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## Writing and Circulating Modern America: Journalism and the American Novelist, 1872-1938

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WRITING AND CIRCULATING MODERN AMERICA:  
JOURNALISM AND THE AMERICAN NOVELIST, 1872-1938

by

Derek J. Driedger

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of  
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska  
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements  
For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Major: English

Under the Supervision of Professor Guy J. Reynolds

Lincoln, Nebraska

May 2007

WRITING AND CIRCULATING MODERN AMERICA:  
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Derek J. Driedger, Ph.D.

University of Nebraska, 2007

Adviser: Guy J. Reynolds

My research began with the question, “How did former journalists depict aspects of the newspaper environment in late-nineteenth, early-twentieth-century fiction?” A historical reading of journalism and fiction places the emphasis on what historical moments or trends these writers documented, and how they presented their worldview. To present findings on how a journalism career proved beneficial for a novelist, I examine arguments debating the shared space between fact and fiction when writers tried to raise their readers’ cultural awareness. My study pays particular attention to newspapers such as the *New York Herald*, the *New York World*, and the *Atchison [Kansas] Globe*. I also find evidence in journals devoted to literature and the writing process such as *Forum*, *Writer*, and the *New York Times Book Review*.

My study constructs journalism-derived definitions of realism, naturalism, and modernism to chart America’s literary developments. These developments regularly cross through urban sensationalism, country journalism, exposés, editorials, and hyper-textual presentation. I organize these developments through fact-fiction dialogs where both journalists and novelists attempted to engage readers in their material. Ultimately, I conclude texts by the paired journalists-turned-novelists covered similar topics in both

genres. However, in each case the second writer portrayed the shared topic with increased cynicism toward American society.

Each chapter explores the literary reputations, journalism, and newspaper related-literature of ten journalists-turned-novelists: Mark Twain, E. W. Howe, W. D. Howells, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Sherwood Anderson, Sinclair Lewis, Upton Sinclair, George Samuel Schuyler, Willa Cather, and John Dos Passos. My conclusion offers other avenues available for study in a journalism-literature discussion, such as travel writing by journalists-turned-novelists, or explorations of the journalist-turned-novelist trend in other countries. My research continues the journalism-literature discussion by such scholars as Shelley Fisher Fishkin, Michael Robertson, John C. Hartsock, Nicole Parisier, and David T. Humphries.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I dedicate this dissertation in memory of Dr. Randy Florell, Dr. Sue Rosowski, and Ben Driedger. Each exemplified encouraging lessons about education and influence.

I would like to thank all of my family who stayed (or tried to stay) interested in what I was doing down in Lincoln. I would especially like to thank my wife, Rebecca, who always allowed what little extra space we had in our apartments to serve as my office. She remained supportive of my efforts to complete this dissertation when I needed it the most. To my daughter, Racquel, you were the best distraction a dissertation writer could ask for.

My committee, and especially my advisor, Dr. Reynolds, provided direction to what started as a formulaic project. Their suggestions, insights, and scholarly examples expanded the scope and usefulness of this project.

WRITING AND CIRCULATING MODERN AMERICA:  
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## **Introduction**

Two major recorders and circulators of America achieved prominence during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century: journalism and the novel. My title contends journalists and novelists preserved, or recorded, their perspective in print. They then shared, or circulated, their writing to a reading public eager to learn and enjoy America's intricacies. In this study I primarily explore debates regarding how journalists and novelists could best engage readers. As I apply the term, "engaging" means the writer's ability to facilitate a reading experience stimulating intellect, emotions, and imagination. Engaging texts also sustain multiple readings, offering new insights to active readers each time.

I adopt my definition from distinguished reviewer Hamilton W. Mabie's *Forum* article "The Most Popular Novels in America" (December 1893). Hamilton's article countered the idea "that magazines and the newspaper have taken the place of the sound and classic works upon which earlier and happier generations were nourished" (508). After analyzing his results compiled from library check-out records, Mabie proclaims the reading public prefers literature "when it is vitalized by deep and real human interests. It is clear also that this same public retains its old-time liking for a strong story-element; in other words, for dramatic quality and power" (514).<sup>1</sup> I contend each journalist-turned-novelist sought "dramatic quality and power" to stimulate intellect, emotions, and imagination. For the remainder of this study, my use of "to circulate" in verb form indicates not statistics, but the process through which writers attempted or caused engaging reading experiences. While the writers examined here reached various literary levels

through journalism, they all sought to achieve the novel's enduring social voice by raising/circulating cultural awareness.<sup>2</sup>

My study's secondary emphasis examines arguments debating how selected journalists-turned-novelists shaped American literary realism, naturalism, and modernism. Many influential novelists publishing from the 1870s to the 1930s worked on newspapers and/or magazines; thus they learned to engage readers with both fiction and fact. Since journalism offered an apprenticeship for more novelists than any other profession, journalism history offers valuable insights into post-Civil War to pre-World War II literature. To find these insights I analyze journalism history (mostly involving newspapers) alongside literature written by journalists-turned-novelists emphasizing the newspaper influence or environment. My study spans the Gilded Age to the Great Depression, beginning with Mark Twain's *Roughing It* (1872), and ending with John Dos Passos's *U.S.A.* trilogy published as one volume (1938). American literature developed in several directions between these texts: from William Dean Howells's utilitarian realism to Paul Laurence Dunbar's defeatist naturalism; from Upton Sinclair's expansive muckraking to Willa Cather's modernist history.

To study and connect realism, naturalism, and modernism to journalism, I assign each literary tradition a journalism-oriented definition. Eric J. Sundquist's preface to *American Realism: New Essays* (1982) indicates why a journalism-oriented definition for realism appears practical. Sundquist explains: "No genre—if it can be called a genre—is more difficult to define than realism, and this is particularly true of American realism. In material it includes the sensational, the sentimental, the vulgar, the scientific, the outrageously comic, the desperately philosophical" (vii). Sundquist's analysis closely



matches journalism as all the listed “material” regularly appeared in newspapers. Stephen Crane’s *New York Times* article “Howells Fears Realists Must Wait” (October 28, 1894), offers an earlier realism definition involving two prominent journalists-turned-novelists. Crane quotes Howells saying, ““It is the business of the novel to picture the daily life in the most exact terms possible, with an absolute and clear sense of proportion”” (20). With both definitions in mind, realism provides an accurate report on characters who might act sensationally, sentimentally, or otherwise. Realists maintain an objective newspaper reporter’s tone to maintain narrative distance no matter how the characters act. Realists acted as more than passive recorders however; they needed to find environments where characters acted in illuminating ways.

The greatest difference between naturalism and realism within journalism-oriented definitions derives from the writer’s tone. Naturalism also defies standard labeling, yet journalist-turned-novelist Jack London’s *Martin Eden* (1908) fully documents a naturalist’s development. The narrator explains Martin’s writing style as essentially realism “though he had endeavored to fuse with it the fancies and beauties of imagination. What he sought was an impassioned realism, shot through with human aspiration and faith. What he wanted was life as it was, with all its spirit-groping and soul-reaching left in” (228). I disagree with Christopher P. Wilson’s *The Labor of Words: Literary Professionalism in the Progressive Era* (1985) where he suggests London “rather simplistically described the [writing] process as the turning of journalism into literature” (101). Naturalism matched realism’s emphasis on the extended human-interest story in complex ways—naturalism differed by relinquishing the narrative distance. Naturalists, like reporters and realists depicted the American experience, but they offered theories on

why events took place, and why characters instinctually reacted as they did. Reporters needed to break from observations to theorize on subjects not readily available, so they investigated and interviewed. When reporters presented their characters' actions, they theorized why characters acted sensationally, sentimentally, tragically, or otherwise. Naturalists, like many investigative journalists, pointed out America's flaws could combine with a character's animal nature to cause ruin.

While I suggest realism and naturalism differ largely in tone, the modernists analyzed in this study differ largely in presentation. In *Modernism, Mass Culture, and Professionalism* (1993), Thomas Strychacz argues modernism between 1880 and 1940 "was shaped profoundly by a convergence of professional discourse and the rise of mass culture" precipitated by newspapers (5). Strychacz argues modernists held "a predilection toward esoteric writing as a way of marking out a distinct space apart from what is perceived to be the clear, simpleminded production of mass culture" (6). While a brief newspaper story filled one small column, a more complex narrative appeared on multiple pages, or continued to different sections or issues. To construct a journalism-oriented definition of modernism, I argue modernists considered the multiple plotlines, themes, settings, characters, etc. appearing in each newspaper or magazine issue. Since articles function as a complete narrative within a larger text, readers can choose to read in any order. Socially aware readers could make connections between the articles to create the American montage each newspaper or magazine issue presents. Thus modernists like Cather and Dos Passos act as multiple reporters, or a reporter-editor who blends objective and subjective observations concerning several characters. Cather and Dos Passos then arrange and form multi-plotlines into a panoramic, anti-novel.

Newspaper circulation and cultural influence saw a major increase during the period in which realism, naturalism, and modernism blended with journalism. Successful newspaper industry developments included: sensationalism's rise, more visuals, increased reliance on wire services, standardized procedures, more national and political coverage, and increased war coverage, to name a few. The newspaper's growing influence also cast a physical reminder, originating from towering headquarters in business districts. The *New York World* headquarters unveiled on December 10, 1890, generated the most press. In *Narrating the News* (2005), Karen Roggenback explains, "Americans had never seen a structure of this size; many visitors were afraid to ride the elevator to the *World's* top floors" (xi). The building's grandeur conveyed Joseph Pulitzer's financial success; he paid an estimated \$1,230,000 for the building and \$630,000 for the site ("The Pulitzer Building" [December 11, 1890] 4).<sup>3</sup> The building created news during the entire construction; newspaper sketches appeared eleven months before the grand opening.

As this study explores, the newspaper's financial success supplanted the artistic writing journalists sought to write. Tension developed between the businessmen and the artists, among the advertising office and the copy room, causing many aspiring novelists to not consider journalism their career. However, the businessmen and the artist agreed on two key issues: factual reporting constantly faced narrative gaps, and a reporter could create more interesting copy by filling such gaps with calculated fiction. In each chapter I examine such fact-fiction tensions to discuss the presentation of American realities by journalists in newspapers, and by journalists-turned-novelists in their art.

The public's attention to newspapers increased alongside profits and social status. Several fact and fiction dialogs emerged on the profession to assess the changes. Nicole

Parisier's journalism-literature study, *Novel Work: Theater and Journalism in the Writing of Theodore Dreiser, Edith Wharton and Willa Cather* (2001) identifies one key fact-fiction dialog or tension I examine in several chapters. Indicating society's expectations for realistic writing, Parisier indicates novelists received less flexibility as society placed "much more responsibility to . . . the artist representing imagined truths than the reporter offering documentary evidence" (146). Novelists received criticism for overly-sentimental or overly-imaginative fiction with such a standard. Critics, other novelists, and society judged events appearing in fiction based on what they felt could and should happen under certain conditions. Ironically, many newspaper articles depicting similar unrealistic or sentimental events received no criticism. While the novel's permanence causes greater accountability, the credible-fiction dialog did negatively impact certain writers, especially E. W. Howe.

My analysis builds upon Parisier's work and others raising insightful connections between American journalism and literature. In "The Newspaper Experience: Crane, Norris, and Dreiser" (1953), Joseph J. Kwiat examined the journalist-turned-novelist's training.<sup>4</sup> Kwiat's essay offers insights into how a journalism apprentice influenced a fiction career. Kwiat analyzes how the newspaper experience helped in "formulating many of their unconventional attitudes toward life, their selection of subject matter, even their techniques" (99). Kwiat summarizes Crane, Frank Norris, and Theodore Dreiser's newspaper experiences with special attention to artistic limitations. Kwiat then focuses on how each writer developed his artistic worldview before their apprenticeship ended.

Shelley Fisher Fishkin's *From Fact to Fiction: Journalism & Imaginative Writing in America* (1985) and Michael Robertson's *Stephen Crane, Journalism, and the Making*

of *Modern American Literature* (1997) focus on the most discussed journalists-turned-novelists, including Twain, Howells, Henry James, Crane, Dreiser, and Ernest Hemingway.<sup>5</sup> Like Kwiat, Fishkin and Robertson appraise how journalists-turned-novelists' experiences shaped their best fiction. For example, Fishkin theorizes the apprenticeship “forced him to become a precise observer, nurtured in him a great respect for fact, and taught him lessons about style. . . It taught him to be mistrustful of rhetoric, abstractions, hypocrisy, and cant; it taught him to be mistrustful of secondhand accounts and to insist on seeing with his own eyes” (4).

John C. Hartsock's *A History of American Literary Journalism: The Emergence of a Modern Narrative Form* (2000) analyzes literary journalism's development and fiction's resistance to the genre. Hartsock's text provides several media history insights, especially pertaining to realism. Hartsock argues literary journalism adopted “the techniques commonly associated with realistic fiction—dialogue, scene construction, concrete detail, and showing activity” (23). David T. Humphries's *Different Dispatches: Journalism in American Modernist Prose* (2005) studies how modernists Cather, Sherwood Anderson, Hemingway, Zora Neale Hurston, James Agee, Walker Evans, and Robert Penn Warren included journalism in fiction to raise cultural and community issues. Humphries finds “in key works they coupled art and journalism as a means of negotiating the expectations of their critical readers and the demands of the popular audience” (5).

I expand upon these works by paying more attention to the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century cultural debates surrounding newspapers and magazines. While earlier studies tend to emphasize each writer's greatest works, I highlight specific aspects in the writer's texts (fact and fiction) that correspond to the chapter's guiding concept.

Therefore, newspapers' response to technology gives way to messages writers circulated regardless of technical advances. Consequently, my study draws more historicist background and evidence from the journalism texts themselves. My approach fills a void, for as Roggenkamp explains, "Literary scholars have ignored newspapers almost entirely, seeing them as little more than the repository of an ephemeral record of daily life in the city and across the nation. Newspapers, literary history has told us, hold inferior, unimportant writings" (xv). Newspapers and magazines published many views concerning journalism and the novel's emergence raised by fact writers, fiction writers, scholars in various fields, and the public. However, these historical views lie in obscurity unless scholars have gathered and edited them in books such as Henry Nash Smith's *Mark Twain of the Enterprise: Newspaper Articles and Other Documents 1862-1884* (1969) or James W. Simpson's text presenting Howells's *Editor's Study* (1983).<sup>6</sup> Recent research databases such as 19<sup>th</sup> Century U.S. Newspapers or ProQuest Historical Newspapers provide searchable, electronic facsimiles of full issues from urban dailies and country weeklies across the nation. With increased availability, literary critics and social historians should pay increased attention to fact-fiction debates in newspapers. These debates will cause new discoveries and retrieve forgotten writers and texts.

In each chapter, dialogs concerning how writers should circulate American realities provide a major focus for arguments I make about the primary texts under examination. Though journalists-turned-novelists sometimes wrote on similar subjects, their individual approach changed the reading experience. Book reviews became one method for discussing the developing literary traditions, but novelists also wrote editorials assessing literature's future. Some articles served as outright attacks and indicate the vested interest

these writers held in American letters. For instance, Ambrose Bierce's *New York Times* editorial "Sharp Criticism of Mr. Howells" (May 23, 1892), characterized Howells as "Absolutely destitute of the supreme and sufficient literary endowment imagination, he does not what he would but what he can; takes notes with his eyes and ears, and writes them up as does any other reporter" (5). While Howells developed his realism from newspapers (as I explore in chapter two), Bierce saw Howells's journalism experience as something Howells should forget.<sup>7</sup> Readers interested in late-nineteenth century, early-twentieth-century American literature can use such dialogs to better understand the public texts entered. A writer's critical conversation also illustrates how they maintained, or challenged the developing literary standards.

My chapters also differ from earlier studies by presenting a more conceptual focus dealing with journalism and fiction. Rather than a largely biographical emphasis of journalist-turned-novelists, I centralize on storytelling, credibility, sensationalism, country journalism, muckraking, satire, and narration. The writer's experiences and texts illustrate various approaches for describing modern American realities in their era within these concepts. For instance, Twain's *Roughing It* utilizes light-hearted sarcasm and wit to detail several inherent problems facing the country. Sinclair Lewis and George Samuel Schuyler used satire to deal with nationwide issues; Cather wrote about seventeenth-century Quebec, Dos Passos clustered newspaper headlines together. No matter the approach, texts written by journalists-turned-novelists grew increasingly cynical as America moved through the early-twentieth century. The novelists witnessed how the increased proliferation of the American Dream, often through newspapers, continued to stand in direct contrast to the majority of the American experience. Their novels include

several characters with big dreams who find their expectations challenged by several cultural and social factors. The characters who achieve success often do so through immoral or illegal means.

My study includes an increased emphasis on American journalism's developing voice in the nineteenth and early-twentieth century. I perform close readings on representative newspaper articles beginning with James Gordon Bennett's *New York Herald's* first issue (August 31, 1835). I select characteristic examples providing evidence for each chapter from news articles, book reviews, editorials, essays, and journal publications. Most book reviews derive from major dailies across the nation to better illustrate the national reaction to the selected texts. The included newspaper articles come from all regions; each locale recorded and circulated the American experience in pieces.

If journalists-turned-novelists achieved the American Dream and became famous, details about their life regularly appeared in newspapers around the country. Newswire service or reprinted articles made sure all citizens could read about "Mark Twain's Cold" (*Milwaukee Daily Sentinel* on October 14, 1874), or "The Home of William Dean Howells" (*Bangor Daily Whig & Courier* on May 24, 1877). Novelists created news even when they refused to act, as when the *Chicago Inter Ocean* reported Howells refusal to speak at a banquet, but his polite decline rated as "one of the best speeches made at the banquet" ("Telegraphic reports" 1).

I examine ten journalists-turned-novelists following an overview explaining American journalism's rise to prominence. The journalists-turned-novelists receive examination in pairs to facilitate the conceptual discussion, and to chart the increased cynicism toward similar topics. The pairs I examine appear in the following order: Twain



and Howe (chapter one), Howells and Dunbar (chapter two), Sherwood Anderson and Lewis (chapter three), Sinclair and Schuyler (chapter four), and Cather and Dos Passos (chapter five). The pairs correspond in chronological order except for Howe and Howells (Howe's *The Story of a Country Town* appeared in 1883, one year later than Howells's *A Modern Instance*). The later novelist's text builds upon the earlier novelist's subject and worldview in each pair. I will conclude each chapter by explaining how the second journalist-turned-novelist cynically displays the complications inherent in America's modernization.

In nearly all the examined works, divorce and marital strife arises as one American reality. Though chapter two offers the closest divorce analysis with Howells's *A Modern Instance* (1882), several novelists analyzed and depicted marital problems as an American truth. Realism and naturalism's focus on marital problems directly opposes the Victorian romance novel. Cather's *Shadows on the Rock* (1931) becomes the only included novel without a divorce (official or unofficial), or a prolonged separation experienced by a major character. Auclair lost his wife before the novel of seventeenth-century French Canada begins, but the other journalists-turned-novelists answer magazine editor Basil March's inquiry toward marriage in Howells's *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890). Basil decides marriage appears in fiction "as the highest premium for virtue, courage, beauty, learning, and saving human life. We all know it isn't. . . . By and by some fellow will wake up and see that a first-class story can be written from the antimarriage point of view" (416, emphasis in original). The writers in this study sought "first-class" stories of divorce and other facets of American society they observed during their journalism apprenticeship.

Divorce is just one of several illuminating patterns that develop once critics group journalists-turned-novelists to provide fact-fiction dialogs.

### **Intersections of Newspapers and Novels**

“In America it is the newspaper that is his boss. From it he gets support for his elemental illusions. In it he sees a visible embodiment of his own wisdom and consequence. Out of it he draws fuel for his simple moral passion, his congenital suspicion of heresy, his dread of the unknown. And behind the newspaper stands the plutocracy, ignorant, unimaginative and timorous.”

— H. L. Mencken, *Prejudices: Second Series* (1922), 77

Before I examine specific journalists-turned-novelists, a brief newspaper history overview will foreground the writing environment journalists-turned-novelists’ texts entered. The American newspaper began in Boston on September 25, 1690 with Benjamin Harris’s three-page *Publick Occurrences Both Foreign and Domestick*. Harris, a former Whig editor and publisher, arrived in America four years earlier after spending time in British prison for “printing a seditious pamphlet” (Mott 11). Harris envisioned a monthly newspaper “to provide ‘a Faithful Relation’ of ‘considerable things as have arrived unto our Notice’” (qtd. in Mindich 11). Unfortunately for Harris, his failure to apply for a printing license caused the Massachusetts Governor and Council to terminate his newspaper after one issue. The Governor and Council also ruled the newspaper contained “‘Reflections of a very high nature: As also sundry doubtful and uncertain reports’” (qtd. in Mott 9). Offensive stories in the sole issue included: “the immoralities of the King of

France” and “the barbarous way in which the Indian allies of the English had used some French captives” (10).

Thousands of newspapers would follow the *Publick Occurrences*' short life to garner America's reading time. Postmaster John Campbell's Boston *News-Letter*, the second newspaper published in America began on April 24, 1704 and lasted seventy-two years. William Bradford, a long time publisher and editor in Philadelphia established New York's first newspaper, the *Gazette*, on November 8, 1725. Bradford's newspaper lasted until 1745 (11). On May 30, 1783, Benjamin Towne's *Pennsylvania Evening Post* became America's first daily newspaper, lasting until October 1874 (115).

Newspapers expanded in focus and impact by the late-nineteenth century. Post-Civil War the focus shifted from events, to people initiating events. As Larzer Ziff explains in *The American 1890s* (1966): “In a rural area personal gossip was common knowledge, and the new metropolitan journal after the war attempted to carry that interest in private matters into the city. . . .it was the medium that gave a sense of community to the newly arrived farm girl, and it was the medium that Americanized the immigrant” (148). As I will show, this community sense derived not from personal interaction but by reading about people as subjects, or even as objects. Therefore, a newspaper's ability to circulate belonging, despite the growing isolation in the large cities, stands as a major achievement.

Newspapers documented the shared experience through the human-interest story. An article depicted a group facing newsworthy conflicts such as homelessness, disease, war, natural disasters, etc. by heightening one individual's experience. As George Juergens clarifies in *Joseph Pulitzer and the New York World*, (1966) human-interest stories exposed “what had hitherto been regarded as private, the gossip and scandal about

individuals, and discovered a rich source of news in crime and everyday tragedy” (viii-ix).<sup>8</sup>

To write America’s stories required persistent observation. Reporters monitored people’s lives whose actions incited public interest. Central for my study, the varied stories a reporter found indicated enough engaging stories took place for writers to investigate and observe. Reporters did not need to invent stories to make the nation interesting.

Subsequently, newspapers’ wide readership proved readers did not require fiction to enjoy reading. However, fiction, and especially novels increased in numbers and influence during increased newspaper circulation.

Since American magazines and novels proliferated as never before, each genre sought to engage the newspaper-reading audience. As Christopher Wilson writes in “American Naturalism and the Problem of Sincerity” (1982), “During the mid-1890s, native authors finally passed European writers in sales” (511). The three genres overlapped each other: magazines and newspapers regularly serialized novels, magazines and novels published contributions from former or current newspaper reporters. Several magazines would include investigative reporting or muckraking alongside society pages, feature stories, travel writing, and other elements shaped by newspapers. Newspapers quickly became masses’ literature, thus offering steady work for writers. Several writers turned to newspapers seeking employment and exposure to American culture, beginning at a country press in Missouri or Ohio, in a rebuilt Chicago, or an expanding San Francisco. Generally, talented writers would not remain as a “printer’s devil” or beat writers, but would write features, literary narrative journalism, and even short stories, poetry, or serials. To borrow Ralph Waldo Emerson’s well-known term, many journalists became the post-

Civil War “American Scholar” through their careful observation and documentation of a country seeking world power status.

Many writers experienced fact-fiction dialogs from both sides, and a general overview of the trend provides necessary background information. Studies examining late-nineteenth, early-twentieth-century American literature inherently encompass journalism because so many fiction writers apprenticed in magazines and newspapers. An incomplete, but telling list of novelist’s with journalism experience during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century includes all ten writers in this study, plus: Crane, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Norris, Bierce, Dreiser, Ellen Glasgow, Abraham Cahan, David Graham Phillips, London, Ray Stannard Baker/David Grayson, Edna Ferber, Frank L. Baum, Hemingway, and Katherine Ann Porter. These writers did not lose themselves and their art in an environment many found factory-like and hostile to artists. For example, in “Consolation” (1921) Mencken chastised literature ruled by magazines and journalism. Mencken felt literary critics “are too prone, ass-like, to throw up our hands and bawl that all is lost, including honor” when a young writer submits his “beautiful letters down the steep, greasy chutes of the *Saturday Evening Post*, the *Metropolitan*, the *Cosmopolitan* and the rest of the Hearst and Hearstoid magazines” (17).<sup>9</sup> However, the numerous journalists-turned-novelists indicated such an apprentice could assist careers and reputations. The writers helped present America’s various “beats” while observing, investigating, documenting, and presenting engaging stories in journalism and fiction.

Media historians, reporters, and literary critics continue to indicate most late-nineteenth, early-twentieth-century reporters sought to write fiction, and regularly used their copy for works in progress. Even Ida M. Tarbell, a writer dedicated to investigative

journalism, admits in her autobiography *All in the Day's Work* (1939) how she looked over her notes “and finally I decided I should write a novel about it. Very secretly indeed, I went at it, assembling a cast, outlining a plot, writing two or three chapters.”

Unfortunately, Tarbell could only create “Poor stuff. Luckily I soon found out I was beyond my depth and gave it up” (84). Ray Stannard Baker’s autobiography, *American Chronicle* (1945), indicates a typical instance when facts became fiction. Baker describes his interview with William T. Stead of “If God Came to Chicago” fame. When Baker looked at the final copy, he found the pages he wrote reduced to “two or three colorless paragraphs” (27). He questioned the editor, learning the editor did not want ““to publish all the truth on one day”” (28). Baker then found solace by thinking ““If the [Chicago] *Record* won’t use it, why I’ll work it into my Great American Novel”” (28). Material finding more use in fiction than in fact happened repeatedly. Other times, an editor would not even see the fascinating life-material, for as Lincoln Steffens affirmed in *The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens* (1931): “What reporters know and don’t report is news—not from the newspapers’ point of view, but from the sociologists’ and the novelists’” (223).

