

SELLING OUT: THE AMERICAN LITERARY MARKET PLACE AND THE MODERNIST NOVEL

BY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2010

Urbana, Illinois

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ABSTRACT

“Selling Out: The American Literary Marketplace and the Modernist Novel” re-examines the “modernist author” we think we know by rereading how four American authors, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Kay Boyle, and William Faulkner deliberately tried to create a literary reputation through both their success in commercial publishing and their resistance to it. I do not so much refute the difference between elite and mass culture, but instead show how even in their fictionality, those very categories inform the very structure of how we understand the categories of the author, the book, and of modernism itself.

For Max and Harry-

Sometimes all you get is the journey,
And you two were the best part of mine.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing may be a solitary activity, but this project did not happen without support.

This project could not have been completed without the help of numerous libraries and librarians. I am grateful to the Special Collections Resource Center at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale for allowing me access to the Kay Bole and Caresse Crosby collections. Librarian David Koch was particularly kind and helpful in sharing his stories and answering my questions about these two literary women and their works. After his retirement, Melissa Hubbard made my work in the collections a pleasure. Sandra Spanier, of Penn State, helped direct me to the Kay Boyle papers, and other members of the Kay Boyle Society, including Thomas Austenfeld and Marilyn Elkins, were instrumental in pointing me to other sources for this project. Kay's son, Ian Von Frackenstein, was generous enough to allow me to quote from his mother's unpublished papers. I am indebted to the staff at the JFK Library for facilitating my access to Hemingway's papers and manuscripts. Judith Baughman and Jeffery Makala at the University of South Carolina library helped me to access Matthew Bruccoli's Fitzgerald collection remotely. The staff of the University of Virginia Library helped me to locate correspondence between Faulkner and his publishers.

I am also grateful to my committee for their assistance. Michael Rothberg, John Marsh, and Naomi Reed all read portions of this project at various times and added their expertise. Robert Dale Parker helped me formulate many of the ideas found in the Faulkner coda and Hemingway chapter. His keen eye and extensive notes helped me polish my writing. I am especially grateful for the guidance and support of Stephanie Foote. She always seemed to know where this project was going far before I did, but her guidance was

never prescriptive. I'm grateful that she took a chance on a 20th century dissertation and allowed me the freedom to make this project my own. Her guidance was astute and made the final product here infinitely better. Any shards of brilliance contained within are directly the result of these scholars' influence; any mistakes are, of course, my own.

Finally, I am grateful to those who had to live with me while this project was being completed. Aerin Hyun helped keep me sane when I dreamed of throwing in the towel and going back to retail. Mary Rose Cottingham's excitement for completed chapters and publications was infectious. Max and then Harry kept me grounded. By being perfection themselves, they let me know that there was more to life than obsessing over the perfection of this project. Because they were my babies, this was always my work, and their presence in my life made the work here better. And last, but never least, Jason— my biggest cheerleader, who has been with me since day one of this project—the economist who now knows more about Fitzgerald and Hemingway than anyone should. I am grateful that he put up with trips to the deer-infested wilds of Southern Illinois and for holding down the fort while I flew off to Boston. None of this would have meant anything without him.

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“Of the Making of Books There Is No End”: Modernism, the Novel, and the Black Sun Press

I have always thought that there could be nothing so important as a book can be.

–Maxwell Perkins ¹

In 1963, the American editor of one of the many small presses that flourished in 1920s expatriate Paris prepared a manuscript entitled “Letters to the Editor” that compiled her correspondence with writers who had by then become widely known as important modernist authors. By the time Caresse Crosby, the co-founder and editor of the Black Sun Press, began circulating this manuscript to various publishers, her imprint, the Black Sun Press, had already published texts by a variety of well known and well regarded authors, including a portion of James Joyce’s *Work in Progress* (later published as *Finnegan’s Wake*), a first printing of Hart Crane’s *The Bridge*, an edition of unexpurgated stories by D.H. Lawrence, and poetry by Archibald MacLeish, to name but a few. Her press had persisted for more than thirty years, far outlasting other small presses of 1920s Paris, and during its lifetime had ranged from producing finely crafted editions of important modern writers to a line of paperbacks meant to compete against the popular European-based Tauchnitz line. Since her husband and partner’s death in 1929, Crosby single-handedly kept the Black Sun Press going, and she believed that the personal letters in the proposed book would illuminate an aspect of her role and the role of her press in the circulation and canonization of modernist literature.

In a prospectus for the book, Crosby proposed a collection of letters would include 30 letters from D.H. Lawrence, five from James Joyce, fifteen from Hart Crane, twenty-eight from Ezra Pound, and twelve from Ernest Hemingway. Her close friend, and the co-editor

of her literary review, Henry Miller, had agreed to do an introduction.² The book was to be a glimpse into the publishing world that initiated the publication of modernist writers. The letters ranged from personal notes that Crosby believed would show readers a new facet of these writers' identities to business correspondence that revealed the logic authors used to negotiate contracts and the cost of creating art. However, the importance of the authors included in this collection was not enough to interest any publishers. The typescript was rejected by Heinemann first, and when Crosby sent it to James Michie of the Bodley Head, a supporter of Crosby's 1953 autobiography *The Passionate Years*, he also rejected the manuscript. Michie specifically told Crosby that the manuscript was not essential to the public's understanding of modernism or its authors. He wrote, "Too many of the letters are about relatively unimportant matters or about that important but boring subject— money."³

"Selling Out: The American Literary Market Place and the Modernist Novel" insists that the important subject of money is anything but boring. Rather, this study insists that for writers of the 1920s and 1930s who would later become identified as "modernist," literary reputation depended upon a negotiation of the different valences of "selling out." On one hand, writers who wanted to make their living by their pen needed to sell enough books to keep their names, texts, and reputations before a purchasing public. On the other hand, they needed to balance the necessity of vigorous book sales with the danger of appearing to sell out—to cultivate a commercial career. By the time an American modernist canon was established in the University classrooms of the second half of the twentieth century, the narrative of a disinterested modernist artist had been established. The out-of-hand rejection of Crosby's manuscript came from the importance placed upon

this version of modernist reputation—one that did not see issues of contracts, payment, and other economic concerns as an appropriate or important topic for literary criticism, one that came from the more widespread inclination of mid-century critics and scholars to establish a narrative of modernist production and authorship predicated on an assumption about the essential differences between modernism and mass culture.⁴

This study examines the underpinnings of that inclination by resituating the production of modernist reputation within the cultural history of the production and circulation of books. As Astradur Eysteinnsson has recognized, “modernism has become a ‘tradition,’ that is, a conventionalized discourse for a limited interpretive community” (Eysteinnsson 68). This study, in part, questions the origins of this discourse by examining the interpretive communities that initiated it. More importantly, this study examines the material and cultural forces responsible for influencing those communities. In *Literature, Money, and the Market*, Paul Delany argues that recent “new historicist arguments tend to assume that because the destination of modernism is commodification—in the form, say, of a modernist classic that sells half a million copies a year...the commodification was implicit in the very moment of conception. But modernist patronage was not just a screen, behind which commercialism pulled the strings of reputation and financial reward; rather, it was a specific regime that deserves to be examined, in all its complexity and contradiction, within the historical conjuncture that made it possible (161). The notion of the autonomous modernist author was not born solely between the world wars, when avant-garde writing and publishing flourished in an international space. Nor did it originate with the mid-century critics at work consecrating a modern American canon for an increasingly diverse University population. *Selling Out* shows that both sites of production were intertwined in

naturalizing a narrative of modernist authorship that has not only lasted to the present, but has also become a focal point of modernist studies. Rather than treating modernism as a static generic category or even as a period of literary production, *Selling Out* recovers the publication history of some of the most canonical of American modernist authors to resituate the historical narrative of modernist production within the material history of the American field of literary production during twentieth century.

Whether their work appeared in small *avant-garde* magazines published on fine paper, in the limited numbers of a deluxe edition, or in the larger runs of “serious” commercial publications, U.S. writers during the first half of the twentieth century relied on a contemporary audience’s ability to recognize their work as distinct through its packaging. Those writers we now classify as modernists were no exception. Their involvement with small magazines and private presses indicated a sharp awareness not only of the aesthetics of the texts they produced, but also of the aesthetics of the books within which those texts were found. But modernist authors were typically not interested in remaining the exclusive property of small circulation venues. The vision of modernism that includes an inspired author working diligently without concern for crass commercialism, indeed working against any notion of commercial viability, is only part of the story of modernism’s history. As Catherine Turner astutely points out in *Marketing Modernism between the Two World Wars*, modernist authors “saw that if they really wanted to ‘make it new’--in the broad sense of changing human perception and experience in the world—they would have to reach an audience” (4). With circulations of only a few hundred copies, most of the become synonymous had no hope of reaching broad audiences. More practically, with such

small circulations and limited budgets, these venues also could not pay authors a high enough price for their work to allow their contributors to write for a living.

For a writer to establish any sort of public reputation as an *author*, it was not enough to be published in Eugene Jolas' *transition* or Wyndham Lewis's *Blast*. In fact, the archives are filled with small magazines, which are in turn filled with forgotten writers and poets. Conversely, library shelves are filled with now forgotten best-sellers who have not made their way into literary history. While many modernist writers began their careers in those smaller-circulation venues, most did not completely reject the ever-increasing commercialization of the mainstream publishing world. Instead, they sought to engage it. Their writing often index the precarious balance between using commercial publishing venues to attain a professional career and remaining true to a romantic ideal of legitimate authorship as separate from market concerns. This study maintains that the publishing history of those writers and their books reveals the how literary reputations were dependent upon an increasing acceptance of mass produced culture as a conveyor of cultural value.

The notion that modernist writers rejected the world of commercial literature to produce an art more pure and more important than the stories in the contemporary weekly glossies or more aesthetically valuable than the novel after novel that found its way on the best-sellers' list each year became the defining logic of definitions of modernist production until the advent of New Modernist Studies. *Selling Out* fuses a recovery of the changing role of the book in American culture with a reexamination of the publication history of American novelists to reveal how changes in the publishing industry and the culture of the book in America changed the conception of authorship in America. Consequently, *Selling*

Out argues that recovering modernism's relation to print culture over the course of the first half of the twentieth century reveals how the modernist novel's place in twentieth-century literature was informed by the transformations in American publishing after World War II on the texts themselves and on mid-century critics responsible for establishing a modernist canon.

Framing the Critical Context: What's New about the New Modernist Studies?

Since Andreas Huyssen's 1986 landmark, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*, modernist studies has turned its focus to exploring modernism's relationship to the cultural field.⁵ Citing or referring to Huyssen's theory that modernist culture is "the kind of discourse which insists on the categorical distinction between high art and mass culture" has become the paradigmatic gesture of modernist studies (viii). Consequently, in the last twenty years, the study of modernism has turned away from the 1960s and 1970s almost celebrity-driven criticism that focused on the greatness of authors and texts to a field focused on historicism and recovery. Following its publication, numerous studies grappled with Huyssen's articulation of the divide between elite and mass culture, often using new historicist methodologies to expose the fictionality of the gap.

For instance, Lawrence Rainey's *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* (1999) takes seriously Huyssen's recognition of a cultural gap, and argues that while modernism may have entailed a certain distance from mass or public culture, it remained entangled with that culture in a variety of ways. Rainey argues, "Modernism, among other things, is a strategy whereby the work of art invites and solicits its commodification, but does so in such a way that it becomes a commodity of a special sort,

one that is temporarily exempted from the exigencies of immediate consumption prevalent within the larger cultural economy, and instead is integrated into a different economic circuit of patronage, collecting, speculation and investment” (3). Other critics have taken up this notion of modernist art as commodity. Notably, Mark Morrisson’s *The Public Face of Modernism* (2000) examines the small magazine culture by recovering the publicity and reception of small literary magazines to show the extensiveness and diversity of modernists’ entanglements with the commercial market. Similarly, Catherine Turner’s *Marketing Modernisms between the World Wars* (2003) examines the use of advertisements to situate commercial publishers of modernist works as readers who needed to compare the “quality” of modernist writing in order to garner the largest possible audience. Unlike Rainey’s notion of modernist art as a special type of commodity, Turner’s argument refuses to recognize even avant-garde works as “significantly different from other literary commodities of the time” (2). Turner’s argument attempts to contest Huyssen’s notion of a Great Divide by arguing that “in their promotional activities the modernists and their publishers created the same uneasy syntheses that are characteristic of modernism’s attitude toward ideas such as highbrow, lowbrow, and middlebrow as well as modernism’s use of concepts such as sacred artistic production and profane mass culture” (8).⁶

In 1999, a group of scholars invested in the seemingly new direction of modernist studies organized the Modernist Studies Association’s first annual conference. Entitled, “The New Modernisms,” with the purpose of presenting panels on the “expansion of the modernist canon, particularly in light of recent concerns with race, class, gender, region, and ethnicity; the ‘postmodern’ reevaluation of modernism; the new interest in modernism, science, and technology; the reassessment of the socio-political contexts of modernism;

issues of nationalism, imperialism, and colonialism; the marketing of modernism; the impact of new editorial principles and procedures; and new approaches to the relations among the various arts and sciences of the era” (MSA). The Modernist Studies Association and its inaugural conference came out of an already established interest in new historicism and cultural materialism among modernist scholars, and in many ways it set the precedent for modernist studies.

These studies have destabilized the fictional divide between mass culture and elite modernist production in productive ways, but they also prompted Huyssen to respond in a 2002 article by rearticulating his original intentions in defining the Great Divide. He writes, “Much valuable work on the editing, marketing, and dissemination of modernism has misconstrued my earlier definition of the Great Divide as a static binary of high modernism vs. the market. My argument was rather that there had been ... a powerful imaginary insisting on the divide while time and again violating that categorical separation in practice” (366-67). He goes on to reference some of these studies by writing, “Thus the recent, detailed documentation of the high modernists’ involvement with the marketing of their works, their bickering with publishers, and engagement with small journal enterprises—even with fashion magazines—will not do away with the issue of the divide as a central conceptual trope and energizing norm of the post-World War II period” (367). While Huyssen’s more recent re-articulation of the Divide is couched in his attempt to expand the focus of modernist studies to what he calls the “geographically non-modern” parts of the globe, his statement refocuses the Divide as the structuring discourse he originally intended it to be. Thus, more than just opening a space in literary history to study the interstices and continuities between literary markets, Huyssen’s re-articulation

of the Great Divide raises questions about what is gained or lost by participating in or using this discourse to situate works of literary modernism.⁷

Strangely enough, the critical preoccupation with the Great Divide has not only opened the modernist canon but has also reaffirmed the privileging of a certain vision of modernist authorship. While studies such as those by Rainey and Turner have uncovered modernism's relationship to and implication within mass culture, they often use the most canonical of modernist authors (Joyce, Pound, Stein, and others) to stabilize their study of the genre. To put it another way, rather than interrogating modernist authorship as an identifying feature, these studies often proceed on the assumption that certain authors are irrefutably modernist. Thus, even as the trend in modernist studies has been to promote writers and texts that were previously excluded from the canon, the principle for inclusion often seems to be an unspoken reliance on the very same imaginary that Huyssen wishes for us to explore as a structuring principle.

More importantly, perhaps, despite the explosive influence of post-structuralism and new historicism in literature departments, the study of literature often ignores the material realities that influence the discourses that texts engage with as well as our present reception of texts. As Philip Cohen recognizes in, "Is There A Text in This Discipline?," "We have the almost comical paradox in American literary studies of post-structuralists influenced by Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, and Stanley Fish using in their classrooms paperbacks containing the clear reading texts—but not the apparatuses—of massive authorial, single-text editions" (731). Thus, while recent scholars have done important work to revive interest in forgotten modernists, the essential "greatness" of certain writers and the stability of certain texts has still been naturalized and

accepted—even by scholars who seek to open the canon. *Selling Out* does not argue that any of these writers should or should not be considered modernist, but instead insists that any understanding of their—indeed, of any writer’s—exemplariness must be situated in the historical context of their publication, circulation, and reception.

Book History’s Importance for Modernist Studies

By overlooking the book itself as the material form of modernist texts, new modernist studies has often unintentionally naturalized a belief in the primacy of the text that oversimplifies modernism’s complex relationship to print culture, even as it challenges canonicity. Book history, which is often overlooked as theory’s less-rigorous other, may serve as a corrective for the way new modernist studies historicizes cultural production. Specifically, Jerome McGann’s theory about the “sociology” of texts shows how a text’s materiality—its very status as a piece of printed matter—remains an essential component of reading, circulation, and reception. Texts are, as McGann affirms, materially and socially defined by their status as printed matter. “Literary works do not know themselves, and cannot *be* known, apart from their specific material modes of existence/resistance. They are not channels of transmission, they are particular forms of transmissive interaction” (11). To escape from the romanticism of hermeneutics, “We must turn our attention to much more than the formal and linguistic features of poems or other imaginative fictions. We must attend to textual materials which are not regularly studied by those interested in ‘poetry’: to typefaces, bindings, book prices, page format, and all those textual phenomena usually regarded as (at best) peripheral to ‘poetry’ or ‘the text as such’” (12). That “boring” topic of money—centered on the production and circulation of texts—must become central to any understanding of textuality and, especially, authorship.

Authorship, as McGann recognizes, “is a special form of human communicative exchange, and it cannot be carried on without interactions, cooperative or otherwise, with various persons and audiences” (64). Thus, the ways that writers have their texts transformed into books, the interactions between writers and their agents, publishers, and critics, and even a writer’s relationship to his or her public become essential elements of understanding an author and a text’s reputation. As Zachary Lesser argues, books are not “opposed to texts, for all books, unless they are blank, involve a text, but books are not *merely* texts and they are not *merely* documents.” He goes on to specify, “Texts are not in themselves commodities, and neither are many documents. . . . But almost all printed books are” (16). Leslie Howsam reaffirms the difference between the text and the book when she reaffirms Stoddard’s assertion that “whatever they may do, authors do *not* write books. Books are not written at all. They are manufactured by scribes and other artisans, by mechanics and other engineers, and by printing presses and other machines” (20). The work done by critics in the last twenty years has made great strides in recovering the processes by which certain texts and authors have become commodified and in revealing what an understanding of that commodification means for a larger definition of modernism and modernist production, but the relative lack of interest in the way the production, circulation, and reception of these texts was influenced and limited by the cultural understanding of the *book* as an object has limited the new modernist studies.

For the new modernist studies, the rise of small magazines and private presses in the expatriate communities of Paris during the 1920s has been a central concern to teasing out the relation between elite and mass literary production. Consequently the magazines and less well known writers who appeared between their covers have become a dominant

area of study. While the growth of these presses and magazines indicates that the writers of the 1920s and 1930s saw a need for an alternative market for the work that they were unable to publish in trade venues, it also indicates a desire on the part of writers to see their texts become physical, printed works. Even as these alternative print venues distance themselves from traditional publication outlets, their very appearance reaffirms the importance of publication and the production of texts into material objects. The appearance of numerous manifestoes is only one example of this simultaneous impulse to reject the traditional modes of literary production and to replicate those very modes through an intense need to be published. While proponents of an avant-garde modernist movement may have declared themselves as separate from the masses, the very appearance of these printed manifestoes displays a desire for and interaction with a public readership.

In one of the more famous examples, Hart Crane, Eugene Jolas, Kay Boyle and others proclaimed “The Revolution of the Word” in *transition*, a small, avant-garde modernist magazine. Specifically, the signers of the manifesto declared themselves “tired of the spectacle of short stories, novels, poems and plays still under the hegemony of the banal word, monotonous syntax . . . [and] descriptive naturalism” and famously declared “the plain reader be damned.” While much of this manifesto and other, similar self-conscious proclamations about modernism or the modernist aesthetic do accurately describe what has come to be seen as a certain modernist aesthetic, the very publication of such manifestoes also displays a nervousness about the definition and position of their supposedly revolutionary aesthetic movement. These published manifestoes exhibit more

than the desire, they exhibit the need for authors to transform texts into material artifacts through publication.

Embodying Value in the Page: The Black Sun Press

While the world of expatriate modernism abounds with examples of magazines, editors, presses, and publishers that might illustrate the importance of the material form of modernist texts, perhaps no example better exemplifies the complicated relationship between this world and the larger structure of the field of literary production than the Black Sun Press. Over its fifty year history, Harry and Caresse Crosby's Black Sun Press published some of the most important modernist authors and works in a variety of forms, including collectible *de luxe* editions, an early form of the paperback, and an eclectic international review of the arts called *Portfolio*. A recovery of the press's history reveals the tension between elite and mass markets that marks the very nature of modernist production. In particular, rather than the press being an anomaly, the Black Sun Press, in its many incarnations, anticipated publication strategies that have shaped our understanding of modernism and the literary field in general.

In 1925, Harry and Caresse Crosby (née Mary Phelps Jacob), an American couple from Boston's upper class, decided that they wanted to see their poetry in print. Like many American and British expatriates committed to the ideal of revolutionizing literature, rather than wait to have their poems rejected by mainstream magazines and publishers, the couple decided to publish their own book of poetry. *Anthology*, Harry Crosby's first book of poems, came out in an extremely limited run intended exclusively for friends and family (see illustration 1). The couple was so excited about the result of their first publishing endeavor that they followed *Anthology* with two additional poetry collections in

1925, *Crosses of Gold* and *Sonnets for Caresse*. After finding master imprimatur Roger Lescaret in a small print shop on a back street not far from the Luxembourg Gardens in Paris, the Crosbys established their own imprint, *Editions Narcisse*, named after their black whippet, Narcisse Noir. Under the imprint *Editions Narcisse*, the Crosby's continued their self-publication in ever-increasing luxury. The press issued of collections of Caresse Crosby's poetry, including editions entitled *Painted Shores* (1927), *The Stranger* (1927), and *Impossible Melodies* (1928), but by 1928, they were also publishing reprints of other texts.⁸

In 1927, with the help of Edward Weeks, who would later go on to become the editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, the Crosbys expanded their press's offerings to include a limited edition of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher." At a cost of over two hundred francs, the couple produced a beautifully wrought volume of the classic story.⁹ Printed in two colors of ink on heavy Van Gelder paper, the edition included five original drawings by the artist Alastair and an introduction by the British poet and editor, Arthur Symons (see illustration 2). The illustrations were mounted on separate leaves of silver-faced paper and were hand-tipped into the book (see illustration 3).¹⁰ This book, like all the Crosby's early productions, was designed to itself be a work of art, but with the publication of *Usher*, the Crosbys reached a new level of craftsmanship. Through the beauty of the binding, typography, and paper that the couple hand-selected, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, like other books of their imprint, highlighted the value of the text by consecrating the book itself as a work of art. For the Crosbys, transforming a text into a book, and the aesthetic quality of the books they produced spurred, on their commitment to their imprint and their publishing house. What they saw as the success of the 300 book run of *Usher*

enticed the couple to expand their offerings beyond that of a vanity press, and by 1928, the Black Sun Press was born.

Under this imprint in 1928, the couple published collections of Harry Crosby's sun poems, *Chariot of the Sun*, *Shadows of the Sun*, and *Shadows of the Sun*. These books ran in very small editions; *Shadows of the Sun* was limited to forty-four numbered copies.¹¹ While in general, these early editions functioned as a vanity press, publishing the work that mainstream trade presses had no interest in, these books also indicate the Crosbys' perception of the value of the book as an object. By electing to take such an intense interest in the production of these texts, they created books that as objects were often more valuable—both in terms of their material costs and in terms of their cultural value—than even the texts they contained.¹²

The Crosbys' interest in producing beautiful books was not by any means unique in the world of expatriate modernist publishing. Because small presses and magazines ran in limited runs and for a small readership, often by subscription, they had the luxury of selecting better quality paper, ink, and bindings than many of the trade presses of the day. More importantly, perhaps, their interest in creating finely produced books helped to visually indicate the quality of the texts those objects contained. Rather than the slick paper of the glossies or newsprint of the pulps, the little magazines produced by British and American writers and publishers during the 1920s were often printed on high quality paper and vellum. From the bold typography and striking artwork in Wyndham Lewis's *Blast* (1914-1915) to the multi-colored antiquated type that graced the early covers of Harriet Monroe's *Poetry* (1912- present), modernist small magazines fused forward-

looking avant-garde texts and art with an almost reactionary sense of the importance of the book as a physical and aesthetic object.¹³

One of the most famous examples of a small press's interest in the appearance of a book matching its text was the first edition of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. The novel was published by Sylvia Beach in 1922 at a considerable financial loss, because during the publishing process, Joyce demanded exacting specifications for the final product. One of these specifications was the color of the cover. Joyce wanted the book covered in the blue of the Greek flag, a color that was difficult for Beach to find. The search for the correct color blue took Beach's assistant to Germany, where he found the correct color in the wrong type of paper. "He solved this problem," Beach writes, "by getting the color lithographed on white cardboard" (Beach 63). Lawrence Rainey has commented on the importance of *Ulysses'* appearance as a true deluxe edition. Rainey argues that the deluxe edition provided readers and buyers an opportunity for a unique experience. No longer simply a consumer, someone who purchased the first edition of the novel was transformed into "a collector, an investor, or even a speculator," even at the time of its initial publication (52). Publishing Joyce's novel as a limited, deluxe edition, "transformed literary property into a unique and fungible object, something that more nearly resembled a painting or an objet d'art, a 'something' that could genuinely rise in value, at least on the collectors market" (74-5).¹⁴ While the value of *Ulysses* did, in fact, hinge on the importance of the text itself and on the author's reputation, the way that it was produced both created publicity for the text that spurred on interest in it and created an object that was, itself, valuable, and it is this relationship between the bibliographic and linguistic codes that was essential to both modernist writers and their later critics.¹⁵ As McGann argues, "The example of *Ulysses*

ought to remind us that many of the key works of the modernist movement in literature, especially the work produced before 1930, heavily exploit the signifying power of documentary and bibliographical materials" (79).

Shakespeare and Company's edition of *Ulysses* is only a singular example of what seemed to be a pervasive impulse of small presses and little magazines to highlight the material form of the text, the book itself as an object. Small magazines often followed a similar impulse to produce beautiful volumes, often including original art by some of the most important modern artists of the day. Ernest Walsh's *This Quarter*, published in 1925 and 1926, featured heavy papers, well-made bindings, and finely executed typography. After William Bird's Three Mountains Press, published Hemingway's *in our time* in a limited run of 170 hand-printed and numbered copies, Ezra Pound planned to use the press to publish "an elegant edition of sixteen of his cantos, a volume that would aspire to the level of the medieval manuscript" (Ford 108). In 1928, Nancy Cunard realized what she called "an old ambition" to learn hand-printing, and began producing hand-set books under the imprint of the Hours Press (Ford 253). Examples of modern writers using antiquated techniques and machinery to publish books that resembled older, collectible volumes are abundant. At the same time that writers were proclaiming "the revolution of the word" and "making it new," the presses that published their first works were emulating a period when books themselves were precious commodities.

Perhaps one of the strangest, and most telling, books produced by the Black Sun Press was a collection of correspondence between Henry James and Harry Crosby's uncle, Walter Berry. Entitled *Letters of Henry James to Walter Berry*, the book collected letters that Crosby inherited upon his uncle's death in 1927. The collection, like all of the Press's

books, was beautifully crafted, but the Crosbys made a small addition to this particular publication: each of the 100 copies was sold with a facsimile of one of the original letters. In an addition to the 100-copy limited edition, the press produced a special run of sixteen copies in which the book buyer would receive an actual manuscript letter. The edition of 100 on Van Gelder Zonen paper cost ten dollars, but the limited edition on fine Japan paper supplemented by the manuscript letter was priced at fifty dollars.¹⁶ By including actual manuscripts of Henry James' letters, the Crosbys not only elevated the text's importance through the material form of the book itself, they elevated the book—even their exquisitely produced books—through the author himself. Aaron Jaffe has detailed the ways that modernism relied upon and transformed the author him or herself into an *imprimatur*, but by inserting actual holographs into their book the Crosbys took the imprimatur of the author a step further. Consumers, they understood, would be willing to purchase these editions for the enormous price of fifty-dollars because they were, quite literally, purchasing an actual piece of Henry James' writing. The delicate paper with its faded ink became a tangible, physical link to the author himself.

Although the press produced extremely limited and expensive editions, it had a surprising longevity. While most small, expatriate presses lasted for only a few short years, the Black Sun Press continued publishing until Caresse Crosby's death in 1970. However, over the course of the press's history, the material form of the books that the Crosbys produced changed dramatically. By 1970, Caresse Crosby had transformed the press from a vanity press publishing only collectible *de luxe* editions to an imprint publishing paperbacks of modern writers for a continental audience, and finally, after World War II, to

an eclectic international review of the arts called *Portfolio*, published on an array of scraps from the printer's floor.

In most histories of the period, however, the Black Sun Press appears as little more than a footnote to the more self-indulgent aspects of the time. From the time of Harry Crosby's death in 1929 until the late 1960s, the press published more than forty-five editions of various works (many of them written by authors now considered canonical modernists), but most studies of the press focus exclusively on Harry Crosby or the years until his death. In Malcolm Cowley's *Exiles' Return*, for instance, the press receives only cursory mention as the publisher of Hart Crane's epic poem, *The Bridge*. Cowley focuses only on the details of Harry Crosby's life and 1929 suicide, using him instead of Crane as the emotional coda of the book—the symbolic end of the literary hedonism of the period. Cowley writes, Crosby's "death, which had seemed an act of isolated and crazy violence, began to symbolize the decay from within and the suicide of a whole order with which he had been identified" (*Exiles* 284). In Hugh Ford's *Published in Paris*, the press is given an entire chapter, but less than one third of the more than sixty-page chapter examines the years after Harry Crosby's suicide in 1929, years that account for the vast majority of the press's total output. Even Shari Benstock's landmark study, *Woman of the Left Bank*, devotes only two paragraphs to the Crosbys and their press.¹⁷

In part, this lack of attention to the press during and after the 1930s might have something to do with the changes in the types of texts that it produced. Following Harry's death, Caresse made the conscious decision to expand the Black Sun Press's output. By 1931, the *de luxe* book market had been severely curtailed by the world-wide depression, and Caresse decided that the Black Sun Press needed to change to meet the times. In

December of 1931, she wrote to Hemingway to tell him about her new plan for the press and to ask for his help. “Now I am venturing on something much less luxurious in form and at prices more in keeping with the times,” she wrote. “Cheap editions in English of the masterpieces of the modern world, books that will express the genius of every country in the language we all understand, at a price we can afford.”¹⁸ In a personal letter that sounds more like a sales pitch, Crosby hoped to convince Hemingway to give her permission to use one or more of his titles in her new line of paperbacks marketed specifically for a continental audience. She understood that Hemingway’s fame and critical acclaim would lend itself to promoting the success of her new venture.

The Crosby Continental Editions (CCE), as she called her new paperback line, stemmed from her growing dissatisfaction with the de luxe book market. In 1930, the Black Sun Press published the first edition of an epic poem written by Hart Crane under the Crosbys’ sponsorship. Only by locking Crane in a room with a case of Cutty Sark had Harry and Caresse been able to get the poet to finish *The Bridge*, a poem that the Crosbys had already paid him for. But Caresse’s correspondence with Crane shows that she was disillusioned about the results of that publication. After Caresse wrote to Crane about her disappointment that the Black Sun Press had not been mentioned in reviews of the poem, the poet responded by telling his editor that he knew of “no magazines or papers in America of any considerable circulation who review (separately) limited editions of poems, plays or novels, especially when the edition is restricted to such a small number of copies as 250.” He continued by explaining to Caresse that while she had “perfectly valid reasons for limiting [her] editions to such small numbers. . . the very exclusivity which you value[,] naturally works against the publicity which reviews in any of the large papers or magazines

are justified giving.”¹⁹ Caresse had believed that the success of Crane’s opus would translate into more publicity and wider acclaim for the press itself. Her disappointment in that regard, no doubt, informed her decision to abandon the world of de luxe publishing within the next few months for what she believed could be a more commercially viable market.

Her interest in running a profitable press, however, was not separate from her interest in creating a name for herself and her press through the quality of the texts she published. In the same letter to Hemingway that she proposed the line of paperbacks, Caresse more directly disclosed her desire for success as an editor. In the letter, she recalls attending a bullfight where both Hemingway and Charlie Chaplin were the center of attention: “The place was full of English and Americans; you and Charlie were the focus of many admiring eyes and I felt very jealous of you. It must be thrilling to be famous and I wondered how to set about it. (Don’t smile! There are, they say, a hundred gateways to the Temple of Fame and, woman-like, I fondly hoped to wedge my way in by one of them!).”²⁰ Like Hemingway himself, Caresse desired fame, and like Hemingway, she wanted her fame to come from the renown of her productions. Her decision to pursue the line of paperbacks was one avenue toward attaining a wider visibility as an editor of important authors. Because she would be publishing reprints, similar to the already established Tauchnitz editions, she had an opportunity to publish authors who were already well-established and critically acclaimed.

Hemingway was not her first conquest in this regard. A month before she requested the continental rights to one of Hemingway’s books, she had already been in contact with her friend and sometimes-mentor Ezra Pound. She hoped Pound would sign on as an

advisor or, at least, provide a promotional blurb. Just as the Crosbys had used the celebrity of Henry James to sell an earlier edition, Caresse Crosby believed that Pound's cultural significance would lend authority to her new line of books. Pound was less than cooperative. In a long series of letters, he assured Caresse that he was interested in seeing someone topple the already established Tauchnitz line, but that he also required that any promotional blurb he might allow her to use come with certain editorial expectations. As Mary Lynn Broe has commented, "The letters fashion a rare "Guidebook for the Aspiring Publisher," as they also provide a glimpse into the construction, dissemination, and economics of a literature in direct challenge to high modernism" (213). Specifically, Pound saw the CCEs as his chance to reinsert his own sense of literariness into the modern literary scene. He responded to Caresse, telling her

anything I can say as blurb depends on there being a definite and agreed list containing a certain percentage of stuff I think worth printing (and in need of being printed and which either wdnt be printed or wdnt. be printed so SOON unless the C.C.C. (or whatever pub/ concern it might be) were in action. At present yr/ list is pretty much a program that might have been written by "transition" (the late review of mssrs Jolas and Paul) Prob. very pernicky of me not to be delighted by it.²¹

Pound's reluctance to give the power of his name to a booklist dominated by authors who had appeared in the pages of *transition* was a problem for Caresse, who was depending upon the recommendation of Pound, Hemingway, and other celebrities of modern writing to sell her books. Unlike the usual books produced by the Black Sun Press, the CCEs would

not have the additional help of fine craftsmanship to recommend them to an English-speaking public (see illustration 4).

In the end, Pound refused to provide Caresse promotional assistance. Before she ran out of funds to continue the line, Caresse obtained the continental publishing rights for Hemingway's *Torrents of Spring* and *In Our Time*, Faulkner's best-selling *Sanctuary*, and Kay Boyle's well-received *Year Before Last*. In addition, the paperback line published some of the more popular and well-regarded French titles in translation for an English and American audience. The series was sold as a decisive list of the best in modern literature, a selection that could give a reader the benefit of becoming a literary tourist. In a promotional blurb, Aldous Huxley argued that "By publishing translations of the best European literature, you are—at last—making it possible for tourists to go abroad mentally as well as physically. I hope they will be grateful and that the series will be a success."²² Using a sales pitch aimed at an elite audience who would see value in reading French literature or in becoming familiar with the best of modern culture, the paperback line targeted British and American tourists on the continent, a demographic that still had the means for European travel despite economic downturns. Consequently, these editions were not meant to target the same audience as other paperbacks of the time. Unlike the cheap reprints and dime novels that proliferated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Crosby tried to sell quality literature to a quality audience.

Ultimately, she failed. The Crosby Continental Editions were bankrupt by 1935, and Caresse was forced to dispose of a largely un-sold inventory at very low rates. But the failure of this early attempt at a quality paperback imprint exposes the structure of the literary field of production in the first half of the twentieth century. To understand Caresse

Crosby's failure, we have to place it in the larger context of the world of American publishing before World War II.

The Later Years of the Black Sun Press

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century saw sporadic attempts at paperback publishing, including the *American Mercury's* "Mercury Mysteries" and the Rumford Press's "Modern Age Books," but according to one study of the paperback industry, "even the economic depression of the 1930s was not enough of a catalyst to overcome the public revulsion to both the lurid content and unpalatable business practices connected with paperbacks" (Gillespie 3). Although Tauchnitz had been successfully publishing paperback books in Europe since 1841, Americans as a group were reluctant to accept the paperback book as the equal of the traditionally printed hardback. It was not until 1939, when Robert Fair de Graff partnered with Simon and Schuster to produce a line of paperback reprints of popular hardback texts called "Pocket Books," that the paperback held the respect of American consumers. Until after the cultural transformation of the paperback revolution in the 1950s, American consumers did not understand paperback books as equal commodities to traditional hardbound editions. More importantly, perhaps, studies of the rise of paperbacks have shown that the popularity of the paperback was not so much an effect of traditional book buyers changing their purchasing habits, as it was an effect of a new type of book buyer. In general, paperback editions seemed to have a life apart from their hardbound counterparts.

Caresse Crosby's continental paperback line, however, was not marketed to a new group of paperback consumers, but to a group of consumers *and* to a market that still saw a fundamental difference between hardbound books and paperbacks. This is especially clear

from the way the advertisement for the series focused more intently on the cultural exclusivity of the proposed selections than the economic accessibility of the books.

Immediately after the end of World War II, Crosby embarked on yet another change in the Black Sun Press's publications. Using her connections with her friend Archibald MacLeish, then serving as the Assistant Secretary of State, Crosby was one of the first civilians to return to a newly-liberated France. Dedicated to what she called "modern" art and literature, Crosby collected writing and art from previously occupied countries. Because paper was still scarce, *Portfolio*, as she called her new literary review, was printed on an amalgamation of various papers from the printer's room floor. Rather than being bound like a typical magazine, *Portfolio* was presented in a large folder, its pages of assorted colors and sizes loosely tucked into the folder. Over the course of three years, Cresse produced six different editions of *Portfolio*, each highlighting a different country: France, the U.S., Italy, and Greece, and each produced in both English and the originating country's language.

Portfolio may seem an even more marked turn from the Press's original fine editions, but it shared with those editions an interest in the materiality of art through publication. In *Portfolio II*, for example, a limited number of 100 copies replaced a facsimile of a charcoal drawing by Matisse with an original lithograph. Like the letters from Henry James included in the earlier Black Sun Press edition, the significance of an object's material existence merged with the cultural significance of its producer to highlight the text's own cultural importance. Like the CCEs, however, *Portfolio* could not find a large enough public to sustain itself, even as its final issues were published as a non-profit enterprise to support Crosby's new-found activism for world peace. Its cost along with its

focus on a transnational modern aesthetic did not find a ready audience in a victorious post-war America.

The ultimate commercial failure of both the CCEs and *Portfolio* and the lack of critical attention the Black Sun Press has received helps to reveal an underlying aspect that structured, and continues to structure, the field of literary production. The impulse on the part of modernist publishers and editors to produce beautiful editions should not be read as a reaction to or against the commercial market, but as an intervention within that market. The quality of the books these presses and magazines produced may seem to make them a different sort of commodity than trade publications, but I want to argue that their attention to the production of the book was actually *exaggerated* the qualities of books that trade publication used to make texts legible as cultural products for American consumers.²³ While these books were meant for a more elite audience than the general book buyer, both because of their price and because of the aesthetic difficulty of many of their texts, modernist publishers and editors seemed intuitively to understand that the object of the book could signify the value of the text to a larger cultural field. Indeed, their attempt to fetishize the value of their texts through the quality of their books and magazines' workmanship indicates the pervasiveness of the book's importance as an object of cultural significance in the American imaginary.

The commercial failure of Caresse Crosby's attempt at a paperback line may signal just how ingrained the hardback book's value was for the first half of the twentieth century. Despite a depression that made owning books even more of a luxury, consumers did not respond to the availability of even "serious" texts in paperback form. The ultimate financial failure of the CCEs reveals less about Caresse Crosby's competency as an editor and

publisher than it does about the larger structuring logic of the literary field. After all, Crosby was not the only publisher who tried and failed to establish early paperback editions. She was, however, one of the first publishers to attempt to promote avant-garde offerings through a paperback line. Her instincts were as much to promote this literature, especially the literature in translation, for a larger audience as it was to make a large profit. With the Black Sun Press edition of *The Bridge's* failure to garner recognition for the press, Caresse Crosby realized that her goal of promoting modern literature and art could not be met through the limited edition. Her foray into the world of mainstream publishing preceded its market.

More importantly perhaps, this failure helps to illustrate the often overlooked limitations of the ideology of creation. As Pierre Bourdieu describes it, this ideology of creation is the “charismatic ideology which is the ultimate basis of a belief in the value of a work of art and which is therefore the basis of functioning of the field of production” (76). In Bourdieu’s estimation, this ideology of creation masks the very machinations that *actually* produce a work’s value—the “exhibiting, publishing, or staging” that consecrates the work’s value (76). The Black Sun Press’s earliest publications editions, in their inclusion of actual manuscripts, hand-numbered and signed copies, and even hand-colored illustrations relied on an understanding of the *artist’s* importance to the value of the books they produced. The author’s signature, for instance, added value to a copy of the work. Also at work, however, in these earliest productions of the press was the implicit understanding of the value that could be imparted through a text’s material production—its printing, binding, and the exclusivity of its sale. When Caresse Crosby turned to Pound and Hemingway as she embarked on her line of paperbacks, she relied intently on a belief

in the author. Her belief that a blurb by Pound or a text by Hemingway could sell books that appeared to be commodities more akin (at least their material appearance) to the cheap dime novels and pirated editions of the nineteenth century than to trade editions represents a belief in the implicit importance of the author that, I would argue, exceeds even the earlier inclusion of manuscript letters.

