

**AUTHORIAL ANXIETY IN A MASS MEDIA WORLD: FOUR MODERNISTS**

**RESPOND**

A Dissertation  
by  
JAMES MARCEL STAMANT

Submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

Chair of Committee,	William Bedford Clark
Committee Members,	Jerome Loving
	David McWhirter
	John H. Lenihan
Head of Department,	Nancy Warren

December 2013

Major Subject: English

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## ABSTRACT

This project explores the anxieties authors of the early twentieth century experienced in relation to mass media, particularly newspapers and the movies, focusing on the selected works of four modernist authors: Sherwood Anderson, James Joyce, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Ernest Hemingway. The works I examine span a twenty-year period, from the late 1910s to 1940, when both the newspaper and movie industries were firmly established as “mass” media. I submit that these authors sustained very complicated relationships with the media they were in contact with. While all four of these authors worked for a time in one of these media, they maintained a negative attitude toward these same media when writing about them in their fiction. All four of these authors depicted perceived flaws in the very media they participated in.

Anderson and Joyce, critiquing the newspaper world, suggest that newspapers fail to fulfill expectations regarding “real” and accurate representations of the world. Anderson’s portrayal offers different reasons for the medium’s inability than Joyce’s, but both authors’ fiction comes to comparable conclusions of the newspaper business’ inadequacy to compete with the representations that could be found in literary fiction. Fitzgerald and Hemingway, writing about the movie business, highlight what they see as that medium’s shortcomings, and though both Fitzgerald and Hemingway personally held great optimism in the potential of movies they ultimately suggest otherwise in the fiction I examine.

For these authors, the anxieties they felt were quite real. Some of the worries that these four authors held existed long before their time and continue to persist in the media saturated world of the early twenty-first century. Whatever reservations these authors had, though, they did not preclude them from envisioning the possibilities of different media, participating in those media, and utilizing their experiences (both real and imagined) in their own literary fiction. The connections between media and authorship in the early twentieth century were extremely complex, and the blurred lines between different modes of communication—as well as the definitions of “art”—created concerns that these four authors expressed in the best way they knew how: in their literary works.

## **DEDICATION**

To my family: past, present, and future. In memory of Jean Nolan Stamant.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

There are many people who supported this project and need to be acknowledged. First, I'd like to thank my committee for all of their hard work, comments, and suggestions, in particular the mentorship of William Bedford Clark. He gave me his time, confidence, and the benefit of his years of experience for which I am truly grateful. Furthermore, I'd like to thank Jerome Loving and David McWhirter; parts of this project originated in their classes at Texas A&M. I'd also like to express my appreciation to John H. Lenihan and to James Aune both of whom provided me with lots to consider and from different vantage points. Within the English Department, there were many outside my committee who helped initiate deep thinking about parts of this work. In particularly, I would like to acknowledge Marian Eide who spurred my thinking about James Joyce. That part of this project also benefited from my work at the Cushing Memorial Library and Archives, and with the support I received as a Kelsey Fellow I'd like to further thank the directors of Cushing who supported my work there: Steven Escar Smith, David Chapman, and Larry Mitchell.

I have been very lucky, all of my life, to have the love and support of my parents, Jack and Jean Stamant, and my sister, Jackie Longino. Thank you for all that you've done to propel me forward. That good fortune expanded long ago with the addition of Charles Longino, his parents Chuck and Loyce, and his sister Laura. There have been many deep conversations during holidays with all of these members of my extended family. And to my niece and nephew, Chase and Brynn Longino, you have given me

laughter and repeatedly displayed your big hearts; for that I am truly thankful. The thoughts and prayers of my aunts and uncles are also greatly appreciated. Knowing that you were thinking of me and cheering me on gave me drive; many thanks to Sr. Mary Gallagher, Fred and Betty Harkins, Bob and Jeanne Stamant, and Edward Gallagher. My family has grown since I began this project, and I have received much love and support from my in-laws: Patricia McDaniel, Bill West, Bruce Carder, and Janet Wolery. Additionally, I am very grateful that Michelle, Liz, Jack, and Grant were always there to cheer me on.

I also want to acknowledge all of my friends who continually inquired about the project and let me tell them about whatever part I was working on at the time. I am blessed with many good friends, too many to include them all here, but I would like to mention a few who discussed specifics throughout this process: Nick and Dana Lawrence, and Michael and Kimberly Beilfuss. Additionally, I would like to thank Todd Samuelson who spoke with me at length about my work. Also, I need to give a special thanks to Damian Carpenter, who not only discussed aspects of this project over the long-haul but also was a reliable and intelligent reader of drafts.

I would not be where I am without the encouragement, direction, and instruction of H. R. Stoneback, and I am indebted to him for his continued help over many years. I also want to remember his wife, Sparrow, who was always squarely in my corner. The Stonebacks took students like me into their family and provided an example of teaching that cannot be equaled but should be strived toward.

Finally, I want to express my infinite gratitude to my wife, Nicole, who constantly discussed this project with me: over breakfast, in the car, at family gatherings, in the office, etc. She has always showed tremendous confidence in me and my work and has been an unending fount of reassurance. My journey through this process would not have been possible without her love and her constant support of me, my thinking, and my writing. I am eternally grateful that she is in my life.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION: AUTHORIAL ANXIETY IN A MASS MEDIA WORLD

Since Plato, the question of the writer's right to exist has not often been raised with the same emphasis; today, however, it arises once more.

Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer"

Media determine our situation.

Friedrich A. Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*

The twentieth century was an age of information and mass media, quite different than what existed in previous centuries, and this change, or shift, did not go unnoticed by writers working in the medium that had been a main means of communication for hundreds of years: the book.<sup>1</sup> As the translators of Friedrich Kittler's *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* (1986) note in their introduction, "The media of the present influence how we think about the media of the past or, for that matter, those of the future" (Winthrop-Young and Wutz xii). Such a claim suggests that there is a thread connecting the different media that have helped us communicate throughout time and in our present "mediascape,"<sup>2</sup> and while the study of one medium might aid our understanding of another, times of changing media offer particularly fertile ground for exploring how stories and information are transferred, what the authors of that content think about the media of their present, past, and possible future, and how those media affect their own authority and stature in relation to the competing media of their time.

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<sup>1</sup> Kittler calls the twentieth century "The age of media" (146).

<sup>2</sup> Mediascape is a term used by Kittler to describe his present world of media technology in the late twentieth century (13).

The years surrounding World War I, Kittler tells readers, were particularly important because this was a time “when media technologies, reaching beyond information storage, began to affect the very transmission of information” (169). In Kittler’s preface, he lays out his reasoning for the structure of his work and notes his inclusion of others’ stories and

texts that show how the novelty of technological media inscribed itself into the old paper of books. Many of these papers are old or perhaps even forgotten, but in the founding age of technological media the terror of their novelty was so overwhelming that literature registered it more acutely than in today’s alleged media pluralism, in which anything goes provided it does not disturb the assumption of global dominance by Silicon Valley. (xl)

Such an idea, to examine texts “in the founding age of technological media,” is the drive of this project; yet, I have chosen to do so by looking at some texts that have not been forgotten—such as James Joyce’s *Ulysses*—alongside others that have at least been deemed as lesser works outside the traditional canon—such as F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Pat Hobby Stories*. Kittler notes that the response of authors to media, what they “committed to paper between 1880 and 1920 amounts … to a ghostly image of our present as future” (xl). I agree with this statement and, accordingly, shift the time-frame slightly to examine texts committed to paper between the late 1910s and 1940. Readers will notice that the authors discussed in this project do provide an “image of our present

as future”: The technology and media have changed, but the same anxieties about authorship and literature endure from this beginning of mass media in the modern world.

The academic, novelist, and critic Raymond Williams claimed, in his 1989 book *The Politics of Modernism*, that evaluations and studies of modernism “must start from the fact that the late nineteenth century was the occasion of the greatest changes ever seen in the media of cultural production” (33),<sup>3</sup> and Kittler quotes Norbert Bolz’s 1986 work in which Bolz claims that media “define what really is” (3). If Williams and Bolz are right, then the beginning of the twentieth century was a time when the world witnessed a change in how reality was defined, represented, and communicated, and these changes provoked new questions about what was being communicated as well. Authors and theorists provided their own answers to these questions in varied forms, from fiction to essays.

In his well-known essay “The Storyteller,” first published in 1936, Walter Benjamin lamented the end of “storytelling”<sup>4</sup> and noted that a new form of communication had taken hold: “This new form of communication is information” (365). One of the ways that Benjamin distinguished “information” from storytelling was by asserting that information “lays claim to prompt verifiability” (365). He also claimed that this “form of communication …, no matter how far back its origin may lie, never

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<sup>3</sup> Michael North similarly claimed “that modernism ‘can be largely defined … by the influence of mechanical mediation on the old media’” (qtd. in Rando 3).

<sup>4</sup> Benjamin defines “storytellers” as “people with the ability to tell a tale properly” (362). He adds that this act, which is being “taken from us,” is “the ability to exchange experiences” (362). Benjamin notes that storytelling needs interpretation, and not only does Benjamin witness a dearth of people who can tell a tale properly, he also perceives a smaller community of listeners, which is just as important, in Benjamin’s opinion, to storytelling (365-367).

before influenced the epic form in a decisive way. But now it does exert such an influence. And it turns out that it confronts storytelling as no less of a stranger than did the novel, but in a more menacing way, and that it also brings about a crisis in the novel” (365). Thus, Benjamin distinguishes between storytelling and the activity that novelists engage in, but while the novel had slowly affected storytelling over the course of over four centuries, Benjamin claims that information’s effect has been much swifter and far reaching (as well as “menacing”), and that a major reason for this difference was the way in which “information” was communicated to modern audiences, through the new *mass* medium of the press.

In the middle of the twentieth century, media theorist Marshall McLuhan famously declared that “the medium is the message” (8), proposing that the information communicated to audiences could only be properly understood when the mode of communication was considered as well. Benjamin already understood this and tied the rise he witnessed in “information” and its replacement of storytelling to the rise of a medium, the press; he did so with good reason (365). Between 1870 and 1890, the population of the United States grew 63%, but the total circulation of daily newspapers rose 222% (Good 3). These statistics, Howard Good claims, show that the “newspaper was becoming a mass medium” (3).<sup>5</sup> Shelley Fisher Fishkin also notes that “[d]uring the last third of the nineteenth century … increased literacy and education created an unprecedented market for newspapers” (87). More and more people began looking to

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<sup>5</sup> Howard Good’s *Acquainted with the Night: The Image of Journalists in American Fiction, 1890-1930* (1986) examines the image of journalists in fiction at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries.

newspapers and their reporters, people who might have looked to literature, to seek a representation of the world and to better understand the world.<sup>6</sup>

Soon after the newspaper industry surged, the new medium of movies began to gain traction in the cultural sphere, too. While Benjamin was writing about the end of storytelling and the storyteller, F. Scott Fitzgerald was lamenting the end of the novel. In the same year that “The Storyteller” was published, 1936, Fitzgerald wrote a series of essays for *Esquire* magazine that were titled “The Crack-Up.” In one of these essays, titled “Pasting It Together,” Fitzgerald wrote that the novel was “becoming subordinated to a mechanical and communal art” (78). The “art” he refers to here is the movie industry, and he continues to argue that this industry, “whether in the hands of Hollywood merchants or Russian idealists, was capable of reflecting only the tritest thought, the most obvious emotion” (78).<sup>7</sup> Again, as with Benjamin’s connection of the fall of storytelling to the rise of the press, Fitzgerald’s statements about the novel’s being discredited in favor of the movie are not unfounded. By the time that Fitzgerald was writing these essays, the movie industry had grown enormously in both size and stature. In their book, *Early Cinema: From Factory Gate to Dream Factory* (2004), Simon Popple and Joe Kember write, “Between 1895 and 1914, cinema established itself as the leading form of visual culture among rapidly expanding global media” (“Preface”). Well before that time, there were moving images and projection devices (Plunkett 1), but

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<sup>6</sup> Although “literature” has many definitions, the main use of the term in this project stems from the *OED*: “written work valued for superior or lasting artistic merit.”

<sup>7</sup> In “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (1936), Benjamin writes that a “desire to class the film among the ‘arts’ forces … theoreticians to read ritual elements into it—with a striking lack of discretion” (227). Benjamin makes this observation in a larger discussion about an older dispute about the artistic value of painting versus photography in the nineteenth century.

the scale and abilities to show moving images greatly evolved with the birth of cinema and continued to take hold of audiences in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>8</sup> As authors of the early twentieth century witnessed the “rapidly expanding global media” of newspapers and movies, they were faced with decisions about how and if to participate in such media, ostensibly competitors on some level in representing the world as well as for the leisure time of new readers and story lovers (Popple and Kember “Preface”). Kittler notes each medium was competing with the others to remain independent and draw an audience: “Literature as word art, theater as theater, film as the filmic and [*sic*] radio as the radiophonic: all these catchwords of the 1920s were defensive measures against the approaching media links” (172). Although Kittler does not mention newspapers in this statement, that industry, too, was vying for the attention of modern audiences of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Both the locomotive and the telegraph helped advance the newspaper industry, and as the nineteenth century wore on, cheaper paper and better means of production helped catapult newspaper journalism to unforeseen heights. Newspapers were cheap and readily consumed every day. Just as newspapers began to dominate the lives of average citizens, new technologies were being developed and introduced into the culture. By the early twentieth century, many people could read mechanically produced newspapers, and they could watch mechanically produced moving pictures. Modern advances in technology, including in transportation, allowed more and more people to

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<sup>8</sup> While newspapers and other print media increasingly included photographs, the “cinema’s decisive difference from photography was its ability to inscribe movement through time” (Doane 24).

gain leisure time that could be spent accessing media, including reading newspapers and watching movies. As with print media, these advances helped make the cinema affordable; by the end of 1905 the first Nickelodeon opened in the United States (Popple and Kember 16).

Movies were based on the ability to show an audience something interesting or spectacular, and the early movies strived for these unusual sights as much as their cinematic descendants. The ability of the early movies to participate in such a presentation has been defined by Tom Gunning as the “cinema of attractions” (Gunning 57). Beyond this foundational element of the movies, as the movie industry developed, techniques and technology combined to produce longer and more complicated movies. Soon, the industry was in need of narratives and turned to established authors as a source for stories. By 1913 Joseph Conrad was negotiating the movie rights to his work (Seed, “British” 50), and he is just one in a long list of authors who either considered or began working with the movies. Some, like James Joyce, even went so far as to attempt running their own theaters. Joyce’s sister, Eva, visited him in Trieste and remarked how much she liked the theaters there and could not understand why there were none in Dublin; Joyce decided to open one. He secured the backing of some associates who had knowledge of the business and acted as the advance man in Ireland, negotiating for ten percent of the profits (Ellman 301).<sup>9</sup> There were even more authors who had

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<sup>9</sup> Richard Ellman notes that although there were no cinemas in Dublin at times films were shown in hired halls (303). Joyce’s theater opened on December 20, 1909 (302). Joyce stayed on, temporarily, to manage the theater but then turned over management to one of the investors, and the theater could not break even; it was sold in the summer of 1910 (313).

attachments to the newspaper industry at some point in their lives—including each of the authors included in this project: Sherwood Anderson, James Joyce, Ernest Hemingway, and F. Scott Fitzgerald.

It is not surprising that the worlds of newspapers, movies, and authors would come into contact. Yet, the relationships were not always easy. Marc Joseph DaRosa, in his dissertation on modernism and the newspaper industry, writes that the “fiction of [the early twentieth century] (both high and low) shared representational practices with the newspapers, borrowed its methods of self-validation, and sought to appropriate the discursive authority of journalistic language even as it defensively denied the availability of its own language to the social rhetoric of the daily press” (3). DaRosa’s claim ties together authors of fiction and writers of newspaper stories while pointing out a divide between these two modes of “storytelling.”<sup>10</sup> Why, then, would fiction writers deny that their language was available to the newspaper writers of the day? One possible answer is that fiction writers felt threatened by the growing medium of newspapers. DaRosa works to resituate the modernist novel “in the midst of competing textual practices that sought to appropriate its privileges and prerogatives” (2). Such speculation underscores fiction writers’ appropriation of newspaper practices, methods, and authority to illustrate that they existed in tandem with the newspaper industry’s appropriation of fiction’s strengths in a struggle between the two groups for the attention of a modern audience.

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<sup>10</sup> Here, I am not borrowing Benjamin’s definition of “storytelling” but instead am calling attention to the more collective understanding of fiction as “stories,” as well as newspaper pieces being commonly referred to as “stories.”

Still, while these media were contending for an audience, print's monopoly was in rapid decline and other media were entering the field of competition.

Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz discuss the texts that Kittler writes about in *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, texts they suggest center “on the new electric media and the condition of print in the age of its technological obsolescence” (xxvii). They argue for the relevancy of Kittler’s selection of texts, writing, “Because these texts were written between the 1890s and 1940s, that is, in the immediate presence of a changing media ecology, they registered with particular acuity the cultural effects of the new recording technologies, including the erosion of print’s monopoly. Print reflects, within the limits of its own medium, on its own marginalization” (xxvii). Winthrop-Young and Wutz’s evaluation of Kittler’s approach makes sense; this time period saw massive changes in the way that audiences received content. They also note that Kittler looks at three “new information channels” and surmise that “What distinguishes the post-Gutenberg methods of data processing from the old alphabetic storage and transmission monopoly is the fact that they no longer rely on *symbolic mediation* but instead record, in the shape of light and sound waves, visual and acoustic *effects of the real*” (original emphasis, xxvii-xxviii). Although Kittler’s *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* might appear to be a work uninterested in print—a central focus of my examination in this dissertation—in that book he does examine the typewriter as “the new, technologically implemented materiality of writing that no longer lends itself to metaphysical soul building” (Winthrop-Young and Wutz xxviii). I assert that the newspaper industry of the early twentieth century falls into a similar category.

The authors examined in this project, like those Kittler addresses in *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, are writing in a period in which there was an “immediate presence of a changing media ecology” (xxvii). As previously mentioned, I have chosen to focus on the latter part of the period Kittler studied (from the 1890s to the 1940s), looking at texts from the latter part of the 1910s to approximately 1940, an even more focused period in which authors had already had time to live with and consider mass media but had not yet moved into the next phase of mass media: television. Some of the authors and texts chosen for this project look back to the end of the 1890s, and others reflect on their present in the 1930s. They identify the “changing media ecology” in relation to their own medium of communication and make suppositions about the future of media, including the place of *literary* books in that future. They see a transition that occurred and foresee changes to come, anxiously wondering, in their fiction and their lives, about the future place of their medium while stubbornly advocating for its relevance in their own time and beyond.

### **Newspapers: The New Mass Medium**

In 1830, the French writer Alphonse de Lamartine wrote to the editor of a French periodical, *Revue Européenne*, to decline a job offer:

Before this century shall run out journalism will be the whole press the whole human thought. Since that prodigious multiplication which art has given to speech multiplication to be multiplied a thousand-fold yet

mankind will write their books day by day, hour by hour, page by page.

Thought will be spread abroad in the world with the rapidity of light; instantly conceived, instantly written, instantly understood at the extremities of the earth it will spread from pole to pole. Sudden, instant, burning with the fervor of soul which made it burst forth, it will be the reign of the human soul in all its plenitude. It will not have time to ripen to accumulate in a book; the book will arrive too late. The only book possible from today is a newspaper. (qtd. in McLuhan, “Joyce, Mallarmé” 38)

Marshall McLuhan uses this quote at the start of an essay about James Joyce, Stéphane Mallarmé, and the Periodic Press in which McLuhan declares that “today when technology has conferred ascendancy on pictorial and radio communication it is easy to detect the peculiar limitations and bias of the four-century span of book-culture which is coming to a close” (38-39).<sup>11</sup> McLuhan’s prognostication is one in a series that has predicted the end of the book for quite a long time, since at least Lamartine, who was born at the end of the eighteenth century. McLuhan comments on the quotation from Lamartine, drawing a comparison of fairly contemporary views of the press with views of printed books from the sixteenth century, noting that both printed books and the press similarly elicited “the enthusiastic attention of poets and aesthetes while rousing the gloomiest apprehensions in the academic mind” (38). Although McLuhan makes this

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<sup>11</sup> McLuhan prophesied the end of book-culture in this article, which was written in 1954. Although book-culture has changed much since McLuhan’s writing, it continues to exist and probably will in the future. What form that culture will take is debatable.

claim, the poet he uses for his epigraph, Lamartine, *turned down* the journalism job he was offered. This fact stands somewhat in opposition to McLuhan's claim, then; although McLuhan ascribes the "gloomiest apprehensions" to academics, as early as 1830 *authors* were considering the rise of journalism and the possible demotion of a centuries-old version of the book with a competitor, the newspaper. By the turn of the next century, the power of the press had grown significantly, and newspapers were more entrenched in the culture of the Western world than ever before. If Lamartine had predicted the end of the book in the first third of the nineteenth century, authors writing in the early twentieth century might feel even more threatened by this medium which had become a mass medium during their lifetimes.

One explanation for the press's threat to authors was the argument that, as McLuhan claims, "every medium of communication is a unique art form which gives salience to one set of human possibilities at the expense of another set" (40). If McLuhan is correct, the rise of mass media in the first half of the twentieth century would have to be balanced by the decline of another medium: books. Marc Da Rosa's observations about the goals of the newspaper industry at this time illustrate another issue: incursion. He writes that "the newer generation of papers adopted the techniques of story telling [*sic*] in a self-conscious way, advertising them as a sign of their extension into a specifically 'literary' territory" (11). It would be nearly impossible for authors to miss the rapid growth of the newspaper business, and the growing similarities between newspaper stories and fictional stories signaled an alarm to fiction writers that their territory was being invaded. Da Rosa continues to note that, even before the turn of the

century, the president of the Institute of Journalists in Britain was encouraging newspaper writers to change their writing styles to better approximate literature, telling journalists: “The public are beginning to prefer literary to mechanical form” (qtd. in Da Rosa 11). Such observations by those working in the newspaper business helped to change the nature of newspaper stories and may have helped lure fledgling authors to the industry, but this practice also indicated that newspapers were more than willing to encroach on the turf of established fiction writers.

Although young writers drawn to newspaper writing might not always have sensed this incursion, some began to feel it as they found success in the literary realm, so much so that an author such as Ernest Hemingway felt the need to explicitly disparage the medium that had given him his start as a writer and provided extra income both in his early days (when he was not financially independent) and much later when he no longer needed money. In his later years, Hemingway said of his experience with journalism, “I never considered journalism as of any permanent value or in any way connected with my serious writing except as an apprenticeship” (qtd. in Underwood and Bagwell 75). Hemingway’s statement provides a clear separation between what he views as “serious writing” and newspaper writing. His defensive need to voice such an opinion must have stemmed from his anxieties (as an author) about the newspaper industry as a serious competitor with, and threat to, the literary world, even though he claimed not to take newspaper writing seriously.

Although it would now be hard to argue that Hemingway did not see his journalism, more magazine writing in his later years than newspaper writing, as

“serious,” there are arguments to be made about the different levels of investment, the different approaches he took, and the different attitudes he maintained toward his journalism and his fiction writing,<sup>12</sup> and it is productive to consider why authors such as Hemingway maintained such distinctions. One explanation has to do with the representation of war the public received from various media in the twentieth century. David Rando writes that “modernists perceived damaging constraints on the newspaper’s ability to render the experiences of war in formally significant ways” (20). Thus, Hemingway covered the Spanish Civil War as a war correspondent but also wrote fictional short stories and later the novel, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), which could “render the experiences of war” in ways different from his journalism. This rendering took more time and care and suggests a difference in the level of craftsmanship applied to the different representations and genres.

In connecting storytelling to Nikolai Laskov and Laskov’s thoughts about storytelling, Benjamin declares that storytelling is a “craft,” and that craftsmanship takes time (367). This statement implies that storytelling is a serious-minded endeavor. In contrast non-narrative communication is not seen as a genuinely skilled craft. He makes

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<sup>12</sup> Although Hemingway had considerable trouble completing any writing at the end of his life, including the writing for *Life* that became *The Dangerous Summer* (1985), he did publish some of his journalistic writing. In contrast, although Hemingway had been writing a number of literary works—including both the memoir *A Moveable Feast* and the novels that were posthumously published as *Islands in the Stream* (1970), *The Garden of Eden* (1986), and *Under Kilimanjaro* (2005) (a portion of which was published in 1999 as *True at First Light*)—he did not publish any of the literary projects he was working on at that time. Arguably, although Hemingway was confident enough in his journalistic writing at this time he applied different standards to the fiction and fictional memoir. While his nonfiction writing made it into print before he died, he refused to publish these other projects while living. This distinction sheds light on Hemingway’s evaluation of journalistic writing in comparison to literary writing. He did take his journalism seriously, but he reserved another level of evaluation for his literary work and would not publish that writing at the end of his life when he struggled so much to edit and finish any of his writing.

such a point early in his essay, then continues by claiming that the decrease in storytelling is tied to a decrease in the value of experience, writing that “Every glance at a newspaper demonstrates that [the value of experience] has reached a new low, that our picture, not only of the external world but of the moral world as well, overnight has undergone changes which were never thought possible” (362). Thus, Benjamin sees the experience communicated through the medium of the press, and specifically newspapers, as lesser in value than the experience that can be, or at least had been, communicated through the craft of storytelling by storytellers.

This was not the only time in 1936 when Benjamin was thinking of, and writing about, craftsmanship and art. In his well-known essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” Benjamin begins by quoting the French poet, essayist, and philosopher Paul Valéry’s *Pièces Sur L’Art* (1934), in which Valéry addresses what he observes as a real change in the techniques of art:

Our fine arts were developed, their types and uses were established, in times very different from the present, by men whose power of action upon things was insignificant in comparison with ours. But the amazing growth of our techniques, the adaptability and precision they have attained, the ideas and habits they are creating, make it a certainty that profound changes are impending in the ancient craft of the Beautiful. In all the arts there is a physical component which can no longer be considered or treated as it used to be, which cannot remain unaffected by our modern knowledge and power. For the last twenty years neither

matter nor space nor time has been what it was from the immemorial. We must expect great innovations to transform the entire technique of the arts, thereby affecting artistic invention itself and perhaps even bringing about an amazing change in our very notion of art. (qtd. in “The Work of Art” 217)

Valéry’s observation and Benjamin’s inclusion of it in his own consideration of “art” show that the status of art and how it was defined were far from certain in the time that the authors in this project were living and writing; “art” is a concept that is always under consideration and subject to changes in definition. People involved in new and expanding media hoped to redefine the term and include their media in a modern definition of “art.” Benjamin claimed that there was great difference between the craftsmanship of the past and the communication of information in his present.

In “The Storyteller” Benjamin denigrated the recurrent communication of information that readers received from newspapers, writing that “[e]very morning brings us news of the globe, and yet we are poor in noteworthy stories” (365). So, although the newspaper industry had long been interested in drawing their newspaper “stories” closer to literary stories, readers were not receiving the kinds of stories that were interesting, in Benjamin’s estimation, that were skillfully honed through craftsmanship, that would be worth recording and/or remembering. The press, Benjamin argues, only transfers “information,” and one quality of information is that it has the appearance of being “understandable in itself” (365). Benjamin states his problems with this kind of information transference, including his suggestion that such written content, unlike

“storytelling,” does not require much from the audience. As an example, Benjamin cites the person he deems to be the first storyteller, Herodotus (366). Referring to the fourteenth chapter of Herodotus’ third book of his *Histories* and the story of the Egyptian king Psammennitus who was captured by the Persian king Cambyses, Benjamin explains that, although Psammennitus was set on the road and forced to watch the Persian triumphal procession, he did not show any emotion. Psammennitus then viewed his daughter on this road, fetching water after becoming a maid. He saw his son on this road, too, being taken to his execution. But as Benjamin notes the Egyptian king was unmoved until he witnessed his old servant among the ranks of the prisoners. At this sight, the king “beat his fists against his head and gave all the signs of deepest mourning” (366). Benjamin points out that this story is not “understandable in itself”; instead, it requires readers to consider why the Egyptian king was unmoved as he witnessed a number of events that should certainly be upsetting to him, only to be utterly moved and saddened when he saw someone whom the reader would assume the king did not have such deep feelings for as his own son and daughter. Benjamin indicates that a reader of Herodotus’ story is forced to think about the content of the story and find a way to interpret it in order to understand it, and this comprehension is a major difference that Benjamin draws between storytelling and newspaper stories.

In addition, Benjamin further questions the appearance of “information” as being “understandable in itself.” Benjamin suggests that information’s appearance does not necessarily coincide with its reality:

Often [today's information] is no more exact than the intelligence of earlier centuries was. But while the latter was inclined to borrow from the miraculous, it is indispensable for information to sound plausible. Because of this it proves incompatible with the spirit of storytelling. If the art of storytelling has become rare, the dissemination of information has had a decisive share in this state of affairs. (365)

The information communicated through newspapers, Benjamin indicates, only seems to be clear and factual; Benjamin claims that this information looks like fact to readers simply because it appears so commonplace. If Benjamin is correct, the newspaper industry not only failed to raise the level and style of their content closer to literature, as the President of the Institute of Journalists in Britain had hoped (Da Rosa 11), but the industry also failed to deliver on an implicit promise made to its readers: that the information being communicated was factual or as close to it as possible. This situation proved frustrating to writers, both authors and newspaper writers, working in the first part of the twentieth century.

In an article titled “Journalists with Literary Ambitions No Less Satisfied with Their Jobs,” Doug Underwood and Dana Bagwell point out that journalists working at the turn of the last century were unsatisfied by the conditions under which they worked. Not only did they resent the level of pay for journalists, they also were forced to deal with “exploitative editing systems and ethically dubious reporting standards” (76). Underwood and Bagwell provide a long list of literary figures who worked in journalism at this time and note that “a number complained about the mistreatment of newsroom

employees and the perpetuation of news gathering formulas that kept journalists from telling the truth about what was going on in the world” (76).<sup>13</sup> It is not difficult to understand how such conditions could push writers away from journalism and toward literature. Newspaper writing was more confining and left hopeful authors without the authority they desired, an authority that could be more fully realized in the pursuit of literature.

The newspaper industry was successful, however, in creating the appearance of representing the world as it was, and the scope of that representation had grown, in the eyes of newspaper businessmen, to include more of that world than ever before. As Rando writes in the introduction to his 2011 work, *Modernist Fiction and News*:

When news baron Alfred Harmsworth, Lord Northcliffe, summarized the immense changes in mass media that his newspapers helped to inaugurate or intensify in the early years of the twentieth century, he declared with satisfaction, “What we did was to extend its purview to life as a whole.”<sup>14</sup>

However, this “Northcliffe Revolution” or the New Journalism, Raymond Williams argues, was produced in the first instance not by a primary desire to widen the range of what could be considered reportable, but rather by changes in the economic base of the industry: newspapers came

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<sup>13</sup> Sherwood Anderson and James Joyce comment in their work on such news gathering practices, although with variations since Anderson writes about small town newspapers and Joyce writes about big city newspapers. I discuss their views in subsequent chapters.

<sup>14</sup> William Stead, the owner of *Pall Mall Gazette*, offers a similar view to Northcliffe’s, claiming that the revolution within the newspaper industry turned journalism into “a living thing, palpitating with actuality, in touch with life at all points” (qtd. in Rando 3).

to rely upon circulation numbers and advertising revenue, thereby making news content newly and principally responsive to the market. (2)

As this quotation suggests, newspapers did include more information from wider sources than in the past, and if we can trust Rando then this expansion explicitly transgressed boundaries and invaded the long-held ground of fiction: “The novel had long enjoyed the privilege of representing life as a whole, of both entertaining and informing its readers with a comprehensive vision of reality that was free to seize any dimension of human experience as its object” (Rando 2).<sup>15</sup> Rando comments on this phenomenon and draws on Jacques Derrida’s idea of the archive, writing that “Modernist texts can similarly be understood as highly selective archives culled from the possibilities of total information storage, but at the same time they somehow remember exactly what they set out to forget” (6). Rando’s statement suggests that although Modernist texts choose to represent a selection of the whole, they end up including a total picture in their representation. An example of this paradox can be found in Hemingway’s writing, in which Hemingway suggests that much of the meaning to be gleaned is hidden beneath the surface of the story or that a particular feeling might be elicited from readers by the purposeful omission of a detail of the story.<sup>16</sup> Rando acknowledges the newspaper industry’s expansion and the possibilities of “total information storage” that were not possible before the modern age, but he also subtly makes his own distinction between

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<sup>15</sup> Rando writes that newspapers began to overlap “with the wide array of life that literary representation traditionally assumed as its province, perhaps to an extent unrivalled since the sixteenth century when ‘novels’ and ‘news’ had once been indistinguishable” (2).

<sup>16</sup> These theories have been widely noted and recorded as Hemingway’s “iceberg theory” and his theory of omission.

the newspaper industry's movement toward such possibilities and "Modernist texts" which "somehow" include a total picture of the world even while appearing to be highly selective in what they chose to communicate to readers.<sup>17</sup>

The information conveyed through newspapers did not require much intellectual investment from its readers and did not require much craftsmanship from its writers, in Benjamin's eyes, and did not even succeed in being "exact" in its everydayness. If, as Benjamin argues, that the modern communication of information in the press is "no more exact than the intelligence of earlier centuries," then the newspaper industry was failing to deliver on its implied promise to its audience: to provide the most realistic and accurate portrayal of modern experience possible to its readers on a regular basis. By the time that Benjamin wrote this essay, Sherwood Anderson had long since voiced similar thoughts in his fictional work *Winesburg, Ohio* and James Joyce, likewise, had expressed such views in his epic novel *Ulysses*. While Rando asserts that authors could not look back at an established mass media until the 1930s, a claim he uses to substantiate his exploration of that period, I suggest that authors such as Anderson and Joyce were already reflecting on the established mass medium of the newspaper industry at early as World War I, looking back to the turn of the century to comment in their fiction on the modern mediated experience and representations of the world.

In "The Storyteller," Benjamin not only holds the press and its dissemination of information responsible for the demise of storytelling; interestingly, he also holds the

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<sup>17</sup> Such an argument can be drawn from a reading of Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919), which I examine in the next chapter.

novel complicit: “The earliest symptom of a process whose end is the decline of storytelling is the rise of the novel at the beginning of modern times” (364).<sup>18</sup> Benjamin’s claim, here, makes a distinction between stories told orally in communities and those written by individuals in books.<sup>19</sup> He dates the beginning of the end of storytelling, then, many hundreds of years before the writing of his own essay, but he still records a difference between novels and the press and the way the latter accelerated the end of storytelling through its inability to effectively do what Da Rosa claims newspapers were trying to do in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: adopt the techniques of storytelling (4). Still, the newspaper industry enjoyed increasing circulations, and Rando writes that the “popularity and ubiquity of news stories meant that the newspaper’s content took on tremendous cultural power, and the modernist novel was happy to share some of this power by overlapping in content” (12).

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<sup>18</sup> Benjamin explains how he differentiates between the “novel” and the “story”: “What distinguishes the novel from the story (and from the epic in the narrower sense) is its essential dependence on the book. The dissemination of the novel became possible only with the invention of printing. What can be handed on orally, the wealth of the epic, is of a different kind from what constitutes the stock in trade of the novel. What differentiates the novel from all other forms of prose literature—the fairy tale, the legend, even the novella—is that it neither comes from oral tradition nor goes into it. This distinguishes it from storytelling in particular. The storyteller takes what he tells from experience—his own or that reported by others. And he in turn makes it the experience of those who are listening to his tale. The novelist has isolated himself. The birthplace of the novel is the solitary individual, who is no longer able to express himself by giving examples of his most important concerns, is himself uncounseled, and cannot counsel others” (364). Later, Benjamin describes the differences he perceives between the novel and the story, writing that “the novel reaches an end which is more proper to it, in a stricter sense, than to any story. Actually there is no story for which the question as to how it continued would not be legitimate. The novelist, on the other hand, cannot hope to take the smallest step beyond that limit at which he invites the reader to a divinatory realization of the meaning of life by writing ‘Finis’” (372).

<sup>19</sup> Rando, too, marks this moment, in a citation from Lennard Davis’ *Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel*. Davis writes that it is another technological shift that brings news and novel together in the sixteenth century. With the invention of the printing press, “narrative was given the ability to embody recentness, hence to record that which was novel—that is to be a ‘novel’” (qtd. in Rando 148).

These details create a complex situation, more complex, even, than the one Da Rosa contests in his work on the old “reflex in critical schools … to treat modernism as a movement of resistance to the standards and modes of popular literacy” (2). Da Rosa rehearses this idea, stating, “The modernist artwork, it is argued, resists integration into social life and transition into the styles of popular, mass cultural art by abandoning the realist project of representation, defensively warding off the phenomenal world, and complicating its own forms to forestall easy consumability” (2). This rejection is certainly not the case in *Winesburg, Ohio*, and although Joyce does complicate forms to create, in *Ulysses*, a work that is not easily consumed, it is imprecise to say that Joyce was simply resisting the “standards and modes of popular literacy”; these standards and modes are interpolated, rather, into Joyce’s novel but in a manner that allows the author to comment on those elements in a thoughtful way.

Additionally, these authors’ participation in the medium that they evaluated and explored in their fiction adds another dimension to both their knowledge of the newspaper world (whether their most vigorous participation in the newspaper world came before or after the works discussed in this project) and their judgment of its value in relation to literature. These authors simply represent a sample of their many literary contemporaries who also spent time working on newspapers before, during, and/or after writing literature. They understood what the newspaper industry promised and was trying to accomplish, and they did not stand by quietly watching these developments. Rando writes, “Most important of all, modernists perceived a growing distance between news reporting and lived experience, and they developed and honed narrative techniques

and an experimental resolve that made nearness and experience defining values.

Improving on what the newspaper promised but failed to do, modernist novelists hoped not just to ‘make it new,’ but also to ‘make it near’” (18).

### **The World of Movies: Dreams by Collaboration**

The newspaper industry was not the only growing medium that was attempting to draw closer to “storytelling” in the first part of the twentieth century. The movie industry, particularly in Hollywood, borrowed from the literary world to further expand its reaches and entice audiences to view their representations of experience. By 1919, the movie executive Samuel Goldwyn was hiring “Eminent Authors” to give Goldwyn pictures credibility even while continuing to turn out mostly “popular” products (Leff 6). The draw of Hollywood money and fame was hard to resist, and many well-regarded authors, from F. Scott Fitzgerald to William Faulkner, tried their hand in Hollywood at some point in their careers. Hemingway, while he was an author who was very interested in his public image and audience, was not one of these authors, but recent research by Jill Jividen has shed new light on Hemingway’s movie hopes and desires.<sup>20</sup> Hemingway may have been living as far away from Hollywood as possible while remaining at the border of the United States, in Key West, and then just outside the country in Cuba, but movies were on his mind, too. Many of the authors who worked in the movie industry, including Hemingway who worked on non-Hollywood

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<sup>20</sup> I provide a more complete discussion of Hemingway’s movie hopes later in the project.

documentaries, tried to use the same approach they brought to their literary work and were mostly disappointed. Even a writer like Fitzgerald, who attempted to work in the movie industry multiple times and initially did not seem to harbor any prejudice toward the industry, eventually made a clear statement of division between the world of literary pursuits and the world of the movies.

Fitzgerald spent the end of his life writing about the movies, specifically the Hollywood movie industry, and he touched on a few aspects of the business: forced collaboration of writing, the loss of authority for writers that stemmed from that system of writing, and inferior stories that the industry claimed as superior representations of the world. The movie executive Irving Thalberg, the man Fitzgerald used as the basis for his megalomaniacal executive in *The Last Tycoon*, once said, “I, more than any single person in Hollywood, have my finger on the pulse of America” (qtd. in Phillips 145). Thalberg’s statement is an example of the kind of arrogance that existed in Hollywood. While Fitzgerald observed movie executives in Hollywood who believed they were intimately connected to the “pulse of America,” Hemingway learned about the procedures of film production outside of Hollywood: in war-torn Spain.<sup>21</sup>

Hemingway found that his filmmaking friends did not have their fingers on the pulse of Spain and its people. Particularly in a number of short stories, which I examine later in this project, Hemingway comments on the level of closeness that he believed he, as an author, had with Spain and its people in comparison with the film crew that was attempting to capture the truth of the brutality that transpired in Spain in the 1930s.

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<sup>21</sup> This is further examined in a subsequent chapter on Hemingway, his fiction, and the medium of film.

Fitzgerald did not dislike Thalberg, and Hemingway did not dislike Joris Ivens, the director Hemingway worked with to document the Spanish Civil War on film, yet both writers chose to expose the differences that they saw between the literary stories being written by authors and the film stories being made by men like Thalberg and Ivens and later projected onto movie screens. In revealing these variances, Fitzgerald and Hemingway voice their support for the supremacy of the literary versions. This declaration, however, did not negate the optimism and sense of possibilities that these authors harbored for the medium of film, if they could only have complete control over the story and the ability to be involved in the film's production to the end.

Hemingway, in fact, not only befriended Hollywood movie stars but also enjoyed movies—just not movies made from his literary works. Yet, he generally deemed movie content less authentic than “serious” literature. An example of this evaluation comes in Hemingway’s repeated criticism of Willa Cather’s book *One of Ours* (1923). Hemingway was upset that this book was so successful, and he complained to Edmund Wilson about the book being critically acclaimed and winning the Pulitzer Prize because he believed that she had taken her war material from the 1915 film *The Birth of a Nation*.<sup>22</sup> Although Hemingway had seen and enjoyed the movie, his belief that Cather used its content in a work of literature led him to see the book as inauthentic. Hemingway viewed Cather’s work in this way because its source, a film, was

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<sup>22</sup> Hemingway also commented on *One of Ours* publicly in his own work of satirical fiction, *The Torrents of Spring* (1926). In that book, Hemingway writes, “Nobody had any damn business to write about [the war], though, that didn’t at least know about it from hearsay. Literature has too strong an effect on people’s minds. Like this American writer Willa Cather, who wrote a book about the war where all the last part of it was taken from the action in the *Birth of a Nation* [sic]” (57).

inauthentic, and while such material might make for a successful movie, Hemingway was disappointed that it might also be considered as a success in the literary realm because he had different standards for literary content.<sup>23</sup> The idea that an author might scavenge experience from a movie, which was already a superficial representation in Hemingway's mind, was a distasteful one to the author but even more so because readers and critics did not seem to agree with Hemingway.

Hemingway was immensely competitive, so it is not surprising that he would take advantage of an opportunity to find fault with another author, like Cather, who was getting attention and accolades for her writing. When Hemingway complained about *One of Ours*, he had not yet begun to make a name for himself. That competition extended between the different media of the early twentieth century as between artists and authors should not be any more surprising. Grahame Smith reminds readers that there is a long tradition of rivalry between the arts; Smith notes that the great Leonardo had extolled the virtues of painting above other arts because it "more closely resembled ... the design in the mind of the artist" (31). Although Leonardo saw painting and poetry as connected, he favored painting because it conveyed the artist's impression all at once (31). Leonardo's focus on the visual in art can be seen carried through to the period of the early twentieth century in which images in newspapers and on movie screens captured the attention of audiences. These images suggested that they were

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<sup>23</sup> In "The Work of Art," Benjamin writes about the inauthenticity of the audience's connection with movie actors, writing that the "audience's identification with the actor is really an identification with the camera" (228). Benjamin goes on to say that "for the first time—and this is the effect of the film—man has to operate with his whole living person, yet forgoing its aura. For aura is tied to his presence; there can be no replica of it" (229).

more “real” than words on a page. While words could describe an image, a camera could capture one and show it, theoretically, as it really was. Kittler reminds his readers that this perception is flawed, if not false, writing, “Since its inception, cinema has been the manipulation of optic nerves and their time” (115). He notes that “it is with film tricks, montage, and cuts that the recording of optical processes began” (115). There is then a difference between what film projected on movie screens and what the industry suggested it could, or did, provide.

Kittler emphasizes the manipulation of the image that film accomplished and how this representation of the world existed alongside film’s attempts to seize and show the “reality” of the world. Extending photography’s ability to record minute movements, as with Edward Muybridge’s snapshots—such as photographs of horses to show the positions of their legs in motion—that were collected into a number of volumes titled *Animal Locomotion* which “were meant to instruct ignorant painters in what motion looks like in real-time analysis” (Kittler 116), film furthered the idea that the camera could capture even more than the naked eye could observe.<sup>24</sup> In a section about film and psychiatry, Kittler quotes a Dr. Hennes who explains that a patient may not exhibit symptoms when meeting with a doctor, but a person might stand by with a film camera and begin recording when the patient behaves in an unhealthy way: “Once the filming is done, the pictures are available for reproduction at any moment” (qtd. in

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<sup>24</sup> Another example is the photographing of Georges Demeny, the French inventor and filmmaker, who used “a serial camera with shutter speeds in the milliseconds [which] was aimed at Demeny himself, who adhered to the honor—common during the founding age of modern media—of performing simultaneously as experimenter and subject, priest and victim of the apparatus. A human mouth opened, expectorated the syllables ‘Vi-ve la Fran-ce!’ and closed again, while the camera dissected, enlarged, stored, and immortalized its successive positions, including the ‘fine play of all facial muscles’” (Kittler 136).