Steffens describes another oft-cited fact-fiction intersection when he sent Abraham Cahan to cover a murder for the *New York Commercial Advertiser*.<sup>10</sup> Steffens told Cahan, that as for the observable details stemming from “rather bloody, hacked-up crime,” “We don’t care about that” (317). However, as a publisher who hired people for literary prose, Steffens appealed to Cahan’s novel-writing aspirations. He told Cahan “The man loved that woman well enough once to marry her, and now he hated her enough to cut her all to pieces. If you can find out just what happened between the wedding and the murder, you

will have a novel for yourself and a short story for me. Go on now, take your time, and get this tragedy, as a tragedy” (317).

Steffens’s advice illustrates newspaper articles and novels derive from storytelling. Cahan, or any other reporter, could have written a formulaic murder story by visiting the murder scene, noting the necessary details, and interviewing a police officer or neighbor. The reporter’s formulaic story would still engage readers due to the sensational details, but readers would only receive a brief, one-dimensional observation. In the Cahan novel Steffens envisioned, readers would receive a more intimate and prolonged view into the couple’s lives, would witness what led to the murder, and perhaps the actual murder. As this speculative fact-fiction dialog indicates, restrictions on a journalist’s storytelling largely depended on time, space, deadlines, an editor’s expectations, and the journalist’s skill.

Steffens’s advice to Cahan also highlights observation and investigation as central to novelists in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. Steffens did not tell Cahan to imagine the circumstances surrounding the murder, but to write a factually-based depiction. Ziff indicates realists and reporters rejected the romance writer’s “highly rearranged picture of life amused in its melodrama” and sought fiction “which would show life as it really is” (164). The research and observation skills required by reporters offered novelists the formula to move beyond formulaic narratives or personal experiences. Novelists who apprenticed in journalism found themselves prepared to explore new geographic and literary territory.

Successful reporters tailored articles to their reader’s interests. As Fishkin describes, writers often left journalism when unable to add artistic touches. These writers

realized “conventional journalism could engage a reader’s mind and emotions in only very limited ways” (Fishkin 7) and articles often failed to “do justice to the complexities of the world he encountered” (8). While few reporters might have sought to strip away the all-encompassing illusions Mencken saw in this section’s epigraph; many journalists found their occupation only offered note-taking, telegraph dictation, listing facts and other menial tasks.

Journalists-turned-novelists depicted the newspaper environment and journalist characters in fiction less often than one might assume. Prominent journalist characters not analyzed in this study include society reporter George Flack in Henry James’s *The Reverberator* (1888), socialist editor Michael Akersham in Ellen Glasgow’s *The Descendant* (1897), war correspondent Rufus Crane in Stephen Crane’s *Active Service* (1899), and joke-publishing Scott McGregor in Willa Cather’s *The Professor’s House* (1925). While writers often fictionalized the newspaper environment after they left journalism, others did not. As I discuss in chapter three, Anderson purchased, then edited the *Marion Democrat* and *Smyth County News* in Marion, Virginia from 1927 to 1928. Anderson previously included the newspaper environment in *Windy McPherson’s Son* (1916), *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919), and *Dark Laughter* (1925). As I examine in chapter four, Schuyler, whose journalism career continued until the 1960s, lampooned race relations and newspapers in a 1931 novel. Howe, Hemingway, and others would continue to publish in newspapers throughout their fiction-writing careers.

Novelists rarely give the newspaper element the main focus in their novels. Yet the novelist still provides valuable insights and critiques on the newspaper. Several characters read newspapers during novels, as one would expect for credible fiction. Ruined



businessman Hurstwood in Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900) reads newspapers for hours to escape reality. In *Hard Facts: Setting and Form in the American Novel* (1985), Phillip Fisher examines Hurstwood's acquiescence because "the newspaper is the essential symbol of decline because it involves a preference for all experience as retrospective rather than lived" (176). Social-climber Undine Spragg, in Edith Wharton's *The Custom of the Country* (1913) closely follows society newspapers for details on the various functions and marriages of the social elites. In Lewis's *Babbitt* (1922), Babbitt reads the *Advocate-Times* for the society pages and business developments that supposedly offer the American Dream.

Novels focused on owning and publishing a newspaper rarely occur, and they receive little critical attention. I will analyze Howe's *The Story of a Country Town*, but Albert Bigelow Paine's *The Bread Line: A Story of a Paper* (1900) also concentrates on newspaper publishing. In this novel, four men attempt to publish *The Whole Family*. However, their first issue takes nearly a year, and when their subscription scheme yields only thirty-two subscriptions, they decide to give up (196). The men conclude "it takes more than artists to run [a paper]" (198). In Charles Chesnut's *The Marrow of Tradition* (1901) racist newspaper editor Major Carteret helps organize events leading to the 1898 Wilmington race riot. In David Graham Phillips's *The Great God Success* (1901), the first half details a journalist's development, while the second half emphasizes a newspaper's business side. David Grayson's *Hempfield* (1915) depicts the activities at the *Hempfield Star*, a rural Ohio newspaper.<sup>11</sup>

One can better understand why so many reporters wrote successful novels when exploring the reporting profession. Journalists found writing instruction in several places,

though Pulitzer, in an effort to forge a college of journalism, argued, “Nobody in a newspaper office has the time or the inclination to teach a raw reporter the things he ought to know before taking up even the humblest work of the journalist” (“College of Journalism” [1904] 647). Journalism set standards reporters could learn on the job or reporters could read such publications as *Forum*, *Journalist*, or *Writer*. *Writer* offered specific advice to reporters, identifying itself as “A Monthly Magazine To Interest and Help All Literary Workers.”<sup>12</sup> Reporters could also read numerous newspapers, and most importantly gain life experience. Similarly, the American novel developed through readings and gatherings, a growing supply of new books, essays on writing, journals such as *The Atlantic Monthly*; and by writers documenting life in late-nineteenth, early-twentieth-century America in print. I integrate several key literature and journalism developments in the following chapters, explicating what occurred when fiction passed as facts, or journalism permeated fiction.

## Chapter One

### **Bennett-Style Storytelling and the Late-Victorian Journalist-Turned-Novelist:**

#### **Twain's Pre-*Roughing It* Journalism Experience and Howe's *The Story of a Country Town***

James Gordon Bennett's reign at the *New York Herald* began with the Victorian era. His journalistic practices proliferated through the post-Civil War era, especially in the American West where "Hundreds of new papers were born" (Fishkin 55). As I explore in this chapter, when the technology arrived, penny-press storytelling methods followed. Twain's journalism experiences in Missouri, Nevada, and California enlighten several fact-fiction dialogs. For instance, Twain often filled his famous journalism with fiction. Second, Twain's journalism predates many late-nineteenth journalism standards. As I demonstrate in this chapter, Twain's journalism success stemmed from a freedom to provide Bennett-style coverage before standardization reduced a reporter's individual style.

I examine Twain's early forays in journalism (including a retelling of his earliest), to indicate his perception, social critique, storytelling, and wit. As John E. Bassett investigates in "*Roughing It: Authority through Comic Performance*" (1988), *Roughing It* converges Twain's apprenticeship and fiction career because it "was a kind of literary manifesto for him and provides the clearest introduction to his performative mode and to the function of humorous and comic devices in controlling audience and subject matter" (223). Twain focused his writing skills upon the effect his tales created on newspaper readers. Twain recounts his western journalism experiences by blending fact and fiction to "breed excitement" about frontier towns and lawlessness.

Howe, like Twain, developed into an engaging storyteller known for his wit and social critique. Howe also worked on rural newspapers from childhood and wrote for years before attempting a novel. Howe provided many stories for his newspaper; his *Atchison Globe* created interviews, letters to the editor, and news items. Howe maintained his *Globe* editor position from 1877 to 1911, whereas Twain lost his promotions in 1851 and 1863. Howe's *The Story of a Country Town*, written after a long day on the *Globe*, articulates the writing struggles journalists-turned-novelists faced when active in both environments. Howe's novel illustrates the American novel's transition process in the early 1880s. Howe faced a backlash for not meeting, as Parisier explained, the novelist's responsibility to represent "imagined truths" accurately (146). Certain readers, most prominently Howells and Twain found the novel's melodrama unsuccessfully blended with more realist depictions of characters, setting and emotion.

Howells and Twain's criticism fuels the fact-fiction debate surrounding Howe's novel. Howe argued he knew people similar to the sentimental character, Jo Erring. After his divorce, Jo murders his wife's former fiancé, and then commits suicide in prison. I will include two Atchison murder cases to show the town did experience horrific murders and fatal love triangles during the time when Howe wrote *The Story of a Country Town*. Despite such evidence for Howe's credible narrative, Howe eventually sided with Howells, Twain, and others who questioned Jo's character and actions.

The novel serves largely as a *bildungsroman* when one does not emphasize the romance and murder plot. Ned Westlock edits the *Union of States* newspaper in Twin Mounds, Kansas, following his father's desertion. Ned observes more than takes part in the town's events, becoming Howe's voice to criticize the town. Ned's story ends with a

sensible marriage to his former tutor, the newly rich Agnes, after several tragic events. He also acquires ownership in a profitable mill business, and combined with his valuable property, Ned reaches Howe's for acquiring an income "ample to support me without work of any kind" (365). Howe's ability to engage the reader's interest in small-town Kansas helps to develop naturalism. However, melodramatic subplots involving long-lost fathers, a fatal love triangle, and mental illness indicate Howe's struggle to balance engaging fiction with late-Victorian realism standards.

Howe's Midwest in *The Story of a Country Town* greatly differs from Twain's *Roughing It*. Adventures in Twin Mounds cause long-term suffering. Isolation overwhelms the small town and surrounding farms; the local newspaper does little to transform a mundane existence or bring the community together. Ned's country newspaper does offer several similar insights into the rural presses' everyday practices, conflicts, and ideology. However, even though Howe had more opportunity to create events than Twain, Howe chose not to make the newspaper environment a key plot-line as Howells did in *A Modern Instance*.

Twain and Howe offer similar western portrayals because their small-town newspaper experiences blended fictional writing with facts. Both *Roughing It* and *The Story of a Country Town* explore the country editor position while using a *Herald* writing style. To chart Bennett's influence on Twain and Howe I examine how early *Herald* stories handled negative topics and made regular news engaging. Several nineteenth-century newspaper critics noticed Bennett's style, chastising him for his propensity to breed excitement. Twain and Howe exhibits the same excitement breeding impetus in their fact and fiction, circulating dangerous Midwest and Western realities to national readers.

## American Journalism's 19<sup>th</sup> Century Expansion

“Avoiding the dirt of party politics we shall yet freely and candidly express our opinion on every public question and public man. We mean to also procure intelligent correspondents in London, Paris and Washington, and measures are already adapted for that purpose. In every species of news the Herald will be one of the earliest of the early.”

— The *New York Herald's* mission defined in issue one (August 31, 1835), 2.

Newspapers' longstanding presence and cultural influence began with the nineteenth-century penny press. According to Fishkin, the penny press created America's fascination with facts, and “For the first time thousands of Americans began to see scenes from everyday life in print” (13). As this chapter will show, many scenes appeared as exciting narratives, whether the reporter witnessed the events or not. On August 31, 1835, journalism changed forever as James Gordon Bennett first published the *New York Herald*. In *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers* (1989) Michael Schudson asserts “There is no question that Bennett was the most original figure in American journalism, at least until Joseph Pulitzer. Nor is there any doubt that the *Herald* was the most important and widely read American newspaper in the decades before the Civil War” (50). Bennett held lofty literary goals for the *Herald*, boasting ““What Shakespeare did for the drama—what Milton did for religion—what Scott did for the novel, such shall I do for the daily newspaper press”” (qtd. in Crouthamel 311-12). Media historians pair Bennett with much lower company when making an analogy. For instance, Calder M. Pickett in “Technology and the New York Press in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century” (1960), describes Bennett “as an editor whose counterpart in the entertainment world was P. T. Barnum and, like Barnum, he served up for his readers a diet of freaks of the world of

news” (402). Bennett’s entertainment-oriented articles hurt his legacy, but Twain and Howe carried his legacy into their fact and fiction writing.

Writers realized sensational details enticed readers, and newspaper industry criticism and success stemmed from sensationalism. John D. Keeler, William Brown and Douglas Tarpley provide a representative sensational definition in *American Journalism: History, Principles, Practice* (2002). They indicate how the press proliferated “crime, sex, catastrophes, questionable scientific discoveries, gossip, and trial by newspaper rather than jury.” Alongside sports, comics, and trivia, the sensational press often used “stories that were untrue, fake photographs, and provocative headlines” (49). Bennett’s early issues indicate why the *Herald* faced several attacks. For example, “Wedding Extraordinary” (August 31, 1835) in issue one vaguely details the common wedding news. The participants receive veiled recognition: “The Lothario (who is a reverend gentleman;) has been united in the holy bonds, not less than *five* times previous to his making love to Miss Amelia — . . . The lady is fresh from Jersey, and has a handsome fortune” (2, emphasis in original). However, because the reporter can give details, the bakery mix-up and how a young man stole a wedding cake slice receives extensive coverage.<sup>13</sup> The story’s emphasis on the cake mishap provides simple humor, contrasting the husband’s depiction as a predator, and the bride as a “fresh” victim.

“Wedding Extraordinary” foreshadows the conventional *Herald* writing style. The cake theft appears in the third person. The events/plot reporter/writer could not have witnessed reads as a dramatic retelling from beginning to conclusion. The writer/reporter would have gathered whatever details he could, and then restructured testimonies and his own observations into an engaging story. This issue’s sensational storytelling continued

over the next weeks with articles such as “Horrible Death Bed” in the October 24, 1835 issue best indicating the sensational press’s obsession with “crime, sex, catastrophes.”<sup>14</sup> Crouthamel explains the first issue as a whole “indicated what Bennett intended the *Herald* to be. There were numerous short, spicy tidbits: a murder and a death by suffocation, the explosion of a steamboat, a balloon ascension, horse racing, romantic poetry, and police court reports” (299).<sup>15</sup>

Several “News Briefs” in early issues focus on impoverished citizens depicted as objects under study. A writer closely examining people’s reasons for their low social status connects to a journalism-oriented naturalism. “Attempt to Drown” (September 8, 1835) scrutinizes a tragic loss with subjective observations made by the reporter. The reporter opens the story with “A wretched looking object named Susan O’Donald was brought to the Police yesterday morning, charged with having attempted to drown herself” (2). An objective reporter could have simply begun with “Susan O’Donald” and listed the charges. The reporter’s insights continue with “She was perfectly sober, but evidently labored under great depression of spirits, in consequence of having lately lost her only son. She said she was in great distress, and did not wish to live. The magistrate, after reasoning with her on the enormity of her crime, discharged her” (2). *Herald* critics who likened the newspaper to a circus would view O’Donald as one more sideshow whose life did not provide uplifting news. Since O’Donald does not convey goodness, these critics suggested her life should not reach newsworthy status. Twain and Howe noticed, like Bennett, how frequently the reading public commanded stories depicting human nature’s bad side.

The *Herald*’s early issues devote extensive coverage to violence and death. “Diabolical Attempt to Poison” (October 30, 1835) provides a typical where an extended



narrative provides constructed details. Since reporters rarely printed names in the early-nineteenth century, their focus shifts to the events, details, and observations made about unnamed participants. The article opens with: “A few days ago, the following dastardly attempt to poison a respectable citizen was made by some miscreant hitherto unknown” (1). The “miscreant” placed a plate of large white grapes on the table of “a doctor of considerable practice, residing in Carmine street. He is unwilling his name should appear in the public prints” (1). The doctor ate the grapes, felt ill, and diagnosed the deadly symptoms just in time to ingest the antidote. Again, the *Herald* seeks and prints bizarre tales in narrative form because readers will find them as exciting to read. With the *Herald*’s dedication to narratives, the reader becomes the active observer, as they would in any fictional third-person narrative.<sup>16</sup> These stories show an America different than most experience, an objective Twain and Howe share in *Roughing It* and *The Story of a Country Town*.

Bennett began feuding with rival editors only a few months into publishing his newspaper. On October 24, 1835, a statement surely from Bennett indicates the *Herald*’s growth while chastising *New York Sun* editor Benjamin H. Day: “The Sun is alarmed (and very justly too) at the rapid progress of the Herald in popularity, patronage, and circulation” (1). Bennett does not feel threatened by the two year older *Sun* because “They do not possess manners, materials, mein, or modesty enough.” He presents the following warning: “Come, come, Mr. Sun, you must get out of our way, or we shall kick you out of it” (1). Bennett furthers the feud days later on October 30, 1835 with “Some Notes on the Sun’s Reports.” He calls *Sun* employees “block heads” and boasts “These men don’t know the stuff they deal with – they don’t know the customer they have got” (1).

Bennett's interest in feuding stemmed from self-promotion and copy production, even if his words brought forth physical harm. Bennett made enemies with more than just Day, as on two separate occasions in 1836, *New York Enquirer* editor James Watson Webb followed Bennett into the streets and beat him with a cane (Mindich 15).<sup>17</sup> Editors' direct confrontations indicate nineteenth-century journalism's personal nature and how editors closely observed their rivals' writing and actions.

While other critics did not follow Webb's physical attacks, abundant criticism followed for Bennett and American newspapers in general. Newspaper criticism often focused on storytelling, including Lambert A. Wilmer's book-length criticism, *Our Press Gang; or, A Complete Exposition of the Corruption and Crimes of the American Newspapers* (1859). Wilmer, a former Maryland justice of the peace acquired newspaper experience over two decades at such newspapers as the *Saturday Evening Post and Casket*, the *Baltimore Saturday Visiter*, and the *United States Telegraph*. Wilmer presented fourteen "serious" charges against the American press, with lesser charges listed in an appendix. Wilmer called several newspaper editors "excitement breeders," charging them with a "tyrannical exercise of power and authority to which it has no just pretensions" (51). Wilmer identifies such problems as anti-American sentiments by foreign born editors and publishers, the newspaper being the "zealous advocate and interested colleague of every form of villainy and imposture" (51), "invading the sanctuary of private life" (52), and "debasement of the literature of our country" (53).<sup>18</sup>

Wilmer and others, including British journalist-turned-novelist Charles Dickens, largely objected to how Bennett's vision for the newspaper gave little attention to morality and family values. Dickens's travel narrative and American culture examination,

*American Notes* (1842) identified newspapers as fueling most American problems.

Dickens devotes one section in his “Concluding Remarks” to the “Evil Influence of the Journals.” In this section he suspects: “while the newspaper press of America is in, or near, its present abject state, high moral improvement in that country is hopeless” (246-47). Dickens satirized American newspapers soon after in *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1844). His title character travels to New York and hears newsboys shouting the stories included in the following New York newspapers: “the Sewer, the Stabber, the Family Spy, the Private Listener, the Peeper, the Plunderer, the Keyhole Reporter, the Rowdy Journal” (255). Dickens lampooned America’s love for exposed scandal as newsboys shout ““Here’s the Sewer’s exposure of the Wall Street Gang, and the Sewer’s exposure of the Washington Gang, and the Sewer’s exclusive account of a flagrant act of dishonesty committed by the Secretary of State when he was eight years old; now communicated, at a great expense, by his own nurse”” (256).

The journalism industry made an effort to lessen the constant criticism by forming and publishing advice and standards for the major journalistic practices. Twain would not follow these standards, partially since his work predates standardizing publications such as *Forum* and *Writer*. Twain also benefited by working on newly established newspapers such as the *Hannibal Journal* and *Virginia Enterprise* where he could “parody not only letters from traveling correspondents, but also stock prospectuses, political speeches, art criticism, romantic novels, travel guidebooks, Sunday school primers, and history textbooks” (Fishkin 58). Twain captured the melodramatic writing style exploited in the *Herald* to attain celebrity status. Twain created rustic personas for himself and journalism

during his early apprenticeship. One can most closely connect Bennett and Twain through Wilmer's derogatory term, the "excitement breeder."

### **Twain's Wild West Features Beat Journalism Standards**

"Popular excitement is the element in whose 'ennobling stir' the journalist feels himself exalted. Whatever disturbs the tranquility of the public increases the emoluments of the press and magnifies the importance to the editor. To stimulate the rage of factions. . .to produce an agitation of some kind, without any regard to the consequences, is now the obvious design, —the AVOWED purpose, of some of our most distinguished, successful and influential journalists."

— Lambert A. Wilmer's *Our Press Gang*, 103

Twain's journalism apprenticeship began during widespread decries against journalism's path into sensationalism, gossip, and immorality. From Twain's beginning, he followed Bennett's scandalous writing to stimulate the reader's imagination. Twain's humor, rustic writing style and the fact-fiction blend in many texts made him a world-famous "excitement breeder." Like Bennett, Twain faced the threat of physical harm from rival editors for harming their public image. One finds Twain's strong allegiance to Bennett if one studies Twain's early journalism and *Roughing It* within a context of the *Herald* and late-nineteenth-century journalism advice columns. Twain formed an allegiance to Bennett without receiving similar scorn because readers expected his fact-fiction to contain humor. Twain's rise to an important journalist-turned-novelist suggests Bennett's influence extended into canonical literature.

Twain's ability to engage readers began when he worked as a "printer's devil" on his uncle's newspaper, the *Hannibal Journal* in 1851. Twain recounted his earliest writing at sixteen in "My First Literary Venture" (April 12, 1871). Twain's introduction indicates "It was then when I did my first newspaper scribbling, and most unexpectedly to me stirred up a fine sensation in the community. It did indeed, and I was very proud of it, too" (1). Twain's uncle leaves town and asks the teenaged Twain to edit one issue. Ron Powers's biography, *Mark Twain: A Life* (2005), portrays Twain as more than eager to edit the paper, suggesting "Sam's fingers must have been snaking toward the typecase before Orion was out the door" (53). Each Twain story follows Bennett's standards for excitement, public scorn, and the study of humans as objects.

Twain's first story focused on Josiah T. Hinton, the editor for the rival *Hannibal Tri-Weekly Messenger*. Hinton left a suicide note for his friends after a woman dumped him. However, Hinton's friends found him alive in the creek; he decided he wanted to live. Twain heard the story and highlighted Hinton's melodramatic suffering in a similar manner as the O'Donald story. As Twain explains, "I wrote an elaborate account of the whole matter, and then illustrated it with villainous cuts engraved on the bottoms of wooden type with a jack-knife—one of them a picture of Hinton wading out into creek in his shirt, with a lantern, sounding the depth of the water with a walking stick" (1). In Twain's retelling, unlike the O'Donald story, readers learn the writer's motivation for the story's slant. Twain explains "I thought it was desperately funny, and was densely unconscious, that there was any moral obliquity about such a publication" (1). Twain's first newspaper story begins his process to write engaging journalism and fiction by ignoring conventions.

Twain evades the “moral obliquity” through the entire issue. His other stories take on well-known citizens, including another country editor in a professed attempt to ““see him squirm!”” (1). Twain metaphorically pledges allegiance to Bennett’s circus standards further, because as he explains, he “lampooned two prominent citizens outrageously—not because they had done anything to deserve it, but merely because I thought it was my duty to make the paper lively” (1). Twain even took on the Hannibal “Lothario,” Mr. J. Gordon Runnels, a tailor, who wrote “lushy ‘poetry’ for the *Journal* about his latest conquest (1).

Twain received immediate feedback in the form of violent threats once he published these stories. Subjects written about in country newspapers could easily eliminate the distance between a writer and his material. However the dangerous exposure created an audience and engaging writing. Twain learned exceeding the reader’s expectations heaped great rewards because “The paper came out, and I never knew any little things to attract so much attention as those playful trifles of mine. For once the Hannibal *Journal* was in demand—a novelty it had not experienced before. The whole town was stirred” (1). Only sixteen, Twain’s use of “play” to describe his actions seems age-appropriate, yet despite these early repercussions he would maintain a fierceness and satirical nature. Twain’s allegiance to the Bennett-style proved even more courageous when one learns “Hinton dropped in with a double-barreled shot gun early in the forenoon,” “The tailor came with his goose and a pair of shears,” “The two lampooned citizens came with threats of libel,” and “The country editor pranced in with a war-whoop the next day, suffering for blood to drink” (1). Luckily for Twain, each man rescinded his violent threat when they found a “child” wrote and published the exposés; but according to

Twain, the rival editor and tailor both left the town for good based on the harmful press coverage (1).

Twain's uncle returned from his trip in a foul mood, but the increased circulation lessened his temper.<sup>19</sup> Orion tried to make peace with Hinton, writing the following disclaimer in the next issue: “The jokes of our correspondent have been rather rough; but, originating and perpetrated in a spirit of fun, and without a serious thought, no attention was expected to be paid to them, beyond a smile at the local editor's expense” (qtd. in Powers 54-55). As Bennett knew, and Twain and his uncle quickly found out, newspaper stories exciting as fiction sold and increased the newspaper's influence. More importantly, “Clemens had tapped the lode of invective that would irradiate the satiric voice forever afterward” (Powers 55). Twain refused to back down when real subjects approached him, and he learned he could write more leniently with fictional characters.

Twain stuck to Bennett's standards fifteen years later during the Virginia, Nevada experiences he would collect and shape for *Roughing It*. In Twain's “The Latest Sensation” (Oct. 31, 1863), the article's scope represents the social problem Wilmer found when “No narrative of human depravity or crime can shock or horrify an American reader.” The constant exposure to such stories, says Wilmer, occurs for readers “when some newspaper scribbler tries (after the manner of the Herald or Tribune) to astonish him with ‘a full and faithful report’ of the latest deed of preternatural atrocity” (Wilmer 173). Twain's story includes a subtitle Bennett would have appreciated: “A Victim to Jeremy Diddling Trustees—He Cuts his Throat from Ear to Ear, Scalps his Wife, and Dashes out the Brains of Six Helpless Children!” Twain's trademark humor does not appear in this story; however, writing such a horrific event with sympathy for the transgressor suggests

naturalism. Twain's article begins with foreshadowing: for some time Mrs. Hopkins worried about her husband's sanity. Mr. Hopkins goes insane on the frontier without proper medical attention; Mr. Hopkins soon becomes grotesque and rides into Carson with a fatal cut across his throat. The article's dramatic details include how Hopkins held "a reeking scalp from which the warm, smoking blood was still dripping" before he falls dead (5). The story then reveals the scalp to be that of his wife. The next scene depicts Hopkins's home, described as "ghastly." Observers find "The scalplless corpse of Mrs. Hopkins lay across the threshold, with her head split open and her right hand almost severed from the wrist" (5). Observers find six children scattered about the room, "Their brains had evidently been dashed out with a club, and every mark about them seemed to have been made with a blunt instrument" (5). The attention to detail and shock value match Wilmer's critique that newspapers present "a full and minute account of criminal trials, cases of rape, seduction, *crim. con.*, etc., the details of which are often too gross and filthy to be diffused through the atmosphere of a common brothel" (174). Twain's concluding explanation provides an editorial for the story.