This belief in the value of authorial reputation is not necessarily a mis-reading of Crosby's historical moment, however. As Aaron Jaffe has recognized, modernist authors "were more canny about fashioning their careers--indeed, fashioning the very notion of a literary career--than is often appreciated. . . . [they] transformed the textual signature itself into a means of promotion" (3). Rather, the CCEs failure helps to reveal the interconnectedness between the authorial signature and the object that was signed. It is true, as Genette argues, "The name [of the author] then is no longer a straightforward statement of identity . . . it is, instead, the way to put an identity, or rather a 'personality,' as the media call it, at the service of the book" (40). While it is true the *de luxe* editions of coterie publishing increased a text's value and an author's reputation by their very scarcity, modernist studies has heretofore overlooked the way that the world of commercial or trade publication also functioned to increase the value of authorial reputation, even as it threatened to obliterate that value.²⁴ The CCE's failure, at least in part, illustrates that authorial reputation was not enough to sell books—especially books that did not look like quality books to an American audience.

The Black Sun Press's financial failure at marketing a new type of product into the literary market can be read specifically in the context of American print culture. Although the Crosbys worked out of Paris, the books they produced, including the CCEs and *Portfolio*,

were intended for an English-speaking consumer, and were marketed most heavily toward Americans traveling abroad. Unlike continentals, who were long used to Tauchnitz's inexpensive line of paperbound reprints, or even a British public, which was accustomed to books printed in expensive library editions before being published in trade editions, American consumers recognized traditional, hard-bound trade editions as "legitimate" books. In many ways, the CCEs were illegible as books, especially to a consumer privileged enough to be engaging in European travel during a world-wide depression. By the time paperbacks were an accepted part of literary culture, the Black Sun Press and the innovations of Caresse Crosby had all but been forgotten or obscured by a critical emphasis on modernism's essential difference from mass culture. The example Black Sun Press shows just how closely related the world of avant-garde publishing was to the logic of the larger commercial market; both portions of the industry operated around the way books were understood and made legible as cultural objects.

Return to the Mundane: Trade Publications and the Creation of Modernist

Reputation

The Black Sun Press provides, in many ways, a crucial case-study for the interaction between the literary market and authorial reputation in the 1920s and 1930s. The Press's obscurity in the later half of the twentieth century, however, reveals how the structural logic of the elite/mass cultural divide has structured the study of modernist production, for both modernist writers and their later critics. Indeed, "Modernism's supposed antagonism toward mass culture and mass culture's supposed indifference to modernism have long been features of--some would say the chief impediments to--the academic invention of modernism" (Jaffe 88). However, *Selling Out* argues that by overlooking the book itself as

the material transmitter of modernist texts, these studies often naturalize a belief in the primacy of the text and the primacy of the author that oversimplifies modernism's complex relationship to print culture.

Situating modernist production within the larger historical context of American print culture, especially in relation to Americans' cultural understanding of the book as both aesthetic object and commodity, allows us to understand modernism not as a stable set of aesthetic forms nor even as a single period of production, but as a historical construct that mobilized a rhetoric against the growth in mass culture over the course of the twentieth century. The growth of mass market periodicals before World War II, the enactment of the International Copyright Act in 1893, and the explosion of mass market paperbacks after the war each transformed the way that Americans published, circulated, consumed, and understood literature. Each of these developments in the way American publishers circulated and sold texts made books less exclusive commodities. These changes in the way texts were transformed into commodities transformed the cultural understanding of the book in America during the first half of the century, and as the book became less scarce as a commodity, the reputation of authors became increasingly important to definitions of modernist production.

Selling Out examines the publishing history and its effect on the reputations of four American novelists, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Kay Boyle, and William Faulkner. I argue that rather than rejecting the world of trade publication, these writers sought to engage it, and by recovering that engagement, we can better understand the way that authorial or textual reputations are influenced by material and cultural history. The chapters that follow provide individual case studies of how modernist reputations were

cultivated through their private relationships with agents, publishers, and editors, and through their public representations of authorship and books, as well as how later critics took up these narratives later in the century.

“Literature, or whatever you call it’: Ernest Hemingway, the Novel, and the Professionalism of Authorship,” demonstrates the importance of the novel as a genre for the career and reputation of one of modernism’s most famous writers. Through an analysis of Hemingway’s earliest publishing and his eventual contract with Charles Scribner’s Sons, this chapter uncovers how the novel structured both the trade publishing industry after the International Copyright Act made novels profitable for both publishers and writers as it examines Hemingway’s use of the novel to establish himself as a professional writer. The chapter connects Hemingway’s contractual obligation to write novels with his novelist characters in *The Sun Also Rises*, *The Garden of Eden*, and *A Moveable Feast*. These texts expose the anxiety Hemingway felt about a market that demanded a writer produce novels regularly, while the history of their production shows the changes in relationship between novels and the book industry over the course of the first half of the century. This chapter demonstrates that Hemingway’s investment in a masculine professional identity he achieved success as a published author circumvented his ambivalence toward the novel as a genre, even as it informed later definitions of modernist authorship, and that the circulation of Hemingway’s own persona and his novelist characters helped to establish the discursive framework for legitimate modernist authorial identities in later years.

After establishing the impact of both the novel and Hemingway’s reputation for modernist authorship, I turn to an examination of the book industry’s role in the recovery of an almost forgotten modernist. “Culture follows money’: F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great*

Gatsby, and the Making of a Literary Reputation,” provides an account of the *The Great Gatsby*’s reception from its initial publishing through the 1960s “Fitzgerald revival” and contextualizes the novel’s status within changes in the publishing industry during the first half of the twentieth century. I argue that while the novel uses the appearance of books within the text to catalog its characters as readers, the book itself as an object was becoming a less readable commodity during Fitzgerald’s career. Only when the book as an object became illegible as a rare commodity capable of indexing its owner’s social position did Fitzgerald’s reputation as an author regained prominence. By tracing the developments within the publishing industry during and after World War II, the chapter demonstrates how the paperback revolution provided a space for a popular author, like Fitzgerald, to find prominence the academy.

In “‘I am not a business woman’: Kay Boyle and the Promises of Publishing,” I move away from the careers of canonical authors and instead examine the career of a writer who was heavily involved in both *avant-garde* publishing and the mainstream publishing market, yet who is virtually unknown today. The chapter examines the relationship between the types of publications an author pursued—including *avant-garde* little magazines and best selling romance novels—and the longevity of an author’s reputation. This chapter positions Boyle’s publication history in the context of her earliest involvement with small presses to show that financial success and literary achievement were not mutually exclusive for even the most *avant-garde* modernists. Through an analysis of her autobiographical novel, *Year Before Last*, and a recovery of her publishing history, this chapter reveals the stakes of a gendered cultural sphere for a woman writer. Reinserting Boyle into the larger modernist context allows me to illustrate how the line between

artistry and commercialism that these authors traced was also informed by a culture structured by gendered norms of acceptability.

Finally, “From *Flags in the Dust* to *Sartoris* and Back: William Faulkner and the Business of Literature” connects the analysis of the book’s cultural transformation to the investment in modernism’s importance by the 1970s on the part of both the professoriate and the trade publishing industry. Using a public discussion of the 1973 publication of Faulkner’s *Flags in the Dust* between its Random House editors and Faulkner scholars, this chapter reveals the stakes as both parties wrangled for masculine dominance and intellectual ownership over the author and his text. By the 1970s, the academic market had become big business for trade publishers, and texts that once sold only small numbers became profitable for publishing houses. This exchange demonstrates how the professoriate distanced itself from the commercial realm, even as it coalesced a definition of modernism as separate from the market. At a point when the modernist canon had solidified and American literature had become a staple of university curriculum, this chapter exposes the continuing influence of the commercial book market on academic interests in modernism.

Notes

1. From correspondence between Ernest Hemingway and Maxwell Perkins, his editor at Charles Scribner's Sons (Trogdon 7).
2. From "Prospectus for Work in Progress."
3. Letter from James Michie to Caresse Crosby. Aug. 1963. CCP.
4. As John Harwood argues, "Modernism' in any of the reified versions now deployed in academic debate did not exist in 1909, or 1922; it is an academic invention of the 1960s and after, retrospectively imposed on the works and doctrines it supposedly illuminates" (13). He goes on to claim that "a reified 'modernism' (the invention of the last twenty-five years), is then fed back into the period-use of 'modern,' of which Pound's 'our modern experiment' is perhaps the most influential stance"(34-5). This distinction between the naturalized version of "modernism" and Harwood's recognition of the historicity of the term is essential for my understanding of modernist culture.
5. In *The Field of Cultural Production*, Pierre Bourdieu defines a cultural field as " nothing other than the structure of the distribution of the capital of specific properties which governs success in the field and the winning of the external or specific profits (such as literary prestige) which are at stake in the field" (30). He goes on to define the importance of understanding art in the context of a field of production by arguing that "the ideology of the inexhaustible work of art, or of 'reading' as re-creation masks . . . the fact that the work is indeed made not twice, but a hundred times, by all those who are interested in it, who find a material or symbolic profit in reading it, classifying it, deciphering it, commenting on it, combating it, knowing it, possessing it" (111).

6. Aaron Jaffee makes a similar argument in his study of *Modernism and the Culture of Celebrity* when he argues, “the difference in scale between modernist production and popular cultural consumption remains an unavoidable framework, helping to account for the anxious freighting of mass culture in modernist artistic culture. These and other explanatory difficulties give rise to a misleading tendency to explain high culture almost exclusively as a phenomenon of consumption” (89).

7. To take but one example of the changes in the way modernism is studied, at the Tenth Annual Modernist Studies Association conference, an author who was once unquestionably part of the modernist canon, Ernest Hemingway, was declared by multiple participants, without qualification or irony, “not a modernist” and “no longer a modernist.” These statements expose the constructed nature of modernist reputation even as they raise the question about what modernist authorship was and what it has become. That scholars could dismiss so unequivocally an author who was once considered an essential modern American author indicates how definitions of modernism have become obscured, even as scholars attempt to delineate them.

8. For a complete list and bibliographical descriptions of the Black Sun Press’s publications, see Minkoff.

9. Ford 175.

10. Minkoff 10.

11. Minkoff 14

12. This is especially apparent now, 80 years later. While the press’s holdings are at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, they are not in WorldCat or any other database. Former rare books librarian David Koch informed me that this was because the books themselves are of such

interest to collectors of fine editions that if they were listed in WorldCat, they would attract attention from bibliophile tourists, who were not so much interested in research as in collecting.

13. With the publication of *Usher* the form of the Crosby's books took on that of a French book, especially those published by La Nouvelle Revue française (NRF). Thus, the Crosbys' books also played on a sense of the value of European or French books.

14. Gerard Genette comments, "In the case of deluxe printings, the irony is that, for obvious technical reasons, notice of these printings ('proof of printing') is printed in *all* copies, including the ordinary ones that are not in any way affected by it. . . . For it is not enough to be happy; one must also be envied" (36).

15. Gerome McGann has discussed this point: "Every literary work that descends to us operates through the deployment of a double helix of perceptual codes: the linguistic codes, on one hand, and the bibliographical codes on the other" (77).

16. Minkoff 17.

17. Although Benstock had a different purpose for her book which centered more on female and, especially, lesbian communities in Paris, her lack of attention is the usual rather than the exception.

18. Open Letter from Caresse Crosby to Ernest Hemingway. Dec., 1931. CCP

19. Letter from Hart Crane to Caresse Crosby. 19 Apr.1930. CCP.

20. Letter from Caresse Crosby to Ernest Hemingway. Dec. 1931. CCP.

21. Letter from Ezra Pound to Caresse Crosby. November 1931. CCP

22. "What Famous Authors Say About Crosby Editions." CCP.

23. The issue of the relation between special publishing and trade publishing has been taken up by both Rainey and Turner,

24. Jaffe understands, especially, that this rule of scarcity actually increases value in significant ways. “Signed, illustrated, finely papered and wrapped, gold-edged, printed in off-set colors, these luxury commodities were designed to be scarce, to be more heard of than come across, and to redound their excess aura to the authorial name” (74).

“Literature, or whatever you call it”: Ernest Hemingway, the Novel, and the Profession of Authorship

I'm a Professional Writer now—that which there isn't anything lower. I never thought I'd be it.

—Ernest Hemingway to Maxwell Perkins, October 1929¹

In October of 1929, Ernest Hemingway examined the newly printed first edition of *A Farewell to Arms* and composed a letter to Maxwell Perkins, his editor at Charles Scribner's Sons. While he was pleased with the early reviews Perkins sent him, Hemingway railed against the book's jacket. In particular, Hemingway was angry that his name was not in larger letters on the dust cover. Compared to his two earlier books from Scribner's, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) and *Men without Women* (1927), Hemingway felt that the font size of his name on the cover was too small. He told Perkins, "I'm no actress wanting the name in Big electric lights—But the name must have some value as a selling point."² While the size difference between the type of the title and the by-line was noticeable, Hemingway's concern about the role of his name in the sale of his books, even at this early point in what would become a long writing career, exposes the anxiety he felt about the way he understood that his book sales could affect his public recognition as an author. Hemingway was aware that his concern about his name's commercial possibilities marked a change from any youthful idealized vision of authorship he may have had. Taken from the same letter, the epigraph above highlights his awareness that his more commercial concerns for his work marked him as something more and something less than simply a writer. Hemingway was no longer a man who wrote in anonymity, and the importance of his name as a saleable brand marked him both as a public author and as a professional. These two

categories, however, came at a price; no longer could Hemingway imagine himself as an autonomous artist, unaffected by the commercial market.

In particular, the early twentieth century publishing world was structured in such a way that a writer needed to continue engaging with the commercial market if he wanted to remain a widely recognized author. This letter and his other personal correspondence show that Hemingway understood these conditions. The challenge of finding and keeping that public, however, changed as the reading public itself changed. This chapter examines his personal correspondence with Maxwell Perkins, his editor, and Charles Scribner, his publisher, to uncover the challenges Hemingway faced balancing an appearance of disinterest in the commercial market with the necessity of selling enough books to remain a successful and recognized author throughout the twentieth century. Hemingway's negotiation of the publishing world shows is that changes in the structure of the market influenced the cultural understanding of authorship. In the first half of the twentieth century, writing and publishing novels made one a professional, but as Hemingway's career progressed, the literary market saw changes in the way that literature and authorship were culturally understood that, ultimately, had essential implications for Hemingway's status as an author.

Even as Hemingway continued to affirm writing as a properly masculine profession, he increasingly accepted his publisher's suggestions to use middlebrow venues he originally saw as feminized for his taste to sell his books.³ His increasing willingness to promote his books through venues such as The-Book-of-the-Month-Club, however, does not so much indicate a change in Hemingway's beliefs about authorship and publishing as it shows how these middlebrow institutions had become important to literary prestige.⁴

Hemingway's transformation from professional writer to great author hinged upon changes in the publishing industry that made reprints and paperbacks legitimate vehicles for authorial prestige. In particular, the rise of importance of the novel as a form in American publishing was instrumental in the transformation of Hemingway from struggling writer to great author. Hemingway's career shows that as books themselves became part of mass culture and as novels became recognized as an important literary form, commercial success did not so much trump an author's legitimacy as it served instead as an important signal of it.

The Torrents of Spring and Strategic Publishing

Hemingway's earliest publishing career has been well documented.⁵ Beginning as a journalist for the *Kansas City Star* (October 1917-April 1918) and the *Toronto Star* (1920-1924) in the years following his return from World War I, Hemingway transformed himself from a journalist into a short story writer and finally into a novelist over the course of a decade. While working as a correspondent for the *Toronto Star*, Hemingway focused on writing short stories, and his first book, a collection of small vignettes entitled *in our time*, was eventually published in a limited run by William Bird's Three Mountain Press.⁶ As a young expatriate living in Paris during the post-war years, he contributed to a variety of Little Magazines, including *This Quarter* (1925-1927), the *Transatlantic Review* (1924), and the *Little Review* (1914-1929). However, even as he was finding a ready audience for his work in the small, avant-garde literary circles of the Left Bank, Hemingway understood that to be recognized as an elite author in America he needed a contract from a mainstream press. American publishers, however, were not interested in collections of short stories, but in novels. His earliest move into the American publishing industry and his eventual

contract with Charles Scribner's Sons provides an example of the importance of the novel in establishing an author's identity in the American market.

After William Bird published the small edition of *in our time*, Hemingway's friends, Donald Ogden Nash and Harold Loeb, used their American connections and submitted the manuscript of the book to their own publishers. After rejections of the revised and lengthened manuscript from George Doran and Alfred Knopf, Loeb's publisher, Horace Liveright, agreed to publish the short story collection with the stipulation that the company would have the right of first refusal on Hemingway's next two books. The contract with Liveright was a risk for the company. To date, Hemingway had only one piece published in America and no discernable American market for his work. Liveright's decision to accept *In Our Time* was a gamble, one that the company hoped would pay off when Hemingway published a more marketable book, specifically a novel. The contract for *In Our Time* was structured to mitigate the firm's risk in taking on an unproven writer. It stipulated that Hemingway would receive a two hundred dollar advance for the book of stories, but that advances for future books were to be determined by the royalties that Hemingway received from the previously published book. This meant that if the short story collection sold poorly, as Liveright suspected it might, the advance for the next book would be equally as small. More importantly, the contract stipulated that one of his next two books must be "a full length novel."⁷ The contract effectively used *In Our Time* as an expense to retain Hemingway as a future novelist for the firm and made commercial success—or fame—a nearly-contractual obligation for the young writer.

Hemingway's understanding of the novel's importance in the 1920s world of commercial publishing underscores the structure of the larger market for fiction. Until

collected into books, short stories remained disposable entertainment. As a book, however, the traditionally published novel was aligned with permanency and sense of literary legitimacy.⁸ As Helmut Lehmann-Haupt explains in his mid-century study of *The Book in America*, novels became increasingly important in American literary culture after the passing of the copyright act in 1891. According to Lehmann-Haupt, in 1914, the market for fiction made up only 8.77 per cent of the total output of American publishers, but by 1901 that figure had increased to 27.4 per cent (318). The vast majority of those publications were novels.

Hemingway understood this problem of genre implicitly. He knew that to become a respected author, he needed to be published in the commercial press, and he understood that for the commercial presses to continue publishing his work he would have to write—and continue to write—novels. In 1937, he wrote more directly about the phenomena of the novel's importance and its effect on writers for a preface to Jerome Bahr's *All Good Americans*: "you must write a novel first. A novel, even if it fails, is supposed to sell enough copies to pay for putting it out. If it succeeds, the publisher has a property, and when a writer becomes a property he will be humored considerably by those who own the property."⁹ Novels, Hemingway concluded, are necessary for publishers, because through novels, publishers could reap the largest profits for and through their authors. But Hemingway also understood novels as having another, equally important role—creating a saleable name for the author. As a "property" of and for the publisher, Hemingway the novelist became a source of profit for the publisher, and as a "property," the novelist lost some of the autonomy he may have once had as a short story writer.

Becoming a “property” was a risk the young Hemingway was willing to take. The publishing world of expatriate Paris did not provide its authors with the possibility for professional success. With low circulation, poor distribution, and a self-selecting audience, these venues were, in a sense, always amateur venues. Only by leaving behind the world of small-circulation presses run, in many cases, by women, and only through publishing with a commercial press could Hemingway become a professional and join the world of business—the world of men. Thus, while the commercial literary market was and is routinely figured as feminized and emasculating, Hemingway’s entrance into the market was anything but. Rather, the commercial press gave him the opportunity to participate in the economic market, to fashion himself as an American man. For Hemingway, the move into the commercial press did not disrupt his identity as an author, but rather established it publically as a proper profession.

Having been rejected by multiple firms, Hemingway seemed happy with his agreement with Liveright. His contract, however meager, put him into position to gain an American audience. In May of 1925, he wrote a letter to his friend and mentor, Sherwood Anderson, thanking him for the help with Liveright. He wrote Anderson, “I’m terribly glad about you going over to Liveright and I can’t write letters and so I can’t tell you how grateful I am for your getting my stuff published.”¹⁰ Hemingway had good reason to be happy with his agreement with Liveright. By 1925, Liveright was the publisher of T.S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* (1922), Sherwood Anderson’s *Dark Laughter*, and had already contracted Theodore Dreiser’s next novel, *An American Tragedy* (1925). In 1917, the press had introduced the Modern Library series, an innovative line of reprints that were a successful precursor to the later paperback revolution. Liveright was also a staunch

crusader against censorship in publishing, and had led the fight against Justice John Ford's "Clean Books Bill" in 1924. By the time Hemingway signed with the house, Boni & Liveright's belief in marketing books like any other product had made them one of the most talked about presses in the country (Teachout). In short, his contract with Liveright allowed Hemingway to establish himself and his work before an American public through a reputable and well known publisher.

Whether Liveright truly saw the book as a necessary expense or whether the firm's other financial concerns caused the press to limit the book's advertising, Robert Trogon argues in his study of Hemingway's relationship with Scribners that "Liveright appears to have treated the book as a lost cause right from the beginning, publishing it only to secure a talented author for the firm" (19). Hemingway believed that what he saw as a lackluster promotional campaign was the cause of disappointing sales. Coming from the world of small magazines that thrived on short stories and poetry and clamored for his work, Hemingway was used to a certain level of regard for and excitement about his work. He saw Liveright's lack of effort to push his book before the public as an insult to his talent and, more, his worth as an author. Although happy with the original contract, Hemingway grew increasingly dissatisfied with Liveright's handling of his work. His disappointment with Liveright's handling of *In Our Time*, however, was informed by two other issues: his first experience with the censorship of the commercial book market and the interest that Charles Scribner's Sons had shown in his work.

As part of the contract to publish *In Our Time*, Liveright requested that the short story "Up in Michigan" be replaced by something more suitable. Having only published in the uncensored, small expatriate magazines that populated Paris during the 1920s, this

was Hemingway's first encounter with the restrictions of publishing with a commercial press. In his letters to the publisher, Hemingway shows a certain willingness to make the necessary changes to the book and on May 22, 1925 Hemingway sent a letter to Liveright to confirm the changes that he was to make. "As you say," he wrote, "it would be a very silly pay to get an entire first book suppressed for the sake of a few funny cracks in one story."¹¹ As a new participant in the world of commercial publishing, Hemingway understood the importance of that first book, but even as he made the required changes to the stories in the book, he questioned the necessity and propriety of the changes. Liveright felt that "Mr. and Mrs. Elliot," a story about less-than-virile man attempting to conceive a child with his wife needed revision. While Hemingway obliged him by removing the phrase "they tried very hard to have a baby," he also suggested that the revisions were unnecessary. He told Liveright that "Jane Heap ran it in its original form and did not get into any trouble."¹² Jane Heap and Margaret Anderson's *Little Review* was an American magazine with a circulation of only about one thousand. His reference to Heap reveals a moment when the young author is beginning to learn the difference between publishing venues—and the limits placed on him by the commercial presses. For Hemingway, being published for the first time in the American press, the suppression of his book could mean the end of his career as an author, but his letters show that he increasingly chafed at the changes required by his publisher.

At the same time that Hemingway was working to revise the book to his publisher's specifications, he was growing increasingly aware that a published book gave him more opportunities to find willing publishers. While Nash and Loeb were circulating his manuscripts in New York, F. Scott Fitzgerald was discussing Hemingway's promise with his

own editor, Maxwell Perkins. On October 18, 1924, Fitzgerald sent a letter to Perkins telling him about a “young man . . . who lives in Paris (an American), writes for *The Transatlantic Review* and has a brilliant future.”¹³ Perkins took Fitzgerald’s advice about Hemingway and in February of 1925 wrote to the young author. Perkins asked Hemingway whether he would consider Scribners as a publisher, but warned him that they could not publish *In Our Time* “on account of material considerations.” Perkins claimed that the book was too small and that “the trade would therefore not be interested in it.”¹⁴ Perkins hoped, however, that Hemingway might have something that the publisher would be able to consider.

Perkins was two weeks late. By the time Hemingway received Perkins’ letter, he had already made an agreement with Liveright. Hemingway used his response to Perkins to give the editor a rather uncensored version of himself as a writer. He told Perkins, “Somehow I don’t care about writing a novel and I like to write short stories and I like to work at the bull fight book so I guess I’m a bad prospect for a publisher anyway. . . . Somehow the novel seems to me to be an awfully artificial and worked out form but as some of the short stories are now stretching out to 8,000 to 12,000 words may be I’ll get there yet.”¹⁵ At this point in his career, Hemingway did not envision himself as a novelist. He understood that a novel was necessary to be successful in “the trade,” but in this letter, he tells Perkins that he had not yet committed himself to the form.¹⁶ His statements to Perkins served two purposes: they were self-declarations of his seriousness as an artist and they served as not-so subtle indications of his requirements as a property for any publisher that might decide to take him on after Liveright.

His statements to Perkins, however, were not written out of ignorance about the requirements of the trade. Even as he made the agreement with Liveright, Hemingway had already realized that making a living as a writer would depend on either selling his stories to the commercial magazines (where he had not had any success) or finding a publisher willing to put him under contract. More importantly, Hemingway realized that with *Scribner's Magazine*, Perkins had the possibility of allowing him to do both, and he understood that his established contract with Liveright gave him leverage to negotiate on his own terms. Although the financial aspects of the contract with Liveright were meager, being a signed and published author changed his position in terms of negotiating with other presses. Hemingway was interested in Scribners, especially in their magazine, but he was growing less willing to follow the dictates Liveright placed on his work. In his letter to Perkins, then, he uses these seemingly authentic expressions of his commitment to other projects as a way of testing the editor. While Hemingway had explained to Perkins that Liveright's contract gave the firm first refusal rights on the next book, and that a refusal of that book would mean that they relinquished their option on the third book, he did not tell Perkins that Liveright had required one of his next two books to be a full-length novel. His decision to represent himself to Perkins as an unwise investment was an attempt to set his own terms with the editor, and his comments about being a "bad prospect" were a way for Hemingway to indicate what he would require of a publisher.

Hemingway's angry reaction to Liveright's handling of his work indicates just how closely his understanding of a work's literary value and its subsequent market value were tied. In a confidential letter between Fitzgerald and Perkins, Fitzgerald told Perkins, "to hear [Hemingway] talk you'd think Liveright had broken up with him and robbed him of

millions—but that’s because he knows nothing of publishing, except in the cuckoo magazines.”¹⁷ To some extent, Fitzgerald was correct; the world of Little Magazines had predisposed Hemingway towards a publishing industry that placed the writer’s artistry above financial concerns. In most cases, the authenticity of the works published superseded even the solvency of the press.¹⁸ Little Magazines had short lifespans, most lasting only a year or less before collapsing under their own financial strain.¹⁹ With venues like the *Little Review* and *This Quarter*, he had never been asked to censor his work, and what Fitzgerald (who had involved himself only in commercial literary spheres) did not recognize, having never been involved with the Little Magazine market himself, was that Hemingway’s involvement with those “cuckoo” publications also taught him the importance of a writer understanding his own worth. For Hemingway, sales of his work did not indicate a deviation from his literary ambitions; rather, high sales indicated something important about the worth of his work. When Horace Liveright treated *In Our Times* as a cursory expense and did little (at least in Hemingway’s estimation) to push the book before the public, he insulted not only the text’s value, but Hemingway’s value as that text’s author. As Robert Trogdon argues, “the money itself does not seem to have been the real issue. Rather it was what the money represented to Hemingway: tangible proof that he was valuable to the publisher” (180). For Hemingway, sales and fame were intimately tied to his identity as an author, and Liveright’s treatment of the books—at least from Hemingway’s perspective—was insulting and unforgivable.

After what Hemingway saw as the mishandling of *In Our Time*, he decided to break his contract with Liveright by offering them a book that he knew that the publisher could not accept. Although he was already working on the novel that would become *The Sun Also*

Rises (1926), Hemingway submitted the manuscript for *The Torrents of Spring* to Liveright. In *A Moveable Feast*, Hemingway claimed that he wrote *The Torrents of Spring* because it was “so terribly bad, silly and affected that I could not keep from criticizing it in a parody,” but the correspondence about the book with both Liveright and Perkins suggests that the composition of *The Torrents of Spring* was a calculated move to free himself from his contract with Liveright. The manuscript, a satire of Sherwood Anderson’s *Dark Laughter*, took aim at the firm’s biggest selling and most important author. While Hemingway had told Liveright that it might be advantageous for the firm to differentiate between the two authors, he knew that the publisher would not be able to publish a book so derisive to its newly acquired star. By September of 1925, he confirmed to Ernest Walsh that he had finished his novel (*Sun*), but in December of that same year, he sent *Torrents* to Liveright.²⁰

In the letter sent to Liveright with the manuscript, dated December 7, Hemingway appears for the first time as the bombastic and demanding author his later letters often show him to be. Confirming that both Fitzgerald and Louis Bromfield had read and approved of the manuscript, and situating the satire of Anderson in the tradition *Shamela*, the satire Fielding wrote of Richardson’s *Pamela*, Hemingway gave Liveright every reason possible for not rejecting the book. He even addressed the more material concerns of publishing it: “On the practical side,” he wrote, “the book is the right length for a funny book. . . . A good sized page with lots of margin and room at the bottom with the breaking up into chapters and the separate chapter headings and Author’s notes in different type and spacing will give you plenty of length for a good sized book.”²¹

More importantly, Hemingway gave specific directions for how the book should be sold. Reminding Liveright of the relative lack of promotion that *In Our Time* received, he told the publisher,

If you take it you've got to push it. I have made no kick about *In Our Time*, the lack of advertising, the massing of all those blurbs on the cover, each one of which would have made, used singly, a valuable piece of publicity but which, grouped together as they were, simply put the reader on the defensive; because I know that you believed you could not sell a book of stories and were simply building for the future. But this book you can sell and it must be given a real play.²²

Having bided his time as a newly published author, Hemingway knew that he now had other options. Liveright had no way of knowing that the offer from Scribners remained, or that both Harcourt and Knopf had also made offers to publish future works. Hemingway, however, understood that these other offers could help in his negotiations with Maxwell Perkins and Charles Scribner. In his letter to Liveright, he made every pretence of remaining committed to his contract with Liveright. He was presenting the publisher his second manuscript, complete in every way as a singular, sellable book, and he was asking the publisher to guarantee that this book would be promoted more vigorously than his first. Asking for an advance of \$500, Hemingway told Liveright that he expected the book to sell upwards of 20,000 copies—more than ten times the number of copies that were even printed of *In Our Time*.

Liveright, apparently, did not take seriously the young author's demands. Shortly after, Hemingway received a telegram from the publisher—"Rejecting Torrents of Spring Patiently awaiting Manuscript Sun Also Rises."²³ While Liveright was not willing to give up so quickly on his investment, Hemingway used the nature of their contract to his

advantage. By January 19, 1926, he declared himself “free” to give the manuscript to another publisher. Having the vagueness of the contract’s details on his side, he castigated Liveright for not upholding their deal. “As you know,” he wrote, “I expect to go on writing for some time. I know that publishers are not in business for their health but I also know that I will pay my keep to, and eventually make a great deal of money for, any publisher.” Having predicted his future worth, he asked the publisher, “You surely do not expect me to have given a right to Boni and Liveright to reject my books...while sitting back and waiting to cash in on the appearance of a best seller.”²⁴ If his original submission of *Torrents* was demanding, his declaration of his freedom was adamant, but it also reveals how Hemingway’s self-identification as a professional writer was tied to his commercial success. More importantly, perhaps, this is a moment in his correspondence, when what will later be recognized as the iconic “Hemingway” persona appears to mediate between the ideal of the artistic and the danger of the commercial.

This emphasis on compensation for his work is not a signal of the corrupting influence of commercial publishing. Rather, his interest in his own worth and the economic value of his work comes from his earliest involvement in those “cuckoo” Little Magazines. Early in his career, what little income he earned from writing came directly from Little Magazines. As both part-time editor (of the *Transatlantic Review*) and contributor, he understood that these limited-circulation venues provided a chance for authors to receive compensation for their work. Hemingway once told Ernest Walsh, the editor of *This Quarter*, that although he realized his best work could “never get into the purely commercially run magazines... [a writer] will always hold on to it hoping to get something for it.”²⁵ A text’s literary worth was not mutually exclusive from its economic worth, in

Hemingway's estimation. Although the commercial market, a market which paid at a much higher rate than the more limited small presses, would not or could not publish the most innovative and uncensored of a writer's work, Hemingway believed, like most of his peers, that literary professionalism demanded payment. For Hemingway, as for many of his contemporaries, to succeed in selling your work was a marked success. The sale and circulation of that work guaranteed an author's identity and prestige.

For Hemingway, Liveright's rejection was a relief. He had taken a risk in presenting Liveright with a publishable manuscript, but he had counted on its subject matter to keep Liveright from accepting it. Breaking his contract with Liveright was relatively easy, but it also presented Hemingway with a complication—having used *Torrents* to break the contract, he needed to now find a publisher willing to publish the book. He had already told Perkins that he would give him the first chance at anything should he be released by Liveright, but he also had received an offer from Harcourt to publish both *Torrents* and his novel sight unseen. Hemingway understood that by sending the manuscript to Perkins, who had not given him a formal offer, he was jeopardizing his chances with Harcourt, should Scribners decide not to take the risk of publishing the satire. Using Fitzgerald as an unofficial agent, Hemingway negotiated a contract with Scribners and placed both his satire and his novel with the firm. Perkins had not seen either piece of writing, but gave him an advance of \$1,500 for both books, a marked improvement from the \$200 Liveright offered for his short stories. Like his contract with Liveright, his contract with Scribners came with a requirement—a full-length novel.²⁶ The shift from the small press market into the commercial publishing market in America marked a shift in Hemingway's identity as a writer as well. By finalizing his commitment to involve himself more thoroughly with

commercial publishing, Hemingway confirmed his transformation from short story writer into novelist.

His public transformation as a professional author transformed his private life as well. His decision to satirize *Dark Laughter* had implications far beyond breaking his contract with Liveright. Sherwood Anderson had been a friend to the young author and was one of the voices that helped Hemingway place *In Our Time* with Liveright.

Hemingway's decision to take aim at Anderson's only bestseller was also a decision to take aim at Anderson's reputation as an author. Privately, Hemingway attempted to maintain a friendship with Anderson by remaining the devoted "student" to Anderson's "master," but publically, *Torrents* established Hemingway as a writer separate from Anderson's influence. Through his deft satire, he positioned himself as the more perceptive and relevant writer and exposed Anderson's novel as a flimsy pastiche of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. In a letter to Anderson, Hemingway explained the book as a fellow author attempting to make an impersonal critique of another author's book. He wrote to Anderson, "I feel that among ourselves we have to pull our punches, if when a man like yourself who can write very great things writes something that seems to me...rotten, I ought to tell you so." The danger, Hemingway continued, was of letting oneself believe in uncritical encouragement and never stop writing "slop." Should writers capable of literary greatness reduce themselves to producing superficial slop, Hemingway believed, "we'll never produce anything but Great American Writers."²⁷ For Hemingway, the bestselling American author had become a parody of what a writer should aspire to be, in the same way that Anderson's work had become a parody of his more innovative successors.

It was Hemingway's goal to position himself as one of those successors. His willingness to expose what he saw as the pretensions of Anderson's novel and to sever his friendship with the author is, perhaps, a classic Hemingway story, but it is also indicative of the importance he placed on his own identity as a writer. In Hemingway's estimation, "Great American Writers" were not artistic geniuses who pushed the boundaries of literary aesthetics, but were those writers whose works sell well in the commercial market. His comment has an editorial function as well, though. Even as he attempts to enter the literary field, he also attempts to delimit the boundaries of that field's editorial judgment. In a calculated attempt to secure a measure of artistic legitimacy as part of his authorial status, Hemingway positioned himself to become one of the most successful writers of the lost generation, even as he took Anderson to task for the commercial and critical success of *Dark Laughter*.

Even at this earliest point in his career with commercial publishing, Hemingway understood the importance of publicity for giving a new book the best start possible. While he believed that once published a book would continue to make him a steady stream of revenue, Fitzgerald had already told him that this was not the case. In a letter to Perkins that year, Hemingway expressed his concern that "in a little while it will all be over and when a respectable number are sold then it will be laid off being pushed and not sell any more and the book will be just the same only no one will ever buy it."²⁸ His understanding of the market for his work came, in part, from his friendship with Fitzgerald, but Hemingway's own experience with *In Our Time* also underlined to him the importance of those initial sales. From his own experience, Hemingway knew that an author could not depend upon a book to continue generating revenue. The book market in 1920s America

was focused on novelty, and just as avant-garde publishing fetishized the “new” as an exclusive commodity, commercial publishers focused primarily on new works. It was not enough to write a novel; Hemingway needed to become a novelist. A single novel, no matter how well received, had about as much longevity in terms of impact on the author’s reputation as many of the Little Magazines in the more exclusive small press market. Even a bestselling novel had a single impact on an author’s finances, much the same as a well-placed short story may have had. Although *The Sun Also Rises* sold over 36,000 copies between its debut in 1926 and 1945, Hemingway earned only \$10,842 in royalties from Scribners’ edition of the book.²⁹ Success in the commercial market could never be singular a singular event; for an author to maintain his reputation and to make a living, success had to be recurring.

Novel Anxieties: Hemingway and the Virile Integrity of Texts

The Sun Also Rises solidified Hemingway’s status as a novelist, but Hemingway quickly learned that having a novel published did not guarantee him either literary prestige or an income. Although novels, as hard-bound trade editions, were more permanent material objects than the magazines that served as the major short story market, as cultural objects they had a fairly short impact on an author’s career. As Hemingway told Perkins in April of 1931, “a novel exists only for a few months, and. . . what you get from it is entirely dependent on how violently it is pushed during those months. . . and the chances are that when you are fifty if you should have written seven good books your income will probably be about \$30 a year.”³⁰ At this point in Hemingway’s career, a novel or novelist published by a commercial trade press lasted only about as long as the novelty of their work. Firms

promoted new works, but put little effort in continuing to promote a work once its sales had dropped.

In part, the reason for this was that the book market was bifurcated along class lines. Trade publishers saw their market as a middle-to-upper class, educated consumer who usually understood the value of a work through its material appearance as a book. Trade publishers did not often concern themselves with those consumers who might be interested in reading and even owning books, but who either could not afford a trade edition or who no longer identified the physical qualities of a trade edition with literary legitimacy. Trade publications were, necessarily, more expensive than paperbound or reprint editions in order to keep a reasonable profit margin after covering the costs of the initial typesetting, editing, and production. Reprint publishers like the Modern Library series could sell their books for a fraction of the trade edition price, because their lease of the copyright for the book included the author's royalties and the already set plates as one flat fee. Other publishing houses, like Grosset and Dunlap bypassed printing altogether, and would simply buy a portion of the publisher's stock in a book the public had lost interest in and rebind the already printed pages with their imprint. Books that needed to sell for two or three dollars as a trade edition could then easily be sold to this other market of consumers for fifty cents or less.

Because trade publishers put so much emphasis on pushing new books before the public, they were more than willing to trade the future profits for a book that had stopped selling for the instant lump-sum payment offered by one of these reprint houses. The author, however, often had little choice in accepting what amounted to a substantial cut in royalties. For example, once Hemingway's second novel, *A Farewell to Arms* (1929),

reached the point where Scribners' usual market was no longer purchasing the book in high enough numbers, the possibility of leasing rights to both Bennett Cerf's Modern Library and to Grosset and Dunlap came up. Hemingway, not surprisingly, was not pleased. He understood that the reprint market amounted to "saying good bye to all further income from its sale for an outright cash payment" and was unwilling to accept such a payment unless the amount was considerable. But the Grosset and Dunlap editions held a bigger problem for the author. Because they were, essentially, the same book as the trade edition priced much lower, they threatened to encroach on what royalties the trade edition might continue to bring in. Hemingway believed that "the Cerf business does not wipe out the ordinary sales as completely as the G and D does," and that should Scribners allow a Grosset and Dunlap edition, the firm would need to sell seven times the amount of books for Hemingway to earn the same amount in royalties.³¹

During the 1920s and 1930s, Book Clubs and other subscription services posed an equally costly proposition to Hemingway's ability to make a living as a writer. These "litero-menstrual clubs," as he referred to them, offered a book guaranteed sales to an instant audience that was separate from the market targeted by trade publishers. During the 1930s, the impact of the Depression on the book market caused Scribners to consider turning to the Book of the Month club to sell Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon* (1932). While a club placement meant considerable free advertising and an increased interest in the book itself, it came at a price.³² Hemingway saw three main problems with a Book of the Month Club release: that the payment he received from the Club would reduce his royalties from Scribners, that the Club may ask him to eliminate certain words from their edition, and that should reviewers receive copies of the censored edition, it would color

their reviews. For Hemingway, the extra money such a placement might bring in was not worth what such a placement might do to the book. He told Perkins, "If anyone so acts as to put themselves out as a book of the month they cannot insist in ramming the good word shit or the sound old word xxxx down the throats of a lot of clubwomen . . . and I will not have any pressure brought to bear to make me emasculate a book to make anyone seven thousand dollars, myself or anyone else."³³ The Book of the Month Club, for Hemingway, posed not only a risk to his profits, but to the very virility of his work.

For Hemingway, literary value was linked directly to what he saw as the virility of his texts. Hemingway believed that the text needed to stand as an authentic whole. Any censorship because of commercial constraints corrupted the text's integrity. More importantly, for the author, any sort of literal or metaphoric emasculation, whether through censoring the texts or marketing them to what he considered a woman-centered audience, was a direct affront not only to the text, but to Hemingway himself. For example, in his correspondence with Maxwell Perkins about possibly objectionable words in *A Farewell to Arms* that Perkins believed Hemingway would need to delete for the serialized version of the novel, Hemingway responded that while he was willing to be reasonable, the deletions of words and passages impacted the total integrity of the book. Putting the book's integrity in the terms of masculinity, Hemingway told Perkins, ""My point is that the operation of emasculation is a tiny one--It is very simple and easy to perform on men—animals and books—It is not a Major operation but its effects are great--It is never performed intentionally on books—What we must both watch is that it should not be performed unintentionally." He went on to explain to Perkins that he was willing to compromise by inserting something to indicate the omission was due to censorship rather

than to his unwillingness to face the issue head on. He told his editor, "I know we both have to be careful because we have the same interest ie (literature or whatever you call it) and I know that you yourself are shooting for the same thing that I am. And I tell you that emasculation is a small operation and we dont [sic]want to perform it without realizing it."³⁴

For Hemingway, the serialization of the novel was an important step towards publicizing the novel successfully, but while successful publication would mean sales commensurate with Hemingway's belief in the novel's worth, he was unwilling to sacrifice the novel's integrity. Rather, he saw the novel's integrity—"literature"—as something within the text that the market could not touch. Thus a mainstream literary career, for Hemingway, did not mean the end to his role as an artist. As he told his editor in 1934,

I am a careerist, as you can read in the papers, and my idea of a career is never to write a phony line, never fake, never cheat, never be sucked in by the y.m.c.a. movements of the time, and to give them as much literature in a book as any son of a bitch has ever gotten into the same number of words. But that isn't enough. If you want to make a living out of it you have to, in addition every so often, without faking, cheating, or deviating from the above to give them something they understand and that has a story—not a plot—just a story that they can follow instead of simply feel, the way most of the stories are.³⁵

For Hemingway, saleable literature was not necessarily emasculated literature; the market could not corrupt something written authentically, without "cheating" or "faking." More importantly, literature was not some category imposed on the book, but something within

the book itself that stands apart from the words on the page. Here, Hemingway delineates his own vision of literary value and one that he sought to have his publishers endorse on his behalf; even as more expensive trade editions, his books, the thought, are a bargain.