Kittler 145). Kittler explains that Hennes' comment "means that films are more real than reality and that their so-called reproductions are, in reality, productions" (145). Kittler, however, explains "why film is not directly linked to the real," citing the difference between the recording of physical waves and the storage of physical waves' "chemical effects" on negatives (119). Additionally, he also notes that until fiber technologies run at the speed of light there is no way to store optical waves (119). At the time of this writing fiber networks have yet to reach the speed of light, and technology during the 1910s to 1940—the time period examined in this project—was much slower.<sup>25</sup> If current technology falls short of replicating reality, the technology of the early twentieth century was much farther away. There was still an element of the imagination and dreams in film, and that aspect drew the medium closer to literary narratives.

There was overlap between the world of the cinema and the world of literature, commented on both by authors and those working in the cinema. For example, Joseph Conrad perceived that his job, as a writer, was to make his audience "see" something in his text, and the Russian film director and theorist Sergei Eisenstein acknowledged a proto-cinematic dimension in the work of Charles Dickens (Seed, "British" 48). Authors in the early twentieth century were not simply lured to Hollywood by the possibilities of fame and money that could be obtained there; many authors were optimistic about the possibilities this new medium offered. Conrad, for example, "was involved in

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<sup>25</sup> According to an online tech website, "Researchers at the University of Southampton in England have produced optical fibers that can transfer data at 99.7% of the universe's speed limit: The speed of light" ([extremetech.com](http://extremetech.com)).

negotiations over the film rights to his fiction from as early as 1913,” and in a talk Conrad gave in America, he proposed that fiction and film had common aims (Seed 50). At the same time, a writer like Aldous Huxley could write an essay in 1925 condemning the movies, titled “Where Are the Movies Moving?,” but later move to Hollywood in the 1930s to work for MGM Studios as a screenwriter (Seed 64). Many authors were suspicious of what the movies were doing, where they were “moving,” but that distrust was often not strong enough to outweigh curiosity and a sense of possibility, in addition to the opportunities for celebrity and wealth.<sup>26</sup> Kittler writes about the place of literature and film during World War I, citing a “troop leader and recipient of the Ordre pour le Mérite” who claimed “that this war is a chokehold on our literature” (130); Kittler, however, claims, “Literature dies not in the no-man’s land between the trenches but in that of technological reproducibility” (130). The authors in this project contemplated at least a version of this possibility, without the advantage of Kittler’s hindsight, but worked with their competing media just the same.

For writers like Fitzgerald and Hemingway, though, and for many others who knew enough of the movie industry to learn how movies were made, the result was a diminishing of the possibilities authors hoped to find there, often due to the difference in the screenwriters’ composition of stories and the inclusion of many others involved in the process of moviemaking, whether writers, actors, producers, executives, or one of the many other cogs in the machine of movie production. Among this plethora of people

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<sup>26</sup> Another example that Seed mentions is the author Evelyn Waugh, who liked movies and visited Hollywood in 1946. Waugh disliked the commercialism of Hollywood, but he “never lost his fascination with film” (68).

involved in the making of each movie, it was usually the executives who held real power. As the screenwriter Maurice Rapf told Fitzgerald in 1940, Thalberg was against the unionizing of the screenwriters because “he saw it as a challenge to his authority” (qtd in Phillips 151).<sup>27</sup> The executives, who were not authors, maintained tight control over the stories that were being shown on movie screens.

The lack of individual craftsmanship and the impulse to move quickly in the production of film is echoed in the audience’s experience with the finished product, as pointed out by Benjamin when he writes, “Let us compare the screen on which a film unfolds with the canvas of a painting. The painting invites the spectator to contemplation; before it the spectator can abandon himself to his associations. Before the movie frame he cannot do so. No sooner has his eye grasped a scene than it is already changed. It cannot be arrested” (“Work of Art” 239). Like the canvas of a painting, a work of fiction can be contemplated; the reader is invited, to use Benjamin’s word, to contemplate the text. Movies, however, could not be paused and contemplated by the average moviegoer in the era that this project examines. Each moment was replaced by the next, disallowing the kind of interaction a reader could have with a work of literature.<sup>28</sup> Benjamin considers this relationship between a message and its audience

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<sup>27</sup> Budd Schulberg, who worked briefly with Fitzgerald on the movie *Winter Carnival* (1939), provides another example, a fictional one. Schulberg wrote in his 1950 novel, *The Disenchanted*, about how writers were often on the outside of the inner power circles in Hollywood.

<sup>28</sup> Additionally, Benjamin’s comment on film can be applied to the newspaper. Although, theoretically, a reader could slowly contemplate the text of a newspaper in the same way she would a work of literature, the continual appearance of new editions of the newspaper (whether weekly, daily, or multiple times a day) with content that was so closely tied to the immediate present meant that readers felt the need to consume newspapers very quickly. As a new edition of the newspaper appeared, readers would have felt compelled to leave behind or discard the older edition for the “new” news.

in relation to “the same ancient lament that the masses seek distraction whereas art demands concentration from the spectator” (239).<sup>29</sup> The authors in the project enter into this discussion and echo that lament.

Exploring this “lament” a bit more, the idea that “distraction” and “concentration” were in opposition, readers find an example in Kittler that illuminates the exhaustion of modern workers and shows a distinction between literature and film in the choices people made with their limited leisure time. Kittler cites the German publication *Frankfurter Zeitung* and a section within a 1929 issue that examined what three women stenographers read; the examination showed that they were not reading much of anything, and the editor believed that what little they were reading was not thought-provoking (174-175). These women, and later their peers, stated that modern women were too tired from working long hours to read anything substantial and would rather spend their evenings at the movies (175).<sup>30</sup> Whether or not “modern” people were really more exhausted than their ancestors, Kittler’s example suggests that they felt they were. Mass media offered those without much money affordable forms of entertainment that did not require the same kind of mental engagement that literature did. Authors

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<sup>29</sup> Rudolph Arnheim, a Berlin-born writer, published an article in 1937 in which he discusses the inability of people to focus or concentrate, even on their newspaper. Arnheim writes, “There are those who are no longer capable of reading the newspaper without words, songs, or laughter from the radio. This is a symptom of mental laxity and nervousness that destroys every possibility for genuine attention and artistic enjoyment” (423-424). Such an argument sounds very familiar today in relation to discussion about the internet and social media.

<sup>30</sup> This story is reminiscent of T. S. Eliot’s “typist home at teatime” (222) in his foundational poem *The Waste Land* (1922). In that poem, the typist awaits “the young man carbuncular” (231) for a meal and a casual sexual relationship. The typist is described as “bored and tied” (236), and after her lover leaves she thinks very little about the experience (or anything). Readers do not find her reading high-minded literature; she is too tired to engage with such a text. Instead, Eliot writes that “She smoothes her hair with automatic hand, / And puts a record on the gramophone” (255-56). Readers might just as easily imagine the typist wandering to a local theater to watch a movie.

were competing with novel forms of communication that asked less of their overworked audience, a difficult proposition for authors to contend with.

The distinction between distraction and engagement is only one of the elements that Kittler's text interrogates; he notes that even before the turn of the century, "literature" was separating itself from the medium of film, using film to define what literature was: "Ever since December 28, 1895, when the Lumière brothers presented their cinema projector, non-filmability has been an unmistakable criterion for literature" (173). While authors of the early twentieth century might write literature that was unfilmable, they might have also wondered what kind of an audience future literature would have in a modern, mechanized age. And it is thought-provoking to consider the possibility that film utilized a mechanical form of writing that drew inspiration from the factories of the modern age that were filled with machines and assembly-lines poised to produce and mass-produce products that could distract audiences away from engaging literature.

Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno would write about such a system only a few years after Fitzgerald's death. Fitzgerald fictionally documented the assembly-line collaboration of Hollywood in his last two works of fiction, and Horkheimer and Adorno echo his view in "The Culture Industry": "Films and radio no longer need to present themselves as art. The truth that they are nothing but business is used as an ideology to legitimize the trash they intentionally produce" (95). While Ezra Pound famously encouraged artists to "make it new" in the middle of the 1930s, Horkheimer and Adorno

claimed that mass culture involved “the exclusion of the new” (106).<sup>31</sup> And though Andreas Huyssen writes about visual art, particularly the avant-garde, and artists’ desire to change people’s lives, he writes in *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*, “It was the culture industry, not the avantgarde [sic], which succeeded in transforming everyday life in the 20<sup>th</sup> century” (15). Still, Tom Gunning claims that “cinema emerged as a new form of representation, outside of academic aesthetics and not yet recognized as an art form. Thus, for avant-gardists, the form was not cursed by a hoary tradition of aesthetic principles” (“A Culture of Shocks” 299). In that sense, cinema was making it “new,” and Gunning’s point speaks to the optimism that the authors discussed in this project, though none but Joyce could be classified as avant-garde, held for the cinema. Gunning writes about a “cinema seen through a modernist filter, a cinema of utopian possibility that certain artists of the next decade would try to realize” (299), and while he is referring to avant-garde artists, Fitzgerald and Hemingway shared optimism over the possibilities of this medium, even while retaining a healthy skepticism. Fitzgerald and Hemingway experimented with this medium in their own ways, and though both authors were disappointed by their experiences with the film industry they continued their attachments to the medium up until the end of their lives.

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<sup>31</sup> This “sameness” is connected to Benjamin’s worry over “authenticity” in the sense that these theorists see authenticity and newness a part of how art is defined.

## **Lessened Authority and Lack of Control for Authors' Narratives**

All of the authors in this project witnessed a radical change in how “stories” were being transferred to audiences. Their recognition of this change included an understanding of the importance of new means of communication, means (media) that were growing and competing with literature for the leisure time of the public audience. Whether their anxieties about this competition were well founded, these authors perceived a threat to their art and livelihood and responded in kind in the way they knew best: in their literature, in their fiction. These authors understood media’s importance and the necessity of exploiting media to their own advantage if possible. The new mass media of the early twentieth century were able to reach an immense body of people in a relatively short amount of time—more people and faster—than authors could reach by publishing books. Anderson, Joyce, Hemingway, and Fitzgerald all took advantage of the media they considered in an effort to increase their exposure and to reach an audience that they may not have been able to reach otherwise.

In “Work of Art” Benjamin postulated, “The whole sphere of authenticity is outside technical—and, of course, not only technical—reproducibility” (220). The authors considered in this project, particularly Anderson and Hemingway, responded in their fiction to the issue of authenticity in media representations; Anderson addressed what he viewed as a lack of authenticity in newspapers, and Hemingway wrote about a perceived lack of authenticity in film. Hemingway’s view dealt with more than typical Hollywood films, but Fitzgerald’s fiction touched on the issue inside the Hollywood

circle. When Benjamin writes about the destruction of “aura” and the loss of uniqueness that results from reproduction, he connects that phenomenon to audience and writes, “The adjustment of reality to the masses and of the masses to reality is a process of unlimited scope, as much for thinking as for perception” (223). This process can be applied to the production of literature, but Benjamin does not tie his comments to that art; instead he writes about “the first truly revolutionary means of reproduction, photography” (224).<sup>32</sup> Photography was tied to both newspapers and the movie industry, with the increasing use of photographs in newspapers in the later part of the nineteenth century and the invention of movies following soon afterwards.

Beyond the consideration of authenticity in artistic representation, Benjamin questioned the future existence of “the writer’s right to exist.” Benjamin writes that his audience is generally “conversant with it in a different form, that of the question of the writer’s autonomy” (“Author as Producer” 167). In thinking about an author’s autonomy, or authority, Benjamin writes, “You are not inclined to grant him this autonomy. You believe that the present social situation forces him to decide in whose service he wishes to place his activity” (167). Following this charge, Benjamin asserts that the “author of entertainment literature does not acknowledge this choice” (167).<sup>33</sup> Whether the author consciously and actively chooses to place himself within a particular

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<sup>32</sup> The creation of the printing press allowed for the first mass reproduction of art, and Benjamin addresses this fact by specifically pointing toward woodcuts as the first mass-reproduced art. Literature, however, also falls into this realm, yet using Benjamin’s reasoning, the reproduction of a book as a work of drama or, in the twentieth century, as a movie speaks more directly to Benjamin’s idea of the loss of aura and the impossibility of reproducing authenticity.

<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, Benjamin notes, a “progressive type of writer .... places himself on the side of the proletariat. And that’s the end of his autonomy” (167).

group is not the point for Benjamin; regardless of the author's perceived choice he or she will inevitably be taken up by a group and will lose the ability to "write just what he pleases" (167). Although Benjamin's point is political, it is broadly applicable to mass media and its influence on the changes in authorship in the early part of the twentieth century. Anderson and Fitzgerald show, in their fiction, the inability of the newspaper writer and the film writer to write what they want, to retain autonomy within the media of newspapers and film. In a lesser way, Hemingway reflects on this same problem with regard to his own, non-Hollywood moviemaking experience, and Joyce highlights the anxieties of authors—in his case, the aspiring writer in *Ulysses*, Stephen—to work on a newspaper for fear of the loss of his authority. Additionally, these writers feared losing a potential audience to media which promised to offer more "real" representations of the world. Kittler suggested there was a takeover "by technological media since Edison's inventions," and he further claimed that "The dream of a real visible or audible world arising from words has come to an end" (14). Newspapers could offer photographs of the world, and movies showed photographs in apparent motion.

Kittler records how "the technological differentiation of optics, acoustics, and writing exploded Gutenberg's writing monopoly around 1880" (16). Although Kittler includes mechanical writing in the form of the typewriter, the printing presses of the turn of the century are even larger versions and examples of this disconnected writing. These new technological mass media, to borrow Kittler's language of monopoly, acted as trust-busters to the established medium of books and literature. Such changes to centuries-old ways of communicating made those engaged in the old ways wary and uneasy, and they

wrote about that discomfort, an uneasiness which extended to the ways in which authors were being represented by the new mass media.

The astuteness of these authors' reasoning forced them to realize that whether they wanted to or not, their names and public personae would appear in these media in some form or another. For example, even if Hemingway had decided not to sell any of his work to Hollywood, or the movie industry more generally, that decision would not necessarily stop the industry from using his work to make films. This exact situation occurred with Hemingway's first big success, the novel *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), in which the Fox movie studio tried to use his title without permission and attach it to a John Monk Saunders work that shared a number of similarities with Hemingway's novel (Goff 23-24).<sup>34</sup> Considering such possibilities, these authors made choices about attempting to control the media coverage of their lives and work or attempting to remove themselves and cede control by refusing to add their own content; the latter choice would allow the media to direct authors' stories without impediment because the media would be the only voice constructing and disseminating these life-stories. These authors were not always successful in their attempts to participate, to shape their own media stories, and sometimes they wished that they could remove themselves from the mass media machines of the early twentieth century, but that was no longer a possibility. Fame and celebrity were issues for authors of previous generations, but the literary figures of the first part of the twentieth century faced new forms of these older phenomena, changed by the shifting mass media as much as anything else.

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<sup>34</sup> To be fair, Hemingway borrowed the title from Ecclesiastes.

Recognition meant exposure and access to a new kind of modern celebrity in the early twentieth century. If a segment of the overall reading audience was being lost to newspapers, authors could still make themselves and their work known by participating in the medium. Before the explosion of the movie industry as a new mass medium, and the celebrity that accompanied that metamorphosis, the newspaper provided the most viable access to modern celebrity.<sup>35</sup> Refusing newspaper exposure would be foolish for authors trying to attract the attention of readers, and an active choice not to participate did not ensure that newspaper writers would not write about authors or publish their pictures anyway. Still, whether reluctantly accepting newspaper exposure or actively seeking it, many authors continued to distinguish between their literary work and newspaper content. In the nineteenth century, Mallarmé wrote of the immensity of the press and its “employing print for the propagation of opinions, the recital of divers facts, made plausible, in the Press, which is *devoted to publicity, by the omission, it would seem, of any art*” (my emphasis, qtd. in “Joyce, Mallarmé”47). The authors included in this project express similar sentiments in the fiction they wrote during the first part of the twentieth century. And although readers can discover such opinions in these authors’ texts—as I later demonstrate—those sentiments did not preclude these authors from experimenting with media forms or attempting to use media exposure and celebrity to the benefit of their work and themselves.

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<sup>35</sup> Leonard Leff, in the preface to his *Hemingway and His Conspirators* (1997), claims that Hemingway was very aware of audience: “More than most other serious authors of his time” (xvi).

The massive growth of the movie industry, particularly after it consolidated its base of operations in Hollywood, meant even newer possibilities for money and notoriety that were virtually unequalled in other areas. A new style of journalism put names to newspaper pieces, but Hollywood created possibilities for “celebrity” that were entirely new to the world.<sup>36</sup> Celebrity is not new, and related phenomena such as renown and fame stretch back through millennia. Leo Braudy, in his foundational work *The Frenzy of Renown* (1986), rightly or wrongly claims that “the first famous person was Alexander III of Macedonia, later called ‘the Great’” (28). The brand, or version, of celebrity that currently exists, however, has only been around for approximately a century, and the window that opened and enabled literary figures access to that specific type of celebrity may have already closed. Authors no longer have the type of public visibility that they had in the early and middle parts of the last century when the increasing presence of media in the daily lives of people was a major contributing factor to the birth and development of this precise type of celebrity which allowed for the number of famous people and celebrities to grow enormously. Both the expansion of existing print media and the emergence of new media like movies fostered this new celebrity from its start. As these conditions began to materialize, people with access to these outlets and their accompanying possibilities for celebrity had to consider their “visibility.” As Michel Foucault noted in *Discipline and Punish* (1975), “Visibility is a trap” (200). The authors I examine in this project, however, were thinking about their

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<sup>36</sup> By-lines began appearing around the American Civil War, but they still were used infrequently in the 1920s, but “By the 1930s, by-lines were used liberally for domestic as well as foreign correspondence” (Schudson 145).

visibility almost a half a century before Foucault's theorizations were published. These authors' considerations involved an attempt to determine how much autonomy they might be able to retain over their lives, how much power they might have over this new fame and their public representations, and whether they were giving more power to media that were competing for a share of their audience's time.

When these authors chose to participate in other media, they observed failings that were housed in each medium and later wrote about these failings to expose their weaknesses in comparison to the older and established medium of the book. The collaborative production of stories and the breakneck speed with which those stories were delivered to an audience contributed to these authors' opinions about the untrustworthiness of mass media such as newspapers and movies. The slow craftsmanship of art could rarely exist in a media context because these media would not allow for the necessary time for such work, and the people in positions of authority were often not the people who were composing the content anyway. Executives and editors directed stories with profit in mind, and authors often had little authority over their writing for either newspapers or movies. Literary figures who were used to being given a great deal of control over their stories witnessed media industries in which writers had little autonomy and sometimes cared less about the craftsmanship of the "stories" or accuracy of the "information" they wrote about—or so readers are told in the fiction examined in this project. This lack of power and care fostered representations that these four authors claimed were far inferior to the work they could compose in their literary pursuits. They feared that their chosen medium was in some jeopardy, a medium that

they saw as superior in storytelling and representational capabilities to the new mass media that had grown in size and popularity. These authors did not retreat from the new and/or greatly expanded “mass” media, nor did they deny their power in the modern world. Instead, they did the most natural thing for authors to do: they commented on this change in their art. They wrote about media as a part of their representations of the world, sometimes, even, by borrowing from those same media in the process.

Sherwood Anderson and James Joyce constitute the first part of this project. Both of these authors were extremely significant to their contemporaries *and* authors writing much later and were quite influential at the start of the high modernist period of the 1920s.<sup>37</sup> Joyce continues to be seen as a major literary figure of the period while Anderson has been neglected, but both writers affected the authors that I examine in the second part of this project: Fitzgerald and Hemingway. Although Joyce’s place in the canon seems more secure than Anderson’s, it is time to reconsider Anderson and his contributions. Joyce’s style is easily seen as innovative and experimental, but Anderson was also trying for something new in his work. His writing, like his literary protégé’s, Hemingway, is deceptive in its directness and seeming simplicity but is actually quite complex.<sup>38</sup> Many reviewers in Anderson’s time were puzzled by *Winesburg, Ohio*. They connected it with *Spoon River Anthology* (1914) but viewed it as a negative that his

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<sup>37</sup> David Stouck writes about Anderson’s influence on both Hemingway and postmodern writers: “Hemingway, in order to dispel the anxiety of influence he felt in relation to his literary mentor, wrote *The Torrents of Spring* (1926) to expose what he felt were the thematic weaknesses and stylistic mannerisms of Anderson’s fiction. But, ironically, those elements of Anderson’s prose he highlighted—the dimension of fantasy, the exaggerated comic-book characters, the loose plot structure, and especially the self-reflexive asides between author and reader—have become valued features of contemporary postmodern fiction” (229).

<sup>38</sup> John Updike made such a claim in a 1984 article on Anderson titled “Twisted Apples.”

work lacked Masters' "simplicity and directness" (161 Broun). The complexity of Anderson's stories, hidden in an outward simplicity, was not understood by these reviewers because they were in the presence of modernism, which could be better seen and understood in hindsight. As David Stouck writes, "*Winesburg, Ohio* is a classic work of fiction about small-town life in the American Midwest, but as an expressionist work it has a further significance in American literary history in that it provides an important link between modernism in the first quarter of the century and American writing today" (229). It is quite likely that Hemingway's bildungsroman about Nick Adams, *In Our Time* (1925), would never have been written without Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*. While single stories are often excerpted from these two works, they both contain narratives that carry throughout the books and center around a single character—in both cases, a young man. Although many have seen Anderson's influence in Hemingway's short story "My Old Man," it is more accurate to note that all of *In Our Time*, not just this one story, is connected to the mentor who had helped Hemingway find his way by pointing him in the right direction: literally by suggesting Hemingway go to Paris and literally by providing the stripped-down, unadorned style of *Winesburg, Ohio* as a model.

Like Anderson's work Fitzgerald's stories about a character named Pat Hobby have been overlooked. Thus, this project comments on both well-known and lesser-known authors and works, drawing a connection between these authors and their writings; a thread can be seen through their common assertions about the media of their time. All four authors in this project imply, in their fiction, that media cannot represent

experience as well as fiction can. Anderson and Joyce suggest this notion about the turn-of-the-century newspaper, and although Anderson takes the small town newspaper as his focus and Joyce interrogates the big city newspaper, both authors explore how regardless of its size the newspaper fails to accurately represent experience. Fitzgerald and Hemingway write about movies and that medium's flaws in representing experience. As Anderson had focused on the small-town iteration of newspapers, Hemingway writes about the independently made film; the extremely small group of people responsible for publishing the *Winesburg Eagle* in Anderson's book can be seen in comparison to the small film crew in Hemingway's stories, documenting the Spanish Civil War on film. The analogy may be complete by comparing Joyce's examination of the big city newspaper, written and published by a multitude of people, with Fitzgerald's depiction of the Hollywood movie machine and the collaborative, assembly-line style of production that existed there.

By writing about these four authors, I intend to show that the anxieties authors had about the media of their time were felt by an author who is less remembered and authors who remain in the forefront of our memories, authors who mostly lived in the United States and authors who lived most of their lives outside of the country, authors who worked for other media before they were fiction writers and authors who did not work for other media until after they were finished writing fiction, authors from America and an author from Ireland. The concerns of these writers who paved the way for and/or are remembered as part of the group of modernists from the 1920s, were real. The selection of authors and works in this project shows the variation that exists within such

a group. The first author, Anderson, is the least remembered but is connected to the last author, Hemingway, who is best known, through these writers' views on and criticisms of the media they witnessed and interacted with during their lifetimes.

## CHAPTER II

### HACKING IT: AN AUTHOR'S LIFE BRACKETED BY NEWSPAPER WORK

What the book says to people is this—"Here it is. It is like this. This is what the life in America out of which men and women come is like. But out of this life does come real men and women."

Sherwood Anderson, "1938 Letter"

I remembered how as a boy in mid-western towns before the factories came in so thick the carpenters, wheelwrights, harness-makers, and other craftsmen often gathered about to speak of their work and how I loved to be among them at such times. The factories had brushed such fellows aside. Had the same thing happened in the more delicate crafts? Were the great publishing houses of the city and the magazines but factories and were the writers and picture makers who worked for them but factory hands now?

Sherwood Anderson, *A Story Teller's Story*

In a 1938 letter, Sherwood Anderson claimed that he had shown readers the lives of "real men and women," an achievement he claimed had been lacking in earlier American literature.<sup>1</sup> Even in his own time, however, he did not have great confidence in the state of literature, and his anxieties were tied to his observations about the modern construction of writing, writing that fell short of artistic craftsmanship. Speed and collaboration were aspects that likened some modern types of writing to work in a factory, but these were not the aspects of modern writing that Anderson latched onto in his early masterpiece of new fiction writing, *Winesburg, Ohio*. Instead, Anderson focuses on those aspects of life that make it "like this" for "real men and women" which (rightly or wrongly) he claims had previously been missing from American literature and continued to be absent from the stories being conveyed to the modern reading audience

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<sup>1</sup> Anderson made this comment in "An Apology for Crudity," a contentious claim considering the literary movements of Realism and Naturalism that immediately preceded Modernism.

through the medium of the newspaper. Rando writes in *Modernist Fiction and News* (2011) that modernist fiction “resists disclosure by making readers more aware that experience itself is a difficult thing to represent, and thus for readers to name or even access” (48). Rando also acknowledges another aspect in this relationship between experience and its representation when he writes that modernist texts, in comparison to newspapers, “[offer] their own narratives of exposure, often on a more intimate level than a newspaper could possibly access” (48). In *Winesburg, Ohio* Anderson implies that newspaper writing is flawed in its attempt to deliver an accurate representation of life because, too often, the newspaper business does not allow its writers the time to discover and write about the more intimate aspects of people’s lives, and somewhat like the literature of the past (according to Anderson), newspapers often failed to report the more intimate and darker aspects of people’s lives even when reporters possessed such information. Anderson’s book argues that it is modern literature, like his own *Winesburg, Ohio*, that can communicate these aspects of life and thus provide a more complete picture of the world than the one found in newspapers. Anderson’s fictional newspaper reporter in *Winesburg, Ohio* actually does find out about people’s deep dark secrets, but he does not write about them. Anderson thus suggests that such stories are properly reserved for an author who can craft a story that reveals something important about existence because, ironically, such a narrative is not constrained by reporting *facts*. Instead, Anderson shows that the writer of literature is free to delve beneath the surface of life to expose the “grotesque” which so often defines “the life in America out of which men and women come.”

In his memoir, *A Story Teller's Story* (1924), Anderson mentions “picture makers” and people working on “magazines” among the group of would-be artists who might be regarded as “factory hands now,” and although he does not specifically mention newspaper writers in his assessment here he had already voiced his judgment on their writing, quite strongly I argue, in *Winesburg, Ohio*. In a 1916 letter to Waldo Frank, an editor for *Seven Arts* magazine, Anderson says that some of the stories he has been writing “get pretty closely down to ugly things of life,” and he finishes the letter by stating, “It is my own idea that when these studies are published in book form, they will suggest the *real environment* out of which present-day American youth is coming” (141, my emphasis). Here, in these stories/studies, Anderson succeeds in depicting such an environment, one that is “real” because it “get[s] pretty closely down to ugly things of life” in ways that neither the fictional newspaper nor the newspaper reporter in the book are able to manage. Certainly, newspaper writers were no strangers to the ugly side of life, but Anderson’s meaning goes beyond the sensationalism and gossip of newspaper stories to illuminate the intimate details of small town life which the local newspaper in his book never attempts to relate. Such a failure of the medium to communicate this aspect of its readers’ lives blocks it from suggesting the “real environment” that Anderson describes in his book and in his letter to Frank. This deficiency is highlighted in the book, over and again, because the town’s newspaper reporter repeatedly learns his fellow townspeople’s stories firsthand, and is privy to the “ugly things” of their lives but never communicates them through his reportage. Anderson, through *Winesburg, Ohio*,

argues that the medium of newspapers is incapable of telling the kind of stories that the writer of literature can tell, the very same kinds of stories that make up *Winesburg, Ohio*.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Sherwood Anderson did not begin his writing career in the newspaper industry, but he was involved with the newspaper world at a young age. As a boy, in Clyde, Ohio, Sherwood Anderson's first job was selling the weekend edition of the *Cincinnati Enquirer* on the streets of the town and in its saloons (Townsend 14). Much like the fictional character he created in *Windy McPherson's Son*, Anderson would meet a train to receive his stacks of newspapers. Sometimes he would sell the papers to the train's passengers, and he was often seen in the streets of Clyde past dark, delivering the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* and the *Toledo News-Bee* (14). He remained a newsboy until he was too old to be one; then he worked numerous jobs in and around town, but it is clear from his letters and his literary preoccupations that his time as a newsboy held a lasting place in his memory. According to Townsend, visiting Clyde for the first time after a twenty-year absence brought back two memories to Anderson, one of which was attached to an encounter he had with an hotelier and former whorehouse operator who invited Anderson in for a bite to eat and a break from selling his newspapers (24). Apparently this was a memorable, though not extraordinary, experience for the young Anderson; as a newsboy, he saw many things in the town that were not published as news in the papers he sold—or in any newspaper. Once, Townsend relates, Anderson observed a man in an alley inviting a girl into his coach; the man paid Anderson to keep quiet about what he saw. Another time, Anderson saw the local drugstore clerk and his wife running around their house naked (24). His time as a

newsboy enabled Anderson to learn more about his town and its people than he could ever know by reading the paper he sold to its residents.<sup>2</sup>

As Anderson matured into an adult, however, he did not have further direct connection to the newspaper business for a long time. Instead, he settled into a job as an advertising solicitor, and before long became a copywriter (45).<sup>3</sup> He felt that the job was a good fit for someone who wanted to write fiction, and in a 1918 publicity essay he wrote—an advertisement for himself—Anderson writes, “I do not understand why more novelists do not go into it. It is all quite simple. You are to write advertisements for one who puts tomatoes in a can. You imagine yourself a canner of tomatoes. You become enthusiastic about the tomato. You are an actor given a role to play and you play it” (46). The performativity of such writing allows Anderson to create a fiction; he is not actually a “canner of tomatoes,” but he must create writing that rings true to the audience from the position of a “canner of tomatoes.” Although an actual canner of tomatoes might be able to more accurately describe the surface activity of canning, the writer is tasked with unearthing a truth about the activity that connects with the audience. This kind of writing must have appealed to the young Anderson not only because he was allowed to use his imagination in his writing but because he felt that the imagination was a requirement for good writing, unlike the newspaper writing he describes in *Winesburg*,

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<sup>2</sup> Theodore Dreiser’s reminiscence about his days on the newspaper show that he also felt that newspaper work could open a person’s eyes to the underside of life: “It was in 1892, at a time I began working as a newspaper man … that I first began to observe a certain type of crime in the United States” (qtd. in *Last Titan* 302). The crime that Dreiser refers to is the growing disparity between the rich and the poverty stricken.

<sup>3</sup> Coincidentally, James Joyce makes a main character in *Ulysses*, Leopold Bloom, an ad canvasser, placing Bloom in the same realm of employment as Anderson. I will discuss Bloom and *Ulysses* in more detail in the following chapter.

*Ohio*. A friend of Anderson's, Floyd Dell, was one example of a writer who, as Anderson eventually did, moved from creative writing into the world of journalism, working at the *Masses* (93). Even after Anderson began to find success as an author, he continued to work for a time in the advertising business.<sup>4</sup> He did not sever his ties with the advertising world until 1922 (192), and he did not forget the lessons he had learned in that job, particularly when it came to shaping his public image through the media.

Anderson was almost always aware of his image, publicizing himself at a young age. When Anderson returned home from Chicago to join his regiment of the Ohio National Guard following the Cuban rebellion against Spain, for example, he made sure to get off the train two stops before his destination to buy new clothes; he wanted his hometown residents to believe that he was successful in Chicago, that he was making a real sacrifice by giving up a good job in the big city to come home and join his old regiment. The truth was that Anderson had been working as a day laborer in Chicago, but his purchase of new clothes brought about the effect Anderson desired; the local newspaper, the Clyde *Enterprise*, reported on Anderson's return, portraying the image that Anderson wanted to publicly depict (Townsend 38). Anderson understood that the newspaper would not attempt to determine the truth of his situation but merely print what was suggested by his appearance. Howard Good validates such an assumption when he disdains the training that newspaper work provided for writers, due to the newspaper business' favoring of "speed over deliberation, faceteness over substance"

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<sup>4</sup> In contrast, writers like Ernest Hemingway and James Joyce greatly scaled back their writing for newspapers after they gained some traction as literary authors. In subsequent chapters of this dissertation, I will discuss their relationships with newspapers in more detail.

(12). Anderson was not always so adroit at predicting how his actions would translate into newspaper publicity, and he could not fully control his image. The Elyria *Evening Telegraph* reported his nervous breakdown in 1912 (83). It was not the type of publicity that Anderson, head of the Anderson Manufacturing Company at the time, would have welcomed. Still, Anderson understood the potential of newspaper publicity to power his authorial career. To help advertise his novel *Windy McPherson's Son* (1916), Anderson made appearances at places frequented by newspaper reviewers and editors, such as the Round Table in Chicago (142). Even though he was not writing for a newspaper in the 1910s and 1920s, he was usually connected to the medium through personal contacts.

During the 1920s Anderson spent much time with newspaper people in Chicago and New Orleans, the city to which Anderson moved in the summer of 1924. When Anderson's oldest son, Bob, visited him in New Orleans, looking for advice about becoming an author, Anderson used his newspaper contacts to set him up with a job on the *Times-Picayune* (Townsend 215). Anderson's decision to direct his son toward the newspaper business, while personally rejecting newspaper writing, indicates that he observed a divide between the kind of writing required for literature and that used in newspapers and perceived a difference between his own writing and that of his son. Another event that occurred at this moment in Anderson's life helps shed more light on Anderson's prejudices: Anderson wanted to buy a house but was short on cash. He wrote his friend Gertrude Stein about his predicament, claiming he would "lecture, spit over the top of boxcars, do anything to get [the money] but make love to ladies I do not fancy" (qtd. in Townsend 215). Anderson, however, does not list "write articles for

newspapers” as one of the jobs he is willing to consider. He had set Bob up with a newspaper job because he did not believe that his son had what it took to be an author; Townsend describes Bob’s authorial ambitions this way: “Bob seemed to Anderson to be all assurance without anything to back it up” (215). Anderson, though, believed that Bob could *hack* it at a newspaper, thus categorizing newspaper writing as easier than fiction writing. Apparently Anderson did not want to lower himself and his writing to that level to gain the extra money needed for his dream house, even though many of his contemporaries had participated in newspaper writing for the express purpose of making money; for the Anderson of the mid-1920s writing newspaper articles was on the same level as “mak[ing] love to ladies [he] did not fancy.”

Townsend asserts that Anderson enjoyed being in the company of Chicago newspapermen because they “gave Anderson a sense that he was in touch with the actuality and the raciness of men’s lives, and they might represent a kind of intellectuality, a kind of peripheral status with which Anderson could sympathize, but they did nothing for his prose” (142-143). Although Townsend does not specify what type of “actuality” Anderson was finding in these newspapermen, he does suggest that Anderson saw these writers possessing “a kind of peripheral status” and, while many have written about the advantages and disadvantages of using newspaper writing as a way to become a fiction writer in the twentieth century, it is clear that Anderson, even when he purchased two Virginia newspapers, did not believe that newspaper work would

improve his fiction.<sup>5</sup> He did, however, struggle with his analysis of newspaper writing.

While contemplating the possibility that newspapers were getting at *an* actuality of people's lives—an implicit promise of the newspaper industry—he still wondered what that actuality was and whether it remained somewhere on the periphery of life more generally.

Anderson's increasing ambivalence toward newspaper writing, somewhat fueled by his insecurities about his literary efforts in the later part of the 1920s, allowed him to take over, publish, and write for two newspapers for a few years in the early 1930s. Anderson's early career choice of advertising writing allowed him to work on his literature without financial worries, and just as some of Anderson's contemporaries (like James Joyce and Ernest Hemingway) quit or reduced their supplementary jobs as newspaper writers once they were generating enough income from literary work, Anderson had left his advertising job when his literary reputation and celebrity really took off. It was not until his literary star began to fall that Anderson reconsidered newspaper writing, his declining literary celebrity paralleling financial worry. Anderson had been receiving regular advances from his publisher for some time, and he was able

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<sup>5</sup> Howard Good writes that the frontier paper Mark Twain worked on “was an excellent classroom for the budding satirist” (74). Good notes that there “is a legend that the city room is the place to begin if you want to learn to write” (8). Sinclair Lewis, however, believed that working as a journalist was rather poor training for a writer wishing to become a novelist. Lewis, too, worked as a journalist, for a short time, on a paper in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Beyond the fact that Lewis did *not* envision newspaper work as positive training, he actually saw this work as “either useless or positively injurious” (qtd. in Good 9). Lewis felt that journalism encouraged writers to perform their work hastily and, worse than that, it exposed them to “certain highlights of existence … [sic] far less important to a genuinely creative writer than the steady, unmelodramatic daily life which may be uninteresting as immediate news but which forms the basis of all veritable poetry, fiction, or criticism” (qtd. in Good 9). Richard Lingeman notes that Dreiser “advised one hopeful writer that writing could not be taught. He recommended working on a newspaper, ‘if you do not stay at it too long,’ as the best school” (274).

to stop accepting this money, and the pressure for new literary work that accompanied it, when he began running his newspapers (244).

### **Readers' Illusionary Connection to a Literary Celebrity's Rise and Fall**

Of the authors examined in this project, Sherwood Anderson has enjoyed the least lasting fame. Still, Anderson was a literary celebrity, very famous, and extremely well respected in his time. As mass media and its celebrity were in their infancy, in the early 1920s, both "in the United States and abroad, Anderson's fame increased" (Townsend 184). It was at this time that Anderson's celebrity brought instant, and sometimes unwanted, recognizability. For example, when Anderson visited a group of virtually unknown painters in Chicago, artists whom Anderson believed to be avant garde, he quickly discovered that the artists had invited a photographer and a newspaper reporter to the meeting, lured by the presence of Anderson. The artists hoped to use Anderson's celebrity to garner publicity for themselves and their work. The newspaper reporters wanted to get close to Anderson to procure a firsthand account of the man, the inside story of one of America's current literary giants; as soon as Anderson realized their purpose, he swiftly left (185). Only a few nights later, Anderson attended a talk given by a friend, Francis Hackett; when Anderson arrived, he inadvertently caused a disturbance because he was recognized by a man in the audience who announced in a loud voice that Anderson was present, interrupting Hackett's talk. The rude audience member could not restrain his zeal in learning that he was in close physical proximity to

Anderson, and he wanted the rest of the audience to share in his realization and joyful surprise that they were presently on the inside of celebrity's circle, witnesses to Anderson's presence. Hackett later sent Anderson a drawing, illustrating his perception of Anderson's situation. In the drawing, Anderson is seen "fleeing from a mob of fat and well-dressed men" (185). Hackett titled the drawing "Celebrity—or the Price of Fame" (185). These people longed to be close to "celebrity" (in this case Anderson, *a* celebrity), someone who stands out in the crowd, but when people could not physically achieve the closeness they desired they relied on other avenues to gain information that could at least make them feel as if they were close to celebrity. The media is an example of one of these avenues, and Anderson formulated an opinion, in *Winesburg, Ohio*, on the newspaper as a medium that continually fails to make any real and emotional connections between its subjects and the audience. Instead, the moments of real connection in the book come when characters are in some kind of physical contact. While Winesburg residents may make news in the paper, the stories do not reveal anything below the surface of these residents' lives. The items that create closeness and intimacy are not to be found in the *Winesburg Eagle*.

Townsend comments on the incidents of Anderson's celebrity noted above and claims that "Anderson was hardly one to avoid attention. He asked for it. He seemed to thrive on it. He was delighted to imagine that intelligent people were beginning to appreciate him. But this was too much. For all his showiness, he was not a public man" (185). When Anderson made his first trip to Europe, in 1921, he had finished three novels and a collection of short stories, *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919), but he had not been

widely reviewed. Still, Townsend states that Anderson was well known in Europe, and Anderson's trip was big news for the community of artists living and working there, particularly in Paris. During Anderson's stay in Paris, many of these artists and writers made a point to visit him at the Hotel Jacob, including James Joyce. Though Anderson was only visiting Paris for a short time, he saw Joyce several times. At the end of 1926, when Anderson's star was already beginning to lose its luster, Anderson returned to Paris and visited some of the people he had previously met there. Anderson was sick when he arrived, spending the first ten days of his Paris trip in his hotel room, but he sent his wife to keep an engagement he had made with Joyce (Townsend 241). The meeting was very short; the two did not have much to talk about, and Joyce might not have been excited to entertain a substitute for Anderson, but the experience did not deter him from meeting with Anderson and his wife, Elizabeth, when Anderson was feeling better. After his dinner with Joyce, Anderson recognized that he had changed places with him in some ways—and with Hemingway, who invited Anderson for a drink in an effort to allay some of the hurt he had caused Anderson by parodying Anderson's novel *Dark Laughter* (1925) in *The Torrents of Spring* (1926). When Anderson returned home, he recorded his judgment of the change in his celebrity this way:

Sherwood Anderson—

A man's name.

You hearing it around.

Presently a kind of deep sickness. . . .

Hemingway made a damn fool by it; Joyce, too. I saw it popping in them both.

I am Joyce.

I am Hemingway.

Christ! (qtd. in Townsend 242)

Clearly, Anderson struggled with his feelings about celebrity; if he was not a public man, as Townsend claims, he still envied others who were more prominently regarded in public. After he was unable to connect with an audience through his literary efforts, he was only left with the connection offered by the very medium he had criticized in *Winesburg, Ohio*, but even that connection was tenuous and mostly disappeared after Anderson's celebrity waned.

At the end of the 1920s, Anderson briefly attempted to retreat from the public by moving to a rural town in Virginia. Yet, a writer with Anderson's level of celebrity in the 1920s did not have much choice in being publicly recognized, and a girl in the town recognized him from a picture she saw in an old copy of *Literary Digest*, which listed Anderson amongst the greatest American writers (Townsend 235). Anderson consciously made his way back toward a much smaller spotlight, buying two country newspapers in Virginia, a move that shifted Anderson's writing and level of recognition. Anderson spent the rest of his life writing articles, first for his newspapers and then political articles for a variety of print publications. He worked again at fiction but with

little success. Anderson saw some of his stories transferred to the stage as plays,<sup>6</sup> and though he once disdained the idea of turning his work into Hollywood films, he entered into negotiations with Paramount Studios about filming *Poor White* (1920) and one of his short stories (Townsend 311). The project did not develop. At one point, Anderson even considered performing an imaginary report of small-town news, weekly, for the radio (311); this idea did not materialize either.<sup>7</sup> Anderson was interviewed on the radio, however, by Edward Weeks of the *Atlantic*; the interview took place at the end of 1940 as Anderson was preparing to depart on a trip to South America. Anderson was no longer big news; in the middle of the 1930s, after Scribner's published a collection of plays created from Anderson's work, the *Washington Daily News* wrote a story on the author with the headline “Sherwood Anderson Says He's Glad Celebrity Days Are Over” (qtd. in Townsend 301).<sup>8</sup> It appears that Anderson had learned a lot about fame and the culture surrounding celebrity and truly *was* glad; yet, he was famous enough to be interviewed on the radio and by his old friend Ben Hecht before he embarked on what he believed would be a long stay in South America.<sup>9</sup>

Anderson gave Hecht permission to write a story, if he cared to, and Hecht wrote for the leftist paper *PM*:

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<sup>6</sup> Dreiser was among those who came out to the dramatic interpretation of *Winesburg, Ohio* on its opening night in June 1934 (Townsend 290).

<sup>7</sup> It seems that Anderson wanted to create a radio show that bears a resemblance to the contemporary show *A Prairie Home Companion*, hosted by Garrison Keillor on National Public Radio.

<sup>8</sup> As these examples suggest, though Anderson was not as well known by the middle and end of the 1930s, he was still being reported on. Anderson was simply not a *big* celebrity at the end of his life.

<sup>9</sup> Anderson swallowed a toothpick at a dinner held in honor of his imminent departure. Anderson and his wife embarked on their trip with Anderson feeling sick, and Anderson died before reaching South America (Townsend 322).