Twain's last paragraph completes the naturalistic scope by identifying and examining the reasons Hopkins's brute self emerged. As Twain suggests, Hopkins's insanity derives from social forces treating him as a plaything to victimize. According to Twain, Hopkins left one mining scandal only to find the same scandal of cooking dividends in his new water company. Twain's reprimand of big business appears a little heavy-handed for objective reporting, but it matches the narrator intrusions found in Norris, Dreiser, Dunbar, and London's naturalism. Twain writes how newspapers failed to expose the illegal actions conducted by "cunning financiers, leaving the crash to come



upon poor and unsuspecting stockholders. . . We hope the fearful massacre detailed above may prove the saddest result of their silence” (5). While the last line moves from naturalism to didacticism, it reduces Hopkins’s individuality to a human-interest story concerning victimization in capitalist America. Such an individuality reduction became standard procedure for human-interest stories, which attempted to present a wider version of the American experience. Few human-interest stories, however, would attempt to explain a man cutting his family into pieces.

Twain’s standard-free articles became literary when he narrowed the distance between feature and composition. As Ziff proclaims about literary journalists, “it was his prose that made the difference between what was common and uninteresting in life and what was absorbingly pathetic or humorous in print” (148). Twain’s “The Black Hole of San Francisco” (January 18, 1866) functions as an article with literary goals. Twain’s lead appears as follows: “If I were a police judge here, I would hold my court in the city prison and sentence my convicts to imprisonment in the present Police Court room” (1). The sketch informs readers on court-room dangers, since “It is the infernalesst smelling den on earth, perhaps. A deserted slaughter-house, festering in the sun, is bearable, because it only has one smell, albeit a lively one” (1). The facts about the actual dimensions only serve to further heighten the dramatic effect, and they appear amongst other personal comments. This story performs much the same function as the *Herald*’s cake story. The story presents no real news, but a lively set scene engages reader’s imaginations.<sup>20</sup>

Twain’s prose generated celebrity status as he traveled over the country and Europe to give speeches and public readings. Though his fame as a novelist via *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885) remained over a decade away when he wrote

*Roughing It*, his frontier narrative indicates Twain could have written embellished facts, or satire, for a career. Describing the rustic western nature aided his readability, and several events took place for him to report. Such a writing strategy connects to Bennett, who in several *Herald* issues draws together a collective narrative of American experience similar to the revised and reshaped articles Twain published in book form as *Roughing It*. This method also connects to Howe, celebrated for Twin Mound's picturesque details.

### **Twain's Engaging Travel Narrative**

“‘[F]aking’ is an almost universal practice, and that hardly a news despatch [sic] is written which is not ‘faked’ in a greater or less degree.”

— William H. Hills's “Advice to Newspaper Correspondents.—IV. ‘Faking’” in *Writer* (November 1887), 154

Twain's *Roughing It* constructs an engaging narrative with a fact-fiction blend. Twain made newspaper work interesting to readers, partially because the *Virginia Territorial Enterprise* offered an environment conducive to artists. Twain, recounting his first day reporting, explains how “I wandered about town questioning everybody, boring everybody, and finding out that nobody knew anything. At the end of five hours my notebook was still barren” (223). Luckily for Twain's notebook, he heard Indians murdered a traveler. However, Twain found his subsequent report bland, and felt if he was not “confined within rigid limits by the presence of the reporters of the other papers I could add particulars that would make the article much more interesting” (224). Twain's comment suggests reporters valued scoops so someone else could not provide contrary

details. Reporters who created news also scooped competitors and eliminated the limitations facts could cause.

Twain's desire for a scoop and an engaging story on that first day presented itself when he found another wagon going in the same direction. Twain switched to fiction and included the latest wagon "to the killed and wounded. Having more scope here, I put his wagon through an Indian fight that to this day has no parallel in history" (224). Powers indicates Twain would repeatedly create news, since "Rather than focusing on the facts that any fool could observe and report, Sam reported facts that would have occurred in a better and more interesting world" (112). Twain's turn toward the imaginative derived from a desire to romanticize the West as a place rife with gunfights and Indian raids. Whereas one murder report lacking illustrative details would draw in readers, an epic battle would engage imaginations and create a literary impression.

Journalists using fiction to create or complete news stories occurred regularly. Hills explained the "faking" necessity because newspapers for two reasons. First, faking makes newspapers "much more interesting and readable" (154), and readers express a "constant demand for picturesque stories" (155).<sup>21</sup> Hills did not suggest the reporter create news or embellish facts as Twain did. Hills wanted writers to include less important details to make the story "picturesque" while maintaining a recognizable reality. Above all, Hills reinforces "the less of it the correspondent does, the better," and blending fact into fiction should be left "to the writer of historical novels" (155).<sup>22</sup> Aside from the historical novelist, Twain and all journalists-turned-novelists would hone their skills at creating readable stories from actual events, then use material encountered from their apprenticeship to create fiction.

While the novelists under examination refrained from a journalism plot once they left newspapers, Twain included several details and stories about his days on the *Virginia Enterprise* in *Roughing It*. Twain provided fundamental details about how many compositors the newspaper employed, his writing strategy, and why certain columns kept the audience's attention and imagination. Fortunately, Twain's apprentice occurred on a newspaper devoted to fostering artists. As Powers surmises "The *Territorial Enterprise* was easily the liveliest, if not exactly the most reliable newspaper on the American continent. . . .it had attracted a coterie of brilliant, adventuring young poets and misfit writers who had found their way to the *Enterprise* generally by accident" (110).

Twain even worked on a serialized novel during his apprentice. A literary paper entered the Virginia market when *The Weekly Occidental*, "devoted to literature" made its appearance and "All the literary people were engaged to write for it" (271). The novel soon faltered as writers rotated chapters. The writer before Twain, Mr. D, wrote his chapter drunk; thus he engaged in sensation beyond Twain's imagination. Twain outlines the ridiculous plot advancements in full, which include multiple scandalous marriages, four suicides, a descent into hell, and a transition into the next chapter which indicated the next writer (Twain), "would take up the surviving character of the novel and tell what became of the devil!" (273). The other novelists made Mr. D revise his chapter, but he got drunk again and Twain indicates "the chapter cannot be described. It was symmetrically crazy; it was artistically absurd; and it had explanatory footnotes that were fully as curious as the text" (274). The chapter did not appear in the next edition and the *Occidental* ended soon after. Mr. D "faked" too much, even for fiction. Writers needed to follow certain fiction standards even in a melodramatic romance. As this study will discuss, certain

melodramatic events in Howe's novel made him want to stop writing; the mixed reactions to his and Mr. D's novels indicated fiction needed to adhere to reality in ways sensational journalism did not.

Twain offers further information in *Roughing It*, explaining how a western reporter covers his district. Twain soon discovered methods for covering his territory, and as he expanded his network he wrote less fiction, borrowing more facts. Twain explains his transition process, informing readers, "as I grew better acquainted with the business and learned the run of the sources of information I ceased to require the aid of fancy to any large extent, and became able to fill my columns without diverging noticeably from the domain of fact" (225). Twain's newfound reliance on fact resulted from another journalist as he explains "I struck up friendships with the reporters of the other journals, and we swapped 'regulars' with each other and thus economized work" (225). Twain does adhere to standard journalism in such cases, as evidenced by Massachusetts and New Hampshire reporter Frank H. Pope, who contributed "How a District is Covered" for *Writer* (August 1887). Pope explains a reporter covering a large area must often play the "hustler" and "it is necessary that the 'district man' be thoroughly familiar with every fount of information on his territory that can be tapped, as exigencies arise that require speedy tapping even from a long distance" (90). Twain's "stream of information" often showed up at his office because whenever a new mine opened reporters received a small claim for writing about the property (231).

As in Hannibal, the *Enterprise's* editor, Mr. Goodman, left for a week and made Twain editor. This promotion destroyed Twain's apprenticeship in Virginia; he only lasted one week. Twain could not write editorials because "*Subjects* are the trouble—the dreary lack

of them, I mean. Every day, it is drag, drag, drag—think, and worry and suffer—all the world is a dull blank, and yet the editorial columns *must* be filled” (299, emphasis in original). Twain’s inability to write editorials stems from the material since he finds real subjects dull compared to the fiction he writes. Twain explained what subjects he found to write about in “How I Escaped Being Killed in a Duel” (December 23, 1872). He instructs readers the article contains a “true story” and a moral “merely thrown in to carry favor with the religious element” (1). Twain explains why his *Enterprise* editorship caused conflict: “when I retired I had a duel on my hands, and three horse-whippings promised me” (1). His trouble with Mr. Lord, an editor at the rival paper occurred because “I suppose I called him a thief, or a body-snatcher, or an idiot, or something like that. I was obliged to make the paper readable” (1).

Twain challenges him to a duel hoping he will decline. Mr. Lord declines until Twain taunts him several more times. Though the duel never occurs because Mr. Lord greatly overestimated Twain’s talent with a pistol, Twain develops the story as a joke on himself, Lord, and dueling. His conclusion illustrates his comedic storytelling because after wishing his story might reach Sunday school teachers, he satirically concludes, “If a man were to challenge me now—now that I can fully appreciate the iniquity of that practice—I would go to that man, and take him by the hand, and lead him to a quiet, retired room—and kill him” (1).

To Twain the West served new adventures, where a person could live the westerner persona. While regular frontier news proved engaging to an 1870s eastern reader “Clemens flaunted the gap [between fiction and reality]. . .with his comically outrageous prefatory assertions that his books had no morals or messages, resisted interpretation as a

threat to authority” (Bassett 222). Bassett suggests rather than a travel narrative, *Roughing It* “reads more like a text with the title, ‘How I became a writer-lecturer in America and what that means’” (224). Twain’s travel sketch created humorous tales of editing a newspaper, culminating all his prior journalism experiences that created his rustic writing style. Howe’s novel lacks confidence in the newspaper subplot, so he reverted to Bennett melodrama to engage readers.

### **From Hannibal to Atchison**

Howe began his small paper in Atchison, Kansas, five years after *Roughing It*. He established a similar wit and observation style as Twain, and the “sayings” of the “Sage of Potato Hill” reached as large an audience. Howe’s *Globe* and *Story of a Country Town* matches Twain’s fact-fiction style. While readers celebrated his Bennett-style melodrama in the *Globe*, melodramatic scenes in Howe’s novel disappointed himself and others, including Twain and Howells. Atchison murders during the time Howe struggled through the novel suggest Jo Erring’s actions seem plausible. Numerous readers enjoyed the new approach in literature his novel offered despite the Parisier identified fact-fiction dialog that fiction should adhere to the reader’s sense of reality.

The novel’s originality caused Howe to publish the novel on his own press after several rejections from Eastern publishers. In Howe’s autobiography, *Plain People* (1929), he recounts how he “sent copies to W. D. Howells and Mark Twain, both of whom I specially admired: the first because of ‘A Modern Instance,’ and the second because of ‘Roughing It,’ both newspaper stories” (211).<sup>23</sup> Twain’s response praises Howe’s journalism-derived realism: “Your style is so simple, sincere, direct, & at the same time so

clear & so strong, that I think it must have been born to you, not made. Your pictures of that arid village life, & the insides & outsides of its people, are vivid, & what is more, true; I know, for I have seen it all, lived it all” (qtd. in Schorer 110). However, Twain did not find logic in the Jo-Mateel-Bragg love triangle ending in divorce, murder, and suicide. He even offered Howe some private fiction-writing advice (*Plain People* 212). When read alongside Twain’s journalism, Howe’s novel ends with a “preternatural atrocity” like Twain’s Hopkins family murder story. Jo murders and commits suicide when his stringent moral code conflicts with jealousy over his wife’s prior engagement to the despicable Bragg. He then reflects upon the reason for his actions, or as the final chapter identifies his tragedy, “The History of a Mistake” (356).

Howells’s response corroborates Twain’s views, with appreciation for the realism, not for the melodrama. Howells wrote “I have never lived as far West as Kansas but I have lived in your country town, and I know it is every word true” (qtd. in Stronks 474). Howells’s appreciation held serious weight; his positive review convinced publishing companies to issue a second printing. But like Twain, Howells wrote “[Your book] has many faults [especially] the last half of your Jo, who slops into sentimentality and driveling wickedness, wholly unworthy” (qtd. in Stronks 474). Subsequent printings expanded Howe’s audience and circulation to a book in two halves, with most positive responses highlighting Twin Mound’s truthful depiction in the first half. For example, Hamlin Garland praised how the novel “depicted ‘homely, prosaic people in their restricted lives,’ not view them from a distance as picturesque but writing ‘as from among them’” (qtd. in Smith 488). Readers interested in romance novels, enjoyed the second half, and considered *The Story of a Country Town* among the very best novels.



The *Globe*'s own review, "That Book" (Oct. 6, 1883), as one might expect, found many reasons to applaud the book. The reviewer called Howe's novel "the best romance yet made out of the materials to be found on the prairie" (1). In discussing the realistic qualities, the reviewer called it "a genuine western production" where the author "described the simple lives, the everyday struggles of its people better than we have ever seen it told before" (1). The reviewer suggested the novel stood outside romance as even the villain, "Bragg is an excellent delineation of the pretentious hightailed loafer" (1)

The *New York Herald*'s review (November 2, 1883) also applauded the new, more cynical Midwestern story. The reviewer called Howe's Kansas depiction a "powerful, sympathetic and original work," with writing that appears as "an unconscious simplicity of narrative and a fidelity to nature in the portrayal of character which convince the reader that the while is a study direct from life" (1). Like *Herald* articles "the peculiar people of the place are so sympathetically treated, that our interest is kept keenly alive" (1) In regards to Jo, the novel's polarizing element, "we are so convinced that his crime is the natural and almost inevitable result of his false and barbarous uprearing that we cannot but pity him in his desolation and despair" (1). The *Herald* review links Jo to Twain's Hopkins and other naturalist protagonists destroyed by their environment. All early reviews indicate Howe accomplished one major task in publishing *Story of a Country Town*. Howe circulated and preserved the Midwest in fiction by challenging common perceptions held by those who never saw the region, while matching the reality of those who lived there (or had moved away).

### **The Country Editor Who Moonlighted as a Novelist**

“He was the best reporter this writer has seen or hopes to see. When Howe ran *The Globe* it was the best written and most interesting newspaper this writer has known. . . . It was a reporter’s newspaper. It took the pony report of the Associated Press. Aside from that, Howe and his reporters wrote almost every line that went into the paper. The paper had subscribers in every English-speaking country of the world.”

— Jay E. House’s “Ed Howe—The Country Editor Supreme” in the *New York Times* (June 12, 1927), SM8

Four decades after Bennett published his first issue his influence reached Atchison, Kansas. A small town southwest of St. Joseph, Missouri, housed one of the most widely quoted country editors. House deemed Howe “the only American writing man who has attained national significance in the editorial and news columns of a daily newspaper published in a town of only 15,000 inhabitants” (SM8). With full freedom to print any “news” he saw fit as owner and editor, Howe’s paper became a sounding board for his views on journalism, literature, and life. Howe’s newspaper expanded the practice of “faking” as he regularly created stories, letters, and interviews. When Howe attempted the novel genre he did so with little direction, or energy after a day at the *Globe*. Applying the same freedom to the novel brought forth mixed reactions from literary critics. Exploring the *Globe* and *The Story of a Country Town* indicates the longstanding fact-fiction dialog placing greater need for reality in the novel than in the newspaper.

Howe worked extensively in fictional journalism before his novel. He satirized other newspapers and used Twain-like wit to increase readership, influence, and profits. Howe began the *Globe* in 1877 after gaining experience in journalism since his father

bought the Bethany, Missouri, *Union of States* in 1863 (Bucco 15). He later wrote for the *Eagle* in Golden, Colorado, where “not a line I wrote. . .had sense in it” (*Plain People* 119). Despite Howe’s confusion in Colorado, the “Salutatory” in his first *Globe* issue closely aligns with realism. Howe informed neighbors and prospective readers “We shall confine ourselves almost exclusively to the small affairs of humanity not ordinarily noticed by newspapers” (qtd. in Pickett 29).

Howe’s “Salutatory” points to local topics a subject/citizen could easily recognize as fact, but his newspaper regularly included fiction. Howe explains, “I was familiar with the faults of newspapers, and these were made fun of. Our competitors made much of interviews, and these we mocked, by running long display headings over imaginary interviews of three or four lines” (133). The interview allowed the reporter to interact with the subjects, but Howe did not wait for an invitation. In an interview, the reporter invaded a noteworthy person’s private space, a major reason why “Members of the upper class and practitioners of traditional journalism at first resisted the interview” (Kaplan 41). Certain writers and journalists worried about the interview’s impact on society. Henry James, in particular, despised the interview. In 1887 James wrote in his journal how credible fiction writers could not ignore its overuse (Strychacz 45). James called interviews “the highest expression of the note of ‘familiarity,’ . . . [causing] the invasion, the impudence and shamelessness. . .the devouring *publicity* of life, the extinction of all sense between public and private” (qtd. in Strychacz 45-46, emphasis his). Interviews showed a human side of people nearly all readers would never meet, but they also made people subjects of study.

Though Howe created interviews for satirical purposes, journalism standards indicated a reporter should facilitate this human study similar to a fictional character.

Reporters received guidelines to follow when conducting interviews to create the desired result for newspapers. The premier issue of *The Writer* also included James W. Clarke's "The Art of Interviewing" which stated "that interviewing is one of the most enjoyable duties of a newspaper man" (5). Journalists experiencing difficulty remembering the entire interview (including non-verbal communication) or extracting the required answers solved the problem with sensible fiction. Clarke instructs reporters how to handle the interviewee who "fears the notebook" or is "ultra-nervous." Clarke suggests the following strategy: "Put in many ornamental phrases which he did not use, polish off the crudities of his actual remarks, throw in some facts, if you know any, that help out his views, but which he forgot to use or never heard of" (4). The reporter's desired interpretation, or prejudice, of the editor and reporter caused another reason for dissent toward the newspaper. In "What a Daily Newspaper Might be Made" (1893), William Morton Payne, an associate editor of the Chicago *Dial* from 1892 to 1915 chastised reporters and editors "so eager to say something of the latest happenings that they print fictitious accounts when it is inconvenient or impossible to get accurate reports" (357).

Howe's "Country Town Sayings," another source of his newspaper fame, functioned more as art than news. In the *Globe*, numerous "Country Town Sayings" would appear one after the other like Dos Passos's Newsreels. These quips, similar to advice printed at the bottom of the *Herald*, appeared in newspapers around the country; Howe even sold them as a book in 1910. A few examples of sayings connected to newspapers include: "We are becoming very tired of the never-ending clash between men and women. There was a time when women were modest in their charges against the men; when they insinuated that they could tell dreadful things, if they cared to, but here lately they are

telling them in the magazines and newspapers” (80); “Most of the stories about the ‘Wonderful American Newspapers’ are printed in the American newspapers: we don’t hear the people talking much along that line” (236); and “There is a lot of little gossip in every town, but the real big stories are seldom known” (264).<sup>24</sup> Without a telegraph the *Globe* needed these sayings to fill their columns. Readers could either read a story to discover the theme, or they could scan Howe’s “Saying” to receive rapid-fire themes on all topics.

A media historian can not call the murder Howe wrote in *The Story of a Country* town his first use of murder in fiction. The *Globe* included fictitious murders as jokes or to present a larger social message.<sup>25</sup> For instance, “A horrible murder occurred at Fall City last week” (March 10, 1882) quotes a newspaper editor retelling how he killed a tramp with an “iron side-stick. . . pulled his lungs through his ears, the remainder of the carcass we ran through the cogs of our new job press” (1). The story reports the editor still freely roams the streets “with the scalp of the murdered man in his belt” as all those who carry disputes with the editor have fled the city (1). The story’s punch-line appears as follows: “A humorous editor on the rampage is more to be dreaded than an intercene war” (1). An earlier, sillier murder story, “Another cold blooded murder has just been committed” (June 29, 1881) indicates St. Joseph reporters cannot finish their weather complaints before someone kills them. The *Globe* writer complains “Bah! America will never be free until a man can travel from Maine to California under a July sun and shout at the top of his voice, ‘Ain’t this warm! ain’t this warm!’ We—” (1). The writer then hesitated since “a murderous looking villain came into our office” and tried to stop their weather comment “with a knife” (1). They detained the culprit, “the funny man of the St. Joe *News*, and was

the most villainous looking humorist we ever looked upon” (1). Howe, like Twain, took on rival editors to make his newspaper interesting.

Howe believed newspapers set national writing standards. He closely followed urban newspapers and believed editorials contained the nation’s best writing. He also felt “America is poor in book literature but it is singularly gifted in newspaper literature” (36). Howe’s attention to literariness came through in his newspaper, as it functions as a modernist text similar to Dos Passos’s *U.S.A.* newsreel and camera eye sections (explored in chapter five). As S. J. Sackett explains in *E. W. Howe* (1972), Howe published texts “lumped together without headlines, the subscribers had to read every word of it to find out what was going on” (23). *Globe* readers, unable to scan the headlines and choose a particular story, found the *Globe* more like a collage of information and entertainment. While readers worked through the pages they found “Howe’s shrewd and pithy observations of the life around him and the ‘paid locals,’ brief advertisements which began like any other item” (23). These blended genres caused readers to stay focused and not rely on headlines when deciding which stories to read. Readers closely examined the stories to find out if they appeared in articles. With the close proximity of subjects, Howe faced repercussions for his stories. Like Bennett and Twain, Howe received violent threats along with cancelled subscriptions. In one particular case “a man kept Howe under the muzzle of a loaded revolver for thirty minutes on Commercial Street” (Sackett 23).

After building the *Globe* as the premier Midwestern country newspaper, the “Sage of Potato Hill” retired in 1911 to start his own magazine, *E. W. Howe’s Monthly*. Howe had given up on novel writing by this time, but many believed *The Story of a Country*, *The Mystery of the Locks* (1885), and *The Moonlight Boy* (1886) would have enjoyed more

success if Howe quit his newspaper earlier. In “Western Story Writers” (September 9, 1897), *Chicago Times-Herald* writer H. S. Canfield suggested Howe “is too good a man to waste” on newspaper work and wished someone would “beseech him to give up the daily grind” (5). The “grind” versus art clearly identifies the separation between newspapers and novels. Howe needed to find stories or write fiction before the *Globe*’s deadline. He worked on his material every day, with few vacations.

After each day he tried to forget about the grind and write art about small-town life and newspapers in a process taking months. How could critics expect Howe to maintain an organized, even-tempo novel? His newspaper work, filled with short, disrupting narratives blended in with his sustained work on a long text every day. As Ziff elucidates about writers involved in journalism while writing fiction, “Both the cynicism and the sentiment marred many a novel or play composed after hours. . . even as the work of both benefited from the experience newspaper life made possible” (153). Since he wrote about the same people and places in both fact and fiction, his struggle to keep reality and realistic fiction separate hinders the novel. Martin Bucco states the same idea another way, suggesting, “By day Howe joined forces with the community, but by night he was a spectator, and introspectionist” ([1977], 19). Though Howe exposed a lot of himself in the *Globe*’s created material, *The Story of a Country Town* makes more of his private life public. Through Ned Westlock’s first-person narration, Howe presented readers with the American reality he faced from boyhood to his editorship on a small-town newspaper. After the newspaper sub-plot ends, Howe moves outside his experiences and realism, providing Bennett-style melodrama.

### Early Naturalism or Old-Fashioned Romance?

“I am disposed to believe, now that I am willing to appraise myself candidly, that such natural ability as I have in writing is not inclined toward the novel form: I have tried it several times, and failed, unless it may be said that I succeeded in the first attempt.”

— E. W. Howe’s *Plain People*, 208

Howe’s preface to *The Story of a Country Town* expresses his faded hope novel writing would allow him to “get rid of my weary newspaper work.” Instead Howe felt exhausted and “incapable of exercising my judgment with reference to [the quality of the novel]” (35). Howe’s novel received multiple rejections and entered into a cultural debate on what the reading public expected in a late-nineteenth-century American novel. Though the reading public debate would continue into the twentieth century, Howe’s *The Story of a Country Town* implicated new territory the novel could cover, while reverting to sentimental tactics several critics and novelists hoped the American novel would leave untouched. Thus *The Story of a Country Town* mixed two reporting methods: close scrutiny regarding small Kansas towns, with Bennett-style melodrama to depict particular residents. Wilber L. Schramm explains in “Ed Howe Versus Time” (1959) how “readers found a hissable villain, a beautiful girl, a heart-rendering separation, and a melodramatic ride through storm and night, with bells tolling and wind shrieking. But all these ancient melodramatic devices were overshadowed by an unforgettable portrait of the great actor in the book, the village” (64).