Hemingway as Novelist: A Properly Masculine Profession

While Hemingway wanted to publish with a commercial press, his entry into the world of the commercial literary market was not without misgivings. His initial unwillingness to turn away from short story writing to the genre of the novel exposes the anxiety he felt about the possibility of the form. In his posthumous memoirs of life in Paris during the 1920s, *A Moveable Feast* (1964), Hemingway tells his reader that he knew he must write a novel, but that he wanted to wait until there was no other choice: "I was damned if I would write one because it was what I should do if we were going to eat regularly. When I had to write it, then it would be the only thing to do and there would be no choice" (76). In his memoir, a good day's work on a short story brought him a feeling of comfort and release, but the knowledge that he must someday become a novelist brought him only the feeling of being cornered by the market. The market had no power over Hemingway's self-identity *unless* it began to dictate what he could write, but the power of the market to change one's identity brought with it real masculine anxiety.

For Hemingway, the intersection between his occupation as a working writer and his identity as an author was always mediated by his own understanding of masculinity. From the young Kansas City Star reporter sporting an unearned Italian army uniform, to the bearded "Papa" tracking Nazi submarines off the coast of Cuba, Hemingway's public persona as a working writer was predicated on a virile masculinity defined by action.³⁶ His fear that censorship might emasculate his work was also a fear that an emasculated text

would accordingly mar his own masculine identity, and throughout his career, Hemingway reacted with violence at any critique of his texts' potency. For example, when Max Eastman questioned the virility of the author's writing, Hemingway took the critique as a personal assault on his manhood. Upon meeting Eastman at Scribners' offices, Hemingway wrestled Eastman to the floor after comparing the hairiness of the two men's chests. (Hemingway's, of course, was the more manly of the two). Hemingway's tireless performance and defense of his own masculinity became a hallmark of Hemingway's identity as an author, and the persistence in the vision of the author as hyper-masculine remains an influential vein in Hemingway scholarship. This iconic image is so pervasive in the American cultural imaginary that even those who have never read any of his texts have naturalized Hemingway as the quintessential man's man. But his investment in establishing authorship as a properly masculine profession also needs to be set in the larger cultural context of American culture.

In his cultural history of American masculinity, *Manhood in America*, Michael Kimmel has persuasively linked American manhood with capitalism through the myth of the self-made man. The self-made man "embodied economic autonomy," but also occupies a precarious identity; masculinity becomes a shifting signifier where "success must be earned, [and] manhood must be proved—and proved constantly" (Kimmel 17). Specifically, the self-made man was "made" through his vigorous interaction and success within the American capitalist marketplace. However, the role of the artist was traditionally one separate from the marketplace. As an autonomous genius, the artist's very identity was opposed to the world of commerce. The cultural belief in the value of economic success through a man's labor or ingenuity created a pervading sense of anti-

intellectualism in American culture. As Richard Hofstadter argues, American anti-intellectualism produced a stereotype of artists and intellectuals as “pretentious, conceited, effeminate, and snobbish, and very likely immoral, dangerous, and subversive” (qtd. Raeburn 25). To write for a living was not, before the late nineteenth century, a proper performance of manhood. According to David Blackmore, “The popular conception of writing as an unmanly profession received the stamp of scientific approval as psychoanalysis mined works of art for hidden neuroses and residue from early psychosexual development” (53).³⁷

At the beginning of the twentieth century, writing fiction was not masculine work in the cultural imaginary. Indeed, not until the passage of the 1891 act did U.S. Copyright Law recognize the work of foreign authors as their rightful property. Even with the expansion of copyright protection—a change that allowed American authors an opportunity to compete more equally in the book market—copyright protection was only provided to a text if an edition was both *set and printed* within the United States. The text itself and the labor of the author in producing that text was always secondary to the manual labor of U.S. citizens responsible for producing the book. Hemingway’s intense investment in cultivating a space for a properly masculine identity in an already feminized profession can be situated as a reaction to a literary culture already gendered by the cultural construction of American manhood. His entrance into the world of trade publishing represented a possibility for him to transform writing into a properly masculine profession—one that would allow him to claim a masculinity informed by economic success through the legitimate labor of writing. The limits imposed upon him by that market, however, were a source of anxiety.

As Kimmel argues, the explosion of monopoly capital at the turn of the century undermined the style of manhood through which the market becomes a space to prove oneself as a man. The decline of this style of manhood “gave rise to a widespread panic about the feminizing effects of modern urban living—a panic about the ‘feminization of American culture’” the result “was an intense nostalgia for the rugged autonomy--the physical potency and virile self-mastery” (Forter 23). As Greg Forter argues, “American modernism, at least in one of its most dominant strands, represents a relatively cohesive set of expressive responses to this crisis” (23). In its interest in impersonality and disinterestedness, American modernism espoused a vision of autonomy from the market even as it engaged the market to make their livings.³⁸ The appearance of disinterestedness became a mark of professional mastery for the modernist author.

For Hemingway, prose became an answer to that anxiety. Prose, he wrote in *Death in the Afternoon*, “is architecture, not interior decoration, and the Baroque is over” (DIA 191). Reclaiming fiction from the sphere of women’s influence, he situates the writing of fiction as a profession, like the building of houses. With the publication of his first novel, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), critics characterized his prose as lean and sparse. His publisher, Charles Scribner’s Sons, used this focus on the virility of prose to their benefit, and sold the text as a “revolt” against the “lazy,” sentimental fiction that preceded it. From the very beginning of their advertising campaign for the book, his publisher focused on Hemingway’s value as being tied to his masculinity and the virility he imparted to his prose. In their 1926 supplemental list of Spring publications, Scribners introduced Hemingway to booksellers as a writer who was “a revolt against the soft, vague thought and expression that characterizes the work of extremists in American fiction today... [his] writing is utterly

direct and completely fearless.”³⁹ In their fall catalog, the publisher presented Hemingway as a writer in revolt against sentimentality and his novel as a new advancement in realism: “one seems to observe life directly, not through any literary medium.”⁴⁰ Should a bookseller doubt the veracity of the firm’s claims about Hemingway’s novel, most ads also included a picture of the ruggedly handsome young author.⁴¹

While Hemingway’s texts undoubtedly engage in an exploration of many facets of masculine identity, many of his works combine that focus on masculinity with the issues faced by a writer entering the complexities of the commercial literary market of early twentieth century America. Novels like *The Sun Also Rises* and *The Garden of Eden* and his own memoirs of his time in Paris, *A Moveable Feast*, index the anxiety of a writer turned professional as he enters a market that has the power to strip him of his aesthetic identity. In their portrayal of author-figures attempting to transform themselves into professional writers, these texts explore the impact of the novel as a form in that transformation. As he negotiated the publishing industry, his novels reflect the possibility of balancing the identity of autonomous author with that of literary professional. Specifically, in Hemingway’s texts the trope of the disinterested artist allows him to position certain versions of authorship as more valuable, and consequently more literary, than others, while at the same time claiming the legitimacy of professional authorship in the realm of masculinity.

***The Sun Also Rises* and the Value of Professionalism**

The Sun Also Rises is a novel about the catastrophic sense of loss predicated by the First World War, but it is also Hemingway’s first public statement about the relationship between masculinity, professionalism, and writing. Told through the perspective of Jake

Barnes, an American newspaper man injured during the war, the novel traces a group of expatriates from Paris to the bullrings of Spain as Jake deals with the implications of his intimate wound. On the surface, it is a novel about the ennui of expatriate life and about a man whose impotence keeps him from the love that might give him a sense of fulfillment. The very of Jake's wound (or its indeterminate nature, for that matter) has spurred a wealth of studies about masculinity in the novel. But while the text is a novel about Jake attempting to fashion for himself a masculine identity, it also explores what it means to be a professional writer—especially a writer coming back to publish in an American market.

As Bill Gorton tells Jake during their fishing trip, “Nobody that ever left their own country ever wrote anything worth printing, not even in the newspapers” (120). Bill's good-natured barb at Jake Barnes' decision to live and work as an expatriate journalist is part of a lively conversation about literary production and consumption, but his denigration of Jake's professional identity begins to uncover the tension within the literary field that the novel depicts. As Bill ironically expounds on the problems of expatriation by mocking contemporary critiques of the left bank community of writers, he unintentionally brings up Jake's wound. Bill tells him, “One group [of critics] claims women support you. Another group claims you're impotent” (120). Suddenly, the light-hearted banter becomes uncomfortable. Confronted by Jake's literal impotence, the perceived figurative impotence of the left bank literati hangs uncomfortably in the air. In the space of a few lines, the reader is made painfully aware that the wound that marks Jake's masculinity is always exacerbated by his societal position as a writer. For those who don't know of his injury, his very profession marks him as emasculated. His decision to live abroad as he makes a living through his writing serves as yet another strike against his manhood. Hemingway's

decision to wound Jake in such an intimate way makes his character a literal embodiment of that other, figurative perception of literary impotence. Jake's own status as the text's fictional author makes this figurative impotence as real for his identity as his mangled or missing member.⁴¹ As Richard Hofstadter, American anti-intellectualism produced a stereotype of artists and intellectuals as "pretentious, conceited, effeminate, and snobbish, and very likely immoral, dangerous, and subversive" (qtd. Raeburn 25).⁴²

Jake's identity as an expatriate newspaper man, however, sets him apart from the other would-be writers and socialites that populate the Left Bank. As a working journalist, Jake is not a tourist; he has an office to visit each day, and he is careful to include in his narrative scenes of himself at work, even as he tells his reader that he cultivates an air of leisure around his fellow expatriates (SAR 19). Unlike many of the other characters who rely on their family's wealth to allow them a leisurely life in Europe, Jake's income and ability to live in Paris comes solely from his income as a working writer. Jacob Michael Leland links Jake's status as a professional with a specifically American brand of masculinity. Leland argues that Jake uses his status as a worker and the circulation of his money within the European economy to mark him as legitimately masculine. "To make money and circulate it... allows Jake to imagine himself as a fully realized male and an agent of U.S. economic power, in control of the modernizing marketplace he inhabits" (37-8). Jake's ability to conspicuously consume becomes a performance of masculinity. While Leland persuasively outlines the economy of *The Sun Also Rises*, it does not examine the importance of *how* that money is made. Jake, indeed, is one of the "people going to work;" his office is a newspaper syndicate and his work is writing. But as a writer, Jake is always

aware of his difference from others in the text. He has no novel or publisher's contract, and as Bill's comment exposes, his writing for the newspapers marks him as unliterary.

As a journalist, Jake is a specific type of writer in a text populated by writers, but Jake is also a specific type of newspaper man. As he drives along the Avenue de l'Opéra in a taxi with Georgette, a prostitute he has picked up for the evening, Jake is conscious of the New York *Herald* bureau with its "window full of clocks" (23). He does not, however, work for the *Herald* or any of the other major syndicated press associations that had become prevalent since the turn of the century. Instead, Jake occupies a small office above one of the many Parisian cafes and works for himself. Jake jokes that while Robert Cohn slept in the outer room of his office, "the Editor, Publisher, and I worked for two hours," but Jake himself comprises the newsroom trinity for his own company (20). As a self-employed journalist and an individually owned news service, Jake positions himself in the text as an independent, self-made man.

Jake's status as an independent journalist also situates him as separate from those men who put in long hours for the major syndicates and bureaus. This independence gives him an extraordinary amount of freedom compared to his peers in the news business, but it also excludes him from complete membership in that world. We can see that difference in his interactions with other correspondents. After a press conference with a dozen other correspondents, Jake's conversation with Woolsey and Krum highlights his difference from his peers. Krum claims that someday he will not work for an agency and "have plenty of time to get out in the country," but unlike Jake, he has an employer to pay for his drinks. The freedom Jake has to visit the countryside or spend his evenings and weekends at the bars in the Quarter, however, comes at a price—unstable finances. Without a job at a larger

agency, Jake is solely responsible for the prices his reporting brings in. His attempt to buy the other men's drinks, then, serves as his attempt to display his success, and consequently his masculine prowess.

Jake's position as an independent journalist would not have been unique in Paris, but it also was not common. By the 1920s, the newspaper industry had transformed itself from independently owned family newspapers to a business dependent upon syndication and conglomerates. Edward Adams has shown that following an initial wave of mergers in the 1890s, newspapers underwent a second wave of mergers and consolidations in the 1920s. Within forty years of the establishment of the first newspaper conglomerate, the Scripps McRae League of Newspapers in 1890, the United States saw the arrival of forty newspaper chains. Syndicated press agencies began as early as the mid-nineteenth century, but the use of press agents as correspondents during World War I marked an increased shift toward syndicated news services. By 1929, the United Press Association (U.P.), first founded in 1907, could boast that it used "10,000 miles of leased wires in the distribution of its services... [to] 1,170 newspapers in 45 countries and territories of the world" (628). With over fifty bureaus in major cities from London to Shanghai, the United Press is an example of the many syndicated news agencies that provided young men an opportunity to write the news. While Jake's individualism sets him apart from the mainstream press agencies, it also places him in a precarious financial position. If, as Kimmel suggests, American manhood has been defined from its earliest moments through the ability for men to prove themselves within a capitalist economy, Jake's decision to remain independent from the established structure in the news industry sets him apart to the mainstream entrance to that economy.

Hemingway's decision to isolate Jake's position in the world of journalism as different from the other correspondents and yet fairly indeterminate was deliberate. In the manuscript of the unpublished novel, Hemingway had given Jake a more definite occupation and employer. In the manuscript, Jake tells the reader that he had given up his job with the *New York Mail* to go into a partnership with the Continental Press Association, a fictional news syndicate.⁴³ As their European Director, Jake keeps his salary low enough that other journalists will not be interested in competing for the job. In his refusal to reveal Jake's definite employment status in the published novel, Hemingway positions Jake more thoroughly as a character whose masculine identity is uncertain. However, in the context of a world structured by different types of professional writers, Hemingway's decision to leave Jake appear as a free agent also sets him apart from the uniformity of the syndicated press world. As a seemingly independent agent, Jake is an anachronism: the image of the autonomous hardboiled newsman on the beat in a world of increasingly commercialized homogeneity.

But his status as an independent agent would also given him a measure of *aesthetic* freedom in his journalism. By the 1920s, the newspaper industry had moved from a "story" model of reporting to an "information" model of reporting, and syndicated news agencies helped to effect that change. As Michael Schudson argues in his social history of the American newspaper, because agencies like the United Press Association or the Associated Press gathered news for a variety of papers across political allegiances, these agencies "could only succeed by making [their] reporting 'objective'" (4). As Schudson also shows, however, objective reporting did not become the standard of journalism during the nineteenth century, when these news agencies first began. Instead, the changes in the way

news was reported had less to do with technological innovations (such as the telegraph). They were an effect of the newspapers making “their ideals and practices consonant with the culture of the dominant social classes” (5). The belief in objectivity, Schudson argues, is “the belief that one can and should separate facts from values”—an opinion that only found its way into news reporting after developments in psychoanalysis had uncovered the unconscious desires in narratives. Moreover, after World War I disillusioned an entire generation about the value of the democratic market society, newspapers turned away from reporting as storytelling and focused on an ideal of objectivity. Syndicates compiled long lists of conventions that reporters should follow to report the news correctly. In one such United Press document, they tell their correspondents that “Accuracy in reporting the news is of paramount importance,” but that “excitement is a luxury which you cannot afford when writing a story. If you are excited, you are not the master of your story” (Nelson 516). While soldiers on the field would be shot or arrested for becoming hysterical, they explain, it was up to the journalist to be his own policeman. Above all, the United Press insisted that it was “an impartial news service. It never takes sides in any controversy. When covering a story developing around a controversy, United Press has but one policy, and that is to present all sides and carry the news” (518). Where journalists once participated in the construction of an event through narrative, by the 1920s, journalists assumed a pose of objectivity to distance themselves from the stories they told.

Hemingway, himself a journalist, had problems with the limitations placed on him by style sheets and news agencies. While he called the *Kansas City Star's* style sheet the best rules he ever learned for writing, he also complained that “journalism robbed him of the juices he needed to write fiction” (Dewberry 16). In her study of the effect of

journalism on Hemingway's realism, Elizabeth Dewberry argues that he often tested the limits of journalistic convention and that "the best-known of Hemingway's *Kansas City Star* pieces also defies journalistic convention by using techniques more often associated with fiction than with journalism" (22). Hemingway's interest in blending the genres of fiction and journalism, Dewberry suggests, were part of his larger interest in investigating the nature of reality and the relationship between language and representation. *The Sun Also Rises* served as his longest and most complete investigation into that relationship to date. In transforming the manuscript from a journalistic account of "Hem" and his friends' adventures in Spain into Jake Barnes' narrative, Hemingway signaled the importance of fiction in mediating the space between reality and representation. Jake's apparent position outside of the news bureaus of Paris represents a possibility for Jake to retain his narrative autonomy, at the historical moment when the structure of the newspaper industry was restricting a journalist's autonomy in representing individual experience.

The Sun Also Rises, however, gives Jake an explicit alternative to journalistic representation—the novel, specifically the modernist novel. The novel, as it was published, reads as Jake's personal account of the events during the summer of 1925, but in the original typescript, Jake makes it clear that the text is that of a novel he is writing.⁴⁴ In sections that Hemingway deleted, Jake tells his reader that he has now finally decided to write the novel that all newspaper men secretly want to write. He tells the reader, "I am writing the story, not as I believe is usually in these cases, from a desire for confession, because being a Roman Catholic I am spared that Protestant urge to literary production, nor to set things all out the way they happened for the good of some future generation, nor any other of the usual highly moral urges, but because I believe it is a good story" (qtd.

Svoboda 102). In composing the novel, he breaks a primary convention of journalism—detachment from his subject. By believing the story to be “good,” he makes a judgment about its value. It is the reinsertion of value into the objective professionalism of journalism marks Jake as the superior artist figure in the text.

As a surrogate author within Hemingway’s text, Jake represents the possibility for the novelist to claim an authentic masculinity through his professionalism. Consequently, his almost obsessive focus on Robert Cohn’s inadequacies reveals the perils of negotiating a masculine identity in a space structured by literary professionalism. The vehemence with which Jake represents Cohn’s ineffectualness as both an author and man uncovers Jake’s anxiety about the connections between masculinity and writing that structure the text. After all, Cohn, like Bill, has a published novel, and however “poor” it might be, Jake has not. Likewise, Cohn can be with Brett in ways that Jake can not, but through hardboiled stoicism, Jake differentiates his own attachment to Brett from Cohn’s.

From the first pages of the novel, however, Cohn’s rivalry for Brett is complicated by his status as a problematic other; as an out of place Jew in both Princeton and Paris, Cohn’s race marks him as separate from the other expatriates. Despite his impressive physique, Cohn’s race feminizes him. As Jeremy Kaye argues, Hemingway’s representation of Cohn as a “whiner” taps into an anti-Semitic tradition relegating Jewish men to a feminized, less-than-male status” (45). Jake’s fixation on Cohn’s Jewishness highlights his rival’s uncertain masculinity, but Cohn’s success in going away with Brett highlights a virility that trumps Jake’s own. In a world where sex structures masculinity, Cohn will always have a more stable manhood than the impotent Jake—even as a Jew.

Jake's attacks on Cohn's shortcomings, however, are not limited to his race. In addition, Jake focuses on Cohn's shortcomings as an author, reader, and editor. While Jake has a profession, Robert Cohn, has only an "occupation"—reading and re-reading W.H. Hudson's novel, *The Purple Land*. Cohn's obsession with Hudson's novel and his proclivity to take literally the novel's idealistic vision of South America is a symptom of his outdated romanticism and a mark of his ineptitude as a consumer of literature. As Jake tells us, "for a man to take it at thirty-four as a guide-book to what life holds is about as safe as it would be for a man of the same age to enter Wall Street direct from a French Convent, equipped with a complete set of the more practical Alger books" (17). Unable to differentiate between the objectivity of journalism and the romanticism of Hudson's novel, Cohn is marked by Jake as a romantic reader, unable to see the differences between texts and genres of literary production. Cohn's inability to see Hudson's novel as nothing more than a romanticized pastoral feminizes him by aligning him with a long line of ill-fated young heroines who are corrupted through what they read. His inclination to see the novel as, on the whole, "sound" does not simply mark him as a feminized romantic, but an anachronistic realist.⁴⁵ That Jake understands Cohn's misreading of *The Purple Land* positions Jake as an answer to the problem of realism's limit. Jake may not be able compete with Cohn in a world determined by the phallus or the fist, but by establishing himself as a more competent consumer of texts, Jake undercuts Cohn's literary accomplishments and establishes himself as the superior man in a world structured by the profession of writing. As a professional writer and editor, Cohn is a failure. With one novel that received negative critical reviews and a failed literary review, Cohn is ill-equipped to meet the challenges that the contemporary literary life demands.

Hemingway's unflattering depiction of Cohn is not a simple attack on a rival suitor; instead, it is a complicated indication of Jake's own perception of and investment in a gendered field of literary production, an investment that I want to suggest very much reflects Hemingway's own understanding of expatriate modernist production. In Cohn, Hemingway created a character emasculated by Cohn's own romanticized vision of the literary life and his inability to function as a perceptive reader, but Cohn is not purely an imagined character. The portrayal of Robert Cohn was easily recognized by contemporary readers as a caricature of Harold Loeb, the founding editor of *Broom* (1921-24).⁴⁶ While Hemingway himself never published in *Broom*, he was friends with Loeb and was indebted to him for helping secure his first contract with Liveright. Hemingway's decision to portray Loeb as the ineffectual and unlikable Robert Cohn was, in a sense, a way to position his own work apart from the small magazine market that had been the earliest supporters of his work without directly assaulting any of the editors that had taken the financial risk in publishing his earliest work. Already secure with a multi-book contract from Horace Liveright, Hemingway no longer had a need for the amateur editors of small-run presses that had given him his start. Just as Cohn's reading of *The Purple Land* and his review's failure marks him as an inferior player in the literary field, Hemingway's use of Cohn situated Loeb—and the range of non-commercial presses that served as the midwives of modernism—in a similarly inferior position. His contract with Liveright had already established his career apart from the private avant-garde presses that populated the Left Bank, and his decision to expose the emptiness of the expatriate life and to take aim at Loeb, specifically, was a way for Hemingway to distinguish his own authorship from the perceived "impotence" with which Bill unintentionally charges Jake. Thus, Hemingway

does more than emasculate Loeb via Cohn in print; he reaffirms his own literary production as legitimately masculine. The danger in emasculation, then, was not mass culture itself, but in the wrong type of author engaging with it. What the text makes clear in its obsession with Cohn's Jewishness is that neither physical brawn nor a lucrative publishing career can claim for the boxer the masculinity Jake thinks he naturally lacks. As a Jew, he is always already feminized, and his mis-reading of *The Purple Land* serves more as a symptom than a cause for his lack.

Even with his injury, Jake attains a masculinity through professionalism that Cohn cannot. As a journalist and working writer, Jake is committed to a profession, and his emphasis on work and labor sets him apart within the novel. Jake is not the stereotypical expatriate.⁴⁶ As Bill's earlier comment suggests, contemporary critiques of American expatriates centered on their reluctance to join the capitalist economy as "real" workers. Hemingway's interest in establishing Jake as a professional—even in the face of his literal impotence—indexes how pervasively the structures of masculinity informed the literary field. *The Sun Also Rises* suggests the complexity of the balance between rugged masculine professionalism, on one hand, and the value of literary legitimacy, on the other, and in doing so it creates a space where the work of writing can be figured not only as masculine, but also as an even more legitimate performance of masculinity than even Cohn's virile physique.⁴⁸

As many studies have already noted, as a protagonist, Jake Barnes is contentious. Hardly objective or even reliable as a narrator, there "is an inconsistency between public and private identities that undercuts the possibility of [Jake] ever being a unified presence in his own story" (Buckley 77).⁴⁹ Publically, Jake remains stoic in the face of his love for

Brett; privately, he laments that “it’s awfully easy to be hard-boiled about everything in the daytime, but at night it is another thing” (SAR 42). His desire for Brett and his inability to attain her loyalty either physically or emotionally makes Jake an unstable and untrustworthy narrator. Read another way, however, the inconsistency between public and private becomes the point. As conscious author of his own narrative, Jake’s willingness to expose both public and private facets of his identity underscores his considerable degree of control over his narrative, if not over his relationship with Brett. His daytime stoicism is a performance—one that Jake shares with an audience, his readers. Unlike Cohn, who insists on making his pain public at every possible moment, Jake’s private pain intensifies his public stoicism, and his narrative becomes a mark of his self-mastery, even as it exposes his insecurities. Through his depiction of Cohn, Jake validates his own stoicism in the face of Cohn’s romanticism and legitimizes his own narrative through his understanding of *aficion* and the aesthetic of the bullring.

The removal of passages detailing Jake’s ambition as a novelist, however, destabilizes the value of novels as the primary mode of literary legitimacy. Hemingway’s decision to excise Jake’s determination to write a novel is important. It allows the character to remain separate from the other writer figures in the novel. As a journalist and working writer, Jake is committed to a profession, but his value in the novel is an ability to see the shortcomings of both that profession and the literary culture in general. As narrator, Jake provides the text with its values while allowing Hemingway, as novelist, to exhibit his mastery of those values. His reluctance to equate Jake’s narrative with the writing of a novel also underscores the danger fiction posed for conflating representation and reality. The deletions of Jake’s literary ambitions soften the tie between Jake and

Hemingway as novelists, and in doing so, Hemingway separates his representation of Jake from his own reality. *The Sun Also Rises* may be Jake Barnes' story, but this separation guarantees that it remains Hemingway's novel.

Writing the Novelist: Hemingway's Later Career and Posthumous Novels

By standing apart from his narrator, Hemingway claimed virility as a novelist that even Jake could not quite attain, but as a novelist, Hemingway always stood in an uneasy relation to the market. His reluctance to identify Jake as a novelist exposes an anxiety that Jake's failures as both a novelist and man might be read as his own. Its identification with a feminized mass culture and especially with a feminized market marked the novel as a precarious vehicle to establish masculine identity. While his publisher and his later critics would read Hemingway as recuperating the genre of novel as a masculine space, his own texts index an anxiety about the novel's ability to emasculate its writer.

In *The Garden of Eden* (1986), composed in the 1950s, Hemingway makes his most explicit representation of the novel's possible emasculating influence. The novel covers approximately five months in the early marriage of David Bourne, an American writer, and his wife, Katherine. David is working on his third novel, a fictionalized version of the young couple's life together, but as the story begins, David has done little writing since their marriage. As a "surprise" for David, Catherine cuts her hair to match his, but the androgynous haircut has other effects in the couple's bedroom as Catherine pushes the boundaries of their relationship. Imagining herself as a boy, Catherine gives the couple's sexual relationship a homoerotic charge as she takes David sexually. While the text does not make clear whether the couple has simply switched positions or whether Catherine actually penetrates David, the result is the same for David's masculinity. Catherine's games

turn more dangerous, however, when she experiments with another woman and then brings that woman into their marriage. Throughout, David seems increasingly unable to either gain control of his own sexual desires or to regain control of his wife's monogamy. While he convinces himself that their relationship's transformation is not a sin, because "a sin is what you feel bad after and you don't feel bad," the blurring of the sexual boundaries in his marriage unmans him (*GE* 19).

His inability to take control of his marriage, however, is secondary to another unmanning at the hands of Catherine—the destruction of his manuscripts. In the novel, David is working on two projects: his third novel, a narrative that depicts his life with Katherine and a short story that depicts the event of an elephant hunt he experienced as a child living with his father in Africa. The short story enables him to reclaim himself from the madness his life has become. As he writes, he disappears into the text: "he went on with the story, living in it and nowhere else, and when he heard the voices of the two girls outside he did not listen" (107). As his wife's behavior becomes more erratic, and as he begins to fall in love with the second girl, returning to the short story provides him a way to stabilize his identity. He thinks to himself, "You better go to work. You have to make sense there. You don't make any in this other. Nothing will help you. Nor would have ever since it started" (146). His reliance on the short story reinserts him into the male-centered world of his childhood. As Robert B. Jones argues, "David Bourne's resolve to put aside the honeymoon narrative and write the elephant story symbolizes the reclamation of his identity as a man and as a writer" (6). By avoiding the novel, he also avoids further investing himself into the senselessness of what his marriage has become.

His decision to set the narrative aside for the short stories, however, enrages his already unstable wife, who takes them from his locked suitcase and burns them, leaving only the narrative of their life together.⁵⁰ To Catherine, the stories represented a disregard of David's duty to her. She tells him, "Jumping back and forth trying to write stories when all you had to do was keep on with the narrative that meant so much to all of us... Someone has to show you that the stories are just your way of escaping your duty" (190). What becomes clear in her decision to burn the stories is that Catherine's relationship with David is one of ownership. David's autonomy threatens that ownership, and as she invests more in performing a masculine version of herself, her desire for control over his production increases.

We can see her investment in ownership of David's writing early on in the text, when he receives an envelope of clippings from his publisher. The clippings, reviews of his second novel, disturb Catherine, and she asks David to destroy them. She asks, "How can we be us and have the things we have and do what we do and you be this that's in the clippings?" (24). The favorable reviews of his novel establish him as something other than her husband—as a professional writer. The clippings also unsettle David. Although he tells himself that "They had been understanding and perceptive reviews but to him they had meant nothing," his outward show of detachment is frustrated by his internal monologue. He thinks to himself, "And the hell with the promise he had validated. What promise to whom? To the *Dial*, the *Bookman*, to *The New Republic*? No, he had shown it," he thinks. "Let me show you my promise that I'm going to validate it. What shit" (60). If he thought of himself as separate from the problems of commercialized literature, the reviews reinsert him into that sphere of influence. In their praise for his second novel, the rearticulate a

vision of value that David, himself, does not aspire toward. His irritation at the reviews, however, is actually a reaction to Catherine's insinuation that his initial pleasure in the reviews proves that he writes only for money.

The fact that he does earn money through his writing presents a danger for Catherine's ownership of David, especially since Catherine's wealth originally funded his writing and their lifestyle. Her destruction of the manuscripts served as a way to reclaim her ownership. She tells him that she "put up the money for it," because her income was supporting the couple as he wrote (156). Catherine's emasculation of David is two-fold; she unsettles his position as a man in their relationship but she also undermines his identity as an autonomous author.⁵¹ She does tell David, however, that she is willing to compensate him for the wages he may have lost with the loss of the stories. "Who appraises these things," she asks David. "There must be people who do . . . such people as the editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*, *La Nouvelle Revue Francaise*" (226). By confusing literary value with economic value, and by equating the work of writing with any other type of labor to be compensated, Catherine's comments expose the risks that an author takes when entering the commercial literary market, and Hemingway critiques those who do not understand the difference. The text makes it clear that Catherine's reading of value is mistaken. The horror David expresses in the idea of her contacting his publishers and the devastation he experiences with the loss of the manuscripts signal that the work of writing is a special sort of labor—one more valuable than the money Catherine has provided and more valuable than any price a magazine might pay for it.⁵² That a novel proves David's unmanhood is important, however. As the thing that first exposed his

susceptibility, the novel remains throughout the text a palpable source for David's unmanning.

Moreover, David's response to Catharine's threats "is especially revealing if one understands, as Hemingway did, the difference between writing and authorship. By talking about publishing the narrative, Catharine is pushing into authorship" (Justice 84). On the other hand, Marita's understanding of "the difference between writing in its private context and writing as the profession of authorship provides the counterpoint to Catherine's unwitting...insistence on art as business" (85). In the end, only through rejecting the novel, and embracing the elephant story that David is able to recuperate a sense of masculine identity through his work.

While *The Garden of Eden* pairs the issues of "creation and transformation, of privacy and publication, of fertility and virility, and of writing and authorship," and serves in some respect as Hemingway's "textual autobiography" (Justice 560), his true autobiography deals with the complexities of remaining a legitimate professional and a legitimate man in even more specific detail. In his most famous posthumous work, *A Moveable Feast* (1964), the role of the novel returns once again as an ambivalent force for masculine agency. While the text depicts his success in writing *The Sun Also Rises*, it also situates that novel as the cause for the end of Paris. His decision, as narrated in the text, to share the manuscript of the novel with "the rich" in Schruns marks the beginning of his marriage's end even as it marks the beginning of his life as an author.⁵² Their approval of the manuscript causes Hemingway (the character) to lose sight of his own position: "When they said, 'It's great Ernest...I wagged my tail in pleasure...instead of thinking, 'If these bastards like it what is wrong with it.' That was what I would think if I had been functioning

as a professional” (209). By narrating the period in which Hemingway transformed from newspaperman to author and the period during which he was writing *The Sun Also Rises*, *A Moveable Feast* details not only Hemingway’s transformation, but also exposes his investment in crafting an autonomous authorial identity as both an artist and a commercial success. In the book, Hemingway (the character) attains success outside of the narrow realm of expatriate Paris by standing apart from the effete left bank crowd. *A Moveable Feast*, in a sense, serves as a recuperation of that professional identity by transforming his conversion into a professional writer into an aesthetic act.

In *A Moveable Feast*, Hemingway spends ample time focusing on the job of writing: the coldness of the attic garret where he worked, his irritation at meeting less serious expatriates who could ruin a day’s work, and the joy and satisfaction of a solid day’s production. It also highlights the physicality of writing as labor: the soreness in his fingers, numb from the cold and cramped from writing with a pencil. He also spends ample time exposing the weakness and failings of many of his fellow writers. Just as Jake exposes his own anxiety about his position in the literary field through his critiques of Cohn, Hemingway reveals his investment in the structure of this field through his critiques of Gertrude Stein, Ford Maddox Ford, and F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Like Jake, the way Hemingway depicts his fellow writers establishes him as an exemplary professional among less dedicated dilettantes. One of his targets in this regard is Gertrude Stein. Unlike Stein, Hemingway did not shirk the “drudgery of revision” (17). Instead, Hemingway depicts himself as a willing and devoted professional, telling his reader that at Schruns he “did the most difficult job of rewriting I have ever done there in the winter of 1925 and 1926, when I had to take the first draft of *The Sun Also Rises*....and

turn it into a novel” (202). He not only labors over his own work, he labors over Stein’s as well, reading her proof of *The Making of Americans* for *The Transatlantic Review*, because the task “gave her no happiness” (18). Through his description, he dethrones his mentor and suggests that he, himself, is the reason for Stein’s success.

Compared to the diligent, and often very hungry, Hemingway, who found satisfaction in writing “nothing that anyone in America would buy,” Stein’s growing dependence upon commercial validation emasculates her as soundly as whatever it is that Hemingway overhears Alice B. Toklas say to her at the top of the stairs. Hemingway’s dedication stands apart from the approbation of the reading public, a professionalism intrinsic to his very identity. His writing follows his own artistic desires, and despite knowing that he must write a novel to become, finally, recognized in America as an important Author, he “was damned if [he] would write one because it was what I should do if we were to eat regularly” (76). His recognition that he must eventually write a novel rather than the short stories that mark his tenure as a journalist reveals his understanding of the literary market in the 1920s. Even as many of the expatriate presses emphasized the material form of the magazines they published, unless an author had a novel published, his or her work was disposable, published in the wealth of literary and popular magazines at the time that were not intended to sit on anyone’s library shelves. Novels—*books*—were and are lasting evidence of an author’s cultural and *commercial* importance.

A Novelist in a Changing Market

During the first two decades of his career, Hemingway was a professional writer, but changes in the book industry and the cultural understanding of the book itself created a space for Hemingway to become a great author. The structure of the publishing industry in

the first half of the century demanded that a writer continuously produce new texts in order to remain visible as a professional. Once a text went into reprints, it garnered its author less prestige, and once a text was out of print, it no longer existed in the public sphere. However, with the changes in the cultural perception of paperbacks, reprints began to gain importance as a mark of an author's significance. In the years following World War II, those publishing markets that had traditionally been ignored by trade publishers began exerting their influence on the publishing industry as a whole.

Traditional firms could no more ignore the growing market for inexpensive reprints and paperbacks than they could ignore the growing educational market.

By the 1950s, the royalties that an author could receive for a reprint edition had increased dramatically. In 1948, Bantam Books offered Hemingway a \$3000 advance on *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms*, but by 1952, they offered him a \$12,500 advance on *Across the River and Into the Trees*.⁵⁴ The sheer number of books that these presses printed and distributed also helped to increase an author's chance to earn something in the way of royalties. At a rate of one cent a book, the 681,915 copies of Bantam's edition of *The Sun Also Rises* earned Hemingway almost \$7,000 in just over a year—an amount only \$3,000 less than the trade edition's royalties over the course of almost twenty years. The demand for inexpensive but well-made books helped Hemingway to earn a profit from his earlier writing.

By the end of the 1950s, both Maxwell Perkins and Charles Scribner, Sr. had died, and Charles Scribner, Jr. decided to take the firm in a more modern direction. Taking his cue from the success of their hard-cover Modern Standard Authors series and from an interest in paperbacks from the educational market, Scribner decided to discontinue the

practice of leasing reprint rights and to venture into producing their own paperbound editions. This change in Scribners' publishing policy meant the possibility of a renewed interest in an author's older or out of print books for the instructional market, and for a living author who had just won the Nobel Prize and whose works were already in demand for educational markets, like Hemingway, this development meant that his status as an essential American author was assured.

The decision for Scribner's to branch out into the market for educational paperbacks was purely economic. Once educators learned that the cheapest paper-back reprints would no longer be available for their students to purchase, they complained to the firm. Scribner's hope was that by offering a moderately priced student edition of the book, the publishing house might get "a chance at many big college adoptions we might otherwise miss." According to Scriber, "the academic people have become virtually hypnotized by soft covers," and his plan used that desire for soft cover books to the firm's advantage.⁵⁵ At \$1.45, these paperbound editions were only moderately less expensive than the already-discounted education editions Scribner's had already been publishing for \$2.75, but as paperbound books, the student editions were a success. In less than two years, the publisher sold over 30,000 copies of the student edition of *The Sun Also Rises*. Even at the reduced ten percent royalty, the book made Hemingway over \$4000 in a very short time. Less than three years later, in August of 1959, Charles Scribner, Jr. once again came to Hemingway with a proposal for reprints. The success of the college editions and the advancement of the paperback revolution gave Scribner a reason to believe that a generally discounted paperbound edition of Hemingway's texts might be equally as profitable to both the firm and the writer. Scribner believed that creating a discounted line of paperbacks

would “more than offset our reduction of gross profit per copy by increased sales in the aggregate.” At \$1.95, the paperbound book price was meant to spur sales in all markets.

The changes in the book market in the 1950s created a space for the professional author that Hemingway had envisioned in 1925. As a young author, he had been disillusioned to learn that a book published by a commercial press would have little more impact on his position or finances than a magazine story. At the time, Perkins explained that the reprint industry was to blame for the state of affairs, and he told Hemingway that Scribners and the other firms were “such fools years ago as to let Grosset & Dunlap, and such reprint houses, get going, and the result was that many people got in the habit of not buying books until they came down to a dollar, or seventy-five cents, as it was then.”⁵⁶ As reprint houses proliferated, the book market changed, Perkins claimed, as a book’s “biggest sale in the old days came after a year or eighteen months--But now people generally find what books they want to read in dollar series by that time. That is the great reason why books do not hold up as they did in the old days, and as they ought to...It is an unhealthy situation for literature and an unsound one for publishers.”⁵⁷ Perkin’s explanation of the problem with the state of literature and the state of publishing is predicated on the assumption that the book is the proper vehicle for textual distinction for a specific type of consumer. However, reprint firms did not so much damage the publishing industry as they exposed the weakness of a publishing industry set on a single-minded market.

The very appearance and success of reprint firms in the early half of the twentieth century points towards an ever expanding and diversifying consumer base for literature. Reprint firms were originally allowed to form because traditional firms believed that those readers who purchased Modern Library or Grosset and Dunlap editions were different

types of consumers than those who purchased trade editions of a book. They were not only different, for these firms, they were also not viewed as “real” consumers of literature. The books they purchased were not “real” books, at least not in any traditional sense, but were instead some illegitimate version of the text. What traditional firms missed was that over the course of the first half of the twentieth century, readership in America was expanding and the book as an exclusive or rare commodity was being transformed in the cultural imaginary. As the next chapter on F. Scott Fitzgerald will show, the paperback revolution may have been the pinnacle of this shift, but the popularity and success of the reprint market shows that this was a process a long time in the making.

More importantly, perhaps, the single-minded focus on the book as special commodity injured not only publishers, but their writers as well. With the market structured by a belief in promoting and supporting only the newest works, an author was only ever worth the last thing he or she wrote, and only as long as that was continuing to sell. To be a professional writer was to have an occupation, but that occupation did not guarantee the writer any lasting longevity as an author. However, as the book itself became synonymous with mass culture, especially through the vehicle of the paperback, it enabled a professional writer to become a great author. The inexpensive nature of the paperback allowed it to be adopted more readily into the educational sphere—both in secondary schools and in universities. By the time that Scribners inaugurated their own paperback line, it had been almost eight years since Hemingway had published a new book. His reputation and his income depended on that paperback market. Hemingway’s career, then, exposes the paradox of the literary market: by re-creating himself as a novelist, Hemingway was able to likewise recreate himself as a professional author, and through a

supposedly “feminized” mass culture, Hemingway became the iconic masculine author that was foundational in mid- and late-century definitions of American modernism as a disinterested aesthetic form.