Sherwood Anderson is off to find something that vanished out of the world he knew and wrote about. It disappeared out of the land. It was the America he knew—that moody, whimsical, inarticulate hero of the pre-radio, pre-movie hinterlands. Something scotched him. And Sherwood, his great biographer, is off for strange lands, where he can forget his hero is dead. (Qtd. in Townsend 321-322)

Anderson wrote about an America that did not contain a ubiquity of radio and movies, but it was an America flooded with newspapers. As previously noted, the circulation of daily newspapers had skyrocketed by the time in which *Winesburg, Ohio* is set. Anderson wrote about that time from a perspective that was not pre-radio or pre-movie. Anderson understood the impact of media on his country, and the world; his final published book was a long essay called *Home Town* (1940), which deals with determinate forces Anderson perceived in modern life, including the city and the media (314).<sup>10</sup>

The mass medium that Anderson had some firsthand knowledge of was the newspaper industry, and Townsend notes that Anderson's move into the newspaper world can be seen as a “full circle, [Anderson] having been what George [Willard] set out to become” (244). In essence, George sets out at the end of *Winesburg, Ohio* with dreams of becoming a fiction writer; Anderson, who had been living his life as a fiction writer, shifts jobs to work as a small town newspaperman. In *Winesburg, Ohio* Sherwood Anderson fictionalized or imagined what his own life might have looked like

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<sup>10</sup> Anderson believed that the other major forces were the automobile and the mail-order business.

if he had taken the path George does, working as a newspaperman with dreams of writing fiction, but Anderson was writing at a time in history in which many modernists demanded a new combination of stark reality and hopeful optimism that was neither a snapshot of life's bleakness nor a return to the romantic fantasy of pre-Civil War America. Fishkin asserts that “[w]hile a journalist [Ernest Hemingway] was content with vividly evoking a scene, as an artist he would settle for nothing less than communicating a new way of seeing” (155). Anderson’s *Winesburg, Ohio* does the latter and influenced Hemingway; it communicates a new way of seeing the small town by seeing previously obscured aspects of that town, but it might also spur readers to rethink the point of connection between the direct reporting of journalism and the creative writing of the fictionist. Anderson’s George Willard leaves town to face the test of bringing these two worlds together, but readers can only imagine how he fares. Anderson moves in the other direction, from fiction writer to journalist, but having spent a good deal of time close to the newspaper business and writers, he formulated ideas about literature and journalism that are revealed to readers of *Winesburg, Ohio*. Anderson was not just a literary celebrity at the start of a new kind of media fame in the early twentieth century; his writing also influenced many other authors who were grappling with their relationship to the mass media and its representation of the modern world.

## **Imagining and Creating a Real World from Newspaper Omissions**

As John H. Ferres has argued, *Winesburg, Ohio* “is our most sensitive literary record of the human effects of the transition from an agrarian to an industrial-technological age in the American small town” (466). By the time that Ferres wrote those words, in 1966, he was viewing *Winesburg, Ohio* decades after its publication and could thus evaluate how accurate Anderson had been in depicting this transition, making his declaration all the more forceful. One of the effects of this “transition,” which Anderson takes as the heart of his book, is a change in communication: in *Winesburg, Ohio*, Anderson questioned these shifts as the world moved into a modern phase, and he placed the newspaper business squarely in the middle of this exchange about how communication had changed for better or for worse by making his main character a newspaper writer. In Anderson’s work, the author makes a clear distinction between the communicative possibilities of literary writing and newspaper writing. Newspaper writing is a job for a young person who does not yet know much about the world; as such, it becomes a way to witness life early on.

*Winesburg, Ohio* centers on a young man named George Willard who is too young to accurately represent experience through the written word because he has not yet seen enough of the world. He ostensibly seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the world by working as a newspaper reporter, and by the close of the novel readers find him leaving town to see more of the modern world in a big city where he hopes to secure a position as a journalist but with the long-term goal of writing literature. Setting his book

at the end of the nineteenth century, Anderson places George on the cusp of a media-saturated century, one that had greatly changed even by the time that Anderson's book was published. There were more places for the reading public to turn to for representations of the world, but Anderson positions newspaper writing, and thus the newspaper industry's representations of the modern world, as lacking and incomplete. Through the stories in *Winesburg, Ohio*, Anderson argues that literature still offers an important look into modern life, one that was ultimately unavailable in any newspaper because of what newspapers reported—or more accurately what newspapers did not report.

Simultaneously, Anderson laments the possible loss of the storyteller's prominent place in society. Because readers do not witness George becoming an artist, it is impossible to know whether he continues as a newspaper writer, quits that work to become a serious author, or tries to do both, but Thomas Yingling reads the end of *Winesburg, Ohio* in relation to Benjamin's essay "The Storyteller," and claims that George is finally "the very figure of the storyteller that Benjamin sees as being lost in the modern world" (125). If George becomes "lost" as a storyteller, it is because he is caught up in a genre of writing that does not allow for the complex storytelling of literature. Anderson provides numerous examples of George's interactions with his fellow townspeople and the stories that they tell him in the book, stories that never find their way into George's newspaper stories but are finally communicated to a reading audience through Anderson's fictionalized presentation of them.

Many of the characters in *Winesburg, Ohio* have troubled souls and minds, and a number of the citizens in Winesburg seek out George in an attempt to unburden themselves of their emotional and spiritual baggage. George is, at times, the only person in town who knows the dark secrets of these people, the only one whom the residents of Winesburg want to tell their stories to.<sup>11</sup> When the townspeople bare their souls to George he is the person best situated to exploit these stories, in the form of tawdry newspaper items in the local paper, spreading gossip to an audience that has personal connections with the subjects. There is no evidence, however, that George does this. Instead, he protects their secrets and publishes banal stories about the machinations of the town and the everyday actions of its residents. It is the literary writer, not the newspaper writer, who may finally publish the townspeople's more interesting stories by fictionalizing them and transforming their raw material into art. Thus fictional stories, paradoxically, offer a more "real" and complete picture of the town and its people than the purportedly *factual* newspaper.

In the story "The Thinker," readers learn that the *Winesburg Eagle* "had one policy. It strove to mention by name in each issue, as many as possible of the inhabitants of the village" (128). Anything the residents do can be news; George moves "here and there, noting on his pad of paper who had gone on business to the county seat or had returned from a visit to a neighboring village" (128). To drive the point home, Anderson includes a particularly dull example of what passed for news in the Winesburg

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<sup>11</sup> Readers know, for example, from the story "Respectability" that "there was but one person who knew the story of the thing that had made ugly the person and the character of Wash Williams. He once told the story to George Willard" (115).

paper: “A. P. Wringlet had received a shipment of straw hats. Ed Byerbaum and Tom Marshall were in Cleveland Friday. Uncle Tom Sinnings is building a new barn on his place on the Valley Road” (128). With all of the infinitely more interesting secrets that George knows about the people of the village, it might seem tempting for him to share these stories with his readership. How can George *not* stop the press when Reverend Curtis Hartman bursts into the office of the *Winesburg Eagle* to tell him, “‘I have found the light,’ he cried, ‘After ten years in this town, God has manifested himself to me in the body of a woman’” (152)? Readers learn that George is in the office, “undergoing a struggle of his own” when the Reverend comes in; he is likely having difficulty shaping the minutiae of the town into a readable paper when Hartman continues, “God has appeared to me in the person of Kate Swift, the school teacher, kneeling naked on a bed” (152). After this outburst, the Reverend leaves the office, showing George a bleeding fist and telling him that he has broken a window. All of this information might seem strange to George; it is sensational without George needing to add any spice. But George does not report what he hears and sees; he only writes about the more respectable aspects of his fellow townspeople’s lives. A reader of the *Winesburg Eagle*, then, learns little about who the townspeople truly are. Reading Anderson’s fictitious accounts of the residents, however, shines light into the darker, deeper, and rarely seen details of their real lives.<sup>12</sup> Thus, Anderson is able to show the interiority of these people’s existence whereas his fictional newspaper writer presents nothing but the

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<sup>12</sup> The book is the one readers imagine George writing, if in fact he pursues a career in fiction after leaving town.

outermost exterior of small town life in the 1890s. It was Anderson's airing of the private, and often darker, parts of small-town life, especially regarding sex, that brought trouble for Anderson in the form of complaints about his works being too vulgar.

In 1917, after the publication of *Windy McPherson's Son* and a handful of stories that would later be collected in *Winesburg, Ohio*, Anderson wrote an essay for the *Dial* titled "An Apology for Crudity." In the essay Anderson writes about a perceived disconnect between the reality of Americans' lives and the stories that had been written by American authors (437). In an introduction to a collection of Theodore Dreiser's stories,<sup>13</sup> Anderson likewise condemned writers who use tricks, separating writers who include the "crudity and ugliness" of life, such as Dreiser, from past masters such as William Dean Howells and Henry James, whom Anderson believes did not (438). Though Anderson alleges that Dreiser was able to move closer to the truth of life by including its darkness, he nonetheless makes it clear that he does not believe that there is only *one* truth to be found.

As a prologue to *Winesburg, Ohio*, Anderson offers a story titled "The Book of the Grotesque," a story that was published almost three years earlier. In the story, an unnamed writer has a dream about a number of figures he describes as "grotesques" (5). The narrator notes that not all of the grotesques were ugly: "Some were amusing, some almost beautiful" (5). The writer writes about the grotesques when he awakes and titles the book "The Book of the Grotesque" but never publishes it. The narrator has seen the book and reveals its "central thought": "That in the beginning when the world was

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<sup>13</sup> Anderson's introduction appeared in Dreiser's *Free, and Other Stories* (1918).

young there were a great many thoughts but no such thing as a truth. Man made truths himself and each truth was a composite of a great many vague thoughts. All about in the world were the truths and they were beautiful" (5-6).

The writer declared that when a person took up one of the truths and "called it his truth, and tried to live his life by it, he became a grotesque and the truth he embraced became a falsehood" (6). As an introduction to Anderson's book, "The Book of the Grotesque" clearly admits that readers will not find *the* truth in *Winesburg, Ohio*, because there is not one truth to discover.<sup>14</sup> Anderson does, however, intend to present a number of truths, and, as we have seen, he wrote that *Winesburg, Ohio* would "suggest the real environment out of which present-day American youth is coming" (qtd. in Townsend 113). The "environment" Anderson refers to here is World War I-era America;<sup>15</sup> Anderson recorded this statement in November 1916, midway through the war (Townsend 113). If Anderson declared that his work would show "the real environment" then it would be reasonable to assert that he submitted his picture in contrast to an unreal or incomplete picture; this is the picture that George Willard and the book's fictional newspaper offers to the reading public of Winesburg.

Though Anderson begins *Winesburg, Ohio* with an admonition about searching out a single truth to possess and live by, he still argues in the book that his fiction is as true (or more so) as what readers find in newspapers, simply because he can include all

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<sup>14</sup> In fairness, trying to possess and live by that statement (that there is no, one truth) as *the* truth would also make it a falsehood, following the logic of the writer in "The Book of the Grotesque."

<sup>15</sup> Although the United States had not yet entered the war, the atmosphere in the country was already being affected by it.

he observed and imagined in his stories. A case in point is “The Thinker,” which suggests why some newspaper writers might choose not to report all that they observe. In that story Anderson relates a catastrophe: “Clarence Richmond, a quite passionate man extraordinarily admired by his neighbors, had been killed in a street fight with the editor of a newspaper in Toledo, Ohio. The fight concerned the publication of Clarence Richmond’s name coupled with that of a woman school teacher” (122). Readers are given no information as to the veracity of the claim, but the publication of such gossip in the newspaper is shown to have great and possibly lasting consequences; Clarence widows his wife and leaves his young son without a father, though these factors do not keep the story from entering the public realm. The truth of the story is not ultimately what is important. The publication of the story in the newspaper places the suggestion of truth in its readers’ minds, and Clarence is unwilling to live with that consequence.

The widow in “The Thinker” tells her son, “You’ll be hearing all sorts of stories, but you are not to believe what you hear” (122). Certainly, Anderson asks his readers to consider the ways in which the medium of newspapers can shape the public’s perception of others; an “extraordinarily admired” person can be found guilty in the court of public opinion based on the suggestions of a newspaper, even though the public (and readers) are not given the full story which might allow them to more correctly ascertain the truth. Not furnished with more information, readers are left wondering whether the newspaper simply mentioned both Clarence and this woman in the same article or if the writer went further to suggest a relationship. Anderson submits that our ignorance of what has truly happened mirrors the situation in the book in which the newspaper’s readers do not

know what truly happened. Clarence is left with the choice of defending himself—since he seems to believe that he has been wronged—and risking the possibility that others will see his protest as affirming his guilt or staying silent and allowing the newspaperman to define and possibly change how he is perceived by the neighbors who have admired him. In other words, Clarence is faced with a losing proposition. When the story is related to readers of *Winesburg, Ohio*, however, the fictional character of Clarence may be assigned any number of characteristics or suggested behaviors without the worry that Anderson is destroying the life and reputation of a respected man in the community. Because the story is fictionalized, Anderson is able to uncover a truth—or number of truths—without the repercussions that might limit a newspaper writer in telling a story, including the private thoughts and conversations of the widow and son of Clarence Richmond.

The first story in the collection, following “The Book of the Grotesque,” is called “Hands,” about a character named Wing Biddlebaum who was run out of his previous town and job as a school teacher because of gossip concerning his relationships with his students. Wing is filled with “restless activity” which manifests itself in his hands, which are compared to “the beating of the wings of an imprisoned bird” (11). Wing uses his hands to communicate, but such physical communication can be misconstrued. It is far from clear that Wing did anything wrong in interacting with his former students, but his students’ parents believed he had because he did not forego *all* physical contact; he communicated with his students through physical touch, though not necessarily in an inappropriate way. Still, his way of expressing himself has continued to keep him on the

outskirts of the community in Winesburg. Aaron Ritzenberg argues that in *Winesburg, Ohio* Anderson “documents the struggle of conveying emotion in a culture where it seems that hands have lost their expressive power” (498). Ritzenberg’s reading is apt and is particularly important in relation to “Hands” since it is the story that sets the tone for the rest of the book, but many of the stories focus on the “physical” way people connect and/or nonverbal communication.

A failure to communicate is a theme that dominates *Winesburg, Ohio*. The fact that the main character of the book is a newspaper writer is important in relation to that overlying theme because his job is to communicate through the written word, but he declines to communicate what the townspeople confess to him throughout the book. Anderson’s main character, as a representative of the booming newspaper industry, even fails to communicate his observations of Winesburg with any substantive emotion. Anderson sets the book in a time of transition in which media like the newspaper business had gained dominance in the reading community, but communication in this time, in these stories, often fails. Ritzenberg claims that Anderson’s authorial anxieties are indicated in the figure of the “writer” in “The Book of the Grotesque”; he states, “The writer, as authorial archetype and dying specter, as redemptive artist and fading craftsman, embodies the tensions that we find in Anderson himself” (503). Anderson asks his readers to consider how words convey emotion and can “touch” an audience. Ritzenberg refers to Walter Benjamin’s theory of storytelling and his assertion that the storyteller’s existence relies on the presence of a community of listeners (504). Anderson offers readers a work of literature that argues for the continued existence of

such a community by pointing to the flawed—or at least incomplete—communication of literature’s rival for readers, newspapers.<sup>16</sup>

It is in “Hands” that readers meet George Willard and learn that he is a reporter on the local newspaper. Readers cannot glean whether or not the suspicions about Wing, whose real name is Adolph, made it into the town’s newspaper where he had lived and worked as a teacher in Pennsylvania. It is clear, however, that Wing trusts George enough to shed light on the mystery that he has been to the residents of Winesburg in the twenty years since he moved to the town. He tells George his story, knowing that the townspeople wonder about him and that George could write the story up in the newspaper, maybe even causing Wing to be run out of Winesburg, but he also imparts his advice on life to George, trying to persuade George to be different from the other townspeople, to dream instead of replicating the voices of the people in town (12-13). Readers receive no indication from Anderson that George publishes Wing’s secret in the newspaper, but it seems clear that Wing wants to tell his story to someone and that George’s potential future as a serious author prompts Wing, and others, to impart important aspects of his life in the hope that George will someday tell his story, the story Wing had been unable to tell up to this point.

One reading of Wing’s advice, then, is that he feels George should transition from newspaper writing, in which George simply replicates, to the more complex and

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<sup>16</sup> Ritzenberg claims that Anderson wants to be a craftsman and storyteller but worries that “he is stuck in an age absent of deep community, where the craftsman may have lost his place” (504). Although Ritzenberg does not mention newspapers specifically, the hurried copy that constituted the work of newspaper writing fits well with the idea of an age “where the craftsman may have lost his place.” The speed and inaccuracy of newspaper writing stands in direct contrast to the type of writing Anderson was hoping to create in his literary efforts.

creative act of fiction writing. Wing tells George, “You hear [townpeople] and you try to imitate them” (12). This is exactly what George is supposed to do as a reporter for the *Winesburg Eagle*, record what people say and print it in the newspaper. Wing, however, knows that this activity does not allow George to move below the surface of things. If George is to more accurately report on everything he witnesses and experiences in town, he will either have to publish in the newspaper the secrets of the townspeople, like Wing, endangering their presence in the town, or he must find a way to include everything that he cannot print in the newspaper in fictional stories. Anderson, through George, does just that, writing his experiences of small-town life in a fictional form that allows him to include things he has seen, known, and imagined.

Wing is not the only character in *Winesburg, Ohio* who has difficulty finding an outlet for his voice, and as Bill Solomon attests, “Wing is merely the first in a succession of marginalized would-be storytellers” (125). In “Paper Pills,” a character named Doctor Reedy continually stuffs his pockets with scraps of paper which turn into “little hard round balls, and when the pockets were filled he dumped them out upon the floor” (Anderson 19). The narrator describes Reedy’s actions as “work[ing] ceaselessly, building up something that he himself destroyed. Little pyramids of truth he erected and after erecting knocked them down again that he might have the truths to erect other pyramids” (19). Readers discover that Reedy does not reuse these scraps, however, that he in fact throws them away, and that the scraps contained “thoughts, ends of thoughts, beginnings of thoughts” (20). Doctor Reedy records his thoughts but cannot communicate them to others; instead, the thoughts are hidden inside his pockets until

they are unrecognizable, at which time they are thrown away. Doctor Reedy's thoughts never reach the outside world; the closest they come to escaping Reedy's inner world is when they inhabit his pockets. Still, the story of Doctor Reedy and a young girl whom he helped when she "became in the family way" to another man is communicated, not to the readers of the *Winesburg Eagle* but rather to the readers of *Winesburg, Ohio*.

Another story of strained communication is titled "The Philosopher," in which George talks with a Doctor Parcival who feels compelled to tell George that he does not want patients anymore (35). The doctor is full of stories which George believes "must all be inventions, a pack of lies. And then he was convinced that they contained the very essence of truth" (37). Parcival tells George that he had been a newspaper reporter when he was a younger man and suggests that he may have fled that life and come to Winesburg under suspicious circumstances related to a murder, that if George was "a really smart newspaper reporter [he] would look [Parcival] up" (37). Parcival is not concerned, though, that George will go digging into the doctor's past to find material for a newspaper article; rather, Parcival's further discussion with George indicates that such detective work might prove advantageous for a would-be writer learning about people and the world. Parcival tells George that he is writing a book, and he shares his pages with George. After an incident occurs in town which Parcival believes may threaten his life, he tells George, "If something happens perhaps you will be able to write the book that I may never get written" (42). Parcival, a reporter turned writer, assumes that George will be able to pick up where he left off. The doctor presumes that George will naturally continue on the path towards authorship. Parcival's own mixture of "lies" and

“truth” are transferred onto George with the expectation that George both tell the doctor’s story and somehow make it true to Parcival’s vision.

Kate Swift, the woman who *inspired* Reverend Hartman, also encourages George to become a writer of fiction. Readers find, in “The Teacher,” that Kate believed in George (“she had recognized the spark of genius and wanted to blow on the spark” [160]). Anderson writes, “The school teacher tried to bring home to the mind of the boy some conception of the difficulties he would have to face as a writer” (160). For Kate, George’s development from newspaper reporter to fiction writer is a foregone conclusion, but she tells George that he “will have to know life” and that if he is “to become a writer [he’ll] have to stop fooling with words” (160). She wants George to write seriously, after learning “to know what people are thinking about” (161). Kate might believe that a short stint in the city room would be good for George, giving him a great deal of life-experience in a short amount of time. She does not believe that George is ready to become a writer, that it might “be better to give up the notion of writing until [he was] better prepared” (161). She also, however, does not want George to become a “mere peddler of words” (161). She connects real writing with a writer’s ability to “know what people are thinking about,” something a newspaper reporter might not have the luxury to ponder through prolonged contemplation and discovery, due to the steady deadlines which demand quick and easily digested content.

Unlike the newspaper reporter who lives in the environment of the newsroom with its constant deadlines, a writer of literature has the capability “to go away and look at people and think” (33). This is what George tells his mother he wants to do with his

life in the story “Mother.” Kate Swift draws a contrast between writers who do just that, observe and consider, and writers who must dash off copy so that a newsboy can peddle the newspaper in the streets. Anderson was a former peddler of words, hawking newspapers as a newsboy, but he had a different view of newspaper writing and fiction as a mature author; Swift, as a teacher and respected figure in George’s life, imparts advice that is consistent with Anderson’s other trustworthy and/or wise characters, voicing an amalgamation of the author’s thoughts on the difference between newspaper reporting and fiction writing.

Sometimes when characters in *Winesburg, Ohio* are not nudging George toward authorship they still reveal Anderson’s view that the newspaper writer is poorly situated to portray life in the way a writer of fiction can. For example, in a story titled “A Man of Ideas” the character Joe Welling does not encourage George to become an author. Welling both believes that *he* should have been a newspaper reporter and belittles newspaper work. He jokes that, before there were trains, mail, and the telegraph, people could still decipher what was happening in the world by simply living in the world and noticing what was happening around them. Once “trains, mail, and the telegraph” existed people utilized them as a way to try and understand the world they lived in, and both literature and newspapers helped to serve that purpose. Joe talks about how people formerly knew when it had rained in Medina County, because “[t]hat’s where Wine Creek comes from. Everyone knows that. Little old Wine Creek brought us the news” (96). Such common sense belies Joe’s shallow consideration of the world around him, and it is for this reason Joe believes he would make an excellent newspaper writer. Joe

tells George that he should be doing George's job, not that he has anything against George, and that he could "do the work at odd moments" (96). Clearly, Joe does not believe that newspaper reporting is very difficult, though he believes that he would be good at it.

His advice for George is to start his articles with sensationalism: "Just say in big letters '*The World Is On Fire.*' That will make 'em look up" (97). Joe's opinion of news articles is not very high; he does not appear to care about whether news pieces are misleading or help readers to sort out the events of the day. Joe feels he could succeed in the newspaper business because he believes he knows how to grab readers' attention, something that "would make a newspaper hum" (97). Welling does not expect a newspaperman to spend much time thinking about stories or writing them up, and he readily admits that his advice to George, to start his pieces with an eye-catching headline, is not well-considered but is rather something he "just snatched out of the air" (97). Anderson, here, provides yet another example of comparison between literature and newspaper writing; instead of commenting on what newspapers cannot include, such as the inner thoughts and feelings of people, here Anderson relates his judgment on some of the content that *is* included in newspapers. Joe talks about the weather and hollow stories and headlines, nothing that contains any depth or attempt at a more complex human connection, the exact thing that Anderson is doing by writing about a character like Joe and the types of things that interest him. And still, Anderson does not finish this story without returning to his theme about the failure of newspapers to capture the more

interesting parts of life, even if reporters might try to grab readers with intriguing headlines.

Before the end of “A Man of Ideas,” Joe has a meeting with his sweetheart’s brother and father, men perceived by the townspeople as “proud and dangerous” (98). The townspeople are aware that Joe is going to see them, and they fear the meeting will end in “tragedy” (99). Readers are told that George is a “witness” to the meeting, stationing himself in the hallway outside of the room where the three men met. Although George is the only person in town, outside the trio in the room, who gains firsthand knowledge of the meeting, and though readers discover that most of the town is interested in possessing that knowledge, readers are given no indication that George shares this story with the townspeople by writing it up in the newspaper. Once again, the Winesburg newspaper leaves out the aspects of town life that its readers are most interested in; these details are only revealed through the medium of fiction as Anderson translates his life experiences and observations to fiction in the pages of *Winesburg, Ohio*.

In the end, Anderson provides his readers with a view of a world that is shifting from an agricultural to an urban one. The old ways of communicating are going away, but the characters in *Winesburg, Ohio* have difficulty communicating in this new world. Many of these characters converse with George Willard, not because he is the town’s newspaper reporter but because they believe he may become a serious writer and artist. It is a belief and a hope in the young George Willard’s future, not present, writerly life that persuades the townspeople to tell him the stories that they cannot communicate to

the world on their own. It seems necessary to these characters, in a world that has become highly mediated, to relay their story to someone else, to hope it might be put out into the world. No longer will the country people be satisfied to live their lives and be content to tell stories to one another, often with storytelling that incorporates some type of nonverbal communication. Anderson makes this idea clear in the longest of the stories in *Winesburg, Ohio*, “Godliness.” In that story, the main character is a country man named Jesse Bentley who owns large tracts of farming land in the area near Winesburg. The narrator clearly explicates the difference between the agricultural world of the mid-nineteenth century and the present, in terms of media and industry, noting the technological advances in communication and transportation which have culminated in “these later days [with] the coming of the automobiles” (56). The narrator claims that the changes of the preceding fifty years have “worked a tremendous change in the lives and in the habits of thought of our people of Mid-America” (56). And, although the narrator has listed trains and “urban car lines” amongst these changes, he proceeds to explain the “change in the lives and in the habits of thought” in terms of print media:

Books, badly imagined and written though they may be in the hurry of our times, are in every household, magazines circulate everywhere. In our day a farmer standing by the stove in the store in his village has his mind filled to overflowing with the words of other men. The newspapers and the magazines have pumped him full. (56)

The narrator includes books, though not “literature,” in the list of print media changes that have filled peoples’ minds, the distinction being between books that are “badly

imagined and written” and “in the hurry of our times” as opposed to literature that is carefully constructed and composed. These books that fall below the status of “literature” are placed on the same level as other print media, such as newspapers and magazines, as distractions that fill peoples’ minds with words that draw the farmer close to “the men of the cities,” and not in a good way (57). The comparison, in the narrator’s appraisal, simply shows that “if you listen you will find [the farmer] talking as glibly and as senselessly as the best city man of us all” (57). Ostensibly, the narrator comments on the increase in available means of communication and number of voices, deeming the change as a negative for communication overall, since the talk is glib and senseless.

In “Godliness” Jesse Bentley is an example of this change in communication, a manifestation of mediated life on the farm. The narrator states that “[in] Jesse Bentley’s time and in the country districts of the whole Middle West in the years after the Civil War it was not so. Men labored too hard and were too tired to read. In them was no desire for words printed on paper” (57). In the present of the story things have changed; Jesse has bought machinery to alleviate the workload of farm life. There is more leisure and more time for words, but Jesse consumes words that do no more than show a hollow version of life. In this present, readers find that “Jesse formed the habit of reading newspapers and magazines” (68). The effect on Jesse is negative, and his mind becomes “fixed upon the things read in newspapers and magazines” (69). Now that Jesse is not too tired for words, he fills his mind with “fortunes to be made almost without effort by shrewd men who bought and sold” (69). Far from the contemplation that an author like Anderson hopes to elicit from readers of well-wrought literature like *Winesburg, Ohio*,

Bentley's daily reading does not engage his mind with life below the surface. His reading only leads him to think about easy money because he receives a daily representation of the world, in newspapers and magazines, which is far from his reality. Anderson, through his narrator, argues that men like Jesse Bentley are done a disservice by the newspapers and magazines they use to fill up their leisure time and their minds. In contrast, Anderson's representation of the world could facilitate a deeper contemplation of life and its transformation in a modern, mediated world.

Ultimately, Anderson's book allows for a hopeful possibility in the character of George Willard. Anderson may not reveal Willard's eventual path because of Anderson's own uncertainty about the future place of literature in American culture. Less than two decades later, F. Scott Fitzgerald would be even more skeptical about the future of his chosen profession while advocating for it strongly in the literature he was writing at the very end of his life. Certainly, the Anderson of the 1920s continued to stake his claim for literature as the superior medium for representing the world to readers with complexity and depth. If Anderson does not divulge George Willard's path, he at least makes known his case for George attempting a more serious kind of writing. In "The Teacher," Anderson uses the character of Kate Swift to convey the difficulties attached to the life of a writer (160-161). Until he can get inside peoples' heads, "to know what people are thinking about, not what they say," his attempts at serious writing will fall short. Swift does not tell George, however, that he should quit writing for the newspaper because she does not see such writing as important one way or another.

Kate Swift does not seem to know that men like Jesse Bentley only read what is printed in the newspaper or magazines, and that even if George could learn enough about life to write a great work of literature Jesse Bentley would never read it. Or she does not care, because she is so focused on the importance of literary pursuits; she is one of the only characters in the book who is shown reading a book (148).<sup>17</sup> The narrator of “The Teacher” says that “the reporter was rapidly becoming a man” (161). It is at this moment, then, that George contemplates a more mature form of writing and that Kate Swift feels “[a] passionate desire to have him understand the import of life, to learn to interpret it truly and honestly” (161). George has been writing for the newspaper for some time, but he has not learned to do that. That kind of interpretation is left to the author in Anderson’s *Winesburg, Ohio*. The line between literary writing and newspaper writing is clearly demarcated, and Anderson only leaves the question of whether there will be as large an audience for the storyteller that can dive deep below the surface of life. This craftsman can communicate what is omitted from newspapers and thus from the representation of the modern world. These incomplete representations were produced and consumed on a daily basis without the ability for prolonged contemplation in either the crafting or reading of such texts.

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<sup>17</sup> In the same story in which readers see Kate Swift reading, we find Reverend Curtis Hartman at his desk and “before an open Bible” (147). The Bible is “open” before Hartman more than once in the story, but readers are not told that he actually reads it. In a later story, “The Awakening,” the narrator mentions that George Willard “had been devoting all of his odd moments to the reading of books” for a year (184). Again, he is not *shown* reading, but readers know that George wants to be a fiction writer, so the inclusion of this detail seems to fit his character. The narrator of “The Book of the Grotesque” says that although the book was never published he “saw it once and it made an indelible impression on [his] mind” (5). Again, readers do not see him reading, but it is assumed that he has read it and not simply seen it since it makes “an indelible impression.”

While Anderson was asking these questions, Joyce was posing similar ones in *Ulysses*, although he was asking them in relation to a very different kind of newspaper, the metropolitan type that greatly differs from Anderson's *Wineburg Eagle*. Both Anderson and Joyce were coming to similar conclusions about newspapers, even though they were looking at very different versions of the medium. While Anderson points out all of the details of life that do not make it into the *Eagle*, Joyce's examination includes multiple editions of newspapers with huge circulations that are not concerned with manners or keeping the peace in a community by voluntarily suppressing information about its subjects. Anderson acknowledges that not all small town newspapers self-censored such questionable or even possibly inflammatory information, as previously noted, but the type of small town newspaper operation that he depicts remains on the surface of its subjects' lives—which are also its readers' lives—in an effort to keep its audience happy.<sup>18</sup>

Alternatively, Joyce's focus is on the big city newspaper, an institution in which the reporters do not know all of the people in the geographic place on which they report. The medium that Joyce writes about is flawed in different ways, due to the immense size and speed of the big city variety of newspaper which inevitably decreases the amount of

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<sup>18</sup> It is likely that Anderson was drawing on his own experience, growing up in a small town in which he saw many things about the town's inhabitants that were not published in the newspaper when these inhabitants were written about. Additionally, when Anderson purchased and took control of two newspapers in Virginia he talked about the situation he found there in similar terms. Anderson, in a letter to a friend, wrote, "The two papers in the county were owned by one man. I think a somewhat typical smalltown [sic] publisher nowadays. He ran the papers merely as moneymaking institutions, tried to squeeze out all he could, putting in as little as possible. He was afraid of the politicians, of the churches, of almost everyone" (*Homage to Sherwood Anderson* 203). Certainly, one way to keep from upsetting people and thus to maintain the newspaper's profitability would be to refrain from publishing anything that could be deemed inappropriate or upsetting to the readers. This is the model that Anderson takes as his focus in *Winesburg, Ohio*.

time, care, and consideration that can be put into each published piece.<sup>19</sup> These two types of newspapers, small town and big city, may seem incomparable in many ways, but Anderson and Joyce reveal a point of comparison by pointing out a similar flaw: inaccurate representation. Whether the newspaper is large or small, metropolitan or country, it is clearly unable to represent experience in the way that fiction can.

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<sup>19</sup> Anderson is certainly aware of this kind of newspaper and its particular problems in representing experience. In a letter to a friend, Anderson discusses the aspect of speed in connection to the job of literary reviewers on daily newspapers: "As for the daily newspapermen—in criticism, how can they be other than they are? Imagine trying to review a book a day—Great God! Do you wonder they are book weary—snatch at old idea?" (*Homage* 194). He continues, however, to note that some of the really big newspapers are able to hire a large enough list of reviewers to help alleviate this problem.

## CHAPTER III

### JOYCE'S WRITING DREAMS: JOURNALISTIC TO LITERARY

A writer in the Illustrated London News sneers at Tolstoy for not understanding WAR. “Poor dear man!” he says. Now, damn it, I’m rather good-tempered but this is a little bit too much. Did you ever hear of such impudence? Do they think the author of Resurrection and Anna Karénin is a fool? Does this impudent, dishonourable journalist think he is the equal of Tolstoy, physically, intellectually, artistically or morally? The thing is absurd.

--James Joyce, “1905 Letter”

In his real life, James Joyce did what he has his famous fictional character Leopold Bloom do in *Ulysses*: use the newspaper business to generate an income. Unlike Bloom, who works as an advertisement canvasser for a newspaper in *Ulysses*, Joyce actually wrote for newspapers, both in Ireland and on the continent. Unlike one of Joyce’s other main characters in *Ulysses*, Stephen Dedalus, who many identified as Joyce’s younger self transposed to the page,<sup>1</sup> Joyce did not eschew writing newspaper articles as a way to make money, particularly at points in his early life when he was in dire need of income. And while in the past Joyce’s relationship with newspapers was characterized as purely negative,<sup>2</sup> more recent scholarship has argued that his

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Yeats remarked that he believed *Ulysses* “a disguised autobiography” (qtd. in Ellmann 391). Ezra Pound, in a letter to Joyce on November 22, 1918, wrote, “Bloom is a great man, and you have almighty answered the critics who asked me whether having made Stephen, more or less autobiographical, you could ever go on and create a second character” (qtd. in Ellmann 443). This sentiment is echoed by Hemingway in the deleted ending of “Big Two-Hearted River,” later published as “On Writing”: “That was the weakness of Joyce. Daedalus [sic] in Joyce was Joyce himself, so he was terrible. Joyce was so damn romantic and intellectual about him. He’d made Bloom up, Bloom was wonderful. He’d made Mrs. Bloom up. She was the greatest in the world” (217). In the preface to Stanislaus Joyce’s *My Brother’s Keeper: James Joyce’s Early Years* (1958), T. S. Eliot writes, “In the case of Joyce we have a series of books, two of which at least are ... autobiographical in appearance” (viii). Stanislaus Joyce, however, refutes these analyses, claiming that Stephen is an artistic creation (17).

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Donovan, for instance, points to Richard Ellmann’s comment on Joyce and the press in *The Consciousness of Joyce* (1977), that the newspaper press was Joyce’s “principal emblem of modern capitalism ... wasting the spirit with its persistent attacks upon the integrity of the world, narcotizing its

relationship is much more complex. Stephen Donovan points to works by Cheryl Herr, Jennifer Wicke, and R. B. Kershner which claim that “Joyce incorporated and subverted the language of the press in a spirit of parodic playfulness” (25), while Kershner points out that Ellman “was committed to the belief that Joyce’s attitude toward newspapers was unproblematically contemptuous” (“Newspapers and Periodicals” 10). Kershner himself, however, asserts:

Joyce’s relationship to newspapers is ambivalent. Scornful of their idea of literature and especially of the poetry they printed, yet eager to take advantage of them as an unparalleled publicity machine,<sup>3</sup> Joyce early in his career tried to support himself by writing for the newspaper in all three modes available to him—as editorial writer, reviewer, and even as straight reporter. (“Newspapers and Periodicals” 1)<sup>4</sup>

Here, Kershner does not address Joyce’s feelings about the difference between newspaper content and “literature,” but his comment about Joyce’s disdain for newspapers’ “idea of literature” points to Joyce discerning a marked difference between these two types of writing and product. Readers may wonder, then, why Joyce would

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readers with superficial facts, [and] habituating them to secular and clerical authority” (qtd. in Donovan, 25).

<sup>3</sup> Ellmann notes Joyce’s claim that he was in contact with one hundred and twenty newspapers about *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (415).

<sup>4</sup> Joyce loved to read the newspapers throughout his life. As a young man in Dublin, Joyce enjoyed the newspapers so much that he gave them up for Lent—along with sweets and the theaters (Joyce, Stanislaus 80). In Rome, in 1906, Joyce was “avidly reading every Irish and English newspaper he could get his hands on” (Collier 107). Later in life, when Joyce was hard at work on *Finnegan’s Wake*, his wife (Nora) claimed, “I never get but three words out of him all day these days, with the chop suey he’s writing. In the morning, ‘The papers!’ At lunch, ‘What’s that?’ And the third—Jim, what is the third? I can’t remember it. Ah yes, about his bottle of water on the floor, ‘Don’t touch that!’ Goodness” (qtd. in Ellmann 710).

participate, or attempt to participate, in all three modes of newspaper writing that were available to him, but it is also important to note that this participation occurred “early in his career.” After Joyce had established himself as a legitimate figure in the literary landscape, he no longer sought out newspaper work in the way he did when he was young and an unknown without literary celebrity. At the start of his career, though, Joyce exploited his newspaper connections to their fullest extent.

Patrick Collier notes that Joyce—just out of his teenage years—utilized his father’s contacts with a newspaper, the *Irish Times*, to publish an article about the Gordon Bennett Cup race (114).<sup>5</sup> James’ father, John Joyce, worked for a time as an advertisement canvasser for the *Freeman’s Journal* (Joyce, Stanislaus 63).<sup>6</sup> It is no coincidence that this is the very same job James Joyce gives to Bloom in *Ulysses*, a facet of the character that connects James Joyce’s real father with the father figure of Bloom in Joyce’s book. John Joyce had no qualms about exploiting his resources to their limits, and in *Ulysses* Bloom likewise hopes to take advantage of his newspaper contacts to travel for free in order to visit his daughter. Similarly, James Joyce worked a press pass more than once to obtain things for free.

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<sup>5</sup> The story about Joyce’s father, John, helping his son place the article is corroborated in a postcard from Joyce to his father on 21 January 1903 and a footnote by Ellmann to the postcard. In Ellmann’s biography of Joyce, he writes, “Before he left Dublin, on January 17, 1903, Joyce heard from his father that a man named O’Hara, on the *Irish Times*, might be able to arrange for a French correspondent to the newspaper. Joyce imaginatively transformed such remote possibilities into certainties, and departed with the conviction that the *Irish Times* would soon be providing him with a regular income” (119).

<sup>6</sup> Ellmann also notes that James and his father made some calls, in London, on newspaper people. They visited “T. P. O’Connor of *T.P.’s Weekly*, to sound out O’Connor about a journalistic job” (77). Not only did James fail to disparage journalistic work, he sought it out using whatever connections he had at his disposal.

At one point in his life, after failing to find work with the three Dublin newspapers in 1909, Joyce called on his brother—who was in Italy—and asked him to arrange some work for him with an Italian newspaper, *Il Piccolo della Serra*. Joyce agreed to write an article for the *Piccolo* about Lord Chamberlain’s attempt to prevent the performance of George Bernard Shaw’s *The Shewing-Up of Blanco Posnet* at the Abbey Theatre (Ellmann 285). He persuaded the manager of the Abbey to give him a press pass for the performance. Then, Joyce had business cards printed up with his name, the newspaper’s name, and Trieste (where the newspaper was published); he showed one of these cards to the manager of the Midland Railway and asked for a pass to Galway “on the understanding that he would write about Galway in a projected series of articles on Ireland for the Italian press” (Ellmann 285).<sup>7</sup>

Joyce did write an article about the Shaw play but not with much care or thought; Ellmann writes that Joyce, after talking with journalists after the play and suggesting (falsely) that the *Piccolo* had sent him to Ireland to cover it, “hastily wrote his article and sent it the same night to [his brother], asking him to check it before giving it to [the editor of the newspaper]” (286).<sup>8</sup> Such a lack of effort on Joyce’s part might help explain a 1959 review of *The Critical Writings of James Joyce*, in which Vivian Mercier

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<sup>7</sup> This was not the only time Joyce successfully traveled on a press pass; on another occasion he used his card to get a ticket on the London and North Western Railroad (Ellmann 301). While in Italy, Joyce also tried to convince the *Corriere della Serra* to send him to Dublin for the Dublin Exposition, hoping that he could work a press pass to visit his home while reporting on the Exposition; this time the *Corriere* was not interested (260).

<sup>8</sup> In his last year at Belvedere College, Joyce was extremely interested in drama, and he would “write critiques of every play he went to see, and then compare them with the bored, platitudinous notices of the performances in the newspapers” (Joyce, Stanislaus 87-88). Interestingly, when Joyce had the chance to write reviews for the newspapers he, too, could fail to give his best effort (according to his brother), as with the Shaw play mentioned above.

writes, “Like all the big decisions in his life, Joyce’s resolve to devote his literary gift entirely to major work and to earn his living by anything rather than journalism was a truly wise one” (472). Mercier, in appraising Joyce’s early writing that was reprinted in this book, writes that “the newspaper articles for a Trieste paper, even when well done, give one a sensation reminiscent of watching an elephant pick up a penny” (472). As Mercier suggests, while Joyce was not particularly suited to newspaper work, he was not above writing for the newspaper. He could easily produce a showy piece of newspaper writing, but he did not put the same care into his newspaper articles that he would expend on his literary efforts. Often, these pieces were simply a means to an end, a way to make some money and maybe even see a show and travel across Ireland for free.<sup>9</sup>

By the time that Joyce wrote about *Blanco Posnet* for the *Piccolo*, he had written a number of newspaper pieces and felt that he had a talent for such writing.<sup>10</sup> After a stint in Rome, Joyce returned to Trieste with almost no money and begged some newspaper work from the editor of the *Piccolo*, a friend, named Roberto Prezioso.<sup>11</sup> Joyce, Ellmann contends, was “content with his articles” (255). He even told his brother, Stanislaus, sounding a bit like Anderson’s Joe Welling: “I may not be the Jesus Christ I once fondly imagined myself, but I think I must have a talent for journalism”

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<sup>9</sup> Joyce also made the most of his connections to newspaper people, many of whom he was friendly with. For example, Ellmann notes that Joyce used his friendships with newspaper people in Trieste to get free theater tickets (265).

<sup>10</sup> Joyce had nine essays published in *Il Piccolo della Serra*, over several years after 1907 (Kershner “Newspapers” 10). From September 3 to November 19, 1903 the *Daily Express* published fourteen of Joyce’s reviews, unsigned; Joyce was paid thirty shillings for one of these reviews (Ellmann 139).

<sup>11</sup> At times, Joyce could be very frank about the exchange of writing newspaper pieces for income; for example, Joyce wrote to his brother from Austria on February 7, 1905: “Look through the reviews to see if ‘La Figlia di Jorio’ has been reviewed. I want to write an article to get money” (SL 53). Faced with the need for income, Joyce decided that writing newspaper pieces, whether articles or reviews, was a better job than many others.

(qtd. in Ellmann 255). He gained his first bit of public recognition not by writing and publishing a short story or poem but by having a review of Ibsen published in the *Fortnightly Review*, an influential periodical (“Newspapers and Periodicals” 2). When Joyce left Dublin for Paris, in 1903, he hoped to arrange a job as a correspondent to a newspaper; he thought that he could earn a steady income working for the *Irish Times* (Ellmann 119). Some of Joyce’s early newspaper aspirations did not quite come to fruition, though.