The debate surrounding the style and scope of the American novel remained strong a decade after Howe published *The Story of a Country Town*. For example, French writer Pierre Loti contributed “The Literature of the Future” (1892) for *Forum*. Loti offers “To



give an impression of life” remains the main goal of literature (182). While Loti explains how his definition moves outside documentary realism; he admits such an impression remains “an elusive, an indefinite thing that cannot be formulated, that no explanation can succeed in explaining” (183). Based on Loti’s inconclusiveness, as long as Howe’s depiction of Jo’s tragic fall and other sentimental moments contribute to Howe’s overall “impression of life,” critics should not chastise him. Novelist Marian F. Crawford, also writing for *Forum*, furthers the realistic documentation discussion in “What is a Novel?” (1893). Crawford writes, “The result of the desire for realism in men who try to write realistic novels for the clean-minded American and English girl is unsatisfactory. It is generally a photograph, not a picture—a catalogue, not a description” (596). Howe, like Twain, exposed dangerous elements of the West to contrast the clean-minded reader’s view. Where Twain highlighted the dangers facing the courageous pioneer, Howe circulated the dangers ordinary citizens could incur either when incited by instinctual passions or self-repressing religious codes.<sup>26</sup>

Howe furthered the attention paid to the dual-nature his novel expressed. When Howe tried to revise the novel in 1927 he found “the first eleven chapters almost as good as many kind critics have said, and found pride in them, but while reading had an uneasy consciousness of trouble later on. I found it when ‘Jo Erring’s’ love affair began, but could not do much to improve it without recasting the entire book” (*Plain People* 216). He then declared “I am compelled in old age to desert poor ‘Jo Erring,’ as others who know about him have done. There is more of the author in ‘Jo Erring’ than in any other portion of ‘The Story of a Country Town,’ and ‘Jo’ did much to weaken it” (*Plain People* 217). To understand how Jo’s character became the litmus test for a naturalism versus

melodrama debate, one needs to first realize a naturalism definition did not exist in 1883. As Schramm indicates about the original novel Howe produced, he likens it to “a bull in a china shop. It was an elephant in a china shop” (65). If readers considered the *Herald* or Twain’s murder stories, then Jo’s murder appears instinctual and sympathetic. Howe felt he offered a true depiction, yet even he realized it didn’t make good fiction. Anderson would include several similar characters in *Winesburg, Ohio*, yet their story remains private and subdued, not a major emphasis. Howe does not depict the murder on the page, Ned only hears Jo explain the gruesome details when he returns with Mateel as Bragg lies dead in the countryside.

One reason readers questioned the novel’s credibility in the second half stems from the rapid succession of life-altering events. The first half includes the picturesque details and background information on the town and characters as the plot-line concerning Jo and Mateel’s marriage moves the story forward once Ned’s father leaves. Then on New Year’s Eve three years after Jo and Mateel’s wedding, the novel quickly moves into a narrative that “In mood and sentiment it is like much of the trash of the 1880s” (Pickett 71). In the letter Mateel writes to Bragg she confesses, “If I should be so unfortunate as to have a husband other than you, I would be dutiful and just to him, but my love I would reserve until I met you in heaven” (237). While Jo decides what he should do, Agnes’s mother dies (252). In “The Sea Gives Up Its Dead” Agnes’s presumed dead father returns (266), then gives his adventurous sea story in the first person (274-283). After Jo and Mateel divorce, the plot continues its rapid pace as Ned’s father returns home, “but too late” (300) as Ned’s mother already died. Then Jo murders Bragg to re-capture Mateel (325). The novel then emphasizes Mateel’s descent into mental illness and death alongside Ned’s

continued relationship with the convicted Jo, who chooses suicide on his execution day (351). Howe felt his novel needed action for people to read it, and he apparently believed each key character should undergo a dramatic change. Bucco must refer to the first half when he proposes, “One finds in Howe’s plain style none of the *l’art-pour-l’art* preciosity of the 1880’s. His prairie Puritanism, close to common nineteenth-century prose and workaday journalism, implies an honest realism” (24). The second half almost compares to the *Weekly Occidental*’s abandoned serialized novel in how much takes place in a short period.

Jo’s extreme actions do not stem from an editor’s observations. Instead Jo conveys his dilemma through dialog Ned provides little reaction to. On New Year’s Eve after three years of marriage, Jo finds Mateel’s letter written to Bragg that as Ned reads, it appears in full on the page. A few of Jo’s confessions include: ““She has deliberately deceived me, but in spite of it I love her, and every night-wind brings me word that it is not returned”” (239-40), and ““Since reading the letter I have never kissed my wife, or put my arms about her, and I hope God may strike me dead if ever I do either again”” (240). Jo’s letter even apologizes for his future, proclaiming ““I no longer have ambition. I can never succeed now. . .I am not to blame. . .my strength has been broken”” (241). Jo’s life will quickly spiral out of control before Ned fully understands the implications of Jo’s rigid moral standards.

After the murder Jo runs into Ned’s room carrying the unconscious Mateel so readers can learn about the murder as soon as it happened. Jo confesses to Bragg’s murder, crying, ““She belongs to me, and I have protected her honor! The dog whose ambition it was to disgrace me through her weakness is dead!”” (325). Howe does not depict the

murder, and the melodramatic explanation derives from the murderer's speech, not the narrator. Jo confesses to Ned: "I picked up Clinton Bragg from his seat beside Mateel as they came through the woods by the ford, and strangled him as I would strangle a dog. I held him out at arms' length until he was limp and dead, and threw his carcass into the brush" (325). Jo continues to share and gloat about the murder to Ned, who remains passive. Ned explains Jo would remain "laughing as he told how Bragg had writhed and struggled in his grasp, and once he asked me to feel the bunch of muscle on the strong arm which had righted his wrong" (329). The dialog indicates a "preternatural atrocity" has risen in Jo as he, like Mateel, descends into mental instability.

Howe does foreshadow reasons Jo descends into a state where he will murder, then commit suicide. Early details lend credibility to a character who will decree, "There is no reason why I should care to live, and there are a great many why I wish to die" (351). Jo grew up with violence as Ned's father beats him as often as his son. Ned explains the beatings "gave rise to his first ambition to become a man, and whip my father, whom he regarded with little favor" (57). The violent tendencies shown by Ned's father and Jo speak badly for both. However, the reader will learn Jo's negative judgment passed on Ned's father (Jo's brother-in-law) proves tolerable when Ned's father abandons the church, his wife, and his family to continue his adulterous affair.

Subtle details about Jo's fitness as a husband also contrast the romance plot. Ned reflects on their marriage, considering how "Mateel was a good wife, but I do not know that I ever heard her say a kind word for her husband, although others talked about him a great detail" (224). Even though Ned's function as the editor-narrator to expose the town, it appears some aspects of the town remain outside his view. Or more likely, Ned feels

such brotherly attention for Jo he does not observe him objectively. Evidence for this claim appears at Jo and Mateel's wedding when Ned cannot figure out why Mateel acts lethargic and how he "thought Jo's wedding would be a merry event, but it was not, though I never knew exactly why" (212). Ned then lists Mateel's features and actions, concluding, "Her cheeks were sunken and her form wasted, and she seemed entirely too old for the fresh young man by her side. I imagined that Jo thought of this, too, and regretted she was not more girlish" (212). Ned, who indicates some jealousy in sharing Jo, will find the "girlish" women he desires when he marries Agnes. This romance achieved through patience contrasts the fatal romance hurt by adventure and emotion.

Two early 1880s Atchison murders lend reality to the circumstances surrounding Bragg's murder. For instance, on February 27, 1880, "The late cruel assassination of Charles Gminder" appeared in the *Globe*. This murder precipitates from a woman loving another man as Mateel maintained a love for Bragg. In this murder, Gminder's wife prepared his meal, asked him to sit by the window, then "Gminder's head was shot off with a load of buckshot from a gun" (1). This story gets more melodramatic as the Police Chief found the accused shooter, a 19 year-old "Robt. Simpson" and the 35 year-old Mrs. Gminder, charged with accessory to murder, "in bed together at the Farmer's Hotel" (1).<sup>27</sup> A second murder story suggesting neither Howe nor Twain needed to stretch their imagination to create melodramatic murders appeared in the *Globe* on April 20, 1881. "The murder of Mark Taylor" explores how the newspaper knew of the victim but didn't know him because "we were always afraid he would pull a pistol and begin to shoot" (1). Taylor lived and died the frontier experience as "He was never known to draw a pistol, his friends say, except when drinking, and the numerous instances where he has displayed a

gun in Atchison [sic], furnish evidence that he drank a great deal” (1). After losing a wife and two kids, Taylor got drunk in a saloon, pulled his gun, and someone shot him dead (1). These murders suggest violent murders of passion occurred in towns like Twin Mounds, and such dramatic events could appear reasonable in fiction.

Howe moves into melodrama in order to breed excitement and engage readers. He used his creative talents to blend stories he thought reasonable when he considered all the people he interacted with in Atchison and nearby towns. He validated his characterization by explaining, “Many a man has confessed admiration for the book to me without mentioning ‘Jo’ who admired it for no other reason. I have known many men to go to the devil as ‘Jo’ did, and with ‘Jo’s’ malady, but they give some other excuse” (*Plain People* 217). Jo’s deterioration fits within London’s “impassioned realism.” Or when one considers the real-life tales narrated by Twain, the events depicted by Howe might seem more likely in realistic fiction than Howells and others believed. Twain’s critique proves ironic since Howe used aspects from *Roughing It* as a writing guide in his newspaper and novel.

### **Narrating the West**

Despite the similarities of melodrama in Howe’s fiction, Twain’s early journalism, and *Roughing It*, why did Howe receive scorn for the same style? One reason stems from the mood and tone of their “excitement breeding.” Twain’s *Roughing It* contains various transgressions, failures, and social problems, but as literally a journalist-narrator, Twain conveys humor or a desire for further adventures. Twain, unlike the fictional journalist-narrator Ned, does not stay in one place until he grows complacent and cynical. Twain

migrates as far west as Hawaii in *Roughing It*, always seeking new places, people, and stories to share as Twain writes to develop his art. Ned views his newspaper editorship as something his father's departure forced him into, and he wishes he could leave. After a long and successful run with the *Globe*, Howe traveled the globe late in his career to avoid Ned-like cynicism, gaining a reputation as an effective travel writer. While running the *Globe* Howe approached the position much as Twain did he faced challenges in creating material where none existed, he wrote in a variety of styles (including Twain-like with and satire), and attempted novels.

While Howe's split novel suggests he struggled to keep his journalism and fiction writing separate, his novel accomplished a number of tasks within a journalism-literature discussion. Howe's novel followed Twain's Virginia sections in *Roughing It* and placed a newspaper editor as the protagonist and journalist-narrator for the novel. Though Ned does not appear to find satisfaction in the editor position as Howe did, he supplants the minister as the citizen who knows the most about how the citizens and town functions. Anderson also uses a journalism character-narrator to explore a small-town's secrets, but Howe wrote about *Winesburg* towns and *Main Streets* "before Sinclair Lewis was born. . .he beat the present day school of backyard fictionists to their favorite motif by a margin of forty years" (SM8).

Twain and Howe used rustic, western storytelling methods to define the West to outsiders. Templates for how they handled their topics appear in Bennett's *Herald*. The eastern *Herald* influenced Victorian-era journalism across the nation. Novelists who included naturalistic elements to their writing before the term even arose matched the topics and tone found in *Herald* articles. Eastern newspaper critics such as Wilmer found

penny press newspapers harmful to genteel literary and social standards. In the open West, which had yet to develop journalism or literature standards, Twain and Howe could write fiction and fact in unconventional ways. As later writers began to emulate their rustic style, naturalism developed into a mode of writing examining life when characters face crushing American realities.



## Chapter Two

### **Pulitzer-Era Sensationalism and the Journalist Anti-Hero: Howells's *A Modern Instance* and Dunbar's *The Sport of the Gods***

Howells placed a greater focus on a newspaper plot in *A Modern Instance* than Howe's *The Story of a Country Town*, yet readers once again paid more attention to the divorce plot. Howells's divorce plot serves as another example of a journalist-turned-novelist hesitating to center a novel's actions on the newspaper profession. Howells's first novel after leaving his *Atlantic* editorial post presents journalist Bartley Hubbard: an excellent writer, reader, and interviewer; one who quickly memorizes details; gains people's confidence with his humor and intelligence.

Bartley's anti-hero qualities overshadow his talents and challenged boundaries of impropriety. Bartley's actions and thoughts highlight late-nineteenth century social issues such as divorce and the rising empire of newspapers. By placing Bartley in the newspaper environment, the strongest and often most sensational cultural voice, Howells presented a warning about journalism's direction in modern America. Accordingly, the type of journalist who received Howells's novel-length indignation became the ideal journalist of the late-nineteenth century "yellow press," best represented by Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World* during the 1880s and 1890s.<sup>28</sup>

Since *A Modern Instance* delves into marriage, divorce, the differences between rural and urban New England, religion, propriety, women's roles, physical and emotional illness—what does Bartley's profession indicate about Howells ushering realism into American letters? Howells accomplished two developments by chronicling the orphan Bartley from country editor to Boston reporter and editor, through to divorce and murder.

First, Howells merged realism and journalism in *A Modern Instance*, as Howells, deploying journalism insights, accurately depicted the growing industry of newspapers. Secondly, Howells challenged realists to move literature further from the ideals of the romance novel by examining social problems only newspapers routinely acknowledged.

A fellow Ohio writer, Paul Laurence Dunbar followed Howells's lead in depicting the sensational journalist and expands Howells's critique in several ways. Dunbar's novel does not center on a journalist either; his focus lies on the destruction of a family by social factors in both the South and the North. Dunbar's journalist, Skaggs, lacks the natural writing talents of Bartley, but equals him in ability to locate scandal. Where Howells develops realism with his scandal-monger, Dunbar develops the African-American novel and naturalism as it applies to the urban experience. Dunbar highlights and critiques the role the yellow press plays in altering the lives of unwilling subjects, elevating Skaggs to the foreground during the Hamilton's pivotal moment. The family's eventual destruction mirrors the divorce and death of Bartley as the inherent climax brought about through "modern instances."

This chapter will analyze how Howells predicts the late-nineteenth century journalist of Pulitzer's *New York World*, while Dunbar looks back on the same journalist with his depiction of the *Universe*. Each novel centers on characters who move from rural America to urban America only to find their family torn apart by the end of the novel. Along the path of the destruction, each author offers a view of the newspaper environment they developed their writing skills in. Howells and Dunbar's "sensational" stories of urban America depict the ideal journalist of the Pulitzer-era and draw attention to aspects of society only the yellow press would expose on a regular basis.

### After “Their Wedding Journey”: A Journalist’s Divorce

“[T]he realistic novel depended for its effect upon the faithful, almost photographic delineation of actual life, with its motives, impulses, springs of action laid bare to the eye, but with no unnatural straining after the intenser and coarser emotions of blood and fire, no intentional effort to drag in murder, crime or fierce interludes of passion without adequate reason.”

— Grant Allen of the British journal *The Speaker*, quoted by Howells in his “Editor’s Study” (July 1890), 266<sup>29</sup>

The long established “freedom of the press” and sensational newspapers such as the *Herald* diminished any challenge Howells could pose to genteel standards in the early 1880s. However, *A Modern Instance* still challenged what readers expected of literary writing. In *News for All: America’s Coming-of-Age with the Press* (1995), Thomas Leonard explains journalism’s hold over male discourse in Victorian America. Leonard writes “The division of reading by gender was the rationale for allowing things to be said in a news column that could not be said in a magazine or novel. . . .in the newspaper supposedly guarded by the male, straight talk about the unfolding of American life was allowed” (25). Without genteel constraints enforcing American newspapers, controversial and sensational stories appeared daily. To define the tradition of American sensationalism for this chapter, one might provide the binary to Allen’s vision of realism (which Howells called “exact and vivid”). Adapting Allen’s quote, sensationalism is always “straining after the intenser and coarser emotions,” dragging in “murder, crime or fierce interludes of passion” and other fanciful topics, often “without adequate reason[s]” besides mankind’s unlimited interest in such stories (266). Howells approached Hawthorne’s pledge that “A

work of genius is but the newspaper of a century” (qtd. in Reynolds 4) by turning to his journalism apprenticeship for a protagonist and plot to develop American realism. That the Bartley-Marcia marriage “disengagement” included an immoral journalist and proved sensational (since it did not adhere to the romance plot), exemplifies the blurring of genres that Howells facilitated between journalism and his realism. In other words, Howells learned from newspapers that a real life account can become sensational when a factual account details events or people that exist under adverse conditions.

Howells took Hawthorne’s pledge more literally in *A Modern Instance* than the literary giants of the mid-nineteenth century. Howells moved toward an accurate portrayal of common events in his subjective, depiction of newspapers. On September 3, 1881, Howells wrote a letter to Charles Dudley Warner, known for editing and publishing the *Hartford Courant*, and for co-writing *The Gilded Age* (1873) with Twain. Howells wrote, “I’m making the hero of my divorce story a newspaper man. Why has no one struck journalism before?” (*Selected Letters* 2: 295).<sup>30</sup> Regardless of whether Howells saw journalism as undervalued literary material, or he wanted to oppose journalism as Robertson suggests (22), his journalist protagonist emerges over the divorce plot in providing the crucial component of his realism. On September 11, 1881, Howells told his father his upcoming novel would include a “city newspaper man” and “some good-natured satire of modern ‘journalism’” (*Selected Letters* 2: 296). Howells’s letter indicates his intent to point out the faults of the newspaper industry and though Howells planned to sensationalize details, his experiences and lucid forecast about the newspaper industry led to an early example of American realism.

In *Literature and Life* (1902), Howells reflected on the differences between realism and romance. Howells explained the author of realism “needs experience and observation, not so much of others as of himself, for ultimately his characters will all come out of himself” (29).<sup>31</sup> Consequently, thirty years after the novel, Howells realized “that he had ‘drawn Bartley Hubbard, the false scoundrel,’ from himself” (qtd. in Bennett xx). However, several critics and biographers, most recently Goodman and Dawson in *William Dean Howells: A Writer’s Life* (2005) indicate Bartley matches Twain and Harte (235). Twain, whose *Roughing It* provided readers several insider details of gathering and printing news a decade before *A Modern Instance*, admitted to Howells “‘You didn’t intend Bartley for me, but he *is* me, just the same, & I enjoy him to the utmost uttermost, & without a pang’” (qtd. in Bennett xxi, emphasis in original). As for Harte’s reputation linking him to Bartley, according to Howells in 1878, Harte was “notorious for borrowing and *was* notorious for drinking” (*Selected Letters* 2: 194, emphasis in original). Another precursor mentioned for Bartley is Ralph Keeler, a journalist Howells held a very high regard for, as evidenced by the following comment in *Literary Friends and Acquaintance* (1900): “I now realize that I loved him, though I did as little to show it as men commonly do” (233).<sup>32</sup> Keeler, an orphan after age eight, found a calling in journalism, died in 1873 while on assignment in Cuba, and Howells knew he “owned to some things in his checkered past which would hardly allow him any sort of self-respect” (233).

Since Bartley’s story must eventually end in divorce, his character and working environment must appear in a negative fashion to maintain feasibility. Howells needed no “unnatural straining” to implement divorce into his novel since he wrote in the “context of a rising divorce rate as well as a national campaign to roll back divorce” (Basch 2). 1867

national statistics indicated 10,000 divorces occurred during the year, while in 1886 over 25,000 couples divorced (qtd. in Bennett xiv). A representative editorial on “The Frequency of Divorce” in the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* (1884) suggests the rising divorce rate will remain a hindrance to society’s quest “toward that ultimate perfection which humanity is supposed to be capable of attaining” (4). The editorial makes several comments closely tied to Howells’s novel, including the statement “it must be accepted as a proof that there is something in our modern life which renders men and women more and more incapable of living together happily in the married state” (4).

The “modern instance” the editorial suggests derives from the lifestyle of the “so-called better classes” who take little time to provide “home education” to the children (4). Bartley and Marcia received little “home education” as Bartley grew up an orphan who will later believe, as the editorial indicates many men find out, “marriage proves a restraint” (4). Marcia grows up in a home which denies female self-hood and thus must rely on her husband for an identity.<sup>33</sup> The novel’s “immoral” content received considerable criticism despite several correlations to American life. For instance, the *Chicago Daily Tribune*’s review of *Modern Instance* (1882) warned their readers “Howells’ latest book is the least agreeable of his many stories” because the characters “are not pleasant to read about” (“Howells’ Last Novel” 9).

Had Howells made “pleasant” characters divorce, the literature gentility guardians would have confronted him. Robertson identifies the novel “is as much about the battle between competing modes of representation—the newspaper and the realist novel—as it is about the antagonism between a husband and a wife” (23). But early readers such as the *Tribune* reviewer focused on the dangers provided in Howells’s unsentimental divorce

plot. Divorce arose as a topic for Howells when he saw a performance of Grillparzer's *Medea* in 1875, calling it "an Indiana divorce case" (qtd. in Sweeny 83). Howells even referred to the draft version of *A Modern Instance* as "that *New Medea*" (*Life in Letters* 227).<sup>34</sup> Howells's letter to Warner and his trip to Crawfordsville, Indiana, to witness an April 30, 1881, divorce case to gather material for the novel provides further evidence divorce provided his initial focus. With Howells attempting to write a social critique of various "modern instances," several facets of the novel must subvert morality in order to expand the text's scope. However, Bartley's abandoning Marcia instigated the greatest challenge to late-nineteenth century literary standards.

Howells's *A Modern Instance*, *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885), and *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890) confronted the reading public with stark depictions of American business practices, including the business of journalism. While each novel includes a marriage plot, all three expose characters whose romantic notions lead to severe disappointment.<sup>35</sup> Specifically in *A Modern Instance*, Howells courageously opposes the marriage plot, provides an in-depth critique of the dominant news medium, and foreshadows the observational social stance realism adapted from newspapers.

### **Newspapers as One More "Modern Instance"**

"Pulitzer never denied that the major reason for printing accounts of sex and scandal is that they sell newspapers, nor did the logic embarrass him."

— George Juergens, *Joseph Pulitzer and The New York World* (1966), 69

Pulitzer's mission for his newspaper corresponds with Howells's vision of realism. Pulitzer believed "Every issue of the paper presents an opportunity and a duty to say

something courageous and true; to rise above the mediocre and conventional. . .and fear of popular prejudice” (qtd. in Brian 1). Pulitzer bought the *New York World* in 1883, and soon thereafter he elevated the cultural presence of urban dailies beyond the legacy created by Bennett. On May 9, 1883, Pulitzer’s former rival, the *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, confirmed the sale of the *New York World* from Jay Gould to Pulitzer. The *Globe-Democrat* added, “He will keep the paper Democratic, but aim to make it less political and more newsy” (“Pulitzer’s Purchase” 5).<sup>36</sup>

For an example of contemporary praise for Pulitzer’s accomplishments, one might consider the Milwaukee *Yenowine’s Sunday News*, which on February 2, 1890, used a sketch of the upcoming *New York World* building to review Pulitzer’s career. The article opens with: “The success of the New York World under the management of Joseph Pulitzer, has been the great marvel of modern journalism” (4). Another Milwaukee newspaper, *The Daily Journal*, offered even greater praise upon Pulitzer’s career on August 29, 1890. The article, with the third of three sub-headings “From an Ignorant Alien to the Proprietor of One of the Greatest Newspapers in the United States,” portrays Pulitzer in Horatio Alger fashion. The article opens by indicating Pulitzer’s career serves as a remarkable example “even in this country, w[h]ere self-help has built up so much fame, and many great fortunes” (“Career” 2). The article shows how in 1865, Pulitzer, completely penniless, entered a hotel for warmth and the hotel staff threw him out. Due to his hard work, “Twenty-two years later Pulitzer. . .sent his check to the representative of the estate for the property. On the very spot where he was refused warmth he built the New York World building” (2).



Reporting for newspapers such as the *World* developed into “work for a man” in this rapidly expanding age. Newspapers wanted men “who desired to apply culture and book-learning to practical affairs” (Wilson 20). Reporters could find success in newspapers, but the penny press’s sensationalism attempted to move American literature away from art in order to raise publicity profits. Many journalists-turned-novelists remained single during their apprenticeship in journalism, like Howells during his Ohio journalism days. Similarly, Bartley “sometimes questioned whether he had not made a great mistake to get married” (332) and even avoids his wife on their honeymoon. In a restaurant scene which foreshadows Marcia’s losing her husband to newspapers, she looks around and notices every man reading a newspaper. With a feeling of loneliness, Marcia “let her eyes finally dwell on him, wishing that he would put his paper away and say something” (140). While people formerly read newspapers together, modernizations such as their decreased price, decreased page size, and increased focus on disseminating information quickly made them read by individuals (Juergens 47). A newspaper provided a husband a chance to spend some “quality time” with himself, mentally and physically apart from his wife and children. While books had also offered this opportunity for decades, the smaller prices and wider range of “manly” topics in newspapers created a more prevalent barrier.

While the husband and wife occupy the same space Howells continues to focus on the solitary presence of the journalist. Though Bartley’s fellow Boston reporters consider him ““Very *much* married”” (179, emphasis in original), Bartley’s wife provides little guidance because of her inability to believe his true nature—dangerously combined with her inexhaustible ability to condone the faults she does notice. Bartley’s dedication to his

work even exceeds Pulitzer's de-humanizing standards which demanded employees place "a *World* idea, headline or news story in the same category of importance as his wife, children, and his God" (Swanberg 111). Already ignoring his wife and child, Bartley only pays God attention when he reports on church services, takes a "leading part in the entertainments" at churches in *Equity* (25), or when he lent each *Equity* church "the zealous support of the press" (33). Since Bartley's journalist identity prevails over his husband or father identity in every instance, he abandons Marcia long before his escape to the West.

As *A Modern Instance* exhibits, reporting proved difficult for a family man. Despite large numbers of reporters, those without excellent writing skills struggled because the "relatively low pay and hard working conditions ate up reporters at a fierce rate" (Smythe 150). In 1884, Pulitzer's *World* "paid reporters fifty cents an hour and \$7.50 a column for what was printed. The citywide average was \$15 to \$20 a week, but in most other cities reporters still were paid only a space rate" (Stevens 72). When Bartley begins in *Equity* "There had not yet begun to be that talk of journalism as a profession" (28) and he only finds a journalism community upon visiting Ricker's club in Boston. The club consists of men who hold out a "vague hope of advancement" (171), who previously felt that "generous rage with which journalism inspires its followers" (172). So the lure of journalism brought many single and married men into its realm, yet few men would find enough success in the world to support themselves, let alone a wife and children.