Notes

1. Brucoli, *The Only Thing* 117.

2. Brucoli, *The Only Thing* 117.

3. For a more complete explanation of the history of the middlebrow as a discursive trope, see Radway and, especially, Rubin.

4. In particular, Janice Radway's study of the Book-of-the-Month- Club demonstrates the importance of the Club as a purveyor of cultural value, especially for a middlebrow audience. Radway argues that "Not only did they facilitate the day-to-day business of selecting books for distributions, but more important perhaps, they fostered the definition of an imagined community of general readers" (6). But the books selected as Club selections "had to present themselves to the editors as 'bookbooks.'" They had to call attention to their status as material objects unified organically by a singular purpose and organized seamlessly to accomplish a goal other than the one of generating a financial profit for those who had contributed to their production" (84). As Radway argues, "matters of literary judgment were tightly bound up not only with financial considerations but also with a commitment to an elaborated and finely articulated view of readers and reading" (52).

5. See especially Robert Trogdon's *The Lousy Racket*, which outlines the developments in Hemingway's contracts and business dealings with Scribners—especially from a financial point of view—in precise detail. This chapter builds upon Trogdon's impressive research and concise analysis to analyze Hemingway's relationship with Scribners in terms of the larger literary field. While Trogdon impressively lays out Hemingway's publishing history, his study focuses on a more traditional historical understanding of the business records and correspondence with Scribners. This chapter is indebted to Trogdon's work, and attempts to insert into that history a

reading of how Hemingway's career fits into the larger cultural history of American publishing and authorship.

6. William Bird started the Three Mountains Press as a hobby in the 1922 as he worked as a journalist in Paris. The press was known for its hand-set type and published works by Robert McAlmon and William Carlos Williams, in addition to Hemingway. For a time, Ezra Pound worked as an editor for the press. Bird eventually lost interest in printing and sold the press to Nancy Cunard, who transformed it into the Hours Press. See Ford's *Published in Paris* for a history of the Hours Press.

7. See especially Trogdon, *The Lousy Racket* for a more detailed account of Hemingway's publishing history with Liveright (16).

8. This mattered specifically for traditional, hardbound editions, and not dime novels or other extra-literary publishing, whose very form indicated their less-than-literary status for contemporary book buyers and sellers.

9. Trogdon, *A Literary Reference* 188.

10. Baker, *Selected Letters* 162.

11. Ibid. 161.

12. Ibid. 161.

13. Turnbull 167.

14. Brucoli, *The Only Thing* 33.

15. Ibid. 34.

16. His posthumous memoir, *A Moveable Feast*, corroborates this feeling, as he documents his unwillingness to write a novel for money and continued to work hard at his short stories, even though he was writing "nothing that anyone in America would buy."

17. Turnbull 198.
18. Sylvia Beach's publication of *Ulysses* is, perhaps, the most famous example of this trend.
19. For example *The Blindman* had only two issues published in 1917, *This Quarter* lasted only a year under Ernest Walsh's direction, *Blast* published only two issues over the course of a year, and *The Transatlantic Review* published six issues in the course of a year before closing. More successful Little Magazines lasted slightly longer: *Contact* lasted nearly three years, while *transition* lasted more than ten years.
20. He wrote to Walsh, "I've finished my novel—have to go over it all this winter and type it out" (Baker, *Selected Letters* 169).
21. Ibid. 173.
22. Ibid. 173.
23. The cable is reproduced in a 31 December 1925 letter from Hemingway to Fitzgerald (Brucoli, *Correspondence*).
24. Baker, *Selected Letters* 191.
25. Letter to Ernest Walsh. 12 Jan 1925. Baker, *Selected Letters* 145.
26. Trogdon, *The Lousy Racket* 29.
27. Ibid. 206.
28. Brucoli, *The Only Thing* 118.
29. In 2005, that sum was the equivalent of \$113, 424—still a rather small income from the sales of a book that sold through six printings. Figures from Trogdon, *The Lousy Racket* 49.
30. Brucoli, *The Only Thing* 154.
31. Ibid. 154.

32. Club books were exempt from standard pricing in the book market, “because of the importance of the Book-of-the-Month Club and the Literary Guild with their large subscription lists, as book outlets, it was thought that special consideration had to be given to the clubs’ problems and methods of distribution” (*Fair Trade* 188).

33. Brucoli, *The Only Thing* 163.

34. Ibid. 91.

35. Ibid. 208.

36. For more information about the public persona that Hemingway constructed and performed through his choice of clothing, see Marilyn Elkins, who traces Hemingway’s long-standing use of clothing as a prop for his performance as the ultimate man’s man.

37. Anyone who has encountered the vast amount of scholarship that attempts to pin Hemingway’s hypermasculinity on the fact that his mother left him in dresses and curls for a bit too long can get a sense of the what psychoanalysis did for the cultural understanding of authorship.

38. Todd Onderdonk further argues that “professionalization and gender were also at issue in the high modernist concept of impersonality advocated by Eliot, Pound, and Stein.”

39. As quoted in Trogdon, *The Lousy Racket* 33.

40. Trogdon, *The Lousy Racket* 44.

41. Perkins specifically selected a drawing rather than a photograph so that it could be more widely reproduced, especially in the newspapers.

42. Scholars have written about the implications of Jake’s mysterious wound for the text as a whole. David Blackmore uses the wound to explicate Jake’s homosocial relationship with Bill in the text. J.F. Buckley and Ira Elliot link Jake’s perception of the homosexual characters that

appear throughout the novel with his own masculine anxiety about sexual performance and sexual desire. George Cheatham explores the relationship between Jake's sexual "lack" with the economic surplus that permeates the text to discern the relationship between Jake's spending and his masculine identity. In one of the more extreme takes on Jake's wound and its relationship to his masculinity, Richard Fantina posits the possibility that Brett sodomizes Jake during their interview in his apartment, thus further emasculating the already injured man. Wolfgang E.H. Rudat has written a series of articles that explore the roles of gender in the text and the way that Jake's wound affects those roles. More recently, Dana Fore has linked Jake's wound to the larger issues in disability studies.

43. See also Hofstadter's complete study on Anti-intellectualism in American life.

44. *The Sun Also Rises*. MS. The Ernest Hemingway Collection. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston.

45. In the corrected typescript, Jake begins the text by stating, ""This is a novel about a lady..." (box 200). *The Sun Also Rises*. TS. The Ernest Hemingway Collection. Box 200. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston.

46. In her study of American literary realism, Amy Kaplan argues that literary realism developed in an uneasy debate with the sudden growth of a commercialized mass media at the end of the nineteenth century. Rather than reacting against romance, Kaplan argues, realism's true target is fictionality itself, the danger of which "lies not in its deviances from a normative reality but in the way in which modern life has become indistinguishable from fiction" (19). Literary realism is, in part, a reaction against the cult of personality perpetuated by journalism intent on marketing stories to a readership. Realism counteracted this journalistic "effect of fiction" and combated the "fictionality of everyday life" (20). Hemingway's novel, however, represents the

historical moment in which the goals of journalism and literature have once again conflated and, in the similarity, have the possibility of unmanning a reader who lacks the critical competency to tell the difference. In the text of the novel, the modern (and also the modernist) moment *demand*s something different in literary production as newspapers begin to mirror the objectives of literary realism.

47. Hemingway's portrayal of Loeb as Cohn was so recognizable that it spurred Loeb on to write his own version of the events that happened in Paris and Spain that summer. His autobiography, *The Way it Was*, does not expose Duff Twysden in the way that Hemingway's novel does through its fictional account of Brett Ashley, and it portrays Loeb himself as the somewhat-confused victim of Hemingway's irrational ire.

48. Michael Soto's "Hemingway among the Bohemians" specifically uses some of his *Toronto Star* dispatches about life in Paris to demonstrate the way that Hemingway, the journalist, set himself apart from the rest of the expatriate crowd.

49. Jake's wound and unstable masculine identity is only one of the examples of the link between physical masculinity and literary legitimacy in the text. As Ira Elliot argues, "When Bill acknowledges that Henry, in spite of his wound, was a 'good writer' (could still perform as an artist), he is also reassuring Jake that he can still perform as a good friend and proper man" (81).

50. Elliot goes furthest by dividing the character into Jake and Barnes, two halves to a whole that is never quite complete

51. Marc Seals links this to Hadley losing his suitcase and sees it as the trauma of lost writing that he revisits again.

52. Catherine further attempts to emasculate David by making fun of his choice to write in school notebooks, much like Hemingway himself did.

53. Justice argues that the fact that Catherine may talk to his publishers means that everyone who knows David professionally will also know his private story. For David, Justice argues, this is “the final insult, the final degradation” (87).

54. The manuscript to which *A Moveable Feast* refers is, of course, that of *The Sun Also Rises*.

55. Letter from Charles Scribner Sr. to Ernest Hemingway. 6 Aug. 1949. and Letter from Charles Scribner Jr. to Ernest Hemingway 29 Aug. 1952. The Ernest Hemingway Collection. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston.

56. Letter from Charles Scribner Jr. to Ernest Hemingway. 13 Mar. 1957 The Ernest Hemingway Collection. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston.

57. Brucoli, *The Only Thing* 154.

58. Trogon, *The Lousy Racket* 94-5.

“‘Culture follows money’: F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, and the Making of a Literary Reputation”

The wise writer writes for the youth of his own generation, the critics of the next, and the schoolmasters of ever afterward.

—F. Scott Fitzgerald¹

Seven months before his death in 1940, F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote to his long-time editor at Charles Scribner’s Sons, Maxwell Perkins, asking him whether the life of *The Great Gatsby* might be prolonged by having it published by a twenty-five cent press. At the time, he believed the novel to be out of print and his reputation as an author to be faltering; his desire was to give both *Gatsby* and himself another chance at life.² Although Fitzgerald continued to make his living by publishing short stories and articles and by working as a screenwriter in Hollywood throughout the 1930s, he believed that his public identity as an author was inextricably linked to the availability of his texts in the form of books. In the months before his death, Fitzgerald’s correspondence with Perkins shows that he was highly concerned about the state both of the books available to the public and of his public identity. Less than twenty years later, however, both *Gatsby* and Fitzgerald had found a new life as one of the model novels and one of the novelists of American modernism. By the 1960s, the novel had become a staple of the high school classroom and college classroom, and in 1974 alone, sales of the novel were expected to reach 800,000.³

The transformation of *Gatsby* into a staple of the American modernist canon and the corresponding transformation of Fitzgerald from almost-forgotten popular writer to “great” American author was inextricably linked to an overall shift in the way Americans approached cultural works.⁴ Fitzgerald’s belief in the importance of the availability and

circulation of his books was not incorrect, but what Fitzgerald could have never guessed is that the cultural meaning of the book itself in America would undergo a dramatic change in the mid-twentieth century. During the years of what is now known as the “Fitzgerald Revival,” the paperbound book became a vehicle for serious texts both at home and in the classroom. The history of the eventual reclamation and re-evaluation of Fitzgerald’s personal writing and fiction after Fitzgerald’s death provides one example of how an ever expanding consumer-culture informed the coalescence of a definition of American modernism—even as that definition hinged on the separation between mass and elite culture.

To trace changes in the way different reading publics approached and responded to Fitzgerald’s work, this chapter uses historical documentation about book sales along with an analysis of the critical commentaries and reviews about his work. Because so much of Fitzgerald’s posthumous reputation was founded on ideas often taken uncritically from his personal writing—his notebooks and letters, especially—this chapter also pays special attention to Fitzgerald’s ideas about authorship and publishing as found in those documents and in his fiction. These personal documents not only provided a model for later critics to define Fitzgerald and his work, they also provide an index for understanding how the reputation of an author circulates at different times. While the so-called Fitzgerald Revival emphasized the formal perfection, or “greatness,” of Fitzgerald’s novels and the uniqueness of their author’s “natural” genius to establish Fitzgerald’s position as an important author, this chapter will demonstrate that the revival was ultimately propelled by an increasing interest about Fitzgerald in the popular magazine presses and, perhaps more importantly, the increasing ability of a mass reading public to purchase books—

especially in inexpensive, paperbound editions—in the mid-twentieth century. Rather than simply functioning as a foil to modernism’s elite status, then, the expansion of a mass reading audience and the increasing legitimacy of the disposable, consumable books they favored were intrinsically related to the recovery of Fitzgerald’s texts and his overall reputation as an author.

Gatsby and the Book: The Book in Gatsby

In his 1991 introduction to *The Great Gatsby*, Matthew Bruccoli begins by claiming, “*The Great Gatsby* does not proclaim the nobility of the human spirit; it is not politically correct; it does not reveal how to solve the problems of life; it delivers no fashionable or comforting messages. It is just a masterpiece” (vii). He unequivocally calls the novel “a miracle” of an “innate genius augmented by control, technique and craft” (xv). Bruccoli’s pronouncement of the novel’s worth is startlingly direct, but while he is correct in seeing the novel as the key to Fitzgerald’s literary reputation, his introduction reproduces the general tendency in more contemporary Fitzgerald scholarship to forget that both the novel and Fitzgerald himself were not always universally admired. By erasing the historical process that recovered Fitzgerald as a writer of scholarly importance, the Fitzgerald revival and the critical studies that followed it (especially during the 1960s and 1970s) obscured the relationship between the changing structure of the literary market and the development of a modernist canon. These studies also overlook that the novel itself indexes some of these earliest changes. The novel is, as Bruccoli suggests, a social history, but part of the history it contains is the history of the book itself. Thus, Fitzgerald’s most famous and most respected novel, *The Great Gatsby*, provides a way to trace the

trajectory of his reputation as an author, but it also provides a starting place for understanding the role of the book in Fitzgerald's America.

More than simply using books to illustrate Gatsby's success or failure at performing the role of the American aristocrat, *The Great Gatsby* is a text deeply concerned with the production of texts and the utility of books. The text, itself, points specifically to its status as a book when Nick Carraway, the novel's much discussed narrator, tells his reader in the opening paragraphs that Gatsby was the man "who gives his name to this book" (6).⁵ By drawing attention to the novel's status as an object—the book that readers hold in their hands named *The Great Gatsby*—and by drawing attention to its narrator as a writer of sorts, the narrative points to its own status as a commodity, complete with title and identifiable author.⁶ By drawing attention to itself as a book, the narrative underscores the material form of its textuality within the text itself. Consequently, the appearances of different sorts of books within the text always point back to the book the reader holds in his or her hands, and the way that the narrative positions those different sorts of books provides, in a sense, a historical and cultural background within which the reader can place *Gatsby* itself.

In *Gatsby*, perhaps the most memorable appearance of books occurs the first time Nick attends one of Gatsby's parties, when he encounters an owl-eyed man in the library. After demanding to know what a rather confused Nick thinks of all the books, the man exclaims, "They're real. . . . Absolutely real—have pages and everything. I thought they'd be a nice durable cardboard. Matter of fact, they're absolutely real" (50). In his zeal, the man continues, "It's a bona fide piece of printed matter. It fooled me. This fella's a regular Belasco. It's a triumph. What thoroughness! What realism! Knew when to stop too—didn't

cut the pages" (50). The books in Gatsby's library, like the silken shirts he shows Daisy, are one of many commodities Gatsby has positioned and arranged to give the effect of legitimate social status. The owl-eyed man's excitement about the books demonstrates the transparency of Gatsby's performance; the man expected the books to be fake, because he inherently understands that Gatsby's mansion is the elaborate performance of a parvenu. At the same time that Gatsby's entire mansion and persona give away his true social origins, the books in the library highlight a way to read the book itself as an object and an aesthetic artifact in 1920s American culture. In the text, Gatsby's books, like Belasco's sets, are not simply hollow props designed to imitate the appearance of reality, but are instead real items that display Gatsby's economic wealth as well as his cultural acumen.⁷

Fitzgerald's use of these books to draw attention to the different material manifestations of the class status that Gatsby tries, and ultimately fails, to attain points to the book as cultural object and Fitzgerald's understanding of a book's importance to both its author and its reader.

The narrative draws the reader's attention to one of these real objects as a way to illustrate the library as a whole. The book that Owl Eyes picks up to show Nick has a title and is an actual book outside the text, the first volume of *Stoddard's Lectures*. The narrative's emphasis on this object's reality beyond the fictional world of Gatsby's New York emphasizes the verisimilitude of Gatsby's collection of books for the reader, but as Patrick W. Shaw has argued, this particular volume would also have emphasized the obviousness of Gatsby's artifice for the astute, contemporary reader. Shaw suggests that the content of the *Stoddard Lectures* remains unimportant because the pages are uncut, but argues that Fitzgerald's contemporary readers would have recognized the book as one of a

popular and well known series of volumes. Shaw contends that, “Far from being ‘absolutely real’ as Owl Eyes exclaims, the volume is in fact a meretricious mass-produced book” (126). First published in the late nineteenth century, by 1924 the volumes had gone through multiple printings meant for wide sale and distribution, with many editions bound in faux leather bindings and composed of other inexpensive materials to make them look like expensive volumes. According to Shaw, for the 1924 edition, “the front cover is dominated by a large gold shield, its lower two thirds filled with Stoddard’s “S” monogram—an ostentatious display of a fabricated coat of arms suggestive of Gatsby’s own flaunting of medals” (Shaw 126). Although the reader cannot discern the exact printing of the lectures in Gatsby’s, Fitzgerald’s use of this particular object as an example of the sort of books Gatsby owns allows the perceptive and cultured reader to recognize yet another crack in Gatsby’s carefully constructed façade. Shaw suggests that only the naïve and intrinsically uncultured contemporary reader—as both Owl Eyes and Gatsby are—would mistake the series of books for something that would appear in the library of a wealthy collector.

Fitzgerald’s use of the lecture illustrates that for his contemporary audience, books as objects have different meanings for different types of readers. Owl Eyes (and possibly Gatsby himself) understands that a library like Gatsby’s, “a high Gothic library, paneled with carved English oak, and probably transported complete from some ruin overseas,” would function as a sanctuary for sacred items rather than for the pleasurable reading of consumable objects. In part, this understanding comes from the state of the book itself as a luxury item in the early twentieth century. Owl Eyes’ surprise and delight that the pages of the books are not yet cut, and his belief that this lends even more realism to Gatsby’s

collection, underscores his understanding that those who would own such a library would not do so simply because they were avid readers; the library and the books it contains demonstrates the book's worth as a commodity appropriate to accumulation and display. Fitzgerald's decision to highlight a particular book, however, shows that neither Owl Eyes nor Gatsby can read the difference between a book that a true, knowledgeable collector might desire and one that the masses of consumers would believe was collectable.

While part of Gatsby's mistake comes from his ignorance about upper-class lifestyles and accoutrements, another cause for Gatsby's mistakes in the selection of his library stems from the very existence of mass market books designed to approximate rare and expensive objects. By the early twentieth century, the rise of a managerial class had made book buying a possibility for more than just the upper classes and, consequently, had begun to change the way that the book circulated in America. The growth of mail-order libraries and book collections was one indication of this new book buying population. Dr. Charles Eliot's fifty-one volume Harvard Classics (otherwise known as the "Five-Foot Shelf of Books") was first published by Collier and Sons in 1909; Boni and Liveright's Modern Library series was founded in 1917; and The Book of the Month Club began in 1923. These series met a growing demand for inexpensive books that would provide readers with information necessary to claim essential cultural knowledge, while also allowing them to display their cultural acumen in a visible form in their homes. By offering less expensively made books uniform in binding and approximating the appearance of the rarer versions of the commodity, these publishers catered to a new public that wanted to create a library (or at least the appearance of one) in their homes but did not understand or care about the art of collecting fine editions.

Shaw's argument elides this changing role of the book as a commodity and repository of cultural value; the distinction he makes between a "real" book and a "meretriciously mass-produced" book only uncovers one aspect of the book in Fitzgerald's text. While the contemporary reader of *Gatsby* may have taken this small detail as an obvious indication of the ineptness of Gatsby's performance, Shaw uncritically accepts the distinction between a "real" book and a mass-produced book as natural and understood. Rather, the difference in cultural value between the two types of books was produced by a process of evolving changes in the production and consumption of books. Gatsby is only able to own a copy of the lectures because a growing class of consumers created a demand for mass-produced objects that approximated the physical appearance of actual rare or expensive volumes, while Owl Eyes is able to appreciate Gatsby's display because, even among the mass market of consumers, the book as an object still retains the ability to imply the cultural status of its owner. For later readers, however, the appearance of the Stoddard volume in the narrative only has this particular significance once glossed by an expert. For today's readers, both the series, now long out of print, and the book itself as an object no longer have the same cultural significance as they might have had in the 1920s.⁷ What Shaw's argument uncovers, if only partially, is that books have a different social status as commodities than the silken shirts Gatsby throws onto his bed before Daisy. The physical form of the book represents only one part of its possible value—both economically and culturally. To purchase a library of books that are "real," and not simply cardboard props, does entail a certain amount of wealth, but because a part of a book's value lies in its text (its linguistic codes), to select books that display cultural refinement and education requires a great deal more than money.⁸

However, the reason for Fitzgerald's specific use of the Stoddard Lectures remains ambiguous in the narrative. While it is possible, as Shaw suggests, that Fitzgerald used this particular text to highlight Gatsby's inability to perform the role he aspires to, that intention is by no means clear. Instead, the appearance of the library, its books, and the Stoddard volume, in particular, highlights Nick as a reader as much as they uncover Gatsby as a social climber.⁹ As the text's narrator, Nick fails to either recognize or remark on the incongruities of the appearance of this particular volume in a supposedly perfectly executed library.¹⁰ The lack of a response from Nick helps reinforce the Owl Eyed man's original reading of Gatsby's performance, but at the same time, Nick's silence confirms his own class status as one who also might not fully understand how to read the book's aesthetic and cultural value. Moreover, Nick is a different type of book buyer than the consumer Gatsby attempts to approximate. While Gatsby has purchased and displayed his books in the "Merton College Library" to affect the appearance of cultural distinction, the books that line Nick's own shelves primarily serve a function of utility. Nick describes his own book shelf as lined with books on banking and investment. He tells his reader that these books "stood on my shelf in red and gold like new money from the mint, promising to unfold the shining secrets that only Midas and Morgan and Maecenas knew" (8). Nick's shelf of books represents a very different collection of objects from Gatsby's, because Nick did not purchase his books to approximate social status but to acquire a different sort of status through success in business. By comparing the books to "new money," the narrative underscores Nick's own social status (his family has only been "well-to-do" for three generations) and alludes to a developing class of entrepreneurs that would increasingly re-define social status in the twentieth century.

Moreover, the conflation between the gilded spines of the books and the potential money they represent for Nick in this passage reveals both a new type of consumer and a new way of valuing books. The money that Nick's books represent is a different sort of wealth than from what Gatsby attempts to approximate. In part, the difference between these two book buyers and these two book shelves indicates a different and changing perspective on the way one attains and represents one's class and status. Nick, who feels perfectly comfortable with his family's relatively recently acquired social standing, does not even begin to feel the need for the social pedigree that Gatsby attempts to enact through his consumption and display of material objects. This Midwestern bonds-trader represents a new type of consumer who purchases commodities not for the trappings of wealth (e.g., the gilded edges of the books) they allow one to display, but the information that they contain.¹¹

The disparity between these two ways of reading a book's value ultimately informs how the reader encounters and understands Nick as the text's narrator. Because the text of *Gatsby* is presented from the beginning as Nick's attempt to compose his experience in the East as a book, the text underscores both Nick's role as a writer and as the producer of a commodity. As Zachary Lesser points out, "texts are not in themselves commodities, and neither are many documents. . . . But almost all printed books are" (16). Nick's reference to the text the reader holds as a book indicates that he does not write the story simply to relate it in some abstract way, but to have it published. It is, after all, a *book* that bears its subject's name that the reader encounters, not a notebook or journal or series of letters. The text that the reader encounters is both *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald and the book written about and named after Gatsby by Nick Carraway. By pointing to the its

double status as a commodity, the text invites the reader to consider what type of book that Nick has produced and what sort of author Nick should be regarded as.¹² Nick's regard for his own bookshelf lined with the gleaming copies of business and banking information, combined with his lack of a clear response to Gatsby's library, aligns him with an audience that understands books more as consumable objects of utility than as aesthetic objects meant for collection and preservation. Nick's careful attention to present himself as a "well-rounded" and "rather literary in college," however, exposes his understanding of different types of authorship (8-9). His attempt to evince his literariness demonstrates his interest in appearing as a certain sort of author as well as his understanding of the importance of both the text itself and the reputation of its author to a book's value. Understanding *The Great Gatsby* as a text about the production of writing and the production of a book provides an opening for understanding how the differences between these two types of production influenced Fitzgerald and structured the cultural field within which he worked.

Fitzgerald and the Production of Books

Fitzgerald's interest in the value of books as cultural objects was not limited to *The Great Gatsby*. It was an important part of how he negotiated the literary market during his lifetime. Because so much of his private papers has been posthumously published, students, researchers, and general fans have had access to Fitzgerald's personal thoughts and insights about literature, publishing, and authorship in ways that differ from almost every other modern American author.¹³ As his correspondence and personal writings show, Fitzgerald was mindful of the way that the books he produced might affect the buyers and readers who consumed his texts. Throughout of his career as a professional

writer, Fitzgerald was keenly aware of and concerned about the impact of the physical appearance of his books on their possible audiences at a time when the publishing industry had just recently come to understand the promotional possibilities inherent in the physical object of the book as commodity.¹⁴ Fitzgerald believed that as material objects, his novels and collections needed a certain appearance to promote their sale and his own reputation. For example, by the 1920s, publishers were beginning to standardize the regular use of the dust jackets of clothbound books as advertising space, and Fitzgerald was highly interested in the impact that this promotional work might have on how his texts were received. After seeing the jacket for *The Beautiful and Damned*, Fitzgerald wrote to Perkins, "When a book has but one picture to give the impression the illustrator ought to be careful."¹⁵ Also unhappy about the cover for *Taps at Reveille* (1935), Fitzgerald wrote to Perkins, "I do think a jacket like this has the absolute opposite effect of those fine attractive jackets that Hill and Held used to draw for my books. I always believed that eternal care about titles and presentation was a real element in their success."¹⁶(see Illustrations 5 and 6) This letter to Perkins refers to the dust jacket designed by Doris Spiegel, a jacket that portrayed a variety of simple pen and ink sketches against a ragged, bright orange background. The jacket is reminiscent of the Hill and Held's flapper-era cartoon figures that graced the cover of *Tales of the Jazz Age*, but unlike the Hill and Held's illustrations, which were cleanly drawn and unified by their similarity to one another, the figures on *Taps* seem to be a mishmash of different archetypes: school children, a queen, and a gangster-like figure all share the space.¹⁷ The similarities between the two covers may indicate his publisher's interest in capturing the same audience Fitzgerald held for his earlier books, but Fitzgerald's dislike of the later jacket underscores his understanding of the distinctions

between the two products. While the Hill and Held drawings evoke a particular jazz age milieu, Speigel's figures evoke only a sense of miscellany. His interest in the design and appearance of his books reveals less Fitzgerald's expertise at judging an audience than it highlights Fitzgerald's awareness of the possible effect the book as an aesthetic object could have on a changing book-buying public.

Fitzgerald felt himself keenly aware of this public, and his correspondence with Charles Scribner, Sr. and Maxwell Perkins often displays his interest in exploiting the changes in that larger market whenever possible. In 1922, for instance, he encouraged Scribner to begin a series like Boni and Liveright's Modern Library series. Fitzgerald believed that the Modern Library's success was determined by something he recognized as the "recent American strain for 'culture' which expresses itself in such things as uniformity of bindings to make a library."¹⁸ Fitzgerald's attempt to convince Scribner to begin his own reprint line using out-of- print titles already owned by the company illustrates part of Fitzgerald's understanding of an expanding and changing book market. Moreover, his encouragement that his conservative publisher enter into a portion of the book market that may have been considered illegitimate and tasteless by certain consumers and publishers in the nineteenth century indicates that he understood that broadening his publisher's consumer base would not mean a risk to his reputation as a Scribner's author. Less than thirty years earlier, this would certainly not have been the case, as it was only with the adoption of international copyright protections in the late nineteenth century that the reprint industry evolved into a respectfully regarded form of publishing. Fitzgerald's interest in the Modern Library is one indication of a larger cultural shift. While the nineteenth-century reprint market undermined the autonomy of an author's work through

pirated editions, as early as the 1930s Fitzgerald understood that twentieth-century reprints could help boost the profits and visibility of authors and publishers alike.

His 1922 letter to Perkins, in particular, alludes to a relatively new sector of the book market—a middle-class yearning to purchase their piece of “culture.” Unlike the distinction conveyed by the physical presence of the uncut books in *Gatsby*’s library, Fitzgerald’s understanding of “culture” here is akin to Nick’s notion of a “well-rounded” man. Fitzgerald understood that Scribner’s could capitalize on this public in the same way that the Modern Library had already done rather successfully. Founded in 1917 by Albert Boni and Horace Liveright, the Modern Library had been a huge success for the company, because it provided a new book-buying segment of the population the ability to purchase this very sort of culture at prices they could afford. The series provided inexpensive—as opposed to cheap—reprint editions of modern European and American texts with the goal of representing one title from each important modern writer (Satterfield 128). The subscribers to the Modern Library understood that the series’ editorial apparatus would assure readers that a knowledgeable hand would select only the most literarily important works for their consumption. Fitzgerald understood that the Modern Library series was successful because it exploited a specific consumer—one who was not aware of the distinct material and symbolic differences between a first edition and a reprint, yet who understood the importance of purchasing both books and texts to display their cultural distinction.¹⁹

Fitzgerald’s perceptions about this growing segment of the book market were linked to issues of respectability and value that directed his entire career as an author, but his conviction that Scribner’s could capitalize on this relatively new market was also based

soundly on his belief in what he considered to be Scribner's superior list of authors. Just as central to the importance Fitzgerald placed on the physical object of the books he published was the importance he placed on the publisher's imprint as a marker of value.²⁰ As a child, Fitzgerald was a loyal subscriber to Scribner's children's magazine, *St. Nicholas*, and his correspondence shows that from his career's earliest stages, he was intent on publishing only with Scribner's, because he believed that their reputation for quality would boost his own. The house, founded in 1846, was known in the early twentieth century as a reputable house and for its interest in new authors.²¹ Perkins' victory in getting *This Side of Paradise* published despite the reservations of Charles Scribner, Sr., inaugurated a new era for the publisher but it also "brought Fitzgerald's first novel into the public eye under an imprint that gave it immediate prestige" (Watson 21). The prestige that Fitzgerald garnered from being a Scribner's author indicates that in the 1920s American book market bibliographical codes, like the printer's imprint, had directed the way audiences approached and consumed a text.

Fitzgerald's long-standing loyalty to Scribner's was directly tied to his belief in the company's reputation, but it was also informed by his belief in the value of remaining with a single publisher for the sake of uniformity. In June of 1925, he alleviated Perkins' fear about a rumor that he was changing publishers by giving a long list of reasons why he would not leave Scribner's, but most especially he reminded Perkins about his "feeling about uniform books in the matter of house and binding."²² Fitzgerald never looked elsewhere for a publisher was partly because he wanted to develop a body of work that could line up uniformly on a shelf, with matching bindings from a single publisher.²³ In this way, he was every bit a part of the new book buying consumers who yearned to purchase a

manifestation of their own education and cultural knowledge with their book purchases. He understood that lasting literary reputations were things that needed to evolve over time, and he believed that having his titles all under a single publishing imprint would help simplify creating a later, omnibus edition of his collected works that would confirm his reputation at last.

Fitzgerald Working: Short Stories and the Book

Despite Fitzgerald's belief in the importance of the physical qualities of his books, he understood that his reputation as an author was not determined by his book publications alone. After the sensation of his first novel, *This Side of Paradise*, subsided, Fitzgerald's reputation as an author in the 1920s and 1930s was a function of his entire fictional production, including his short story publications in mass-circulation magazines like *The Saturday Evening Post*.²⁴ Fitzgerald's short stories provided the funding for writing his longer works, and it was his ability to sell and then re-sell these stories in the form of magazine publications, books, and screenplays enabled Fitzgerald to become one of the first writers to make his living solely from his writing.²⁵ As James West argues, Fitzgerald and his agent, Harold Ober, were extraordinarily adept at wringing as many profits as possible from a single text through their use of short story collections and their use of a new medium—Hollywood. Both the author and his agent understood that each text contained the financial possibility for more profits than its initial sale. Although Fitzgerald made as much as four thousand dollars a story at his peak, to prosper financially he needed the "continuing money from republication of his earlier writings in other forms, or from adaptation of his novels and stories into other commercial vehicles" (West 51). The interaction between these different types of commercial vehicles—from the novels he

published with Scribner's to the screenplays that his short stories often became— established Fitzgerald as a well-known writer in the 1920s and early 1930s. The trajectory of his publishing history and the way he positioned his short story publications and re-publications in relation to his novels illustrates that it was the combination of the two types of texts that ultimately generated his reputation as an author.

From the earliest point in his publishing career, Fitzgerald was well aware of the effect that short story publication could have on his reputation. For example, while *This Side of Paradise* (1920) gained him an approving audience of professional critics and a mass readership, the collection of short stories that followed the publication of that novel tempered the critical audience's admiration. In general, the reviews for his first novel were overwhelmingly favorable and seemed to recognize Fitzgerald as a promise for the future and the American novel. The original excitement over Fitzgerald's first novel established him in popular esteem as a natural writer and became the yardstick his future publications would be measured against. However, the short story collection that followed a few months after his first novel was not so warmly regarded by critics. Although the stories published in *Flappers and Philosophers* (1920) had for the most part been written and published before the appearance of *This Side of Paradise*, the reviewer for *Publisher's Weekly* lamented that readers of *This Side of Paradise* were lulled into believing Fitzgerald was a novelist, but they now find "the novelist has become a short story writer."²⁶ The disappointment in this review underlines the rising importance of the novel in American culture; for these critics, his short stories were a less serious and less legitimate sort of text than his novel.

Specifically, the disapproval for his short stories was not because the stories were poorly written but because they had been sold to popular, mass-consumed magazines. A reviewer from the *Minneapolis Journal* put the dismay most reviewers seemed to have felt most starkly when he wrote, “there comes a time in the life of every developing man of unusual powers when he must choose between *the higher and lower values*. It is the old story of Satan and the high mountain. . . . With magazine editors bidding for his work, Mr. Fitzgerald is already standing on the mountain.”²⁷ The portrayal of a messianic Fitzgerald and the demonic magazine market that would cost him his place at some un-named literary father’s right hand may seem like a comic hyperbole, but this review is a surprisingly accurate representation of the overall dismay critics expressed at what they saw as Fitzgerald selling his soul as an artist for the profits to be made publishing in the weekly glossies. For these professional critics, his decision to continue writing and selling the vast majority of his work to the popular magazines was categorized as a betrayal of literary and artistic principles. Fitzgerald, on the other hand, probably did not expect his short story collections to find their audience with his more serious, novel-reading public, but with the same sort of audience who read and purchased magazines. About *Tales of the Jazz Age*, his second collection published in 1922, Fitzgerald wrote to Perkins, *Tales* will be bought by my own personal public, that is by the countless flappers and college kids who think I am a sort of oracle.”²⁸

It mattered little that the stories were well done, with “well-carpentered themes” his critics judged Fitzgerald based on his reputation as an innovative and serious novelist, and for one reviewer in particular, the stories exposed the writer as an “artisan” rather than an “artist.”²⁹ The distinction between artisan and artist helps illuminate the deceptiveness of

the apparent divide between types of literary production. Excluding Fitzgerald from the category of artist and labeling him an “artisan,” the reviewer evokes an image of labor and the market, but this distinction functions only because of a tacit belief in the inferiority of ordinary types of labor. The reviews display an internalized disdain for the motives of labor and profit, and for his critics Fitzgerald’s profitable short stories undermined the notion that he was the revolutionary author that *This Side of Paradise* implied he might have been.

Labeling Fitzgerald an artisan, however, was not the same as labeling him a hack writer or a “fiction mechanic.”³⁰ Instead, the label of artisan plays on an understanding of a certain value in his writing; the Arts and Crafts Movement was, after all, immensely popular and well-regarded in the years preceding Fitzgerald’s novels. The architecture and decorative arts produced during that movement (and by most artisans), however, were functional products designed to sell rather than purely aesthetic objects wrought specifically for the pleasure and from the genius of the artist. Like the architecture and home décor produced by artisans, Fitzgerald wrote magazine stories for sale and for the function of entertaining readers. The reviews consistently draw attention to the assumed, and perhaps false, difference between two types of aesthetic production.

The critiques of his short stories, of course, rely on a long-established romantic ideal of the artist, and they demonstrate the extent of the critical reaction against the proliferation of weekly magazines and other emergences of mass culture in 1920s America. The disdain of the critics in their reviews of the collection of Fitzgerald’s magazine work was related to a more pervasive disdain for the audience that caused the massive growth of magazine circulations in the early twentieth century: those sorts of “people who like clever light fiction done crisp.”³¹ These readers were not necessarily book buyers, but instead

consumed the fiction contained in the pages of countless weekly and monthly as both diversions meant for entertainment and escape and as a means to increase their understanding and appreciation of culture. Although these magazines had varying audiences and addressed different aesthetic concerns, the reviews for *Tales of the Jazz Age* demonstrate that the subtle cultural stratifications could be uncomplicatedly obliterated in a single stroke.

Fitzgerald's personal writing illustrates that he was very much of his time in regard to how he understood his short story production. Although Fitzgerald understood his occupation as a short story writer as an outgrowth of his career as a novelist, he believed that the two publishing spheres were distinct, and throughout his career he strived to keep the business of each separate, even as their publishing histories intertwined. As though he did not want to sully his relationship with the House of Scribner with the sordid affairs of the business, Fitzgerald employed his long-time agent, Harold Ober, solely for the sale of his short stories and the serialized versions of his novels to magazines. But he always undertook his business and correspondence with the Scribner company and with his editor Maxwell Perkins—the business of his *books*—personally. Despite his attempt to separate the two spheres of publishing, Fitzgerald's success, both financially and in terms of his reputation as a serious author, depended on the interaction of the two markets and two readerships. The success of his first novel created a market for stories that were previously rejected by the same editors, and the continuing success of his longer fiction continued to raise the prices those stories received. In 1922, Fitzgerald wrote to Ober about *The Beautiful and Damned* and told his agent that he hoped the novel would boost his magazine price to two thousand dollars a story. "It's a neat sum," he wrote Ober. "And while I don't

feel my stuff is worth anything like that it's as good as a lot that gets much more."³²

Fitzgerald understood that the publicity of a well-received and high-selling novel could increase what magazine editors were willing to pay for his work, even if the magazine-buying public was a different segment of the population than the book buying public.

***Tender Is the Night* and the Effect of the Magazines**

Fitzgerald's correspondence shows again and again that he believed his novels were his more serious and more important work, but the publication history and reception of his novels indicates that the market for his magazine fiction had a larger impact on his novels' reception and his own reputation than either Fitzgerald or his agent could have recognized. The critical response to *Tender Is the Night* represents one of the better examples of how magazine and book publishing affected the reputation of a novel and of Fitzgerald himself. The composition of *Tender* was fraught with the complications of Zelda Fitzgerald's mental breakdown and the mounting bills her treatment required. His correspondence with Ober during this period portrays Fitzgerald as writer whose desperation to support himself causes him to produce texts that he felt were inferior, and whose self-consciousness as an artist undercut his ability to profit fully from those texts. Although the "very literary crowd" might have viewed the many short stories he produced during this period as a debasement of his literary talents, Fitzgerald understood that the large readership of magazines like *The Saturday Evening Post* gave him a wider book-buying public. Moreover, he had a certain respect for the large sums the editors of mainstream magazines were willing to pay for his work. Fitzgerald was at times, however, unwilling to have stories that he felt unworthy of his reputation published in the *Post* or other high circulation venues during this time. His unwillingness to expose this audience to what he considered his most

hackneyed work indicates the importance he must have sensed the mass magazine reading public had for his career. When he sent "Your Way and Mine," to Ober in March of 1926, he gave him specific instructions to not offer the story to the *Post*. "It hasn't one redeeming touch of my usual spirit in it," he wrote. "I'd rather have \$1000, for it from some obscure place than twice that + have it seen. I feel very strongly about this!"³³ His determination to keep certain texts out of the *Post* illustrates Fitzgerald's understanding of the power the *Post's* audience held, in part because of its size and popularity. It was, in part, its general readership that made Fitzgerald apprehensive about publishing a poorly conceived story in its pages.³⁴

As *Tender is the Night* approached publication, the issue of the effect the magazine public could have on his career once again became important as Fitzgerald and Ober decided about the prospects for serialization. Fitzgerald worried about serializing the book, but he worried more about *Tender* meeting the same fate as *Gatsby*. Fitzgerald had decided not to serialize *Gatsby* before its publication as a book, and in part blamed its poor sales on his decision against serialization. When he began thinking about serializing *Tender is the Night*, his agent assured Fitzgerald, "I don't believe that serial publication even in *Liberty* will do you any harm. I'm sure that readers of serials in magazines don't buy books and that book buyers don't read serials in magazines. And there are few authors even of the highest standing that haven't had work published by *Liberty* or *Cosmopolitan*."³⁵ In need of the money serialization would bring and in need of the publicity a magazine publication would garner, Fitzgerald decided to serialize the novel. However, rather than serializing the novel in *Liberty*, which had asked for first refusal rights, Fitzgerald decided that serializing the text in *Scribner's Magazine* would be better for the novel. His decision

to choose *Scribner's* over *Liberty* was doubly costly. *Scribner's* magazine offered only \$10,000, while first refusal rights for *Liberty* would have easily been over \$30,000, but Fitzgerald believed that the appearance of the novel in the *Scribner's Magazine* would prove more valuable in terms of his reputation and his novel's reception than the magazine with the larger circulation.