The *Irish Times* did not hire Joyce as a French correspondent; he wrote a review of Sarah Bernhardt for the *Daily Express* that was not accepted and an article about a Paris carnival for the *Irish Times* that was not published. Joyce, believing that the Dublin newspapers were corrupt, spoke with a friend in November 1903 about starting a newspaper of their own, a half-penny daily, to be named *The Goblin* (Ellmann 140). Joyce and his friend, Francis Skeffington, found a business manager (the editor of the *Irish Bee-Keeper*) and a printer and determined that they would need £2000 to become operational, but they were unable to raise the money and had to give up their venture.<sup>12</sup> Even though Joyce was not able to start his own newspaper, and although he had some

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<sup>12</sup> When it became apparent that they would not be able to raise the money, Joyce spoke with Gillies, the man from the *Bee-Keeper* who they had settled on for their business manager. Joyce offered to translate Maurice Maeterlinck’s *La Vie des abeilles* (*The Life of Bees*) (1901), but after Gillies looked over the book he replied to Joyce, “I don’t think Maeterlinck ever kept a bee in his life” (qtd. in Ellmann 141). Gillies, however, did offer Joyce the job of sub-editor for the *Irish Bee-Keeper*, a job that Ellmann notes Joyce accepted and retained for roughly one day (141).

rejections, he wrote many reviews and articles for newspapers, particularly while living in Italy.<sup>13</sup>

At the time, Joyce had been largely unsuccessful in publishing his fiction and poetry, and he had to make a decision between participating in an outlet where he could find an audience, even with limitations he did not have as a literary author or poet, or not present his voice to a reading audience at all. Even though Joyce felt that newspapers were flawed, his participation in them shows that he chose to add his own thoughts, in an effort to improve newspaper content, at a time when he was unable to express his voice through “literature.” Still, Joyce felt conflicted about the medium and continued judging it as lower than literature.<sup>14</sup> Although Joyce wrote many literary reviews, and a number of unfavorable ones at that, he could become very upset when other reviewers published a poor review of a writer that he liked. Joyce wrote Stanislaus a letter on September 18, 1905, in which he railed against a writer in the *Illustrated London News* who criticized Tolstoy for not understanding war (*SL* 73).

Joyce could tolerate newspaper writing when it came from someone, like himself, who he thought to be on a level worthy of critiquing Tolstoy. Moreover, he believed that newspaper writing could be negative so long as it was honest and smart; Joyce displayed his utmost belief in this principle when he wrote “an uncomplimentary

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<sup>13</sup> Though Joyce was not able to start his own newspaper, he did open up his own movie theater in Dublin. When the theater opened, Joyce sent the *Piccolo* an article about the opening that appeared in the *Evening Telegraph* and asked Prezioso to run a paragraph in his newspaper (Ellmann 303). Joyce could be quite shrewd about maximizing newspaper publicity for his interests.

<sup>14</sup> In a February 7, 1905, letter to Stanislaus, Joyce tells his brother, “I intend to dedicate ‘Dubliners’ to you—do you mind—because you seem to find the stories to your taste. Do you think they are good? or are they only as good as stories in French daily papers” (*SL* 53). Clearly, Joyce’s judgment of literature as higher than newspaper pieces is connected to “how good” he feels the writing to be.

review of Lady Gregory's *Poets and Dreamers* for the *Daily Express*" (Ellmann 121).

The *Daily Express* delayed publishing it, but finally placed it in the newspaper with Joyce's initials, which was not standard procedure, to insure that there was no confusion as to the origin of the review (121). By the time that Joyce wrote this review, he had already solicited Lady Gregory's help; she wrote some letters of introduction for him, including one to W. B. Yeats (107-108).<sup>15</sup> Additionally, Gregory had used her influence to secure Joyce "a promise from E. V. Longworth of the *Daily Express* of books to review for the paper's literary page" (Joyce, Stanislaus 191).<sup>16</sup> Later, Joyce solicited Gregory for money to help him get situated in Europe (178). Lady Gregory was someone who could prove helpful to Joyce, both in his literary pursuits and in the practical capacity to help him earn an income, but Joyce did not allow his self-interest or self-preservation to stop him from writing his review of her work with what he deemed frankness and veracity.

Surprisingly, Joyce also wrote several politically-minded articles which served to connect him back to Ireland when he was living abroad. When Joyce was thirty years old, in 1912, he wrote an article about Charles Parnell for the *Piccolo*, and in the same year, he wrote a sub-editorial about hoof and mouth disease for the *Freeman's Journal*

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<sup>15</sup> Yeats met with Joyce in London after writing him a letter, suggesting "you should let me give you one or two literary introductions here in London as you will find it much easier to get on in Paris ... if you do some kind of writing, book reviews, poems etc. for the papers here. This kind of work never did anybody any harm" (qtd. in Ellmann 108).

<sup>16</sup> Joyce's poor review of Gregory's *Poets and Dreamers* appeared in the *Daily Express*; after securing Joyce the job with that newspaper, she was surprised and "annoyed" that Joyce would write a negative review of her work (Joyce, Stanislaus 220). It was these kinds of arrangements and relationships, however, that Joyce saw as promoting dishonesty in the newspapers.

(Ellmann 319, 326).<sup>17</sup> By the time that Joyce wrote this piece, he had published some fiction and was only a few years away from beginning *Ulysses* where the character Deasy writes an overblown editorial about hoof and mouth disease, a piece that contains some of the same phrases that Joyce used in his own letter (Ellmann 327n).<sup>18</sup> This was not the only instance of Joyce appropriating newspaper content for *Ulysses*: Ellmann claims that Joyce “mined the *Irish Times* for names in *Ulysses*” and picked up newspaper lingo that he used in the novel (365, 367),<sup>19</sup> and Kershner notes that several of the Dublin newspapers were “woven directly into the texture of the novel in a way no earlier novel had ever attempted” (“Newspapers and Periodicals” 4). Joyce gathered the news from June 16, 1904, but he did not report it as the newspapers had.

Joyce does not simply reiterate the newspaper accounts from that day; *Ulysses* uses both the real newspaper stories and anachronistic details to create an imaginary vision of a single day in Dublin while including Joyce’s personal truth of the city, his own vision of his home.<sup>20</sup> The stories that Joyce appropriates *were* news in 1904, but they are really old news when Joyce incorporates them into his work, which was serially published between 1918 and 1920 before appearing as a novel in 1922. Indeed, they no

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<sup>17</sup> A sub-editorial is an editorial written by a member of the newspaper staff who is subordinate to the editor.

<sup>18</sup> Although Ellmann claims that Joyce wrote such a letter, Terence Matthews presented evidence in a 2007 *James Joyce Quarterly* article that seems to prove he was not the author (Matthews 441).

<sup>19</sup> Ellmann provides “Nighttown” as an example of a word that Joyce learned from spending time around Dublin journalists who called the late shift “Nighttown” (367). Late in *Ulysses*, Bloom and Stephen walk into the red light district of Dublin, called Nighttown in the book.

<sup>20</sup> Kershner points readers’ attention to the newspaper boy on the street in Chapter Seven of *Ulysses* (7.969) who shouts a number of real stories from the day’s newspaper at Bloom (“Newspapers and Periodicals” 6). Moreover, all of the newspapers listed in *Ulysses* are real newspapers (6). At this point, I also want to note a detail about the citations in *Ulysses*: citations for *Ulysses* are traditionally comprised of both the chapter number and line numbers in the corresponding chapter since the standard edition of *Ulysses*, edited by Hans Walter Gabler, contains line numbers throughout the entirety of the text.

longer make suitable content for newspapers since they are no longer “new”—even though they had originated from that medium in 1904. Joyce shows that even when the content of literature and newspaper stories are similar—or identical—they assume a different form when presented in literature. Karl Čapek wrote, in 1924, “The newspaper world like that of the wild beasts exists solely in the present; Press consciousness (if one can speak of consciousness) is circumscribed by simple present time extending from the morning on to the evening edition, or the other way around”; Čapek contrasts journalism with literature: “literature is the expression of old things in externally new forms, while newspapers are eternally expressing new realities in a stabilized and unchangeable form” (qtd. in “Joyce, Mallarmé” 45). Instead of the ephemeral value and interest that the newspaper stories Joyce chose carried in 1904, Joyce gives these stories permanent value—or at least an incredibly long life. Instead of the stories retaining value for a day or a few weeks, they have remained worthwhile for almost one hundred years because Joyce made them part of *Ulysses*.

In an introduction to Stanislaus Joyce’s *My Brother’s Keeper: James Joyce’s Early Years*, Ellmann writes about Joyce’s dependence on Stanislaus for news while living as an expatriate, suggesting that “[Joyce’s] gift was for transforming material, not for originating it” (xv). Thus, Joyce does what both his character the “Citizen” and his audience do—he consumes the newspapers’ views of the world and their second-hand reports of events—but Joyce does not attempt to show a panoramic photograph of Dublin in his novel. Joyce offers readers *his* view of Dublin, on June 16, 1904,—when he was living in the city—which is constructed from both the consensus of record in the

newspapers and his subjective take on those events. Joyce reports the Irish as he saw them, not through a “journalistic screen” (Rando 50).<sup>21</sup> Joyce offered an alternative to the way the Irish were depicted in the British newspapers, as “a country of louts and savages” (qtd. in Ellmann 257). Joyce wants readers to see that his version of June 16 is not less “real” or authoritative than the newspapers’ account simply because his is found in fictional form.<sup>22</sup> Joyce sometimes disdained newspaper writing from those he deemed unintelligent, writers that claimed to be objective; this may be one reason why, as he aged and accrued literary capital, he wrote much less frequently for newspapers, limiting his involvement to some letter writing and publicity opportunities.<sup>23</sup> Even when Joyce lacked money in later years, he no longer considered writing for the newspapers to earn

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<sup>21</sup> Rando writes about the newspaper coverage of James and Nora’s elopement, after they had been together for many years. Rando focusses on a specific report and points out, “While anybody familiar with the outlines of Joyce’s biography can detect in the clipping a narrative about Joyce’s scandalous elopement with Nora, it is only through a journalistic screen, conspicuous by its very finessing of scandal and its implication that potential scandal had been averted” (50). Rando also notes that there are a “number of factual errors” in the clipping. In *Ulysses*, Joyce highlights newspapers’ inclusion of numerous “factual errors” as a part of the industry’s normal, everyday business.

<sup>22</sup> Michael Schudson discusses the changing idea of objectivity in newspapers, in which people began to expect an increasingly nonbiased and straight report of daily events, in his book *Discovering the News* (1978).

<sup>23</sup> Joyce championed an Irish tenor named Sullivan and encouraged journalistic friends to write articles about him. Ellmann contends that Joyce wrote a publicity letter that was published in the newspaper with Sullivan’s name signed to it. When Joyce finally married Nora, in July 1931, he was upset about the way reporters and photographers portrayed them: “Joyce felt he was made to look ridiculous” (Ellmann 638). Joyce, however, used the perceived attacks on him in the newspapers to generate more publicity; for example, he took excerpts of what he perceived as negative press pieces and placed them in a special edition of *transition* that paid homage to him. Ellmann claims that Joyce “wished to promote controversy about himself” but “exhibited also a certain abandon about its outcome” (642). Apparently, Joyce was quite litigious and had hoped to be involved in a high profile trial for some time; his wish was fulfilled in the autumn of 1933 when the obscenity trial of *Ulysses* gained a lot of press and he received a favorable, and famous, verdict. When the *Little Review* was threatened with litigation over the serial publication of *Ulysses*, Joyce hoped the trial would be notorious (502). Still, after Judge Woolsey’s decision, Joyce could not be reached for a response; instead, he asked a friend, Paul Leon, to respond to the press for him (666-667).

extra income—though he did talk about teaching, something he had done in conjunction with newspaper writing in the past (Ellmann 478, 489).

In the middle of the serialization of *Ulysses*, Joyce complained to Ezra Pound about financial issues, but in listing a few possible ways to make money he does not mention newspaper writing, and Pound approved. In a letter to the lawyer John Quinn, Pound writes, “[Joyce] is also dead right in refusing to interrupt his stuff by writing stray articles for cash. Better in the end, even from a practical point of view” (qtd. in Ellmann 480).<sup>24</sup> By this point in his career, Joyce felt that he was a serious author and that he needed to differentiate his work from the newspaper writing he had written about in *Ulysses*. Interestingly, a few years later, Joyce told Djuna Barnes that a writer “should never write about the extraordinary. That is for the journalist” (qtd. in Ellmann 457). For Joyce, the newspaper was the realm of the unbelievable, even though it presented itself as the place to find the history of the now. While Joyce’s fiction might be read as *avant-garde*, particularly from *Ulysses* on, he believed that he was simply writing about mundane events—but that there was greatness to be found there. When Joyce learned that a relative thought *Ulysses* unfit to read because of its perceived obscenity, Joyce famously replied, “If *Ulysses* isn’t fit to read, life isn’t fit to live” (qtd. in Ellmann 537). Joyce thus plumbed the depths of humanity, of life, as Sherwood Anderson hoped to do

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<sup>24</sup> In his *ABC of Reading* (1934), Pound would clearly stake his claim for the difference between newspaper writing and literary writing. He espouses literature, declaring that “Literature is news that STAYS news” (29).

in his writing, to expose what he claimed was missing in other “competing textual practices.”<sup>25</sup>

Although Joyce told Barnes that the “extraordinary” *should* be left to the journalist, in *Ulysses* Joyce argues that, though present in everyday life, newspapers actually miss the extraordinary in the ordinary, and are thereby unable or unwilling to include all that exists in the world they report and write about. As Ellmann notes, “Bloom is a nobody—an advertisement canvasser who, apart from his family, has virtually no effect upon the life around him—yet there is god in him” (361-362). By writing a book that is very much centered on Bloom, Joyce captures a reality that the newspapers do not. Ellmann notes that the “verisimilitude in *Ulysses* is so compelling that Joyce has been derided as more mimic than creator, which charge, being untrue, is the greatest praise of all” (363).<sup>26</sup> At a time in which the mass media had been firmly established, Joyce and Anderson looked back to the turn of the century and the first of the modern mass media, newspapers, and considered their claim to authority and “truth” in contrast to literature in the modern world then they made works of fiction that challenged the assumptions of newspapers’ hold on the official record of the day by including aspects that were not included in the newspapers’ accounts, articles, or photographs.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> The term “competing textual practices” is one used by Marc Joseph Da Rosa in his dissertation titled *The Newspaper, the Novel, and the Project of Modernism* (2).

<sup>26</sup> This aspect of good fiction writing is the basis for the phrase, “truth is stranger than fiction,” of which both Mark Twain and Lord Byron might serve as a source—Byron in *Don Juan* and Twain from his *Notebook*. It is likely that Twain was borrowing this phrase from Byron.

<sup>27</sup> A good example of Joyce’s fiction seeming as real as nonfictional life comes in a story he related to Pound in 1916 (while Joyce was writing *Ulysses*). Joyce tells Pound of a man named Gray who was in an

Though both Joyce and Anderson claimed they took as their subject ordinary people, and though they both criticized the medium of newspapers in their work, both men's celebrity grew through the newspapers. That celebrity did not last, however, and what enduring fame they have is due to their literary achievement instead of their exposure in the mass media. Their literature, too, possesses a longevity that the everyday newspaper story of 1900 has not.<sup>28</sup> While Anderson readily admitted that he was no longer a celebrity long before his departure from the United States and subsequent death in 1940, Joyce was continuing to maintain his place in the spotlight. At the beginning of 1935, Joyce's son, George, while living in the United States and trying to make his way as a singer, was approached by the *New Yorker* for an interview. He agreed, welcoming the publicity, but most of the interview was devoted to questions about his father (Ellmann 678). The interest people had in James Joyce appeared too much for him at times, as it was for Anderson at the apex of his celebrity. While in Copenhagen, in the mid-1930's, Joyce asked that no interviewers be sent to him; one interviewer circumvented Joyce's wishes, though, by "posing as an artist" (694). Joyce, by this time, hoped to be let alone, though to gain some publicity in preparation for the publication of *Finnegan's Wake* (1939) he agreed to two photo sessions (715n). Still, when Joyce applied for a visa to travel to Zurich, as the Nazis advanced toward Paris a

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internment camp with Stanislaus during World War I; Stan showed this man the stories of *Dubliners*, and the man liked all of them except "A Painful Case" because he said he knew the people and events that were the basis for the story. Stan asked Gray when the events happened, and Gray replied the autumn of 1909. Then, Stan told the man that Joyce wrote the story in Austria in 1905 (Ellmann 210n).

<sup>28</sup> The newspaper stories retain an archival, ephemeral value, whereas literary production marks a chance at a more permanent space.

few years later in 1940, his name was not recognized by the authorities and his visa application was denied.<sup>29</sup>

### **Newspapers as Unreliable Guides through the Everyday Odyssey of Joyce's *Ulysses***

At the start of *Ulysses*, readers are confronted with one ordinary man, Stephen Dedalus, and soon after another, Leopold Bloom. As Anderson does in *Winesburg, Ohio*, Joyce puts his readers in contact with someone—a main character—on the inside of the newspaper business; in *Ulysses*, Bloom works for a newspaper, canvassing for advertisements.<sup>30</sup> George Willard, though he does not share it with the readers of the Winesburg newspaper, has the “inside scoop” on his fellow townspeople, and readers of *Winesburg, Ohio* receive this information in fictional form, as well as a close-up of the life of a newspaper reporter. Likewise, though Bloom is not a reporter, both he and Stephen have intimate knowledge of the maneuverings of the newspaper world and are privy to the daily intimacies of that business. Through these characters, Joyce brings the

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<sup>29</sup> Interestingly, not only did the authorities fail to recognize Joyce's name, but when a friend of Joyce's asked about the rejection of Joyce's visa application he was told that “it was because Joyce was a Jew” (Ellmann 736). Thus, although Joyce had often been conflated with Stephen Dedalus, the authorities may have unknowingly conflated Joyce with his other famous character, Leopold Bloom—who is Jewish. Either way, with all of the celebrity that Joyce had accumulated through his literary work the real Joyce was unknown, and this fact hindered Joyce at a crucial moment in his life.

<sup>30</sup> Rando writes of Joyce's choice of occupation for Bloom: “In fact, as much as Joyce borrows a reality effect from the newspaper, the occupation he chose for his hero seems calculated at least in part to challenge the reality effect of the newspaper, from the inside out. *Ulysses* asserts its own fiction's fidelity to experience by aligning itself with ‘reality’ above and beyond the newspaper. While the newspaper is represented as an unstable, unreliable, and partly fictional province, *Ulysses* is asserted as reality itself, the illusion it works so hard to maintain, even through paradoxically fantastic episodes and experimental feats of modernist narration. The newspaper seems to mirror the people and events of *Ulysses*, but it does so poorly” (52).

reader inside the offices of Dublin newspapers, the *Freeman's Journal* and the *Telegraph*, where readers are presented with an insider's view of a Dublin newspaper pressgang. Because Bloom and Stephen cross paths at this location, described by Joyce at the start of "Aeolus" as "THE HEART OF THE HIBERNIAN METROPOLIS,"<sup>31</sup> readers are aware that this chapter and this setting should receive particular attention. It is not only the characters of Stephen and Bloom that nearly collide here—although Stephen and Bloom are both at this location, they do not actually meet until much later—but also literary "art" and newspaper work. Both these characters and these two concepts come into close proximity at the office of the *Freeman* but do not fully unite, marking the newspaper office as a space of missed connections.

Very early in *Ulysses*, readers learn that Stephen, like Bloom, is connected to the city newspapers. Stephen is earning a living as a teacher,<sup>32</sup> and his school's headmaster, a man named Deasy, gives Stephen two copies of a letter to the editor he has written about foot and mouth disease, asking Stephen if he would publish it in the paper "at once" (1.411). It does not matter that Stephen does not work for a newspaper; Deasy assumes that the publication of his letters in two newspapers is a foregone conclusion, even though Stephen claims that he only "know[s] two editors slightly" (1.413-4). Deasy must recognize that Stephen's ties to newspaper people are firmer than he lets on. Readers later find that Stephen has downplayed his newspaper connections to Deasy

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<sup>31</sup> The quotation cited, here, is in all caps because it is presented that way in *Ulysses*. This quotation represents the first of a number of headlines in the chapter which separate/fragment the chapter into many parts.

<sup>32</sup> As noted earlier, Joyce also worked, off and on, as a teacher; he earned the bulk of his income in this way for many years.

because he simply does not want to be bothered with his boss giving him letters to publish. Deasy is not particularly well liked by the members of the pressgang partly because of his ties to the Protestant North and England but also because Deasy is pretentious and overblown.

Soon after departing from the school, Stephen tears off the blank end of Deasy's letter to write down some of his own thoughts for a poem (3.404); it is apparent that Stephen does not much respect Deasy's letter, and it is not long before readers discover that Stephen does not think very highly of the newspaper industry as a whole. Certainly, Stephen values his partial poem more than any letter to the editor, even from someone like the schoolmaster Deasy who, based on his position, should be a person with some intellectual status. Joyce provides readers with the opportunity to see parts of Deasy's letter when Stephen reads them to himself and finds the letter filled with clichés, such as when Deasy writes that the Irish need to “[i]n every sense take the bull by the horns” (2.324-37). Deasy feels he is doing something important; he tells Stephen that cattle doctors in Austria have cured foot and mouth in their country, and that he is “trying to work up influence with the department. Now I'm going to try publicity” (2.341-3). In fact, in Chapter Fourteen of the novel readers discover that Deasy's letter *has* been printed in the evening paper. Stephen's ideas about writing and publicity, readers will remember, are tied to writing “high art” or “serious” literature and are quite different from Deasy's.

At the close of the novel, when Joyce famously devotes the last chapter to Bloom's wife, Molly, readers find *her* fantasizing about Stephen and celebrity, hoping

that Stephen might write about her as his “lover and mistress publicity too with our 2 photographs in all the papers when he becomes famous O but then what am I going to do about him though” (18.1365-67). This type of information about affairs and mistresses, what would not be included in the Winesburg newspaper, is the content that Leopold Bloom worries about, because he believes that big city newspapers will not hesitate to print such kinds of salacious details, and he knows that Molly *is* having an affair with another man.<sup>33</sup> Bloom is not wrong to worry, and Kershner reminds readers that newspapers of Bloom’s time did publicly embarrass ordinary people. Kershner points out that Joyce was interested in addressing what he calls “social shaming through the periodic press” as early as in “A Painful Case,” a story in Joyce’s collection *Dubliners* (1914) (“Newspapers and Periodicals” 23-24).<sup>34</sup> *Ulysses*’ readers find, though, that while Bloom’s anxieties about becoming a celebrity, due to bad press, are not unfounded, they are probably unnecessary. Bloom *does* appear in a June 16, 1904, paper, but he is distorted and unrecognizable to the majority of readers, cloaked in the

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<sup>33</sup> Molly consummates her love affair with Hugh Boylan while Leopold is away from home on the day when *Ulysses* is set.

<sup>34</sup> Kershner writes, “Socially, a primary function of the newspaper is listing the names of citizens” (“Newspapers and Periodicals” 23). Such a statement seems to tie the big city newspaper to the small town paper which has a similar objective, but as noted above, the Winesburg paper does not include everything. Alternatively, Kershner notes that the “public display of the private life of women arrested for drunkenness was virtually a genre in Dublin papers” at the time that *Ulysses* is set (23). He sees this function of newspapers operating in similar ways to Foucauldian surveillance (24). Certainly, Joyce experienced newspapers listing names of citizens in Dublin; he occasionally found his own name in the newspaper, as when he read a paper before the Literary and Historical Society on February 1, 1902. His reading was reported by the *Freeman’s Journal* (Ellmann 96). In the paper, according to Stanislaus, James “defended the realism of modern drama, but looked forward … to a realism that should comprise the penetrating illumination of the imagination” (Joyce, Stanislaus 129). Another instance of the young Joyce appearing in the newspaper occurred when he acted in a friend’s play, playing a villain; the *Evening Telegraph* wrote that his work was a “revelation of amateur acting”; according to Ellmann, Joyce kept this clipping in his wallet for a long time (93).

anonymity of the bulk and speed of city newspapers; although Bloom is there, only those who were present with Bloom during the day will recognize him in the article about Dignam's funeral.

In Chapter Fifteen, later titled "Circe," Bloom frets about being listed amongst the "new addresses of all the cuckolds in Dublin," found in the "*Messenger of the Sacred Heart and Evening Telegraph* with Saint Patrick's Day Supplement" (15.1125-7). In truth, the pressgang at the *Freeman's Journal* are talking about the Blooms when Stephen visits the *Freeman's* offices in Chapter Seven, "Aeolus." Bloom is invoked in relation to the "gentle art of advertisement" (7.608). Joyce writes, "And Madam Bloom, Mr O'Madden Burke added. The vocal muse. Dublin's prime favourite. Lenehan gave a loud cough" (7.609-11). Here, Joyce provides one of many incidents in which Molly and her sexuality are invoked and characters suggest that they have had some sexual connection with Molly. The pressgang does not have firsthand knowledge of Molly's affair with Boylan, but they would probably not write it up in the newspaper if they did. Although Bloom worries about it, Bloom's life is not news for Dublin's newspaper audience; this is the point that Joyce makes by writing a long novel that is largely about Bloom's life. While his life is not newsworthy, *per se*, Joyce does present Bloom's life as worthy of a fictional treatment, something that is inextricable from the day he writes about but which does not get recorded in the newspaper's account of that day—at least in any recognizable form.

Joyce extends this idea by incorporating pieces of Leopold Bloom's life in the fictional newspapers presented in *Ulysses*, even as those facts are disguised. For

example, Bloom is having a relationship of sorts, through correspondence, with a woman named Martha. Their exchange of letters began after Bloom created an alter ego for himself, Henry Flower, and placed an ad in the paper in the hopes of attracting a woman. Bloom has been identified in the newspaper by Martha, but she does not know who he really is; in fact, Bloom reads his latest letter from Martha, in Chapter Five. She writes, “I often think of the beautiful name you have” (5.248). Bloom, as Henry, has told Martha that he is married, and Martha asks him about his wife, but she has not met Bloom/Flower and could not recognize him if they were standing next to each other on a Dublin street. Therefore, by Bloom’s choice, only parts of Bloom find their way into the newspaper. Bloom, then, exploits the newspaper’s inability to fully and accurately represent the world. In so doing, he takes advantage of this flaw of the medium so that he may remain partially obscured to the newspaper’s readers, even while purposeful appearing there.

The other significant instance in which Bloom is both in and not in the newspaper comes in relation to the funeral that Bloom attends. Just after readers are introduced to Bloom and he reads *Titbits* in his outhouse, Bloom remembers a man who has just died, Paddy Dignam, and thinks to himself, “What time is the funeral? Better find out in the paper” (4.542-3). From this moment, close to 8:00 in the morning, until sometime between 4:00 and 5:00 in the afternoon, Bloom carries a copy of the *Freeman’s Journal* with him even though he voices a desire to discard it late in the

morning.<sup>35</sup> Throughout the day, this newspaper is always present and Bloom repeatedly consults it for information. After finding the required information in the newspaper about Dignam's funeral, Bloom attends, along with Mr. Powers, Simon Dedalus (Stephen's father), and Martin Cunningham. They pass a spot where a murder took place, and Bloom thinks, "They love reading about it. Man's head found in a garden. Her clothing consisted of. How she met her death. Recent outrage. The weapon used. Murderer is still at large. Clues. A shoelace. The body to be exhumed" (6.479-81). Bloom thinks of how the newspapers write-up such stories, quickly listing the gruesome facts that entice readers—Anderson's Joe Welling would likely approve of this style of writing.

At the funeral, a newspaper reporter, Hynes, records in his notebook the people present. Hynes talks to Bloom, and it is obvious that the two have met. Hynes asks Bloom, "What is your christian name? I'm not sure" (6.880-1). Joyce writes Bloom's reply, "L, Mr. Bloom said. Leopold. And you might put down M'Coy's name too. He asked me to" (6.882-3). Charley M'Coy had worked on the *Freeman*; Hynes remembers him and does not seem to mind adding his name to the list of funeral attendees, even though he is not among the thirteen mourners. Then, in a comical moment, Hynes asks Bloom about one of the mourners that he does not recognize:

And tell us, Hynes said, do you know the fellow in the, fellow was over  
there in the ...

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<sup>35</sup> References to time, place, etc. have been taken from Don Gifford's *Ulysses Annotated: Notes for James Joyce's Ulysses*.

He looked around.

Macintosh. Yes, I saw him, Mr. Bloom said. Where is he now?

M'Intosh, Hynes said scribbling. I don't know who he is. Is that his name?

He moved away, looking about him.

No, Mr. Bloom began, turning and stopping. I say, Hynes! (6.891-898)

Hynes has not understood Bloom correctly and does not care to double-check the information he has received, quickly moving away and on to the next bit of "information" to be recorded. Hynes' source for the name "M'Intosh" is Bloom, a man that Hynes is not familiar enough with to know or remember his first name—though readers learn that Hynes *has* borrowed a few pounds from Bloom in the past. The result of this interaction and both slipshod and rushed reporting is revealed in the text of *Ulysses*. Much later, at 1:00 in the morning, Bloom and Stephen stop at a cabman's shelter. While talking, Bloom notices a late edition of the newspaper, the *Telegraph*. Scanning the newspaper, Bloom finds a story about Dignam's funeral and glances at the list of mourners Hynes has included; just after Hynes' own name, the list reads, "*L. Boom, CP M'Coy,--M'Intosh and several others*" (16.1260-1, emphasis original). Thus, there are a number of discrepancies between the reality of the funeral, as conveyed to readers in Chapter Six, and the record of the funeral in the newspaper, communicated through Bloom's reading of the newspaper in Chapter Sixteen.

First, Bloom had noted to himself the total number of mourners, just before his short conversation with Hynes. Readers are aware, therefore, that there were not

“several others” in attendance; in truth, the list that Hynes provides already has extra mourners because he has, at Bloom’s request, added the name of M’Coy to the list even though he was not there, and he has even added Stephen Dedalus, for some reason, who was neither present nor asked to be included in the list of attendees. Additionally, Hynes has listed the mysterious man who was wearing a Macintosh as “M’Intosh,” though Bloom had tried to inform Hynes that he did not know the man’s name. Finally, although Hynes is acquainted with Bloom and Joyce leads readers to believe that he knows his last name—since he only asks Bloom what his “christian” name is—Bloom is listed as “L. Boom.” Thus, either M’Coy’s shoddy and rushed reporting is further highlighted by his failure to check with Bloom about the spelling of his surname or the name has been misspelled by someone, like a typesetter, after the story has left M’Coy’s hands. Either way, the newspaper gets it wrong, but the mistake seems particularly egregious if the problem is the former, since M’Coy is supposed to have some knowledge of Bloom prior to seeing him at the funeral. If the reporter can botch the name of someone he has borrowed money from, readers wonder how accurate he is when reporting about people he does not know.

Bloom has a clear reaction to the piece he reads in the newspaper:

Nettled not a little by L. Boom (as it incorrectly stated) and the line of bitched type but tickled to death simultaneously by C.P. M’Coy and Stephen Dedalus B. A. who were conspicuous, needless to say, by their total absence (to say nothing of M’Intosh) L. Boom pointed it out to his companion B. A. engaged in stifling another yawn, half nervousness, not

forgetting the usual crop of nonsensical howlers and misprints. (16.1262-7)

Joyce includes this passage to make sure readers do not miss the misspelling of Bloom's name in the newspaper's listing, just a few lines above. Furthermore, Bloom describes the newspaper's mistakes—howlers and misprints—as “usual.” Stephen is so uninterested in the commonplace mistakes of a major city newspaper that he reacts by “stifling another yawn.” Joyce underscores his point, here: there are a number of errors that occur in a few short lines of the article Bloom reads in the *Telegraph*, and it is very clear that Joyce believes his version of the funeral, communicated to readers through Bloom, is to be juxtaposed with the one he offers through the newspaper's report. By highlighting an event that the newspaper gets so wrong, Joyce points out to readers that the newspapers' overall record of the day should not be given more authority than his fictional rendering. Although the press claimed a high level of authority, that authority could actually be based on a low level of competence in reporting the facts of the day, and Joyce suggests that the press did not always follow through on the implicit understanding that the press provided *the* authoritative version of the day's events.

Characters like Bloom and Stephen, with very different views of the newspaper business, both understand this discrepancy so well that it does not surprise them when they see such poor reporting published in one of Dublin's major newspapers.

Joyce used the names of real newspapers, like the *Telegraph*, and he mined newspapers of June 16, 1904 for stories that appeared in those editions. Likewise, he incorporated actual names of Dublin's residents, but he did not create characters that he

believed to be copies of those people. Joyce, rather, filters the newspapers' record of the day through his own lens. Ultimately, Joyce argues that readers of newspapers do not possess a full and accurate picture of the day, though he does not suggest that such a thing as complete comprehension exists.<sup>36</sup> Even if Dubliners read every word of every edition of every newspaper on June 16, 1904, they would not know that Molly Bloom had consummated a love affair with Hugh Boylan or that Leopold Bloom had attended Patrick Dignam's funeral or that Stephen Dedalus had been offered, and turned down, a job working at the *Freeman's Journal*. In *Ulysses*, Joyce dispels the illusion that newspapers offer a more authentic version of the world than fiction with its imagined people. Like Sherwood Anderson, he points out all of the things that do not get into the newspapers and how reporters might make up details—such as how many people, and who, attended the Dignam funeral—which are then offered to readers as facts.

Joyce extends Anderson's project of examining the authorial response to newspapers in so far as he includes the newspaper as a sort of character in *Ulysses*. Many of the characters in *Ulysses* interact with the newspaper, whereas in *Winesburg, Ohio*, readers simply understand that George works for the newspaper. Anderson includes scenes of George working, including in the offices of the *Eagle*, but there are no instances of the characters reading the *Eagle*. Conversely, as noted above, Joyce has Bloom reading the *Freeman's Journal* shortly after he is introduced to readers. From the start of the day until the early morning hours of the next day, the newspaper is present,

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<sup>36</sup> Brian Artese discusses the “promise of complete comprehension,” in relation to print media and fiction in his book *Testimony on Trial: Conrad, James, and the Contest for Modernism* (2012).

consulted, and read. Thus, while Anderson extends his critique on the reading of the newspaper to comments about content, such as when Joe Welling suggests that George should use explosive headlines to grab readers' attention, Joyce extends his critique of newspapers' flawed promise to deliver a more complete and accurate picture of the world by modeling standard newspaper reading practices,<sup>37</sup> showing that many of the citizens receive newspaper content second-hand, at least, from others who have read stories or articles in the newspaper. As Bloom heads to the Dignam funeral, his companions talk about a speech in the morning paper which some have read and some have not (6.1151-3). At the end of the day, at the cabman's shelter, a cabby reads aloud from a newspaper to the bored diners (16.1662-7).

But the main instance of Dubliners getting their news second-hand comes with a character known as the Citizen, in Chapter Twelve. Chapter Twelve is titled, in Joyce's guide, "The Cyclops." Joyce begins the chapter with first person narration, "I," and includes puns on the letter/word. The Citizen is a character who sits in a pub with a stack of newspapers, relating their contents to the pub's patrons. Kershner notes that "[s]itting there surrounded by his heaps of newspapers, the Citizen monopolizes the conversation by borrowing their authority, even as he critiques their limitations" ("Newspapers" 28).<sup>38</sup> The Citizen, like the Cyclops, has limited vision because his

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<sup>37</sup> Kershner argues that "the act of newspaper consumption alters with each reader, a fact that Joyce highlights in his many portraits of newspaper readers reading" ("Newspapers and Periodicals" 21). Also, because the Citizen operates like a newspaper, "with its simple public ideological commitment and its assumption of impersonal authority," Kershner claims that he might be read *as a newspaper*—thus, one instance of the newspaper as a character in the novel (30).

<sup>38</sup> Brian Artese writes about a shift that occurred late in the nineteenth century in relation to the new journalism in which "the series of long testimonials that had once constituted the newspaper were now

world is comprised of the news he reads in the various newspapers in his heap.

Similarly, Joyce argues that newspapers have a limited scope, metaphorically the tunnel vision of the Cyclops with one eye, because they have motives associated with their content that include political and national slants—the Citizen rails against *The Irish Independent* because it was founded by the Irish hero Charles Parnell but had developed pro-British attitudes—as well as an eye towards profit-making. Joyce, though, levels his harshest criticism at the pub-goers who gain the slightest view of the world by accepting the limited range of the newspapers after being filtered or censored by the Citizen, with his own ideas and opinions coloring what he disseminates to his listeners.

For all its focus on Dublin newspapers, “The Cyclops” is not the chapter that centers most on newspapers in *Ulysses*. “Aeolus,” the title Joyce later gave to Chapter Seven, actually takes place in a newspaper office. “Aeolus” follows “Hades,” the chapter that contains Dignam’s funeral, where Hynes conducts his shabby recording of the event for his newspaper article. This juxtaposition allows readers to first witness M‘Coy’s irresponsible reporting and then see inside the workings of the medium that prints M‘Coy’s work. “Aeolus” is the cave of winds in Homer’s *Odyssey*, and Joyce

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sifted, readily paraphrased, and framed with commentary to aid readers’ consumption of the content” (9). Artese notes that print media was “elevated more distinctly above its constituent elements and attained an effectively extradiegetic purchase from which it could claim [as Harold Herd has argued] ‘comprehensive coverage of … [sic] modern life’ in general” (9). Artese’s argument pertains to the perceived increase in first-person narration, as a form of “testimony,” in modernist fiction and how “literary criticism takes it as a given that modernism is interested in testimony because it raises questions about our access to truth and reality” (3). Artese is correct to argue against the assumption that modernists refuted the possibility of accessing truth and reality; although I do not make a specifically narratological argument in this project, the comparison between modernist first-person narration and the world of print media could be viewed as an attempt by modernists to display how testimony in fiction could be as true and real, or more so, than newspaper articles which, as Artese argues, increasingly possessed an authoritative entity (such as “the *Times*” or “the *Herald*”) which oversaw those articles, giving them “authority” and the “promise of complete comprehension” (Artese 9).

offers up some windy people inside the newspaper offices. The entire chapter is composed of parts that are set off from one another by headlines in all-caps. The first headline reads “IN THE HEART OF THE HIBERNIAN METROPOLIS” (7.1-2), and Joyce squarely places the newspaper at Dublin’s center. Likewise, Joyce provides his readers with a look inside the workings of that heart, where Bloom and Stephen almost cross paths. Ostensibly, as stated in one of the early headlines that appears in the chapter, Joyce wants to show readers “HOW A GREAT DAILY ORGAN IS TURNED OUT” (7.85). Readers find that it is turned out with little care for content and a good deal of loafing around and gabbing.<sup>39</sup>

Certainly, Joyce’s later titling of this chapter points his readers toward the “wind” in more than one of that word’s possible meanings. Early in the chapter, as Bloom prepares to head to the *Telegraph* offices, Joyce mentions the door of an office there which “whispered: ee: cree. They always build one door opposite another for the wind to. Way in. Way out” (7.50-51). This early mention in the chapter of the wind, placed at the back of an office at the *Freeman*, illuminates the transient nature of newspaper content and workers. The workers move from one newspaper to the next, and the stories that come into newspaper offices may quickly pass through, as fast as the wind travels through the entrance and immediately afterwards the opposite door. Myles Crawford, looking at the *Independent*, comments on the movement of newspaper men in a reference to wind, as well: “Funny the way those newspaper men veer about when they

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<sup>39</sup> For example, the general consensus among the men at the newspaper office is that Deasy is a ridiculous man, but the newspaper prints his letter on hoof and mouth disease anyway.

get wind of a new opening” (7308-309). Crawford finds this behavior “funny” because of the articles written and published by these newspaper men who regularly disparage their rival writers and newspapers. Crawford continues, “Weathercocks. Hot and cold in the same breath. Wouldn’t know which to believe. One story good till you hear the next. Go for one another baldheaded in the papers and then all blows over. Hail fellow well met the next moment” (7.309-312). With yet another reference to wind, here as “breath,” Joyce critiques newspaper writing from within his imaginary newspaper office. These writers can easily move from newspaper to newspaper, even ones that they had recently criticized, because they are not invested in the content of their writing. Joyce knocks newspaper writing and journalism’s claim to authority by pointing out the hollowness of newspaper articles and the lack of integrity in the writers themselves. Because these writers do not invest any genuine belief in their attacks against rival newspapermen and papers, they find no difficulty blowing hot one moment and cold the next. Their loyalty and belief lasts little longer than the readers’ interest in the newspaper stories themselves.

This point is further elaborated through Joyce’s reminder of the material newspaper pages’ short-lived existence. As Bloom momentarily dwells in the printing press machine room, he cannot help but think of all the paper that is consumed by the machine and spit out as newspapers: “Miles of it unreeled. What becomes of it after? O, wrap up meat parcels: various uses, thousand and one things” (7.136-138). Because newspaper stories are not meant to be leisurely read and reread, kept by the daily reader for later study and perusal, the physical paper can be repurposed for other ends.

Newspaper reporters are aware of this fact, and this awareness may suggest a reason for the lack of sincerity and effort in reporting—as in the example of M‘Coy at Dignam’s funeral. Joyce, however, does not intend his readers to read through *Ulysses* in a single day only to cannibalize its pages for kindling or wrapping up meat. In drawing readers’ attention to this difference in consumption and use, Joyce is making an argument for literature’s enduring place, as separate from newspaper content, and worth or value, in opposition to the value of the newspaper.

While a newspaper story might gain traction for the day or possibly for weeks, most newspaper stories’ lives are short and soon forgotten. Joyce illustrates this point by providing an exception to the rule, the story of Ignatius Gallaher, described in the chapter as the “father of scare journalism” (7.690). This reporter “paralyse[d] Europe” in 1881 with his stories about the “murder in the Phoenix park” (7.628, 632-33). The “GENTLEMEN OF THE PRESS,” as they are described in the third headline of the chapter, only remember Gallaher, however, for being a pioneer in the new style of journalism. He helped direct the trajectory of the newspaper business and its content which, in itself, is not very memorable on a day-to-day basis. Instead, the turn-of-the-century newspaper is one that is meant to be consumed quickly, both its stories and the material paper pages. Unlike *Ulysses*, which Joyce hoped would stand the test of time (and has), the newspapers’ stories are meant to be read and discarded before the next edition. The rapid consumption of these newspapers and their stories is alluded to in a few instances of the chapter, including once in relation to Gallaher. Gallaher is described as “Clever,” and Crawford says that Gallaher “Gave it to them on a hot plate”

(7.673, 674). Elsewhere in the chapter, the men read aloud from the paper and, while they find the content ridiculous, one of the men reminds the others that “it goes down like hot cake that stuff” (7.338-339). Here, Joyce continues to mark a distinction between stories that are published in the newspaper and novels—even if novelists use newspaper stories as the basis for novels. Cleverly, Joyce employs the characters with ties to the newspaper business to make this distinction for him. Because Joyce approaches the comparison, or contrast, in this way he is able to claim that it is not only authors like himself who observe a distinction between the genres but people on the inside of the newspaper business, too, who witness a difference between what makes serious art and what makes good newspaper copy.

The stories that go “down like hot cake” and are served “on a hot plate” are also intended for the widest possible audience. Again, Joyce’s newspaper men and their associates in the chapter mark the divide, as they observe it, between what is fit for the newspaper and what is not. One of these men, Ned Lambert, reads Doughy Daw’s (Dan Dawson’s) speech about Ireland which has been printed in one of the newspapers, a speech filled with flowery language that the men can barely stand. Ned asks Mr. Dedalus, “How’s that for high?” and parodies a phrase of Daw’s, “*The pensive bosom and the overarsing [sic] leafage*,” followed by, “O boys! O boys!” (original emphasis 7.248-249, 2253). The content “goes down like hot cake” because it paints Ireland in a favorable light, but the men in the newspaper office criticize Daw’s style—even though it is primarily intended for a listening audience—and deem it “High falutin stuff.”

Bladderbags” (7.260).<sup>40</sup> When Bloom, who entered in the middle of Lambert’s reading of Daw’s words, asks the group what he is reading, Professor MacHugh jokes, “A recently discovered fragment of Cicero” (7.270). Later, MacHugh judges Dawson an “inflated windbag”; yet, the newspapers happily print this “windbag’s” words (7.315). Lambert is repeatedly interrupted as he tries to finish reading Dawson’s speech, but even Lambert does not take the speech seriously, “chuckling with delight” after “toss[ing] the newspaper aside” once he is finished reading the transcribed speech (7.333). Although the men find Dawson’s speech ridiculous, they also understand that such content sells newspapers, as previously cited: “All very fine to jeer at it now in cold print but it goes down like hot cake that stuff” (7.338-339). Even though Dawson’s style, which serves his oratorical purpose, differs from the usual newspaper style, his words are hardly literary. They can be printed in the newspaper because they will be popular with readers. Although the men at the newspaper office ironically deem it “highbrow,” it is really only posing as highbrow, much like when the character Lenehan accepts a cigarette from MacHugh and tells him, “*Thanky vous*” (7.468).<sup>41</sup> Actual highbrow content, like “Aeolus” or *Ulysses* more generally, is not suitable for the newspaper because it will not “go down like hot cake.”