Like most reporters, and especially those new to a paper, Bartley works long hours, especially when he must acquire extra money. Piecework reporters needed to write long articles to achieve status and a decent living. As Smythe has noted, this goal of writing

longer texts lead to journalism correlating with novel writing because of “verbosity” and a style where “Fact was piled upon fact, detail upon detail” (154). Accordingly, Bartley’s gets excited about publishing Kinney’s “*What I Know about Logging*” (111, emphasis in original) because he can “get out two or three columns” for a Sunday edition. Bartley also believes he can try to sell it in Boston “and seek [his] fortune with it” (110). Yet as Kinney begins to divulge more facts, Bartley’s excitement grows as he believes he can “make six columns of this! I’ll offer it to one of the magazines, and it’ll come out illustrated!” (111, emphasis in original). Following his wedding, even more pressure arose to write longer stories the public would consume until he could acquire a salary position (a dream Marcia shares). A skilled reporter who can advance to a management position, Bartley is not writing for art’s sake, but uses skills that connected with fiction and sensationalism for a paycheck.

### **Bartley’s Apprenticeship Degenerates into a Career**

“[M]en succeeded because of something which was not intimately related with any virtue or vice, but rather with the skill or taste to achieve something which the world desired. If you could do anything which the world really wanted very badly, it would not trouble itself so much about your private life—only you must learn to save yourself whole in the matter of finance and health, otherwise no one would want anything to do with you.”

— Theodore Dreiser, *Newspaper Days* (1922), 83-84

Since Bartley abandons his family and ruins his reputation he precedes Dreiser’s comments by forty years. Some of Bartley’s acts of misbehavior (with little trace of affliction on his conscience) include: flirting, punching his assistant unconscious, using the

literary material of someone who considers him a friend, nearly getting arrested for public intoxication, blackmailing his editor, lying to his wife, lying his wife was dead, gambling with the money Halleck lent him, drinking beer until he reaches excessive girth, and divorcing his wife on the grounds she deserted him. Thus Bartley acts like the bully who threw Halleck to the ground and maimed him for life; feeling no regret and not seeking a request for forgiveness during future interactions with his victim (294). For example, in regards to Bartley's decision to place success over propriety, he tells Ricker he cannot sell what Kinney might someday write for less than \$50 "because he can't afford to do a dishonorable thing for less" (318). Thus by placing his identity as a literary journalist above all else, Bartley willingly tarnishes a friendship to publish one story for a sum the average reporter would work two weeks to earn.

Once a reporter regularly publishes, readers generate certain expectations of the reporter and the newspaper. Bartley's Equity audience desired him to continue as "the funny man" (30). Bartley's Boston readers desired stories about the cost of boarding, interviews with the "Solid Men" of industry, descriptions of society events which "giv[e] names" (185), sketches of places they had not seen (such as the logging camp), and so forth. As seen with Twain's *Roughing It*, if a reporter's writing showed artistry beyond mere verisimilitude, the writing skill became a commodity in high demand.

Bartley's editors wanted him first and foremost to help the papers make money. By leaving Ricker of the *Chronicle-Abstracts* to work for Witherby's *Boston Events*, Bartley learns even more about "moral laxity" and "the newer American business trends. . . which causes him to aim high, but always take the easiest road" (Perkins 430). However, Bartley already developed the sensational approach to journalism that Pulitzer would later make a

financial empire from. In regards to Pulitzer's impact on journalism, Stevens explains Pulitzer "invented almost nothing, but by adapting and demonstrating so many techniques he set new standards for the business" (68). For example, when Bartley writes the boarding house story, "He had the true newspaper instinct, and went to work with a motive that was as different as possible from the literary motive. He wrote for the effect which he was to make, and not from any artistic pleasure in the treatment" (168). He panders the story to conventions for "There is nothing the public enjoys so much as an *exposé*; it seems to be made in the reader's own interest" (169).

When Bartley's story is brought back to the *Chronicle-Abstract*, it "showed all the virtue of a born reporter" (169) and was "readable," though the narrator highlights its "essential cheapness" (170). Thus a large part of Bartley's job-proficiency stems from understanding and meeting the public's desires. Bartley's writing becomes such a commodity he still contributes to the *Events* after Witherby fires him for becoming a liability since he wrote his second Kinney story as his own without permission (334). Though this firing provides ample evidence against Bartley's character, it reflects more so on Witherby, who uses this opening not only to regain his power over Bartley, but also to rescind the dividends on Bartley's newspaper stock (336). No longer a business partner, stockholder, or threat to Witherby's power and profits, Bartley still contributes valuable stories for paying customers.<sup>37</sup> On several occasions, Bartley demonstrates Howells's belief a journalist "does not ordinarily aim at fine writing, even when he achieves it" (*Editor's Study* 160). However, Howells realized realism needed to follow and expand on the coverage newspapers provided of topics defining modern America.

*A Modern Instance* continually questions what the modern world desires. With the rise of Pulitzer, the public proved they regularly demanded *exposés*, scandals, sensationalism, “murders and all uncleanness” as Bartley’s landlady describes the content of the *Boston Events* (231). As Swanberg clarifies, Pulitzer “won the masses with three qualities he labored to instill daily into his paper—readability, excitement, and education” (95). These three qualities become the focus of each Bartley story the reader gains access to, as Bartley never fails to include several details about the subjects of the story.<sup>38</sup> With a focus on the subjects of his story (as Howells focuses on his protagonist), Bartley personalizes his writing by engaging in what Ziff classifies the “pernicious violation of personal experience,” or the act of making the private public, which rose to even further prominence in journalism in the period after Howells’s novel (148).<sup>39</sup>

Hartsock asserts a key concept about the move away from objective writing in journalism (a style Bartley never shows readers). He explains, “Narrative literary journalism offers more of an opportunity for reader engagement precisely because its purpose is to narrow the distance between subjectivity and object, not divorce them” (132). Thus with Bartley possessing the skills to bring subjects to life, he does not differ from fiction writers of the late-nineteenth century who “critically detected this alienating gulf between subject and object in mainstream ‘journalistic practice’” (60). In order to engage with the human element in writing, journalists-turned-novelists focused on literary narrative journalism and/or fiction; they found a similar purpose for both genres.

If Howells wanted to outright condemn Bartley as a writer, it seems unlikely he would grant his character the same talents he uses to craft his novel. As Bartley communicates the faults of the people, satirizes them, or ignores their redeeming qualities,

Howells performs the same task in *A Modern Instance*. Howells and other realists based much of their literary material on lived experiences, or performed investigations when material moved outside their realm (Howells attending the Indiana divorce case for example). Realists often checked on the believability of their fiction (as Howells did when he double-checked on the legality of hasty marriage ceremonies [*Selected Letters* 3: 17]) to make sure readers could not disparage their social critique on the basis of unbelievable scenarios. Considering the journalistic skills required of realists, one begins to realize how closely realism grew out of newspapers, especially subject-oriented human-interest stories and features.<sup>40</sup>

For Howells, his apprentice in journalism led to the style of writing which he described in 1870 as “a path in literature which no one else has tried, and which I believe I can make most distinctly and entirely my own” (qtd. in Reeves xiii). Like Bartley, Howells began in a country print shop and later entered city journalism; unlike Bartley, his experiences served as an apprenticeship, not a career. While most studies of Howells’s early career grant more credence to his editorial position at *The Atlantic Monthly*,<sup>41</sup> his newspaper work influenced *A Modern Instance*. Howells’s work at the *Ohio State Journal* gave him a feeling of accomplishment and “made him feel like a newspaperman for the rest of his life” (Cady 70). Like many other journalists-turned-novelists, Howells’s newspaper work “shaped his literary principles: the importance of honest, clear prose and defining detail in the portrayal of ordinary men and women” (Goodman 36). During his reporting days, Howells called the pre-Pulitzer *New York World*, “a journal of taste” in 1860 (*Selected Letters* 1: 58), and he attempted to find a regular position with the paper.<sup>42</sup> Though not receiving a full-time position, in 1861 Howells covered Civil War preparations

in Ohio for the *New York World*, and he tried “to get some sense” of the war, “but couldn’t” (*Selected Letters* 1: 77). Through such an experience, Howells became aware of how journalists must eschew their personal beliefs to the motives of a paper. Such knowledge allowed him a more realistic critique of the business side of newspapers in *A Modern Instance*.<sup>43</sup>

While Howells tried to expand American literary taste to Flaubert, Dostoevsky, and other European realists, he devoted his strongest efforts to those texts which blurred the lines between literary narrative journalism and realism. In 1871 Howells wrote Ralph Keeler: “I feel more and more persuaded that we have only to study American life with the *naked eye* in order to find it infinitely various and entertaining” (*Selected Letters* 1: 377). Both realism and journalism would answer Howells’s call, as literature began to look at common American life, asked for an uncensored, often grim, observational view used by newspapers to document society. Pulitzer, who suggested that the “daily journal is like a mirror—it reflects that which is before it” (qtd. in Brian 79-80), learned to appreciate the realists because his “reporters’ accounts of New York’s slum life persuaded him that Zola had not exaggerated the horrors inflicted on the poor, but told it like it is” (103). Howells helped usher in the “tell-it-like-it-is” mentality to American literature. Howells’s example allowed other journalists-turned-novelists to recognize how one genre influenced the other. Ironically, Howells accomplished this benchmark while presenting factual stories that may have appeared sensational to those who ignored or remained naïve of the of late-nineteenth-century American realities.

When Howells dined at Pulitzer’s home in 1895 he faced the man who employed several Bartley Hubbards. Howells informed his sister Pulitzer “is a Polish Jew who came



here without a cent in our war, and fought through it, and began to be a newspaper man. Now he is worth many millions” (*Selected Letters* 4: 118-19). Howells’s letter indicates his appreciation for Pulitzer’s work ethic and ambition to live the American Dream. Most notably, thirteen years after *A Modern Instance*, even though Pulitzer ascended to fame by developing the “yellow press” into Howells’s fateful predictions, he does not condemn Pulitzer’s actions. This lack of scorn complicates generalizations Howells detested the man who became famous for the “yellow press,” or that he thought of him as “the epitome of bad journalism” as the most recent Howells’s biography surmises (Goodman 340).<sup>44</sup> This study answers this complication by recognizing realism borrowed newspaper strategies to write about complicated realities.

Though Howells became the “Dean of American Letters,” Bartley does not strive to use his writing talents for art. His poetry writing proved unfulfilling because he could not immediately commercialize his product (56), and novelists who needed a swift way to supplement their income would often turn from art to newspapers. This switching back and forth of assignments presented few hardships because the types of stories journalists and realists covered often proved similar, as did the language to depict those stories. As See explains in “Demystification of Style: Metaphoric and Metonymic Language in *A Modern Instance*” (1974), the limitation of realism is to “pass beyond the precincts of what may be immediately and directly experienced” (380). Consequently, the observational quality supplanted the imaginative quality in both realism and journalism, which provided the reader a trustworthy reading experience. As Mindich observes, once writers focus on real events, they disrupt the information/story dichotomy because “information cannot be conveyed without an ongoing narrative, and stories cannot be told without conveying

information” (133). While Howells’s reputation suggests he abhorred newspaper’s morals and their unlitary audience, he clearly realized the observations and writing of journalists would provide an avenue to develop realism.

The theater director Bartley meets after Marcia throws him out presents the greatest warning about future newspapers in *A Modern Instance*. The director tells Bartley his productions are principally about legs because “The public want spice, and they will have it!” (268). A drunken Bartley believes the director’s thoughts match his own about journalism. Such a parallel suggests Bartley as an ideal candidate for sensational papers. This bar scene explains Bartley’s goal of newspapers focuses on spectacle more than information, and Pulitzer’s later success stemmed from finding a way to make the two goals complimentary. In fact, Pulitzer found a way to closely fulfill Bartley’s dream newspaper: ““I should make it pay by making such a thorough newspaper, that every class of people *must* have it”” (263, emphasis in original). Pulitzer’s version of the same sentiment? He told people to “always remember the difference between a paper made for the million, for the masses, and a paper made for the classes. In using the word masses I do not exclude anybody” (qtd. in Swanberg 386).<sup>45</sup>

Aside from Pulitzer’s offering stories the public desired to read, he accomplished required reading status by expanding the number of advertisements. Pulitzer made his paper’s price low enough through advertisements that everyone could not just “have it,” but afford it. Bartley envisioned his paper as one where ““the advertising element shouldn’t spread beyond the advertising page”” (264). Sensational stories would appear on page one with giant headlines and photos since Pulitzer wanted such stories “to be pushed to the limit” (qtd. in Brian 2), while editorials on the subsequent pages sought to educate.

Juergens also indicates the dilemma between reform and sales when he writes “every *World* editorial was written with one eye on circulation” (330). Pulitzer’s approach for success with the *World* indicates Howells’s perceptive fear newspapers would turn into just one more modern machine of mass production and massive profits.

Like the newspaper owners in *A Modern Instance* who focus on profits and power, Pulitzer’s paper and others of the era often provided more of a counterpart than an opponent to realism. Numerous Pulitzer philosophies could offend scholarly readers: the giant and sensational headlines, the inverted pyramid, his inability to “exclude anybody” from his audience (Swanberg 386), the self-promotion, the “slangy, colloquial, personal” language (Juergens ix), etc. *World* stories such as “A Zuni Princess in Washington” (reprinted in the *Bismarck Daily Tribune* on May 11, 1886) offers little social change. The article depicts a visiting Indian princess, an “eccentric child of nature” (1). After visiting with prominent society and politicians, she hears the Stevenson family complain of the snow on their roof, “She was found up on the ridge pole hard at work clearing off the roof. The work was full of peril, but the princess would not come down until she had completed it” (1). Such stories proved interesting, but would not portray a story a realist would want to emulate.

As newspapers focused on the rising number of injustices, they often published these accounts in straightforward language. As Mott argues, one should not generalize Pulitzer’s *World* solely as a sensational paper, since “Important and significant news was by no means neglected; it was the backbone of the paper” (436). When newspapers such as the *World* increased their critique of societal developments, Howells had already noticed, “Defects had appeared in the system and gave indications of growing larger and

more threatening as time passed. Violence, class bitterness, strikes, depressions had arisen in the new era” (Hough 27). As more realists and naturalists began to work in newspapers, they developed an observational, detailed telling of events. Howells, who was “actively feminizing short story writing as he worked concomitantly to masculinize novel writing” (Shaker 80), found his masculine precedent in newspapers. In writing *A Modern Instance*, he used a genre that would provide an aesthetic and permanency newspapers could not provide.

Howells’s depiction of divorce without the overt sensationalism or condemnation brought a private subject further into the public realm. Yet if novelists would not delve into private and controversial topics, Pulitzer’s *World* and other newspapers would leave them further behind. Newspapers achieved a daily voice novelists could not reach. In fact, novelists could only create a profound, immediate impact on society when they closely modeled their fiction on the exposé style of newspapers (such as Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle* [1905]). Furthermore, if fiction did not deal with the subjects newspapers reported on (or what newspapers edited off the page), their voice in culture would remain an escape from the real world of newspaper reports—an escape from reality similar to romance novels. Without newspapers’ persistent quest for real life experiences and tragedies, the topics journalists-turned-novelists crafted into art would have proven much more limited.

Howells wrote in his August 1890 *Editor’s Study* that “journalism is criticism, the criticism of life, and therefore intimately associated with the criticism of letters” (269). After Howells wrote *A Modern Instance*, revived Bartley to interview Silas Lapham, and witnessed the emergence of Pulitzer’s *New York World*. Much of this installment focuses on problems with anonymous book reviews in newspapers, but Howells’s strong interest in

journalism comes forth, and stems from a realization of the important, daily observations that newspapers provide to millions of readers. Howells saw the potential in newspapers to make society aware of the “modern instances” causing social and moral decay. Romance novels could neither provide answers, nor ask the right questions, since the events depicted occurred outside the reality experienced by the masses. Even if realists could not provide answers, they presented serious social inquiries based in reality. This large group of journalists-turned-novelists stayed determined to carry out a continued social goal of uncovering the truth of American life in all its varied experience.

While Howells championed those writers who sought to document the American existence, he helped develop American letters himself. *A Modern Instance* provided the template for how American fiction could co-exist with newspapers. Howells made his point very clear by presenting a fictional, yet verifiable depiction of the newspaper environment. His novel exemplifies how authors could use the same techniques of observation and investigation as reporters. He also showed how to create characters and plots to present multiple layers of meaning with figurative as well as straightforward language. As Bartley’s death notice suggests, “Mr. Hubbard leaves a (divorced) wife and child somewhere at the East” (451), fiction could accurately portray a more complete story than newspapers. Many of the journalists-turned-novelists such as Howells ended their apprenticeship in newspapers because they sought freedom to write about subjects on their own terms. Luckily for these former journalists, Howells led America through a period of changing expectations in literature. Otherwise businessmen such as Pulitzer might have determined the amount of reality readers received exposure to.

### Promoting “Real” Dialect Poetry

Howells lived a privileged life Dunbar could not achieve during his short life. Dunbar struggled to develop a journalism apprenticeship because racism closed doors to the white-owned media. Dunbar submitted articles to magazines and editorials to major newspapers, but a full-time position comparable to other journalists-turned-novelists never materialized. Before *The Sport of the Gods*, Dunbar’s greatest success occurred through dialect poetry. Dunbar, like Howe, received Howells’s aid from an 1896 review of *Majors and Minors*. Most critics examining Dunbar’s early work or his entire career have analyzed the Howells’s review in detail. For instance, Revell points out Howells “generally had little part in the subsequent literary career of his discoveries, and this was so in the case of Dunbar” (45). Howells would further heighten Dunbar’s status by writing the introduction to *Lyrics of the Lowly Life* (1896). Howells called Dunbar “the only man of pure African blood and of American civilization to feel the negro life aesthetically and express it lyrically” (xvi).

Again like Howe, readers expected the author’s realistic portrayal to match their vision of how people acted in life, in fiction. Dunbar received conflicting details on slavery and race relations from birth because “Whereas his mother fed young Paul sugar-coated tales about plantation life, his father stressed the grim realities of slavery” (Bell 70). In Howells’s introduction to *Lyrics of the Lowly Life* he emphasizes the realistic quality of Dunbar’s poetry as an unmatched achievement for African-American poetry. Howells wrote that Dunbar’s poetry derives from an objective study, expressing “with what the reader must instinctively feel to be entire truthfulness” (xvi-xvii). Yet Dunbar grew weary of Howells’s praise and the impact it created and “openly revolted against what he viewed

to be the limitations imposed upon him by Howells and his followers.” Dunbar expressed a belief that “Mr. Howells has done me irrevocable harm in the dictum he laid down regarding my dialect verse” (qtd. in Gayle 143). Seeking to break from dialect poetry, Dunbar used his journalism experiences and skills to create a naturalist novel that accompanies Crane’s *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893) to expose the harmful traps awaiting naïve or uneducated city dwellers.

### **Dunbar’s Exclusion from City Journalism**

“Two themes run through all of Dunbar’s newspaper dispatches: an assertion of the worthiness of black life and an exposure of the pathology of the white denial of that worth.”

— Jay Martin’s “Paul Laurence Dunbar: Biography Through Letters” (1975), 30

Dunbar’s critique of African-American realities in the North appeared before *The Sport of the Gods*. Since this chapter emphasizes Pulitzer-era sensationalism and journalist-characters and I address issues of the African-American press more fully with Schuyler (chapter five). The current chapter emphasizes Pulitzer-era sensationalism shown through journalist characters, so I will offer a quick overview of Dunbar’s journalism career. Some background proves necessary since Dunbar’s unfulfilling journalism experiences explain his cynical portrait of Skaggs.

Dunbar does not base his reporter character on himself, but rather the white journalist who could attain the positions denied to Dunbar. Dunbar looked critically at the struggles Americans faced in urban America in newspapers, magazines, poetry, and novels. Dunbar submitted editorials to metropolis dailies while editing smaller newspapers

to share his views with a larger audience. Dunbar also published several social protest articles; *McClure's* turned down his "Recession Never" (December 1898), because "this article proved too strong to print. . . The rake. . . was not designed to throw up racial muck" (Martin 28). Dunbar struggled to keep his small positions since "After Dunbar was twenty, every major job he secured, every publication, and all national recognition resulted directly from the assistance of white benefactors" (Turner 2). Looking to make his journalism experience an apprentice, Dunbar turned to the novel.

Dunbar found problems enjoying his journalism apprentice from his high school graduation on. In 1891 he edited the *High School Times* in Dayton, while the *Dayton Herald* published some of his poetry. Dunbar applied for a newspaper position to develop the promise his writing showed, but "he became aware of the handicap of race when he graduated and applied to that same newspaper for a job only to be told that the paper 'could not hire colored'" (Williams 160). Dunbar then turned his attention to African-American weeklies and edited the *Dayton Tattler* for the few weeks it lasted (Revell 40). The *Tattler* did grow Dunbar's concern for race issues. In his "Salutatory" (1890) he wrote, "Your cry is, 'we must agitate, we must agitate.' So you must bear in mind that the agitation of deeds is tenfold more effectual than the agitation of words. For your own sake, for the sake of Heaven and the race, stop saying, and go to doing" (qtd. in Martin 22-23). Dunbar extended Du Bois's "agitate" for social change formula throughout his journalism experiences and, in *The Sport of the Gods*.

Dunbar understood the history of the African-America press. In "Of Negro Journals" in *Chicago Record* (June 22, 1894) he reviewed past successes. He explains the press "has not merely kept pace with his [the Negro's] evolutions, but rather led the way"



(qtd. in Metcalf 83). Since Dunbar witnessed the African-Americans migrating to northern urban centers in increasing numbers he carried the newspaper prerogative to keep pace in a protest novel. While *The Sport of the Gods* offers few solutions to widespread problems, the novel and Dunbar's journalism pointed out the issues readers needed to understand. "Recession Never" serves as just one example where Dunbar expressed the naturalist forces holding down his race. Dunbar felt African-Americans faced impossible odds in their ascension, writing "from the dust of the very lowest places, the places that grind men's souls and kill ambition, the Negroes seek to climb to places of worth and respect" (qtd. in Martin 25).

Dunbar's article, "The Negroes of the Tenderloin: Paul Laurence Dunbar Sees Peril for His Race in the Life in the City" (December 19, 1898), precedes Du Bois's "The Black North Study" series, and serves as a preface for *The Sport of the Gods*. Dunbar's article, first published in the New York *Sun* observes the "crowds of idle, shiftless Negroes" (qtd. in Martin 28) in East Side New York and feels great sympathy for their plight. Much of the article focuses on what African-Americans have relinquished by moving from the rural south to the urban north. While Dunbar uses "we" when mentioning his race, the article portrays him as an observer more aware of people's problems than the people themselves. Dunbar's disapproving observations appear in *The Sport of the Gods* through the narrator's constant undercutting of most characters, but especially Joe Hamilton, and Skaggs the *Universe* reporter. Though Dunbar wrote in major dailies, he held them partially accountable for African-Americans' plight in *The Sport of the Gods*. Skaggs's mission to free Berry from prison puts Berry in an environment that has ruined his children and wife.

While Skaggs and the *Universe* appear as heroes, they quickly forget about the Hamiltons, returning to the process of “white denial” that fueled Dunbar’s socially-conscious writing.

***The Sport of the [Newspaper] Gods***

“[U]ntil the gods grew tired of their cruel sport, there must still be sacrifices to false ideals and unreal ambitions.”

— Banner Club members reflecting on Joe’s imprisonment in *The Sport of the Gods*, 123

Dunbar’s *The Sport of the Gods* draws attention to several of the “modern” social developments leading to professional and moral ruin. Dunbar, a naturalist, focused on the social forces causing the moral ruin of the Hamilton family in the North. Dunbar, whose journalism career hit ceilings due to racism, also criticized the modern newspaper. In this section I argue Dunbar included sensational journalist Skaggs of the New York *Universe* as an anti-hero for two main reasons: as a personification of the northern city’s evil influence, and to draw the reader’s attention to fiction’s resonance when used as social protest.

Before Dunbar, few realized African-Americans traveling to the northeast faced obstacles that hard work, patience, and diligence could not overcome. *The Sport of the Gods* in serial form also preceded W. E. B. Du Bois’s 1901 six part *New York Times* series “The Black North: A Social Study.” Du Bois offered statistics and a historical overview of the problems facing both the Southern migrant and the northern African-American. Du Bois found Dunbar’s fiction complemented his factual data and analysis, so his first in the series (November 17, 1901), told readers, “One has but to read Dunbar’s ‘Sport of the

Gods' to get an idea of the temptations that surround the young immigrant" (SM10).<sup>46</sup>

Ultimately, Dunbar counters the stories newspapers cover, since as Delos F. Wilcox found in "The American Newspaper: A Study in Social Psychology" (1900), "the daily newspaper often tends to make the intellectual life of its readers one continuous series of petty excitements, a veritable life of the social 'senses,' and to shut their minds, by mere fullness of occupation, against any appeal that does not find a voice in the daily news sheet" (57). How the *Universe* frees Berry and writes up his story matches Wilcox's concerns. Dunbar emphasizes fiction's ability to offer a truer, more complete social protest text than sensational newspapers by indicating the limitations and hypocrisy inherent in Berry's freedom.

Critics question Skaggs's plausibility much like Jo Erring in *The Story of a Country Town*. For some critics, an eager reporter who hears a drunken confession, then bridges the novel's South and North sections serves as a *deus ex machina*. For example, Paul Larson's "The Novels of Paul Laurence Dunbar" (1968), argues "Dunbar's denouement moves quickly and is a major weakness of his novel. . . .The incident seems strained. . .to end a novel Dunbar could think of not other way of ending" (268-69). In "Blackness and Borrowed Obscurity" (1981) Myles Hurd argues "Dunbar makes use of absurd plot coincidences and obtrusive narrative interventions to enforce a Hardyean philosophical message" (91). Skaggs emerges as one with "false ideals" and "unreal ambitions" in freeing Berry Hamilton with the press' power behind him. Berry's pardon becomes Dunbar's means for drawing attention to hypocritical late-nineteenth-century newspaper crusades. I also argue Berry's pardon and subsequent tragedy demonstrates newspapers like Pulitzer's *World* had grown so powerful Dunbar viewed them as a deterministic force.

New York *Universe* reporter Mr. Skaggs frequents the Banner Club to absorb African-American culture. The narrator describes the Banner Club as a dead end for the “lower education of negro youth” (66). In “The Negroes of the Tenderloin” Dunbar’s pre-*Sport of the Gods* observations indicated African-Americans flock to such clubs because “As a race we are thrown back upon ourselves, isolated from other Americans, and so brought into a more intimate communion one with the other” (qtd. in Martin 29). Dunbar understood African-Americans would seek community in such establishments as the Banner Club, but his fiction depicts the club dragging people down further.