Fitzgerald was, in a sense, correct about the impact of a *Scribner's* serial, but in the case of *Tender Is the Night*, the effect was the opposite of what Fitzgerald expected. Selecting *Scribner's* as the vehicle for his serialized novel, Fitzgerald was hoping that the reputation of the magazine would lend instant regard to *Tender* the way the publisher had influenced the reception of *This Side of Paradise*.³⁶ After a nine year span when the only texts Fitzgerald published were magazine stories for the mass circulation weeklies, he believed that *Scribner's Magazine* would allow him to reenter the market for serious novels by addressing a specific type of readership. However, the readership of *Scribner's Magazine* actually damaged the reception of the novel. The structure of *Tender* with its long flashback during "Book II," did not translate well into serialized form, and many of those critics who reviewed the novel once it was published as a book seemed to have only read the serialized version. While some reviewers recognized an important quality in *Tender*, most reviewers were mixed in their appreciation for the book. "Any second-rate English society novelist could have written this story better than Scott Fitzgerald," wrote Henry Seidel Canby for *The Saturday Review of Literature*. But he continued on, recognizing that "not one of them could have touched its best chapters."³⁷ Moreover, while the novel's serialization in *Scribner's* succeeded in finding a critical audience, the magazine's lower circulation and more exclusive readership prevented the novel from reaching a larger

readership that might have contributed to book sales. The commercial failure of *Tender is the Night*, in many ways, was a failure less of the text itself than it was the effect of a series of venues and audiences colliding in inopportune ways.

When Fitzgerald was attempting to churn out short stories and complete *Tender is the Night*, he was also increasingly concerned with the effect that his delayed novel was having on the fate of *The Great Gatsby*. His interest in *Gatsby*'s reputation demonstrates Fitzgerald's acute awareness of the importance of reissuing his work to keep it in circulation. As early as 1932, the novel's lack of availability worried the author. He wrote to Perkins that although *Gatsby* was often regarded as a "memorable" book, "the man who asks for it in a store on the basis of such mention does not ask twice. Booksellers do not keep such an item in stock and there is a whole new generation who cannot obtain it."³⁸ His concern about *Gatsby*'s availability in 1932 led Fitzgerald to convince Perkins to allow the Modern Library to bring out an edition in 1934, but the edition failed to sell even its modest five-thousand copy run. Towards the end of his life, *Gatsby*'s continued lack of availability in print continued to worry Fitzgerald. When his first novel, *This Side of Paradise*, went out of print in the late 1930s, Fitzgerald wrote to Perkins, "What I don't like is the out-of-print element. . . . I would rather have "This Side of Paradise" in print if only in that cheap American Mercury book edition than not in print at all."³⁹ Fitzgerald believed that the longevity of his reputation as an author depended upon the visibility of his work. That Fitzgerald was willing to allow his most popular and most universally well regarded book to be printed by Mencken's reprint series indicates the growing respectability of inexpensive reprint publishing, but it also shows Fitzgerald's astute understanding that only authors who could be readily purchased and read could have a lasting reputation.

Fitzgerald believed that his very identity as an author depended upon the availability of his books to consumers. Fitzgerald wrote to Perkins in May of 1940, "I wish I was in print. It will be odd a year or so from now when Scottie assures her friends I was an author and finds that no book is procurable."⁴⁰

Fitzgerald's concern about his books' availability indexes an important aspect of the book market in America. Before the paperback reprints became a respectable form of publication, an author's ability to make a living from his writing depended, in part, on his ability to continue selling his texts as books. But as Fitzgerald's career in magazine publishing demonstrates, an author's reputation was not as intrinsically linked to book sales alone. It was also predicated on the readership he had developed and sustained that did not regularly purchase books, including the readership from magazines. A letter from Perkins illustrates one other possible reason for the continuing interest in Fitzgerald's work and person—a non book-buying public who was still reading his work. In his attempt to get Scribner's to agree to allow the Modern Library to bring out a collected edition of his work (which Scribner's was reluctant to do), Fitzgerald cited the demand for his books in the public libraries as evidence of readers' continued interest in his novels. Perkins responded by telling him, "What you say about the public library demand is true also in New Canaan. It is a curious thing that books do not keep on when they are so much in demand that way. I do not understand it altogether. I have noticed it through the years because my girls brought home copies of your books read to pieces."⁴¹ Fitzgerald's continuing popularity, as evidenced by the worn library books, was an effect of a continued readership, but not necessarily a readership that felt compelled to purchase his books, even in the less expensive Modern Library form. This type of readership was evident

throughout his career as a short story writer for magazines, but neither Fitzgerald nor his publisher understood its implications for the future of the book market and the possibilities of book production, because neither Fitzgerald nor Perkins could have foreseen the changes in book culture that would occur in the next thirty years.

Fitzgerald's Second Life: A Brief Overview of the Revival

Countless authors in the first half of the twentieth century dealt with the problems and pitfalls of publishing their work in magazines, but Fitzgerald's case is unique because his understanding of the publishing world and literary marketplace has had a remarkable influence on his later reputation. Fitzgerald's awareness of the distinctions between so-called serious fiction and light fiction, between the audience for his novels and that of his short stories, and between his status as a *Post* writer and his status as a novelist ultimately influenced (although it did not necessarily determine) the way that later scholars came to understand his reputation as an author. Fitzgerald's reputation in the 1920s and 1930s depended on how his various audiences read and understood the relation between his magazine fiction and his novels, but his literary reputation after his death relied in large part on the beliefs expounded in his personal writing and in his correspondence about the interaction of the magazine and novel reading publics. The movement in American criticism and letters after his death, now known as the Fitzgerald Revival, fed off of the author's own ideas and interpretations of cultural value, and in doing so replicated Fitzgerald's own misunderstandings while it promulgated notions of literary and cultural value that continued to conceal the power of the popular's influence on elite culture.

While it is difficult to pinpoint exactly when interest in Fitzgerald's work coalesced, it is possible to trace the trends that led up to his eventual recognition and canonization as

a major American novelist.⁴² Both during and after his life, Fitzgerald's career was marked by public visibility as a cultural icon. While he was a young writer, the press followed him and his wife Zelda closely, and reported on their exploits and their self-indulgent lifestyle. By the time of his death in 1940, however, the critical failure of *Tender is the Night* and the increasing number of publications by and about Fitzgerald in popular magazines—including the combination of a damaging 1936 *New York Post* interview with Michael Mok and his 1936 "Crack-Up" series in *Esquire*—had established the cultural myth of his tragic fall from creating works of literary genius to struggling to produce hackwork to pay the bills.⁴³ The legend of his brilliance and this myth of his failure, often taken directly from Fitzgerald's own writing, informed the public reception of his work throughout the 1940s and 1950s.

One indication of the pervasiveness of the mythic status of Fitzgerald's fall from literary grace can be found in his obituaries. When Fitzgerald died in December of 1940, the obituaries that newspapers across the country ran were the first substantial evaluations of Fitzgerald's persona or work that had been printed in some years. Although most of the obituaries were short blurbs buried in the middle pages of the papers (and many included incorrect information about the last years of his life), they served as precursors to a revival of interest in the author and his work. More importantly, they helped to create many of the narratives and themes that established the version of Fitzgerald that revival critics both used to their advantage and attempted to disprove. Specifically, the obituaries focused on Fitzgerald's status as historian of the Jazz Age, the resemblance between his life and his work, and the idea of Fitzgerald's own self-declared "moral bankruptcy" (Anderson 21). The *New York World Telegram* ran an editorial that

demonstrates the underlying negative sentiment of many of the obituaries: “The death of Scott Fitzgerald recalls memories of a queer brand of undisciplined and self-indulgent brats who were determined not to pull their weight in the boat. . . . A kick in the pants and a clout over the scalp were more like their needing.”⁴⁴ In general, the obituaries that appeared in the days after his death remembered the author as one whose time had passed. *The Chicago Daily News* claimed, “When he died at 44, F. Scott Fitzgerald, hailed in 1922 as the protagonist and exponent of the Flapper Age, was almost as remote from contemporary interest as the authors of the blue-chip stock certificates of 1929.”⁴⁵ While some articles credited Fitzgerald’s artistry, most that did not attack Fitzgerald or his work still made it clear that both were from a different time, irrelevant to contemporary life or literature. Unsympathetic to what they viewed as Fitzgerald’s ultimate failure as an artist, many obituaries portrayed the author as one whose failure could be directly attributed to his profligate expenditure of time and energy writing popular stories for commercial magazines. These obituaries, like much of the revival criticism that followed, used Fitzgerald’s own theory of moral bankruptcy to explain Fitzgerald as an author who had used up his natural talent as though it were some finite resource able to be squandered or stored. Alluding to Fitzgerald’s inability to surmount the popularity of *This Side of Paradise* or to replicate the promise of *Gatsby*, the editorial in the *Hartford Daily Courant* claimed that “The spent rocket could not renew itself.”⁴⁶ In short, the obituaries convey a sense that Fitzgerald’s moment was spent and that his importance to American letters was negligible.

In reaction to the editorials, a group of authors and close friends responded with a series of tributes and re-printings of Fitzgerald’s work. While it is possible to see the 1941 edition of Fitzgerald’s unfinished novel, *The Last Tycoon*, as a beginning of the so-called

revival, much of the critical writing that solidified Fitzgerald's reputation did not occur until the later 1950s. Prior to the late 1950s, the author's reputation was uncertain at best in the regard of critics or educators, and any work that was done to generate interest in Fitzgerald's texts was accomplished by a group of close friends and fellow writers.⁴⁷ Authors like John Dos Passos and Dorothy Parker and critics like Edmund Wilson kept Fitzgerald's name in circulation during the period following his death, as the public sales of his books remained low. However, the active publication of re-issues of Fitzgerald's work in the five years following his death was enough to get some critics talking about—and reacting against—a revival.⁴⁸

The 1941 edition of *Tycoon*, edited by Fitzgerald's friend Edmund Wilson, was the first new Fitzgerald publication in six years, and to initiated a re-evaluation of *The Great Gatsby*, because the novel was included in the volume. As Fitzgerald scholars have recognized, the edition of *Tycoon*, even with its fractures and incompleteness, allowed readers to appreciate Fitzgerald's work for the first time as the result of the dedicated toil of a craftsman rather than that of some dilettante with a limited reserve of genius. Although the reviews for *Tycoon* were overwhelmingly favorable, the volume itself did little to increase the sales of Fitzgerald's work beyond an initial spike.⁴⁹ Following the publication and modest success of *The Last Tycoon*, Scribner's changed their stance towards Fitzgerald's works. Before his death, Perkins was slow to lease out the publisher's rights for Fitzgerald's texts because he saw it as an imposition on the company's possible profits, but after the author's death, Scribner's turned to leasing out the rights for his novels and short story collections rather than reissuing the texts under their own imprint.⁵⁰ Their decision to lease out the publication rights to Fitzgerald's work led to a

series of reprint editions, including, the Viking Press's *The Portable F. Scott Fitzgerald* (1945), edited by Dorothy Parker, and the New Directions Press's publication of a limited edition volume of *The Great Gatsby* in 1945.⁵¹

The reviews for Parker's collection were mixed; one reviewer thought that "Mrs. Parker...must have done her job in something of a hurry."⁵² The reviewers' clear opinions about the stories that Parker had included indicated a lingering admiration for Fitzgerald's fiction and an implicit understanding of his work as an entirety, even his supposedly less serious magazine work, and the reception of New Directions' volume of *The Great Gatsby* was unexpectedly favorable. The book was printed in a limited run of 2520 copies, which sold out on the first day; the second printing sold out in advance as well.

The first edition of the New Directions *Gatsby* was a special type of book. In a wartime market filled with "flimsy" books that were the product of material shortages and paper rationing, the New Directions' edition of *Gatsby* was "an extremely attractive and tasteful artifact, printed on high-quality paper, with designed-paper boards and dust-jacket and a two-color title page" (Anderson 159). The press's decision to include Fitzgerald in its new series of re-issued "classics" was one of the first indications of a growing critical regard for both Fitzgerald and his novel. The press's decision about the format of the book additionally implied the work's importance. In a market filled with books that were cheaply produced using materials that were less durable and attractive than in pre-war years, this particular edition of *Gatsby* and the series it was a part of indicated a new respect for American novelists and for Fitzgerald in particular. However, it is not surprising that the respect for Fitzgerald's work that the success of New Directions' edition of *Gatsby* seemed to point toward did not translate into either an increase in sales of his

texts or into the admiration of critics and educators until later in the 1950s, because throughout this early period of the revival, most years saw only a few hundred to a few thousand of his books sold.

These early critical responses, however, set the tone and the paradigm for Fitzgerald criticism for the next thirty years. These responses relied heavily on biographical anecdotes to explain Fitzgerald's work as a manifestation of his natural literary genius and to position Fitzgerald as a writer who wasted his "gift" by selling out to the popular magazines. An early example of such a response, a 1944 article published in the *Virginia Quarterly Review* by Charles Weir Jr., represents many of the same themes that would appear in other articles over the next five years to discuss the merits of a revival, and over the next twenty or more years to discuss the merits of Fitzgerald's individual texts. Comparing Fitzgerald to his characters, most notably the tragic Dick Diver of *Tender is the Night*, Weir argues, "I do not think that there can be a full understanding of Fitzgerald's work without a full understanding of his own character" (105). Believing that "Immaturity and waste are the key words" to Fitzgerald's career, Weir's analysis of Fitzgerald underlines the author's "double compulsion to write—to meet the bills and to live up to one's 'promise'" and recognizes that "the same sort of writing would not satisfy both" (102). Weir's recognition of the duality of Fitzgerald's career—the magazine stories that paid his bills and the novels that displayed his promise—was not original. Instead, it was a theme that was taken uncritically from Fitzgerald's own approximation of his career. In "The Crack Up" series of autobiographical essays he wrote for *Esquire* in 1936, Fitzgerald claimed that he had been a "mediocre caretaker" of his talent and that he "had been mortgaging myself physically and spiritually up to the hilt" (71, 72). He confessed that he

had become “a writer only,” one of the “beady-eyed men” who commute into the city each day and say, “Business is Business.” (82).⁵³ The paradigmatic impulse of revival critics to accept Fitzgerald’s own self-derision ignored the irony of the essays and in doing so, replicated the structure of value that the essays themselves, in part, challenge.

For the literary critics of the 1950s and early 1960s, Fitzgerald’s dependence on the world of magazines (or at least their version of that dependence) became a marker for the quality of his texts. His decision—and these critics almost always pose it as a conscious and avoidable decision—to focus on writing and selling magazine fiction in the later years of his life invalidates his entire oeuvre. In a 1946 article for the *Kenyon Review*, John Berryman takes specific aim at Fitzgerald’s publishing history, arguing that Fitzgerald appeared “to have lived his whole life in the well-heeled infantile world of American popular writing” (373). He goes on to claim that while “Fitzgerald did not share all of its attitudes. . . and [although] his judgments remained to some degree independent of it. . . he accepted its standards, made his friends in it, *castrated his work for it*, and took its rewards. And yet he somehow believed—perhaps at intervals only—that he was really on the other side (110, emphasis mine). The word castration seems excessive here, but Berryman’s metaphoric emasculation of Fitzgerald’s work echoes the 1920s review that drew on the Satanic images of the magazine publishing business. Moreover, it illustrates how the critical and literary community railed against Fitzgerald’s use of the magazines like *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Esquire* to make a living. The image of the author and his work as eunuch reveals the gendered nature of the literary market in a startling, yet expected, way. The aversion that the critics of the 1940s and 1950s displayed toward Fitzgerald’s magazine work demonstrated a repugnance for the popular and the feminine.⁵⁴ The idea

that mass culture was gendered as feminine is not new, nor is it ground-breaking to argue that those who created Fitzgerald's reputation as a major American author had to negotiate the problem posed by his voluminous magazine writing. However, Fitzgerald's eventual position in American literary history and the critical and educational spheres' eventual acceptance and celebration of his works was not as much a result of a critical machine capable of overcoming the unpleasant circumstances of his publication history as it depended on the continued interest and support of the mass group of consumers who originally consumed their fiction through the vehicle of popular magazines.

Paperbacks and the Revival: The Fitzgerald Industry

Even during the 1950s, when a small but steady market for his work began to grow, scholarly evaluations of Fitzgerald's work and reputation remained mixed, but increasingly, his work had a public appeal. In 1955 Albert J. Lubell wrote in *The South Atlantic Quarterly* that Fitzgerald might deserve a revival because his "fame was for a number of years under a total eclipse," but that "the obvious truth about Fitzgerald is that he is not a writer of major importance. . . He was perhaps not more than just a cut or two above the average writer for the popular magazines, not one of the greatest writers who ever lived, not even one of the greatest novelists who ever lived" (95, 98). During the 1940s, neither the literary nor the educational community wavered about Fitzgerald's minimal worth as a writer. Throughout 1950 and 1951, however, articles, collections, and books about Fitzgerald and his work began appearing more regularly in studies of American literature. For example, in 1951 Arthur Hobson Quinn's *The Literature of the American People* (1951), Fredrick J. Hoffman's *The Modern Novel in America, 1900-1950* (1951), and Riley Hughes' *Fifty years of the American Novel* (1951) all devoted substantial

attention to Fitzgerald's work.⁵⁵ Also in 1951, Alfred Kazin's *F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Man and His Work* became the first serious collection of critical essays that dealt with Fitzgerald as an essential American author.

The early 1950s also saw the emergence of a popular interest in Fitzgerald's life. In 1950, Bud Schulberg published a thinly veiled account of Fitzgerald's life in Hollywood, *The Disenchanted*, which was the tenth best-selling book that year. A year later, Arthur Mizener published his best selling biography, *The Far Side of Paradise*, which provided the first comprehensive look at Fitzgerald's life and career. To advertise the biography, the January issue of *Life* magazine included a fourteen-page article written by Mizener that included pictures of the dust jackets from six books as well as many items from the Fitzgeralds' scrapbooks. The popular success of both Schullberg's sensational novel and Mizener's carefully researched biography indicated that Fitzgerald remained an interesting persona to a wide audience of American readers, despite his unclear position in scholarly circles. In part, this continuing interest and popularity in the 1950s provided the support that would allow the Fitzgerald of the 1960s to become a major figure in American letters.

One indication of Fitzgerald's continuing popularity is evidenced in Richard Chase's seminal study, *The American Novel and Its Tradition* (1957), which cites *The Great Gatsby* as an important example of "the novel of manners." In the short section about *Gatsby*, Chase considers Fitzgerald only one of the "writers of second or third rank," rather than one of the great modern authors, like Faulkner, but he uses the novel to introduce two other novels he feels deserve recognition (158). Chase's analysis of the novel remains brief, but his decision to use *Gatsby* as the paramount example of the American novel of manners "on the assumption that the reader is fairly familiar with it," indicates that as early as 1957 the

novel had maintained a certain level of popularity and visibility (161). Chase's inclusion of *Gatsby* and his qualification about Fitzgerald's talent indexes the author's reputation at the time. By the late 1950s, Fitzgerald's novel had a wide enough readership that Chase could include a reference to the text without providing a plot outline or other information, even if Fitzgerald's reputation was faltering. Chase's reference to *Gatsby* does not reveal, however, how the novel went from being almost out of print and all but forgotten at the time of Fitzgerald's death to being widely recognizable in 1957.⁵⁶ In a span of less than twenty years, the novel went from being what one *New York Times* columnist called "not a book for the ages" in 1940 to the novel that Chase believed "advanced ... in its way, the art of the novel in America" (161).⁵⁷

The majority of the cultural work done by the Fitzgerald revival occurred during a period that saw larger cultural transformations in American life. In the wake of America's successes during World War II and the resultant booming economy, America experienced an influx of working and middle-class college students in higher education from the effects of the GI Bill, American literature became an increasingly worthy area of study in universities across the United States, resulting in the coalescence of an American canon, and the country experienced an overall shift toward an increasingly globalized marketplace. While the critical work that has come to be known as the Fitzgerald Revival provided a discursive impetus for the re-evaluation of Fitzgerald's work, the critical revival of Fitzgerald's work was actually contingent upon a far less elite force than professional critics and educators—an increase in the portion of the population who bought books and a change in the types of books they were buying.

A Changing Culture: Paperbacks and the American Book Buyer

To understand the ways that the Fitzgerald revival was a material as well as a discursive process, it is necessary to examine the material history of book production and consumption in mid-twentieth century America. At about the same time that the New Directions' edition of *The Great Gatsby* met its unexpected success in 1945, there was an even more important development the production of books that would impact Fitzgerald's reputation in significant ways. During World War II, the United States' military along with an organization called the Council on Books in Wartime instituted a series of inexpensively produced, paperbound books called the Armed Services Edition (ASE). Formed in 1942, the Council was composed of publishers, librarians, and booksellers who wanted to contribute to the war effort by providing reading material to servicemen overseas. The Council designed and executed a plan to produce books inexpensively and in large numbers for fast distribution, but the need to produce the books inexpensively created books that did not look like traditional books.

Because of their unusual appearance, the ASEs required certain measures to make them recognizable objects to the servicemen. The books were printed on rotary presses, usually used for printing magazines that would print each page as a two-up (two identical copies on a page that were cut apart for distribution), but the ASEs were instead printed as four-ups, and consequently had an unusual, elongated rectangular shape. The volumes were both stapled and glued to preserve the binding against wear and against the conditions of battlefield life. By printing the books on a magazine press using inexpensive papers, the council was able to produce hundreds of thousands of copies of over 1,322 texts for less than five cents a copy, but the inexpensive format of the book created a problem:

the editions were not recognizable as books. To help combat this issue, each cover included a picture that depicted the book's dust jacket or the imagined dust jacket (see Illustration 7). The inclusion of an image of each text's dust jacket emphasized the "bookness" of each volume, while the prominence of the author's name in that image emphasized the author as an almost brand-like category. Each ASE was printed in its entirety, but because the intended readership of these books were used to books having certain bibliographic codes as identifying features, the Council was careful to place, in bold letters at the bottom of each copy's cover, "This is the Complete Book—Not a Digest." The need to emphasize the ASE product as a legitimate book through the visual features of the cover reveals the deeply ingrained understandings and values about the expected appearance of traditional books for American readers.

The Council's efforts to support the servicemen overseas were ultimately successful, but the Council had another motive for promoting reading among the troops. This conglomerate of book producers and distributors also hoped to increase the population of book readers and, more importantly, book buyers *after* the war by fostering a propensity toward reading in the servicemen. The Council believed that the comfort servicemen would find in having a book to read while at war would create a positive association with books (not just with texts) and spur the book market after the war. W.W. Norton was one of the leading proponents of the ASEs and wrote of the Council's plan, "the net result to the industry and to the future of book reading can only be helpful. The very fact that millions of men will have an opportunity to learn what a book is and what it can mean is likely now and in post-war years to exert a tremendous influence on the post-war course of the industry" (Hackenberg 17). The Council persuaded a conglomerate of publishers to lease

rights to be included in the series by ensuring against post-war dumping of surplus ASE editions into the civilian book market and by limiting their series from including texts usually used for educational purposes. The Council also made the project financially viable for publishers by paying a royalty of one cent per book to be split between the publishers and their authors on printings that ran into the tens, and sometimes hundreds, of thousands.

For some authors, the impact of the Armed Services Editions seems larger than for others. For instance, the fifty thousand editions distributed by the Council of David Lavender's *One Man's West* most likely "gave the book a running start toward three hard-cover editions, followed by its paperback reprint by the University of Nebraska press" (Cole 9). The Armed Services Editions impact on Fitzgerald's reputation cannot be immediately certain, but as a writer with two titles produced by the series, *The Great Gatsby* and an original collection of short stories titled *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz and Other Stories*, Fitzgerald's name and work circulated to a large audience through the ASEs. Matthew Brucoli has commented that in a single year, the Council distributed more copies of *Gatsby* than were printed or sold from the years 1925 until 1942. Because of the sheer distribution volume of each ASE title, more people came into contact with and read *The Great Gatsby* than in Fitzgerald's entire lifetime.⁵⁸ By highlighting the author's name on the cover of the editions, the ASEs presented some of what are now considered Fitzgerald's best texts as representative works of the Fitzgerald brand to a large audience.

The Armed Service Editions' effect on the sales of traditionally published books was less evident after the war's end. By 1952, a retrospective study of the book market in the United States concluded that while individual servicemen might have felt "that Armed

Services editions had permitted millions of men to discover the pleasures of reading, the widespread influences on postwar tastes had not really been experienced" (Anderson 126-7). W. W. Norton's original hopes that the service men would learn "what a book is" were most likely frustrated by the object of the ASE books themselves. Because they did not actually resemble a traditional book, the Armed Service Edition's very physical form emphasized that a book was not so much an object to possess but a text to consume and then discard.⁵⁹ Rather than teach servicemen to value books as objects and, in turn, convert a population that did not usually purchase books into book buyers, the ASE project did little to increase the market for traditionally bound books. It is more likely, as Freeman Lewis suggests, that the ASE program contributed not to a growth in the market for traditionally manufactured books but "to the postwar success for the American paperback industry" (Hackenberg 18). If the Armed Service Editions had any impact further than providing a diversion to the troops in the field of battle, it was that they created readers rather than buyers.

Or to be more specific, the ASE series did not create the type of reader who would also purchase a traditionally bound book helped generate a new population of readers who would purchase a new sort of book—the paperback. The Armed Service Editions were one aspect of a series of events and changes in publishing that changed the way American consumers understood the cultural value of the book. During the 1950s and 1960s, the cultural understanding in America of what it meant for a consumer to purchase or own a book changed. Previously, America seemed to believe that the book was "something which certain classes of people have in their libraries at home whereas the rest of the world does not buy them, does not read them" (Taylor 7). After World War II, however, books

increasingly became understood as disposable and consumable commodities more valuable for the texts and information that they contained than for the luxury of owning a certain type of expensive object.⁶⁰

The ASE volumes and the paperbacks of the 1950s were not the first popular paperback books in American culture. The nineteenth century saw the rise of dime novels and story papers. By the 1880s, “the market was glutted with the much condemned dime, half-dime, and quarter ‘books,’ designed principally for an adolescent audience and consisting largely of reprintings and imitations of the sensational “Story Paper” novels and of the prototypes of the modern detective and western stories” (French 257). The early twentieth century saw sporadic attempts at paperback publishing, including the *American Mercury’s* “Mercury Mysteries” and the Rumford Press’s “Modern Age Books,” but “even the economic depression of the 1930s was not enough of a catalyst to overcome the public revulsion to both the lurid content and unpalatable business practices connected with paperbacks” (Gillespie 3). Although Tauchnitz had been successfully publishing well regarded paperback books in Europe since 1841, Americans were reluctant to accept the paperback book as the equal of the traditionally printed hardback. It was not until 1939, when Robert Fair de Graff’ partnered with Simon and Schuster to produce a line of paperback reprints of popular hardback texts called “Pocket Books” that the paperback held the respect of American consumers.⁶¹

During the 1950s, the rise of paperbound books in America changed the way that Americans approached and consumed literature. In one sense, paperbacks made the act of purchasing and owning a book less of a privilege, and in doing so removed “the ‘egghead’ stigma from the printed volume” (Anderson xiv). Suddenly, Americans could own serious

or legitimate texts in a form that were not designed to signal the owner's economic wealth. By this time, Gatsby's library had become obsolete, in part, because the economic boom of the post war years had enabled a larger group of consumers to approximate the purchasing power of that class which Gatsby attempted to impersonate. But it was not only the object of the book that became more affordable and widespread; it was also what was contained within the book. The foremost change in paperback book production after World War II was the types of texts produced in paperback form. While Tauchnitz had been reproducing the most important and serious literature of the day for European audiences throughout most of the nineteenth century, American paperback publishers originally only offered their readers sensational romances or thrilling mysteries that approximated the sort of texts in the inexpensive story papers. With the advent of Pocket Books in 1939, and then the Bantam editions in 1945, American audiences could purchase in paperbound editions the same sorts of texts usually found only in hardback. Studies of the rise of paperbacks have shown that the popularity of the paperback book was not so much an effect of traditional book buyers changing their purchasing habits as of a new type of book buyer. In general, paperback editions seemed to have a life apart from their hardbound counterparts.

In part, the larger cultural shift toward the increasing production and consumption of paperback texts may have been nothing more than the effect of publishers finally offering a certain group consumers what they had always preferred but what was not before available—smaller, lighter, and more portable editions of well regarded texts. In general, the book industry had not suffered because a consumer reaction to the physical changes in books necessitated by paper rationing during the war, and the creation of paperback publishers, addressed a newly discovered market.⁶² Thus, in the period of

twenty years that saw the rise in Fitzgerald's reputation and book sales, the way the book was regarded as a commodity vacillated between the idea that the book was an object meant "only to be treasured by those who have custody of them intellectually or personally" and the idea that the book could be "a usable instrument for the extension of one's experience into new modes" (6).⁶³

Paperbacks Go to School

The influx and success of paperback books in America during the 1950s and 1960s changed the way that consumers, in general, approached and understood books and the literature they contained. It also changed the new population of college students, and in turn the expanding system of higher education. Throughout the 1950s, the expansion of paperback production parallels the expansion of university populations and literarily curriculum, specifically, the increasing importance of American literature. While a course on American literature had been taught as early as 1827 at Amherst college, it was not until after World War II that American literature began to be valued as much as any European Literature. Even after World War I, American Literature was considered to be one half as important as Italian literature and only one tenth the importance of English Literature.⁶⁴ Despite American literature's minor status, of one hundred and nineteen major institutions studied by the National Council of Teachers of English in 1941, one hundred and ten listed courses in American literature, an increase from only twenty-six in 1890 (12).

The growing legitimacy of American literature within the university classroom was very much linked to changes in the culture outside of the university's walls. Leslie Fiedler, in a 1958 study for the Committee for Literary Scholarship and the Teaching of English, recognized that mass culture influenced the traditionally elite culture of university

literature departments. He claims that despite a growing literacy rate, the majority of Americans do not read books but depend on “ephemeral” entertainments for their diversions. He also found that “the growth of our university population and the decline of classical studies made it more and more necessary to *teach* the kind of book one once assumed would be read for pleasure outside of the classroom. It is in part the spread of mass culture and the consequent decline in the average reading ability of those who enter college which have helped make way for a proliferation of courses in recent and modern literature” (158-9). Fiedler’s analysis is somewhat reductive, however. The dramatic and ongoing success of the paperback industry reveals that not only were people still reading books, they were also now purchasing books in record numbers. Fiedler draws a distinction between the detritus of “ephemeral” culture and the value of enduring literary works, and in his estimation, only certain types of reading counts—especially the difficult, laborious reading necessary to understanding classical literature.⁶⁵ The growth of the paperback market during the 1950s and 1960s was part of this ephemeral culture.

The noticeable arrival of the paperback book on the education scene was timely, because it came when a long tradition of unbending rigidity in the education structure [was] being challenged. (Anderson xv). Examining the “paperback reality,” Sidney Forman claimed that “one basic custodial tradition--or perhaps assumption--which influenced the practice of librarianship is that the book is sacred. . . . A second set of traditions stems from the idea that each book is unique and irreplaceable” (175).⁶⁶ The mass production of paperbacks changed both of those perceptions about the book as cultural object, and the changing perception of the book had immediate effects on the way literature was consumed and circulated, even within university classrooms.⁶⁷ By 1965, over 35,500

paperback titles were in print, and at least one third of that market was specifically attributed to the educational field (Taylor 6). According to industry surveys, the sales of mass-distributed paperback books to the educational market alone reached over 42,000,000 annually by 1964.⁶⁸

The influx of paperback books in both the larger cultural sphere and in universities was essential to the revival of interest in Fitzgerald's work. For example, the reference to *The Great Gatsby* in Richard Chase's seminal study of the American novel was directly related to the influx of paperback reprints. The popularity of the book had almost nothing to do with the efforts of Scribner's to promote the book or with the sales of traditional volumes of Fitzgerald's work. In fact, the publisher maintained their policy to circulate Fitzgerald's work only through leasing out rights to other publishers until the middle of the 1950s, even as the reprint editions were selling in large quantities. For example, in February of 1952, the Bantam Editions of *The Great Gatsby* and *Tender is the Night* sold 494,301 copies, while hardback editions of *The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald* edited by Malcolm Cowley, *The Last Tycoon*, *This Side of Paradise*, and *Tender Is the Night* sold only 3,303 copies combined. Scribner's did not refused to lease out its rights to *Gatsby* to other presses until they decided to run *Gatsby* for themselves in the larger numbers of a paperback run in 1957, the year Chase's book was first published.⁶⁹ By the time Scribner's launched their first paperback series and began publishing paperback versions of Fitzgerald's work, the market for his texts was well established.

However, the history of *Gatsby's* publication by the Bantam press is not so straightforward as it seems. While it is true that Scribner's refrained from re-printing Fitzgerald's work under its own imprint, and it is true that the success of the Bantam edition surely

underlies Chase's ability to refer to it as extremely familiar to most readers, Scribner's had more of an influence on the book's popularity than might be immediately obvious. Bantam was financed by a conglomerate that was owned in part by Scribner's, Grosset and Dunlap, Random House, and Little, Brown. These investors had some influence over the titles selected for the original Bantam series of paperbacks. Consequently, the Bantam paperback experiment allowed the traditional publishers to test the paperback market without investing their brand and their own reputations. The Bantam editions were well publicized, and part of the publicity included covering an entire edition of *Publisher's Weekly* in the same plasticized cover that would encase each Bantam edition. The goal was to show the paperback as a new, more durable product than the cheap nineteenth-century paperbound reprints or twentieth-century dime novels. The success of Bantam books and the sales of Fitzgerald's titles by Bantam books allowed Scribner's to ascertain American consumers' interest in both products.

The popular success of the Bantam editions informed Scribner's decisions to re-establish publication of Fitzgerald's texts under the company's imprint and to begin their own line of paperbacks, targeting the educational market. The sales of Fitzgerald's books had steadily increased throughout the early 1950s, with over 11,000 copies in hardback by 1956, mostly for the academic market (Anderson 312). Throughout this period, however, the paperback sales of his books consistently exceeded the hardback editions. The launch of Scribner's "Modern Classics" series in 1957 allowed Fitzgerald's novels to appear, in paperback form, for an educational audience. Scribner's had produced textbooks since the mid-nineteenth century, and just as their imprint had given Fitzgerald instant recognition as a new author, their imprint lent credibility to paperbacks in education. As Schick argues,

"Paperbacks were originally conceived as books to be bought on the spur of the moment by individual customers. After the war, the growing student population and the teaching trend of stressing survey courses made increasing use of serious titles brought out by firms such as Penguin, Pocket Books and NAL" (qtd. Anderson 310). The success of Scribner's paperback line indicated that paperback texts had become an accepted part of American culture, and Scribner's entrance into the educational paperback market meant that modern American authors, like Fitzgerald, were more desirable for use in high school and university classrooms.⁷⁰ By the 1960s, sales records and critical assessments indicate that Fitzgerald and *The Great Gatsby* had become a staple of the literature classroom.

The inclusion of *Gatsby* and Fitzgerald in American literature courses was part of the larger coalescence of the American modernist canon. Scholars have already traced the formation of this canon to the rise of New Critical methodologies in the face of an increasingly working-class college population, but the trajectory of Fitzgerald's career demonstrates that the formation of this canon was related not only to scholars working to elucidate the genius of certain authors, but also to the changes in the ways that American students and professors approached, consumed, and understood books. Without the initial success of the Bantam paperback series, and the ensuing success of Scribner's educational paperback series, *The Great Gatsby* would not have had the availability or circulation that eventually stimulated scholars to accept it as a "masterpiece" of American literature and teach it in the university classroom. The shift in Fitzgerald criticism in the 1960s corresponds with the increasing availability of his work under the Scribner paperback imprint. While it is impossible to claim that the paperback editions caused Fitzgerald's canonization, they were an essential and often overlooked component to the increasing

importance Fitzgerald's work held in both the educational sphere and the larger cultural sphere.

The Literary Market and Fitzgerald's Continuing Reputation

In 1921, Fitzgerald wrote to Edmund Wilson, "Culture follows money + all the refinements of aestheticism can't stave off its change of seat. (Christ! what a metaphor). We will be the Romans in the next generation as the English are now."⁷² Fitzgerald understood that the cultural value was intimately tied to the market, and that the market—even the literary market—was driven as much by masses of consumers as it was by elite critics. In *The Great Gatsby*, he mobilizes a reading of the cultural value of the book that reveals the extent to which the culture of the book was an index for class status, but the trajectory of his texts' reputations demonstrates how the changes in the book reflect the larger changes in class status and cultural hierarchies. Fitzgerald was always a popular author, and in both his public and private writings, he expresses again and again his understanding that the true seat of culture lay not with the dying class of American aristocracy, but with a larger public. It is no wonder, then, that he chose Nick Carraway, the Mid-western son who sees a shelf of business manuals as a shelf of gold, to narrate his most famous and lasting work. While there can be no doubt that the transformation of the object of the book in American culture had significant implications for Fitzgerald, his work, and the American modernist canon, the way that those changes occurred is often obscured by the literary focus on the text itself.

The New Criticism popularized in the university after World War II contributed to the increasing disregard for the study of textual history. In some sense, the immensity of bibliographical work done on Fitzgerald and his texts sets him apart, but even with this

large amount of scholarship on Fitzgerald's publishing history, the mechanisms that influence the circulation and valuation of an author's work have remained overlooked by Fitzgerald scholars. The importance of Fitzgerald's popular appeal, for instance, was not only overlooked but condemned and dismissed by literary critics attempting to revive the author's reputation. While the scholarly revival established the importance of Fitzgerald and his work by the 1970s for the elite culture of university classrooms and scholarly journals, it could not erase the popularity of either.

Fitzgerald was right: culture did, indeed, follow money. The popular paperback audience created a persistent market that kept Fitzgerald's work in print. Scribner's reluctance to re-issue *Gatsby* without a clear market, their use of Bantam to test the profitability of a paperback series, and the eventual recuperation of the novel and of Fitzgerald in their Modern Classics line reveals the interaction and importance of a popular audience and mass culture for even a revered and conservative publishing house. The development of a paperback market and the sales of paperback editions of Fitzgerald's work indicate the importance of new book-buying public, one not interested in the filigreed leather of the Merton College Library. Rather than instigate, then, the scholarly revival indexes an interest and a respect for Fitzgerald's work that already existed. Fitzgerald is, in a sense, still a popular writer even as he has attained the canonical status of great author.

Notes

1. Bruccoli and Baughman 34.
2. While the novel was not yet completely out of print, Fitzgerald's fears about *Gatsby's* eventual status were well founded. His final royalty check from Scribner's was \$13.13 (from Bruccoli Collection. See Illustration 8).
3. Anderson, *Fitzgerald Revival 2*.
4. Part of this shift was due to changes in the way Americans were educated; during those thirty years college admissions grew exponentially, American literature became a widely accepted part of the college curriculum for the first time, and the American modernist canon was solidified through the vehicle of the college syllabus.
5. All textual references to passages from *The Great Gatsby* come from the 1992 "Authorized Text" produced by Scribner's Paperback Fiction under the direction of Matthew J. Bruccoli.
6. Nick's distinction between the story and the book here, while a small detail, is important. As we have seen in Chapter 1, Leslie Howsam claims that authors do not write books, but instead books are products created through manufacturing (20). By calling the text of *Gatsby* a book, Nick affirms its status as a commodity, even as he begins to write it.
7. David Belasco was a contemporary American playwright, known as the "Bishop of Broadway." He was famous for his attention to set design and props, often using actual, working objects in his plays. For a more complete description of Belasco's theatrical history and theory, see his *Theatre through Its Stage Door*.
8. In fact, the very publication of Shaw's own argument highlights the difference between readers. It is only because most later readers understand the appearance and recognition of Owl Eyes as serious rather than ironic that the article was even needed.

9. Jerome McGann writes in detail about the double valence of books in terms of their linguistic and their bibliographic codes. He argues that it is necessary to account for both types of codes to understand a text's social history.

10. It also reveals Fitzgerald himself as a reader of culture.

11. Nick later refers to Gatsby's library as Merton College Library, after a library at Oxford.

Moreover, for Nick not to recognize the Stoddard Lectures as less than authentic undermines his own social and cultural acumen and his ability as a narrator to discern the truth about Gatsby's identity.

12. Yet, Nick admires Gatsby because of his supposed wealth. His interest in Gatsby indicates that the lure of a social status designated by old money is still somehow seductive to the would-be self-made man.

13. Much of what critics have seen as his lack of reliability may just be that he is an inexperienced writer, including his inability to tell a consistent story, his posturing about his trustworthiness, etc. There is also the issue of certain critic's proclivity to conflate the narrator of the text with Fitzgerald himself, an inaccuracy that is more understandable when one considers Nick as presenting himself as a writer.

14. Jackson Bryer has argued, "students of Fitzgerald have at their disposal perhaps the most complete array of bibliographical, textual, and reference works available on any modern American writer" (*Four Decades* 284).

15. James West III writes, "Publishers did not fully become aware of the commercial and advertising possibilities of the dust wrapper. . . until the early decades of the twentieth century" (269). Describing the evolution of the dust jacket, James West describes the typical jacket as follows: "The front of the jacket could be employed as a small advertising poster, and the

typography and color and artwork employed there could give clues about the nature of the book, making it appeal to a particular group of buyers. Other sites on the jacket could be used for other kinds of material, and these locations became standard. The front flap was employed for a synopsis of the book; the rear flap continued the synopsis and gave information about the author; and the back panel carried lists of other titles by the same author or of titles on the publisher's backlist or were imprinted with blurbs or photographs of the author" (*Iconic* 270).

16. Kuehl and Bryer 53.

17. *Ibid.* 217.

18. His anger about the jacket art for *Taps* was a bit inconsistent, however. Earlier, in 1926, Fitzgerald wrote to Perkins that "after *Gatsby* I don't believe people buy jackets anymore." For *Gatsby*, the iconic jacket art had done little to spur on sales.

19. In this letter, he suggested a list of books, including Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth*, J.M. Barrie's *Sentimental Tommy*, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, and Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw* (Brucoli, *Life in Letters* 56-57).

20. The Modern Library also responded to a desire on the part of a growing portion of the population's desire to read and learn. Fitzgerald himself understood that there were different segments of the book-buying population. In 1933, when *Gatsby* was all but out of print, he prevailed upon Perkins to bring out a Modern Library edition by claiming, "The people who buy the *Modern Library* are not at all the people who buy the new books" (Kuehl and Bryer 182).