Bloom notes the content that sells papers, and it is far from highbrow:

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<sup>40</sup> Such an estimation of Daw’s work presages F. Scott Fitzgerald’s character Pat Hobby, a hack who makes a strict distinction between what he sees as highbrow “authors”—usually from the East—and the “writers” that Hollywood desires for script work.

<sup>41</sup> Joyce calls attention to the level of discourse, and its false—or mocking—attempt at being highbrow, by stating in the following line, “The editor came from the inner office, a straw hat awry on his brow” (7.469). The men’s evaluations of the level of both discourse and published content is a bit “awry,” like that hat on the editor’s head.

It's not the ads and side features sell a weekly, not the stale news in the official gazette Queen Anne is dead. Published by authority in the year one thousand and... Nature notes. Cartoons. Phil Blake's weekly Pat and Bull story. Uncle Toby's page for tiny tots. Country bumpkin's queries. Dear Mr. Editor, what is a good cure for flatulence? ... Mainly all pictures. Shapely bathers on golden strand. World's biggest balloon. Double marriage of sisters celebrated. Two bridegrooms laughing heartily at each other. (7.89-96)

Particularly interesting is Bloom's statement that "stale news" does not sell newspapers; conversely, Joyce takes the stale news, news from 1904, and uses it as the basis for his novel. Once again, it is a character connected to the newspaper business that tells readers the difference between content that makes up a good saleable newspaper and the content that may be used to construct a quality novel. Bloom's assessment points to the reasons why the public buys and consumes newspapers, as opposed to novels. Bloom claims, however, that these reasons are mostly connected to lowbrow content, often with little text, simple text, or virtually no text at all, as in the case with the pictures. At one point in the chapter, while the men are having a discussion about Britain and the Roman Empire, MacHugh even says, "We mustn't be led away by words, by sounds or words" (7.484-485). For men whose trade is words, Joyce characterizes them as ambivalent at times, and sometimes hostile, to words and their power to leave a lasting impression.

Joyce inserts Stephen into this equation approximately halfway into the chapter; in a sense, Stephen is right in the "middle" of things. When he enters, he bears Deasy's

letter about “foot and mouth” disease; amusingly, Deasy is characterized as a man who might often put his foot in his mouth and is generally unpopular among these men (7.533). In contrast, Stephen is someone whom these men admire, and he is offered a job by the editor: “I want you to write something for me, he said. Something with a bite in it. You can do it. I see it in your face. *In the lexicon of youth*” (original emphasis, 7.616-617). Just before this offer, the men are discussing and listing “[a]ll the talents”; these include “[l]iterature and the press” (7.607).<sup>42</sup> Stephen is smart, too smart not to see that he is being primed for the editor’s offer; by pairing literature with the press, the editor hopes to convince Stephen that newspaper writing is on the level of literary efforts, but Stephen immediately thinks, “See it in your face. See it in your eye. Lazy idle little schemer” (7.618). Stephen is not persuaded by the editor’s flattery. He does not believe that this group is very sincere, and he views the group—particularly the editor—as “lazy” and “idle.” It is not surprising, then, that even after J. J. O’Molloy tries to press the issue by telling Stephen, “He wants you for the pressgang,” Stephen is not interested (7.625).

The editor compares Deasy’s letter with the writing he thinks Stephen could produce for the paper, saying, “Foot and mouth disease! the editor cried in a scornful invective. Great nationalist meeting in Borris-in-Ossory. All balls! Bulldosing the public! Give them something with bite in it. Put us all into it, damn his soul” (7.619-621). But Stephen has a different idea about how a writer can “[p]ut us all into it,” and

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<sup>42</sup> Just after the pairing of literature and the press Joyce, writes, “If Bloom were here, the professor said. The gentle art of advertisement” (7.608). The “professor,” McHugh, says this with a mocking tone, but Joyce wants his readers to consider the place of “advertisement within this grouping of the “talents.”

so does Joyce; writing *Ulysses* is Joyce's way of putting the Irish into print. Stephen struggles to earn a living, but though Stephen is not happy with his teaching job he is also not interested in writing for a newspaper. Kerhsner notes that "newspaper and periodical publication was an accepted way of establishing intellectual currency" at the time in which *Ulysses* is set,<sup>43</sup> and the character that tries to persuade Stephen into writing for the press "believes he is offering membership in a sort of knight-errantry, in which Stephen will be empowered to strike a blow for truth" ("Newspapers and Periodicals" 2). Stephen, however, suggests that he would be lowering his standards by writing for the *Freeman*; Joyce proposes that Stephen believes he is better situated to "strike a blow for truth" by concentrating on more "literary" writing. The editor's idea is for Stephen to write something compelling that has a wide appeal, aspects that he feels are missing from Deasy's letter, but while Stephen shares these men's disdain for Deasy, he does not see newspaper writing as offering an alternative. Stephen's faith lies in his poetic endeavors; this is the writing where Stephen tries to "[p]ut us all into it." And Stephen's evaluation of these men as "lazy" is a condemnation of their lack of seriousness in their work with words. In contrast, Joyce portrays Stephen as a writer who takes his own writing very seriously.

Much earlier in the novel, only a few pages after Stephen tears off the bottom of Deasy's letter, Joyce introduces readers to Bloom. The initial contemplation of literary and newspaper writing that begins with Stephen's interaction with Deasy and his "letter

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<sup>43</sup> Kershner also states that the main areas of economic productivity in Dublin at the turn-of-the-century were the production of alcoholic beverages and printing (2).

to the editor” continues with Bloom. He thinks about the *Freeman* and a publication called *Titbits*, taking an old copy of the latter with him to the outhouse. He reads some of *Titbits* in the outhouse: “One tabloid of cascara sagrada. Life might be so. It did not move or touch him but it was something quick and neat. Print anything now” (4.510-12).<sup>44</sup> Bloom’s negative opinion does not keep him from reading more. He thinks about what a writer earned from a “quick and neat” piece in *Titbits*, “three pounds, thirteen and six,” and thinks that he “[m]ight manage a sketch” himself (4.517-8). Still, Bloom tears in half the prize-winning story from the issue and uses it as toilet paper in the outhouse. Though Bloom is not above participating in the world of print media, both as an advertising canvasser for a newspaper and as a potential writer, he does not conceive of the medium’s content as great literature. Bloom, simply, utilizes the newspaper and print media industry as a means to an end.<sup>45</sup> He does, however, believe that newspaper writing is “[i]mpotent work,” and he tells Stephen as much when the two finally meet up and Bloom discusses newspaper work in the same breath as “literary labour” (16.1152-1155). Stephen, as the aesthete of the novel, is not convinced.

Joyce gets at something underneath the surface of life by looking behind the curtain of a major city newspaper even though the newspaper he presents is fictitious, his

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<sup>44</sup> Cascara sagrada (“sacred bark”) is the commercial name for the bark of *Rhamnus purshiana* and was traditionally used as a laxative ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhamnus\\_purshiana](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhamnus_purshiana)). *Titbits* was a “light weekly” publication that was in competition with weekly newspapers and “mixed news with a variety of entertaining features” (Kershner “Titbits” 2), very similar to a turn-of-the-century newspaper. Stanislaus Joyce claimed that their father only read *Titbits* “for general culture” (Joyce, Stanislaus 92).

<sup>45</sup> Another example in the chapter of Bloom considering how he might take advantage of his connection to the newspaper industry comes when Bloom is thinking about his daughter, Milly. Milly lives away from home, and Bloom thinks that he “[m]ight work a press pass” to see her on his vacation (4.453). Thus, Bloom hopes to convince the *Freeman* to pay his travel expenses, something, as we have seen, that James Joyce did more than once in his life.

creation (101). The headlines in “Aeolus” break up the chapter into fragments, much like a newspaper. But the newspapers of this moment were struggling to unify their fragments into a cohesive whole. At the same time they were moving away from an older style of the newspaper business in which newspaper writers were anonymous, something that had allowed “the newspaper” to maintain authority as an entity outside of its individual writers. Joyce shows that he, as a novelist, does not have this problem. Like other modernist writers, Joyce acts as the authority and thus the unifier of his own fragments. The pieces of this chapter fit together through the unifying vision, structure,<sup>46</sup> and style that Joyce dictates. This is even truer for Joyce than for many of his contemporaries because Sylvia Beach allowed him to maintain an immense amount of control over his content through the entire printing process of *Ulysses*.<sup>47</sup> Joyce emphasizes style as an aspect of his writing that separates his literary efforts from his newspaper writing and newspaper content more generally.

In “Aeolus” Bloom had claimed that the “news” content was not a selling point for the newspaper, but in truth all of the newspaper’s content had to adhere to a style that was marketable. Da Rosa notes this aspect of newspaper writing and claims that newspaper discourse was “written by a cadre of replaceable, exchangeable writers, all

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<sup>46</sup> One way that Joyce highlights this cohesion in “Aeolus” is by giving the chapter a chronological narrative structure. Unlike a newspaper, which does not maintain a narrative when moving from one item to the next—which could include articles, advertisements, pictures, and various other content—“Aeolus” maintains a line from the start of the chapter to the end. Even though Joyce employs stylistic techniques within the chapter that may be disorienting to readers, a style that would not be acceptable for newspaper writing, “Aeolus” is easily understood by readers as moving from one moment to the next. Joyce is the unifier of the sections, overall, and his decision to employ a chronological structure is one way in which he shows his absolute control.

<sup>47</sup> As I will examine later in this project, F. Scott Fitzgerald also interrogates the level of control a writer has over his or her content; Fitzgerald wrote about this in both *The Pat Hobby Stories* and *The Last Tycoon*.

similarly trained to reproduce the standards of journalism. These writers had become extensions of the mechanical mode of reproduction which allowed the paper to be printed in vast quantities on a daily basis” (21). Da Rosa also argues that “[j]ournalists, as representatives of [the mass cultural] marketplace, worked not as independent, creative agents, but as collective laborers at the disposal of editors and publishers” (20).<sup>48</sup> These restrictions are one reason that Stephen does not consider working on the pressgang.<sup>49</sup>

Čapek’s quote about the contrast between literature and newspapers, that “literature is the expression of old things in eternally new forms, while newspapers are eternally expressing new realities in a stabilized and unchangeable form” (qtd. in “Mallarmé” 45), speaks well to what Joyce does in *Ulysses*; he appropriates old news and connects it in a new way, but he also shows how newspaper content exists in a static form. Joyce employs characters from both the literary world and the newspaper world and brings them into contact with one another to examine the connections and divides between these two realms. He challenges journalism’s claim to increasing authority over the representation of the world, in opposition to literature, while employing recognizable

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<sup>48</sup> This kind of collaborative creation presupposes the Hollywood system that F. Scott Fitzgerald critiqued and which I will examine later in this project.

<sup>49</sup> Hemingway was one of the many writers who worked on a newspaper and was trained in the “standards of journalism.” The first maxim of “The Star Copy Style,” the style sheet that Hemingway was given when he started working on the *Kansas City Star*, is a good example of how the newspaper business restrained its writers: “Use short sentences. Use short first paragraphs. Use vigorous English. Be positive, not negative.” It has been argued that Hemingway utilized the very first guideline, “Use short sentences,” in his creation of a new literary style. This guideline, however, is only the first of hundreds of suggestions on the sheet. When working on his own literary projects, Hemingway did not have to subscribe to any of these guidelines; he was free to write content that he perceived as “literature”—only constrained by his publisher’s reluctance to publish content that could result in legal action due to censorship. The quote from “The Star Copy Style” comes from a private collection.

newspaper techniques—such as headlines. Although Joyce depicts individual newspapers and their stories as quickly consumed and disposed of, he also emphasizes their overwhelming presence (they are almost omnipresent in *Ulysses*) and increased relevance in the daily life of modernity.

Rando claims that “[Gertrude] Stein and Joyce look back to their earlier work and, finally judging it as complicit with news discourse, construct their later work in clear contrast to both news and their own former representational practices” (23). As my project argues, Joyce was already constructing his work in contrast to newspapers in *Ulysses*, even though Joyce used elements from newspaper writing in the novel.<sup>50</sup> Ultimately, Joyce criticizes the content of a medium that was in competition with literature for the modern reading audience’s time and attention, a medium that he had often written for and had once even dreamed of participating in as the partial owner of a city newspaper. Joyce does not dismiss the medium of newspapers outright in *Ulysses*, but with the benefit of hindsight—looking back to the turn of the century—he points out some of its flaws to his own readers, an exercise that brings attention to certain failings of a medium while highlighting the strength of literature. *Ulysses* exhibits the case for an artistic form of writing in which the author has a high level of authority in the decisions about the final content and a style of writing that exists in opposition to the mechanical collaborative style of competing mass media of the early twentieth century,

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<sup>50</sup> For more explanation and added examples of how Joyce used newspaper techniques and elements in *Ulysses*, see Marc Da Rosa’s *The Newspaper, the Novel and the Project of Modernism: Reflections of Journalistic Form and Authority in James, Woolf and Joyce [sic]*. Da Rosa delves deepest into Joyce and *Ulysses* in the third chapter of this work.

including Hollywood, the realm that Fitzgerald would take on after living and working there. Fitzgerald would show readers the pitfalls of collaborative writing that wrested authority from the authors with ability and allowed the power over stories to be centered in executives while, at the same time, hack writers were allowed to remain in the process. If the hacks could not destroy an author's story, the studio executive would; this is the environment that Fitzgerald described in his final works.

## CHAPTER IV

### SCREENING AUTHORS IN HOLLYWOOD: NARRATIVE AUTHORITY AND COMPETING REPRESENTATIONS

I saw that the novel, which at my maturity was the strongest and supplest medium for conveying thought and emotion from one human being to another, was becoming subordinated to a mechanical and communal art that, whether in the hands of Hollywood merchants or Russian idealists, was capable of reflecting only the tritest thought, the most obvious emotion.

--F. Scott Fitzgerald, “Pasting It Together”

David Rando argues that “news had pretensions of covering the world as only literature had been accustomed to do” (3). Not surprisingly, authors—like Anderson and Joyce—responded to this new threat to their established role in “covering the world.” Print news, however, was not the only medium that was competing for relevance in the modern world or for preeminence in representing experience in the early twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> Hollywood moviemakers also aspired to achieve dominance in the contest for representation in the culture; cinema scholar Norman Denzin claims that by the 1910s “American culture *became* a cinematic culture, a culture which came to know itself [...] through the images and stories that Hollywood produced” (my emphasis, qtd. in Seed, *Cinematic* 1). Denzen’s statement implies that American culture was not primarily a literary or book culture in the 1910s, that literature was not the primary means through which American culture “came to know itself.” In *Cinematic Fictions* (2009), David Seed cites the poet Vachel Lindsay, among the first American commentators on film, who claimed in 1925 that the “eye is invading the province of the ear, and ... pictures

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<sup>1</sup> “Representing Experience in the Early Twentieth Century” is the subtitle of David Rando’s book *Modernist Fiction and News*.

are crowding literature to the wall” (1-2). Lindsay’s diction raises the contest from one between rivals to a war between enemies, with image-based stories “invading” the traditional space of literature. Seed notes that the kinds of anxiety authors felt over this incursion varied, but that, in particular, “it was a real concern for F. Scott Fitzgerald” (2). Although Fitzgerald was apprehensive about this invasion, he continually returned to Hollywood to participate in the movie business, which raises the question of why Fitzgerald would contribute to a medium that contested literature’s dominance in directing how “a culture … came to know itself.” In his chapter on Fitzgerald, Seed asserts, “Unlike Hemingway, [Fitzgerald] was drawn to all aspects of the movie business and one of his keenest disappointments came from his failure to achieve success in Hollywood” (86). Throughout his career Fitzgerald always believed that “the movies [were] a tremendously important question” (qtd. in Seed 86). Fitzgerald’s career-long questioning of the movies and Hollywood manifests itself in the work he was writing toward the end of his life, at the end of the 1930s: the unfinished novel *The Last Tycoon* (1941) and the series of short stories about a character named Pat Hobby.

### **The Rise and Fall of a Star Author: Inside and Outside the Hollywood Circle**

One of Fitzgerald’s biographers, Jeffrey Meyers, claims that he had a “lifelong fascination with the luxurious life of Hollywood film stars” (274).<sup>2</sup> His enthrallement

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<sup>2</sup> I heavily rely on Meyers’ biography because he places more emphasis than some other Fitzgerald biographers on relationships like the one Fitzgerald had with the Hollywood executive Irving Thalberg.

with that lifestyle mirrored his courtship of Zelda, who was remembered by Virginia Foster Durr, a childhood friend, as “always [being] treated like a visiting film star: radiant, glowing, desired by all” (qtd. in Meyers 45). Fitzgerald’s attractions to Zelda and to Hollywood celebrity and money are connected to his willingness to work so closely with the film industry, but an ancillary reason was his desire for acceptance. Before he found success as an author, Fitzgerald—though popular among his peers—had difficulty gaining the respect of his classmates at Princeton and his fellow soldiers in the Army. At Princeton, Fitzgerald began lasting friendships with Edmund Wilson and John Peale Bishop, but he was frequently ill-treated by the two men throughout his life. For example, Meyers notes that, in 1916, Wilson and Bishop published a “cruel satiric poem that put the popular but cheeky Fitzgerald in his proper place. They contrasted his shallowness to their learning, and deflated his flashy cleverness, superficial reading, derivative cynicism and unworthy ambition” (32). This poem deeply hurt Fitzgerald, particularly because it came at a difficult time in his life as he struggled with illness and the possibility of flunking out of Princeton.<sup>3</sup> Near the end of his life these same friends proved cruel when Fitzgerald was vulnerable. Less than a month before his death on December 21, 1940, Fitzgerald complained to Wilson about an article Bishop published in the *Virginia Quarterly* in which Fitzgerald felt Bishop had misrepresented aspects of his life and “reproached [him] with being a suck around the rich” (*Letters* 349).

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<sup>3</sup> A major reason for Fitzgerald’s academic jeopardy was his intense focus on being accepted by his peers. Fitzgerald successfully gained admittance to one of the most popular clubs on campus, the Triangle Club, but by spending all of his time and efforts on accomplishing this goal, he almost completely neglected his studies.

Fitzgerald was especially upset by this attack because he believed he had not only been a friend to Bishop but that he had also assisted in helping Bishop to “finish his Civil War book and get it published” (349). Wilson, the man Fitzgerald was appealing to, was equally capable of wounding him.

At the beginning of his career, Fitzgerald had little money but possessed the ability to work on his own projects in his spare time, writing film scenarios along with stories; he was not successful with either fiction or film, receiving 122 rejection slips which he used to decorate his room (Meyers 48). Fitzgerald’s early efforts aimed at the movie industry and his inability to find success in that kind of writing anticipate the end of his career (and his life), but it is clear that he was open to all areas of expression in the hope of finding an outlet for his voice *and* a way to make money. After the publication of *This Side of Paradise* in March of 1920, Fitzgerald received widespread attention; Meyers notes that the book brought Fitzgerald instant fame (56). Suddenly, Fitzgerald had achieved the life he sought, both as an artist and as a writer making a good deal of money. It has often been suggested that Fitzgerald’s engagement with Zelda hinged on his ability to enhance his financial position; thus, his motivation for *This Side of Paradise* was quite complicated. Meyers asserts that Fitzgerald found his subject, voice, and style during the intense period of work in Minnesota on the revisions of that book, work that helped make Fitzgerald into a professional writer (50). The success of the novel, however, coincided with acceptance of stories by a number of magazines and allowed Fitzgerald to quickly make money on “amusing, cleverly plotted, and sometimes absurd tales” (51). The money eased Fitzgerald’s financial anxieties and allowed him

time to write more complex “literary” stories that were published in highbrow venues like *Smart Set*, much like modern-day actors who agree to star in blockbuster movies to secure enough money and time to pursue arty independent films; Fitzgerald argued that his popular stories provided him the money, and thus freedom, to work on his more serious efforts (Meyers 79). With his new money Fitzgerald secured Zelda’s hand as well, but this triumph had unintended consequences. For instance, he would always feel the need to write popular and lucrative stories to keep up the lifestyle he wanted and Zelda demanded.<sup>4</sup>

Zelda had humorously illustrated Fitzgerald’s need for commercial success as early as 1922 when she published a review of *The Beautiful and the Damned* (1922) in the *New York Tribune* in which she urged readers to buy the book because she “knows where there is the cutest cloth of gold dress for only \$300 in a store on Forty-second street, and also if enough people buy it where there is a platinum ring with a complete circlet” (“Mrs. F. Scott” D11). Though Zelda screens the seriousness of her statements through humor, she was not kidding. Meyers asserts that Zelda’s review depicts Scott as a writer whose work “had to be justified, even validated, by rapid composition and bountiful payment. It promoted an image of a hasty, superficially brilliant and calculating artist who controls the form as he dominates the commercial market” (91). Fitzgerald craved money and acceptance, but Zelda’s review does touch on the approval

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<sup>4</sup> Fitzgerald wrote, “in 1919 I had made \$800 by writing, in 1920 I had made \$18,000, stories, picture rights and book” (qtd. in Meyers 65). According to an online inflation conversion tool, that income would translate to roughly \$257,000 in 2012, a vast increase from his salary as an advertising writer. According to Meyers, H. L. Mencken told the novelist James Branch Cabell that Zelda “talks too much about money. [Fitzgerald’s] danger lies in trying to get it too rapidly” (67).

he desired from intellectual friends like Wilson, Bishop, and—later—Hemingway. Fitzgerald's desire to maintain a lavish lifestyle sometimes overpowered his focus on creating his best art until he no longer had the option of choosing between art and money. By the mid-1930s, in financial trouble and with little standing in the literary world, there was still one place to turn: Hollywood. After two previous trips to Hollywood, Fitzgerald told his agent, Harold Ober, that he would only go back to Hollywood “if there was no choice” (*Letters* 400). In the mid-1930s Fitzgerald felt as though he had no choice.

Earlier in his career, just after the publication of *The Great Gatsby* in 1925, Fitzgerald wrote a letter to Maxwell Perkins which revealed much about his frame of mind:

In all events I have a book of *good* stories for the fall. Now I shall write some *cheap* ones until I've accumulated enough for my next novel.

When that is finished and published I'll wait and see. If it will support me with no more intervals of *trash* I'll go on as a *novelist*. If not, I'm going to quit, come home, go to Hollywood and learn the movie business. I can't reduce our scale of living and I can't stand this financial insecurity. Anyhow there's no point in trying to be an artist if you can't do your best. (*Letters* 180-181, emphases added)

Fitzgerald signs the letter, “Yours in great depression” (181). For a writer who had already found commercial and critical success, and who would come to gain more with *The Great Gatsby*, he writes as if the decade he was so closely associated with, “the

roaring 20s,” had already ended in 1925. He draws a clear line between his own “good stories” and “cheap ones” but fears that he will not be able to participate as an artist doing his best work without the money of Hollywood.

Even before he published *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald began writing movie treatments and scenarios for Hollywood. He also began selling the movie rights to his work, garnering \$2,500 for his short story “Head and Shoulders” (1920) in the year that it was published (Meyers 54). He was lured to Hollywood in 1927 and again in 1931, finding little success from his efforts during both short stints but collecting a large paycheck each time. While still at Princeton, Fitzgerald had asked the popular poet Alfred Noyes, his professor at the time, whether a writer should write for money or fame, a question that troubled Fitzgerald for his entire life (Meyers 23).<sup>5</sup> As Fitzgerald established himself as a serious author he straddled the line between writing for money or fame, quick celebrity or lasting reputation, but some of Fitzgerald’s friends, like Wilson and Hemingway, worried that he focused too much on fast money and celebrity and too little on creating the more complex literary works they felt him capable of writing.

Faced with the question of writing for money or fame, Fitzgerald decided to try for both, and this included an attempt to write seriously in Hollywood. Maintaining optimism that such writing could be produced under the right conditions, Fitzgerald still worried about how his work in cinema might affect his literary reputation, even though

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<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, Meyers does not include Noyes’ answer to Fitzgerald’s question. It would prove interesting to know what advice, if any, the author of “The Highwayman” gave his student.

many writers had gone to Hollywood to attempt the same thing. With regard to Fitzgerald's anxieties over his artistic reputation, Walter Raubicheck points to Fitzgerald's apprehension concerning different literary forms, noting his uncertainty about "the possibilities of the short story itself as an artistic medium," wondering if it could "rival the novel as a forum for literary achievement" (53). Many of Fitzgerald's short stories were not originally ranked among his greatest literary achievements, even by Fitzgerald, but scholars such as Raubicheck argue with Fitzgerald's judgment, noting that the author "rarely submitted anything genuinely 'cheap'" in his career and adding "it has become clear to generations of critics and readers that Fitzgerald wrote some of the most important stories of his era" (54). In the 1930s, long before that evaluation was accepted, Fitzgerald had lost both his popular and critical audience, and though Fitzgerald considered script writing to be a lower art form than novel writing, he found that Hollywood still accepted him as a respected writer, even after two failures there; that acceptance combined with a need for money to bring Fitzgerald back to the West for a third try at puzzling out the Hollywood writing system.<sup>6</sup>

Fitzgerald was in tremendous debt when he went to Hollywood for the last time, and he had increasing difficulty finding the time to work on his literary pursuits as his family's bills began to amass.<sup>7</sup> He needed the money he could still earn in Hollywood, the only place he felt he could find high-paying employment to support himself and his family. He was bitter about his need, though, writing to his *Collier's* editor, Kenneth

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<sup>6</sup> Meyers counts Fitzgerald's screenplays and movie scenarios among his worst work (78).

<sup>7</sup> Meyers records Fitzgerald's debt at \$40,000 prior to his return to Hollywood in 1937 (284).

Littauer, on July 18, 1939, about his debts to his agent, Harold Ober, explaining, “Through one illness he backed me with a substantial amount of money (all paid back to him now with Hollywood gold)” (*Letters* 587). In the same letter, Fitzgerald vows “never again to sign a long picture contract, no matter *what* the inducement: most of the profit when one overworks goes to doctors and nurses” (586, original emphasis). His “Hollywood gold” went as quickly as it came, as did the money Fitzgerald earned from his literary pursuits, but Hollywood work also deprived Fitzgerald of time to write what he wanted to write, the kind of fiction that might allay his fears about his intellectual abilities and lasting literary reputation. Furthermore, Fitzgerald’s statement about “doctors and nurses” speaks to his health, which was already poor in 1939; his inability to rest, due to the continued need to work for Hollywood, hardly improved things.

Though Fitzgerald was not offered any long-term contracts at this time, his concern about the price he had paid to Hollywood in exchange for lucrative contracts rings true. Hollywood had provided profitable inducements, but his frustrations regarding creative control were increased by long hours of Hollywood writing, which could have been spent on work he had more control over, like his own fiction. As other writers learned, part of the price paid to reap “Hollywood gold” came in a loss of authority. Hollywood valued celebrated authors enough to coax them to its studios with large sums of money, but what Hollywood ultimately valued was the publicity studios gained by securing authors with literary celebrity, not the literary “products” created by these individual authors. Fitzgerald came to learn that the film industry hardly respected

authors' individual talents enough to allow them artistic control.<sup>8</sup> An individual author's representations of the world were not prized once the author entered into the Hollywood assembly-line process of moviemaking. After Fitzgerald spent years working in Hollywood, his continued perception of the movie industry's lack of respect for his writing, as an individual artist, added to his long-held suspicions about his own literary capabilities, anxieties that were still being reinforced by some of his oldest literary and intellectual friends.

Meyers notes that when Edmund Wilson's wife, Mary McCarthy, met Fitzgerald in 1939 she was "struck by Wilson's arrogant condescension toward his old friend" (309). Yet "Fitzgerald seemed to find this [condescension] quite normal" (Meyers 309). After meeting McCarthy, Fitzgerald sent Wilson a letter:

Believe me, Bunny, it meant more to me than it could possibly have meant to see you that evening. It seemed to renew old times learning about Franz Kafka and latter things that are going on in the world of poetry, because *I am still the ignoramus that you and John Bishop wrote about at Princeton*. Though my idea is now, to learn about a new life from Louis B. Mayer who promises to teach me all about things if he ever gets around to it. (*Letters* 348, added emphasis)

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<sup>8</sup> Raymond Chandler was another author who believed he could beat the Hollywood system which denied writers control over the scripts and scenarios they worked on. Meyers notes that Chandler, like Fitzgerald, was disappointed to find that he could not beat the system (290). David Seed likewise notes that Fitzgerald and others like him feared a loss of autonomy in Hollywood (86)

Here, Fitzgerald verifies McCarthy's claim that Wilson had condescended to him, and he also indicates that he was accustomed to this kind of treatment from his old friend. Additionally, in self-deprecatingly labeling himself as an "ignoramus," Fitzgerald asserts that his real chance in moving forward is to try a "new life" in Hollywood, implying that he might be smart enough to succeed there if the Hollywood gatekeepers, like studio executive Mayer, would only allow him into the inner sanctum where he can learn "all about things" in Hollywood. Here, Fitzgerald both suggests that writing in Hollywood is a vocation for less "intellectual" writers and that, with some instruction, he might be bright enough to rise to the level of such writing. This statement reaffirms his personal worries about his literary and artistic abilities, doubts that stemmed (at least) from his college days, as we have seen, when his intellect was belittled by friends like Wilson and Bishop. A part of Fitzgerald's drive for literary achievement was based on his desire to prove himself to these peers. While Fitzgerald's implication here also illuminates his deeply depressed condition at this late point in his life, his comment on Hollywood writing was not gratuitous; Fitzgerald had already seen Hollywood writing and moviemaking from close up.

From the vantage point of someone who had experienced Hollywood firsthand, Fitzgerald's overall assessment of Hollywood writing was very negative. He suggested that it was a lesser skill, but he thought that it was precisely that: a skill that needed to be learned. Writing in 1940 from Hollywood to his editor, Maxwell Perkins, Fitzgerald discusses the movie job he is working on, a film version of his own short story "Babylon Revisited." Fitzgerald laments his fall in literary standing, writing to Perkins, "It will be

odd a year or so from now when [my daughter] Scottie assures her friends I was an author and finds that no book is procurable" (*Letters* 288). In the same letter, Fitzgerald also discusses his failures in Hollywood and laments, "I couldn't make the grade as a hack—that, like everything else, requires a certain practiced excellence" (288).<sup>9</sup> In the 1920s Fitzgerald had worked out a formula for producing saleable stories, many of them published in the *Saturday Evening Post* and other popular magazines, ensuring that he and Zelda had a quick and easy source of income whenever necessary, but as he fell out of prominence, he could no longer command the sums he had in the twenties, and Hollywood followed suit with smaller monetary offers after he was unable to adjust his writing to their system, a system that Fitzgerald would later criticize in his final works. Some of Fitzgerald's friends, like Wilson and Hemingway, worried that the popular stories he had written would brand him as a hack writer, damaging his lasting reputation, but Fitzgerald's depiction of a Hollywood hack writer in the stories about Pat Hobby demonstrates that his writing is much richer and complex than that of the hack writer character he created for those stories.

It was the Hollywood system that, Fitzgerald argued, ultimately blocked his pathway to success in the movie business. After his initial failures in the movie industry, Fitzgerald said that he had discovered the secret to Hollywood writing. In 1937, he told his daughter, Scottie, that he needed to "find the key man among the bosses and the most

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<sup>9</sup> Director Billy Wilder, who provides an intriguing depiction of Hollywood writers in *Sunset Boulevard* (1950), offered this assessment of Fitzgerald's inability to succeed as a Hollywood writer: "[Fitzgerald was like] a great sculptor who is hired to do a plumbing job. He did not know how to connect the pipes so the water would flow" (qtd. in Meyers 291).

malleable among the collaborators” and then convince them to let him work and write on his own (Meyers 285).<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, Fitzgerald was as unsuccessful in these plans as he was in contributing acceptable work to the scripts he worked on, and it is therefore impossible to know whether he could have proved a success in Hollywood if he had been given authority over a story; as Meyers points out, “He had no influence with the studio executives, got stuck with a series of unsympathetic co-authors and collaborated with as many as fifteen writers on *Gone With the Wind*” (285). Though Fitzgerald was never given the chance to try and write a movie in the way that he wished—autonomously—his time in Hollywood was not altogether unfruitful; he had observed the movie business from close up and utilized his experience there to write two works about Hollywood from an insider’s (and writer’s) perspective.

After all of Fitzgerald’s efforts in Hollywood, he was filled with disappointments: Scott and Zelda had once been asked to star in a film version of *This Side of Paradise*, but it did not happen (Meyers 88); the actress Lois Moran secured a screen test for Fitzgerald to star with her in a movie, but he was rejected (170); and Scott’s Hollywood writing consistently failed to gain acceptance. After two roughly one-month stints in Hollywood in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and three-and-a-half years working there at the end of his life, Fitzgerald worked on sixteen films, was one of the highest paid writers, but received just one credit for all of his work (Meyers 285). In

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<sup>10</sup> In *The Last Tycoon*, Monroe Stahr is the “key man,” the one person who has almost total control in Hollywood. In the novel, however, Stahr is unwilling to relinquish that power, and readers find repeated instances of Stahr refusing to give autonomy to his studio writers, even ones that he believes to be particularly gifted.

that same span of time, from just after the success of *The Great Gatsby* (1925) to the end of the 1930s, and the end of his life, the author was conscious of his slow but steady decline in both celebrity and literary reputation.<sup>11</sup>

As late as 1937, Fitzgerald accepted a lavish screenwriting contract of \$1000 a week, though some in the movie business were surprised, when they discovered they would be working with Fitzgerald, to find that the author was still alive (Meyers 285, 313). With all of the problems caused by Fitzgerald's focus on money and celebrity, followed by his own poor health and worries about Zelda and Scottie in the 1930s, his daughter believed that it was his "literary eclipse" that was the hardest for him to accept (qtd. in Meyers 319). He died a largely forgotten writer and man, but Fitzgerald's lifelong fascination with money, celebrity, and Hollywood factored into some of his best work. He included characters with Hollywood connections in many of the stories and novels he wrote in the 1920s, but he finished his literary career by writing more expansively about Hollywood and its dysfunctional system for making stories, in terms of its narrative practices and the industry's relationship with its writers.

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<sup>11</sup> Fitzgerald wrote to Harold Ober at the end of 1934, "It became apparent to me that my literary reputation, except with the *Post* readers, was at its very lowest ebb" (*Letters* 397). Fitzgerald expanded his horizons further beyond Hollywood when he was at his most desperate to find an audience and an income; he even wrote a radio script for the comedienne Gracie Allen in 1933, but the script was rejected (Meyers 231).

## **Authors with No Authority: Writing Outside the Power Circle in Hollywood**

Fitzgerald worked on *The Last Tycoon* and the Pat Hobby stories in the last year of his life while continuing to do freelance work for the movies (Meyers 297). Critics and scholars have generally praised Fitzgerald's work on *The Last Tycoon*. Edmund Wilson, who edited the unfinished manuscript for publication, called the novel "far and away the best novel we have had about Hollywood, ... the only one which takes us inside" (x). When scholar Matthew Bruccoli issued a new edition of the novel fifty years later, with a title change, he declared that the book "is regarded as the best novel written about the movies" ("Preface" vii).<sup>12</sup> In his preface to the 1941 edition, Wilson also makes an astute observation about the book's main character, Monroe Stahr, a man who was partially modeled on a powerful movie executive of the 1920s, Irving Thalberg, whom Fitzgerald met during his trip to Hollywood in 1931. Wilson writes that Fitzgerald's Stahr is "inextricably involved with an industry of which he has been one of the creators, and its fate will be implied by his tragedy" (x). Indeed, Stahr's death signals the end of any hope for Hollywood to create movies with an eye toward anything but money. Part of Stahr's tragedy comes with his personal struggle to represent experience in the early twentieth century, though his battle is mainly with his studio partner, Pat Brady, who is modeled on Louis B. Mayer and is only interested in money.

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<sup>12</sup> Bruccoli's title change was based on a manuscript page in which Fitzgerald had written down and crossed out a number of titles he was considering for the novel. The only title on the page not crossed out is the title Bruccoli used for his edition: *The Love of the Last Tycoon: A Western*. Fitzgerald's lover at the time of his death, Sheila Graham, wrote to Maxwell Perkins about conversations she had with Fitzgerald regarding this longer title, claiming that Fitzgerald "wanted it to sound like a movie title and completely disguise the tragic-heroic content of the book" (qtd. in Bruccoli, "A Note on the Title" v).

Stahr is intricately involved with the production of his studio's movies; Fitzgerald depicts him as a man who truly cares about the product his studio produces. For example, when Stahr is watching a bit of unedited film that has just been shot, he comments on its inauthentic feel, particularly in a close-up shot between the lead actor and actress: "There's no use printing stuff like that. She doesn't believe what she's saying—neither does Cary. 'I love you' in a close up—they'll cluck you out of the house! And the girl's overdressed" (55). Such statements suggest to readers that Stahr approaches these movies like an artist struggling to depict something real about human experience, but perceptions about movie audiences carry tremendous weight in the production of Stahr's movies. Unlike his writers, Stahr has the ability to dictate what will be and what will not be made; he represents the kind of authority authors like Fitzgerald wished for in Hollywood. As his name suggests, he is the biggest "star" in Hollywood, but not because he is the most recognizable figure; he is the biggest and brightest star because he possesses the most power.

Stahr's passion for his movies is intense and made clear in passages throughout the novel. For example, at one point Stahr meets a man on a beach reading Ralph Waldo Emerson. Stahr tells the man that he works "for the pictures" (92), but the man is not impressed, telling Stahr that he never goes to see movies. Stahr, surprised, asks, "Why not?" and the man replies, "There's no profit. I never let my children go" (92). Stahr's date, Kathleen, protests, "Some of them are good," but the man does not hear her. This

man finds more “profit,” something unrelated to money, in books.<sup>13</sup> He does not consider that “some” movies are good because he “never” goes to the movies and “never” lets his children go. His opinion greatly unsettles Stahr; the narrator states that the unnamed man was totally “unaware that he had rocked an industry” (93). Here, Stahr is shown as being synonymous with the movie industry; Stahr has been “rocked” so the entire industry is shaken. Because Stahr has such immense power in the industry, he does not have to let the disappointing encounter end on the beach; he has the desire and the ability to try to change the man’s mind.

Stahr believes in the movies *he* makes, insisting that the man on the beach “was prejudiced and wrong, and he must be shown somehow, some way. A picture, many pictures, a decade of pictures, must be made to show him he was wrong” (95). This unrelenting faith in his medium’s ability to be *profitable*, in a way analogous to Emerson’s work, sets Stahr apart from men like his partner Brady, but Stahr’s power to control the final product is just as important. Readers discover that, beneath his tremendous power, Stahr is a gravely sick man, and his sickness is symbolic of the industry he is so closely tied to in the story. In Fitzgerald’s notes for the end of the unfinished novel, he sketches out Stahr’s death, having him die in a plane crash instead of slowly from his sickness, further accelerating the end of a hopeful vision of Hollywood by leaving Stahr’s studio in the hands of his inartistic and greedy partner

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<sup>13</sup> Here, the book this unnamed man is reading is not fiction; it is Emerson. Fitzgerald’s choice of Emerson points to Fitzgerald’s theme of the individual in the novel, a theme that Emerson stressed and a theme that underlies *The Last Tycoon* from start to finish. Fitzgerald argues that individuals are not valued in Stahr’s Hollywood; only one individual counts there: Stahr.

Brady. The hope that Hollywood might produce serious art, the types of movies that might change the mind of the man who reads Emerson on the beach and “never” goes to see movies, symbolically dies with the only man in Fitzgerald’s Hollywood with the power and creative control to bring such a dream to fruition.

If Fitzgerald had finished the novel, readers would have found that even Stahr, the person with power who was invested in producing something that was “profitable” in more than just the financial sense of the word, was deficient in his understanding of the world—or at least of America. Fitzgerald’s notes for the end of the novel include a scene in which Stahr travels to Washington D.C., a scene that he wanted to link back to the start of the book in which Fitzgerald has some Hollywood people visit Andrew Jackson’s home. In the Jackson scene, the group arrives early in the morning, just before dawn, when the home is not open. They are unable to “gain admittance or even see the place clearly,” (129) and Fitzgerald adds in his notes that he wants readers to view that scene as symbolic of “the relation of the moving-picture industry to the American ideals and tradition” (129). He wanted to use Stahr’s planned trip to the nation’s capital in a parallel manner: Stahr comes down with “summer gripe and goes around the city in a daze of fever and heat. He never succeeds in becoming acquainted with [the city] as he had hoped to” (129). Washington is a metonymy for the United States as a whole, just as Stahr is a metonymy for Hollywood, and thus Fitzgerald hoped to convey a disconnect between Stahr and his American audience, Hollywood and the world they were representing in the movies they created.

Stahr would never believe that he was disconnected from his audience, yet his discovery of the man that “never” goes to the movies, the novel reminds us, turns Stahr’s world upside down. Stahr’s power over all aspects of his pictures stems from a tremendous self-confidence, an inherent belief that he knows what his audience wants and can give it to them, even if it might not make money in the short term. For example, he goes ahead with a movie that he expects to lose a fortune on because, he says, “It’s a quality picture” (48): “Write it off as good will—this’ll bring in new customers” (48). Matthew Bruccoli states that Stahr, unlike the real-life Irving Thalberg, “is not interested in money” (*Last of the Novelists* 9). However, passages like this show that Stahr *is* interested in money, even though he might be willing to lose money in the short term to bring in new customers (and their money) in the future. In discussing with his writers some of the movies currently in production, Stahr comments on a script involving a woman who is unfaithful to her husband: “‘You better forget it,’ said Stahr warningly. ‘Ten million Americans would put thumbs down on that girl if she walked on the screen’” (40). Stahr’s confidence in his knowledge of what an American audience wants gives him authority, including over his studio partner, but even without Stahr’s trip to Washington readers find that Stahr’s knowledge and authenticity are lacking because he is susceptible to the same Hollywood phoniness as other characters in the book, like Brady who lies about his age to seem younger and full of life. An instance in which Stahr betrays his phoniness, for him a confusion of reality and movie magic, comes when he takes the woman he has fallen in love with to a house he is building at the beach. He tells her about a luncheon he had thrown there the previous week. Even

though the house was not finished, he “had some props brought out—some grass and things. I wanted to see how the place felt” (82). The woman, Kathleen, responds with a surprised laugh, “Isn’t that real grass?” (82).<sup>14</sup> In Stahr’s belief that he can obtain an accurate feel for a place by filling it with props, Fitzgerald reveals Stahr’s openness to phoniness as a satisfactory substitute for authenticity.<sup>15</sup>

Stahr is not rigorous in his desire for authenticity;<sup>16</sup> he is willing to compromise at times, particularly when considering what he thinks his audience will want.<sup>17</sup> Because Stahr possesses complete control, and the last word on all moviemaking decisions, none of the other scores of people working on his movies are given the chance to implement their vision of authenticity in representation if it conflicts with Stahr’s. Any movie being produced in *The Last Tycoon* has multiple writers, producers, and sometimes a number

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<sup>14</sup> Such a passage parallels Vachel Lindsay’s assertion, cited above, about the invading “eye.” Here, Stahr focuses on creating an illusion to fool the eye, using Hollywood movie magic to complete the trick. Stahr only cares that his luncheon visitors will see the house as he wants them to, not that they will see the house as it really is: far from complete.

<sup>15</sup> Readers learn that Stahr’s initial interest in Kathleen is due to her resemblance to Stahr’s dead wife, Minna, who was an actress. Later, in the same passage quoted above, Stahr notes that the woman looks “more like [Minna] actually *looked* than how she was on the screen” (89, original emphasis). Here, Fitzgerald shows that although Stahr does not always strictly distinguish between what is real and what is not he has the capacity to do so; at the same time, Fitzgerald also uses Stahr’s declaration to indicate Hollywood’s blurring of reality since Minna does not look the same on and off screen. Fitzgerald’s final comment on Stahr and reality comes in one of his notes sketching out the end of the book; in describing Stahr observing some unedited reels of film, Fitzgerald writes, “[Stahr] watched the new processes of faking animated backgrounds, moving pictures taken against the background of other moving pictures, with a secret child’s approval” (148). Such a process removes Hollywood movies another step from the real world; not only is the audience watching a story through a screen, but some of the action on that screen is on yet another screen.

<sup>16</sup> In contrast, Fitzgerald strongly desires *The Last Tycoon* to have an artistic veracity; scholar Michael Nowlin claims that Fitzgerald expresses this hope in a letter to Zelda when Fitzgerald compares his novel to a work of Flaubert (159).