Joe, desiring to exist outside maternal protection and become one of the “swaggering, sporty young negroes” (57), feels honored Skaggs desires his friendship. Skaggs announces ““there ain’t an ounce of prejudice in my body” and at The Banner Club he finds ““more inspiration than I could get at any of the greater clubs in New York”” (68). Skaggs further proves his affection for African-Americans is his father ““had a big plantation, and owned a lot of slaves. . .and I’ve played with little darkies ever since I could remember”” (69). Dunbar soon makes clear what Joe does not understand. Skaggs, the northern representative, appears as a false-friend to Joe because he only assimilates for personal gain and special status he receives as a white patron. Skaggs infiltrates African-American space as a reporter to observe their suffering, not help them.

As Joe remains awestruck by Skaggs breaking the color barrier, the narrator breaks a realist’s barrier by undercutting Skaggs’s declarations. The narrator explains Skaggs grew up on a poor Vermont farm, and “He was a monumental liar, and the saving quality about him was that he calmly believed his own lies while he was telling them, so no one was hurt, for the deceiver was as much a victim as the deceived” (69). Where a realist

would depict a scene with Skaggs conflicts his earlier admission, or include a flashback to a time he did, Dunbar can immediately alert readers of appearance versus reality differences. Such quick exposure of hypocrisy becomes one reason Lee characterizes the novel in “The Fiction of Paul Laurence Dunbar” (1974), as “more combative in tone and racial awareness than anything previous in Dunbar” (172). Naturalism also comes forth in Skaggs’s search for inspiration at the club. He draws power by consorting with those crushed by uncontrollable social realities, largely racism and poverty.

The narrator labeling Skaggs as a self-deceiving liar makes him an ideal reporter for the Pulitzer-era. Skaggs, supposedly a reporter of facts, uses fiction for personal and financial gain. Skaggs would willingly “fake” any story to engage a reader, feeling no strain on his conscience as he confuses facts with fiction. Skaggs’s extensive background information, combined with the narrator’s disclaimer foreshadows his importance to the plot. While Sadness elicits much critical consideration as a trope,<sup>47</sup> critics have not fully considered the implications of Dunbar’s selecting a sensational journalist to secure Berry’s false freedom.

Skaggs’ inclusion highlights how a newspaper must qualify a person as newsworthy before it follows potential scoops. As Wilson points out, “The endless pursuit of the stunt, for all its heroic potential, actually only pitted the reporter against any news ethic which might have called for a sociological balance or even accuracy” (39). Since Skaggs must rely on five-year-old information about events occurring in the South, his chances for an objective, truthful report prove unlikely. Dunbar enacts the gap between the facts and Skaggs’s story by inserting a flashback to outline what happened since the Hamiltons departed. Readers witness how one year after Berry’s imprisonment Frank’s

brother wrote a letter confessing his guilt and requesting Berry's release (108-10). Readers already know Berry did not steal the money, but now they see documented proof. How Skaggs finds the truth does not unravel the mystery since Dunbar exhibits a separation between what message his novel can accomplish, as opposed to a Pulitzer-era journalist.

Once the northern plot returns from the flashback, Joe finally discusses his father to his friends five years after the Hamiltons escaped the South. Skaggs gives the story his full attention because "He scented a story" (117). Pulitzer's "The College of Journalism" indicates an appreciation for reporters who follow their instincts as Skaggs does: "To think rightly, to think instantly, to think incessantly, to think intensely, to seize opportunities when others let them go by—this is the secret of success in journalism" (676). However, Skaggs's interest in Joe's father does not stem from a man wrongfully suffering in prison, but as the subject of a possible exposé. Ultimately, Skaggs's interest lies in his own aspirations, as he declares, "I've been trying for years to get a big sensation for my paper, and if this story is one, I'm a made man" (117). Unable to advance on the *Universe*, Skaggs needs to find or create a story of an inmate suffering from the injustices of the South. Skaggs knows he can cause front-page news with the human-interest elements in Berry's story. Once Joe tells the story, his tragedy occurs as he "reaches the depths of . . . naturalistic determination" (Larson 267) before Skaggs begins his investigation. Thrown out by his girlfriend, Joe strangles her; the story of the murder and capture proves engaging enough to make the newspaper (125).<sup>48</sup> Skaggs does not concentrate on Joe's story, or even lament his imprisonment because the race tensions in the South make Berry's story more newsworthy than Joe's imprisonment. Skaggs's efforts toward changing the

Hamiltons' future do not occur to right a wrong, but to fulfill an urban daily's short-term needs for engaging stories.

Skaggs dominates two of the last three chapters to reach anti-hero status. Skaggs constructs his theory of Berry's imprisonment and pitches his article idea to his editor. His editor allows Skaggs to seek out the story with the apprehensive encouragement of "'Yes, it looks plausible, but so does all fiction'" (127). The narrator follows up the comments directed toward Skaggs to address the reporter's abilities in fiction: "It is almost a question whether Skaggs had a theory or whether he had told himself a pretty story and, as usual, believed it. . . . No one else would have thought of the wild thing that was in the reporter's mind" (167). The editor's mention of fiction and his reporter's imagination suggests Skaggs acts as a novelist and a journalist as he heads south.

Dunbar continues drawing attention to storytelling as Skaggs follows clues. Skaggs breaks the passive attitude maintained by most Banner Club patrons by taking direct action; his actions will soon impact the Hamiltons, the Oakleys, and the Southern judicial system. Skaggs fictionalizes his identity to carry out his investigation, introducing himself as a businessman looking to invest in the Hamiltons' former town. Skaggs hides his identity and takes advantage of a Southern gentleman, Colonel Saunders, who believes in Berry's innocence. From Saunders, Skaggs learns of Maurice Oakley's altered state of health over the past four years (129), and the inside pocket sewn into Maurice's shirts (130).<sup>49</sup> Skaggs's fiction appears real as he leaves the hotel, for he "had got all that he wanted; much more, in fact, than he had expected" (131).

Skaggs then attempts an undercover operation at the Oakley home, making Oakley believe he has information from the guilty, self-exiled brother. Skaggs' actions match the

various stunts during Pulitzer's era when "a clever and adventurous writer assumes a disguise or forges documents to gain admission to a hospital, jail, or asylum, and then makes the narrative of his experiences an exposé of the administration of the institution" (Mott 442). Skaggs takes direct action to attain the letter Oakley secured by his heart, described in the following melodramatic scene reminiscent of *The Story of a Country Town*: "Skaggs seized him. Oakley struggled weakly, but he had no strength. The reporter's hand sought the secret pocket. He felt a paper beneath his fingers. Oakley gasped hoarsely as he drew it forth. Then raising his voice gave one agonized cry, and sank to the floor frothing at the mouth" (134). Skaggs then needs to safely escape the Oakley home since Mrs. Oakley hears the disturbance and knows he has the letter and "sprang in front of him with the fierceness of a tigress protecting her young. She attacked him with teeth and nails. She was pallid with fury, and it was all he could do to protect himself and yet not injure her" (134). Gregory L. Candela argues in "We Wear the Mask: Irony in Dunbar's *The Sport of the Gods*" (1976), that such scenes place Dunbar "as a novelist able to mix the seemingly inflexible elements of melodrama with the consciousness of an ironic mask that the black people in America know so well" (72). Mrs. Oakley's animalistic nature further indicates Dunbar's naturalism while he depicts the limits sensational reporters reach for an exposé.

Skaggs does not read the stolen letter until he gets to the hotel, but when he does he finds the story he pieced together grows into reality. In celebration, he shouts "'Thank God! thank God! I was right, and the *Universe* shall have a sensation. . .and old Skaggsy will have done some good in the world'" (134-35). The narrator follows up on "good" brought about by a sensational journalist: "It was enough for him that he had it. A



corporation, he argued, had no soul, and therefore no conscience. How much less, then, should so small a part of a great corporation as himself be expected to have them?” (136) To Skaggs, the story reaching the *Universe* readers means more than the lives affected through print. Similarly, in the deterministic world envisioned by Dunbar, the newspaper has become one of the gods who can alter families’ lives for their own curiosity and financial benefit.

Skaggs’s increased stature on the *Universe* staff arises as the most important development from his exposé. His story “was vivid, interesting, dramatic. It meant the favour of his editor, a big thing for the *Universe*, and a fatter lining for his own pocket” (136). The narrator takes a paragraph to describe how the newspaper utilized fiction, creating “an alleged picture of Berry Hamilton as he had appeared at the time of his arrest,” mixed in with such facts as “the opinions of its residents in regard to the case given” (137). Dunbar’s criticism continues as the narrator explains the headlines take up half a page, leading with “‘A Burning Shame!’” followed by such lines as “Great Exposé by the ‘Universe!’” and “A ‘Universe’ Reporter to the Rescue” (137). One of the few critics who mentions Skaggs, Bernard F. Bell in *The Afro-American Novel and Its Tradition* (1987) suggests with the emphasis on the newspaper’s text and not Berry’s pardon Dunbar, “[unmasks] the practice of yellow journalism and the exploitation of black Southerners by white Northern philanthropists” (72). The narrator’s focus on Skaggs’s story asks readers to consider the differences Dunbar offers in literature, compared to the exposés offered in sensational newspapers. Whereas readers forget Skaggs’s story in days, Dunbar hopes to circulate ideas on race to white and African-American readers.

Skaggs's article and the heading match Bartley's writing and Pulitzer-era papers.

As Juergens explains, "the language in a sensational newspaper, unlike a conservative paper, tends to be slangy, colloquial, personal. In such a way does the sensational journal express its identity with the masses of the people who patronize it" (ix). The *Universe* story receives so much attention, and the editor praises Skaggs's story because like the *World*, "The *Universe* had always claimed to be the friend of all poor and oppressed humanity, and every once in a while it did something to substantiate its claim" (137). The *Universe*'s mission matches Pulitzer's, who in 1883 believed the *World* "is a newspaper with the people and for the people it must maintain those broad principles on which universal liberty is based" ("Mr. Pulitzer"). Dunbar indicates yellow journalism hypocritically desires to enforce social justice despite the narrator's perception that "The *Universe* was yellow. It was very so. But it had power and keenness and energy. It never lost an opportunity to crow, and if one was not forthcoming, it made one" (137). The narrator's constant undercutting indicates Dunbar's cynicism to the false ideals people present and believe.

Skaggs's crusade as the Northerner who can fix the South continues when the newspaper sends him to the Governor to ask for the release of Berry Hamilton (SG 138).<sup>50</sup> The novel briefly summarizes these developments because "Dunbar reserves his sharpest criticism for the evil influence of Northern cities" (Hurd 90). The *Universe*'s rewards do not occur in the South even with all the propaganda. The rewards occur in the North even though the editor suggests the story is "a chance for the *Universe* to look into the methods of Southern court proceedings" (137). Houston Baker's *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature* (1984) offers insights on how Skaggs "can both solve the 'crime' of

the Plantation Tradition and provide a more adequate artistic perspective to take its place in an American universe of fictional discourse” (135). However, those advancements never occur as Skaggs either returns to the Banner Club or travels for his next scoop.

The *Universe*'s chance “to crow” in the South allows it to write about subjects outside their normal circulation. Thus complaints will not derive from its business interests, and it can tap into the need to maintain the North's reputation as a liberator of the South. This will bring increased attention and admiration from the North. The *Universe*'s lack of action in the South does not suggest Dunbar wasted an opportunity, it indicates the *Universe* relied on image rather than action. As Dunbar wrote in “Recession Never,” published in the *Chicago Record* (1898) “It would seem that the man who sits at his desk in the North and writes about the troubles in the South is very apt to be like a doctor who prescribes for a case he has no chance to diagnose” (qtd. in Martin 25). *The Sport of the Gods* quickly returns to the South after the *Universe* exposé to highlight how little impact Skaggs caused. Dunbar's ending suggests the North took away two children and hope for the future; the newspaper's influence often vanishes in a few pages as it lacks the novel's permanence.

The *Universe* loses any opportunity for permanence by not continuing after the true guilty party. Instead, the newspaper wishes to promote itself during the time Berry remains a newsworthy subject. When Skaggs tells Berry he will personally escort him to New York, he “did not tell him that, now that the *Universe* had done its work, it demanded the right to crow to its heart's satisfaction” (141). Once Berry arrives in New York, seeking word about his family, a great many reporters want to interview Berry and take his picture. The *Universe* finally gives Berry his wife's address only after it “spread itself to

tell the public what it had done and how it had done it” (141). The reunion of the Hamilton family does not prove a happy one, as Joe sits in prison for murder, Kittie has sold her body to the stage, and Fannie has married an abusive gambler. When Fannie hears about Berry’s release in the news, “she had suffered in silence, hoping that Berry might be spared the pain of finding her” (143). Berry’s period of newsworthy status soon ends, and though the newspaper does feel a certain responsibility for his survival in the North, their offer of a position as a janitor in their building illustrates the demeaning consideration granted to the subject of their most recent exposé (146).

Skaggs disappears from the ending of the novel as Berry and his wife return home. The Hamiltons garner no media attention, even as a follow-up story. Their predicament would make an interesting feature focusing on the retreat of the Southern migrant, but only novel readers learn of the cynical homecoming as Skaggs’s “journalistic revelations only pave the way for the Hamiltons’ return to the quarters. Perhaps, instead of offering an alternative to the ‘tired’ Plantation Tradition, Skaggs is invigorating it” as Walter Benn Michaels theorizes in “The Contracted Heart” ([1990] 530n). Berry and Fanny’s return could have included the desired sensational element, as they return to their former master’s home, whose guilt turns him into a monster. Skaggs or another sensational journalist might have depicted the Hamiltons shuddering at hearing Mr. Oakley’s first screams. Yet a brief summary on the final page provides the only account of the Hamilton return. The Hamiltons fade into obscurity “to the only place they could call home” where “It was not a happy life, but it was all that was left to them” (148). Though they must endure the insane ravings of Mr. Oakley, they lived their life “without complaint, for they knew they were powerless against some Will infinitely stronger than their own” (148). In *The Sport of the*

*Gods* the major facilitator of this “Will” stemmed from an anti-hero and an urban newspaper.

Skaggs garners the narrator’s sustained attention in the ending chapters, but the Hamiltons receive no media attention upon their return. The northern newspaper readers only learn the triumphs: an innocent man set free, an escape from the South, and a reunion with his family. Dunbar might have avoided a final undercut for closure on Skaggs because the characterization already appeared so heavy-handed. If Dunbar chastised the editor and Skaggs for paragraphs his protest might disrupt the African-American writer’s balance of staying “true to their vision of reality and still reach their predominantly white readers” (Bell 56). Remembering his exclusion from *McClure’s*, Dunbar set a final southern scene to circulate the reporter’s anti-hero status. The disruption caused by the aptly-named *Universe* within a journalism-derived naturalism definition highlights both the power and danger caused by late-nineteenth-century urban dailies. If these newspapers did cover a story, lives changed and the story’s subjects periodically entered the public forum. If urban dailies did not cover a story, the unwritten subjects lie helpless in obscurity like those in the Banner Club.

Dunbar’s novel sought to expose several failure stories, such as the false temptations of the North, the naïve nature of the Southerner who moves North, the dangers when the family unit separates, and African-American’s inability to prosper in a deterministic world. A journalist could not construct and explain these catastrophes in a single exposé or a series of articles. Dunbar’s novel sought to highlight realities in the North and South, yet he directs one chief criticism at Pulitzer-era journalism. Like

Howells, Dunbar presents a journalist as an anti-hero while depicting modern social problems best covered by novels.

Several critics and writers indicated Dunbar's truthful depiction concerning the African-American's urban plight despite allegations of sensationalism, coincidences, *deus ex machina*, and rushed writing. Du Bois returned to Dunbar's novel when he concluded his six part study on the North. In "The Black North: A Social Study. Some Conclusions" (December 15, 1901), he explained how the American Dream did not apply to urban African-Americans. Du Bois said African-Americans could find charity but those who wish to work "will have to tramp the pavements many a day. Thus crime is encouraged, politics corrupted, energy and honesty discredited, and a reception prepared for simple-minded negro immigrants such as Dunbar has so darkly painted in his 'Sport of the Gods'" (SM 20). As Dunbar realistically portrays African-American's urban plight, he moves beyond Howells's realism, including more protest statements than observations. Dunbar wrote as a careful observer quick to strike down hypocrisy in fiction and in journalism.

### **Intersections of Realism and Sensationalism**

*A Modern Instance* concludes by depicting Bartley's legacy. An abandoned wife returns to her parent's home where her dominant father-figure delights in his granddaughter's company while ignoring everyone else. Marcia will never remarry because her only possible suitor, Ben Halleck, holds a Jo Erring-like code about marrying a woman he loved while she was married to another (453). *The Sport of the Gods* ends with a return to an unhealthy home as the Hamilton legacy presents less optimism: Joe sits in jail for murder and Kitty performs in one immoral show after another. The unofficial

divorce has ended, followed by a return to the original cottage haunted by Maurice Oakley's ranting. The mock pastoral inherent in the Hamiltons' existence suggests the slavery legacy continues to divide the South; Oakley remains their father figure even after he prosecutes Berry for an uncommitted crime.

*The Sport of the Gods* suggests little hope for the African-American who seeks a paradise in the North. Instead the person moving north "grows callous. After that he goes to the devil very cheerfully" (50). While Bartley caused many of his own problems, a former slave-owner precipitates the Hamilton's move. The Hamiltons follow the general migration trend in the late-nineteenth century, but African-American journalists such as Dunbar presented warnings that could not cause the "white denial" to solve problems. In Schuyler's *Black No More*, African-Americans must change their skin to white in order to receive attention. Dunbar did not challenge credible fiction as Schuyler would three decades later but he provided social protest all the same.

Dunbar and others used naturalism to challenge American realities without the reserved optimism presented by realists such as Howells. Skaggs's integral role in the novel indicates the Pulitzer-era press did expose social wrongdoings and create change. Yet unlike the novel, newspapers needed a constant supply of subjects to meet their demands. So while Skaggs and Bartley exhibit talents necessary for realists, their news stories lack permanence and the patience to enact change. The naturalists' crusading imperative alongside their expressed cynicism carried into the muckraking era as muckrakers acknowledged realist-oriented observations lacked the active voice needed to expose hidden truths.

### Chapter Three

#### **Drawing National Attention to Local Stories, 1919-1920: Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* and Lewis's *Main Street***

Anderson and Lewis achieved engaging fiction when they examined their childhood locales. Anderson based *Winesburg, Ohio* on Clyde, Ohio, where he lived from 1884 to 1896; Lewis based *Main Street*'s Gopher Prairie on Sauk Centre, Minnesota, where he lived from 1885 to 1902. These artists experienced America's wide range of experiences by living in rural America before writing in cities. These two Midwestern writers circulated their childhood place for opposing goals. Anderson made their opposition clear in "Sinclair Lewis" (1922), confessing "the prose written by Mr. Lewis gives me but faint joy and I cannot escape the conviction that for some reason Lewis has himself found but little joy, either in life among us or in his own effort to channel his reactions to our life into prose" (27). While Anderson accentuated the pivotal moments and truths shaping a character's life, Lewis statically portrayed a rural town without pivotal moments, where conformity overwhelmed truth.

Anderson and Lewis recognized the country weekly maintained a large role in small-town life. As Humphries explains about rural areas "the lack of social and cultural institutions and rituals only underscores the importance of the newspaper as practically the sole means by which the town can imagine itself as a viable community" (55). The writers expressed different views when placing a newspaper in fiction. Anderson's *Winesburg Eagle* presents a beneficial apprenticeship for an aspiring artist. The reporter-protagonist, George Willard, must gather and reorganize his fellow citizens' ideologies and experiences before migrating to Cleveland. Lewis's *Gopher Prairie Weekly Dauntless* hinders art and



progress. The editor, Loren Wheeler, maintains rigid, limited views on life and art; regularly upsetting Carol Kennicott. This chapter explores how George and Carol separate themselves from the preserved identity created by the country newspaper.

Anderson and Lewis's fiction brought national exposure to a local area, with special attention to the country weekly. Aurora Wallace's *Newspapers and the Making of Modern America* (2005) comments "The scale of small-town papers. . . meant that the editor was in constant contact with his community and therefore could scarcely afford to offend its sensibilities" (42-43). Therefore, whether docile or "dauntless," the country weekly focused its efforts on maintaining the community spirit. Novelists who criticized small-town America directly opposed these community texts since "Readers came to the paper to find what was good and redeeming about their fellow townspeople, not to find what was wrong" (43). Anderson and Lewis recognized the small-town newspaper's importance as a community center, a recorder of events, and maintaining the town's pastoral image. They best indicate the newspaper's importance by linking their artist-protagonist to the local paper throughout the text.

Anderson's *Winesburg* depicts the developing artist as the sole *Eagle* reporter. George's learning process develops from interaction and stories he does not take notes for, and does not print. These stories become "but a background on which to paint the dreams of his manhood" as George leaves his recently deceased mother and father behind for the city (231). Carol creates news and regularly expresses disappointment over the *Dauntless's* content in *Main Street*. Carol moved to Gopher Prairie from St. Paul, where she worked as a librarian, only to find all her married life expectation suffocated by small-

town life. She initially viewed Gopher Prairie an “empire” she would “conquer” (28). By the end of the novel she dreams her daughter can leave the town as George did.

This chapter will show how two interpretations of small-town America, written one year apart, completely differ in writing style and in portraying the artist. This chapter examines George and Carol’s position in the town and their views on small-town life. Anderson’s various portraits blend and form around a *bildungsroman*, placing a naturalistic character examination within a modernist writing style. George, the catalyst for most characters to divulge stories not fit for the *Eagle*, facilitates a modernist writing style for managing multiple plot lines and shared stories. To circulate increased cynicism surrounding small-town America, Lewis restricts his point of view to Carol and never explores the *Dauntless*’s reasons for rejecting Carol’s modern ideas. While Carol views the town as stagnant, she too retains a static view on the town until her return to close the novel. This limited view presents a slanted view of mid-America and reaches satire, especially when newspaper articles appear in full. Anderson and Lewis unveiled rural America in fiction to show the pastoral view needed revising in post-World War I America. Ultimately, Anderson and Lewis provided an exposé of mid-American values unfit for local publication as they brought country journalism to a national audience.

### **Anderson’s Journey Towards Country Journalism**

“[R]unning a country weekly is not running a newspaper. . . . We are not after news. If any one wants news, let them take a daily. We are after the small events of small town people’s lives.”

— Sherwood Anderson’s *Hello Towns!* (1929), 33-34

Before Anderson published *Windy McPherson's Son*, he lacked the urban daily experience gained by other writers in this study. Anderson began writing advertising copy in 1900 and wrote agriculture articles for Chicago's *Agricultural Advertising* while submitting essays and fiction.<sup>51</sup> In Chicago, Anderson befriended influential writers who helped shape his craft, including: Floyd Dell, Ben Hecht, Susan Glaspell, Carl Sandburg, Theodore Dreiser, and his first two wives (Crowley 9). Unlike Anderson, most writers in this study left journalism once their fiction career showed promise. But Anderson left fiction for journalism, gaining a management position on the *Marion Democrat* and *Smyth County News*.<sup>52</sup> *Hello Towns!* builds upon Anderson's literary career and various musings on art, especially arguments against realism. Anderson would create art in Marion, Virginia, since he found too much shared space in journalism and realism. In *Winesburg*, journalism only serves as a backdrop to indicate journalistic and realistic limitations. Anderson's memoir indicates he understood the small-town newspaper's role existed outside art.

Read within the fact-fiction dialog of this study, *Hello Towns!*, like Twain's *Roughing It*, blends a memoir with an artist's ability to engage readers. As Percy Hutchinson surmised in "The Village Oracle Speaks" (1929) "the inhabitants of Marion were to read editorials having a literary quality and a frankness of view to which, in all probability, they were unaccustomed" (61). Thus Marion newspaper readers found an artistic rendering of local topics with a quality similar to Howe's. Yet national readers of the memoir might wonder, as Hutchinson does, "If Mr. Anderson overstepped the bounds of fact, or if he evaded fact entirely" for the sake of representation and a cohesive, readable

narrative (61). Anderson's memoir might supplant facts with art because as Twain believed, facts should not impede storytelling.

Anderson presented several concerns about realism and how a writer should depict modern society. He argued, "No man can quite make himself a camera. Even the most realistic worker pays some tribute to what is called 'art'" in "A Note on Realism" ([1924] 71). To Anderson realists who find beauty in truth still find a created "truth" because "It feeds upon the life of reality, but it is not that life" (72).<sup>53</sup> In the essay Anderson also proposes artists must make some sense of reality in order to provide interpretation and purpose "to make it true and real to the theme, not to life" (75-76). *Winesburg's* unconventional style, including the citizens' "portraits" challenged the journalistic-oriented realism of the early-twentieth century.

George's wandering about the town matches Anderson's wandering, non-linear storyline. A rural area's master-plot could develop from the local paper since births, weddings, and deaths appear alongside accomplishments and boosterism. Yet Anderson's modernism presents the town like Howe's *Globe* as stories blend together. Plot-lines overlap, such as in "The Strength of God" chapter when George learns the Reverend Curtis Hartman finds "the message of truth" in Kate Swift (140). The next chapter, "The Teacher," moves backward to explain how Kate Swift offered herself up as such a message. George and Helen's final meeting in "Sophistication" presents both characters' point of view earlier in the day to indicate their shared understanding when they find "the thing that makes the mature life of men and women in the modern world possible" (227). Such overlap would not appear in the country weekly since newspapers only present a

single point of view of what an editor can observe, avoiding articles exposing what citizens hide and feel.

The citizens present multiple points of view on truths and lifestyles for George's consideration. Within a mosaic narrative, the public information available to Winesburg citizens from the *Eagle* contrasts the private confessions deriving from life experiences. The novel's cast includes a teacher who lived in Europe, a Standard Oil agent who coaches baseball, a minister married to an underwear manufacturer's daughter, a strawberry-picker whose hands caused accusations of sexual assault, to a rich farmer waiting for God to reward his efforts. This range draws attention to the reality underneath the shared experiences in one small town. Though direct contact will not occur between all these citizens, several connections arise once they share their story. For instance, several characters remove their clothing in public view. Alice Hindman, stoically enduring life after the man she loved leaves to be a newspaper reporter, "had an adventure" where she ran naked into the night (102).<sup>54</sup> She tries to convey her feelings to a drunk man, but her truth confirms she must "force herself to face bravely the fact that many people must live and die alone, even in Winesburg" (103). Other characters stripping clothes include Wash Williams's ex-wife (110), Kate Swift (139), and Ray Pearson (191).