21. Publishers were aware of the importance of the publisher's imprinted and often designed colophons that indicated quality. Maxfield Parrish designed a colophon device for the company. Its logo, with its three key elements of the burning antique (Greco-Roman) lamp, books, and laurel wreath, dates back to the Beaux-Arts architect Stanford White's original design for the

cover of Scribner's Magazine (January 1887). As an unpublished memo from Charles Scribner, Jr. to the Princeton University Library in 1994 explains, “the symbol of the book hardly needs to be explained; the laurel crown is a symbol of the highest achievement in poetry or literature, or the arts in general, and it is associated with the classical god of Apollo; the lamp is not Aladdin's lamp but rather the lamp of wisdom and knowledge. There is a long tradition in art, going back at least to the time of Petrarch, of a poet being crowned with a wreath of laurel, and such scholars as St. Jerome and St. Thomas Aquinas are traditionally depicted beside such a burning lamp. . . This printer's seal appeared on the copyright page of books printed by the Scribner Press” (*An Illustrated Chronology*).

22. Charles Scribner’s Sons was originally an independent publisher, something of an anomaly for its time. It had a history of publishing serious religious and historical documents, but the firm came into its own in the late nineteenth century when it opened its first flagship store in 1894, a six-story building on Fifth Avenue.

23. Bruccoli, *Life in Letters* 116.

24. In “F. Scott Fitzgerald, Professional Author” James West examines whether Fitzgerald benefited from staying with his publisher and suggests that a publisher with more liberal marketing approaches may have helped Fitzgerald’s sales. Scribner’s conservative sales tactics stem from the publisher’s desire to not find themselves with hundreds of un-purchased books.

25. “Fitzgerald placed more than 130 of his 160-odd published stories in glossy, mass-circulation magazines, commonly known as “slicks” (Bitoni 37).

26. James West “F. Scott Fitzgerald, Professional Author.” Other than a brief stint as an advertisement writer, Fitzgerald never held any employment other than that of writing fiction.

Unlike Hemingway, who could rely on the income from his wives and their families, Fitzgerald never had any family money or other funds to support himself.

27. Vane 661-2.

28. *Minneapolis Journal* 3.

29. Kuehl and Bryer 152.

30. *San Francisco Chronicle* 2E.

31. In fact, the review from the *San Francisco Chronicle* for his second novel, *The Beautiful and Damned* specifically states that he is not a mere fiction mechanic.

32. Vane 661-2.

33. Brucoli, *As Ever* 73.

34. Ibid. 87. In this letter, Fitzgerald called the story “one of the lousiest” he’d ever written.

35. The “obscure place” where the story eventually was published was *The Woman’s Home Companion*, but the *Post*’s more general readership included readers who had a collective power to influence an author’s reputation.

36. Brucoli, *As Ever* 200.

37. It may be that his belief in *Scribner’s Magazine*’s superiority in this regard was further fostered by Perkins, himself. In 1931, he wrote to Fitzgerald, “It may be hard to believe, but the fact is that an article in *Scribner’s* has a much greater effect on the real book reading public than one in the *Post*” (Kuehl and Bryer 171). However, Perkins’ distinction between the so-called real book reading public and whichever public acted as a foil to the former is a distortion of the subtleties of differences between readerships.

38. Canby 630-1.

39. Kuehl and Bryer 174.

40. Kuehl and Bryer 218. The series of Mercury books began in September of 1939 and published one reprint and one new mystery each month (Warren French 257).
41. Kuehl and Bryer 5-20-40.
42. Kuehl and Bryer 12-30-38.
43. For a more complete analysis of the minutia of this revival see William Richard Anderson's dissertation, *The Fitzgerald Revival* and Jackson Bryer's study of Fitzgerald Scholarship "The Best and the Brightest."
44. Michael Mok of the *New York Post* interviewed Fitzgerald for his fortieth birthday in September of 1936, while the author was under the care of a hospital in Asheville, NC. Fitzgerald was still drinking at the time, and the interview is notorious for its portrayal of Fitzgerald as a pathetic drunk. *Time* later picked up the story, and Fitzgerald's fall received wider attention.
45. Brucoli and Bryer, *Miscellany* 472.
46. "Back Yonder" 8.
47. "F. Scott Fitzgerald" 10.
48. Anderson writes that "the reviews of *Tycoon*, in isolation, might signal a real beginning but it failed to influence the book buying public" (63).
49. Jackson Bryer, specifically, calls the first two publications a revival: "The Crack-Up and The Portable F. Scott Fitzgerald gave birth to what we call the 'Fitzgerald Revival'" (*Four Decades* 247).
50. In both 1941 and 1942, more than three thousand copies of Fitzgerald's texts (mostly *Tycoon*) were sold, but after 1943, that number remained much lower, with only 519 total titles sold in 1943 and fewer in following years.

51. In 1929, Perkins wrote to Fitzgerald about the Modern Library series: “But what are regular publishers to do if all kinds of special sorts of publishers get out anthologies all the time, and come to them for their material and pay practically nothing for it, either to them or to the author” (Kuehl and Bryer 159). Fitzgerald had wanted to participate in the Modern Library anthology by submitting some of his better stories—he saw it as a way to increase his marketability and reputation. Perkins, however, draws a distinction here between “regular” and specialized publishers that hinges on the material object of the text. Specialty publishers like the Modern Library purchased rights and used the same plates, thus undercutting the production costs of “regular publishers.”

52. New Directions also brought out an edition of collected stories, articles, and selected letters from his friends, and unpublished letters and notebook entries titled after his 1936 series, *The Crack-Up*. *The Crack-Up* marked the first time when unpublished letters were brought before the public and the first time that the author’s now famous notebooks were made public. Critics remained skeptical about both the literary and historical value of the collection and, instead, placed more importance on the letters by other writers to or about Fitzgerald than on the author himself. The New Directions collection, however unevenly received, did serve to initiate a discussion about Fitzgerald’s place in American letters. George Mayberry of *The New Republic* commented that “it is too early to attempt to place Fitzgerald” but that the letters from Eliot, Dos Passos, and Wolfe “are in varying degrees contributions to the history of our literature” (*Book Review Digest* 1945, 234).

53. Ibid.

54. But as critics such as Edward Gillin have more recently pointed out, his “Crack-Up” series is laden with sarcasm and irony.

55. Huyssen's concept of the Great Divide is predicated on this very understanding of mass culture as a feminized other. Rita Felski, however, attempts to recover mass culture and feminine culture by theorizing it as a driving force for modernity itself.
56. More substantial descriptions of each can be found in Anderson 248-9.
57. Anderson argues that *Gatsby* actually achieved a worse fate than being out of print: no one asked for any of the few remaining copies in Scribner's supply. By 1961, however, *Gatsby* was selling 13,000 copies each month (Anderson 180).
58. It is important to note that Chase's project was particular, as it contextualized the study of American literature for English departments and academic books throughout the mid-to-late century. This quote comes from the *New York Times* obituary for Fitzgerald, as published in *Miscellany* (470).
59. The short story collection was also important because it was so unusual for the ASE series. Rather than a straight reprint of one of his short story collection, *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz and Other Stories*, was a new collection, bringing together some of Fitzgerald's most well regarded stories from across the span of his magazine career.
60. ASEs were not meant to be personal property for individual soldiers, but were distributed to companies of service men who would then trade the books among themselves.
61. Or, to put it another way, the *bibliographic* codes of a book took on a different meaning. In a 1939 *Publisher's Weekly* editorial, the writer comments on a related phenomenon: "For what may be wrong with certain important classes of books is that their designers and printers seem to have lost all enthusiasm for reading. Novels particularly. After a title-page, the Sahara. ...Yet some of the most eagerly awaited and esteemed fiction in history has had to come out not only in shoddy (which might not be so bad, since it connotes the

'popular') but in tight, dry, congested type-pages. In fact, the decline of printing almost coincides with the rise of the novel" (Novel 81).

62. In a 1940 report on Pocket Books in *Publisher's Weekly*, the author comments that the books are reaching new audiences: "*Pocket Books were designed primarily to reach a brand new public not only by attracting new customers into existing book outlets but by selling the books through special non-book outlets. . . . Part of the plan was to try to distribute the books not only in what are usually regarded as book cities but also in smaller towns and villages where books are not sold*" (Report 988, emphasis mine).

63. However, the New Directions edition of *Gatsby*, published in the same year as the first Bantam paperback, demonstrates that the market for books could still support an audience that desired well made and collectable books following the end of the war

64. The paperback book saw an enormous success in the years after World War II; in 1951 alone, paperback publishers issued 950 new titles in 230 million copies. The sales records clearly show that the idea of the book as a usable and consumable instrument appealed to 1950s consumers.

65. From *American Literature in the College Curriculum* by National Council of Teachers of English.

66. For a more nuanced discussion of the modernization of the canon, see Guillory, *Cultural Capital*.

67. "Librarians were becoming increasingly more receptive toward the use of paperbacks. They were buying more of them and finding more uses for them" (Gillespie 6).

68. As we have seen in the previous chapter with Scribner's letter to Hemingway, educators during the 1950s and 1960s were increasingly interested in books with paper binding for their classes.

69. Systel 79.

70. The 1953 edition of *Three Novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald* included an introduction by Malcolm Cowley and was edited by both Cowley and Edmund Wilson. The edition, first published in 1953 was first reprinted in 1956, but then again in both 1957 and 1958. The Scribner's paperback run was 80,000 copies (Eble 40).

71. By 1961, the firm sold 13,000 copies of *The Great Gatsby* each month to the educational market (Anderson 354). Anderson provides other specific sales figures: 1957: 22,276 total sales; 1964: 74,325 total sales; 1965: 454,973 total sales.

72. Brucoli, *Life in Letters* 47.

“I am not a business woman”: Kay Boyle and the Promises of Publishing

I'd like to have an agent who takes things off my mind instead of piling them on. I'm not a business woman and I must have someone to handle my stuff who is.

—Kay Boyle to Ann Watkins¹

I wish I were in the best seller class so that I could help you in that way, but so far I am far from it.

—Kay Boyle to Caresse Crosby²

While the writing and publishing careers of Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald may provide compelling examples of how the literary market and culture of book publishing in America influenced the careers of two now canonical authors, this chapter turns to a less well known modernist, Kay Boyle, to illustrate how the divide between artistry and commercialism that modernist writers often crossed and re-crossed was also informed by a culture structured by gendered norms of acceptability. Like Hemingway and Fitzgerald's, Boyle's career was defined by her engagement with the worlds of both the avant-garde and the mainstream American literary market. The above quotations taken from letters early in Boyle's career as a writer represent two impulses that defined the history and trajectory of her publishing career and literary reputation. On one hand, Boyle believed that the serious writer must function as a "spokesman," for those too inarticulate to speak for themselves, "an Aeolian harp whose sensitive strings respond to the whispers of the concerned people of his time" (qtd. Spanier 2). Her own definition of authorship entailed a political moralism and purity of aesthetics that distanced her from the economic concerns of the business world of literature, but her correspondence also shows Boyle to be a professional writer who continuously yearned for the critical and financial success that would give her the stability to write on her own terms. Her self-

identification as a 'serious' author did not preclude her from desiring also to be a profitable and widely read author, but ambivalence about what it meant to immerse herself in the business of the literary profession exposes the problems of a gendered literary market in ways that even Hemingway's masculine-centered career does not.

Boyle's Publishing Career: An Overview

With a publishing career that stretched from 1921 until 1991, Boyle was one of the most prolific writers of the so-called 'Lost Generation.' Boyle was born in 1902 into a family interested both in avant-garde art and leftist politics, and her early life was defined by her mother's insistence that her daughters write. In the spring of 1922 she moved to New York and found work as Lola Ridge's assistant in the New York office for *Broom* magazine (1921-1924). Here she met many of the writers who she grew up reading and who later would come to be her close friends: Marianne More, John Dos Passos, Waldo Frank, and William Carlos Williams to name only a few. It was the work of many of these poets that would help to define her aesthetics and with whom she would identify as an artist. In late May of 1923, she and her French husband left New York for France with the intention of writing novels while he found work. Once in Paris, Boyle remained too awestruck to wander into Sylvia Beach's Shakespeare and Company, but did begin making friends and acquaintances through her contacts at *Broom*, with one of whom, Robert MacAlmon, she would later republish a joint memoir of Paris. In Paris, and later in Le Havre, France, Boyle worked on poems and on the manuscripts of her first two novels.³ During this time Boyle was approached by Ernest Walsh, an American starting a new avant-garde literary magazine that was to be called *This Quarter* (1925-1926). Her relationship with Walsh was both professional and personal, and she details it in her novel *Year Before*

Last (1932). Through her involvement with *This Quarter* and her later involvement with magazines like Eugene Jolas's *transition* (1927-1938) Boyle became an active member of the large expatriate community of American writers and artists living in Paris during the 1920s. Although she arrived later than most and although she was technically a French citizen through her marriage, Boyle would later write in her memoir, *Being Geniuses Together*, "But I was there, in whatever guise" (11).

Her identification with expatriate Paris was essential for Boyle's own career and later reputation. Her work was published next to authors such as Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway, Djuna Barnes, Ezra Pound, and Hart Crane. She was active in the publication of *This Quarter*, working alongside Walsh and Ethel Moorhead to edit and publish the magazine; she worked with the Jolases' on *transition*; and she also translated French texts into English for Caresse Crosby's Black Sun Press. In 1929, Boyle was the first name among the sixteen writers who signed Jolas's "Revolution of the Word," which outlined a series of directives for avant-garde art. The manifesto famously declared, "The writer expresses. He does not communicate," and "The plain reader be damned." While these are just two of the twelve points of the manifesto that defined the work done by writers in *transition*, the manifesto itself descriptively encapsulated much of what is today understood as the aesthetic features of avant-garde modernist writing. While Boyle herself later claimed not to have agreed with all of Jolas's ideas, her involvement with these communities of writers and authors places her within the larger historical framework of transatlantic modernism. "My principle claim to fame," she told interviewer Irv Broughton, "is that I new Hemingway in Paris, but I didn't. But people like always to write down, 'she knew Hemingway'" (Bell 102). This response is typical Boyle, and in the interview she undercuts the iconic public

fantasy of expatriate Paris and attempts to re-insert her own reading of the historical moment by reasserting herself as a working writer at the time.⁴

The quality of Boyle's work has been widely recognized by her contemporary peers and later critics. In November of 1929, William Carlos Williams praised her first short story collection in *transition*, calling her work a new beginning for American literature. He said that her writing represented "a beginning, a trembling at the edge of waking" (314). In April of 1931, Katherine Anne Porter reviewed Boyle's short story collection, *Wedding Day and other Stories*, and her first published novel, *Plagued by the Nightingale* in *The New Republic*. While Porter recognized that not all the stories were successful, she claimed that "the freshness and brilliancy lie in the use of words and the point of view" (319). Calling Boyle's use of symbolism and allegory "masterful," Porter helped to establish Boyle's reputation as an important young author. By 1932, her first novel had gone into a second printing, she was starting to sell her stories to mass circulation magazines for larger profits, and *Contempo* magazine was calling her "one of the best living short story writers" (qtd. Spanier 33). Her work was characterized in her earliest reviews by her dedication to style. As Suzanne Clark explains, "like Joyce, Boyle writes a 'lyric' novel, which decenters the lyric subjectivity, the image of an ego" (331). Her early stories, especially, experiment with the English language and often "detailed little more than the nuances of a relationship or the thought process that would lead to action taking place after the story's conclusion or offstage, beyond the reader's sphere of knowledge" (Bell 3). Often blurring the distinctions between subjects and objects, her stories tend to rely more on a use of atmosphere and emotion than any traditional sense of plot.

Boyle's later work continued her commitment to the stylistic aesthetics of her avant-garde beginnings but also intensified and highlighted political issues. Living in Europe for most of the 1930s and 1940s (much of that time as a French citizen), the rise of fascism and Nazism were starkly important to Boyle and her work in this period. Stories that she wrote during and after the 1940s often portray life in Europe during occupation or the effects of the war on individual lives; "Winter Night," for example, portrays the effects of the Holocaust on an individual woman. By focusing on one woman's loss of a child, Boyle uncovers the terrible simplicity of the Holocaust's devastation. She also wrote a series of stories about life in France during World War II as a correspondent for *The New Yorker* magazine, often revealing painful truths about life in a war torn country. In "They Weren't Going to Die," Boyle deftly uncovers the treatment of Senegalese warriors by the French during World War II. In the story, Senegalese fighters wait for their chance to kill Germans, but for the French, these men are simply "*chair de canon*," a fact underlined by the fact that the French count whose home they are guarding is dismayed not by their bodies but by the potatoes and strawberry plants that would be destroyed by their burial. Her novels written during the 1940s, like *A Frenchman Must Die* (1946) and *Avalanche* (1944), examine the impact of the War on the French people and soldiers alike, putting in stark relief the horrors of the war on the citizens and the country as well as the enticing appeal of a charismatic fascist movement. Often these novels and stories fulfill the expectations of a more popular and mass readership's requirement for stories with traditional and straightforward characters, plot, and action, but many still retain the innovative use of symbol and allegory that marked her earliest work.⁵ Boyle continued to work and publish throughout her life. However, during the 1950s, both Boyle and her husband, Baron Joseph

von Franckenstein, were blacklisted by the House Committee on Un-American Activities for being potentially subversive.⁶ During this time, she had difficulty placing much of her writing and often wrote under a pen name.⁷ In 1963, she accepted a position at San Francisco State College, and remained active in teaching and writing until her death in 1992.

Boyle's long and prolific career presents an example of a writer who was important both to the avant-garde community and to the popular magazine culture of her day, and who has still failed to be recognized as an important contributor to American modernism. Only her first novel remains in print and only a few of her stories are routinely anthologized.⁸ Yet an understanding of her career has implications for our understanding of the way the literary market influenced the formation of a modernist canon. From the late 1920s up until the late 1940s, the period of her publishing career when she had the most freedom to choose where and when her work appeared, Boyle was highly conscious of different understandings of value—both literary value in terms of the aesthetic qualities of certain texts and commercial value in terms of what she might be paid for a text, as well as the more difficult algorithm of value in which aesthetic qualities of certain texts could be matched with the market driven aesthetic commitments of different types of publications. The publishing career and literary reputation of Kay Boyle, a reputation in part assigned by a relationship with a changing sense of what it means to be “modernist,” illustrates the interdependence of these different readings of value and reveals the way that gender marks that interdependence, especially for a woman writer.

Reviving a Literary Reputation

While understanding the overall trajectory of Boyle's career is important, another way of telling the story of Boyle's reputation is to examine how and why it was resurrected and reconstructed for an academic audience. The late 1980s saw a rise in interest about Kay Boyle as a new generation of literary scholars attempted to resurrect from the oblivion of literary history the women of expatriate modernism. Shari Benstock's landmark study, *Women of the Left Bank* (1986), for instance, was one of many studies within a movement that sought to uncover the feminine underpinnings of the male-dominated *avant-garde* literary scene of Paris in the 1920s. This movement was buoyed by the new interest in women's writing and feminist culture, and many of the texts that served as important studies during this time focused specifically on relating modernist women writers to a larger canon of women writers or to feminist writing more generally. The late 1980s and early 1990s, then, saw a wealth of studies by female scholars about modernism and modernity's intersection with gender. Some of the most influential include Shari Benstock's, which combined an interest in the city as woman, lesbian culture, and feminist writing to illustrate the complex nature of 1920s Paris. In addition, Suzanne Clark's *Sentimental Modernism: Women Writers and the Revolution of the Word* (1991) argued that the trope of sentimentality continued to permeate modernism and allowed women writers a new way to revolutionize language. And Rita Felski's *The Gender of Modernity* (1995) examined *fin de siècle* European culture to theorize that an understanding of the contradictions within a gendered matrix of modernity is necessary for an understanding of the later post-modern moment. One of the earlier texts in this movement to reestablish a place for female modernists within the larger canon, Sandra Spanier's bio-critical study of

Kay Boyle's life and work, was the first book-length study of the Boyle's life and work and set the tone for much of the scholarship on Boyle that would follow. These texts together initiated a new approach to modernist studies—one that foregrounded issues of gender and provided a feminist lens for understanding the modernist moment.

Spanier's study is no exception to this trend in feminist modernism, and depends heavily on an understanding of Boyle's personal life and political beliefs to uncover her aesthetics through a female-centered framework. While it is not the first critical work on Boyle, it is the first study that dealt with Boyle's career and work in its entirety, and Boyle herself saw as her authorized biography. More importantly, perhaps, it recovered Boyle as a modernist writer and set the tone for the way critics currently understand Boyle's importance for modernism. In her preface, Spanier makes the now paradigmatic gesture of equating Boyle's work aesthetically with other major modernist figures by citing Katherine Anne Porter's review of Boyle's first novel and commercially published collection of short stories. In the review, Porter compared Boyle to Gertrude Stein and James Joyce, and called her one of the strongest new talents of her generation. The few other critical studies of Kay Boyle's work follow Spanier's example by situating Boyle's value in terms of her involvement in the avant-garde literary communities of expatriate Paris. Using rhetoric that draws attention to the stylistic similarities between Boyle's texts and those of other, better known expatriate writers, these critics legitimate Boyle's work aesthetically through her social milieu. Most studies of Boyle's work also make a second paradigmatic gesture following Spanier's recovery of the writer; they attempt to demonstrate Boyle's difference and exemplariness from writers such as Joyce and Hemingway by placing her within the larger tradition of woman writers. For instance, while Suzanne Clark equates Boyle to

Joyce, she argues that “Boyle’s early work practices a resistance to extremism in the midst of a modernist extremism about gender” that Joyce’s does not (323). Thus, Clark can equate Boyle’s work in terms of stylistic or aesthetic quality without dirtying it with modernist misogyny—both moves important to the larger project of recognizing women modernists. Moreover, by highlighting Boyle’s status as a woman writer, Clark inserts Boyle into a larger tradition of feminist literature—a tradition that Boyle herself disavowed but one that allows critics to contextualize her work in terms of their own critical moment.

But highlighting Boyle’s gender also allows critics to deal with the fact that as her career progressed, Boyle increasingly sold her work to mass market periodicals and wrote novels which have been characterized by both the author and her critics as “potboilers.” At the same time these studies privilege her style and politics, they demonstrate an ambivalence that mirrors Boyle’s own ambivalence about becoming a more commercial writer. For many of the scholars who have tried to reinsert Boyle’s work into the canon of American modernism or into a feminist tradition, her decision to sell her work in the 1930s and 1940s to the most profitable and, consequently, most commercial venues presents a problem in the face of a definition of modernism based on its distance from mass culture.⁹ In this way, the work done by critics attempting to revive Boyle’s reputation was not that different from the cultural work done during the Fitzgerald Revival. Both sets of critics sought to separate the aesthetic value of their writer’s texts from the perceived corruption of the commercial market. However, for Boyle’s critics, the writer’s status as a woman—and perhaps more importantly, a mother—separates Boyle and exemplifies her as separate from her male counterparts. Accordingly, critics like Spanier and Clark differentiate Boyle’s labor as a modernist writer from the work of other expatriates like Malcolm Cowley

and Ernest Hemingway by recognizing that “Boyle’s pursuit of her artistic calling was complicated and often interrupted by the need to attend to such nagging practical concerns as food, shelter, and child care.”¹⁰ The demands of her life as a wife and mother catalyzed for Boyle’s decision to sell her work more commercially. Additionally, highlighting Boyle’s maternal identity and female-centered themes enabled feminist scholars to place Boyle within a larger tradition of women writers and within a larger feminist framework—despite Boyle’s own repudiation of both categories. In the context of the mid-eighties interest in resurrecting the forgotten women of transatlantic modernism, the stress on Boyle’s feminism over her popular publication did important work in reviving interest in Boyle the writer and Boyle the forgotten modernist.

In a sense, this impulse on the part of Boyle’s supporters replicates the logic of cultural value that operates through a tacit belief in the difference between legitimate avant-garde publishing and less-than-legitimate commercial publishing. The attempt to distance Boyle’s reputation as a modernist author from a mass literary culture saturated with commodities and corrupted by consumerism illustrates the power that the imaginary Great Divide continues to hold. The reluctance of critics to investigate whether Boyle’s commercial work was equally ‘modernist’ demonstrates the persistence of modernism as an indisputable marker of value. As John Harwood argues, “to refer to a writer as a ‘modernist’ is not simply to identify him or her as an experimental, or innovative, or *avant-garde* author working in the early twentieth century, but to convey a complex value-judgment” (39). Focusing on the formal similarities of Boyle’s work to other modernists was one means to place her work squarely in the modernist tradition, but the emphasis these studies place Boyle’s more commercial work by highlighting her own discomfort

about this work ultimately limits Boyle's place within American modernism.¹¹ However, even as it limits our understanding of Boyle's history, it provides a place to begin reexamining Boyle's importance for understanding modernist production and reputation in general.

Boyle and *This Quarter*

Before 1931, Boyle published her poetry and short stories almost exclusively in small literary reviews like Eugene Jolas's *transition* and Ernest Walsh's *This Quarter*; one of her earliest publications appeared in Walsh's magazine. The publications during the 1930s and 1940s that resulted from Boyle's new partnership with Ann Watkins may seem like a marked change from her earlier involvement with *avant-garde* magazines and expatriate literary circles, but they actually represent a continuation and intensification of investments with which she had long identified. In part, Boyle understood the larger circulation of commercial magazines as a vehicle for increasing her visibility as an author and the audience for her novels. Her early involvement with Ernest Walsh's expatriate literary magazine, *This Quarter*, had already taught Boyle about the value of an author's visibility and circulation in the public sphere. While *This Quarter* did not have the circulation of larger magazines, it provided writers a venue to make themselves visible as serious authors to the type of readers that could influence other readers. In the first issue of the magazine, Walsh wrote an editorial to declare the magazine's intentions and aims that outlined the importance of publishing to authors. "THIS QUARTER," he claimed, "exists primarily to publish the artist's work while it is still fresh. Without wishing to compete with certain literary magazines that have an almost journalistic zeal for the last word THIS QUARTER recognizes that if publication is to help the artist it must publish his work at

intervals of not less than three months and publish each work under no greater delay than the editing and printing demands" (259). Walsh continued, "THIS QUARTER insists that the vital need of an artist is to be published and read during his creative life and that periodicals delaying publication over long periods possibly protect the editorial reputation of the periodical but in no way may claim to assist the artist" (3). The goal of the magazine was to provide an alternative to the already saturated market of small *avant-garde* literary offerings, and what Walsh believed set *This Quarter* apart was its editorial policy that allowed for quick and unexpurgated publication of original works. Walsh believed that through the timely circulation of art and the consequent visibility of artists new and important forms of art could flourish.¹²

As its editor, Walsh consciously wished to avoid longevity for the magazine. "THIS QUARTER is our search and reason," he wrote in an introduction to the publication. "And what this quarter breeds the next quarter may bury" (4).¹³ Walsh's statement disavowing longevity for the magazine highlights what the magazine saw as most important—the art itself. By privileging the art and artists over the vehicle of publication, *This Quarter* attempted to avoid replicating a publishing industry that placed the publishing house's interest above the artists it served. Walsh's disdain for the publishing industry is clear in the editorial he wrote for the magazine's inaugural issue: "Unlike uninspired workers the artist does not go into the market and barter his work. Because the artist leaves to men's honesty the business of his salary men have been dishonest and paid the artist little or nothing for his work because it is work or prison for him" (5). Walsh saw the publishing industry as culpable in the exploitation of the artists.¹⁴ For Walsh, the serious artist, unlike the average laborer—and also unlike the commercial novelist—remains disinterested in

trading his labor in the market; instead, he produces on his own terms and leaves the business of compensation to others. What Walsh's editorial outlines is that it is not undesirable for the author to be well compensated; indeed, Walsh's critique points to the discrepancy between what he sees as a work's value and the payment authors usually receive. The move is a strange one for a publication that disavows commercialism. In much the same way that Williams's review of Boyle's first book traced an unclear line between the desire for commercial success and a disavowal of commercial publishers, Walsh's editorial wavers between the desire for artists to be paid for their work in the same way that other workers are paid and the need to differentiate aesthetic labor from the uninspired labor of the general population. Moorhead's purse might have paid the "going rate" for literary work, but for Walsh the usual amount paid to writers for their work did not adequately match the value of the product.¹⁵ His editorial calls upon his readers' sense of right and asks them to send in donations with which to pay the artists.

Boyle's own involvement with *This Quarter* was both professional and personal. In the second issue of the magazine, Boyle responded to Harriet Monroe's tepid review of the magazine in *Poetry*. Aligning herself closely with both Walsh and the magazine's philosophy, Boyle writes that the review was "typical rather than exceptional of the kind of thing THIS QUARTER means to make war on: namely the insinuating school of criticism; the weary critic; the bald-headed critic; the judicial critic; the polite critic; the malicious critic; the thousand and one kinds of critic that ought to shut up." She goes on to exclaim, "What cannot be either loved or despised is not vital enough to celebrate in print" (9). Here she echoes Walsh's own sentiments about the importance of the printed word; it becomes a form of "celebration" as much as a venue for communication.

The importance of Walsh's magazine and ideas to the young Boyle come through not only in this letter but also in her novel *Year Before Last* (1932), where Boyle chronicles her life with Walsh and the jealous Moorhead until Walsh's death. The novel traces the life of Hannah, a fictionalized version of Boyle, and her life with Martin, a fictionalized version of Ernest Walsh. Like Boyle, Hannah leaves her French husband to be with the tubercular poet and editor, but Martin is financially and emotionally entangled with his Aunt, Eve Raeburn, who introduced the pair but who now wants him to have nothing to do with Hannah. In the text, Martin's only goal is to publish his magazine, which Eve is funding. He must eventually choose between the two women if Eve is to continue funding the magazine. Boyle's novel captures her life with Walsh and serves as a memorial to the man and his work on *This Quarter*.

The novel also focuses explicitly on publishing and print as an important component of the poet's life. As Martin leaves Hannah to go back to Eve, he tells her "When a man was ready to bequeath something to his heirs...he prepared an instrument to bind time, and thus printing came to life. And with it came!" (80). Here the text is interrupted by Hannah's own thoughts about the beauty in Martin's belief in artists, but the text's lack of quotation marks to delineate speech blur the subjective and objective realities of the moment. The moment becomes a dreamlike sequence where Martin's words envelop Hannah:

With it came words, and words said one after another are in themselves a reason for existence. Measure the gold, the axis where the rails run into the sun. Take it home, measure the miracle. Put your finger on it, that's what I mean by making a poem up and getting it down on paper. It remains to be

proved that there is any dimension to grandeur, or that an open door leads anywhere except beyond the threshold of a man's heart. That's what I mean by a magazine. (80-1)

In this extraordinarily tense moment before their parting, romantic words are replaced by Martin's romantic image of his work. Words and texts, especially for Martin, take on an almost supernatural importance. The narrative itself affirms this importance through the way it presents Martin as romantic and tragic figure. Throughout all of this, issues about his work's value resonate as intensely personal: in one of their first nights together, Martin tells Hannah, "poetry is not a shirt you set aside at night. . . . It is a white shadow running behind" (43). For Martin, then, the literary life is not a posture one adopts but something implicit in the subject; the value of poetry becomes akin to the value of life.

But through its characterization of minor characters, the novel places Martin's version of the literary life in contrast to the commercial aspects of the writing and selling of texts. Flat and comical compared to Martin, minor characters such as the Duke, Phyllis, and Lady Vanta represent a corrupted version of authorship. Spending more time in cafés than working on their writing, they "represent a decadent spirit that threatens the integrity of art" (Spanier 79). The Duke has no interest in Martin's romantic notions about art and poetry. "If anyone can prove to me that a theory alone ever wrote a novel, then I'll pay up my money like a man," he tells Martin as they sit in the Duke's lavish dining room (150). Rather than theorizing about the existential nature of art, the Duke plunks away at his typewriter, each stroke representing a celebratory cocktail. A genial foil to Martin's intensity as well as to his authenticity, the Duke represents the interests of the commercial market and the commercial artist: "Every bloody one of us wants a house built to his liking,

a car that eats up the road, and money enough to eat and drink as we please” he argues. “Ten years ago I had ideas myself...but there’s not an idea going that will put four walls around you and keep a roof over your head” (151). That Hannah and Martin are virtually penniless, living on credit as they attempt to evade bill collectors, makes the Duke’s outburst even more disparate from the couple’s ideals. For Martin believes that the type of publishing the Duke accomplishes is not true literature. He tells Hannah, “a strange superstition has survived among most that editors or publishers are discriminating readers. Which is absurd. They carry their wares about in suitcases, like salesmen for horse-medicine or cough-drops or something worse” (236). Through these types of juxtapositions, Boyle’s novel makes the Duke’s conception of literature appear shallow and ridiculous in the face of Martin’s brooding intensity and integrity. Her sympathetic rendering of Walsh’s life and magazine through the heroic and romantic characterization of Michael indicates the importance of *This Quarter* and its ideals for the young Boyle. *Year Before Last* reads like a testament to the beauty and goodness that was the magazine’s central purpose—the dissemination of new and exciting art.

However, even as the novel situates Martin as the heroic ideal of literary purity, it undercuts the publishing he does in subtle (and, perhaps, unintentional) ways. For Martin, the magazine takes precedence above everything in his rapidly dwindling life—even above the woman he professes to love, Hannah. Although Martin sees printing and publishing his magazine as a way to “bequeath something to his heirs,” his single-minded focus on the magazine leaves him without any heirs. He seems to recognize this failing, telling Hannah, “I have a thing that tastes like poetry, but it would furnish no bones for children.” However, just as easily as he admits his lack of virility through poetry, he dismisses the weakness by

saying, "You must possess a worldly gift of belief in money or power before you can be a father to a child" (48). The always penniless Martin seems not to have any belief in money or its power as he evades one bill after another. After all, he believes in living like a pauper and spending "substance" elsewhere (317). This easy dismissal of Martin's failure to reproduce except through the printing press attempts to portray his literary endeavors as at least equal to the importance of fathering and raising children while it highlights his desire to remain apart from the world of money and power that he refuses to believe in.

In the end, Martin's determination to have his magazine at any cost leaves the editor barren and without any living legacy to pass on, as even the magazine he so desperately wants is controlled by and paid for by Eve. The very printing and production of the magazine depends upon the whim of his jealous Aunt. "It cost a lot of money, said Martin. Eve's money" (72). But Eve sees the magazine as a way to control Martin and to eliminate the competition for his affection that she sees in Hannah. Eve was "the provider," but although she is not interested in a romantic relationship with Martin, she also wants to fill the place in his affection and attention that a lover would fill. As Eve holds the magazine's future over Martin, she appears as a block in Martin and Hannah's relationship, a third body in their bed. For Martin, then, poetry and his magazine do more than replace the children he might have fathered; they prevent him from sustaining the intimate relationship that would create a child. He tells Hannah, "I want to finish my days with you. . . I have been a bad son, a bad nephew, and a bad lover, but I might be a good father," but his desire to be a father to Hannah's children is always frustrated by Eve's involvement in his life (216). As Hannah notes, Eve "had taken the magazine to make a disputed child of it," leaving Hannah, herself, childless (290). Because this text and its characters are so

closely related to the actual events in Boyle's life, it should be noted that Walsh did father a child with Boyle before his death. However, Boyle's decision not to include her pregnancy in an otherwise highly autobiographical text allows for a reading that complicates Martin's virility and, ultimately, the worth of his project.

Martin's failure to conceive a child with Hannah is compounded by his almost homoerotic devotion to "other men's poetry." When he listens to Hannah reading one of the manuscripts sent to him, he has a visceral reaction. "How am I to go on now with the miracle of putting other people's things into print and down on paper?" he asks Hannah. "Put your hand on my breast here, under my coat, Hannah, and feel my heart beating. When you read me his words it opened out so wide that it could not strike against my ribs any more" (130). The devotion that Martin seems to have for other poets' words surpasses even his devotion to a life with Hannah, and his reaction to their words as described here surpasses any description of romance between the two lovers in the text. In a sense, then, *Year Before Last* presents a heroic version of Walsh's vision for *This Quarter*, but in doing so it undercuts the masculine identity of the editor. Controlled by his feminist aunt (who has no erotic interest in men) and his desire for other men's words, the character of Martin also raises questions about the virility of the sphere of small press publishing. However unintentionally, the novel presents a vision more in tune with Hemingway's notion of masculine professionalism than with what one might expect from a writer closely involved in the world of avant-garde literature and publishing.

The Writer Turns to the Business of Authorship

Just two years after she signed Eugene Jolas's "Revolution of the Word," the manifesto that famously declared "the plain reader be damned," Kay Boyle wrote a letter to

Ann Watkins, a New York literary agent, and formally accepted her offer of representation with the Watkins Loomis Agency. "I'd like to have an agent who takes things off my mind instead of piling them on," she wrote Watkins. I am not a business woman and I must have someone to handle my stuff who is." Her declaration that she was "not a business woman" wasn't quite accurate, as it belied her continual involvement in both the venues where her writing was published and her interest in the prices it received. I do not mean to claim that she misrepresented herself to Watkins; indeed, she did not envision herself as a business woman. But throughout Boyle's career, her definition of authorial legitimacy entailed commitment to aesthetic purity that assumed a distance from the economic concerns of the business world of literature.

Her correspondence, however, reveals Boyle as a professional writer who continuously yearned not only for the critical approbation of her peers but also the financial success that would give her the economic freedom to write on her own terms. Rather than remaining separate spheres of her literary output, the worlds of the *avant-garde* little magazine and the commercially manufactured weekly glossies were part of an overall strategy Kay Boyle used to make her living as a writer. Her own ambivalence about what it meant to immerse herself in the business aspect of the literary profession illustrates an authorial identity fraught with contradictions, but her self-identification as an author did not preclude her from desiring to be a profitable and widely read author. More importantly, these seemingly contradictory impulses in the history of her publishing and in her correspondence do not set her apart from modernist literary culture; her career in many ways represents the essential example of a modernist writer at work in the early twentieth-century literary market. While her increasing involvement in the world of

popular magazine fiction might be seen as a marked change from her earlier involvement with *avant-garde* magazines and expatriate literary circle, in actuality, it was these early involvements that taught her about the necessity of an author's visibility through the circulation and publication of their work and fueled her determination to write for her living.

Her 1932 letter to Ann Watkins comes at a crucial moment in Boyle's career. At the same time that Boyle was writing *Year Before Last* in homage to Ernest Walsh, she was also actively engaged in placing her work in more profitable venues and in making more profit from the venues where she was already placing her work. During this period, Boyle's publishing choices and correspondence begins to demonstrate an understanding of and a desire to become a part of a wider commercial market.

In the fall of 1931, Boyle repeatedly voiced her displeasure with her then literary agent, Virginia Rice, to her friend Bessie Breuer. Specifically, Rice seemed set on Boyle publishing with Harrison Smith, Faulkner's publisher, even to the point of turning down other more lucrative or more prestigious offers. Boyle writes to Breuer, "I don't think she's a good saleswoman, like you, for instance. She writes me the stupidist [sic] things about Harrison Smith being 'her favorite publisher', like 'my favorite color', or something equally sweet and feminine and beside the point. . . . I want to move over to Harpers who have been writing me repeatedly, and she won't hear of it."¹⁶ Boyle believed that Rice was ill-equipped to be an effective businesswoman and was mishandling her business interests. In Boyle's view, Rice committed the sin of behaving like a woman with too much feminine sentimentality. She believed Rice was "too nice a girl," one who "gets fussed by the boys after a good lunch and all the rest."¹⁷ Boyle's articulation of Rice as too feminine aligns

with her own dissatisfaction at being known as a woman writer, rather than simply a writer.¹⁸ Her identification with a masculine literary culture underlines an anxiety about not being seen as a serious artist, while it also aligns the literary world with a masculine world of business. While Smith was a reputable publisher, Boyle was upset by the profits she had seen from them thus far. By fall of 1931, Boyle had received only “\$200 to date from those lads,” while they had purchased the original rights to five of her books, including *Wedding Day and Other Stories*, her first novel *Plagued By the Nightingale*, a collection of her collected poems, and a manuscript in progress for a novel that would become *Gentlemen, I Address You Privately*.¹⁹ Displaying a distrust of both commercial publishers and her agent, Boyle continued, “Golly, I guess businessmen are better than nice girls in this dirty game! Cape’s just like a big corpse, and gets you stewed to the gills while he remains stone sober.”²⁰ Her eventual decision to switch agents and start a business relationship with Ann Watkins was precipitated by what she saw as Rice’s inability to relinquish a femininity that prohibited her from competing in the business world.

Specifically, Boyle’s final decision to hire Watkins came after Rice’s mishandling of the contract negotiations for the manuscript that would become *Year Before Last*. In her negotiations for Boyle’s newest manuscript, Rice secured a contract that gave Boyle a one-thousand dollar advance on the novel. Boyle, however, was incensed that Rice turned down five other publishers, including Harpers, Scribner’s, Farrar and Rinehart, the Viking Press, and Knopf, and instead secured her a contract with a strange clause about the advance that Smith was willing to give. The contract stipulated that if the book did not earn back an amount equivalent to the advance of one-thousand dollars within a year’s time, Boyle would be responsible for paying back the publisher out of royalties on future

books.²¹ In effect, the contract transformed the advance into a mere loan, ensuring that Boyle would continue to publish under the Harrison Smith imprint, and that the publisher would eventually regain his initial investment. The contract impinged further on the author's usual rights by stating that "if the publisher saw fit at any time to sell off as many copies of the book as he wished at 50%, that he was at liberty to do so," a clause that would have affected Boyle's royalties.²² Had Boyle agreed to the contract, it would have effectively bound her to the publisher until or unless she became profitable enough to satisfy the requirements of the contract. Smith had good reason to insist on such a strange contract; his partnership with Jonathan Cape had just dissolved when Cape went bankrupt, and he was attempting to guarantee both his profits and his future publications. Boyle was also increasingly dismayed by Rice's inability to understand the importance and artistic merit of her latest manuscript, and the contract that Rice first secured for *Year Before Last* was the last straw.