<sup>17</sup> In the discussion Stahr has with some of his writers, he explains that he wants a simpler, more positive tale than the one they are writing: “The story we bought had shine and glow—it was a happy story” (39). To drive his point home, that he desires happy fantasy and not dreary reality, he tells the writers, “When I want to do a Eugene O’Neill play, I’ll buy one” (39). Though Stahr makes this declaration, the decisions Stahr makes about his movies indicate that Stahr would even alter an O’Neill play so that it would fit his perceptions about his audience’s expectations and wishes.

of different directors, but Stahr is the only person who has final control. Fitzgerald draws out this idea when a visitor to the studio witnesses this assembly-line production of a movie; the visitor and Stahr discuss the place of a well-known pair of writers, a married couple, in the process. Stahr tells the visitor that these writers have “just found out they’re not alone on the story and it shocks them—shocks their sense of unity” (58). The visitor asks what makes for unity if it is not the writers, and Stahr tells him, “I’m the unity” (58).<sup>18</sup> Fitzgerald makes it clear that authors working in Hollywood, no matter how talented they are or their reputation, are forced to cede their “unity” as well as their storytelling authority to people who might not share their sense of honesty and authenticity in the representations being made, as is the case with Stahr. Although Matthew Bruccoli asserts that “Monroe Stahr is a hero without a flaw” (*Last of the Novelists* 4), my reading of *The Last Tycoon* shows that Stahr is deeply flawed and that, through this flawed character, Fitzgerald also critiques the idealized Hollywood system. Stahr is more exemplary than his studio partner, Brady, who *only* cares about money, and Stahr represents the best chance in the novel for Hollywood to produce serious art, but even he falls short of the desire for artistic representations, the kind Fitzgerald hopes for in his own writing, including in his work on *The Last Tycoon*.

Critics who have written about *The Last Tycoon* have praised what Fitzgerald wrote as well as the potential that can be seen in his notes for the end of the novel, but those who have written about Fitzgerald’s later work have not been as positive toward

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<sup>18</sup> At another point in the novel a writer complains to Stahr about the “mass production” quality of movie making. In this scene the narrator refers to Stahr as “the helmsman,” another indication of Stahr’s primacy in shaping the stories he wants from his team of writers (105).

*The Pat Hobby Stories*. They have claimed that the connection between those stories and *The Last Tycoon* is solely one of expedience, that Fitzgerald needed the money he earned from writing the short stories to work on his novel.<sup>19</sup> While this argument has been applied to many of Fitzgerald's magazine stories, in the case of *The Pat Hobby Stories* it is unjust. Because of their perceived inferior quality, very little has been written about them, even in books like Gene D. Phillips' *Fiction, Film, and F. Scott Fitzgerald* (1986) that take Fitzgerald's time in Hollywood as their theme. Phillips devotes just three paragraphs to the Pat Hobby stories (146-147). Likewise, David Seed, in his chapter on Fitzgerald in *Cinematic Fictions*, only gives the Pat Hobby stories half a paragraph (100), and a discussion of them (as a whole) garners just one essay of twenty-three in Jackson Bryer's *New Essays on F. Scott Fitzgerald's Neglected Stories* (1996). The author of that essay, Milton Stern, notes that when the publisher Arnold Gingrich brought out an edition of *The Pat Hobby Stories* in 1962 it "generated sixty-three reviews, but, except for a small handful of essays on the Pat Hobby stories, there has been very little notice taken of these pieces" (309). Scholars seem to have largely overlooked the connection that exists between these stories and *The Last Tycoon*. In both *The Last Tycoon* and *The Pat Hobby Stories* Fitzgerald links the inability of Hollywood to represent American experience in anything but the tritest ways with the movie industry's faulty handling of its writers.

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<sup>19</sup> For instance, this is the stance that Matthew Bruccoli takes in his preface to the retitled edition of Fitzgerald's novel, *The Love of the Last Tycoon: A Western*. Bruccoli claims that the seventeen stories about Pat Hobby "have no direct connection with the novel Fitzgerald was writing at the same time" (ix).

Authors who are persuaded to work in Stahr's Hollywood compromise their integrity by contributing to a system that is in direct competition with fiction for a share of the overall audience. The system drains power from authors and views them and their individual textual productions as perfunctory. The third-rate standing of, and lack of confidence in, Hollywood writers is established early in *The Last Tycoon* when the narrator, on discovering that the man she is talking with is a writer, thinks of how this knowledge "belittled him in [her] eyes," even though she claims to like writers: "Writers aren't people exactly" (12). This perspective on writers threads throughout the book. A little later, the narrator notes that "a supervisor had beaten up his wife ... and must be 'reduced to a writer'" (29), while, near the end of the finished text, Stahr condescendingly states, "Writers are children" (120). Just before Stahr declares that *he* is "the unity," he tells his visitor that the studio hires good writers, "but when they get out here, they're not good writers—so we have to work with the material we have" (57).<sup>20</sup> In these instances, Fitzgerald expresses frustration at the stifling way writers are treated in the process of moviemaking. It is in the stories about Pat Hobby, however, that Fitzgerald more freely expresses his anger, and he does it with a character who is not a "good writer" but rather a hack who barely survives in 1930s Hollywood.

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<sup>20</sup> Stahr's statement about the "material" he has does not make clear whether he means the authors or their writing; by allowing this ambiguity to remain, Fitzgerald suggests that Stahr may even be conflating the two.

## **Pat Hobby: A Hack Hollywood Writer and a Bad Cog in the Assembly Line**

In one of the “Crack-Up” essays Fitzgerald published in *Esquire* in the mid-1930s he wrote:

As long past as 1930, I had a hunch that the talkies would make even the best selling novelists as archaic as silent pictures. People still read, if only Professor Canby’s book of the month—curious children nosed at the slime of Mr. Tiffany Thayer in the drugstore libraries—but there was a rankling indignity, that to me had become almost an obsession, in seeing the power of the written word subordinated to another power, a more glittering, a grosser power. (78)

Fitzgerald’s statement is quite cynical, but he still hoped for the continued “power of the written word” to represent experience in the twentieth century. In the competition for audiences, Fitzgerald’s final works advocate for literature by highlighting what he sees as Hollywood’s flawed representations of twentieth-century experience. In the character of Pat Hobby, Fitzgerald created a man who was once on the inside of Hollywood, a self-proclaimed success in the 1920s, but who finds himself on the edges of the Hollywood circle in the late 1930s. Hobby’s career thus shares a trajectory with Fitzgerald’s, specifically in Hollywood where Fitzgerald had been summoned more than once but had then been removed to its peripheries—and where he wrote these stories, no longer working under contract for any movie studio. As critic Christopher Ames points out, in one of the very few articles on these stories, “Fitzgerald uses his vantage point as

a writer struggling in the studio system to explicate the narrative limitations of Hollywood screenwriting in a disarmingly self-referential way” (289). Unlike Fitzgerald, or the scores of other well-known writers who had worked in Hollywood,<sup>21</sup> Pat Hobby was never considered a talented writer. The narrator of Fitzgerald’s “A Man in the Way” describes Hobby as “a writer but he had never written much, nor even read all the ‘originals’ he worked from, because it made his head bang to read too much” (13). The man Fitzgerald creates is far from a literary figure.

Hobby is a has-been, but only as a “good man for [story] structure” (*Pat Hobby Stories* 30).<sup>22</sup> Hobby could outline a story and make a pitch, but his narrative skill never extended beyond these initial elements. By creating such a character, Fitzgerald is able to critique Hollywood from a writer’s perspective without readers necessarily associating Hobby with Fitzgerald or other contemporary authors with established literary reputations. Hobby is, and has always been, a hack writer, and the stories about Pat Hobby “comment ironically on hackneyed stories by making the hack the victim of the very plots he puts in motion” (Ames 279). Ames claims that “the structure of the stories comically reflects the structure of Pat Hobby’s feeble attempts to generate ideas for screenplays. The intentionally clichéd and predictable plots of [the] stories satirize the hackneyed nature of Hollywood storytelling at its worst” (279-280). In effect, Fitzgerald demonstrates his own abilities as a “good man for structure,” someone more

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<sup>21</sup> A complete list of authors who tried their hand at conquering Hollywood would be too long to cite, but a few of these eminent authors are: Dorothy Parker, Robert Benchley, Ogden Nash, S. J. Perelman, Nathaniel West, William Faulkner, Anthony Powell, and Aldous Huxley (Meyers 288).

<sup>22</sup> Ames notes that this is one of the few moments within the seventeen stories in which anything remotely positive about Pat Hobby is mentioned (279).

talented than the character he creates. This type of composition raises these stories above pure income-generating work for Fitzgerald, and Arnold Gingrich, the *Esquire* editor who first published them, tried to make that point clearly when he collected the stories into a book published in 1962.<sup>23</sup> Gingrich's introduction illustrates Fitzgerald's careful work on, and revisions of, these stories which have been largely regarded as rushed pieces written solely for money. Gingrich also notes that Fitzgerald "would have wanted [the stories] presented in book form, after [their] magazine publication" (ix). This assertion indicates that while Fitzgerald was writing *The Last Tycoon* he was also writing stories that he hoped would be more than simple magazine stories. *The Pat Hobby Stories* are the work of an "author" trying for something more complex than the Hollywood scripts he saw being made into movies, and this claim points to an alternate way of reading these stories—at least as something more than "hack" work.

Even when Pat Hobby was inside the Hollywood circle, he was never considered an "author"; readers find that he is clearly not an artist searching for truth through his writing. Hobby's motivation does not extend past the possibility of a paycheck. Accordingly, Fitzgerald is able to comment on bad writers in Hollywood who are part of the assembly-line system of movie production, hacks who do not share an artistic vision for the stories they work on. Readers of *The Pat Hobby Stories* witness Fitzgerald raising questions about a fundamental problem he observes in the final narrative product

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<sup>23</sup> In his introduction to *The Pat Hobby Stories*, Gingrich records Fitzgerald's communications with him and *Esquire* in which Fitzgerald offered numerous revisions to submitted Pat Hobby stories. Gingrich claims, "Almost every time he wrote another, he would reconsider the order of their appearance in print and as long as he lived he kept revising them" (ix). In one instance Gingrich mentions, Fitzgerald was unhappy with a story he had submitted and rescinded his submission in an effort to fix it (xi).

as well as Hollywood's lack of confidence in authors, like Fitzgerald, lured to Hollywood who do not possess the ability to control the scripts they work on because they are forced to work with hacks like Hobby. As Ames argues, "Pat Hobby's survival as a structure man testifies to the durability of the banal [in Hollywood], while the structure of the stories emphasizes the fragmentary and petty environment out of which emerged the century's new narrative form" (289).<sup>24</sup> Gingrich notes that *Esquire* had described the Pat Hobby sequence as Fitzgerald's "last word from his last home, for much of what he felt about Hollywood and about himself permeated these stories" (ix). Ames' reading is quite a condemnation of Hollywood writing, and his comment recognizes the struggle between media to be "the century's ... narrative form"—whether new or long-established. Fitzgerald's "last word" in *The Pat Hobby Stories* is a damning one. By highlighting flaws in Hollywood storytelling, Fitzgerald expresses his worry about the future of narrative expression amid the struggle between competing media for dominance. In so doing, he extends the previous suggestions he had begun articulating in the "Crack-Up" essays, which were also published serially in *Esquire*.<sup>25</sup>

Pat Hobby had once made lots of money in Hollywood, and he claims to have accrued "a list of credits second to none" during his career (Fitzgerald, *Pat Hobby* 14); in another story he declares, "I've got more screen credits than a dog has fleas" (29). Money and credits are the way that Hobby measures his writing success in the stories.

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<sup>24</sup> Pat's reputation as a "structure man" is noted a number of times in the stories. Being good with "structure" basically meant that Pat was able to generate an idea and a loose outline for a story, not that he was able to write full scripts, but even Pat's reputation as a "structure man" seems dubious to readers.

<sup>25</sup> The epigraph to this chapter comes from "Pasting It Together," one of the series of "Crack-Up" essays.

Still, readers find that Hobby always needed to be “teamed up with some man who wrote dialogue” (14). Hobby’s success was based solely on his talent to outline a story, not to complete one. Hobby’s structures were simply the exteriors of possible stories thus they were hollow; yet the façade of a story had been enough for Hobby to draw a salary in the past, a condemnation of 1920s Hollywood by Fitzgerald, and readers find that Hobby could still earn a salary in late-1930s Hollywood if he could generate ideas for stories, even very flimsy ones (14). Ames notes that Hobby’s real talent lies in “pitching” stories, and he explains that a pitch is a “brief oral summary of a plot for a motion picture, often couched in terms of genre” (280). Such a summary necessarily requires “reducing narratives to plot essentials” (280). With such a limited grasp of written storytelling, it is not possible for Hobby to create a story with any complexity or depth. He is not a *professional* author, and as Fitzgerald suggests with his choice of name for this antihero, he should only be writing as a “hobby” at best.

In the stories’ present, the late 1930s, Hobby is not respected among his peers—which is not out of the ordinary for a writer in Fitzgerald’s depiction of Hollywood—but Hobby also does not respect either his fellow movie writers or the authors whose material sometimes serves as the source for the movies he works on. When Hobby finds a fellow screenwriter reading a book that she is tasked with adapting for the screen, for example, he tells her that she is approaching the job incorrectly. Hobby confirms his credibility in dispensing such advice by stating that he has been “here for years,” and instructs the writer, “Give the book to four of your friends to read it. Get them to tell you what stuck in their minds. Write it down and you’ve got a picture” (16). The

woman responds, “Well, that’s very—very original advice, Mr. Hobby” (16). In this exchange, Fitzgerald illustrates two difficulties with Hollywood writing: first, writers who only use “what stuck” in friends’ minds from a book do not extract anything but the surface of a story and its plot essentials and are likely to write a very empty screenplay, the kind Hobby would write, and secondly, when a writer such as the one Hobby encounters tries to dutifully discover and use the deeper aspects of a book, what made a connection between the book and its readers, she may still have to collaborate with a writer like Hobby who does not read or write much.<sup>26</sup> A well-intentioned writer, as shown here, cannot shed the negative effects of hacks, who care only about a salary. The system leaves authors with no authority.<sup>27</sup>

Hobby not only lacks artistry, he understands that he does and believes the same about Hollywood in general. In the story “Boil Some Water—Lots of It,” Hobby tries to gain employment based only on the idea that the line “boil some water—lots of it” could be the germ of a movie story. The narrator comments on Hobby’s pathetic attempt to finagle a job with such little thought by providing Hobby’s equivocation about Hollywood writing: “This was no art, as [Hobby] often said—this was an industry” (22). To drive home the point for readers, this idea is repeated just after the narrator states it: “‘This is no art,’ [Hobby] remarked to Max Leam who was leisurely

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<sup>26</sup> In the story Hobby ends up stealing the idea his fellow writer has for a story and pitches it before she can. As Ames notes about this story, Hobby’s action “demonstrates how little Hobby thinks he needs or needs to think to snag a contract” (281).

<sup>27</sup> The *Oxford English Dictionary* shows that the words “author” and “authority” are tied to each other and share etymological origins. Fitzgerald’s depiction of Hollywood writing points to a difference between an “author” and a “writer.” An “author” has more control over the text than a “writer,” and Fitzgerald makes Hobby articulate the difference between the two words, and concepts, in “Mightier Than the Sword,” which I discuss in more detail later in this chapter. “Authors” have authority; “writers” simply write.

drinking at a corridor water cooler. “This is an industry”” (22). Leam, a producer, does not disagree with Hobby. The repetition makes the point very clear to readers; producers and hack writers in Fitzgerald’s stories do not envision their jobs as art, and their contributions to the system of Hollywood collaboration stymies the possibility of artists to bring their vision to fruition. Art is simply not important to Pat Hobby; eating at the “Big Table” in the studio commissary, where the powerful eat, or better yet to dine “in the private canteens of executives,” is what Hobby values (Fitzgerald, *Pat Hobby* 23). Unlike Fitzgerald who wanted to obtain closeness to producers and executives in the hopes they would grant him the autonomy to maintain creative control in his writing, Hobby simply wants to be close to the Hollywood elite so that he can secure a contract, giving him access to potential money and celebrity.

In the same story, Hobby feigns interest in narrative authenticity when he asks a nurse at the Red Cross Station if she will answer some “medical questions” he has for a “medical” he is writing (23). He tells her, “we’ve got to have it *right* because a hundred million people would check on it” (25 original emphasis). In actually, Hobby just wants to take this young nurse to lunch, and when she reminds him that he wanted to ask her some “medical questions” he thinks, “Here was toil again” (24). Hobby does not even want to pretend to think about his script idea, but he also does not want the nurse to realize that he is a phony writer, and so tries his best to pretend that he has more of a story than he really does. Hobby tells the nurse that a doctor in his script, which is really only one line, says “Boil some water—lots of it,” and he wants to know “what the people would do then” (25). In effect, Hobby is trying to get the nurse to give him some

more of the story that he is supposed to have thought up, to write the next lines; at the same time he is hitting on her. When she asks him for more details—which Hobby cannot provide since they do not exist—he shifts the conversation to cover for his lack of story, asking the nurse if she is married (25).

Hobby then educates the nurse about Hollywood; he tells her that “studios are democratic; everybody is just ‘Joe’ or ‘Mary’—from the big shots right down to the prop boys” (24), but near the close of the story when an “extra” sits down at the “Big Table,” Hobby becomes incensed over the thought of a “nobody” achieving what Pat would like for himself: to be close to the important people in the Hollywood hierarchy. The producer Hobby had been talking with tries to have the “extra” removed, but Hobby takes more direct action: “He had jumped up, seizing a big heavy tray from the serving stand nearby. In two springs he reached the scene of action—lifting the tray he brought it down upon the extra’s head with all the strength of his forty-nine years” (27). With a bit of a Hollywood twist, the “extra” turns out to be a writer who is working on a big film, and the nurse Hobby had been lunching with tends to the injured man, as does a doctor who calls to the kitchen to boil lots of water. The underlying observation that Fitzgerald includes in this ending is that the “Big Table’s” occupants do not recognize the man because he is a writer. This writer can play a joke on the “Big Table” by sitting there uninvited and refusing to move when they ask him to because, in Fitzgerald’s depiction of Hollywood, the powerful do not acknowledge individual writers and would not remember their faces. While this writer is not as low in the hierarchy as an “extra,” he really is a nobody, just a nobody who is doing better than Pat Hobby.

It is hard for readers to know exactly how successful Hobby was in Hollywood during the 1920s, but his superiors do not challenge his assertions about his prior prominence. Hobby's evidence for his greatness comes in the form of longevity and screen credits: he has been in the business for fifteen years (or twenty, depending on the story) and claims to have thirty screen credits—twenty-nine more than Fitzgerald accumulated. Fitzgerald challenges this gauge of success, even apart from artistic achievement, in a story titled “Pat Hobby’s Preview.” In this story, as in “Boil Some Water,” Hobby meets a woman he wants to impress, but she is disappointed at first to discover that he is a writer (94). She thinks about her reaction to Hobby’s occupation, which in itself is phony since Hobby never writes more than a few lines, and tells Hobby, “Oh, of course. I knew they had to have writers but I guess I never heard of one before” (94).<sup>28</sup> Her confession speaks to the invisibility of movie writers to their audiences. The suggestion is that the originators of stories in Fitzgerald’s Hollywood, and the stories themselves, are not all that important and are certainly not as interesting as the famous people who act them out or the rich producers and executives who can offer actors movie celebrity.

The woman in this story, a “Cute Little Blonde” from Idaho named Eleanor Carter, wants to become a star (94). Hobby sees an opportunity to make an impression on her by inviting her to the preview of a movie he has “worked” on, even though he has been denied tickets to the preview given the small amount of work he actually

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<sup>28</sup> Hobby tries to convince the woman that writers are “some of the biggest shots in Hollywood,” but his lies betray the falsity in his claim: “‘Bernud [sic] Shaw was out here,’ he said, ‘—and Einstein, but they couldn’t make the grade’ (94).

contributed to the movie. Though Hobby has only added a few words to the script of this movie, he is supposed to receive a half-credit for his “writing,” and he decides to try and con his way into the preview without tickets. He is refused entry and makes a scene in front of the crowd that has gathered at the theater in the hopes of seeing celebrities. Milton Stern writes of the difference that Fitzgerald highlights between the people outside the preview and those inside: “Inside are the living luminaries. Outside are the nonexistent” (327).<sup>29</sup> This dichotomy Fitzgerald creates extends to a number of the Pat Hobby stories which focus on Hobby’s ability or inability, depending on the story, to gain entrance to one of the studios. If Hobby can con his way onto a lot, he has hope that he can con his way into a job. Unfortunately, as Fitzgerald shows readers, men like Hobby do not tend to work well with a team of writers. Hobby’s best storytelling comes to the surface when he finds himself in a jam, but it is oral storytelling, and he cannot seem to summon those abilities when he sits down to write.

Ironically in “Pat Hobby’s Preview,” the writer who did most of the work on the script that Hobby has been involved with—a character named Ward Wainwright—erupts from the preview in disgust at how the story has been “directed,” spots Hobby, and says, “*He wrote it. I wouldn’t have my name on an inch of it*” (100, original emphasis). He gives Hobby his tickets, and Hobby, instead of being embarrassed by the scene or the possibility that the movie he is connected with is poor, thinks of how fortune has turned

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<sup>29</sup> Fitzgerald negotiated similar problems in his personal life in Hollywood. At times he found himself outside of the places where the “living luminaries” were. For instance, when Scott and Zelda first went to Hollywood, they “turned up uninvited at Sam Goldwyn’s party, got down on their hands and knees outside the front door, and barked like dogs until they were reluctantly admitted to the house” (Meyers 169).

his way: “This was *his* preview; all had been delivered into his hands: his name would stand alone on the screen when the picture was released. There had to be *somebody’s* name, didn’t there?” (101, original emphases). The story ends with Hobby escorting Eleanor into the theater, Eleanor feeling “exactly like a star” (101). Hobby and Eleanor only care about being on the inside, among the stars; it does not matter to Eleanor that she is not a movie star, that she has never acted in a movie, and Hobby does not mind that he is not given access to the preview based on his work or that the movie itself appears so bad to Wainwright that he declares, “I think the prop boy directed it!” (100). In this story, Fitzgerald goes beyond the notion that a bad writer can ruin a script; Wainwright claims that Hobby did nothing more than “change ‘No’ to ‘No sir’ and ‘crimson’ to ‘red,’ and stuff like that” (92). The end of “Pat Hobby’s Preview” points to another link in the chain of production that can keep a writer’s story from becoming art: bad directing.

“Pat Hobby’s Preview” highlights the arbitrary way in which screen credits are sometimes obtained; Hobby was supposed to earn a half-credit when he had done almost nothing to collect it, and he only ends up earning the whole writing credit after the real writer disowns the final product that came from their work. Fitzgerald’s story asserts that there is always someone in Hollywood hungry enough for celebrity to take the credit for the product, regardless of its quality. Hobby is thrilled to think that he will be listed as *the* writer of the screenplay because *he* does not care about art or literature or that the movie is any good. Eleanor also does not care whether Pat is a good writer, someone who could write good stories; she is willing to be connected to Hobby because she thinks

he may be able to help her secure a screen test. The narrator reveals Eleanor's thoughts about Hobby: "She would never let those red-rimmed eyes come close to her—at least not for any more than a doorstep kiss" (100). Eleanor cannot tell whether Hobby is on the inside or the outside of Hollywood, as indicated in the scene at the movie preview itself. Although the pair finally gains admittance to the preview, Hobby is no more firmly established within Hollywood than he was before, but his entry and his screen credit create an illusion which causes Eleanor to further consider the man she is with. Readers understand that Hobby's connections to anyone of importance are tenuous, and that he is only looking out for himself.<sup>30</sup>

In "Mightier Than the Sword," a story whose ironic title actually demonstrates the insignificance of the pen in Pat Hobby's Hollywood, Hobby shows sympathy for a fellow writer, a New England author named E. Brunswick Hudson. In the story, Hudson has been working with a director by the name of Dick Dale, but he has just been fired by the fickle director who will not suffer Hudson's desire for control in the script. Hudson is replaced by Hobby, who does not crave autonomy and will agree with everything Dale says, but the script the two collaborate on is rejected by the "head office" and Dale subsequently fires Hobby too. When Dale contacts Hudson, asking him to return with the script *he* had been writing, Hudson says, "You remember when I brought it to you? ... You kept me waiting two hours—then you looked at it for two minutes" (147).

Fitzgerald, showing the increasing power of the director in moviemaking, again portrays

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<sup>30</sup> While Hobby steals another writer's idea in "A Man in the Way," he participates in a slightly less heinous act in "No Harm Trying" by taking his callboy's ideas and paying him a paltry sum (109).

an inept director who does not appreciate a good writer or good writing when he sees it. Dale has the audacity to become enraged when Hudson refuses to hand over his script, yelling at Hobby (who has not yet left the room): ““Goddamn writers!” he said savagely. ‘What do we pay you for? Millions—and you write a lot of tripe I can’t photograph and get sore if we don’t read your lousy stuff!” (147). Dale’s accusation holds as he directs it at Hobby, but Dale did no better when he collaborated on the script with Hobby that was rejected by the executives. In Dale, Fitzgerald describes another powerful person in Hollywood who cannot recognize good writing from bad.

More importantly, Fitzgerald points to the difference between an “author” and a “writer” at the end of the story. Hobby talks with Hudson who has “tears of anger in [his] eyes” after learning that his script is “the property of the company” (148-149). Hobby sympathetically remarks to Hudson, “Authors get a tough break out here.... They never ought to come” (149). Hudson asks who would “make up the stories—these feeb?,,” and Hobby responds: ““Well anyhow, not authors,’ said Pat. ‘They don’t want authors. They want writers—like me”” (149). Clearly, the hack writer who has survived in Hollywood for two decades believes that Hollywood distinguishes between “authors” and “writers.” Fitzgerald’s stories about Pat Hobby help to define his own distinction between the two terms. Although Hobby is ordered off the studio lot after he is fired by Dale, he does not leave because the lot “for many years had been home to him” (147). Hobby feels at home on the lot because he is not an “author”; he is barely a “writer.” Still, his identity as a writer, or at least as “a structure man,” points to his tenuous

existence within the walls of the studio that comfort Hobby because his presence there means he might get paid.

Fitzgerald returns to this idea many times in *The Pat Hobby Stories*; a good example is the story “Pat Hobby and Orson Welles,” at the end of which Hobby is wondering who Welles is, saying, “Every time I pick up a paper they got [sic] about this Welles” (41). Hobby’s remark brings attention to the publicity surrounding Hollywood’s elite. In actuality, Hobby knows who Welles is, with all the publicity it would be hard not to, but what he really wants to know is “what credits’s he got?” (41). As I have noted, Hobby judges success by the number of credits obtained and someone’s length of time in Hollywood. As an old timer, someone who thinks of the studio lot as home, Hobby does not take kindly to people he thinks of as outsiders, but in this story Hobby cannot gain access to the lot, to his “home.” He tries three times, at three different gates, before a security guard shows him a photo in a magazine and says, “I wouldn’t let you in even if you told me you was this here Orson Welles” (44).<sup>31</sup> For readers of the Pat Hobby series, Hobby’s inability to enter the lot *could* point to Fitzgerald optimistically suggesting that hacks like Hobby will eventually be locked out of the system, unable to wreck the stories being written by more competent authors like Fitzgerald, but this contradicts most of the stories in the collection. Hobby simply sees himself as being replaced by a new person, Welles, a man whom Hobby lumps in with “the rest of the snobs back in New York” (44). Talking with an old executive who knew

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<sup>31</sup> Stern, writing about this story, claims, “As long as he was still recognized by the guards and allowed to enter the studios (admission and exclusion are constant motifs in these stories), [Hobby] belonged, even if only as a shadowy scrounger” (328, original emphasis).

him from the silent film era, Hobby says, “I wouldn’t be surprised if Orson Welles is the biggest menace that’s come to Hollywood for years .... I wouldn’t be surprised if he was so radical that you had to have all new equipment and start all over again like you did with sound in 1928” (47). In truth, the old executive is worried about any change to Hollywood that might shift power to a director like Welles. Hobby has a vested interest in keeping the status quo by maintaining a low level of artistry in Hollywood; he could not manipulate the system to remain a part of it otherwise. Hobby cannot contribute to a Hollywood system that tries for serious, complex storytelling, and can only coexist with Welles in Hollywood by adopting a phony exterior; specifically, Fitzgerald has Hobby dress as Welles’ double.

Readers are told that Hobby looks enough like Welles that some people had started calling him “Orson,” and this development frustrates Hobby because he considers Welles to be “an enemy” (48), a “radical,” who will want to view moviemaking as art instead of industry; in such a competition to decide the way movies are made in Hollywood, Hobby could be on the losing side and, consequently, permanently outside the studio gates. Hobby talks with a friend named Jeff who does hair and wigs for actors, and Jeff tells Hobby, yet again, that he looks like his “enemy” Welles. Hobby puts up with the comparison because he wants to borrow some money from Jeff, and Jeff agrees to lend it if he will let him try to make Hobby *into* Orson Welles with the addition of a beard. In need of the money Hobby agrees, and Jeff convinces Hobby to let him test out the transformation by driving Hobby, in costume, onto a movie set with a sign in the car’s windshield reading “Orson Welles” (50). On the way to the set Hobby and Jeff

pass a group of men, one of whom is the old executive Hobby talked with earlier in the story. The old executive, who is described as the “most elderly member of the party,” happens to have a heart attack when he sees the car. Ostensibly the executive is overcome by seeing “Welles” driving on the lot, something that would mark Welles as very powerful indeed since even the most successful directors had not been allowed to do such a thing.<sup>32</sup> Another man runs to the car and asks “Welles” if they can use his car to take the old executive to the infirmary. Faced with the possibility of being unmasked (or unbearded) and revealed as a phony, Hobby rushes from the car without a word and runs off the lot until he is safely among a group of extras at a bar across the street from the studio (51). Hobby’s foray into posing as an artist has such disastrous ramifications in the story that he flees the one place he has thought of as home and feels safer at a bar because he is among the “extras,” actors who are inconsequential in the moviemaking process. These extras are all bearded like Hobby, and Fitzgerald writes that it is “with relief [that] Pat merged himself into their corporate whiskers” (51). The story ends with Hobby using the money he has borrowed from Jeff to buy the extras a round of drinks; whether he likes it or not these are his people, cogs in the process who cannot be mistaken for artists. These actors might become known as artists in the future, but at this particular moment in Fitzgerald’s Hollywood, they are not. Hobby feels comfortable with them because he is not an artist either.

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<sup>32</sup> Billy Wilder’s biographer, Maurice Zolotow, notes that even though Wilder was at the highest level of moviemaking at the end of the 1930s he “was not permitted to drive his new De Soto convertible coupe on the lot.... Writers, even those who made \$3,000 a week—the highest then—were not permitted the status privilege of parking on the lot” (Stern 70).

Unlike Orson Welles, who was propelled to great fame after his radio adaptation of H. G. Well's *War of the Worlds* in 1938, Hobby has no celebrity and no influence in the movie business. Stern notes this and asserts that Fitzgerald's choice to make Pat Hobby the central character of these seventeen stories shows a certain sympathy for the hack writer in Hollywood (331), but his compassion for Pat is not connected to a kindness toward hack writers, except in *moments* when he may have felt a little like Pat. In Fitzgerald's depiction of his world, in the late 1930s, a hack like Pat Hobby could still negatively affect the story that serious authors were attempting to tell. In a worse scenario, the writers working on the scripts are not hampered by a hack like Hobby because they are hacks themselves. Either way, the continuing tone throughout the Pat Hobby stories is one of pessimism, reflected in the stories' main character.

In his article, Stern cites an essay by the French scholar Elizabeth Varet-Ali's which describes the "crusading counterattack" against the notion that the stories about Pat Hobby are cheap, thinly disguised autobiography. Unfortunately, as Stern notes, the "French journal in which this essay appears contains sentences that demand some study and repunctuation before they make clear sense" (307, n.3). He does, however, quote one passage:

What the ruthless portrait [of Hobby] suggests is that Hollywood, the nation's most popular symbol of Art and Success, perhaps soon its main access to anything like culture, in fact relies on the tritest themes, the grossest illiteracy, and the basest motives and make-believe illusions imaginable. No wonder it can breed (with a few exceptions) such a race

of “ignoramuses,” “mental cadavers,” and “sub-microscopic protozoa”  
...and rats as Pat Hobby belongs to. (qtd. in Stern 306-307)

This is a good description of Fitzgerald’s viewpoint in *The Pat Hobby Stories*, a collection that ultimately argues for “literature” by showing a bleak alternative possibility in which a dominant Hollywood breeds “ignoramuses,” people who were only fed hollow narratives and Hollywood phoniness passed off as representations of the real world. David Seed states that “an abiding dream of the cinema [was] that it could depict reality directly. A 1902 advertisement for the kinetoscope claimed that it could give ‘apparently life itself’ in its directness and breadth” (173). Hollywood’s promise of showing its audience close-up “reality directly” kept most “authors” outside of the inner circle of people who truly maintained authority over what went up on the screen, the executives and, later, the directors too. For authors who were used to a fair degree of authority in the stories they created, fitting into a Hollywood system that did not value a writer’s individual artistic vision could be difficult.<sup>33</sup>

Fitzgerald had used the word “ignoramus” to describe himself in a letter to Edmund Wilson, but he felt that way among literary and intellectual peers like Wilson and Bishop, not when compared to Hollywood hacks like Hobby. The stories discussed in this chapter are indicative of the overall tone in *The Pat Hobby Stories*. Almost any of the seventeen could be used to show Fitzgerald’s final word on Hollywood as a place devoid of artistry, a poor medium for representing experience in the modern world,

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<sup>33</sup> In Fitzgerald’s “Pat Hobby’s Secret” a producer wishes that writers could be completely removed from the moviemaking process and pines, “If only ideas could be plucked from the inexpensive air!” (60).

deficient because of a lack of caring for artistic authenticity in too many of its people, including those who hold the power to strive for such a goal, and a system that does not allow for writers to use the individual talents that made them attractive to Hollywood, and readers, in the first place.

Fitzgerald's final condemnation of Hollywood did not come until the very end of his career; he remained optimistic that artistic work *could* be produced in Hollywood under the right circumstances. He felt that if he were allowed to direct he might be able to achieve a degree of artistry, but *The Pat Hobby Stories* and *The Last Tycoon* display his ultimate cynicism toward the bulk of what Hollywood produced, and the flaws Fitzgerald points out in these two works are his way of advocating for the continued place of literature in the struggle to represent experience in the world. Pat Hobby is not capable of representing any kind of experience in writing and would not care to do so if it required him to write more than a line; Monroe Stahr, Fitzgerald's most sympathetic Hollywood character, and one with the power to effect results, ultimately does not understand the American audience and is too focused on trying to please it. Fitzgerald, at times, had the same problems in his own writing, purposely creating popular stories to gain money and celebrity; unlike Fitzgerald, Monroe Stahr does not yearn to discover anything about the world beyond what his audience will pay for. For Stahr, when the world does not make sense, he simply asks for another take, new actors, more writers, or more realistic props. Stahr is satisfied with phony representations on the screen, so long as the audience will believe them, but Fitzgerald tries to show the reality of the Hollywood world in his last two writing projects, a world that, in itself, is not real. In

these two works, Fitzgerald shows that the medium of cinema is flawed in ways that should preclude it from replacing the novel—or fiction generally. He purported to fear, in “The Crack-Up” essays, that the novel was not long for the world, but in his final novel and short stories, he makes a case for its indispensable place in representing that world.

Fitzgerald’s longtime friend and fellow author, Ernest Hemingway, shared this latter sentiment, but he too devoted time and energy to making movies. He worked on an independent film and a big Hollywood movie, although he never wrote scripts for Hollywood. Like Fitzgerald, Hemingway retained a glimmer of hope, of optimism, in the potential of movies—even more so than has been previously thought. He did not devote as much time to bringing those dreams to fruition as Fitzgerald did, but even though he gave less of himself (in some ways) to Hollywood, Hemingway was just as disappointed with the results as Fitzgerald.

## CHAPTER V

### WORKING AT A DISTANCE FROM HOLLYWOOD: HEMINGWAY AND THE MOVIE INDUSTRY

To get some of our shots we went into actual battle inside tanks. Beside us marched the loyalist infantry, and we shot their faces as they marched toward the enemy. That is the kind of realism Hollywood can't touch.

--Ernest Hemingway

Unlike F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway was never outwardly excited to work closely with the movie industry in Hollywood. Although Hemingway was writing in the early 1920s, he was not writing movie scripts and treatments at that time, as Fitzgerald did later, and he did not begin selling his work to Hollywood until he was established as an author for some years. Not that Hemingway was uninterested in the money and celebrity that could be made from selling the movie rights from stories and novels, but he approached the medium differently than contemporaries like Fitzgerald. He was cautious, even though he was curious about the possibilities he discerned in moviemaking. One reason was his worry about overexposure; Leonard Leff argues that Hemingway understood that “the expansion of public reputation could backfire” (122). Still, a variety of Hollywood writers and directors began adapting Hemingway’s work in the early 1930s, and it was at this time that Hemingway’s celebrity rapidly increased, with little resistance from the author.

Indeed, Hemingway admired and befriended Hollywood celebrities—including Gary Cooper and Marlene Dietrich—during the 1930s and enjoyed the money that could be made from an association with the movies, though his was not the same type of luxurious lifestyle that Fitzgerald sought. In fact, Hemingway hoped to portray a public

image that was quite different from Fitzgerald's; he wanted to be viewed as a hardworking writer and a powerful man who ultimately cared only about writing the best prose he could, being seen as the best author alive (or dead), and living an interesting life when not writing, and he actively tried to shape that image.<sup>1</sup> Hemingway did not refrain from utilizing the new mass media to publicize himself, but he remained leery of writing directly for Hollywood as so many of his contemporaries had done.<sup>2</sup> Only once did Hemingway write for a movie, a documentary about the Spanish Civil War titled *The Spanish Earth* (1937), and there is scant information on how much of this script he actually wrote.<sup>3</sup> Hemingway's work on *The Spanish Earth* took place during the same decade in which Hemingway's celebrity soared and Fitzgerald's plummeted, and Leff argues that Hollywood movie companies were a significant factor in Hemingway's rise from obscurity to star (xviii).

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<sup>1</sup> John Raeburn's book about Hemingway as a public writer, *Fame Became of Him* (1984), takes this idea as its central subject, but many other scholars and critics such as Matthew Bruccoli and Leonard Leff have made similar claims.

<sup>2</sup> Just one example of his careful image-shaping, from late in his career, is connected to Hemingway's second safari to Africa, in 1953. As Suzanne del Gizzo notes, Hemingway planned to be on safari at the time that the Nobel Prize was to be announced, and he felt strongly that he would win the prize in that year. The idea that Hemingway "would have to be found 'on safari' to learn the news of the award, thus demonstrating his complete indifference to such events," was something he would have enjoyed had he won it that year (Del Gizzo "Glow" 26 n.1).

<sup>3</sup> He also worked on the text for *Spain in Flames* (1937), another film made to raise funds for the Spanish Republic during the Spanish Civil War, but his contribution to that effort paled in comparison to his work on *The Spanish Earth*, a film that was much more highly regarded. Very little information exists about Hemingway's involvement in this film, which was really a compilation that gathered footage from other films previously made by the Spanish government. According to a University of South Carolina Library website, before Hemingway travelled to Spain to report on the war and film *The Spanish Earth*, he helped to write the commentary that accompanied *Spain in Flames* (<http://library.sc.edu/spcoll/amlit/hemingway/hem6.html>). It was *The Spanish Earth* that Hemingway felt attached to. Near the end of his life, Hemingway gave an interview in which the topic of Spain came up, and he said, "I made a documentary film once, myself—*The Spanish Earth*, 1937. I wrote it, but Archie MacLeish and John Dos Passos were supposed to have done it. I think I was a grip, too" (qtd. in Bruccoli 160). Hemingway does not mention *Spain in Flames* at all, much less as a film he "made."

Hemingway was just as anxious about his celebrity and literary reputation as Fitzgerald, perhaps more so, and he frequently considered how his involvement in the media might affect it.<sup>4</sup> One precaution he took, which he thought might protect his lasting literary fame, was to live apart from Hollywood, but even this physical distance from Los Angeles did not insulate him from the mass medium's effects, both positive and negative. For most of his years as a celebrity author, Hemingway lived far away from Hollywood or any other media hubs, residing in locales such as Key West, Cuba, and Idaho. Malcolm Cowley, who recognized and fanned the flames of Hemingway's success at the beginning of this period of great celebrity, wrote in the *New York Herald* that the author's reputation "may partly be attributed to his living away from New York and its literary jealousies, to his ability to surround himself with a legend, to the pride which has kept him from commercializing his work, and also in some degree to his use of rather sensational material" (qtd. in Leff 119).<sup>5</sup> Cowley's observation about Hemingway's refusal to commercialize his work is less credible in hindsight; we know that while Cowley was writing this description of Hemingway the author was considering ways to turn *A Farewell to Arms* (1929) into a Broadway play or a Hollywood movie (Baker 219, 235), but Cowley's comment about Hemingway's purposeful distancing is intriguing. Cowley's comment implies that Hemingway made himself scarce, thus increasing demand for all things "Hemingway," but Cowley does

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<sup>4</sup> Leff writes that Hemingway "abhorred, and wanted, and feared, the personal rather than literary fame that would so wound him and his work" (xviii).

<sup>5</sup> Cowley, however, goes on to state that the main reason for Hemingway's reputation, as of 1929, is his ability to express the viewpoint of his generation better than any other contemporary writer (Leff 119).

not touch on the ways in which Hemingway (the product, the persona if not the person) was in great supply because of the mass media, mostly through still pictures in magazines but also, as the decades progressed, in the form of Hollywood movies.

Throughout his career Hemingway continued to explore the “sensational” subjects that he had always written about: war, love, violence, and others, but Hemingway’s literary reputation began to slip after he won the Nobel Prize in 1954. Contrary to the other writers discussed in this project, Hemingway’s celebrity did not lessen as his literary production slowed and finally stalled; instead, Hemingway’s star continued to shine, and he died as a tremendously well-known figure in 1961 though he had not published a major work for almost a decade. I suggest that his continued media presence helped precipitate this circumstance. A few years after winning the Nobel Prize, Hemingway involved himself in the early stages of a Hollywood movie based on his novella *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952). Though he did not work on the screenplay, he made suggestions about casting and locations for shooting. Unfortunately, this experience turned out to be a bitter one and proved to be Hemingway’s last attempt at contributing to a motion picture.

Hemingway’s authorized biographer, Carlos Baker, records a few early encounters that reveal Hemingway’s interest in movies before he began his life as a professional writer. For example, Baker notes that, as a recent high school graduate and soon after Hemingway arrived in Kansas City to begin work as a journalist for the *Kansas City Star* in 1917, he viewed a Douglas Fairbanks movie (48). Earlier interactions with the cinema are recorded in Hemingway’s own letters. In one, written

in 1953, Hemingway mentions visits to the movies with his paternal grandfather, a Union soldier in the Civil War; yet the anecdote he tells is more about spending time with his grandfather than it is about going to the movies. Nonetheless, Hemingway writes that his grandfather “was a hero and when I was a little boy I went with him to see Annette Kellerman and *The Birth of a Nation* [sic]” (1915) (SL 811).<sup>6</sup> The letter was written to the elderly art historian Bernard Berenson, and Hemingway, fifty-three at the time, may not have been paying strict attention to the details of the stories he related to his friend in this lengthy letter. Earlier in the same letter Hemingway discusses writing in a way that shows his personal distinction between the level of story-writing in the movies and in good fiction, stating, “I cannot write beautifully but I can write with great accuracy (sometimes; I hope) and the accuracy makes a sort of beauty. (Not like the camera)” (SL 808).<sup>7</sup> Hemingway makes this distinction between what “the camera” can do and what the author’s pen can do, particularly when it functions as the author wishes.

Just before Hemingway became an ambulance driver for the Red Cross in World War I, he wrote to a friend named Dale Wilson that he had been spending time with the actress Mae Marsh, one of the stars of *The Birth of a Nation*:

This also is not for publication but I have been to see Mae several times  
and am out there for dinner tomorrow evening. I have spent every damn  
cent I have too. Miss Marsh no kidding says she loves me. I suggested

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<sup>6</sup> Hemingway’s recollection of seeing *The Birth of a Nation* as “a little boy” is a bit anachronistic since he was fifteen when the movie debuted, but he could have seen the Australian actress Annette Kellerman when he was “little.”

<sup>7</sup> I have maintained Hemingway’s spelling and grammar, unless otherwise noted, throughout all citations of his letters.

the little church around the corner but she opined as how ye war widow appealed not to her. So I sank the 150 plunks Pop gave me in a ring so I am engaged anyway. (SL 8) (May 19. 1918)

This letter comes a few days after one he sent to his family on May 14, 1918, in which he also mentions his engagement to the actress (7). In fact, Hemingway was not engaged—in 1966 Marsh in fact said she wished she had known him—but the mind of the young writer and storyteller was mixing his own tall tales with the movies (8 fn3).