While *Winesburg* delves into private moments, Anderson saw realists' goals too closely linked with journalism and public image. Anderson suggested realism "is always bad art—although it may possibly be very good journalism" ("A Note" 76). In "An Apology for Crudity" (1926) Anderson again attacks realism conventions. Anderson explains "America is a land of objective writing and thinking. New paths will have to be made. The subjective impulse is almost unknown to us. Because it is close to life it works

out into crude and broken forms.” Anderson criticizes two Victorian era journalists-turned-novelists, suggesting objective writing “leads along a road that such American masters of prose as James and Howells did not want to take but if we are to get anywhere we shall have to travel the road” (199).<sup>55</sup> In *Winesburg*, Anderson conveys the artist’s “subjective impulse” by minimizing George’s newspaper writing; he accentuates his interaction as the better apprenticeship.

Anderson found the experience in Marion much different from Chicago journalism. The country editor, he wrote, “does not have to rush like the city newspaper man, nor does he need to be high toned and literary, like your magazine editor” (35). This conclusion stems from earlier comments Anderson published in a newspaper article, “The Newspaper Office” (July 12, 1928). Anderson wrote about his evening in a city newspaper office and reflected how in Marion “No one expects us to be down to the minute. What we have got to do is to make a readable paper—gather the home news” (97). As the responsibilities differed in country journalism, so did the scope of the newspaper. Unlike the penny press emphasis, Anderson explains, “*We will not handle scandal in our paper. Domestic relations will be let alone. If some man or woman here in our courts get a divorce we will say nothing*” (36, emphasis in original).<sup>56</sup> Editors ignoring such stories removed conflict and kept the readers/citizens positive. Anderson mentions the backlash possible for a news story in *Winesburg*. Seth Richmond’s father, “a quiet passionate man. . .had been killed in a street fight with the editor of a newspaper in Toledo, Ohio. The fight concerned the publication of Clarence Richmond’s name coupled with that of a woman school teacher” (112). The *Eagle* does not print scandalous news like its urban neighbor, even though characters share their secrets with George.

Several citizens confess scandalous acts to George (even murder), or act outrageously in private moments. Anderson understood the rural newspaper's limitations and how gossip passes through a small town. Anderson knew engaging reading occurred when an author uncovered a character's private moments. As shown in the next section, *Winesburg*'s characters draw in the journalist and share secrets to offer the town's various worldviews while symbolizing journalism and fiction's boundaries.

### **Feature Stories Reserved for the Developing Artist**

“The paper on which George worked had one policy. It strove to mention by name in each issue, as many as possible of the inhabitants of the village. Like an excited dog, George Willard ran here and there, noting on his pad of paper who had gone on business to the county seat or had returned from a visit to the neighboring village. All day he wrote little facts upon the pad. ‘A. P. Wringlet had received a shipment of straw hats. Ed Byerbaum and Tom Marshall were in Cleveland Friday. Uncle Tom Sinnings is building a new barn on his place on the Valley Road.’”

— Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*, 117

The *Eagle*'s mission offers George little artistic development. Though “The idea that George Willard would some day become a writer had given him a place of distinction in Winesburg” (117), his occupation prints news most everyone already know. George's passage into manhood and “Departure” from Winesburg begins with his father's arranging for his reporter position (26). Not a very glorious beginning for a self-made artist, but Anderson had “a distinct notion that the future of writing in America lies with the newspaper boys who do not know they are writing” (*Hello* 138). George's father signals

the *Eagle* work as an apprentice, informing George, ““If being a newspaper man had put the notion of becoming a writer into your mind that’s all right”” (26). George’s Winesburg journey ends when he misses Helen’s goodbye, and with the train conductor’s observation he “had seen a thousand George Willards go out of their towns to the city” (230). While one might read George as an American small-town version of James Joyce’s *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), George offers most to the fact-fiction discussion when analyzed as one who facilitates the town’s secrets. While George does not uncover all the private tales, his journalist-narrator position presents small-town America for a national audience.

The preface to *Winesburg* sets up naturalism’s narrative distance in order to blur facts and fiction. “The Book of the Grotesque” introduces George as an elderly writer’s creation. The elderly writer, after a lifetime in the town, spends his remaining years in relaxation. But after the writer had “a dream that was not a dream” (4) where all the “grotesques” of his town haunted him “he crept out of bed and began to write. . . . ‘The Book of the Grotesque.’ It was never published” (5). Reading the old man as the town’s retired newspaper editor draws further attention to the journalist-narrator in *Winesburg*. In this reading, the editor realizes the newspaper never printed the whole “truth,” just acceptable news stories, so he dream of the citizens true selves and records them in fiction.

George serves as the catalyst to expose truth regardless of the old man’s position. The preface explains how when “people took one of the truths to himself, called it his truth, and tried to live life by it, he became a grotesque and the truth he embraced became a falsehood” (6). George’s role adds to subjective storytelling, and as Robert Dunne suggests in *A New Book of the Grotesques* (2005), “Anderson is purposefully obfuscating a



clear-cut meaning by having his narrator admit that words are inadequate and can at best provide only an approximate or tentative meaning” (11). Since George freely seeks his own truth, his inclusion in multiple plot-lines suggests a journalist-narrator can make meaning from a disordered plot and society.

While a few plot-lines such as George’s development, George’s mother’s impending death and the Bentley legacy extend through *Winesburg*, most portraits receive only one chapter. These chapters explaining a character’s pivotal moments compare to a feature story while shrinking realism’s scope. As Corkin summarizes, “Anderson disrupts the conventional realist notion of cause and effect to fragment his novel into a series of vignettes. At the heart of each of these fragments lies a tale of emotional disruption, which Anderson tells with some understatement” (162). A vignette’s action occurs in a few paragraphs, and most times as a flashback. Returning to Alice Hindman’s story as an example, she ponders her mundane years. The narrator then alerts the reader: “And then one night when it rained Alice had an adventure. It frightened and confused her” (102). The reader then receives a journalistic summary of her naked “adventure” on the dark street. Chapters including Wing Biddlebaum, Joe Welling, Wash Williams, Tandy, and others, edit lives to one portrait. However, the stories filter through George to create the community exposé as Anderson shows the characters live in isolation. Though citizens keep shared experiences to themselves, George’s attention “gives a human face to journalism” (Humphries 49).

Several running narratives in *Winesburg* could deploy a dynamic plot line for a realistic novel. The most prominent examples of these narratives include Mrs. Willard’s marital strife and death; Helen White’s separation from the town; Kate Swift’s Carol-

Kennicott-like struggle to balance her education, travel, and urban sensibilities; and “Godliness” appears as an embedded text in four parts. Several critics have discussed Anderson’s stylistic innovation in constructing *Winesburg*, and whether it functions as a novel, a short-story sequence, or another classification.<sup>57</sup> In *The Last of the Provincials: The American Novel, 1915-1925* (1947) Maxwell Geismar argued “Anderson was not a novelist. The novel form may have increased his difficulties—his essential gift was that of intuition and a brief and brilliant illumination” (270). Likewise, Burton Rascoe’s book review of *Winesburg* (June 7, 1919), suggests Anderson circulates “the fluid illusion of life, together with the heightened drama of it” and manages “the selection of incident without the detail that is part of the method of the novel” (13). Rascoe’s explanation closely follows the reading experience of a country weekly, especially when readers know the subjects under discussion.

Country weeklies include newsworthy updates on people’s lives without background. Brief updates blend together to create a community story but this story derives from content a country reporter can place in the public forum. The leftover, often more interesting material lying in a small town’s secrets cannot appear on the page. Humphries suggests *Winesburg* “appears as an expansive, fictive edition of the *Winesburg Eagle*” (62). The preface indicates *Winesburg*’s content forms an even more fictive text, the unpublished “Book of the Grotesque.” Humphries view of the country-newspaper-influenced vignettes substantiates my reading that a retired editor prepares an artistic community document. One follows Anderson’s fragmented narrative in the presented order, while a newspaper reader can choose the preferred order. Anderson’s modernist writing style offers readers an expansive depiction unequalled by one local newspaper

issue since it facilitates multiple readings and offers a wide range of meanings. Readers better understand Anderson's view on newspapers' limitations when recognizing the old man's influence in how the text appears, and what it includes.

Anderson realized the limitation of newspapers in presenting America and expressed these views in a straightforward manner in *Hello Towns!*, and in a complex way in *Winesburg, Ohio*. Anderson questioned the urban daily's power to represent their readers. As Williams clarifies about Anderson's Chicago days in *A Storyteller and a City* (1988), Anderson felt "as they generate public opinions, the newspapers are also responsible for manufacturing private myths" (245-46). Few scenes in *Winesburg* take place in the *Eagle* office because of Anderson's mistrust in journalism. Office scenes create little impact; George thinks about the various changes in his life, hears stories, and receives letters from a girl (42). As I mentioned earlier, the Reverend Hartman finds George writing a story at the office and tells him about his religious experience (139). Printing process or advertising details do not appear in the text, though readers do learn George always carries a pad of paper for his ideas (88), he spends much of his time trying to write a novel (118) and reading (168). The artist apprenticeship receives focus while George's effort to print the newspaper does not.

With discussion similar to Anderson's views in *Hello Towns!*, the largely-ignored newspaper does receive critical attention in one instance during *Winesburg*. "Godliness," a four-part tale without George still includes a narrator's soliloquy on industrialization's negative impact. The narrator discusses the farmer's loss of innocence, and how poorly-written books, magazines, and newspapers consume lives. The narrator wishes for the day when "a farmer standing by the stove in the store in his village has his mind filled to

overflowing with the words of other men.” Newspapers and magazines make the farmer talk “as senselessly as the best city man of us all” (53).<sup>58</sup> Filling chapters with intimate secrets, *Winesburg* goes further than the information sharing of bygone days. *Winesburg*’s secrets offer a closer “truth” than printed in the newspaper or gossiped at the village store. Citizen’s secret lives remained for the artist, now matter how diligently the urban dailies’ exposés dug for information.

George and *Winesburg*’s citizens view his reporter position as an apprenticeship to send him from the town like most journalists-turned-novelists. George’s mother senses her son’s potential, believing ““He is not a dull clod, all words and smartness. Within him there is a secret something that is striving to grow”” (25). Kate Swift, George’s former English teacher, also notices his genius and “and wanted to blow on the spark.” She tells him, ““You will have to know life. . . . You must not become a mere peddler of words. The thing to learn is to know what people are thinking about, not what they say”” (147). Kate’s comments highlight a separation between journalism and art since she does not consider George a writer though he currently publishes on a weekly basis. She tries to inform him to not rely on his ears when he hears everyone’s story, but to watch them closely and intuitively determine their mindset and motivation. Kate’s observations undercut the interviews George would print in the newspaper. George follows her advice when he ponders her comments, her kiss, and her fisticuffs to conclude her advice (149). As George goes to bed he mutters, ““I have missed something. I have missed something Kate Swift was trying to tell me”” (150). George will switch from journalist to artist when he understands writers do not report on life, they form it into an impression charged with purpose.

Several citizens recognize George's short time within their midst, offering their private tales with little apprehension or concern their story might appear in the newspaper. George's fellow citizens view their storytelling as a didactic offering; they hope George can utilize their knowledge and not repeat their mistakes. George helps Wing to a greater self-realization in "Hands" just by listening, since "Biddlebaum the silent began to talk, striving to put into words the ideas that had been accumulated by his mind during long years of silence" (9). George's knowledge expands during all these tales as the confessions take place in New York, Pennsylvania and elsewhere. These small-town citizens disrupt stereotypes of the stoic, hardworking, religious, robust remnant of the frontier days when they expose their secrets. Thus *Winesburg* exposes "truths," offering sympathy for those struggling with their reality. If George published the true Winesburg stories in the *Eagle* he would first need to develop a feature writing style comparable to what the old man in the preface offers. This same method would also aid George's fiction and require the hidden genius his mother and English teacher noticed.

The death of George's mother ends George's small-town apprentice before he reaches artist status. His mother did not present him the \$800 under her bed, greatly diminishing his chance for initial success. After his mother's funeral, George decides "he would make a change in his life, that he would leave Winesburg. 'I will go to some city. Perhaps I can get a job on some newspaper'" (214). More than a dozen citizens come to wish George good luck, then "the town of Winesburg had disappeared and his life there had become but a background on which to paint the dreams of his manhood" (231). Anderson continues to disrupt the conventional narrative with this ending; he offers little closure. In "The New Realism: Sherwood Anderson and Sinclair Lewis" (1942), Alfred

Kazin finds the ending parallels Anderson's since "Life was a succession of moments on which everything else was strung; but the moments never came together, and the world itself never came together for him" (216).

Jacobsen finds textual evidence indicating George will fail in the city. He explains *Winesburg* "suggests that the odds are against his doing so. The book includes several failed artists, men who at one time may well have looked as promising to their companions as George does to his" (63). The ending highlights both the dream and the reality of the small town male about to test his rural experiences against the city. The train conductor's comment about thousands like George leaving for the city evokes the American Dream, but he also subverts the significance of the protagonist's maturation. Anderson's "We Are All Small-Towners" (1940) touched on the variation between fact and reality when small-town papers address citizens leaving their midst. Anderson explains, "The boy leaves his home town to go away to some city and his name is mentioned. . . If we take the local editor's word for it, all the small-town boys get lucrative positions" (J2). Anderson explains urban life often disappoints with commentary applicable to George's future. He suggests "All the cities are filled with former small-towners but, alas the 'position' in the city, taken by the newly arrived small-towner, doesn't always turn out to be so lucrative" (J2).

George's approaching insignificance in the city places more emphasis on his rural experience. No dozen people will welcome George to the city, so in *Winesburg* everyone sought out George to share wisdom or provide news for the *Eagle*. George might not find a use for his skills or people to listen to in Cleveland, and end up drawing on walls to fight loneliness like Enoch Robinson. The city's isolation also explains why Anderson enjoyed

his sabbatical in Marion. Anderson wrote *Winesburg* by looking back on his childhood home, indicating how writers blend former neighbors into characters, and how unpublished local news creates engaging fiction when an artist combines naturalistic character examinations with a modernist writing style.

### **From Winesburg to Gopher Prairie**

“It was perhaps only a trick of time and the current of the new freedom after the war that put *Winesburg* and *Main Street* together, since no two novelists could have seemed more different. . . .it seemed as if they had come from the opposite ends of the world (or from the same Midwestern street) to meet in the dead center of the postwar emancipation and be stopped there, wondering what came next.”

— Alfred Kazin’s “The New Realism: Sherwood Anderson and Sinclair Lewis” (1942), 122

Anderson and Lewis attempted the same task in *Winesburg* and *Main Street* over a one year span. However, Anderson’s reached just thousands, while Lewis’s novel became a best-seller and offered a catch-phrase for small-town living. Both writers upset their hometowns much like a country editor who will “sooner or later. . . offend every reader” (Cole 60). Anderson failed to realize “he had misused the good name of the real Winesburg, Ohio, a community in Holmes County, southeast of Clyde, an area settled and yet populated, some claim, solely by peaceful and pious farming folk” (White xlix). Lewis’s father never forgave his son for depicting him as Dr. Kennicott (Breasted 234).

Lewis stood to receive more backlash than Anderson. Though Lewis later evened his satire scale by exposing the urban world in *Babbitt*, *Main Street*’s cynicism goes far

beyond *Winesburg* in regards to small-town life. Anderson and Lewis depicted a Clyde, Ohio, and Sauk, Centre, Minnesota, which in the 1890s would have looked much the same. A few shops, multiple churches, and a train station within the surrounding farm land. Despite these similarities, in “The Philosophy of Sherwood Anderson” (1970) Julius W. Friend vehemently argues “[i]t is a ludicrous, critical error to put him alongside writers such as Sinclair Lewis whose books about the American small town are a protest against intellectual narrowness.” Friend suggests Anderson depicts small-town life as a positive alternative to the “rootless and abstract” city life (58).

How Lewis’s journalism experience differs from Anderson’s explains why two writers portrayed their rural locales differently. Their different journalism experience also provides benefits for a comparison between the two texts. Lewis writes a detached, cynical view of Gopher Prairie and the *Dauntless* from above like an urban daily. T. K. Whipple compares Lewis to Anderson in “Glass Flowers, Waxworks and Barnyard Symphonies of Sinclair Lewis” (1928) and writes Lewis “prefers to stay safely on the surface of social appearances. He shows little of Sherwood Anderson’s hunger to delve into the lives of men and women” (21). Anderson, the country editor, who put himself on the same level as *Winesburg* and the *Eagle* provides criticism from within. In “Oh, The Big Words!” (March 31, 1940) Anderson explains how he approached his writing in Marion. He explains “To live at all in the town, I had to be very small, not take myself too seriously, take the town in which I was living as the center of the universe” (J2).

Unfortunately for Sauk Centre, Lewis showed exactly how small a place in the world they occupied. One could suggest Lewis wrote *Main Street* to critique Carol Kennicott, or to explore how someone migrating from a city must adapt. One could read



Carol as paralleling one of the several misplaced citizens in *Winesburg* who lament their situation but still find something positive in sharing their story. All these readings miss Lewis's conscious cynicism because in his words, "I was younger then and terribly anxious to make a mark with my first major book. I *did* exaggerate to make my point" (qtd. in Breasted 241, emphasis in original). Under close examination Carol's character appears static while she presents Lewis's voice to "exaggerate." While most readers believed Lewis provided an accurate depiction of rural America, his protagonist lacks realistic qualities. While Lewis can portray Carol however he wants within the artistic realm of interpretation, her observations lack the naturalistic examination Anderson provides.

### **Lewis's *Dauntless* Experience**

"I can't do newspaper work; am a less excellent newspaperman every year. The only way I can write a story is to polish; think it out; rewrite; whereas in newspaper work on must do it right off & get it out to the linotype room."

— Sinclair Lewis to his father, quoted in Richard Lingeman's *Sinclair Lewis: Rebel from Main Street* (2002), 36

One does not imagine Lewis longed for a vacation from his financially successful fiction writing to edit a small-town newspaper. Lewis found little satisfaction in journalism, viewing the writing practices in direct contrast to art. He moved from newspaper to newspaper, unable to find work that he considered making a career. He worked on Sauk Centre newspapers, the *Herald* and the *Avalanche* during the summers of 1902 and 1903. On these newspapers he gathered community news as George Willard did,

publishing several unsigned news stories (Schorer 815). When Lewis left Sauk Centre to attend college, the newspaper jobs he found quickly became a deterrent instead of an apprenticeship for fiction. Lewis's newspaper jobs included the Oberlin *Herald* in the Ohio town where he first went to college for six months to study Greek in order to qualify for Yale. Once at Yale, where students perceived him as "a raw, uncouth Westerner in the midst of the suave, sophisticated Easterners" (Grebstein 373), he edited the *Yale Literary Magazine* and worked on the New Haven *Journal Courier*. From 1904 to 1906 Lewis served as the *Courier*'s "rewrite man. He was offered a job as campus correspondent, but the work kept him up until 2:00 or 3:00 a.m., so he quit" (Lingeman 20).

Next, Lewis lasted as an editor for the Waterloo, Iowa, *Daily Courier* for ten weeks during summer vacation. Lewis completed several tasks as he "became combination editorial writer, telegraph editor, proof-reader, and dramatic critic" (qtd. in Schorer 140). Lewis moved from writing in academic-centered university towns to another "Main Street" when he began work at his second *Courier*. Lewis's work on the Waterloo *Courier* provided him better documentation for *Main Street* than the eastern papers he left, or the San Francisco journalism that followed. In the northeastern Iowa town he made careful observations on all aspects of town life. Mark Schorer's *Sinclair Lewis: An American Life* (1961) records how "Under the heading of 'Iowa Talk' he collected a whole sheaf of notes, not only on local habits of speech as he heard them in his boarding house, on the street, in the office, but also on dress, amusements, manners" (143). Lewis knew he wanted to be a writer, and when he combined these notes with his own upbringing, he constructed an impression of Midwestern life that culminated in *Main Street*. Lewis benefited a great deal

from the notes taken in Waterloo because further newspaper work would only add to Lewis's bitterness toward journalism.

When Lewis moved to San Francisco in 1908 he worked in an Associated Press office, surely an environment as distant from country journalism as possible. He tried the Associated Press job because earlier at the San Francisco *Bulletin* he enjoyed reviewing books and plays, but detested his rewrite man position and he expressed a dislike for reporting because he had to ask “embarrassing questions of people who much preferred to be let alone” (qtd. in Lingeman 34). The fiction and poetry Anderson had begun to publish would begin the process that would end his journalism apprenticeship. In 1920, he would establish himself as an important novelist, worthy of interviews, and those “embarrassing questions” asked by journalists.

Beginning in 1907 Anderson regularly published poetry and fiction in a number of magazines and newspapers, from “Mr. Hopper Frog” in *The Housekeeper* to “Canned Poetry” in *Puck* to “American Kiplings” in *Life*. Luckily for Lewis *Main Street* would offer him enough money and reputation to leave daily newspaper work behind. Lewis continued to write for newspapers and magazines after achieving novelist fame, but he never needed to rush a text into the linotype room again. However, in 1921 Lewis realized “No art is a pay-as-you-enter proposition. On the contrary it is only hard labor, without wages” (qtd. in Wagstaffe 30). Lewis had bided his time through newspaper positions while he submitted short stories and poetry in search of recognition. He began publishing novels in 1912 with *Hike and the Aeroplane* followed by *Our Mr. Wrenn: The Romantic Adventures of a Gentle Man* (1914). With *Main Street* he reflected back upon his newspaper positions and life experience in Ohio and Iowa, but mostly in Minnesota. As

Lewis told Charles Breasted, “I shall never shed the little, indelible ‘Sauk-centricities’ that enabled me to write it” (234). Lewis blended personal experience with an observational realism to present the facets of rural America an artistically-minded person would perceive if they moved there.

### **Small-Town Struggles Unfit for the *Dauntless***

“[Lewis] was one of millions of Americans who had come to think of their villages as dull in comparison with the more variegated worlds spread before them by *newspapers*, motion pictures, excursions in train or automobile. He was one of thousands who had left their villages and with more distaste than homesickness remembered them in difficult but exciting towns.”

— Carl Van Doran’s *Sinclair Lewis: A Biographical Sketch* (1933), 38-39

*Main Street* begins with a preface as *Winesburg* does to provide a narrative framework for the reader’s response to the text. Lewis explains Gopher Prairie serves as a representation of all small towns, and “is the climax of civilization” without adding any extra narrative distance as Anderson did. The preface provides an answer in response to whether the novel’s critique of the small town proved important enough to tarnish Lewis’s hometown and relationship with his father. The preface offers the following decree after offering the small-town mentality: “Such is our comfortable tradition and sure faith. Would he not betray himself an alien cynic who should otherwise portray Main Street, or distress the citizens by speculating whether there may not be other faiths?” (np). *Main Street*’s Carol provides an outsider’s view, providing first impressions of the town, not innate ones or those gleaned from years of exposure. While Carol’s outsider view stretch’s

Lewis's cynicism for emphasis, readers recognized *Main Street* as real, calling it a study rather than a story. But placing Carol under scrutiny suggests her character lacks . . . This contradiction sets up another fact-fiction dialog because readers believed Lewis's exaggeration when much of the critique derives from the jaded, static protagonist.

Ford and Ford's *Los Angeles Times* book review "Castigation of Mediocrity" (January 2, 1921) represents the social context which helped make *Main Street* a catchphrase due to its genuine portrayal. The review highlights the journalistic accuracy Lewis maintained: "The novel is "so absorbing, so full of reality, so amazingly clever in its picture of small-town life and of the small-town mind that it should be ready by everyone interested in a study of American life of today as well as by those who appreciate distinctive fiction" (III54). The review makes the novel historical fiction, suggesting Lewis's novel can circulate around the world to define the American rural experience.<sup>59</sup>

The accuracy reviewers and critics find in Lewis's novel place him within the journalism-oriented definition for realism. Though Anderson argued no realist could write through a camera lens, E. M. Forster's "Our Photography: Sinclair Lewis" (1962) suggests otherwise. Forster believed Lewis's representation stayed true enough that if someone took a picture of Gopher Prairie "we cry: 'So that's it!' on seeing the snap" based on the perceptions created by Lewis (95). Whether someone takes a picture or reads *Main Street* Forster believed "we are in the presence of something alive" (95). Yet Anderson, in "Sinclair Lewis" (1922) suggested Lewis only chose certain aspects to write about with his "sharp journalistic nose for news of the outer surface of our lives" (27). Lewis's novel lacked the intimate portrayal of small-town people they usually keep hidden. The urbane

Carol remains the only character Lewis exposes from the inside; the other characters only develop as perceptions of her scorn.

Once readers applauded the reality of Lewis's exaggeration, the engaging fiction caused social implications as it "struck the nerve of status anxiety among these upward-striving onetime small-townners, many of whom felt that hailing from a Gopher Prairie was a social liability" (Lingeman 159). Their past, made available to everyone through *Main Street*, had come back to haunt them. Carol's observations about the town caused much of the haunting. The urban readers who felt superior to small-town life by reading Lewis's novel cast her same slanted judgment. When a close friend asked Lewis if Carol was him, he responded that "'Carol is 'Red' Lewis: always groping for something she isn't capable of attaining, always dissatisfied, always restlessly straining to see what lies just over the horizon, intolerant of her surroundings, yet lacking any clearly defined vision of what she really wants to do or to be'" (232).

Comparing Carol to *Winesburg's* Kate Swift helps explain Carol's character and position in the town. Citizens recognize the Winesburg English teacher as a cosmopolitan figure within their town; she has lived in Paris, reads books instead of newspapers and agriculture reports, does not work with her hands. Carol feels, as Mencken points out in "Consolation," "The ideas of the great world press upon her, confusing her and making her uneasy. She is flustered by strange heresies, by romantic personalities, by exotic images of beauty" (18). While Kate seeks to engraft her worldview on George, Carol will not find anyone to teach until she raises her children.