Boyle's decision to change representation turned out to be an astute move. Ann Watkins came highly recommended by her friend and fellow writer, Robert Brown. Unlike Rice, who seemed set on publishing loyally rather than profitably, Watkins understood the artistic merit of Boyle's work as well as Boyle's need to make a living through its publication. The respect that Boyle had for Watkins' dedication to her career is clear as the correspondence over the course of their thirty-year partnership became increasingly informal and personal as the two became fast friends. Calling Watkins a "hard-boiled baby," Boyle was continually impressed with Watkins' ability to sell her texts while attempting to maintain her integrity and reputation as an author, even in the face of McCarthy era blacklisting. Their correspondence over the course of this time demonstrates

a shared understanding of the need to balance profitability with artistic merit and underscores the way that the two are related. "I don't need to assure you," Watkins told Boyle, "of the degree of my interest in promoting Kay Boyle of commercialism as well as kudos."²³ Unlike Rice, who seemed to Boyle only concerned with the aura of the publisher and the literary relationship, Watkins was successful at promoting the legitimacy of Boyle's work while not sacrificing its marketability.

Throughout her relationship with Watkins, Boyle remained an involved client, consistently interested in how Watkins' handling of her affairs would impact her. One example of Boyle's awareness about how being published and in regular circulation could affect the price for her next text appears early in her relationship with Watkins. In 1932, Boyle told Watkins to hold off on selling "A Friend of the Family," until the reviews of *Year Before Last* were out. Up until this point, she had made just over two hundred dollars for most stories, but she tells Watkins that she hoped to make at least three hundred dollars after the novel had been reviewed. Ernest Walsh had once written, "'No writing, painting, sculpturing, or musical composition gains or loses in value with time," but Boyle herself understood that apart from some inherent 'value' of the work, the reputation and visibility of the producer of the object as an artist played an important part in the recognition of the text itself (4). She understood that favorable reviews for *Year Before Last* would make Boyle a more recognized name and, subsequently, would make her stories more sought after. Her belief was not unfounded, but came from experience; both Williams' and Porter's early reviews had made her name and her texts more recognizable as legitimate literary products. Boyle was betting that positive reviews for her novel would create a larger and higher-paying market for her stories.

This example represents one of many instances throughout Boyle's career where she manipulated the publication of her works to ensure higher prices or publication in more prestigious venues. More specifically, she used the profits and visibility provided by what she saw as her more commercial stories to fund the writing the texts that she felt were important for her growth as an artist. Her correspondence reveals a writer who was interested in different forms at different times, and who understood the importance that short story sales and advances for novels could have for her financial solvency. Throughout this period, Boyle was highly aware of the relationship between the genre of her writing and the amount she might receive for its publication, but aesthetically, she wavers between a desire to continue writing and a weariness about what that writing does for her ability to produce novels. For instance, after selling a story to *Harpers* in May of 1931, she tells Breuer that she needs two years of "financial security" to really make something of herself, but she finds it "devastating to have to stop writing long pieces and poems all the time to hammer out a short story that sounds pretty bad after it's done."²⁴ She understood that the short stories helped to make her novels possible, but she worried that they were interrupting what she saw at that time as her real work.²⁵

It was during this period of her career that Boyle's magazine publishing becomes most profitable and most abundant. Throughout the 1930s, Boyle published extensively in a variety of what her agent called the "quality group magazines," such as *Harpers*, *Vanity Fair*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and most especially, *The New Yorker*. Because the style of most of her early short stories eliminated them from possible publication in many of the more popular commercial magazines, Boyle's style in her short stories published during this period tends to become less complex and more readable than her earlier, impressionistic

pieces. Boyle understood that her decision to spend time primarily writing short stories meant that she had to write with a specific audience in mind. Writing to her sister Joan, Boyle explains, "There doesn't seem to be any money for me in novels, so I'm sticking to shorter things for a while."²⁶ Her work throughout the 1930s and for most of the 1940s continued to earn her a reputation as a stylist, but increasingly her stories featured more traditional and straightforward characters, plot, and action than her earliest experiments with language.

Depending upon sales to the popular weekly glossies, however, often meant that Boyle lost a measure of control in the appearance of her texts. Early in 1932, for example, she sent Watkins a story called "Lydia and the Ring-Doves" and suggested that Watkins try *Harpers*. *Harpers*, though, was not interested in the story. By June, Watkins decided to try selling the story "to more commercial magazines," but with little luck until *Vanity Fair* finally purchased it in August. The story sold for only one hundred and twenty-five dollars, less than half of what Boyle hoped *Harpers* would pay, and when it was finally published, the magazine deleted "several long paragraphs" without first consulting her.²⁷ While Watkins promised to convey Boyle's anger to *Vanity Fair*, it is not exactly clear that this was a case of over-indulgent editing on the part of the magazine's editors. In a letter dated August 23, 1932, the editors tell Watkins that they will take the story, but since fiction in their publication can be no longer than two thousand two hundred words, they will have to cut a portion of it. A response dated the next day from the Watkins agency confirmed and approved of this move to sell the story. Apparently, Boyle was not aware of this exchange, because her letters to Watkins convey a sense of surprise that her text has been altered.

The example of “Lydia” seems to be a rare one during this period, though. Rather, Boyle found a fairly loyal and ready audience in *The New Yorker* from 1931 until 1950. By the early 1930s the magazine was beginning to include one longer narrative piece within the first twenty pages of each issue, and Boyle’s work found a place in this prominent position more times than not. Much of Boyle’s early work is hardly the wit usually common to *The New Yorker’s* pages, but her inclination to write highly autobiographical first person pieces fit well enough with the magazine’s usual offerings.²⁸ The pages of *The New Yorker* would have been no place for dark, brooding stories like “On the Run,” a story originally published in *transition* in which a woman unsuccessfully tries to disguise the consumptive coughs of her dying lover in a French hotel that is “not prepared for death.” But the magazine provided Boyle a willing audience for the subtle nuances of her prose and a public willing to buy her novels.

Boyle’s stories that appeared during the 1930s and early 1940s follow certain conventions of the magazine—their briefness, and pared-down prose style, for example—while at the same time pushing the boundaries of the wit and sophistication usually found in the magazine. Her first *New Yorker* story, “Kroy Wen,” uses shifts in perspective to highlight a Hollywood cinematographer’s inhumanity and inability to feel the pain of others. On a boat bound for Italy, the movie maker sees two Italians in steerage whom he can use for his film. “I needed a few food yards of a pregnant woman. God, what atmosphere!” he exclaims, conflating the woman with the celluloid that will capture her image. When the woman goes into labor, he feels he has finally hit upon some good luck, but is dismayed when she does not scream or writhe in pain as he expects. “You’re getting something in the way of cash out of this, you know. After all, you aren’t doing it for the love

of the thing” (15). The implication here, of course, is that as a director and artist he *is* “doing it for the love of the thing,” but his complete inability to comprehend the woman’s pain, in part because of her foreignness, raises questions about what the thing of importance is here. In the story, Boyle criticizes an artist disconnected from the subject he is attempting to capture, but her characterization of the unfeeling cinematographer is mild compared to the characters she critiques in some of her other *New Yorker* stories like “One of Ours,” “Black Boy,” and “White as Snow.” All three deal with white society’s inability to understand and recognize the humanity of non-white characters. Although she published some less serious pieces that have a style reminiscent of Dorothy Parker’s soliloquies, a steadfast political strain runs throughout her *New Yorker* pieces.²⁹ When war breaks out in Europe in 1939, her stories cover the pain and suffering of the French people, and the callousness of both the French and German officers in their treatment of immigrants and naturalized citizens.

As the 1940s progressed, Boyle’s magazine work increasingly slanted toward a mass reading public uninterested in avant-garde experimentation or style. In the late 1940s, Boyle wrote what she called a “slick story.” She told Watkins she hoped it sold “to the movies and makes a million dollars.” But Boyle was aware that such a commercial story was not up to her artistic standards. She goes on to tell Watkins, “if it isn’t the worst story ever written, I’ll eat the entire manuscript, carbons and all. . . . The trouble is that writing a bad slick takes just as much sweat and tears on my part as writing a good story.”³⁰ The story appeared as “One Small Diamond, Please” in the August issue of the *Woman’s Home Companion*, and Boyle wrote that she could only rejoice for the money the story would bring and not that it would “appear in print.”

Boyle's finances might have necessitated that she write short stories in order to support herself and her children, but the time and labor needed to complete the many short stories she would produce during the 1930s and 1940s did not necessarily translate easily into the market for books. Because the market for short story collections was so much narrower than the market for novels, far fewer collections could be brought out at any one time. For instance, in 1934, Harcourt agreed to produce a collection of short stories for Boyle's next book, but because they already had committed themselves to publishing two other collections—John O'Hara's and Katherine Anne Porter's—that spring, Boyle's collection and the payments from royalties on that collection had to wait for a fall publication date. While short story writing kept her family fed and her bank account (mostly) in the black, it had drawbacks and required sacrifices. For Boyle, short stories financed her more "serious" projects: certain novels, her poetry, and a form that she called the novelette, but the structure of the market for stories and novels also meant that her more experimental work had to be neglected or compromised.

A Return to Formal Innovation- The Novelette

In 1937, Boyle became interested in a form she termed the "novelette," an expanded short story that was about the length of the usual novella. Boyle wrote three of these short pieces before they were published as *The Crazy Hunter: Three Short Novels*, "The Crazy Hunter," "The Bridegroom's Body," and "Big Fiddle." While critics have recognized these short texts as some of Boyle's finest writing, the stories did not necessarily contribute much to the author's reputation or her bank account. Boyle's interest in this form demonstrates a continued commitment to her interest in form and style at the same time many of the stories and novels that she published were written expressly for the profits of the mass

market magazine audience. While her contemporary critics and later supporters might see her more profit-driven publishing as a break from her more literary-minded career, her interest in these forms demonstrates that for Boyle the split between these two sectors of the literary market was not as clear as one might think. Her failure to succeed in publishing the novelettes in their intended form, however, exposes the unyielding structure of an already set market; too long for most general magazines, they were too short to be considered for an individual book.

Boyle's first mention of the novelette form appears in a letter to Watkins in July of 1937. She tells Watkins that she is experimenting with a new form and asks her where she might publish it. The novelette in question—an extended short story that later will be known as “The Bridegroom’s Body”—is deemed by both Watkins and Boyle’s publisher at the time, Harcourt, to be among the best work she has ever written. They are both puzzled, however, about where to publish the story. Watkins tells Boyle that the people at Harcourt are extraordinarily interested in the manuscript: “The Harcourt Brace crowd feels that *The Bridegroom’s Body* represents the absolute tops in anything you’ve ever done and it is so important from a literary viewpoint that it might well justify publication between covers in itself. However, the mechanics of its publication (20,000 words as it is) have to be gone over and considered very carefully before they can say Yes.”³¹ The problem with Harcourt publishing this text highlights the problem with attempting to insert experimental prose into an already existing market. It underscores the issues of how both audiences and commercial publishers identified value in a printed text. Harcourt declines publishing the text as a separate book, stating “Done honestly, it would be a little book of 100 pages to sell for \$1.25. Done dishonestly, with fancy trimmings and de luxe curves, it could be padded

into a \$2.00 book.” He goes on to tell Watkins, “Now, unquestionably some booksellers, with a very small and special bunch of clients, like these fancy items, but the public (and the booksellers who reach the public) for any important writer swiftly tires of precocity of this sort and does not easily forgive the writer, or the publisher, for it.”³² Harcourt’s response illustrates a couple of issues about the limits of the commercial publishing industry. First, because Boyle is now under contract to a larger publishing house, even her longer work must be geared towards some mass entity deemed simply as “the public.” While this two dollar book would have in many ways resembled her first published book of stories, a deluxe collection like the one brought out by the Black Sun Press, and would have allowed her to circulate some of her best work for a specific audience, her current publisher was not motivated to sell to that audience because it was not the market with which he usually dealt. Moreover, the distinction between publishing the book “honestly” and a “dishonestly” also underscores the expectations of Boyle’s reading public. Here Harcourt indexes the public’s expectations not in terms of quality of text included between the covers of the book but of its quantity. Harcourt’s letter suggests that “the public” views the value of a book (at least in terms of its physical manifestation) not as reflection of what sort of aesthetics it contains, but of how many pages of print it contains.

Unable to reconcile printing the story separately, Harcourt underscores the difficulty in publishing such a text with the example of a similar story of Katherine Anne Porter’s that the publisher is also holding. Porter, Harcourt tells Boyle, has decided that she wants the story held until she has four others to make “a collection of impressive length, a book that will undoubtedly win her a larger audience than she has yet enjoyed.” The publisher finishes by commenting that, “Miss Porter’s story, published in a quarterly

magazine, has been duly appreciated by a small and knowing audience and the magazine probably paid her as much as the book would have earned in royalties.”³³ The way that Harcourt positions his response privileges a specific understanding of a text’s value: the value that an audience would be willing to pay for it. This version of literary value has more to do with the material form of the book than the aesthetic form of the text. Here, Harcourt equates a magazine publication and the later collection of stories in terms of the amount of profit that Porter would make from the two sales.

Harcourt’s response underlines that these two types of publication mean different things for an author’s reputation. Publishing the novelette in a magazine is not the equivalent of a book publication. While a quarterly—in other words, a literary magazine with a smaller circulation—would probably pay Boyle more than the royalties on a book would ever amount to, it would not position her text in the same way the book form would. Although at this point in her publishing career Boyle’s name had enough recognition that she could have perhaps sold the novelette as a separate book, her publisher believed that to do so was to risk alienating an audience that increasingly had little patience for the aestheticism and “precocious” publishing ventures that marked the expatriate communities of the 1920s. While Harcourt preferred a novel from the writer, the publisher was willing to publish “The Bridegroom’s Body” in a collection of short stories. This refusal on the part of Harcourt to publish a small de luxe edition of a generically peculiar text highlights the importance of author’s understanding the place of genre and form in the marketing of a text; her decision to continue her focus on writing these extended short stories rather than novels indicates that she was either unaware of these constraints or, under certain circumstances, unwilling to be bound by them.

Critical Effects: Influencing Boyle's Reputation

The insistence on the part of both Boyle and her later supporters in keeping her reputation from appearing too commercial may have been predicated by the fiction of a divide between cultural spheres, but that fiction had real effects on Boyle's career. Two reviews of Boyle's work that frame the period between when she began publishing in the late 1920s and when her publishing career seemed to be on the decline in the 1940s shows the actual effects of the perceived divide between elite and commercial culture. William Carlos Williams' glowing 1929 review of her first collection of short stories and Edmund Wilson's scathing 1944 review of her novel *Avalanche* examine both an individual text and her work as a whole. While the reviews demonstrate fundamentally different appraisals of her work and her status, both reviewers use a similar understanding of literary value and authorial legitimacy—an understanding that would inform both Boyle's publishing career and later attempts to revive her reputation.

Williams' review of Boyle's first collection of short stories, simply titled *Short Stories*, appeared in the November 1929 edition of *transition*. His review is more a critique of the publishing industry as a whole than a singular review of Boyle's work, as he never addresses the actual stories. Instead, Williams' review uses Boyle's work to enter a larger discussion about the state of publishing and letters in America. Williams asks, "In what country... is the fear of genius so pronounced in the midst of such overpowering wealth?" (314). Only through inference does the reader understand that Boyle's work represents this genius and not the "opacity of a mist of equality, a mist of common mediocrity is our character" (314). It is a sense of mediocrity that Williams defines the work of Boyle and

himself against, and it is in his definition of mediocrity and “the average” that we might begin to understand his definition of literary “excellence.”

The review is tinged with praise for *transition*, the writers it supports, and The Black Sun Press that published the collection, as it heralds Boyle as the first new beginning for the national literature since the possibility presented by Emily Dickinson. Williams writes, “Her short stories assault our sleep. They are a high degree of excellence; for that reason they will not succeed in America, they are lost, damned” (314). For Williams, the American nation remains in a sleeping stupor, its citizens somnambulists unaware of themselves and their possibility. While Williams is ultimately incorrect about Boyle’s future reception, his definition of “excellence” highlights his anxiety about the state and place of “serious” literature in American culture. In part, his anxiety about his own place in the cultural landscape of America allows Williams to present a definition of literary value based upon the very market upon which he also depends. For Williams, “the best is untimely as well as rare, new and therefore difficult of the recognition” (316). Because the “best” writing does not have a general appeal it is “therefore, dependent on discerning support (without expectation of money benefit from the able; scantily saleable—and without attraction from the book trade)” (317). In his validation of Boyle (and implicitly, himself) as producing just this sort of writing, and in his critique of the lack of recognition that her writing will receive, Williams vacillates between desiring a respectability garnered by the commercial realm’s dismissal and desiring recognition in the form of compensation from that very realm. The result, after all, of being dismissed by commercial publishers and being uninteresting to a mass audience is that the author becomes dependant upon alternative

markets that do not necessarily provide any real pay. Yet, in this dismissal, for Williams, the artist cultivates a sense of legitimacy.

For writers like Boyle and Williams, however, producing only “excellent” art—that is, art that does not sell well—was not a realistic or economically feasible way to make one’s living. The rhetoric of Williams’ review makes it clear that the ideal of excellence is always shifting, but is always defined against success in the market:

Surely excellence kills sales. Why is an outspoken statement of this plain fact, known the world over to publishers and writers, always so carefully avoided? I know it is a cover in which writers hide their pique. . . . But it certainly is known that even when excellence has a market, such a success is rarely its own but must be suspect, from the artist’s viewpoint. Nearly always some quite accidental and therefore unimportant genre which such a work shows will be found to be the cause of its popularity. (316)

Here Williams unconsciously uncovers a contradiction within his own argument and a complexity of the literary field. While he intends the statement that financially successful work must always be artistically suspect, the statement ultimately uncovers a problem with the fundamental logic of his definition of value. In Williams’ logic, to sell one’s work successfully is to immediately become suspect, unless of course that success can be explained away by some “unimportant” issue, like the work’s unintended match with a currently popular genre. He establishes, then, a definition of value that makes it almost impossible for an artist to succeed both artistically and financially. His notion of literary value, then, suggests less about the reading habits of the general population than about the

anxiety of an avant-garde community balancing their desire for two seemingly contradictory goals.

This may be one reason why Williams' review praises the vehicle of her text—a book produced by The Black Sun Press—as much as it praises Boyle's work itself. Because her collection of short stories was published by the Crosbys' small, private press in a limited edition, Boyle avoided the control of the literary agents and the publishing industry that Williams calls their “fashionable pimps” (317).³⁴ The book was sold exclusively at Harry Marks' bookstore in New York City, a store that specialized in selling erotica and finely bound books to an elite clientele. *Short Stories*, then, was not meant for a general public, but for a specific consumer who would recognize the merit of the text, in part, through the packaging which contained it.³⁵ By fetishizing the object of the book itself, the Crosbys' press removed Boyle's text from any mass market possibilities.

What Williams' review did not recognize, however, was that her works' collected appearance in print and Williams' own review initiated Boyle's entrance into the larger commercial literary market. Following the collection's appearance, Boyle had much better luck placing her work with more commercial venues. Her first two novels, which were initially rejected by commercial publishers, were eventually accepted by Cape and Smith following the publicity caused by Williams' praise. With the publication of her first novel, her short stories began to be accepted by venues with larger circulations, such as *Harpers* and *The New Yorker*. She wrote to her friend Caresse Crosby in May of 1931, “I've sold a story to Harper's for \$225! Aren't you proud of what you have made me?”³⁶ The price of \$225 was exciting for Boyle, and in this letter, she demonstrates her appreciation to Caresse by recognizing that the publishing of *Short Stories* had a large part in her success.

Just as *Short Stories* and the review it received initiated her publishing career, her 1944 novel, *Avalanche*, and the reviews it received had a large impact on her reputation. Part adventure fiction, part romance, the novel tells the story of a girl who is the daughter of American and French parents. She returns to the remote village where she grew up, located in a portion of France by the Italian border. She hopes to find the man she once loved as a child, who has mysteriously gone missing since the occupation and who may be secretly involved in the Resistance. However, while Williams' review of *Short Stories* may have helped her career, the review of *Avalanche* by Edmund Wilson in January of 1944 had the opposite effect.

Wilson reviewed the novel in the January 15 *New Yorker*. The review was one of his earliest reviews for the magazine, and because it was his first review of a novel, it attracted a great deal of attention. In a sense, Wilson chose Boyle as an easy target. His own career foundering, Wilson's devastating critique of the book that Boyle herself has admitted was written for commercial purposes and shaped by the *Post's* demands was in some sense an attempt to re-establish himself as a prominent voice within literary circles by critiquing a well regarded author.³⁷ Boyle's biographer, Joan Mellen goes as far as to claim that Wilson's review "sounded the death knell for Kay Boyle's literary reputation" (294). However, as different as Wilson's appraisal of Boyle's work may be from Williams, their definition of literary legitimacy remains similarly dependant on an understanding of the importance of a text's publication venue and commercial success.

It was, in part, its popularity that drew Wilson to the text and which irritated him so thoroughly. While *Short Stories* was printed in a very limited run, *Avalanche* was a major trade publication, was serialized in *The Saturday Evening Post*, was a Book of the Month

Club selection, and had two hundred and fifty thousand copies sold to the Armed Forces for their Armed Service Edition paperback series.³⁸ With *Avalanche*, Boyle succeeded in garnering what might have been her largest audience, and the novel became both her best selling novel to date and her only bestseller. Wilson begins the review by calling *Avalanche* “nothing but a piece of rubbish. . . simply the usual kind of thing that is turned out by women writers for the popular magazines” (74). Much of Wilson’s critique focuses on what he sees as a contrived plot. He writes that “The Girl herself keeps the story going only by exercising so stubborn a stupidity that it becomes difficult to understand how any underground movement could have trusted her,” and that “the climax is terrific,” in that hero rescues the Girl at the last possible moment and marries her that very night” (74). For Wilson, the artifice of the plot also calls into question Boyle’s entire body of work. He writes, “I cannot see how a writer with a really sound sense of style could have produced this book even as a potboiler” (74).

While the fantastical and romantic plot may have been the reason for his harsh review, the rancor in his review was directed at the way the text was published. For Wilson, the faults in the text’s content was exacerbated by its serialization in the *Post*—a magazine that had a circulation of almost four million at the time and represented a very different type of publication from either the avant-garde magazines where Boyle got her start or the *New Yorker* itself. He writes that he did not read the novel in the *Post*, but has “been haunted ever since I read it by a vision of *Saturday Evening Post* illustrations, in which the ideal physical types of the skin-lotion and shaving soap ads are seen posing on snowy slopes” (66). His association of Boyle’s texts with the advertising illustrations of *Post* toiletry ads, even though he did not actually encounter the serialized version, calls

attention to Boyle's novel as something equal to a bottle of lotion or cake of shaving soap—a disposable and consumable commodity not worthy to be enshrined in print much less purchased by a discerning reader.

For Wilson the aesthetic flatness of the novel was highlighted by its serialization, but Wilson does not stop his critique there. Instead he goes on to write, "Nor do I doubt that this novel was constructed with an eye to the demands of Hollywood, that intractable magnetic mountain which has been twisting our fiction askew and on which so many writers have been flattened" (76). For Wilson, to write for Hollywood seems almost worse than writing as a woman for other women; it is writing for the most banally popular. Wilson's review saw Boyle's publishing in the *Post* as moving dangerously into the realm of a commodified culture.³⁹

Like Williams' review, Wilson's review illustrates an anxiety about the prospect of "serious" literature in the face of an ever expanding commodity culture. He draws on a similar notion of the literary—one that values a distance from the mediocrity of mass culture. Wilson draws directly on the avant-garde expatriate movement to illustrate the lost possibilities of Boyle's authorship: "It is easy to be funny about *Avalanche*, but it has its depressing aspects. I have not read much else by Kay Boyle since her very early work. . . but I know from those early stories, written when she lived abroad and printed in the "little" magazines of the American *émigrés*, that she was at least making an effort at the time to produce something of serious interest" (76). Less than twenty years earlier, Williams' notion of Boyle's value was based specifically on a *lack* of recognition, but Wilson's review tracks the changing position of the avant-garde's position in American culture. By 1944, the literary scene in avant-garde Paris had become a recognized and

understood part of the larger cultural sphere. Wilson's scathing critique tells us something about the stakes in shifting from avant-garde to popular for a writer who is financially successful.

Wilson's review obscures, however, that Boyle's shift into the realm of mass market literary publishing did not happen spontaneously with the publication of *Avalanche*, but had been a progression since her first publications in *transition* and *This Quarter*. Her move away from publishing solely in small magazines and with private presses was, as noted earlier, partially due to the financial constraints imposed by her growing family, but it was also part of her movement toward becoming a professional author—a woman who wrote as her primary source of income. More importantly, though, Boyle's publishing career—especially the period through 1950—illustrates that the changes she made in the venues that published her work was less a break than a continuation of earlier publication strategies.

Life After Avalanche—Enemy Detail and His Human Majesty

The 1930s and 1940s were perhaps the most profitable years in Boyle's long career. Her short story production in the late 1930s and especially the 1940s was prolific. The major market for her work remained *The New Yorker* and beginning in 1942, she added the *The Saturday Evening Post*. In the years from 1939 to 1943, she also published two more novels directed at a mass audience, including *Avalanche*. The commercial success of *Avalanche* had helped her bank account swell and her financial worries decrease. On her 1943 income tax return, she listed her income as \$26,761, with \$9357.95 in royalties from the serialization and success of the *Avalanche*—one of the highest incomes she would ever record (Mellen 280). But the late 1940s represent another transition in Boyle's career as a

writer: the critical reactions to *Avalanche* and her overwhelming amount of writing and publishing in the late 1930s and early 1940s in a sense had flooded the market for her work, and by the late 1940s the limits of the market's possibilities caused problems for her and her publishers.

At the point that Boyle turned back to what she considered more serious writing—a manuscript for a novel she called *Enemy Detail*—the sheer amount of her publishing caught up with her. The salesmen for Simon and Schuster, her publisher at the time, begged their editor to hold off on publishing more of Boyle, because they were unable to sell so much at once.⁴⁰ The lack of sales combined with Boyle's constant demands about how and when her work was to be published caused the firm to back out of their contract. The way that Schuster released Boyle from the contract indicates the value he continued to see in her writing as well as the respect he had for her work. Watkins forwarded a copy of Schuster's letter to Boyle:

Kay's heart is really in Europe. Her heart is so big that it is probably there now more than ever. She wants to help the people among whom she matured. She wants to write about them, not only in the way they are now but the way they were in Kay's own earlier years. . . . I wonder if you know of any publisher who likes Kay as she is and who realizes that she probably will not much change the subject matter of her books, the locale or her style. If he is the sort of publisher whom Kay would like and respect and is financially stable, then I think Kay should go to such a publisher. We have tried to do our best for Kay but I don't think it has been good enough for her, and

therefore not good enough or us. If such a switch could be made, then I suggest that it be done with both books.⁴¹

The delicacy with which the letter is written suggests that Boyle's work was still respected by the publisher, but its content suggests that Boyle had become less in tune with the demands and possibilities of publishing commercially in the post-World War II market. One of the biggest problems was Boyle's insistence on her publisher bringing out short story collections rather than novels. Boyle had hoped that she would be able to collect some of the finer stories she had been writing to satisfy the demands of her contract. Her demands about how and when the current novel should be serialized—demands that affected her publisher's cut of her earnings on the serial—were the last straw for the company. While Schuster's letter focuses on Boyle's style and themes, the loss of her contract with Simon and Schuster was predicated on her focus on the novelette form.

Watkins cushioned the blow for Boyle by already having a new publisher in mind. Edward Aswell, the editor of Thomas Wolf and Richard Wright for Harper Brothers, was starting the Whittesly House imprint and wanted Boyle's new novel for his first publication. Watkins told Boyle, "I've felt from the beginning that this was perhaps the most important book that you've as yet tackled, and it was a question in my mind as to which publishers to approach...The best editor, and one of the straightest shooting and thinking men I know, is Edward Aswell."⁴² He writes Boyle in an early letter, "Although you do not know me, I feel that I know you through your work; and here, at the beginning of our relationship, I want to say, as simply and straightforwardly as I can, that I regard you as one of the greatest writers of our time. To be privileged to work with you as your editor is a prospect as exciting as any that has ever opened out before me, and to that prospect of future

collaboration I want you to know that I dedicate myself with pride and a deep humility.”⁴³

The delicacy with which Aswell deals with Boyle and her ego in their correspondence suggests his respect for her, but his need for her prestige as an author marks a turn for the artist. For the most part in the past, she had been able to select the presses and publications she wished to be associated with—either because of the financial stability they would provide her or because of the prestige they offered her reputation. Aswell’s desire to publish *Enemy Detail* (which would eventually be called *His Human Majesty*) signals both the importance of Boyle’s previous work and the falling value of her current recognition.

The publication of *His Human Majesty*, however, was continually complicated by Boyle’s return to an earlier sense of her work’s integrity as art. Aswell and Watkins arranged for the novel to be serialized in Edward Week’s *Atlantic Monthly*, but the serialization was contingent on Boyle meeting certain standards about the content. Boyle’s determination to make a “really good book” of the novel caused a variety of problems for the serialization, as well as the sale of portions of the novel as short stories. When Boyle told Watkins that the specter of writing a novel with serialization in mind would paralyze her work, Watkins replied to the worried Boyle, “Don’t let the possibility of the Post or another big circulation magazine worry you on ENEMY DETAIL. I know Ross turned it down, but that was nearly 2 years ago. However, you should not be disturbed or worried about any markets. As you say, you’ve got to do your stuff and do it honestly, and without thought of market. And this—you know—is the thing I want you to do.”⁴⁴ In fact, Ross’s refusal of the story Watkins refers to in this letter was not because of the quality of the writing so much as the content. Ross had rejected the story in a personal letter to Boyle, telling her his decision to reject the story indicates that he may be “running the

wrong kind of magazine.”⁴⁵ Her renewed commitment to the manuscript’s quality may have been a response to the negative reaction from the critics of *Avalanche*, but Watkins’ letter implies that Boyle had not forgotten about the concerns of selling the finished product. The letter displays Watkins’ understanding of Boyle as an artist apart from “any markets,” but in part, her encouragement was meant to help Boyle meet the deadlines that would benefit them both.

Boyle succeeded in writing the novel the way she wanted to, despite the problems that it may have caused for the text’s serialization. At one point she even destroyed the final chapters and rewrote them, losing all possibility of meeting the *Atlantic Monthly*’s deadlines as well as the profits of serialization. “This letter will be a blow to you,” she writes Watkins.

I don’t know how you can possibly fix things up for me ever, and I think the wisest thing is not to say anything to Aswell about it at all. The pages came back from the English typist, and instead of sending them to you, I tore them up in small pieces. Then I lay down on the bed and thought for eight hours without stopping, and the last thirty pages are now being done again. . . . I couldn’t let Aswell—or anyone else—see it the way it was. And now the new development of it will put it out of the running for any magazine publication . . . but it HAD to be.⁴⁶

This new development, however, meant that Boyle did not fulfill the contract she had with Weeks for serialization. The failure to get the novel into serialized form cost her both possible sales for her novel as well as a good relation with the *Atlantic Monthly* editor. In terms of her finances, Boyle’s dedication to the text’s perfection did not pay off. Her

inability to meet the deadlines and demands of serialization cost her the only profits that the work may have made and ultimately demonstrated her inability to recognize her reputation's changing position.

While Aswell was extremely happy with the finished text, *His Human Majesty* did not find a willing audience. Apparently, the reading public was no longer interested in a novel about ski troopers training in Leadville, Colorado or their later fight with Nazis. Reviewers for the novel—possibly still under the influence of *Avalanche*'s critical disappointment—were skeptical at best, complaining about her inability to convey the reality of the situations she portrayed in the midst of heavy emotional rendering. Katherine Gauss Jackson, writing for *Harper's Magazine*, reviewed the book by saying that “when a book has basically as worthy a moral seriousness as this one, it seems small to quibble that its literary tediousness—its lack of any sort of humor, intrinsic or extrinsic—comes close to making a caricature of its intent” (108). It seems that by 1949, Boyle's audience was primed for more work along the plot and character-driven lines as *Avalanche*. When *His Human Majesty* appeared too literary for her audience's tastes, the buying public did not respond warmly. By 1950, it was clear that the novel was a financial failure, and Aswell was forced to reply to Boyle's request for copies of the novel by telling her that her royalty account for the book was “in the red.” Aswell's understanding of Boyle's possible public, it seems, was as faulty as Boyle's own understanding of her reading public. Aswell had signed on with Boyle with an understanding of Boyle's earlier work—texts that were generally characterized as avant-garde or “serious” literature, but the author he ended up with an author whose reputation was waning. The extent to which the book ultimately failed financially underscores the changes in the cultural and material marketplace;

consumers were no longer as interested in Kay Boyle as a “serious” author or in her European-centered work.

Boyle as a Modernist Author

Boyle’s correspondence shows that throughout her career she understood her magazine sales primarily as a way to continue produce an income that would allow her to write her more important works on her own terms. In a 1978 interview, Boyle likened writing to playing an instrument: “You play the violin; you play Bach beautifully, and then, every now and then, you may play something less important. And that’s the value of the classical” (Bell 94). Her letters to Watkins show that she repeatedly used the sale and publication of her short stories to fund her novels and that she used the advances from novels to fund her more experimental work—especially her novelettes like *The Bridegroom’s Body*. Her statement about the “less important” work demonstrates that she understood her less experimental work—including what she called her “slick stories”—as part her overall strategy as a professional author.

More importantly, perhaps, her correspondence with Watkins illustrates that her commitment to creating personally fulfilling art and her involvement in the sales of her work were always part of her strategy as an author. Her publications in *The New Yorker*, *Harper’s*, and *The Saturday Evening Post* need less to be excused for their deviation from modernist culture than examined for what they might tell us about the way that the entire literary market of the early twentieth century informed the formation of that culture. She may have claimed not to be a businesswoman, but Boyle’s astute perceptions of how to position herself as an author provide an important example how professional writers—even self-identified modernists—in the early twentieth century met and negotiated the

demands of a seemingly fragmented market. Boyle's long and prolific career presents an example of a writer who was important both to the avant-garde community and to the popular magazine culture of her day, yet whom most accounts of modernism still fail to recognize. An understanding of her career in particular has important implications for our understanding of the way the literary market influenced the formation of a modernist canon as a whole. The interdependence between the commercial market for short stories and the possibilities that market opened for Boyle's autonomy as a writer underlies Boyle's career and characterizes the early twentieth-century cultural field. By beginning to examine the interconnectedness of these two seemingly opposed markets, we can position Boyle within the material culture of the early twentieth century and can reassess her work and career. Moreover, the trajectory of Boyle's reputation and publishing allows us to understand the impetus behind modernist literary production as a negotiation of conflated spheres of mass and elite cultural production.

The later critical reticence to deal with the more commercial aspects and consequences of Boyle's career indicates a continuation of the same notions of literary value that marked both Williams' early review of *Short Stories* and Wilson's later review of *Avalanche*. While the emphasis on her form and style has helped to circumvent the issues that ultimately cost Boyle her reputation as a serious author, it has ultimately failed to reinsert her as an important part of the modernist movement. In part, that failure is the result of an implicit acceptance of a definition of modernism based on an exclusivity from the market—a definition that Boyle's career uncovers as a fiction. Kay Boyle, however, provides an example of an author who was a well respected, important figure within modernist circles, who saw herself as continuing the work of modernism and whose career

demonstrates the difficulty of balancing writing for oneself and writing for a market already structured by an audience who understands value apart from the work itself.

Notes

1. Letter from Kay Boyle to Ann Watkins. Apr. 1932. Kay Boyle Papers.
2. Letter from Kay Boyle to Caresse Crosby. 25 Aug. 1925.
3. The manuscript of her first novel *Process* was lost in transit to a publisher and not published until 2001, after Boyle's first biographer, Sandra Spanier, found the manuscript when searching through the New York Public Library's card catalog. Her second novel, *Plagued by the Nightingale*, was her first published novel. The novel was published by Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith in 1931.
4. Interviews with Boyle in her later years often focus on rectifying the image of expatriate Paris as a playground for dilettantes who played at writing in their spare time, and instead focused on those in the literary communities in Paris as laborers.
5. Boyle herself has commented on the aesthetic differences between these stories and novels and her earlier output. She explained that many of these novels and stories were written purposefully to appeal to a wide audience because she wanted their political message to have the greatest impact (Spanier).
6. One charge against her was her friendship with Ezra Pound. FBI officers questioned her about a visit to Rapallo in 1938. Someone in New York had claimed that she had an affair with Pound in the years before World War I, despite the fact that she would have barely been a teenager at the time (Mellen 274).
7. Her daughter, Faith, told the Kay Boyle Society in 2007 during their annual business meeting at the American Literature Association conference that her mother wrote under a different name during the 1950s. The name under which she wrote, however, remains a mystery, as no one had ever heard of it and her daughter could not remember it.

8. Boyle made her first appearance in the 7th edition of the *Norton Anthology of American Literature*.

9. As Aaron Jaffe has argued, “the key ingredient in elite modernist reputation [was]...the capacity to frame work against contrastingly lesser labors of contemporizes” (Jaffe). The cultural work done by later critics to re-establish modernist reputations is no different.

10. Spanier, “Paris Wasn’t Like That” 171.

11. Spanier, for instance, claims that “the transition from high- to middlebrow was not entirely comfortable” for the author and while Boyle herself remained unapologetic about her publishing history, she remained wary of what she called “the dirty game of publishing” (Letter to Bessie Breuer). It is this ambivalence—the whole-hearted desire to be both a best seller and to be a great artist—that highlights the incommensurability of those two categories for Boyle’s contemporaries and later critics alike.

12. In another editorial, the editors of the magazine write, “We believe that the best editing is that which edits the least” (4).

13. Walsh’s disinterestedness in the longevity of his magazine may well have been for more practical than esoteric reasons; he would die of consumptive lung disease before the second volume of the magazine was published.

14. One of the problems that critics like John Beasley-Murray have found with Bourdieu’s notion of cultural capital is that it overlooks the problem of exploitation that Marx places at the center of his writing about production and value.

15. The going rate that Walsh refers to in the editorial is questionable. In 1925, Scott Fitzgerald expressed his “horror” to Maxwell Perkins that Hemingway had practically given away a story for only \$40 to an “arty” publication called “This Quarter” (Brucoli, *Life in Letters* 133).

16. Letter to Bessie Breuer 21 Sept 1931. KBP.
17. Letter to Bessie Breuer 3 Nov. 1931. KBP.
18. It also aligns with her portrayal of the world of small magazines as effete in *Year Before Last*. The character of Martin would never have lasted in the man's world of business as Boyle saw it in these letters.
19. Letter to Bessie Breuer 3 Nov. 1931. KBP.
20. Ibid.
21. Letter to Bessie Breuer. 14 Dec. 1931. KBP.
22. Ibid.
23. Letter to Kay Boyle. 20 Jun. 1932. KBP.
24. Letter to Bessie Breuer. 28 May 1931. KBP.
25. In April of 1932, she wrote to her friend, Caresse Crosby, that she had "lost much time doing the novel, and must keep at short stories all summer long to make life possible" for her family (Letter to Caresse Crosby. 19 May 1932. CCP.)
26. Letter to Joan Detwieler. 19 Jan. 1939. KBP.
27. Letter to Ann Watkins. 14 Nov. 1932. KBP.
28. When Boyle first published in *The New Yorker* in 1931, its fiction consisted mainly of stories told in the first person meant to be witty or amusing. Because the magazine used by-lines at the end, rather than the beginning, of each piece, and because the publication did not include a table of contents, texts categorized as "fiction" were often indistinguishable from non-fiction narratives that populated its pages. By the time Boyle published heaviest in its pages, however, the fiction found in the magazine had changed somewhat. *The New Yorker* still categorized any

number of narratives—meant to be true or not—as “fiction,” but the magazine was incorporating more and more works recognizable as stories.

29. For instance, “I’m Ready to Drop Dead,” is a monologue by an operator in a hospital complaining about all the tasks she is left to do. These pieces lack the sharpness of Parker’s similar stories and were never Boyle’s strong suit.

30. Letters to Ann Watkins. 22 Jul. 1942. and 2 Aug. 1947. KBP. Though she published regularly in *The New Yorker*, she never became a regular contributing writer for this very reason. She felt that if she “could actually write something in a morning that would be something else again, but I can’t.” (Letter to Bessie Breuer 28 May 1931. KBP.)

31. Letter to Ann Watkins 9 Aug. 1937. KBP.

32. Letter from Harcourt Brace and Co. 30 Sept. 1937. KBP. Although the story was still short enough to be sold to certain magazines, Boyle wanted to bring the novelette out as a separate book, in part, because she felt that the story’s “lesbian twist” at the end would not do for a magazine sale.

33. Ibid.

34. The very form of the book was also important to Williams’ praise: brought out by the Crosbys’ Black Sun Press, *Short Stories* was printed as an aesthetic object in and of itself, appreciated for its beauty and the beauty of what it contained. There were only one hundred and sixty-five of the books printed using the hand set type of Roger Lescaret’s press; fifteen copies were printed on Japan Vellum and signed with numbers written in longhand by the author, and the remainder were numbered on hand-made paper bearing the van Gelder Zonen watermark (Minkoff).

35. Moreover, the set of short stories was not meant to sell great numbers or to make any great profit, as the Crosbys sold their books for a flat rate and paid the author a single fee.
36. Letter to Caresse Crosby. 7 May 1931. CCP.
37. Boyle admitted that *Avalanche* was written primarily as a potboiler for serialization in the *Saturday Evening Post* to convey to as wide an audience as possible “how all that was simple and good and admirable in France had been betrayed” (qtd. Mellen 298).
38. *The Saturday Evening Post* in the 1940s was one of the most popular magazines in the country. The editorial policy of the *Post* reflected the most mainstream values of the country’s citizens. For a more detailed analysis of the *Post*, see Abrahamson.
39. With its comparison of Boyle’s potboiler to the flatness of the movie version of Hemingway’s *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Wilson’s review demonstrates a marked anxiety about the movies as a serious threat to legitimate literary culture. This anxiety is especially telling when we consider that just three years before he had edited Scott Fitzgerald’s posthumous novel, *The Love of the Last Tycoon*, a novel about Hollywood written by a writer immersed in the screen writing culture.
40. Part of the problem with her sales might have been that the themes and the topics in her work had become more overtly political and more focused on the effects of war in Europe, a topic that a victorious American public was impatient with and even less willing to purchase.
41. Letter to Kay Boyle 23 Jul. 1947. KBP.
42. Ibid.
43. Letter from Edward Aswell to Kay Boyle 6 Sept. 1947. KBP.
44. Letter from Ann Watkins to Kay Boyle 2 Sept. 1947. KBP.
45. Letter from Harold Ross to Kay Boyle. 21 Aug. 1947. KBP.