In the same letter, Hemingway shares his experience of seeing President Woodrow Wilson in person—incidentally the first President of the United States to view a movie (*The Birth of a Nation*) at the White House—and notes the inability of the camera, here a camera for still photographs instead of moving pictures, to accurately capture the man's likeness (8). The failure of a camera, whether one for movies or stills, to capture real life was a problem that Hemingway continued to puzzle over throughout his life; the camera's promise to do exactly what Hemingway felt it did not do, capture and transmit verisimilitude, was one of the reasons that he never completely put his faith in the new medium.<sup>8</sup> Hemingway did not trust the camera's recording of life over his

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<sup>8</sup> Readers of Hemingway's early fiction discover the author's misgivings about the camera. For example, in "Soldier's Home," first collected in *In Our Time* in 1925, the author writes of a World War I soldier coming home late from the war and finding that things there are all wrong. The first indication given to readers that things are not the way they should be comes in the first two paragraphs as Hemingway juxtaposes two photographs: one shows the soldier, Krebs, "among his fraternity brothers, all of them wearing exactly the same height and style collar"; the second shows Krebs "on the Rhine with two German girls and another corporal. Krebs and the corporal look too big for their uniforms. The German girls are not beautiful. The Rhine does not show in the picture" (111). As the story progresses, readers find that Krebs's struggle with honesty—especially in relating war stories—makes him nauseous (112). Neither picture captures the complexities of life; in the first things are too perfect, and the second picture does not include enough to encapsulate the awfulness of war, while leaving out important aspects of place like the Rhine. While Hemingway's description of the second picture offers a glimpse of World War I

own observations. One example that illustrates this wariness comes in relation to *The Birth of a Nation* and a fellow author, Willa Cather; Hemingway claimed that Cather had obtained her entire knowledge of war from watching *The Birth of a Nation* (Leff 27). In a letter to Edmund Wilson, Hemingway wrote, “Poor woman she had to get her war experience somewhere” (SL 105). Clearly, Hemingway did not find this way of acquiring knowledge to be a suitable substitute for witnessing war and death firsthand.

In fact, there were many things Hemingway found unacceptable, and A. E. Hotchner provides a list in the Preface to *Dear Papa, Dear Hotch* (2005): “phonies, tycoons, politicians, losers, braggarts, writers of undeserved acclaim, poseurs, neckties, wine connoisseurs, hustlers, bullies, self-servers, dandies, do-gooders, lawyers, agents, gourmands, gossips, automobile salesmen, the telephone, the camera, Texans, alcoholics” (xv-xvi). Again, “the camera” is noted as an object of derision, and while Hotchner does not specify whether “the camera” in question takes still photographs or moving pictures, readers of Hemingway’s work find that the author conveyed contempt for both kinds at times, including in his fiction, and his reasoning was tied to the first item on the list: “phonies.” Hemingway repeatedly railed against phonies and phoniness because he claimed to toil for the opposite—verisimilitude—in his writing, even though he aimed to find this truth by writing fiction. He did, however, always maintain an interest in the medium of the movies and hoped that he might be able to find authenticity there as well.

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Germany that is more accurate than the stories soldiers have been telling after returning home, the juxtaposition of the two photographs serves as a commentary on the inability of either picture to adequately represent the experience of others.

The Mae Marsh letter was first published in *Ernest Hemingway's Selected Letters 1917-1961*(1981), and through this book scholars and critics have learned a great deal about the author; the new series of Hemingway letters that is now in the process of being assembled and published should further that knowledge, opening up new areas of inquiry and, in particular, shedding light on areas that have been neglected, like Hemingway's relationship with the movies and Hollywood.<sup>9</sup> For example, the first volume includes a letter Hemingway wrote to his father on October 25, 1917, just after starting work at the *Kansas City Star*. In this letter, Hemingway notes that he shares a typewriter at the *Star* with the "Movie Editor," who uses it at night (*Letters* 55). While this may seem a small detail, it is far from insignificant when read alongside another letter in this volume, written to Hemingway's sister, Marcelline, in February 1918. This letter mentions the *Star*'s movie editor, a man who later became executive editor at *Life* magazine and acquired the magazine rights for Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* in 1952 (*Letters* 82 n.5). Additionally, in the postscript of this letter, Hemingway writes:

I have got a bad case on Mae Marsh. I have met the fair one and have fell hard. Ivory if you hear of me plunging off into Matrimony be not surprised. And Ivory if you would see the future Mrs. Hemingstein go to any movie that she is in and you will agree with me. And she is not half

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<sup>9</sup> The first volume of *The Letters of Ernest Hemingway*, edited by Sandra Whipple Spanier and Robert W. Trogdon, was published in 2011; this volume encompasses all of the surviving letters of Hemingway from 1907-1922. In the following years, there will be numerous volumes in the series, in an effort to publish *all* the surviving Hemingway letters.

as good in the movies as in real life. Wilson Hicks the Movie Ed has fallen with a resounding splash too. (*Letters* 81).<sup>10</sup>

The postscript contains more about his bogus relationship with Marsh; Hemingway goes to great lengths to pass off his story as real by providing specific details about the relationship. Interestingly, Hemingway argues that Marsh is much better in “real life” than she is in the movies.<sup>11</sup> This letter shows that Hemingway had been trying to convince friends and family that he knew and was attached to Marsh months earlier than his letters sent from New York City in May 1918, in which he indicates that they are likely to be engaged.<sup>12</sup> Such actions would later seem ironic, since Hemingway claimed to seek “authenticity” and “veracity” in writing.<sup>13</sup>

Besides the new volumes of letters, another project that examines previously unstudied Hemingway letters is Jill Jividen Goff’s dissertation about the correspondence between Hemingway and his lawyer, Maurice Speiser. Goff claims that Speiser has been totally neglected in Hemingway biography: Carlos Baker mentions Speiser only five times (on five separate pages), and his collection of Hemingway letters does not

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<sup>10</sup> “Ivory” was one of Hemingway’s nicknames for Marcelline; “Hemingstein” was one of the many nicknames Hemingway used for himself.

<sup>11</sup> Since Hemingway had not actually met Marsh in “real life” he could only imagine that she was better in person than on the screen, but this position would prove to be one that Hemingway continued to hold throughout his life: that movies could not do justice to “real life.”

<sup>12</sup> A footnote to the letter mentions the possibility that Hemingway saw Marsh perform in a vaudeville show in Kansas City (82 n.4). Marsh, however, appeared in a dozen movies during 1917 and 1918; Hemingway may have simply been watching her movies in Kansas City, as he asks his sister to do.

<sup>13</sup> For example, in *a Moveable Feast* Hemingway notes something he would tell himself when he was having difficulty with his writing: “Do not worry. You have always written before and you will write now. All you have to do is to write one true sentence. Write the truest sentence that you know” (12). A few pages later in this chapter, Hemingway recounts a disagreement he had with Gertrude Stein about “words that people would actually use” but that are obscene, which Stein defines as “*inaccrochable*” (15). Hemingway argues that sometimes these “are the only words that can make the story come true” (15).

include a single letter to Speiser; likewise, Michael Reynolds “devotes eight words to Speiser,” and Jeffrey Meyers gives Speiser one paragraph in his biography (2). Two other Hemingway biographers, James Mellow and Kenneth Lynn, do not mention Speiser at all (2). Goff is right to point out this omission in Hemingway studies, one that is particularly significant given the decades-long relationship that existed between Hemingway and Speiser. More to the point, Speiser’s brother-in-law was the screenwriter Benjamin Glazer; thus, Speiser was connected to the inner workings of Hollywood and was in a position to help Hemingway see inside it without having to physically be there (3). While that level of knowledge would not have sufficed for the author if he intended to write about Hollywood, which he did not, this secondhand information was adequate for Hemingway to stay connected from afar.

Work like Goff’s and the new volumes of letters helps scholars to better understand Hemingway’s relationship with Hollywood. For example, the correspondence between Hemingway and Speiser offers readers a new understanding of how Hemingway’s competitive nature factored into some of his early dealings with Hollywood. Just as Hemingway was beginning to work with Hollywood, in the early 1930s, he found movie studios, specifically Fox, trying (successfully) to use his titles *Men Without Women* and *The Sun Also Rises* without his permission (Goff 18, 23). Fox did give Hemingway \$500 for the title *Men Without Women* as a courtesy payment, but Hemingway wanted to completely stop them from using *The Sun Also Rises* (23). As Goff explains, Fox claimed that Hemingway had no case to keep them from using the title because his “claim must be based on vogue and celebrity given by [the writer] to the

title” (qtd. in Goff 23). Fox did not believe that Hemingway had enough celebrity to block their usage. The story Fox intended to use to make *The Sun Also Rises* was taken from a novel titled *Single Lady* (1931) by John Monk Saunders which bares striking resemblances to Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises*. This detail only increased Hemingway’s desire to prevent his title—which he borrowed from Ecclesiastes—from being used for Fox’s movie.<sup>14</sup> Hemingway believed that he had made the title “famous or notorious” (qtd. in Goff 24), but Fox obviously felt that Hemingway was not famous enough to stop them, fame and celebrity in Hollywood being equated with power. Such an experience helps to partially explain why Hemingway would want to increase his celebrity, and subsequently his power, and to sell the movie rights to his work before others simply stole his stories and titles.

That is exactly what Hemingway advised Saunders to do: find a buyer for *The Sun Also Rises* “before some other bastards steal it” (qtd. in Goff 24). For Hemingway, the competition between Hollywood and fiction writing became very personal; not one to bow out of a contest, Hemingway decided to compete as best as he could. His attitude by this time was very different from the stance he had taken a few years earlier, in 1926, when he asked his editor Maxwell Perkins to handle negotiations with Hollywood for the movie rights of *The Sun Also Rises*. In a December 6, 1926, letter to Perkins, Hemingway writes, “As for movie rights please get the best you can i.e. the most

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<sup>14</sup> Hemingway wrote to Speiser that Saunders’ stories, which were serialized in a magazine and then collected as *Single Lady*, were “shall we say, inspired by Sun Also, at least readers kept writing to the magazine and asking why they paid J.M.S. to rewrite the Sun Also” (qtd. in Goff 24). Hemingway was not the only one to notice the similarities; Goff notes that numerous reviews of *Single Lady*, including one in *The New York Times*, also recorded the eerie resemblance.

money—I do not go to the movies and would not care what changes they made. That is their gain or loss—I don't write movies. Although if they would film Pamplona they could make a wonderful picture” (*SL* 236, emphasis mine).<sup>15</sup> As soon as movies began being made from his work, however, Hemingway did care about “what changes they made” to his stories. Even while claiming in this letter that he does not “write” movies, he betrays his desire to do so, though in his own way, in which he would be allowed to make decisions such as where to film.

Like Fitzgerald, Hemingway realized that Hollywood was competing with books and other media for an audience. As noted, Hemingway had a very competitive nature; he often discussed writing as a contest between himself and other writers, both contemporaries and writers who were long dead.<sup>16</sup> His desire to be viewed as the best drove him to seriously consider the arena of filmmaking at one time. While it is well known that Hemingway worked on *The Spanish Earth*, a propaganda film in support of the Spanish Republicans, few scholars know that Hemingway harbored an interest in making documentary pictures at least five years earlier, in 1932, at the same time that

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<sup>15</sup> Later in the same letter Hemingway writes about making a movie “inside the ring one year with a German portable camera” (*SL* 236). He tells Perkins that he has another one of a friend, Don Stewart, “being tossed in the amateur fight and one of me bull fighting. When I come over to the states will bring them and we can run them off sometime” (236). Hemingway, here, betrays his interest in making movies just after claiming that he does not write movies or care what Hollywood might do with his story. Hemingway’s interest, however, lies most closely with documentary movies, as his comments show, and he continued to maintain this interest until the end of his life.

<sup>16</sup> A good example of Hemingway’s famous competitiveness is a statement he gave to Lillian Ross for an article on Hemingway in the May 13, 1950 issue of *The New Yorker*. Hemingway is quoted as saying, “I started out very quiet and I beat Mr. Turgenev. Then I trained hard and I beat Mr. de Maupassant. I’ve fought two draws with Mr. Stendhal, and I think I had an edge in the last one. But nobody’s going to get me in any ring with Mr. Tolstoy unless I’m crazy or I keep getting better” (42).

Hollywood was preparing to release *A Farewell to Arms*, the first Hollywood movie made from Hemingway's work.

Ultimately, though, Hemingway was disappointed by what he perceived as Hollywood's inability to represent the "real," even when he was involved in the creation of the film. Hemingway also found that it was impossible to obtain the level of authority in filmmaking that he possessed as an author, and he expressed that frustration in his writing and in his personal life. He wrote some fiction about what he viewed as the disconnect between filming and real life observation and experience. Through this fiction he claimed that experience could be better transmitted through the artistic struggle of writing. Stray lines, written as early as the vignettes of *In Our Time* (1925), illuminate Hemingway's opinion about the cinema's ability (or inability) to tell stories, and he wrote two short stories which address this issue: "Night Before Battle" (1939) and "Under the Ridge" (1939).<sup>17</sup>

By the time his first movie was being made in Hollywood, in 1932, Hemingway was complaining about the overwhelming publicity generated to promote the film version of his novel *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), and he used figures from Hollywood and popular culture to make his point. Hemingway wrote to his editor, Maxwell Perkins, that he wished to add his own slant to the "imaginative press releases that were then

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<sup>17</sup> An early connection Hemingway made between film and experience is found in "Chapter XIV" in *In Our Time*, the vignette that immediately precedes "Big Two-Hearted River: Part I" (131). In this vignette, a bullfighter's final moments of life are described in relation to a film: "Then everything commenced to run faster and faster as when they speed up a cinematographic film. Then he was dead" (131). A few years later, Hemingway would make a longer, and more negative, comment of the movies in his short story "The Killers" (1927).

flooding the country"; he sent Perkins a public statement from Piggott, Arkansas, on December 7, 1932, and asked him to pass it on to the press:

Mr. Hemingway, who is a writer of fiction, states that if he was in Italy during a small part of the late war it was only because a man was notoriously less able to be killed there than in France. He drove, or attempted to drive, an ambulance and engaged in minor camp activities and was never involved in heroic action of any sort. Any sane person knows that writers do not knock out middleweight champions, unless the writer's name happens to be Gene Tunney. While Mr. Hemingway appreciates the publicity attempt to build him into a glamorous personality like Floyd Gibbons or Tom Mix's horse Tony, he deprecates it and asks the motion picture people to leave his private life alone.

(*Selected Letters* 379)<sup>18</sup>

All of the references in this letter are to famous personalities in Hemingway's time: Gene Tunney was heavyweight boxing champion of the world in the mid-1920s and had made millions in the fight game; Floyd Gibbons was an American war correspondent in France who lost an eye when he was wounded in the battle of Belleau Wood and later gained further recognition through his work in radio; and Tom Mix was a Hollywood celebrity, as was his horse, who starred in Westerns in the 1920s and 1930s. It is difficult to ascertain how serious Hemingway was about the interference of publicity in

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<sup>18</sup> Hemingway's claims, supposedly meant to downplay the circulating stories of his war record and boxing prowess and to publicly state that he did not want the limelight, differ from what he was claiming just after he was injured in World War One and when he first landed back on American soil.

his private life at this time. Leff claims that Hemingway's fame may have helped generate the large sales of his novel *A Farewell to Arms*, even as economic depression set in, and Hemingway must have understood this (119).<sup>19</sup> After Frank Borzage produced and directed the movie version of *A Farewell to Arms* in 1932, however, Hollywood did not premiere any more movies based on Hemingway's work for over a decade, when Sam Wood produced and directed *For Whom the Bell Tolls* in 1943. Hemingway only wrote one novel in the 1930s, *To Have and Have Not* (1937), but during this time he wrote a good deal of nonfiction, both creative nonfiction and essays. Additionally, he was busy in Spain during the Spanish Civil War as a war journalist and working on *The Spanish Earth*, a documentary in which he played a major part.<sup>20</sup>

The work of movie documentarians was important to Hemingway; his friend A. E. Hotchner records this in his telling of the first meeting he had with Hemingway, in Cuba in 1948, when the two drank daiquiris and "discussed Robert Flaherty's documentary films, which Hemingway greatly admired, Ted Williams, the Book-of-the-Month-Club, Lena Horne, Proust, television, swordfish recipes, aphrodisiacs, and

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<sup>19</sup> Jill Jividen Goff notes that although the stock market had crashed in the autumn of 1929 *A Farewell to Arms* sold 60,000 copies by December of that year (*Power* 21).

<sup>20</sup> Although Orson Welles' name still appears in the credits of many copies of the film, Hemingway actually replaced him as the narrator and allowed his voice to be recorded—though not in tandem with his face—for a very rare instance. When advertising the film, the press was almost split between advertising it as "Hemingway's famous film story" and "Joris Ivens's film account" (qtd. in Guill 53). Ivens, the director of the documentary, remembers Hemingway as a willing student of the filming process; Hemingway served as Ivens' grip, or camera assistant, and was willing to "help in any capacity" (Guill 55). There is evidence that Hemingway helped with the overall vision of the film and was actively participating at the end of the process, working with Ivens in New York during the editing of the film (64). It is not altogether surprising that Hemingway would involve himself with *The Spanish Earth* to the level that he did; he was particularly fond of movie documentaries.

Indians” (*Papa* 9).<sup>21</sup> The tentative development of Hemingway’s relationship with Hollywood in the 1930s, after *A Farewell to Arms*, did not actually mean that the author was uninterested in the movie industry; he was simply more drawn to nonfiction and documentary films at the time than too conventional movies. Indeed, much later, when Hemingway involved himself in the film version of *The Old Man and the Sea*, his frustrations were largely due to the fact that the picture was not shot more like a documentary.

By the time he was working on the filming of *The Old Man and the Sea*, Hemingway had published all the work he would be remembered for; the novels he wrote after *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952) would not be published in his lifetime. However, more of his work was adapted for cinema and television in the last ten years of his life, from 1951 to 1961, than at any other point in his career. Moreover, he contributed to the movie version of *The Old Man and the Sea* (1958) in a more direct way than with any film since *The Spanish Earth* roughly twenty years earlier. In 1962, the year following Hemingway’s death, Daniel Boorstin called Hemingway the “Douglas Fairbanks” of American letters, comparing Hemingway’s situation to that of actors in the Hollywood star-system, a system that “valued actors’ personalities over their acting abilities and accomplishments” (qtd. in Del Gizzo “Glow” 8).<sup>22</sup> Boorstin claimed that at Hemingway’s death he was a writer known not for the significance of his

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<sup>21</sup> Besides cluing in readers to Hemingway’s awareness of various arts and media, Hotchner notes that Hemingway was fond of Flaherty’s documentaries, the most famous of which was *Nanook of the North* (1922).

<sup>22</sup> In fact, Fairbanks and Hemingway shared something else, the title of “America’s Favorite Gypsy Couple” in *Vanity Fair*. Fairbanks and Mary Pickford once held the title but were supplanted by Hemingway and his second wife, Pauline Pfeiffer, in July of 1934 (Raeburn 49).

literary contribution, but for his “well-knownness” (Del Gizzo 7). Such a claim would have greatly upset the author if he had been alive to read it, but Hemingway’s relationship with Hollywood, even at a distance, certainly contributed to Boorstin’s analysis.<sup>23</sup>

Some critics have argued that Hemingway only continued to sell his work to Hollywood for the money, but John Raeburn notes, “If money alone were the reason [for the turn in his career], he could have cashed in by turning to screenwriting and by producing glossy stories for the *Saturday Evening Post* variety, two possibilities he stoutly resisted” (33). Hemingway’s denial of these avenues sets him apart from contemporaries such as Fitzgerald and William Faulkner. He was too savvy to ignore Hollywood and too optimistic about the artistic possibilities of movies to cease all contact with the medium, but like Fitzgerald, Hemingway could not make a movie in the way that he wanted: with complete control. As with Fitzgerald’s engagement with the industry, it is hard to know whether such a movie would have been a success. The attention that stemmed from Hemingway’s media celebrity was at once desired and unwanted. Hotchner relates a story that encapsulates Hemingway’s issues with the movie industry, highlighting Hemingway’s contradictory wishes for authorial control and solitude. After winning the Nobel Prize, Hotchner writes, “[Hemingway] said the constant assault of visitors was brutal. He had finished a short story and was thirty-

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<sup>23</sup> Mark Cirino’s article, “Beating Mr. Turgenev: ‘The Execution of Tropmann’ and Hemingway’s Aesthetic of Witness” is a good, recent article that explores both Hemingway’s desire to write “with an accuracy that not only inspires emotion, but conveys authenticity” and his incredibly competitive nature (Cirino 31).

seven pages into another one when Bill Lowe showed up with a proposal to make an African documentary film in the fall. This seemed like a good idea until Lowe put out a press release to the effect that Ernest had agreed to write, act in and co-produce an original full-length feature. End of film project” (*Papa* 144). If this anecdote is true, then Hemingway still had enough belief in the possibilities of movies, even in the last stage of his life, to feel that a “proposal to make an African documentary film [...] seemed like a good idea,” but he simply did not want to “write, act in and co-produce an original full-length feature film.” Hemingway’s overall reluctance to work in Hollywood usually kept him at arm’s length from the movies, but when he was involved he felt stymied by the same system that Fitzgerald and others complained about, even though Hemingway’s complaints extended far beyond scripts.

### **Hemingway’s Control over “Real” Representations of Spain and Cuba**

In his book *Fame Became of Him: Hemingway as Public Writer* (1984), John Raeburn claims that Hemingway’s “own acute awareness of the public response to his personality, and his sense of what this response meant, affected what he chose to write about and what he said when he did write. Nearly everything he published after 1930 reflected this awareness” (13). Considering Raeburn’s statement, which assesses Hemingway’s activity after 1930 in relation to the public and the media (which delivered a public “Hemingway” persona to that public), alongside Hemingway’s post-1930 works

allows for an interesting evaluation of Hemingway's decisions about literature and other media, particularly the medium of movies. It is not a coincidence that this is the same period of Hemingway's career in which Hollywood started making movies from his work and in which he began seriously reconsidering what kind of art he wanted to pursue. In this decade, Hemingway's publications were primarily nonfiction: a variety of essays and articles, as well as books like *Death in the Afternoon* (1932) and *The Green Hills of Africa* (1935). These books blurred the line between fiction and nonfiction—what might now be considered creative nonfiction—and were very different from his early novels like *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) and *A Farewell to Arms* (1929). Many readers are surprised to learn that Hemingway published only one novel between *A Farewell to Arms* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* in 1940: *To Have and Have Not* (1937). As previously noted, Hemingway also worked on a documentary, *The Spanish Earth*, but he likewise wrote short stories in the 1930s as well as a play. Some of the stories take the Spanish Civil War as their subject; more importantly for my analysis of Hemingway and cinema, two of the stories involve a discussion of filming the war, what Hemingway as part of a small film crew did for *The Spanish Earth*. While Hemingway's willful participation in moviemaking may come as a surprise, especially knowing that, as he wrote to Maxwell Perkins, he did not give any thought to the movie business outside of the money he might receive for the sale of movie rights, Hemingway's correspondence with Maurice Speiser reveals more about Hemingway's interest in movie-making. Indeed, his exchanges with Speiser underscore what is simply

suggested in Hemingway's letter to Perkins: Hemingway recommends Pamplona as a good place to film the then-theoretical movie version of *The Sun Also Rises*.

On June 2, 1932, Hemingway wrote Speiser to thank him for handling the sale of the movie rights for the novel; the deal had just been finalized with RKO Pictures (Goff 46). Hemingway tells Speiser that he has just finished correcting the proofs for his nonfiction book about bullfighting, *Death in the Afternoon* (1932). Hemingway also writes of fishing off the coast of Cuba and is excited about what great fishing he has found there, scoffing at fishermen who travel all the way to New Zealand in search of fish comparable to those he has been catching. Amusingly, he specifically mocks the popular Western novelist Zane Grey, writing, "When the illustrious Zane Grey goes on his much advertised and money invested year and a half trip to Tahiti for a giant fish picture if I can get some company to back it will get a good operator and make the goddamnedest big fish and fish catching picture ever made here in Havana" (qtd. in Goff 47). Such a suggestion might seem like a simple passing fancy, but Hemingway did attempt to make this picture twenty-five years later, unsuccessfully, when he signed up to work on the Hollywood version of *The Old Man and the Sea*. He wanted to make *The Old Man and the Sea* in the way he had imagined the "big fish and fish catching picture" in his 1932 letter, "us[ing] a few local people," but that was not to be (47).

Hemingway, understanding that the "eye" was invading the "ear," goes on to say in his letter to Speiser that he "can see the whole damned thing from beginning to end—could make a swell picture of people and fish and country ... [sic] can see the shots and the sequence" (47). Then, he spends another page and a half discussing the things that

he “sees” to Speiser: all the fish that could be seen off Cuba on a good day (fifteen to thirty); the action that takes place out of the water, once the fish are hooked; and even the men who catch them, whom he describes as “wonderful” (47). Hemingway asks Speiser not to mention his film suggestion to anyone, an important request since this letter really relates Hemingway’s intentions, not just a fantasy. Hemingway writes, “*Will* make it summer after next—or next summer if too broke to go on the African trip” (emphasis added, 47). He tells Speiser that he “can see the whole damned picture” but that he has not mentioned it to anyone before now (47). Because Speiser had Hollywood connections, Hemingway may have been using Speiser as a sounding board for his movie ideas, but, regardless of Speiser’s opinion, Hemingway betrays a clear enthusiasm for the possibilities of such a film project; he even mentions that he “might get a hurricane in too” (47). A hurricane is an apt metaphor for the level of excitement Hemingway communicates about making such a film. Acknowledging, to himself as well as Speiser, that this eagerness is a change from his feeling about movies in the past, Hemingway writes, “First time I’ve ever been interested in the goddamned movies” (46-47). Here, Hemingway refers to an interest in moviemaking more than movies in general; even from his pre-World War I letters it is evident that the younger Hemingway did have an interest in movies and stars like Mae Marsh. This new interest, though, goes beyond a simple desire to make money because, in his descriptions of the possibilities for filming, Hemingway is absorbed in these potential movie projects based on their artistic merit, disconnected from any financial gain.

In addition to a “fish picture,” Hemingway writes Speiser that he would like to make a bullfighting picture in Spain (47). He had already made a few amateur bullfighting movies, the ones mentioned in his 1926 letter to Perkins, but now Hemingway is more serious and feels he could make “two bloody fine ones” (47). He finishes this section of his letter by admitting his lack of moviemaking knowledge but restating his vision for these pictures. He writes, “Could make a wonderful one in Spain—Would have to have good technicians and swell operator—But I can *see* the whole damned things—story and all—Don’t tell me I’m a damned fool. Because I’m not (in this [sic] the damned movies are dying from lack of *action* and movement—” (original emphasis 47). Again, Hemingway asks Speiser not to mention his intentions to anyone and admits that what he is writing may not appear well thought out; he claims, however, that his letter may only seem like rambling because he has not taken the time, yet, to “get down on paper what I can *see* in my head” (emphasis added, 47).

Hemingway feels that once he puts his vision into more considered words, it will be coherent. While he would have to wait a very long time to apply his vision to the “fish picture,” it was only a few years later that Hemingway became involved in making a movie in Spain, although it was not the bullfighting picture that he had envisioned.

Instead of making the bullfighting picture, he helped create *The Spanish Earth*. Hemingway scholar Allen Josephs writes that the “only positive ‘cause’ Ernest Hemingway ever supported was the Spanish Republic” (314), and he also notes that since Hemingway wrote about the Spanish Civil War “as fact and as fiction, distinguishing between his fact and his fiction is not always a simple matter” (314). *The*

*Spanish Earth* is no different; it is difficult to determine what is fact and what is fiction in this “documentary.” Unlike Hemingway’s other Spanish Civil War projects, *The Spanish Earth* was not solely written by the author. Stacey Guill writes that “*The Spanish Earth* was a collaborative effort, the film representing a significant departure from Hemingway’s usual role as a solitary writer” (52). Guill lists a number of people who were involved with the making of the film: “In addition to Hemingway, John Ferno, Helen van Dongen, Irving Reis, Marc Blitzstein, and Virgil Thomson all labored individually and together under the creative and brilliant direction of Joris Ivens” (52).<sup>24</sup> Guill’s article examines the ways in which the film was marketed; depending on the situation, the film was alternately attributed more to Hemingway or Ivens. As Fitzgerald had observed in his Pat Hobby stories, the director (the *auteur*) had risen to a position of power in moviemaking by the middle to end of the 1930s—rising to the level of studio executives. Hemingway had expressed the need for “good technicians and [a] swell operator” when he wrote to Speiser about his filmmaking intentions, and he must have known that he would not be the person in charge of *The Spanish Earth* when he agreed to become a part of the process, but for an artist used to control and authority the collaborative process of filmmaking must have been disorienting.

Hemingway could, however, use this opportunity to learn more about the process of making a movie, and Mary C. Johnson claims that “[a]s an unappointed apprentice, Hemingway learned the craft of filmmaking” (qtd. in Guill 55). As for Ivens, he

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<sup>24</sup> The internet movie site [imdb.com](http://imdb.com) also contains a list of writing credits for the film. There, the list includes: Hemingway, John Dos Passos, Lillian Hellman, Joris Ivens, Archibald Macleish, and Prudencio de Pereda (for the Spanish adaptation). Pereda, Hellman, Ivens, and Macleish are listed as “uncredited.”

characterized Hemingway as camera assistant or “grip” during the filming and repeatedly stressed that the filming was a collaborative effort (55). Ivens understood that Hemingway was new to filmmaking and “appreciated Hemingway’s eagerness to learn, his willingness to help in any capacity” (55). In *The Camera and I* (1969), Ivens writes about the process of making movies in an artistic way, stating:

any film, including any documentary film, has so many sides to its content and its expression that its ideal author is a *team*, a collective of people who understand each other. Such a team is quite different in my mind from a crew formed by a producer who wants to bring certain names and talents together. (emphasis original, qtd. in Guill 55)

Such repeated declarations by Ivens show him as an *auteur* director who is not concerned about enhancing his control and power over the creation of his films, suggesting that Hemingway would neither have been creatively stifled by Ivens, nor ignored when trying to contribute to the film. Additionally, Guill claims that “there could be no more obvious example of two artists [, Hemingway and Ivens,] who consistently and intentionally traversed literary and visual genres in an effort to capture *reality*” (emphasis added 57). This situation leads to a pair of obvious questions: If Hemingway possessed a genuine desire to make films, and particularly documentary films, and if his first real experience in this arena was a positive one, with a generous and appreciative director at the helm of the project, then why did Hemingway cast aside his filmmaking ambitions after *The Spanish Earth*? Why did it take another twenty

years before Hemingway ventured to work on another movie, the “fish picture” based on his own novella? Hemingway and Fitzgerald ultimately had similar difficulties with the medium of movies: issues with the medium’s verisimilitude and a lack of individual authority. These authors were used to wielding total creative control in the construction of their literary works, and collaboration kept Hemingway, in particular, from furthering his experiences in the medium beyond selling movie rights. Hemingway realized that the conditions for making the independently produced *The Spanish Earth* were likely more ideal than Hollywood moviemaking would be with the usually large number of people involved in those movies; the group making *The Spanish Earth* was quite small. Still, neither the experience nor the final product met his high hopes and expectations.

The fact that Hemingway was not the one ultimately in charge must have bothered him, at least a bit. Because the filming took place in dangerous locations, Hemingway assumed a leadership role outside of the technical aspects of filming. In fact, Guill notes that “Ivens relied on Hemingway for advice and direction on war zone logistics” (55). At the same time, part of Hemingway’s new knowledge about the process of filming included learning that documentaries were not one-hundred percent “real.” For example, Ivens initially had a script for the film which was entirely unrealistic, as he himself recalled. “How could we ask people who had fought in the fields and in the trenches around Madrid to help reconstruct the atmosphere of King Alfonso’s abdication?” he asked (qtd. in Guill 56). Ivens decided to throw this script out, but this does not mean that there were no other “reconstructions” or “recreations.”

For instance, in the village of Fueteduena, filmmakers shot a memorable scene central to establishing the reasons why the Spanish Republic should be supported. Villagers are shown building an irrigation system. While these villagers want to work the land and make it fruitful, that cannot be done without irrigation and Franco's side does not want to provide access to water. Thus, the earth, of enough importance to the film that it is part of the title, will sit dry and unused if the Spanish Republic does not win the war. Ivens later wrote that "working for the earth" was one of the two main themes in the move; the other was "fighting for the earth" (qtd. in Guill 66 n.10). The irrigation scene, however, was one of the scenes that was re-enacted (66 n.10). The villagers had indeed worked to irrigate the land, but the documentary implies that the scene being shown *is* in fact the villagers doing that work; it is not quite false but also not entirely true. During the film, the narrator (Hemingway) says, "Men cannot act before the camera in the presence of death." This statement, very likely written by Hemingway, encapsulates his attitude as a writer in relation to death. As Mark Cirino notes, Hemingway claimed that it was important for a writer to observe death so that it could be written about accurately (31). While much of *The Spanish Earth* does contain actual footage of battle, where death was truly taking place, Hemingway must have been disappointed to find it necessary to re-enact any of the action needed for the film.

These aspects of the filmmaking process are somewhat removed from the writing of the film. As noted, Ivens' initial script was discarded and the film team, which included Hemingway, used a more spontaneous approach once they were on the ground in Spain. Still, there is a narration for the movie, and Hemingway seemed the natural

person to write that text. He did this, and he aided Ivens with the synopsis of the film, helping him to “shorten and clarify the synopsis into six brief sentences” (62).<sup>25</sup> His writing for the film, however, did not go smoothly; after his first attempt to write the commentary, Ivens read the text and expressed his feeling that it was too long and wordy. He marked the text in red and gave it back to Hemingway who, according to biographer Jeffrey Meyers, was furious. Meyers claims that Hemingway yelled at Ivens, “You Goddamned Dutchman. How dare you correct my text?” (qtd. in Meyers 312). Hemingway was not very open to criticism of his writing; negative comments about his work, whether finished or in progress, could bring out the worst parts of his competitive nature and elicit harsh responses from Hemingway as well as long lasting grudges. In this particular situation, Hemingway deferred to Ivens’ judgment in the matter, according to Guill, and the finished commentary was later praised for its “Hemingway-esque style” (62). Ironically, Ivens helped Hemingway write a commentary that was more like Hemingway’s style than what Hemingway initially wrote. The narration is sparse and understated, but the experience of having his writing approved by someone else unsettled the author.

Another issue of control arose in the final stages of the filmmaking process. There has been some dispute, as Guill notes, about how involved Hemingway was in these late stages of the process. Some biographers have claimed that Hemingway was

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<sup>25</sup> The synopsis, which Carlos Baker included in his biography of Hemingway, reads, “We gained the right to cultivate our land by democratic elections. Now the military cliques and absentee landlords attack to take the land from us again. But we fight for the right to irrigate and cultivate this Spanish Earth which the nobles kept idle for their own amusement” (qtd. in Baker 313).

rather removed by the editing stage, but Guill suggests that Hemingway was very much involved to the very end, citing Ivens as her proof (64). Certainly, even after the film was finished the work was not; *The Spanish Earth* had to be promoted, and Guill notes that the “close collaboration between Ivens and Hemingway even extended into” this phase (64). It was in Hollywood that, according to Carlos Baker, Hemingway and Ivens would show the film “to the movie stars and gather money for ambulances” (401).<sup>26</sup> According to Guill, Ivens gave a speech in support of the film that echoed one Hemingway had already given, suggesting that either Hemingway helped Ivens write his speech or that they collaborated on their remarks. Bearing in mind the way that Hemingway sometimes treated friends who had criticized his writing, it might seem surprising to find these two men continuing to work together. Even though Hemingway believed strongly in the cause of the Spanish Republic, and that passion may have helped him to overlook Ivens’ criticism, Hemingway’s writing was still the most important part of his life. After recording the narration, however, Hemingway imposed his artistic vision in a surprising way, and Ivens supported Hemingway. This event might have helped heal hurt feelings Hemingway had in connection to the written commentary.

The man who was hired to voice the narration for *The Spanish Earth* was the powerful director and actor that F. Scott Fitzgerald had written about in *The Pat Hobby Stories*: Orson Welles. Welles’ reading the commentary for the narration of *The Spanish Earth* marked the first time that Hemingway and Welles met, and the story of the

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<sup>26</sup> It was also during this press junket to Hollywood that Hemingway saw Fitzgerald for the last time (Meyers 287).

meeting became legendary, with Welles recounting it in interviews many years after Hemingway's death. In one of these interviews, given to Juan Cobos in 1964, Welles claims that he arrived at the studio to record the commentary only to find Hemingway drinking a bottle of whisky. After Welles commented that the lines he was to read were "too long" and "dull," echoing Ivens' notes, Hemingway became furious and verbally attacked Welles' sexuality and then initiated what Welles called a "terrible scuffle"; although Welles does not mention if either Hemingway or he was hurt, he says that the affair ended with the pair toasting each other over the bottle of whisky (114). What is more verifiable than this story is the fact that Welles did record the commentary and is listed as the narrator in the credits of the finished film, but at some point Hemingway replaced Welles as the narrator.

Ivens recalls the decision to rerecord the narration, using Hemingway's voice, in the 1978 book *Cinema Strikes Back: Radical Filmmaking in the United States 1930-1942*:

As proposed by Archibald MacLeish, we asked Orson Welles to read (the narration) [sic] and it seemed like a good job; but there was something in the quality of his voice that separated it from the film, from Spain, from the actuality of the film.... In any case, when I took the film to Hollywood, the other people in Contemporary Historians—Herman Shumlin, Lillian Hellman and Dorothy Parker—sensed what was wrong and suggested that Hemingway try reading it himself. That was right. During the recording his commentary sounded like that of a sensitive

reporter who has been on the spot and wants to tell you about it—a feeling that no other voice could communicate. The lack of a professional commentator's smoothness helped you to believe intensely in the experiences on the screen. (qtd. in Russell Campbell page 356)

Ivens' comments, here, when he discusses what "was wrong" and what "was right," echo Hemingway's general artistic vision throughout his career. Ivens' intuitive reasoning is in line with Hemingway's and must have helped bond the two artists in their creative endeavor, even when Hemingway's choices, particularly in regard to his writing, which should have been the place where he could contribute most strongly, were critiqued by the director.

Another story that relates a version of the choice of narrator comes from Valerie Hemingway, the woman who served as Hemingway's secretary in his last years and later married Ernest's son, Gregory. In her memoir, *Running With the Bulls* (2005), she remembers eating at a restaurant outside Paris where Hemingway was once mistaken for Orson Welles—who ate regularly at the restaurant. After she and Hemingway were seated, Welles came into the restaurant, and Valerie recalled being a bit star struck when she saw him. She tells Hemingway that she would like to meet Welles, and he sends Welles a brandy—an invitation to come over, which Welles accepts (75). Valerie remembers having a fine lunch with "all of us relaxed and in good humor," adding that Hemingway afterwards "decided that Welles was a fine character after all" (75). In this anecdote, in which Welles discusses with them the movie he is making at the time, she mentions the first meeting between Hemingway and Welles and the narration of *The*

*Spanish Earth*. She writes, “Welles had been chosen to narrate [*The Spanish Earth*]. He made a preliminary recording, but Ernest found his intonation unacceptable” (75). She mentions that Prudencia de Pareda, with whom Hemingway worked on *Spain if Flames* (1937), wanted to do the narration, but “[a]s it happened, Ernest ended up doing the narration himself” (75). According to this version, it is Hemingway who realizes that Welles’ narration does not work; then, another person with movie experience, Pareda, is passed over in favor of Hemingway. Such a series of events makes it seem as if Hemingway was in control of the “as it happened” and by extension the film more generally, instead of Ivens, and it is likely that Hemingway might have told the story of his involvement with *The Spanish Earth* in this way to Valerie, decades later. While it would not be out of character for Hemingway to exaggerate his role, a recent depiction of this meeting, in the movie *Hemingway and Gelhorn* (2012) takes Hemingway’s version (via Valerie) and amplifies it even more, with a scene that depicts Hemingway firing Welles in the studio. This seems unlikely—indeed, it resembles the kind of hyperbolic “Hollywood” storytelling that Hemingway practiced orally but avoided when writing. Nonetheless, Hemingway *did* rerecord the commentary, and such a change could not have happened without Ivens’ blessing. Hemingway, who hated hearing his recorded voice, either suggested he serve as *the* voice of the movie or at least agreed to take the job in an effort to bring authenticity to the film that was lacking with Welles’ narration.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> The television station *Turner Classic Movies* aired *The Spanish Earth* with the original narration from Welles. On TCM’s website, there is some commentary about the movie which includes a short discussion

Hemingway's overall success with *The Spanish Earth* leads scholars to wonder why he did not follow up this project with an attempt at making "the bullfighting picture" in Spain or a fishing picture in Cuba, but even with the degree of authenticity that *The Spanish Earth* achieved, Hemingway did not view the product as "real" in the same way that he considered his literary works; coupled with his lack of overriding authority, the film's unreal qualities dissuaded Hemingway from pursuing his movie ambitions for many years. In a piece in *Verve*, Hemingway discussed the finished product of *The Spanish Earth* in this way:

Afterwards when it is all over, you have a picture. You see it on the screen; you hear the noises and music; and your own voice, that you've never heard before, comes back to you saying things you'd scribbled in the dark in the projection room or on pieces of paper in a hot hotel bedroom. But what you see in motion on the screen is not what you remember. (qtd. in Guill 51)

His description here is in line with the short stories he wrote about filming *The Spanish Earth*, and stand in contrast to what he wrote about "writing."<sup>28</sup> For Hemingway, the collaborative effort of filmmaking was less real than the solitary process of the author

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of the change in narrators and the superior quality of Hemingway's version: "[Hemingway's] flat, sometimes raw intoning of his own words gives them an urgency a slicker-sounding narrator would have undermined" (Carr). The commentary adds, "Those words, spoken with conviction, are the key to the film's enduring power. Many a documentary maker has been tripped up by asking people to portray themselves for the camera. Many times, the minute they do, they lose their authenticity. Not here" (Carr). Thus, with much hindsight the film is remembered as a successful documentary, in part due to Hemingway's narration.

<sup>28</sup> A particularly good example is what Hemingway wrote about "writing" in the deleted ending of his short story "Big Two-Hearted River," later published as "On Writing."

creating something true to life from experience, memory, and imagination. The inability to maintain the authority that he had as an author also proved to be a problem when he finally did give filmmaking another shot. Long before that happened, though, Hemingway expressed his thoughts on the filming of *The Spanish Earth* in two short stories: “Night Before Battle” and “Under the Ridge.”

### **Hemingway’s Fictional Representations of Filming the Spanish Civil War**

As Hemingway critic and scholar Allen Josephs reminds readers, Hemingway’s time in Spain sparked a very productive period: “Hemingway wrote more about the Spanish civil war than about any other single topic” (235). To be precise, Hemingway wrote thirty syndicated news dispatches for NANA (the North American Newspaper Alliance), articles for the magazine *New Masses*, an article for the Russian newspaper *Pravda*, twelve pieces for *Ken* magazine, a play titled *The Fifth Column* (1938), a novel titled *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, the narration for *The Spanish Earth*, and a handful of short stories (Josephs 235). *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is, undoubtedly, the most well-known and remembered work from this list, but Josephs asserts that, while some critics complained that the novel did “not give an accurate historical picture of the Spanish civil war .... the stories and the play, in fact, do give us an accurate rendition of that part of the war that Hemingway actually experienced” (236), which includes his foray into filmmaking. Three of these war stories were published in *Esquire* and one in *Cosmopolitan*, but they were not collected until after Hemingway’s death. Of the four

stories collected and posthumously published in *The Fifth Column and Four Stories of the Spanish Civil War* (1969), only one, “The Butterfly and the Tank,” makes no mention of the cinema, and two contain a main character who is filming the war in Spain.

Although “The Denunciation” does not focus on filming the war, the main character, Enrique, is walking home as he observes people “hurrying by in the dark on their way home from the cinemas where they had stayed until the shelling was over” (428). This is only one sentence in an eight page story about a fascist spy being denounced in a Madrid bar, Chicote’s, but the significance of the line resonates deeply. The spy is easily recognized by Enrique and a waiter because they had been regular patrons of the bar before the war started. In the story, the waiter calls a number, given to him by Enrique, and reports the spy, dressed in a loyalist uniform, to the “proper” authorities who are outside the bar as the main character leaves. When Enrique arrives back at his hotel, he calls the same number and talks to a man named Pepé; he asks Pepé to tell the spy, Luis, a lie, that he, Enrique, was the one who denounced him (428). Pepé wonders why this detail should matter, but Enrique tells him that “it makes a difference” (428); he thinks how the “old clients of Chicote’s had a sort of feeling about the place” (428). Enrique does not want Luis to lose this “feeling” by thinking that it was the waiter that denounced him; representing this deception as a small kindness, the story ends with Enrique explaining, “Luis Delgado was an old client of Chicote’s and I did not wish him to be disillusioned or bitter about the waiters there before he died” (428). This is not the only untruth found in the story: Luis was attempting a deception by wearing

his enemy's uniform in the bar. And, while readers do not learn his purpose for entering Chicote's, the story notes that he "had been such a fool as to go back there" (428). Deception is the main theme of this story, and the line about the cinemas plays into this theme. Presumably, the people stayed in the cinemas during the shelling because they want to escape the horror of the real world that is happening all around them.<sup>29</sup> In the cinemas, these people can be deceived into forgetting the truth about their realities for a time, specifically at the time of extreme danger during the shelling. Hemingway does not cast judgment on this action; he simply places it within the context of other deceptions that are commonplace during war.

"Night Before Battle" and "Under the Ridge" make a stronger and more direct statement about movies and what is, and is not, captured by the camera. In the first paragraph of "Night Before Battle," the narrator discusses filming a battle from a "shell-smashed house that overlooked the Casa del Campo in Madrid" (437).<sup>30</sup> The description of the house as "shell-smashed" denotes the location as close to battle, and the narrator continues to stress that this area is near the action: "Below us a battle was being fought. You could see it spread out below you and over the hills, could smell it, could taste the dust of it, and the noise of it" (437). By the end of the paragraph, in fact in the last sentence, readers learn that, even if nearby, the narrator is still not close enough to adequately capture the battle on film: "But it was just too far to film well. We had tried working closer but they kept sniping at the camera and you could not work" (437).

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<sup>29</sup> Another reading is that the cinemas were safer structures which provided an "escape" in more than one sense.

<sup>30</sup> The Casa del Campo is a park that is located west of the center of the city.

Here, the narrator establishes a set of conditions that make it impossible to film the action of the battle well. They are too far away to get the shots they want, but they cannot work any closer. This situation draws attention to a problem with filming that a writer does not have when writing. A writer does not have to create in the given moment; instead, a writer can observe or witness the action and write from memory later. Such distance need not compromise the authenticity of the story in the way that reenactments might. The writer might take notes from a vantage point that is near the action and use them to write a story later; because the writer does not have to operate a camera, he or she does not necessarily face the problem of being shot at by the soldiers taking part in the battle. The narrator elaborates on this problem, describing military tactics *they* employed to try to improve their filming situation in the story. He writes about moving into a house which “was a fine place to work and we made a sort of a blind for the camera on a balcony with the broken latticed curtains; but, as I said, it was too far” (437). The problem remains: where it is safe to film is too far from the action.

It is not too far away to film the landscape, though, “the pine studded hillside, the lake and the outline of the stone farm buildings that disappeared in the sudden smashes of stone dust from the hits by high explosive shells, nor was it too far to get the clouds of smoke and dirt that thundered up on the hill crest as the bombers droned over” (438). The problem lies in filming the battle realistically. Hemingway writes:

But at eight hundred to a thousand yards the tanks looked like small mud-colored beetles bustling in the trees and spitting tiny flashes and the men behind them were toy men who lay flat, then crouched and ran, and then

dropped to run again, or to stay where they lay, spotting the hillside as the tanks moved on. (438)

The tanks do not look like tanks but instead, beetles; the men look like toys. Such a depiction is reminiscent of the problematic one Hemingway wrote about in “Soldier’s Home,” in which nothing in the photograph looks like it should, and it downplays the seriousness of what is happening on the battlefield below: death does not retain *realness* when it is captured on film in this way. The narrator, not completely deterred, hopes that they will at least be able to “get the shape of the battle” with the close shots that they had managed to film (438). When the light is no longer adequate for filming, the narrator and his two partners break down the camera equipment and quit for the day. The narrator proposes they go to Chicote’s, the bar cited in “The Denunciation,” but his partners “had to repair a camera, to change film and seal up what we had made” (438). Here, the narrator draws attention to other, technical problems associated with filmmaking. The camera can stop working properly and precautions need to be made to protect what has already been filmed. Unlike writing, filming has external equipment that must be protected. The only equipment that a writer needs to protect is him or herself.

When the narrator goes to the bar to further observe and experience what life is like for people living in Madrid during the war, his friends do not go. Hemingway suggests that their understanding of the reality of peoples’ lives in war-torn Spain is inferior to the narrator’s because he is able to get closer to other people; the narrator talks with and observes a reality that is very different than the surreal, toy-like vision

captured on the camera. Hemingway highlights this contrast when the narrator enters the bar and begins talking with a soldier he knows. The soldier asks the yet-to-be-named narrator if he was at the battle, and the narrator tells him, “We’re making a picture of it” (439). The soldier asks if the battle photographs well, and the narrator responds, “Not too” (439). After a long conversation that drifts away from filming, the narrator returns to the subject and asks his friend about a rumored upcoming attack. The narrator, now known as Hank,<sup>31</sup> wants to know when the attack will take place so that he and his team will be able to film it, but the soldier is reluctant to disclose such sensitive information (442). Then, the narrator changes the subject and talks about an attack from the week before. The soldier, now identified as Al, says, “The tanks were no good there,” and Hank replies, “I know … but they photographed very well” (442). Again, Hemingway is drawing a comparison about what actually happened and what the camera picks up. Both Hank and Al know that the tanks were no good in the attack, but the footage of the tanks *is* good; this is the same comparison that Hemingway will make in “Under the Ridge.”

After spending time in the bar, Hank and Al go up to Hank’s room where there is a gathering of people drinking, playing records, and shooting dice. Al wants to play dice, so Hank leaves him to the game and goes to his filmmaking team’s room only to find that they have gone out to the Gran Via to eat. Hank, then, goes to the Gran Via, but the pair have already finished eating and left to go “back to work on the bad camera”

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<sup>31</sup> Later in the story, the character’s full name is provided: Edwin Henry, the same initials as Ernest Hemingway (451).

*yet again* (449). Again, Hank's friends only briefly leave their room before returning to work alone on their equipment. Unlike Hank, who readers are told is a writer, these others do not possess the freedom to look and listen to what is around them because, without working cameras and equipment, they will not be able to continue their movie project. They are virtual prisoners of a mechanistic medium that can only convey a less than "authentic" representation of reality in the first place. When a drunk airman shows up at Hank's room, Hank tells the man that he is making a picture and the airman, named Baldy, says that he is "no longer interested in any but the picturesque aspects of the [war]" (453). Baldy has a fantastic story to tell about being shot down after downing a "tri-motor Junker" during the day's battle, but Baldy is too drunk to advance past the first details. After many attempts to tell his story, he asks the people in the room if they want him to describe what he saw and they reply, "O.K. What did it look like?" Baldy responds, "You can't describe it" (456). As a man who declares that he is only interested in the "*picturesque aspects*" of the war, Baldy aligns himself with the false version of the war that the camera records, and his inability to tell his story parallels the inability of the camera to tell the real story of the battle.

Near the end of "Night Before Battle," Hank goes to check on his team: "In their room the two I was working on the picture with were still working over the bad camera" (457). The "two" are disappointed that they have been unable to leave their room, stating, "We work always on this damn camera" (457), and neither is named because they are not really a part of what is happening around them. Before heading back to the bar, Hank tells them, "We've got to be closer tomorrow" (458). One of the men replies,

“I have thought so too. Much closer. I am glad you know” (458). When Hank goes down to the bar, however, he finds that distance will not make much difference tomorrow. Al, the soldier, is preparing to return to the other soldiers, and he tells Hank that he will get “a good five hours’ sleep before [the attack] starts” (458). Inadvertently, or purposely, Al has communicated the answer to Hank’s earlier question about when the attack is planned to begin. Now, he asks Al, “That early?” (458). Al’s reply provides the explanation for why the distance for filming will be inconsequential: “Yeah. You won’t have any light to film by. You might as well stay in bed” (458). The limitations of the camera are apparent here, and filming pales in comparison to the possibilities for a writer. After a day of filming that does not capture the essence of what it is like to be in battle, the narrator—and writer—has seized on the opportunity to reveal the true nature of what it is like by writing about the people who are living through and fighting in the Spanish Civil War. Moreover, Hemingway conveys *his* truth of the frustrations associated with trying to obtain the same sorts of “truth” with the temperamental movie camera.

The second story, “Under the Ridge,” again shows Hemingway working out his feelings about participating in filming as a novice moviemaker. As in “Night Before Battle,” the story begins after the end of a day filming a battle. In “Under the Ridge,” readers learn that the Spanish Republicans had launched a failed attack. In this story the narrator has been filming the battle with a companion who, like the two unidentified men in “Night Before Battle,” is unnamed. It has been dusty and dirty, and the filmmakers are trying to quench their thirst in the loyalists’ camp; the soldiers there are understandably

in a bad mood. The narrator thinks about the day and how he feels safe now, after doing their “work well in the morning” and almost being killed “twice during the early part of the attack” (461). Unlike in “Night Before Battle,” the narrator has not been too far from the battle to film well; he describes going in with the tanks and finding a good place to film, but notes that he began to feel “a sudden distrust for the place” (461). They move the cameras two hundred yards to the left and narrowly escape a six-inch shell that lands where they had originally set up the camera. The narrator and his filming partner had been very close to the action of the attack and, in fact, were in a position to obtain the inside story. Now, at the end of the day, they are still among the defeated soldiers

The man with the narrator is not entirely aware of what is happening around him, but the narrator is and notices a French man who seems “to pay no attention at all to where he [is] … in International Brigade uniform,” walking without a rifle “over the edge of the ridge and out of sight … down out of the war” (463). The narrator makes a point, however, that “The one who was with me, busy changing film in the hand cameras, had not noticed him” (463). Once again, the camera takes all focus away from the reality happening around these men. The man who walks “down out of the war” turns out to be a very important part of the story. A Russian officer asks the narrator if he has seen this man who has just deserted the army, and the narrator lies. It is no matter, because the Russian soon spots the man and chases after him, catching and shooting the deserter just over the ridge. This swift punishment serves as one example of why the Spanish soldiers claim to dislike foreigners. The soldiers declare that “they

are the representatives of tyranny” (464), because it reminds them of a previous execution. That execution was of a Spanish soldier named Paco. Paco had given himself a self-inflicted wound and had spent an extended period in the hospital recuperating and rehabilitating, but was returned to the front just so the officers could make an example of him by executing him in front of his fellow soldiers without giving him any warning or “chance to prepare himself” (467). The Spanish soldiers viewed this behavior from the foreigners as unbelievably cruel.

The execution of the French deserter and subsequent conversation leads the narrator to reflect on the man who has just been executed, thinking:

I understand how a man might suddenly, seeing clearly the stupidity of dying in an unsuccessful attack; or suddenly seeing it clearly, as you can see clearly and justly before you die; seeing its hopelessness, seeing its idiocy, seeing how it really was, simply get back and walk away from it as the Frenchman had done. He could walk out of it not from cowardice, but simply from *seeing too clearly*; knowing suddenly that he had to leave it; knowing there was no other thing to do. (emphasis added, 465)

The narrator tempers this assessment with understanding for the other side of the transaction, the duty and responsibility of the officers to enforce discipline in war, but the narrator says of the Frenchman, “I understood him as a man” (466). The repetition of the variations of the phrase “seeing clearly” in the above quotation sets the Frenchman apart from Baldy in “Night Before Battle,” who cannot tell his story and only cares about the “picturesque.” Presumably, the Frenchman has seen the horror of war in

the failed attack that day and can see the folly of the coming battle. It is because the Frenchman sees it all so clearly, the awfulness and the horror, that he wants to leave; Baldy, alternatively, made his way back to the war after he was shot down. Furthermore, it is the narrator who has seen the Frenchman, has considered his situation and his motives, and has understood something through the contemplation of what he has seen. The cameraman observes none of this.

When the soldiers voice their animosity toward foreigners, the narrator suggests to his friend that they leave, but his friend does not speak Spanish and does not understand what the soldiers are saying and so replies, "I'm going to sleep" (464). Hemingway points to more than one flaw in the filmmaker who is accompanying the narrator: he does not speak the soldiers' language and does not try to communicate with any of the people for whose good he claims to be making the film. Just as he fails to talk with the Spanish people, he fails to use his eyes to observe what is happening around him, thereby missing the death of the Frenchman at the hands of Russian officers. It is up to the narrator to witness and interpret what is happening around them, and, after hearing the soldiers' story of Paco, the narrator tells them, "I understand your hatred" and decides to leave them alone (468). The soldiers appreciate the narrator's empathy, and they part on good terms, but the narrator has to wake "the one who took the pictures," who has been sleeping the whole time that the narrator has been observing, talking, and coming to realizations about the situation of this country and its people at war (468). The filmmaker, once awake, speaks with the narrator:

Were you talking all that time?

Listening.

Hear anything interesting?

Plenty.

The filmmaker does not have the ability to listen in the way that the narrator does, since he does not speak Spanish. He might at least have utilized his powers of observation, but instead chooses to sleep.

At the end of the story, before the filmmakers leave the camp, they need to talk with the ranking officers. Early in the story the narrator anticipates the awkwardness of this meeting because of the day's failed attack: "I did not want to face them. If an operation was successful they were happy to have motion pictures of it. But if it was a failure everyone was in such a rage there was always a chance of being sent back under arrest" (463). The top officers are not interested in communicating the reality of the war; they only want to portray success and victory. Readers learn that the general is "furious" about the attack, mostly because he had been ordered to make the attack without being given enough support. Additionally, the tanks had performed awfully. The commander of the tanks "had got drunk to be brave for the attack and finally was too drunk to function" (468). The narrator notes that this commander would be shot when he was sober. The disastrous result of this situation is explained by the narrator, not the general: "The tanks had not come up in time and finally had refused to advance, and two of the battalions had failed to meet their objectives" (468). Because the narrator is aware of what is going on around him, unlike his film partner, he can describe the details of the failed attack.

The narrator asks the general what he can write about the day's events, and the general replies, "Nothing that is not in the official communiqué" (468). This indicates a problem for writers—censorship—something Hemingway had been forced to deal with before. The end of the story hints at something besides plain censorship, however; the general repeatedly tells the narrator, "don't get killed," asking the narrator to remember that he is a writer (469). The narrator reiterates the fact that he is forbidden to write what he has seen, heard, and smelled, but the general reminds him that this restriction will not apply forever: "Write if afterwards. You can write it all afterwards" (469). Unlike the movie project the narrator is involved in, which is restricted in many ways, the writer is only restricted by his memory and lifespan. The movie needs to be filmed while they are in Spain; it needs to be shown to an audience as soon as possible because the film is intended to be used as a way to raise funds for the Spanish Republic. The narrator/writer, however, can include everything that is deemed important to the truth of his experience, whether it paints the Republic in a fair or poor light, once he is home. Hemingway did just that, writing and publishing this story it in the late 1930s.

As the narrator and the general have this conversation, the other filmmaker is apparently absent. He thus misses yet another opportunity to gain a greater understanding of the truth about the war that can be gleaned through interactions like the one between the narrator and the general. But, then again, he does not speak Spanish and might not understand the conversation anyway—readers do not know what language is being spoken at this moment in the story. The general asks the narrator if he got any pictures of the day's fighting, and the narrator tells him that they filmed the tanks. The

mere mention of the tanks enrages the general, and the two part ways. As the narrator walks, with his film partner, to a staff car assigned to take the pair to Madrid, they see the dead Frenchman—this is the first time the other filmmaker has seen him, and he makes no comment—and the narrator thinks about the day and the images they had filmed: “But the oddest thing about that day was how marvelously the pictures we took of the tanks came out. On screen they advanced over the hill irresistibly, mounting the crests like great ships, to crawl clanking on toward the illusion of victory we screened” (469). It is this deceptive vision that the camera creates, an illusion, something altogether different from the actual failure of the tanks, that dissuaded Hemingway from pursuing further film projects for twenty years. The narrator of “Under the Ridge” leaves the scene of battle believing that the dead Frenchman was “the nearest any man was to victory that day” because “he had walked out of battle with his head held high” (469). Unfortunately, the filmmakers did not film this “victory” and instead are asked to create the illusion of victory from the actuality of defeat. The film was far from the truth; the truth, in the eyes of Hemingway and the narrator of “Under the Ridge,” could be better captured by writing about it afterwards.<sup>32</sup> These stories, in themselves, are Hemingway’s argument for literature over film and provide his explanation for

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<sup>32</sup> Similarly, Hemingway immediately recorded what he observed and reported on it in the journalism he wrote as a war correspondent in Spain, but he claimed to think of his newspaper writing in a very different way from his fiction, the latter being more “serious.” He did, however, take his journalistic writing very seriously. For example, articles and books that discuss Hemingway’s work on what would later be published as *The Dangerous Summer* (1985), his reports on the bullfights in Spain in 1959 which appeared in three installments of *Life* magazine in 1960, show that Hemingway labored and fretted over this job. Valerie Hemingway discusses at length, in her book *Running With the Bulls* (2005), Hemingway’s concerns and anxieties over all of the details that were associated with this project, down to the photographs used in *Life*.

abandoning filmmaking for decades, even though he secretly harbored an interest in the medium.

### **The Old Man and the Movie: Hollywood's *The Old Man and the Sea***

Writing in the *New Republic* in October 1958, author and critic Stanley Kauffmann reviewed the movie version of *The Old Man and the Sea* which had premiered earlier that month. Kauffmann notes, “The director (John Sturges) and the screen adapter (Peter Viertel) have hewn faithfully to [Hemingway’s] story line” (21). He explains why this was a challenge and how it was achieved: “This is feasible even though the drama is largely internal because much of the Old Man’s inner conflict is given voice on the sound track” (21). Though the adaptation followed Hemingway’s story, the film was not a success at the box office.<sup>33</sup> This was also the only Hollywood movie that Hemingway was truly involved in, signing on as a consultant for part of the film. It was his last filmmaking venture, and, after a considerable amount of labor—at least according to Hemingway—he swore off any further participation in filmmaking no matter what the potential payoff. As Hemingway writes in March 1956 to his actor friend Gary Cooper, who was thinking of a long-proposed movie version of Hemingway’s World War II novel *Across the River and Into the Trees* (1950), “Coops

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<sup>33</sup> Jeff Stafford, a writer for the television company Turner Classic Movies, claims that although the movie collected three Academy Award nominations (and one win for Best Music Score), it failed at the box office “in relation to the immense amount of time and money that went into it.” He also claims that Hemingway said of Spencer Tracy’s performance, “Tracy looked like he was playing Gertrude Stein as an old fat fisherman” (<http://www.tcm.com/this-month/article/358906|297135/The-Old-Man-and-the-Sea.html>).

the picture business is not for me and no matter how much dough we could make how would we spend it if we were dead from dealing with the characters we would have to deal with" (SL 855). Hemingway then mentions the current movie project he is involved with and writes, "After *The Old Man and the Sea* is finished I will not ever have anything to do with pictures again so Help Me God. God is Capitalized" (855). Hemingway, after twenty years of staying out of filmmaking, had tried once more to contribute to a film, and his frustration in that process cured him of his film desires for good. In those intervening twenty years, Hemingway reaffirmed his confidence in literature as a superior storytelling medium, a sentiment apparent when he writes Cooper, "I know it means I will never have any dough but I know I shouldn't work in pictures when I go well enough in books" (856). Unfortunately, Hemingway would not again "go well enough in books"; his best work was behind him, but he did refocus his energy toward his writing, as he wrote to the author Harvey Breit in July 1956, "Since I quit the cinema have written two short stories for discipline and purge and to bite on the nail" (866).

Hemingway repeated his renunciation of films, Hollywood or otherwise, to his editor Wallace Meyer in another letter written a few weeks after the one to Cooper: "I bitterly regret ever having participated in the film in any way but it seemed best for all of us that an attempt be made to make a decent picture of the book. Will never have anything to do with motion pictures again" (857). Hemingway's frustration stemmed from a lack of control over the filming of *The Old Man and the Sea*, which ultimately meant that he failed to achieve his goal of bringing his vision of the story to fruition.

Hemingway had decided to become involved with this movie, his chance at making his “fish picture,” because he wanted to be sure that the fishing scenes looked as real as possible. In fact, he spent weeks with a crew in Cuban waters and off the coast of Peru trying to catch a 1,000 pound marlin because he had envisioned such a catch as the “great fish” that his character, Santiago, wrestles with in the book. Baker writes that the marlins in Peru were said “to behave with something of the lordly grandeur of the one in Ernest’s novel” (533). Unfortunately, Hemingway failed to net the fish he wanted, and the camera crew had continued difficulty obtaining the shots of the fish that were caught. In a letter to a friend, Hemingway wrote about the problems they were having and joked that everyone working on the movie was under contract except for the fish, who was the star (Laurence 30)—to be fair, *the marlin* in *The Old Man and the Sea* does not exist; it is a product of Hemingway’s imagination. Ultimately, *The Old Man and the Sea* became a bitter disappointment for him.

When Leland Hayward, Hemingway’s friend and the producer of *The Old Man and the Sea*, did not allow Hemingway to continue his search for the perfect fish, Hemingway was furious. Just as Fitzgerald had believed that he might find success in Hollywood if he made connections with the right person, Hemingway must have hoped that his personal association with Hayward would provide him with the leeway he needed to shape the picture as he wanted. Moreover, as the epistolary evidence suggests, Hemingway suspected that this movie was his chance to see *his* work on the movie screen as real and true, in the ways he believed he had written it on paper. His inability to catch the right marlin was costly monetarily, but the failure also cost the film much of

its verisimilitude in return: Spencer Tracy, cast to play Santiago, eventually filmed all of his fishing scenes in a boat in a studio tank in Hollywood, and a dummy made of plastic and foam rubber was made for the close-ups on the marlin (Laurence 35).

The movie retained much of Hemingway's text but little of its authenticity, and it failed. Hemingway believed that the lack of success was attributable to the movie's phoniness, exclaiming, "No picture with a fucking rubber fish ever made a dime!" (qtd. in Laurence 38). Kauffmann's assessment in this area is in line with Hemingway's. In his *New Republic* piece, he compares the location shots and the studio filming:

James Wong Howe's color photography of the sea is excellent; outstanding among numerous scenes is one of a fleet of small fishing boats starting out just before dawn, each with a lantern on its mast. Some of the special effects are poor; it's obvious when a studio close-up has been superimposed on a location shot. (22)

Hemingway did not think audiences would buy Hollywood's version of the story and neither did Kauffmann. Too much of the movie looked phony. Landscape was vitally important to Hemingway's stories, and he even worried how location shots, filmed in Cuba, would look on screen in comparison with what he had written in *The Old Man and the Sea* because of "the steadily increasing urbanization of Havana to the East" (SL 853). The scenery, however, was only one of the problems with accurately filming a movie that was truthful to the written story; casting was also a complicating factor.

For Hemingway, more important than using all of his words, unchanged, was the proper casting of characters.<sup>34</sup> For example, he preferred that a Cuban fisherman be cast to play the part of Santiago instead of a Hollywood actor. Even when producers cast a Cuban named Felipe Pazos as Manolin, the boy who retains his faith in and friendship with Santiago, Hemingway was unhappy with the choice. Laurence speculates that Hemingway's dissatisfaction may have stemmed from the fact that, though he was Cuban, Pazos was the son of a bank president instead of the son of a fisherman, as Manolin is in the book (30-31). Worse than this casting decision for Hemingway, however, was the choice of Spencer Tracy as Santiago. Tracy was not Cuban, did not look Cuban, did not do a good job acting Cuban, and was notorious for the tantrums he threw, which were befitting of a Hollywood star. At least as early as May 1956, Hemingway articulated his disappointment with Tracy's portrayal of Santiago, suggesting that such a casting decision only added to what Hemingway saw as the artificiality of the scenery and props.

On May 25, 1956, Hemingway wrote a letter to a friend Gianfranco Ivancich in which he talks about the good time he and his wife, Mary, had working on *Old Man in Peru*, but he also discloses his apprehensions about Tracy and the film (SL 859). By this time the “difficulty with the artist” had been straightened out, but Hemingway writes that “in the stills I saw last night [Tracy] still looked very fat for a fisherman and the boy

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<sup>34</sup> Although Frank Laurence notes that Hemingway felt strongly about the text of *The Old Man and the Sea* being used word for word in the movie, A. E. Hotchner insinuates that Hemingway did not mind when adaptors of his work condensed, deleted, or recast aspects for the purpose of time. He did, though, fume when adaptors showed no understanding of his stories, as when they gave stories an opposite ending (“One Thing” 71).

looks very tiny” (859). As a joke, Hemingway adds, “There is nothing that a rubber fish cannot fix,” but he does hold out hope that Tracy will be able to pull off the job of playing the character of Santiago because “he is such a good actor” (859). Roughly a year and a half later, when the film debuted, it was apparent to critics like Kauffmann that Tracy had not been able to perform this necessary movie magic.<sup>35</sup> Kauffmann cites Tracy’s acting as one of the real disappointments of the film, stating that Tracy’s “performance in this film demonstrates that he has made his reputation in very carefully tailored roles and that he is not, in the best sense, an actor at all; he is a ‘behaver’” (21). As if this stunning rebuke were not enough, Kauffmann criticized Tracy’s inability to leave behind his own personality, which Kauffmann believed was present in all of Tracy’s movies: “This is not to say that an actor is condemned to a small field because he has made his mark in it or because of his personality; but Tracy has very little as a performer besides the ability to market his personality. It is not the Old Man’s personality” (21). In Kauffmann’s view, Hemingway’s judgment was vindicated in the end.

In the same way that it is impossible to know if Fitzgerald could have found success in Hollywood if he had been given the control he desired, it is equally difficult to discern whether Hemingway could have transformed his vision to the screen successfully if he had been given the ability to cast the people he felt were right for the parts, to dictate where the scenes would be filmed, and to determine how his text would

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<sup>35</sup> The Hollywood Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences nonetheless nominated Tracy for an Oscar.

be used for the dialogue (both internal and external) and the narration of the film. In one exchange of letters, Ezra Pound expressed his fondness for the film version of *The Old Man and the Sea*, to which Hemingway responded, “I always liked the silent pictures better. I think this one would have been better made silent with simply narration” (“Ezra Pound Papers” YCAL MSS 43, Box 22, Folder 958). In this ideal film, all of the words would be Hemingway’s, and the look of the landscape and the people would be emphasized by the lack of sound. Hemingway had “seen” films in his head in the early 1930s, just after the end of the silent era of movies, but they would never make it from his mind to the screen. The closest he came was in his collaboration on *The Spanish Earth*, in which most of the words were likely his, though it is impossible to know if *all* the words were, and the fact that those words were critiqued before the final version of the film premiered was Hemingway’s first disappointment in learning the ways of moviemaking.

Hemingway’s inability to control the movies he worked on is directly tied to his dissatisfaction with the lack of “true” representations in films. His frustrations with *The Old Man and the Sea* were compounded by the making of another movie from his work at the same time, a remake of *A Farewell to Arms* by David Selznick. Hemingway’s irritation is summed up well in a letter he wrote to Meyer in May 1957:

I shouldn’t let B[arnaby] Conrad<sup>36</sup> anger me but just now with 2 pictures being made over which I have no control (and receive nothing) and with that bastard [David] Selznick sabotageing A Farewell to Arms (he’s

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<sup>36</sup> Barnaby Conrad was an American artist and author.

rewritten the love story with Ben Hecht) he told [John] Huston it was no good. *His* is a real love story. Selznick would never permit Rock Hunter [Hudson] to approach a girl in such a gauche way. They have rewritten it all etc. My temper is a little rough. Selznick he says has written a love story that is a love story not just followed slavishly some screwy thing by me. It makes you pretty sick, Wallace. (emphasis original *SL* 875)

Ultimately, it did not matter whether Hemingway was involved in the writing or making of movies from his own work; he would always find these movies lacking if he was not in complete control of them. The only real consequence of Hemingway's involvement at any lower level was that Hemingway lost time that he could have spent working on his literary projects. In the letter to Breit quoted above, Hemingway refers to the short stories he has written, since he "quit the cinema"; he claims that three of the four stories are "too awful to write but am trying to write very simply and gentle but with the real words .... It will make up for the time I wasted trying to make a true picture" (866).<sup>37</sup> When Hemingway did not have control over an artistic medium, and could not dictate the ways in which it presented a story—whether fictional or nonfictional—the process was, to him, a waste of time.

Roughly a decade before his complete renunciation of the moviemaking business, Hemingway still had a measured optimism about the medium of movies. In an interview for *Time* magazine in August 1947, he was asked, "Is a writer-Hollywood

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<sup>37</sup> Hemingway echoed this sentiment to the writer Irving Stone while on the *Île de France*, claiming that the effort he had invested in the film version of *The Old Man and the Sea* was a waste of time (Baker 535).

combination capable of doing good literary work?”; Hemingway replied, “So far [it] hasn’t. But Hollywood has proven [it] can make good pictures from good stories honestly written” (qtd. in Brucoli 51). Hemingway, like Fitzgerald, makes a distinction between “good pictures” and “good literary work.” By this time, a handful of movies had been made from Hemingway’s stories, texts he would have judged as “good stories honestly written,” including a film version of “The Killers” (1946) and *To Have and Have Not* (1937). The former was a movie that Hemingway liked, at least the first part of the movie that uses Hemingway’s text nearly word for word, while the latter was turned into a movie that was co-written by William Faulkner and Jules Furthman, as well as two other uncredited writers (IMDB). Hemingway’s statement takes on special meaning when considered in this context; he did not believe that even the “writer-Hollywood combination” of Faulkner-Hollywood had proven that “good literary work” could be produced in Hollywood movies, even from an “honestly written” story from Hemingway himself. Of course, the actual combination was not Faulkner-Hollywood; it was Faulkner-Furthman-Adams-Chambers-Hollywood. Perhaps Faulkner-Hollywood would have worked better.<sup>38</sup>

When asked, in the same *Time* interview, “How much has the big money of slicks, Hollywood, radio, etc., taken writers away from serious personal themes?” Hemingway simply answered, “Most whores usually find their vocations” (qtd. in

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<sup>38</sup> While Faulkner is outside the scope of this project, there has been a fair amount written on his time in Hollywood. To my knowledge, there are no books that look exclusively at William Faulkner’s relationship with Hollywood. There are, however, a number of new and old articles and dissertations that address the subject, such as Michael Gray’s 2005 dissertation *Faulkner and Film* and George Sidney’s 1961 article “William Faulkner and Hollywood.”

Brucoli 51). If he thought that his own work on the film of *The Old Man and the Sea* was a waste of time in the mid-1950s, work that had distracted him from his literary pursuits, he may have been particularly upset to consider his action in relation to this previous statement. Would he count himself among the “whores” he alluded to in 1947? Certainly, he did not want to be lumped in with that group, which in his mind would also include Faulkner, Fitzgerald, and many other literary figures. Valerie Hemingway recorded that Hemingway was once mistaken for Orson Welles in the late 1950s; in 1958, on a trip to his new home in Ketchum, Idaho, Hemingway stopped over at a small hotel in Nebraska where he was mistaken for another Hollywood celebrity. The hotel restaurant’s waitress told Hemingway that “the manager’s children had spotted the big bearded stranger as a famous man” (Baker 541). Hemingway asked the children who they thought he was, and they replied, “Burl Ives” (541). Baker claims that Hemingway “was only mildly amused” at this case of mistaken identity. Still, Hemingway told the children who he was “and graciously autographed menus for the waitress and the children” (541). Unlike Welles and Ives, Hemingway was no actor; it was this very aspect of Hemingway that led to his replacement of Welles in the narration of *The Spanish Earth* two decades before.

In speaking to a group of Idaho teenagers in 1959 about movies, Hemingway expressed his dislike for films made from his stories, claiming that he liked *The Killers* (1946) but walked out of all the other movies “except *The Old Man and the Sea*. I was responsible for that one” (qtd. in Brucoli 147). Hemingway’s involvement in the film made him feel “responsible,” even though he ended up having very little authority or

control in the way the film was made. Ironically, Hemingway's tremendous increase in celebrity could not bring him the power he needed to bring his cinematic visions to life. At the start of the 1930s, Fox had not believed that Hemingway had enough celebrity to block their use of one of his titles, but even after Hemingway had arguably accumulated as much (or more) celebrity than any other author in the twentieth century he still could not wield that power with complete authority when it came to the movie business.

Hemingway's feeling of responsibility for the creation of art, even when he did not possess complete control, made it impossible for him to find success working in a collaborative effort like filmmaking. If Hemingway could not make "good stories honestly written," at least in his estimation, then he could never consider the final product of that work to be "good literary work." The lack of authority for the author, and his perceptions of a flawed ability of movies to tell stories in contrast to the medium of literature, mostly dissuaded Hemingway from trying to bring his visions of motion pictures to the screen; he expressed some of his reservations to friends and in interviews, but he also wrote about specific misgivings, tied to his work on *The Spanish Earth*, in the medium that he had the most control over, the written word.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION: WIDENING THE SCOPE OF THE MEDIA'S REPRESENTATIONS OF THE WORLD

In fact, print is the only category of media consumption to lose ground among young people in the last five years. Within the print category, just newspapers and magazines declined. Book reading held steady over the last five years, actually increasing from 21 to 25 minutes a day in the last 10 years.

Vivian Vahlberg, "Fitting Into their Lives: A Survey of Three Studies About Youth Media Usage"

My secret hope is that we're so overwhelmed by this technology, but soon sanity will prevail, and we're going to say, Okay, we need to retreat and create a space for ourselves that's quieter, that isn't just an endless bombardment of information. We need to create a space where we can take stock of who we are, where we are in life, what the world is around us. And just looking at blogs is not going to do it. And just looking at my Facebook page is certainly not going to do it.

Gary Shteyngart, "Gary Shteyngart on Facebook, Literacy and the End of America"

What's hard to convey to European readers is how deeply irrelevant American writers are to American culture.

Jonathan Franzen, quoted in Garth Hallberg, "Why Write Novels at All?"

The twentieth century was an age of information and mass media, but the twenty-first century is filled with vastly more information and media than its predecessor. This dissertation has examined a small if representative number of authors and works within a limited timeframe, but the project could be expanded by widening the scope of media considered, extending the time period, or both. Authorial anxieties toward other media were not limited to newspapers and movies, and these concerns did not disappear in the middle or later parts of the twentieth century; the fears that were extant then are still present. One difference between the early twenty-first century and the early twentieth century is that there are many more modes of media now than there were one hundred

years ago. Television arose to be a dominant medium in the middle and latter part of the last century, and the online world of digital media has asserted itself into our contemporary lives in ways that were almost unfathomable a few decades ago; it is unthinkable for many to ponder modern life without media screens, and these screens are with us for more and more hours of the day.

The death of the physical newspaper as a medium has long been proclaimed,<sup>1</sup> and what remains of the material newspaper industry has been greatly affected by the world of digital media, forcing even the most respected newspaper outlets to speed up their transference of information to an even faster pace in an effort to compete with lesser skilled and often untrained bloggers and other online news sources as well as social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Some of the criticisms that authors had for the newspaper industry of the early twentieth century are similar to the complaints that the established newspaper industry now has for online news sources, bloggers, and social media, particularly with regard to the speed in which news stories are written and communicated to the public, which has created the perception of more errors and mistakes in these representations of the world, but also due to the lack of journalistic training among online news writers.<sup>2</sup> The newspaper industry, however, is not the only medium that has been forced to consider major changes because of online competition.

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<sup>1</sup> There is even a website, “Newspaper Death Watch,” which is completely devoted to “Chronicling the Decline of Newspapers” ([newspaperdeathwatch.com](http://newspaperdeathwatch.com)).

<sup>2</sup> There is research the shows that enrollment in mass communication and journalism majors has been down in recent years, more drastically at the graduate level (Jinks).

Even the Hollywood movie industry has had to contemplate major modifications to its very profitable medium now that online sites such as Netflix and Hulu have increased the convenience of watching movies from the comfort of home even more than the video rental industry did in the last few decades. A recent *New York Times* article reported on a symposium at the University of Southern California film school where famed movie directors George Lucas and Steven Spielberg “predicted the collapse of most megabudget [sic] movies, and with it the end of Hollywood as it now exists” (Rose BW SR 5). While Lucas shared his view that Hollywood blockbusters would eventually become like other big-ticket live events such as concerts, Broadway shows, and sporting events, in which people would pay more money for a seat but might not go to the movies as often, Spielberg went a step further to express his opinion that a more drastic change in the medium would bring an elevated sense of realism to the movie experience by eliminating the screen: “We’ve got to get rid of [screens] and put the player inside the experience, where no matter where you look you’re surrounded by a three-dimensional experience. That’s the future” (5). In an effort to compete in the future world of media, Spielberg believes that movies will have to offer *more realistic* experiences to audiences. The audience will have to feel as if they are actually in the movie and experiencing what is being “shown” to them firsthand.

Interestingly, the author of this article connects that level of realistic experience, what he calls “immersion entertainment,” to literature, citing Cervantes’ character Don Quixote who “read all night from sundown to dawn, and all day from sunup to dusk until with virtually no sleep and so much reading he dried out his brain and lost his sanity”

(qtd. in Rose).<sup>3</sup> One major difference, though, between the more traditional “immersion” medium of literature and the virtual reality that Spielberg talks about is that the audience for books must internally construct their own visuals when reading literature while a consumer of virtual reality is provided with the sights and sounds of the imagined world. It is likely that the remaining senses of touch and smell will be incorporated once it is possible.<sup>4</sup>

The author Steve Almond worries about this loss of imagination and creativity that comes as a result of the increase in screen-time and the decrease in traditional forms of reading. He writes about his six-year-old daughter learning to read by using a Web site that “allows kids to listen to stories, with some rudimentary animation, before reading them and taking a quiz to earn points” (45). Although he admits that this tool helped his daughter read over fifty books, he writes that she “never fails to remind [him] that ‘the reading’ is her least favorite part of the activity” (45). Almond also worries “that the screen alters and dilutes the imaginative experience” (45). He writes, “The reason people turn to screens hasn’t changed much over the years. They remain mirrors that reflect a species in retreat from the burdens of modern consciousness, from boredom and isolation and helplessness” (45). Almond’s fear is that our interaction with these screens/media, this “retreat,” is destroying our ability to imagine.

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<sup>3</sup> Frank Rose is a journalist and digital anthropologist. He is the author of *The Art of Immersion: How the Digital Generation is Remaking Hollywood, Madison Avenue, and the Way We Tell Stories* (2012).

<sup>4</sup> The movie industry has already tried to attend to the senses of touch and smell. There was an attempt to introduce smells into the theater during a movie in 1960, a failed experiment known as Smell-O-Vision, and 4-D movies of today put audiences in seats that move, prod, and poke viewers at certain points of the movie, sometimes even spraying them with mist to engage the sense of touch in combination with the 3-D experience of viewing a movie.

A self-confessed addict of media technology, Almond is also skeptical of media technology's ability to bring "greater ... connectivity" (45). As a modern author, he is not alone in his anxieties and fears. In 2012 the journalist Dwight Garner talked with contemporary authors about the lack of a literary community in New York City, something the author Gary Shteyngart recently lamented. Daniel Halpern, the publisher of Ecco Press, suggested to Garner that "the Internet has obviated young writers' need for companionship, gossip and consolation" (Garner). Contemporary writers are not without any physical interactions, but much of that contact comes in MFA programs and workshops. While I believe that a good deal of this work suffers from the same problems that the Hollywood system of collaboration brought to stories, I will leave the judgment of the fiction that has resulted from these kinds of collaborations up to readers.

Before jumping forward to the present, however, the most logical step in expanding this project would be the inclusion of more media from the beginning and middle of the twentieth century. Radio served as a major competing medium from the 1920s onward. In the early 1920s, the demand for radio receivers was greater than the supply, and by 1924 there were more than 1.25 million radio sets in use in the United States; a year later, one of every six homes in America had a radio (Hillard and Keith 42-44). The number of homes with radio sets rose dramatically from there to 40% in 1930 (61). In rural farm homes the number was lower, closer to 21% in 1930, but 60% of rural farm homes had a radio by the end of the 1930s (Craig 4). The phonograph had invaded homes even earlier, and television was the first mass medium to bring screens into the home. All of these media shaped and changed the environment and culture of

storytelling and served as competition for the centuries-old medium of literature. In their literature, authors continued to respond to and comment on the place of these media in society. For example, Carson McCullers places the radio in a prominent position in her novel *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* (1940).

Still later in the century, and into our current century, writers persistently addressed their media competition. Michael Chabon's 2012 novel *Telegraph Avenue* is a story about records and a record store that employs the first major advance in media communication, the telegraph, in its title. This book was written and published long after the internet's takeover of media, showing that writers continue to explore outmoded means of media and communication. Certainly, there have been many stories written over the last few decades that focus on the internet and online communities; Gary Shteyngart's *Super Sad True Love Story* (2011) takes a close look at digital and social media. These novels are examples from our current literary period, but postmodernists also took media as a central theme. Don DeLillo's 1985 novel *White Noise* focuses on television, a medium that bombards the public with white noise. Another example is David Foster Wallace; in the summer 1993 issue of *Review of Contemporary Fiction* Wallace wrote an article titled “*E Unibus Pluram*: Television and U.S. Fiction,” in which he examines the rise of postmodernism alongside the rise of television.<sup>5</sup> He claims that television is like a mirror, but “Not the Stendhalian mirror reflecting the blue sky and mud puddle. More like the overlit bathroom mirror before which the teenager

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<sup>5</sup> Wallace's title plays with the Latin phrase *E pluribus unum* on the United States' seal, changing “Out of many, one” to “Out of one, many.”

monitors his biceps and determines his better profile” (152). This quotation is a glimpse into Wallace’s opinion of television’s ability to accurately represent experience. More than a half-century after the authors and works examined in this project, authors continued to criticize the quality of their media competitors.

Wallace claims that although fiction writers like to observe the world—he begins the article by calling them oglers—they tend to be self-conscious and “dislike being the object of people’s attention” (151). He allows that there are exceptions (he lists Norman Mailer, Jay McInerney, and Tama Janowitz), and he asserts that these exceptions “create the misleading impression that lots of belles-lettres types like people’s attention” (151). If Wallace is right, his contemporaries need not worry. Jonathan Goldman in his recent book *Modernism is the Literature of Celebrity* (2011), places the starting point of a new form of celebrity in the early part of the twentieth century. Goldman believes that modernism, in particular the high modernism of the 1920s, is directly tied to a new celebrity that began at that time. Authors, perhaps a greater number than in any other time, had access to this celebrity, but Loren Glass, in the coda to *Authors Inc.* (2004), concludes that literary celebrity “no longer commands the cultural authority it did in the modern era; and it never will again” (200). The first part of the twentieth century, then, represents a particular and separate time in which authors could access a new form of celebrity that coincided with the invention of new media, like the movies, and the apex of newspaper and print media.

This moment also contains a look into our first interactions with mass media, a relationship that has steadily grown since the time of Anderson, Joyce, Fitzgerald, and

Hemingway. In a 2010 article, Tamar Lewin, a journalist for *The New York Times*, writes that Americans between the ages of eight and eighteen “spend more than seven and a half hours a day” consuming media. Lewin adds, “And because so many of them are multitasking — say, surfing the Internet while listening to music — they pack on average nearly 11 hours of media content into that seven and a half hours.” Martha De Lacey, writing for a British newspaper in January of 2013, claims that the average UK citizen spends “nine hours every day glued to a screen.”<sup>6</sup> If we are spending more time with these media then we are spending less time with the traditional book. Thus, we are getting less of our stories from literature. Authors might be concerned that they are losing their audience, but they are also concerned about where that audience is seeking stories.

Authors’ authority has arguably lessened since the start of mass media and has continued to diminish in our contemporary time—their loss of celebrity in the present is an ironic sign of that decline. While it might be argued that authors gain more control over their work when they do not have to worry about their audience, a myth that was connected to the high modernists for many years, the end result is a literary product that nobody reads. Without an audience, publishers are not interested in publishing authors’ work, and the online community is so awash in text that a single author’s upload becomes simply another wave in the online ocean. Literature continues to be produced, but that literature has been greatly changed by the presence and immense growth of mass

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<sup>6</sup> De Lacey’s source for this statistic was a study that looked at how much time people spent, daily, looking at a computer, television, or mobile device (including phones and tablets).

media. The anxieties that the authors in this project felt about this change were not unfounded; we can trace backwards from the present to see how some of their fears materialized. Still, the book is not dead, and that medium remains a place for authors to respond to the modern world, including the dominant media of that world, so long as there are readers willing to see what these authors want to show us through their words.

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