46. Letter to Ann Watkins 7 Jan. 1948. KBP.

Coda: From *Flags in the Dust* to *Sartoris* and Back: William Faulkner and the Business of Literature

...his deliberate and malicious mis-reading of your comments put him in a ridiculous light, where he ought to remain, slowly twisting in the wind as our White House friends say.

—Linton Massey to Albert Erskine¹

By the time the 1973 edition of William Faulkner's novel *Flags in the Dust* went to print, the American publishing industry had experienced a transformation informed by the rise of a more diverse reading public that understood the book not only as a luxury for the aristocracy and a growth in the market for American modernist novels fueled by their increasing importance in University curriculum. As we have seen in the cases of both Hemingway and Fitzgerald, it was the availability of books in paperback and in reprint additions provided an opportunity for authors to achieve lasting importance, especially in the academy. The above quote, taken from a letter from Faulkner's close friend Linton Massey to Faulkner's Random House editor and the editor of the 1973 *Flags in the Dust*, Albert Erskine, demonstrates how the state of modernist literature and the authority over its authors had become important to both the trade publishers and to the scholars who had worked to ensconce modernist texts in the university curriculum. Responding to the critiques of Erskine's edition of *Flags* by a Faulkner scholar Thomas McHaney, Massey equated the attack on Erskine's edition with the problems that Nixon's administration was having during the Watergate controversy. Massey intimates that, like Patrick Gray, Nixon's acting director of the FBI, Day's comments about the Random House edition of *Flags* will leave him open to attack, while eventually, Erskine would be vindicated.² Equating the controversy over the 1973 edition of *Flags* with its contemporary political climate may

have been a convenient way to ease Erskine's worry over the edition's reception, but it also exposes the importance that this edition held for Faulknerian scholars and the author's publisher alike. The intensity of the discussion about the Random House edition of *Flags*, and the rancor with which Massey and Erskine responded to academic critiques of the edition reveals the high stakes of claiming the authority to speak for or about an author's work by this point in the late twentieth century.

The History of *Flags in The Dust*

In late 1926 or early 1927, Faulkner began working on the manuscript he would eventually call *Flags in the Dust*. Set in the years following World War I, the novel examines the Sartoris family by juxtaposing the experiences of its male members who served in the Civil War and in the First World War. Taking the advice of Sherwood Anderson, Faulkner had finally written a story about what he knew best, the area in northwestern Mississippi in which he was born. The novel is the first to introduce Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County and many of the characters and themes that would become important to his later works. As the original text about Yoknapatawpha, it remains an important to understanding Faulkner's fictional setting as a cohesive fictional space. Faulkner, himself was sure of its importance, and in October of 1927, he wrote to his publisher, Horace Liveright, "At last and certainly, I have written THE book, of which those other things were but foals. I believe it is the damdest [*sic*] book you'll look at this year, and any other publisher" (Blotner 204). However, claiming that the manuscript had neither plot nor character development, Liveright regretfully returned the manuscript, suggesting that Faulkner not bother to send it elsewhere. Looking back at Liveright's refusal, Faulkner would later write, "I was shocked: my first emotion was blind protest, then I became objective for an

instant, like a parent who is told that its child is a thief or an idiot or a leper; for a dreadful moment I contemplated it with consternation and despair, then like the parent I hid my own eyes in the fury of denial.”³ Faulkner did not give up on the manuscript, instead revising it into at least ten different drafts and resubmitting it to no less than four other publishers. Eventually, he grew tired of paying for the postage to ship the typescript to New York and gave *Flags in the Dust* to his friend and eventual agent Ben Wasson, who secured publication with Harcourt, Brace and Company. The contract for publication came at a price, however. In order for Harcourt to publish the novel, the publisher required that at least 110,000 words be excised from the six hundred-page typescript by someone other than Faulkner himself. Reluctantly Faulkner agreed, vowing to have nothing more to do with the novel, in part out of stubbornness and in part because he was already deep into his work on what would become *The Sound and the Fury*. In less than one month, Wasson transformed Faulkner’s typescript, most likely the fourth typescript of the text, into what Harcourt would publish in 1929 as *Sartoris*.

It was not until 1957, when Faulkner loaned his papers to Princeton, that critics paid much attention to the differences between *Sartoris* and Faulkner’s original manuscript. In fact, until the late 1950s only a handful of people even knew the original manuscript had ever existed. James Meriweather, then a graduate student working on cataloging the collection, recognized the differences between the two texts as substantial and suggested to Saxe Collins, Faulkner’s editor at Random House, that the publishing house should bring out a corrected version of the novel. Although Random House was slow to act on the project, their willingness to acquire the rights from Harcourt is not surprising. By the late 1950s, Faulkner had solidified his reputation in American letters with his 1949

Nobel Prize for literature and his 1954 National Book Award for *A Fable*. During this time, the university market for American literature texts was slowly growing, but while Random Houses had been successful with a 1953 anthology of the author's work (*The Faulkner Reader*), the overall market for Faulkner's texts was not by any means demanding. It was not until 1959, then, that Random House acquired the rights to *Flags in the Dust* and Meriweather began examining the manuscript and a composite typescript in order to begin the process of reconstructing the text.

The path to publishing a new and uncut edition of *Flags in the Dust*, however, was neither straightforward nor easy. Before the project was complete in 1973, Faulkner and his original editor at Random House had died and Meriweather had somewhat reluctantly stepped down and allowed Douglass Day to take over the project of editing the edition.⁴ More importantly, the texts from which Day worked were suspect from the very beginning. In the Faulkner collection was the manuscript and a composite typescript. As Stephen Dennis demonstrates in his 1969 dissertation (the first full-length study of a Faulkner text), the text of *Flags in the Dust* had most likely gone through six different phases, including five different typescript versions; only two of those phases remained in the Faulkner papers. The typescript from which Day was working was not the typescript Wasson had edited in 1929. Instead, all that survived in was a composite typescript composed of portions of the first, second, and third typescripts—all compiled *before* Wasson worked on what would have been the fifth typescript (see appendix B). From the very beginning, then, the project of reconstructing the text “as Faulkner intended it” was fraught with the problems beyond even the usual issues of authorial intent, as neither the last typescript nor the galley proofs were available.⁵

In addition, even if that fourth typescript had survived, the 1929 published version of *Sartoris* raises many more questions about Faulkner's "intentions" than it answers. The text of *Sartoris* differs from both the manuscript and surviving typescripts in a variety of ways, not the least of which is length. As George Hayhoe points out in his thorough study of the two texts, there are three possible reasons for these differences: They may reflect changes Faulkner made in a typescript that has not survived; they may be the result of changes that Faulkner made on the galley proofs (which also have not survived); or, they may be revisions made by someone other than Faulkner (Hayhoe 9-10). There is also the additional possibility, as Joseph Blotner argues, that Faulkner himself may have helped Wasson to make those changes. Blotner claims, "there were substitutions of dialect words whose meanings Ben [Wasson] didn't know" (223). It may be, then, that even with the missing final typescript, Day would not have had Faulkner's finalized text.

Just a rudimentary understanding of the process through which the text of *Flags in the Dust* went would be enough to elucidate the complexity of understanding the text of the novel as we know it today, but it also helps to expose the historical process through which critics have come to define Faulkner as an important American modernist author. Indeed, following the introduction of *Flags in the Dust* in 1973, critics could and did begin to examine the ways that the differences between the text of *Sartoris* and that of *Flags* helped to demonstrate Faulkner's development as an artist.⁶ *Sartoris* has historically represented a turning point in the author's career and reputation, but understanding *Sartoris* as a corrupted text that is not the novel as Faulkner envisioned it also raises questions about his development as a writer, his reception as an author, and the historical trajectory of his reputation within the canon of American modernism. Examining *Flags in the Dust* in its

complete and “uncut” form has allowed later critics to see the stylistic and thematic developments in Faulkner’s canon as having an earlier starting point than previously thought. Consequently, examining the process that *Flags in the Dust* went through to become *Sartoris* highlights the perils of discussing authorship as static and of discussing any text—no matter how canonical—as the authentic product of a singular genius. Examining the process *Sartoris* underwent to become the 1973 edition of *Flags in the Dust* also further exposes the very historicity of canon creation and the material history of authorship.

When *Flags in the Dust* finally appeared in August of 1973, its reception was mixed. Encompassing many of the negative reviews, *The Southern Review* critiqued Day’s editorial decisions, writing that

a reliable text of *Flags in the Dust*—one that we could accept with reasonable confidence that it would represent as nearly as possible the author’s intentions in writing the book—would provide an excellent opportunity to review the fundamental and hitherto baffling question of how Faulkner made his spectacular leap ... to *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying*,...Unfortunately there is no convincing reason to believe that the present Random House publication... represents any concerted effort to achieve that result. (Adams 878-9)

Critics, however, were unaware that the text presented was not the text as prepared by Douglas Day. Rather than using Day’s edited typescript, Erskine had discarded Day’s typescript, had a Xerox made of the composite typescript, edited it heavily himself, and then used that version of the text for the galleys of the book. Critics and scholars railed

against the liberties Random House had taken in changing, rearranging, and deleting the text of the composite typescript. Rather than being a “faithful reproduction of that composite typescript,” as Day’s introduction claimed, critics recognized that the Random House *Flags in the Dust* was marred (Day x).

The annoyance with which critics reprimanded Day, Erskine, and Random House, and the equal vehemence with which Erskine defended himself and his publishing house is perhaps not uncommon in the business of literature, but the very public nature of the exchanges that happened between university critics and Erskine underlines the importance of *Flags in the Dust*’s appearance in 1973. One of the most scathing exchanges occurred in the pages of the *Faulkner Concordance*, in which Thomas McHaney commented on the edition. In his review, McHaney critiqued the edition as being “incomplete and filled with difficult editorial problems to which the present editor has not really addressed himself” (7). McHaney gives six specific passages in which the Random House edition changes words that appear in the composite typescript and critiques the decision to move a passage.⁷ McHaney claims that “these changes affect the texture of Faulkner’s work, which was deliberate and consistent throughout his career,” but recognizes that the changes are “consistent with the editorial revision of his work all along. There is a simple irony here,” he concludes. “Now *Flags in the Dust* is consistent in form with the great majority of Faulkner’s other published works. It exists for the reading public in a corrupt text” (7-8). Erskine publicly responded to McHaney’s charges rather melodramatically, calling McHaney’s scholarship “indoctrination” and chiding McHaney for giving Random House his proofreading services free of charge. As overblown as Erskine’s response seems, however, it uncovers what was at stake in the novel’s publication. Specifically, he reminded

McHaney, and the entire concordance, that Random House publishes “novels on behalf of novelists (including Faulkner) and for readers of novels rather than for a small group of intensive proofreaders of them” (2). In this statement Erskine bifurcates Faulkner’s readership in the 1970s; in Erskine’s schema, there are true readers, and then there are the academic critics. By singling out academics as not readers but *proofreaders*, Erskine positions their form of reading and criticism as absurd and calls into question their authority to speak about Faulkner and his texts.

Erskine continues his rebuke, making certain that his readers understand that his criticism goes far beyond McHaney. Indeed, he critiques the entire academic world engaged in Faulknerian and literary studies:

I grow increasingly impatient with those people who, though they did not know William Faulkner, think they know more about what he wanted and intended than those who worked with him. I know that he did not wish to have carried through from typescript to printed book his typing of mistakes, misspellings (as opposed to coinages), faulty punctuation, and accidental repetition. He depended on my predecessors, and later on me, to point out such errors and correct them; and ... I have no intention now of substituting Mr. McHaney’s preferences for what I learned to be Faulkner’s.

In this statement, Erskine conflates his knowledge of the author as a person with his authority over the text in question and, in doing so, begins to uncover the tension between the commercial publishing apparatus and the professional critics who, at that very historical moment, were in the process of solidifying the definitions of American literature and American Modernism for the academy.⁸ At this historical juncture, the study of

American literature had finally become an established part of university curriculum, the paperback book market had made books accessible to a wider audience than ever before—including an academic audience—and critics had been writing with some certainty that modernism was “a revolution in the literature of the English language” (qtd. Rainey xxi). In part, the fury with which Erskine responds to McHaney’s critiques reveals the importance of *Flags in the Dust* in promoting Faulkner’s inclusion into this academic curriculum. As his first and, perhaps, most accessible Yoknapatawpha novel, *Flags* was poised to re-invigorate the critical debate about Faulkner’s status and the sales for Faulkner’s other books as well. A negative review by one of the inner circle of Faulkner scholars had the possibility of thwarting the sales of the book to others interested in studying and, perhaps more importantly, *teaching* the text. This exchange reveals a moment in literary history where the status of Faulkner’s works and his reputation as an author was not yet completely settled. Even as both parties return to a rhetoric of authorial intent to situate their claims, their very argument reveals one of the problems with seeing either Faulkner’s work or modernism, more generally, as an unchanging and whole entity. This exchange demonstrates the extent to which the professoriate was engaged with distancing itself from the influence of the commercial realm, even as it coalesced a definition of modernism as separate from the market. At a point when the modernist canon had been solidified and American literature had become a staple of university curriculum, the battle over *Flags* exposes the continuing influence of the commercial book market on academic interests in modernism.

Coda- Modernism, Authorship, and the Book in America

As James McGann reminds us, “authors themselves do not have, *as authors*, singular identities; an author is a plural identity” (75). As I have shown in the previous chapters, our definition of modernism and modernist authorship also has a plural identity shaped by the histories of texts. However, it is not enough to understand the publication history of a single text, or even a single author. Rather, these histories must be contextualized within an understanding of the literary field as a whole. Modernist writers’ own ambivalence about the growing influence of mass culture served to create an emphasis on disinterested aesthetic purity that their later critics adopted and that has influenced current understandings and definitions of modernist authorship. As these case studies of individual authors have shown, the economic and cultural factors that influenced Americans’ changing perception of the novel as a genre, authorship as a profession, and the book as an object also informed the prominence of the modernist novel in the American canon by the end of the twentieth century. Within their novels, these authors indexed the precarious balance between using commercial publishing venues to attain a professional career and risking their financial wellbeing by remaining true to a romantic ideal of authorship as separate from market concerns. Individually, each of these author’s publishing careers demonstrates the complexity of negotiating an authorial identity in a market not so much divided by the split between commercial and elite culture but nonetheless defined by it. Collectively, the publishing histories of these writers and their novels expose the extent to which modernist literary reputations were increasingly dependent upon an increasing acceptance of mass produced culture as a possible conveyor of cultural value. Ultimately, the American modernist novel’s place in twentieth-century

literature was informed not only by the intrinsic aesthetic value of the texts produced by these writers, but by the effect of this larger cultural shift on both the reputations of the authors who wrote the texts and on mid-century critics responsible for establishing a modernist canon.

Notes

1. Letter from Linton Massey to Albert Erskine. 30 Apr. 1974. Special Collections. Small Library. University of Virginia. Charlottesville.
2. The irony, of course, that Nixon was eventually found just as guilty as the 1973 edition of *Flags* was found to be lacking should not be overlooked.
3. Faulkner, as quoted in William Faulkner's Essay on the Composition of *Sartoris* (Blotner 123)
4. This information comes from George Hayhoe's personal interview with Meriwether, as cited in his dissertation.
5. In his introduction, Day claimed that the text of *Flags in the Dust* aimed at being "a faithful reproduction of that composite typescript," but the book was billed at "the complete text of Faulkner's third novel, which appeared in a cut version as *Sartoris*." (x). Random House used the idea of authenticity to sell the 1973 version as Faulkner's true vision for the work.
6. See especially, Atkins, Cohen, Keiser, Muehl, Kight, Devlin.
7. It's important to note that McHaney's critiques were not unfounded. The words changes that he notes in his brief examination of the text are, as Erskine later confirmed, mistakes.
8. See especially Cady, Terrey for contemporary information about American Literature and the development of college curriculum.

Appendix A: Illustrations

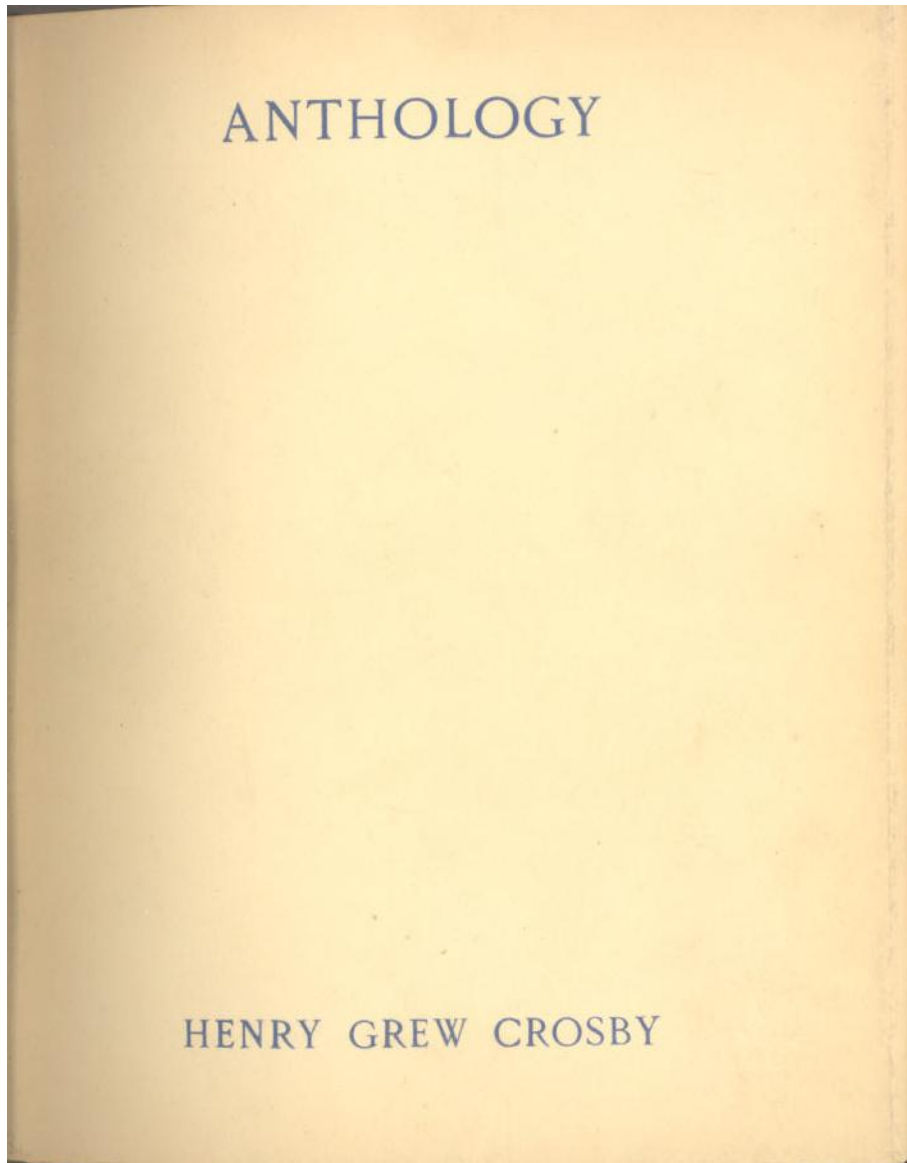


Illustration 1: Frontispiece for *Anthology*. Crosby Papers, 1912-1970. Special Collections Research Center. Morris Lib. Southern Illinois U, Carbondale

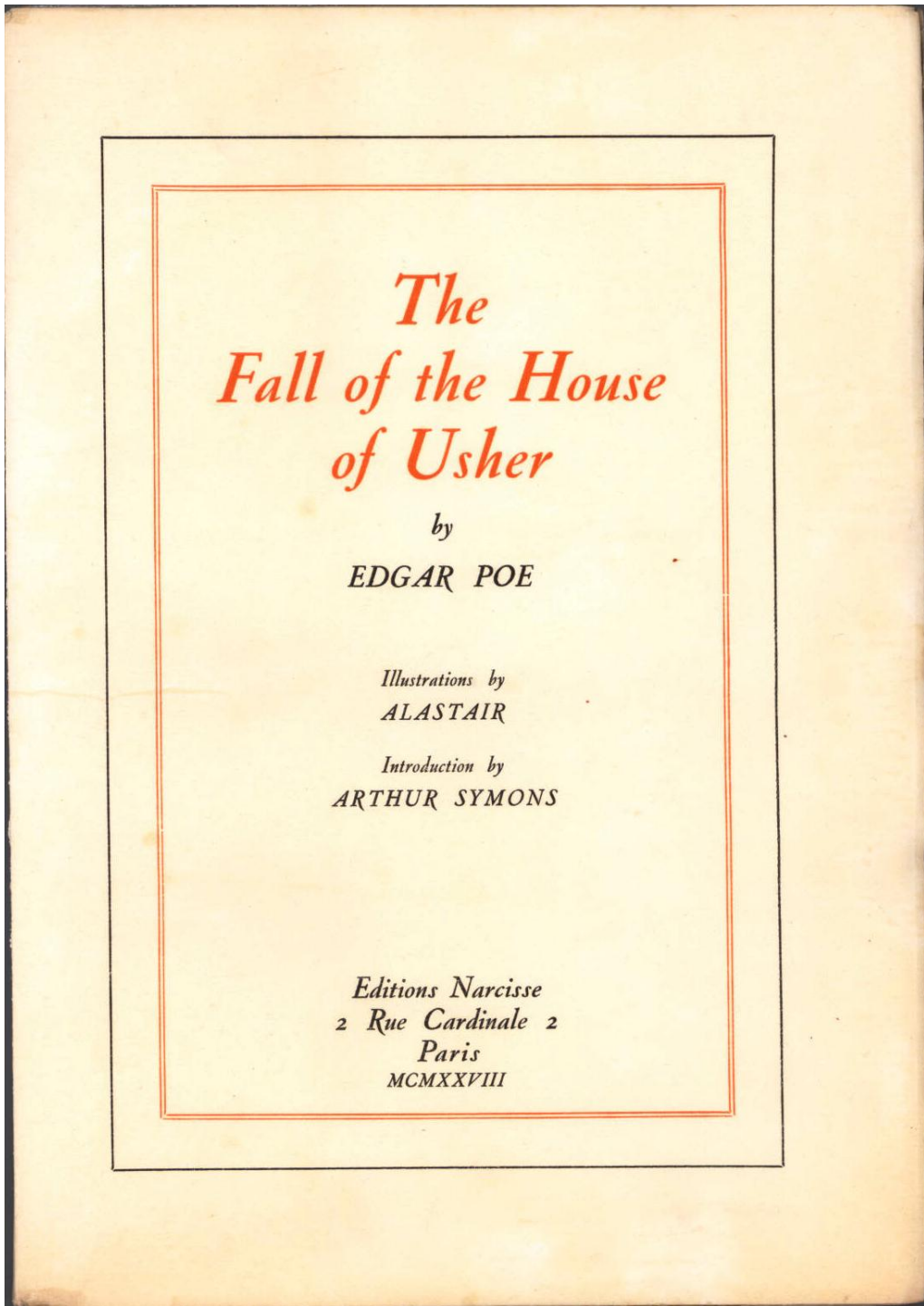


Illustration 2: Frontispiece for Black Sun Press Edition of *The Fall of the House of Usher*. Crosby Papers, 1912-1970. Special Collections Research Center. Morris Lib. Southern Illinois U, Carbondale.

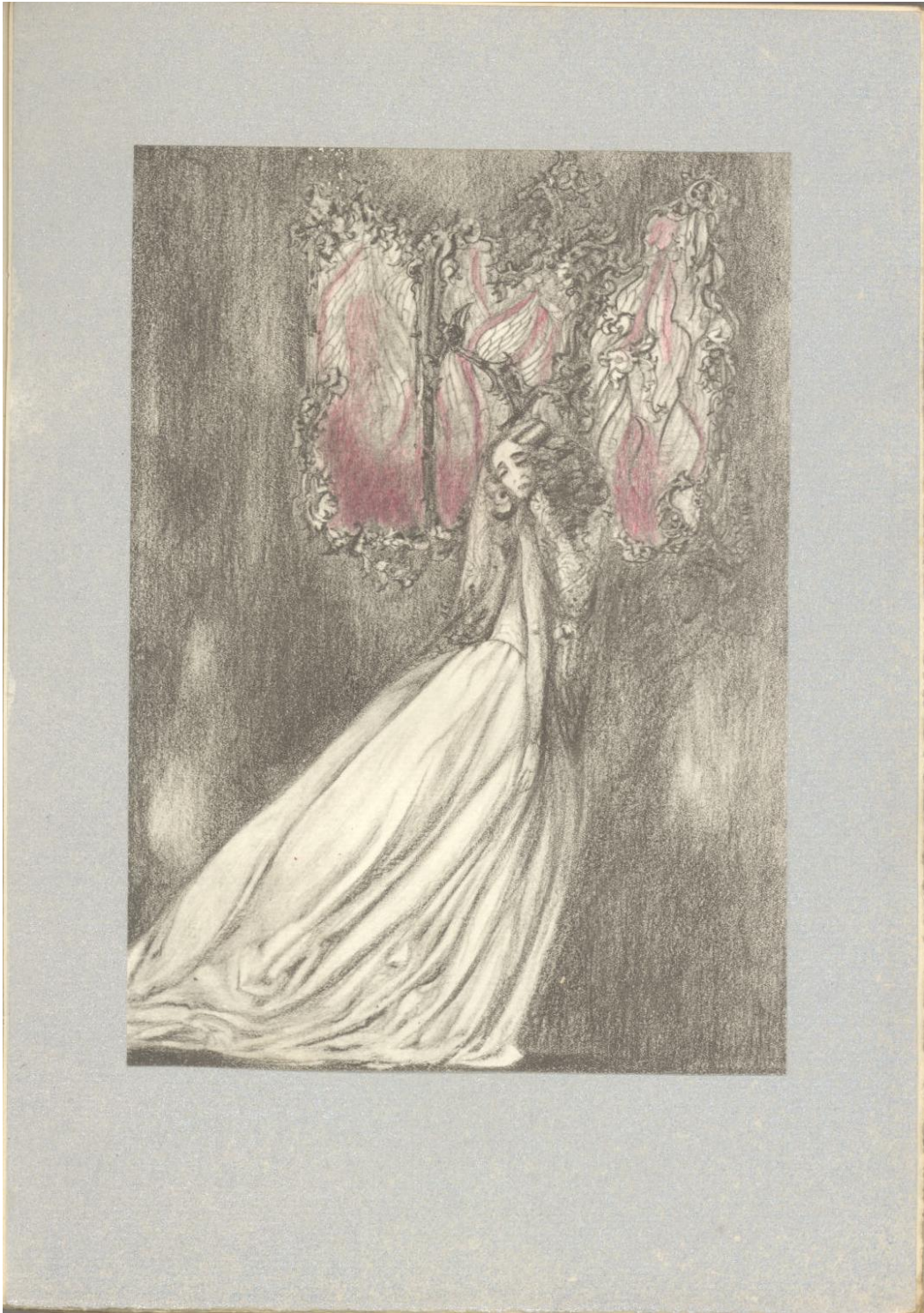


Illustration 3: Illustration by Alastair for *The Fall of the House of Usher*. Crosby Papers, 1912-1970. Special Collections Research Center. Morris Lib. Southern Illinois U, Carbondale

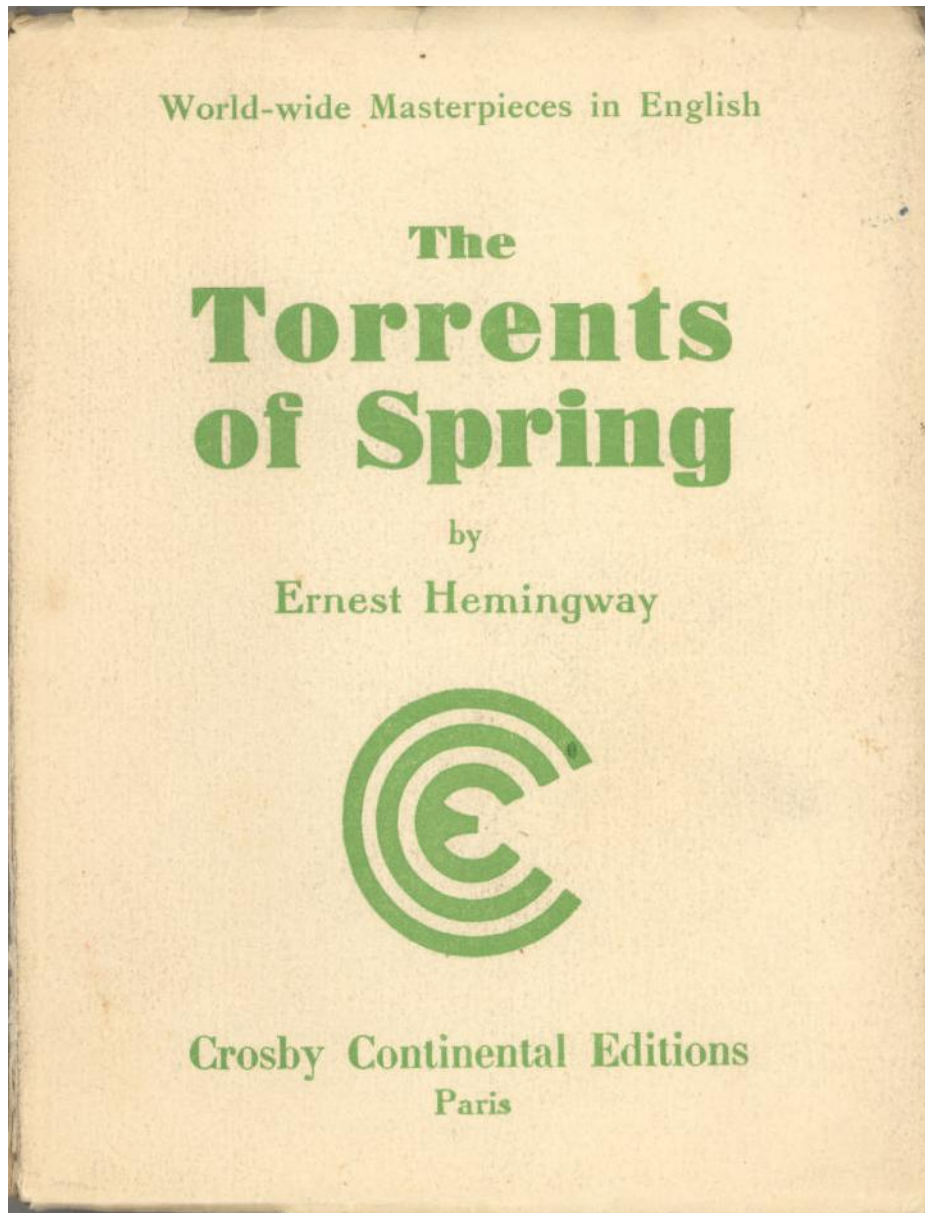


Illustration 4: Crosby Continental Edition of *The Torrents of Spring*. Crosby Papers, 1912-1970. Special Collections Research Center. Morris Lib. Southern Illinois U, Carbondale.

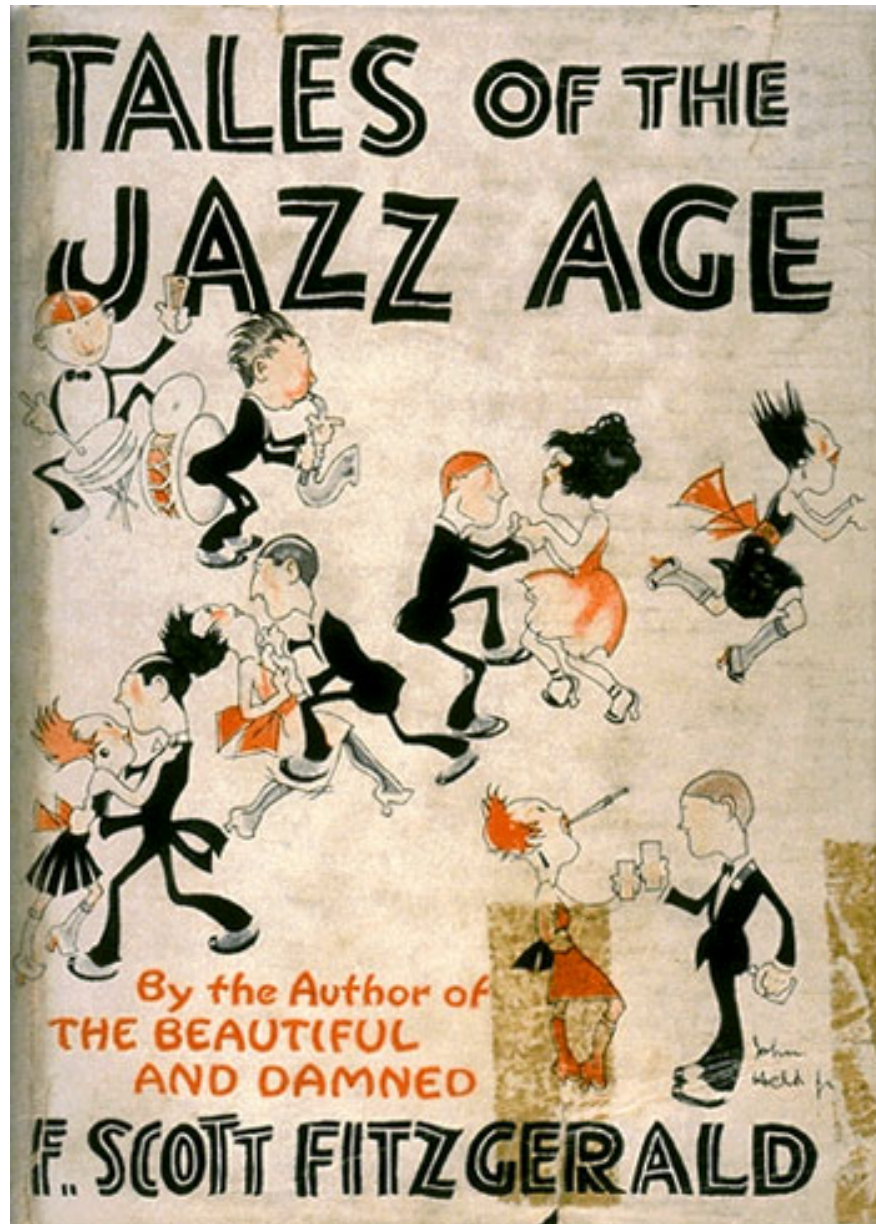


Illustration 5: First Edition Dust Jacket of *Tales of the Jazz Age* (1922). Illustrations by John Held, Jr.

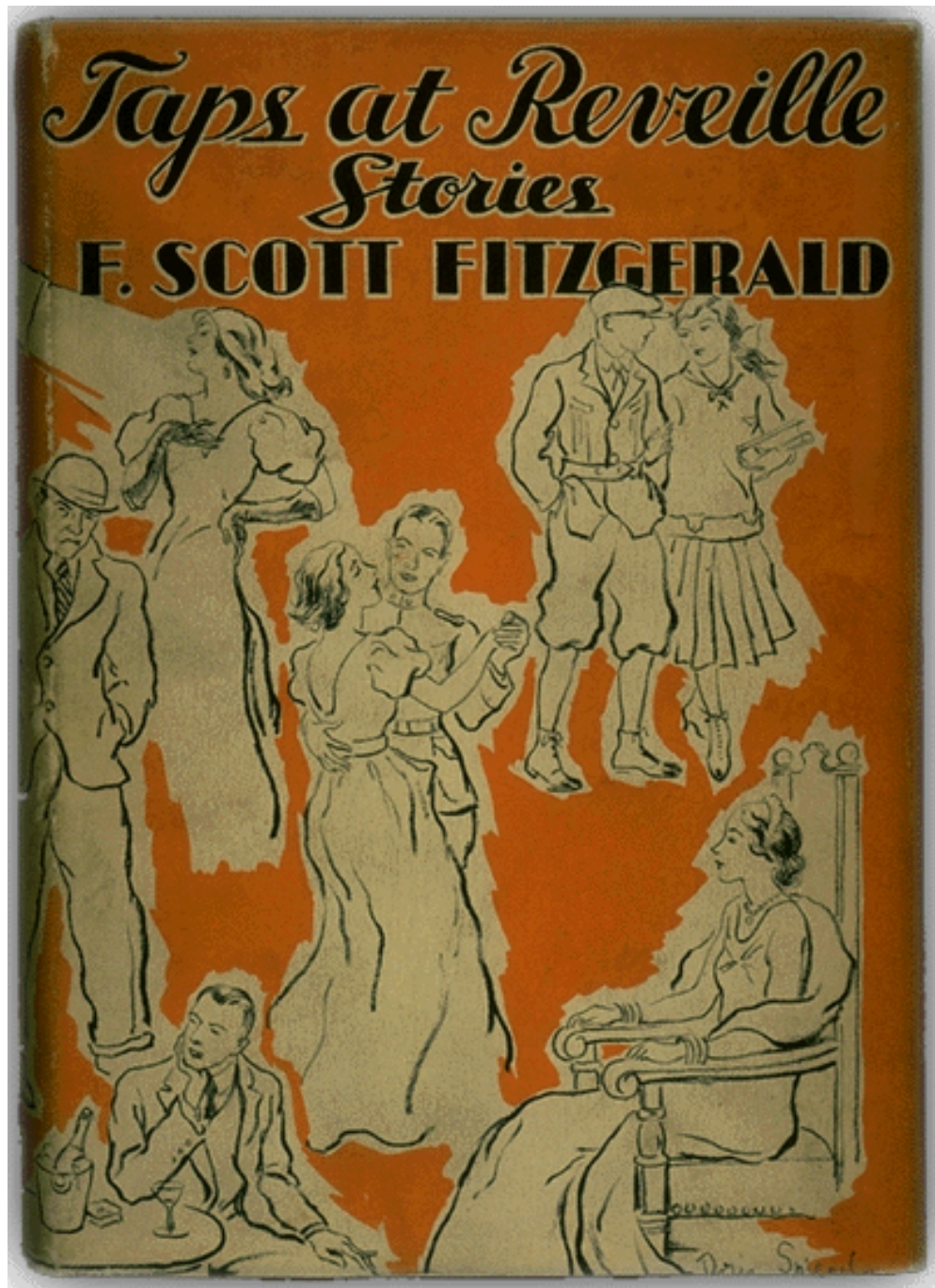


Illustration 6: First Edition Dust Jacket for *Taps at Reveille* (1935). Illustrations by Doris Spiegel.

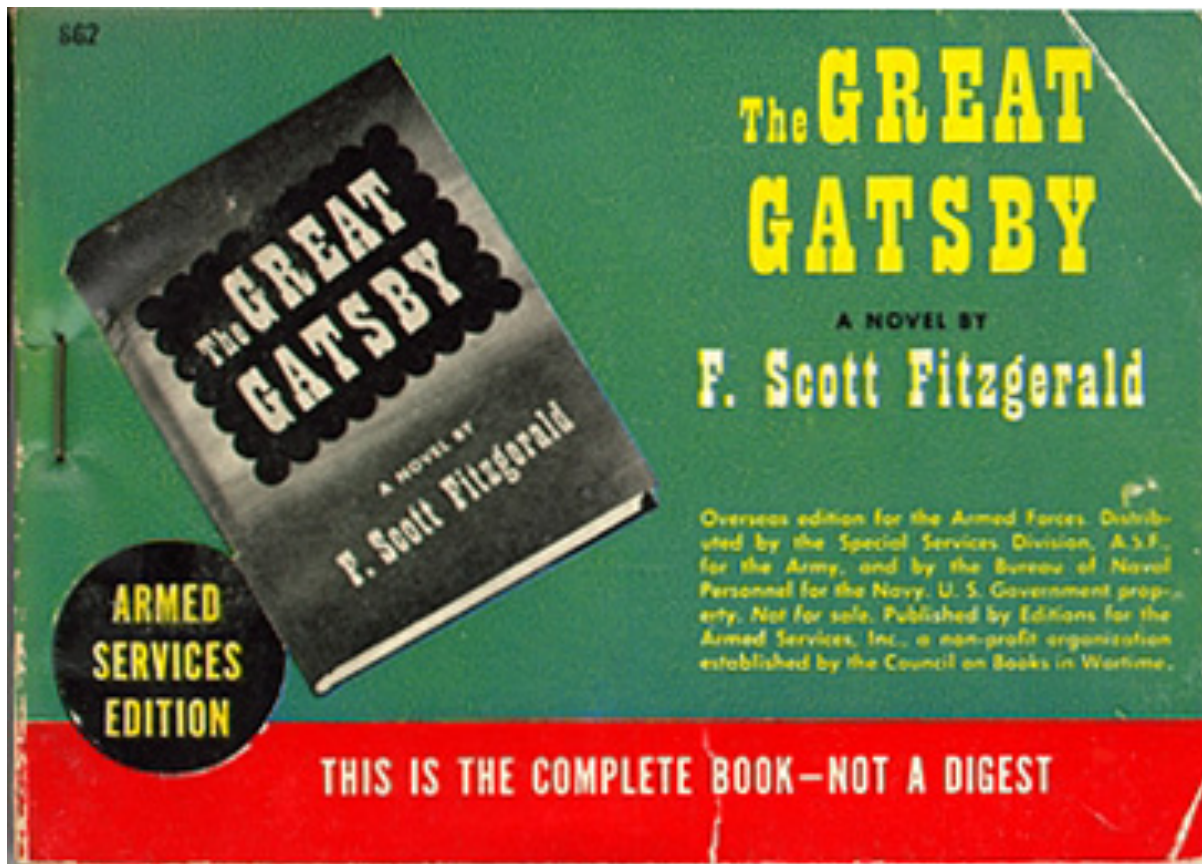


Illustration 7: ASE editions required certain bibliographic markings to make them legible to the servicemen as complete books. All editions used the image of a book on the cover of the edition.

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