Leading up to Carol's arrival, her courtship partially functions as recruitment. Dr. Kennicott tells her he's been to Atlantic City and New York but "'I never saw a town that

had such up-and-coming people as Gopher Prairie” (12). Dr. Kennicott then places Carol above the town and tells her ““We’re ready for you to boss us!”” (15). In “Consolation” Mencken describes Dr. Kennicott as a typical American for whom “life remains simple; do your work, care for your family, buy your Liberty Bonds, root for your home team, help to build your lodge, venerate the flag” (18). Dr. Kennicott expects his future wife to help him achieve these common goals. Carol’s training in urban schools offers her different goals. As an orphan with only one near relative she does not care for (3) she never gained experience in staying responsible to a family. Carol’s opportunity to live on her own makes her a “rebellious girl” (1) who “would earn her living” (3). Her ambition will face several constraints when she arrives in Gopher Prairie since she has married a successful man on a small-town scale.

Since Carol marries the town doctor she gains all the domestic duties that commit her to the home. As the doctor’s wife she cannot work because the townspeople would look down upon her husband. Carol cannot even redesign her husband’s office because then his patients would not think he needs money. Kate Swift lacks the domestic duties and can use her time and brain teaching Winesburg young adults to read about the world around them. Carol’s place in Gopher Prairie leaves her “a woman with a working brain and no work” thus presented with three options: “Have children; start her career of reforming; or become so definitely a part of the town that she would be fulfilled by the activities of church and study-club and bridge parties” (76-77). As Anderson pointed out about Gopher Prairie’s utter lack of vitality, Carol’s greatest problem occurred when “she chanced to discover that she had nothing to do” (76). With too much leisure time Carol

grows cynical, pervading the entire novel and heightening the narrator's negative observations.

The narrator's negative observations come through particularly strong in the portrayal of the small town newspaper, the *Gopher Prairie Weekly Dauntless*. Lewis's depiction of the small-town weekly adheres with Upton Sinclair's summation of local sheets in *Brass Check* (1920). Sinclair writes "If you wish to get a complete picture of American Journalism. . .you must descend from the heights of metropolitan dignity into the filthiest swamps of provincial ignorance and venality" (237). Sinclair then presents an attack on editors such as Loren Wheeler. Sinclair claims, "The average country or small-town editor is an entirely ignorant man; the world of culture is a sealed book to him. His idea of literature is the 'Saturday Evening Post'—only as a rule he doesn't have the time to read it" (239). All *Dauntless* articles convey Sinclair's scorn for country journalism while serving as a partisan paper intent on keeping every aspect of Gopher Prairie positive.

Journalism plays a role in Carol's arrival as Lewis follows up his journalism-derived realism with the subsequent newspaper report on the event. After the honeymoon, the arrival includes a journalistic sketch of the train rolling across a September prairie. Details about her view of the "Northern Middlewest" pile up in her mind: "a land of dairy herds and exquisite lakes, of new automobiles and tar-paper shanties and silos like red towers, of clumsy speech and hope that is boundless. An empire which feeds a quarter of the world—yet its work is merely begun" (21).<sup>60</sup> Before all the negativity surrounding Gopher Prairie an elongated description of rural qualities appears from Lewis that captures the "warmth and lucidity" he wished to make his chief concern, instead of writing as a "journalist" and "photographic realist" (Whipple 71). Her entire description contrasts her



future views, and reads as if it comes from a trained artist, and it nearly does. The description begins with “Here—she meditated—is the newest empire of the world” (21). The two dashes and “she meditated” allow Lewis to hide behind the thoughts and questions that pile up until “Carol’s head ached” (22).

When Carol finds the town the pastoral images are shattered. She sees the train station and likens Gopher Prairie to “a frontier camp. It was not a place to live in, not possibly, not conceivably” (23). Following all the description and disappointment expressed by Carol the *Dauntless* reduces the sketch to facts, sentimental observations, and boosterism. The *Dauntless* provides a society article about Carol’s arrival in Gopher Prairie as the wife of the much appreciated Dr. Will Kennicott. The article announces the wedding is “a delightful surprise” and that Carol is “a lady of manifold charms, not only of striking charm of appearance but is also a distinguished graduate of a school in the East” (55). The society editor welcomes Carol on behalf of the town and “prophesies for her many happy years in the energetic city of the twin lakes and her future” (55).

By the time Carol’s arrival “hits the press” she has already decided she cannot find happiness there unless she creates change. She decides the prairie town of three thousand will serve as an “empire I’m going to conquer!” (28). Her first meetings with locals sets up the opposition between Carol’s urban sensibilities and Gopher Prairie’s rural ideologies. Carol faces an impossible task when attempting to fuse art into a farming community because “Life dehumanized by indifference or enmity to all human values—that is they keynote of both Gopher Prairie and Zenith. And nowhere does this animosity show itself more plainly than in hostility to truth and art” (Whipple 11). Since Carol worked at the library in St. Paul she naturally looks to begin her conquest at the library. She meets Mr.

Wutherspoon who loves movies better than books because of censorship. He tries to explain to Carol that “when you drop into the library and take out a book you never know what you’re wasting your time on” (53). Wutherspoon had previously stumbled upon a Balzac novel, and after reading about cohabitation, he “spoke to the library about it, and they took it off the shelves” (53). Gopher Prairie should feel fortunate to have a library, since “In areas not well served by libraries or the book trade, the weekly newspaper functioned as a ‘circulating library’” (Wallace 43). But Carol cannot believe the practices at this library, where she learns in Gopher Prairie “the first duty of the *conscientious* librarian is to preserve the books” rather than to “get people to read” (83, emphasis in original). Carol, who reads Dreiser, Anderson, Mencken, and other writers whose works the library might pull from the shelves for questionable content (238), will find it difficult to convey her love of literature in Gopher Prairie.

As Carol attempts to find her place in the town, she does not scour the town for news as George does. However, at book clubs and in domestic settings she does interact with other residents and try to insert the urban-centered art culture into Gopher Prairie. Carol passes judgment on Gopher Prairie, making her like many of Lewis’s characters who protest but do not appear “really alive, forceful, or even able to articulate what it is they believe in. . .the protagonists exist on the periphery of the novels, never quite realized” (Brown 55). Shortly after visiting the library Carol discusses Harold Fredric’s *The Damnation of Theron Ware* (1896) with Mrs. Sherwin, the French and English teacher at the high school. Carol appreciates Fredric’s novel about a minister losing his faith and quitting his vocation, while Mrs. Sherwin answers ““Yes. It was clever. But hard. Man wanted to tear down, not build up. Cynical. Oh I do hope I’m not a sentimentalist. But I

can't see any use in this high-art stuff that doesn't encourage us day-laborers to plod on'" (59).

No Kate Swift, Mrs. Sherwin evaluates literature based on its ability to encourage production, an important value for a farming community seeking subsistence. Her view of literature does not consider texts functioning as art-for-art's sake, as a mirror of society, or as a purveyor of challenging ideas. The women's study club, the Thanatopsis, proves no different. The club discusses classic literature by following programs appearing in a society magazine called *Culture Hints* (112). Presentations on Shakespeare, Milton and other English writers consist almost completely of biographical summaries. The few divergences from biography occur to inject moral commentary, such as Burns "was a good student and educated himself, in striking contrast to the loose ways and so-called aristocratic society-life of Lord Byron" (114).

Carol's first major attempt to conquer the town with her urban sensibility is the Oriental theme party she hosts in her home. Carol begins at the top with her challenges, inviting "the entire aristocracy of Gopher Prairie: all persons engaged in a profession, or earning more than twenty-five hundred dollars a year, or possessed of grandparents born in America" (66). After extensive preparation the party flops as it raises "eyebrows indicating a verdict that Doc Kennicott's bride was noisy and improper" (69). A game of sheeps and wolves that involves stealing another's shoes in the dark only slightly veils Carol's desire to change everyone (69).<sup>61</sup> Carol then further shocks the party by changing into a revealing Chinese costume and making everyone eat food they had never heard of before. She even "thought of smoking a cigarette, to shock them" (71).

Carol thinks she has made huge gains in culturing people, and Dr. Kennicott agrees. Dr. Kennicott says, “‘Now you’ve showed ’em how, they won’t go on having the same old kind of parties and stunts and everything’” (72). When Loren Wheeler writes up the party for the *Dauntless* the chance for change still appears hopeful. The party receives the following upbeat coverage: “. . . a number of novelties in diversions were held, including a Chinese orchestra in original and genuine Oriental costumes, of which Ye Editor was leader. . . one and all voted a delightful time” (72). However, the narrator undercuts the party’s significance on the town when a three-line chapter about the next party restores the status quo: “The week after, the Chet Dashaways gave a party. The circle of mourners kept its place all evening, and Dave Dyer did the ‘stunt’ of the Norwegian and the hen” (73). While the Kennicotts assaulted Gopher Prairie’s aristocracy with new ideas, the Dashaways quickly restored the order.

Carol’s next major attempt to insert culture into Gopher Prairie occurs when she produces a play. The play, “The Girl from Kankakee,” “narrated the success of a farm-lassie in clearing her brother of a charge of forgery” (198). Lewis takes special interest in satirizing small-town play reviews because “From the opening, Carol knows that the production is bad—just how bad Lewis’s parody of the arty, slangy, chauvinistic, irrelevant, neighborly review in the *Dauntless* makes clear” (Bucco 65). The *Dauntless* review makes no judgment on the play’s content and only accentuates the locals who “gave such fine account of themselves in difficult roles of this well-known New York stage play” (206). The review makes such ineffectual comments pertaining to art as “Dr. Gould was well suited in the rôle of young lover—girls you better look out, remember the doc is a bachelor” (206). When the review writes “to no one is greater credit to be given than to

Mrs. Will Kennicott on whose capable shoulders fell the burden of directing” (207). Carol has stubbornly learned urbanizing Gopher Prairie’s social life cannot happen. While Carol tries to produce something of value to impress the town, she fails to realize she “was barely superior to the village level in her gifts, except for the virtue of discontent” (Van Doren 23).

After the directing failure, Lewis draws attention to the separation of country journalism and the novel. The narrator tells readers what the novel has shown, but the newspaper ignores. The narrator explains, “In three years of exile from herself Carol had certain experiences chronicled as important by the *Dauntless*, or discussed by the Jolly Seventeen, but the event unchronicled, undiscussed, and supremely controlling, was her slow admission of longing to find her own people” (208). Citizens who did not attend Carol’s dinner party, or did not understand the play’s significance, grant Carol’s struggle little consideration. *Main Street* exposes her emotions and reactions to what appears in print, but within the novel Carol’s reactions only consistently reach her husband because she does not write an editorial to the *Dauntless*.<sup>62</sup>

Carol makes a direct statement against the town by leaving, but the *Dauntless* maintains a positive spin. She leaves her husband and goes to Washington D.C., but “The theory of the *Dauntless* regarding Carol’s absence,” as the included newspaper article implies, is “Mrs. Kennicott confided to Ye Scribe that she will be connected with one of the multifarious war activities” (382). The *Dauntless* uses what the novel indicates is a marriage and town separation into a chance to brag about the community. The article editorializes the report at the end with “Gopher Prairie thus adds another shining star to its service flag, and without wishing to knock any neighboring communities, we would like to

know any town of anywheres near our size in the state that has such a sterling war record. Another reason why you'd better Watch Gopher Prairie Grow" (382).<sup>63</sup> Carol finds work in the Bureau of War Risk Insurance and safe from the town she has found an outlet for her brain and time.

Carol's escape differs from George's departure because Carol willingly leaves her husband behind. While George's distant father expects George to make a man of himself in the city and the townspeople offer him good luck, Carol's rejection of her domestic role in the country serves as a rejection of stasis. To maintain her individuality and to find acceptance Carol must leave and face challenges similar to George's. But without a feeling of community in Washington D.C., Carol's return with a daughter soon to arrive means she will finally consider herself a Gopher Prairie citizen. Now that Carol has expanded beyond her discontent she can grow as a character and blend her urban sensibilities with the good qualities the rural town offers. Conroy's "Sinclair Lewis's Sociological Imagination" (1970) suggests, "Adjustment of course spells defeat for her aspirations, but it is a peculiar kind of defeat, almost without sting" (74). Her daughter's instruction will become her happy focus as "Carol could not decide whether she was to become a feminist leader or marry a scientist or both" (403). Carol imagines her child receiving one apprentice at Gopher Prairie School and another at home. When she grows up, her daughter will reinvigorate the urban migration and become the female Percy Bresnahan.

*Main Street* presents a one-sided view of Gopher Prairie until the static protagonist finally considers the benefits for living and raising children in the rural town. Had Lewis put his characters under naturalistic examination his novel would have provided more

accuracy. Lewis could have offered several insights into country journalism if he set scenes where Loren Wheeler constructs her stories for the *Dauntless*. Lewis's portrayal might have described the process by which she consciously follows the newspaper's vision. But Lewis, circulating his perceptions of small-town life sought satire and the revolt-of-the-village tradition to provide observed realism. To write about his childhood home Lewis emphasized what Gopher Prairies lacked when regarded by an outsider who observes more than interacts.

### **Rural America's Hidden Stories**

Both *Winesburg* and *Main Street* develop the critique of the American heartland Howe delved into with *The Story of a Country Town*. The emphasis each text places on the local newspaper and the skewed image of the town maintained by country journalism exposes newspapers as a hindrance to art. By the 1890s the newspaper industry began to wonder if the country newspaper remained necessary in an industrialized America. For example, Charles Fiske's "The Revolution in Journalism" in *Writer* (August 1887) considered the country newspaper's struggle to provide news and other stories when they don't use a newspaper syndicate service or report on events outside their vicinity. If country journalism would give way to urban dailies, Fiske believed "The abundance of padding written to fill up the rural paper when there is a dearth of news will be lost, and the public will be the better for it" (92). Anderson responded to such ideas in *Hello Towns!*. In the section "Will You Sell Your Newspapers?" a businessman wants to make Anderson's papers part of a chain. Anderson refuses and explains "'a country weekly is such a highly personal thing. It is about the only kind of personal journalism left'" (334).

The country weekly might not expose scandal in its articles as Anderson and Lewis did in their fiction, but its editors personally know their readers and can receive feedback.

Both Anderson and Lewis found a number of stories to tell about rural America. Anderson suggests a variety of problems exist in small-towns, but many of those problems stem from rural areas becoming more urban in their lifestyle and ideology. The main problem facing small-towns, according to Lewis, is that it lacks the varied experiences and lifestyle found in an urban existence. While George receives training that may make him an artist, Carol's daughter will need to endure the small-town struggle that defeated her mother until she leaves for college before she gets her chance to succeed.

How Anderson and Lewis drew attention to their stories played a large role in their efforts to circulate rural America to a national audience. Anderson used a modernist writing style, asking readers to find and consider the connections made when citizens shared their stories with the journalist-protagonist George. The added narrative distance created by the old man who writes "The Book of the Grotesques" presents further challenges for readers to discern Anderson's themes and goals. Lewis's observational realism proved engaging without the esoteric writing modernists had developed by 1920. With a straightforward reading experience Lewis's novel reached best-seller status while becoming an American catch-phrase for its accurate portrayal. While Anderson's small-town depiction proved more artistic, Lewis's portrayal received greater recognition. Both writers widened society's view of American culture by proving fiction allowed readers to witness small-town lives in ways neither the country weekly or urban daily could match.



## Chapter Four

### Exposing Newspapers' Ideological Control, 1927-1931: Sinclair's *Oil!* and Schuyler's *Black No More*

Sinclair's *Oil!* and Schuyler's *Black No More* use a single protagonist to tackle an ambitious number of social issues. The articles newspapers publish as Bunny Ross and Max Disher/Matthew Fisher complete their various adventures across the country offers key debates for this study. Sinclair and Schuyler, both socialists when writing these novels, explored how newspapers hid truths to present false ideologies. Whereas George Willard and Loren Wheeler reported events, Sinclair and Schuyler suggest urban dailies create news only for financial gain. These two novels protest 1920s and 1930s media-saturated society, suggesting more facts appear in their fiction. Sinclair makes this claim with journalistic realism, while Schuyler challenges facts with satirical science-fiction.

Sinclair and Schuyler emerged from different career paths. Though Sinclair regularly contributed to newspapers and magazines, he only worked as a reporter for a week, barely qualifying him as a journalist-turned-novelist. Schuyler worked on African-American newspapers for over forty years, but he only published novels in 1931. Despite Sinclair's short newspaper-tenure, he deserves attention in a journalism-literature study since he used a reportorial style more than any other author under examination. Anthony Arthur's *Radical Innocent: Upton Sinclair* (2006) recounts how "A sympathetic editor wisely advised Upton Sinclair as a young man that he needed 'a good stiff course in plain, every-day newspaper reporting'" (180). While Sinclair's extensive investigations, real-life subject matter, and excessive documentation made him a leading socialist, several

questioned Sinclair's artistic qualities. Sinclair's drive to write fiction withstanding libel threats created his reportorial and detail-obsessed style.

Schuyler's reputation stems from his work on the socialist New York *Messenger* and the *Pittsburgh Courier*, not *Black No More* or *Slaves Today* (1931). Schuyler's shift from socialism to conservatism continues to draw emphasis away from *Black No More*. As Henry Louis Gates Jr. explains in "A Fragmented Man: George Schuyler and the Claims of Race" (1992), "the later Schuyler is not the socialist civil rights activist of the 1920's and 1930's. And his career was not a simple drift from left to right but a complicated, painful journey filled with the sort of 'double-consciousness' that continues to raise disturbing questions about what racism does to people in America" (31). *Black No More* lacks critical attention, despite its position as "the first completely satirical novel written by and about African Americans and the first extended work of science fiction" (Dickson-Carr 57). Schuyler all but ignored the novel in his autobiography *Black and Conservative* (1966), devoting only this sentence: "Removed from the American scene I knew nothing of the great interest and even furor raised by *Black No More*, and under the circumstances there was no way for me to find out until I returned from Africa" (179). Schuyler's novel deserves consideration in a journalism-literature study since he fuses a muckraking agenda with humor.

Though Schuyler's *Black No More* functions as science fiction and satire, his agenda matches Sinclair's *Oil!*. Whereas Sinclair the laborer produces a novel over 500 pages, Schuyler the journalist accomplishes the same message-making in under 200 pages. The novels' similarities begin with a plot centered on corrupt businesses. Sinclair takes on the oil industry while Schuyler imagines a skin-whitening business. Characters in each

novel use the radio to deliver national speeches, suggesting radio offers a challenge to the newspaper's dominance. Both novels poke fun at religious fanaticism, as Eli Watkins and the Reverend McPhule lead naïve followers. Both novels begin with a preface suggesting the novel's plausibility, then end with a federal election to expose the secret agendas deciding the winner. The protagonists Bunny and Matthew try living in two worlds. Bunny, accordingly named for his rampant side-switching, sympathizes with socialists and workers striking against his capitalistic father while dating Hollywood actresses. Max Disher/Matthew Fisher, *Black-No-More's* first client, serves as Grand Exalted Giraw for the Knights of Nordica. He preaches against impurities threatening the white race, writes the same message in the Knights of Nordica's official newspaper, breaks up strikes, and does whatever else to keep getting richer.

A study examining these two writers could focus on any of the above connections. My study develops primarily from a fact-fiction dialog exploring how Sinclair and Schuyler depict the newspaper's ideological control over society. Sinclair and Schuyler expose newspaper propaganda with their protagonists who edit and consistently consider a newspaper story's implications. Bunny edits the socialist *Investigator* while in university; once he graduates his father buys him *The Young Student*. Matthew Fischer edits the Knight's of Nordica's official sheet, *The Warning*. Sinclair and Schuyler's characters remain in contact with the national newspapers to expose corruption from what newspapers print, and why.

*Oil!* and *Black No More* function as more than social protest when considered in a literature-journalism discussion. Schuyler's science fiction provides freedom, yet a wide coverage of topics proves considerably more difficult for Sinclair. In discussing Sinclair's

research for *The Jungle*, Hicks explains “The novelist who wishes to write about the complex structure of modern society cannot possibly have had all the different kinds of experience he finds it necessary to describe: he can scarcely have been both employer and employee, both union member and scab, both ward boss and reformer” (198). The closest fiction an observer can reach is photographic realism. In *Oil!*, Bunny provides the most commentary against newspapers, but other characters provide complaints allowed in observational realism. *Black No More*’s narrator takes more direct action, exposing numerous problems and ironies while undercutting each character’s actions with satire. In this chapter I will concentrate on the encounters each protagonist undergoes with newspapers, alongside the newspaper writing concerning the oil industry and Crookmam’s Black-No-More. Through muckraking and satire, Sinclair and Schuyler illustrate newspapers’ ability to form the public consciousness to meet national and political interests.

### **Sinclair’s Development During the Muckraking Era**

“The methods by which the “Empire of Business” maintains its control over Journalism are four: First, the ownership of the papers; second, ownership of the owners; third, advertising subsidies; and fourth, direct bribery. . . .By these methods there exists in America a control of news and of current comment more absolute than any monopoly in any other industry.”

— Upton Sinclair’s *Brass Check*, 241

While Sinclair only worked on the *New York Evening Post* for a week, he remained in contact with the publishing industry as he developed his craft. As Steffens, Tarbell,

Phillips and others proved muckraking's ability to expose American realities with investigated facts, Sinclair proved his muckraking ability to expose and change American realities in fiction with *The Jungle*. Sinclair received an invitation to the White House to discuss his novel with President Roosevelt, who in *The Autobiography of Upton Sinclair* (1962), he called "the greatest publicity man of that time" (118). Sinclair then traveled to Chicago where "The commissioners obtained evidence of practically everything charged in *The Jungle*, except that I was not able to produce legal proof of men falling into vats and being rendered into pure leaf lard" (120).<sup>64</sup> The aftermath from Sinclair's novel occurred during the same time David Graham Phillips's "Treason of the State" articles connected various Senators to national financial powers. *The Jungle* and muckraking created four outcomes: Sinclair gained instant fame, Roosevelt issued the Meat Inspection Act of 1906, Roosevelt gave his muckraking speech later that year, and Roosevelt set up a press room in the White House (Schudson 139). This last change opened the way for public relations and press agents to print news without reporters.<sup>65</sup>

Sinclair's novel caused changes he did not intend, and some he found dangerous to investigative reporting. As Sinclair famously concluded about *The Jungle* not improving workers' rights, "I aimed at the public's heart and by accident I hit it in the stomach" (*Brass Check* 47).<sup>66</sup> Sinclair witnessed the boom and decline in muckraking, and then he sought to muckrake the journalism industry in *Brass Check*. Sinclair exhibited a widespread knowledge about American newspaper history, practices, influences, etc. as he presented arguments for newspaper reform. Sinclair felt he caused small victories with *Brass Check*, but the book brought nowhere near the changes or social discussion *The*

*Jungle* caused.<sup>67</sup> Sinclair would return to newspaper's corruption in *Oil!*, hoping America would respond better to muckraking fiction.

Sinclair's struggle to turn reality into fiction followed a long apprenticeship in writing escape literature for newspapers and magazines. Sinclair did attempt newspaper work, but as he explains in his autobiography: "I gave it up because the staff was too crowded, and all there was for this bright kid just out of knickerbockers was a few obituary notices, an inch or two each" (42-43). Sinclair's literary training continued soon after, since at age fifteen he "began to submit puzzles and jokes to children's magazines, newspapers, and publishers of joke books" (Bloodworth 20).<sup>68</sup> Yet as Sinclair exchanged his writing for a check, he noticed the business conditions inherent in publishing. For example, most of his juvenile stories went to *Argosy* magazine, where the headquarters "looked more like a factory than a place of imagination and artistry" (Mattson 36).

Sinclair, the spokesman for the working class, toiled in the process to reach artist status. In Christopher Wilson's "American Naturalism and the Problem of Sincerity" (1982), he finds Sinclair and other muckraking-era writers "said that authorship was not a matter of inspiration, but of rigorous work habits, a watchful eye on market demand, and a sense of one's responsibility to the public" (511). Sinclair used every available moment to improve as a child, devoting each day to "eight hours of writing, eight of study, and eight of sleep" (515). Accordingly, when Sinclair wrote *Oil!* "the novel consumed its author in a year-long, creative obsession. Sinclair interviewed oil-men, lawyers, workers; he watched drilling, gushers and fires, read books and briefs" (Powell 49). Early 1920s *Los Angeles Times* articles such as "Strike Oil at Signal Hill" (May 25, 1921), "Oil Excitement at High Pitch" (May 27, 1921), and "Signal Hill Well Gives Oil Stream" (June 21, 1921) indicate

how accurately Sinclair depicted the Paradise scene, and how many details newspapers offered to their readers about the oil drilling process and results.<sup>69</sup> Sinclair's documentation and investigation remained important strategies for his fiction-writing preparation when he tried to emulate *The Jungle*'s success.

Sinclair's self-designated title as a worker contrasted writers who saw literature as primarily about art. Anderson, for one, grouped Sinclair with Dos Passos as writers who "[pretend] they are workmen, that they feel like workmen. What rot. An artist is an artist. He isn't anything else" (311). Similarly, the *New York Times Book Review* for *Oil!*, "Socialist Doctrine" (May 8, 1927) suggested: "One lays aside 'Oil!' with a considerable respect for Mr. Sinclair's energy but with a low opinion of his artistic sense" (22). Labeling Sinclair as a muckraker working in fiction best explains his style in *Oil!* because it complements his consideration for fiction's role in social change.

Sinclair's *Brass Check* provides commentary on the muckraking tradition, adding a socialist slant to the historical overview. For the historical overview, Judson A Grenier's "Muckraking and the Muckrakers: A Historical Definition" (1960) defines muckrakers as those reporters who "participated in the exposé movement led by the magazines of mass-circulation in the years 1902-1914" (558). More specifically, Grenier indicates through the muckrakers' devotion to truth, they "sought for, exposed, and charged corruption on the part of public men and corporations in the name of higher readership, a heightened public awareness, and the common good" (558). Sinclair followed these goals as he believed the muckraking tradition developing from low-circulation socialist newspapers. Sinclair saw the muckraking tradition stemming from profit, since editors realized the stir socialist news caused and "if only the people could get it in a newspaper or a magazine, what fortunes

they would pay! . . . what more natural than that one of them should now and then yield to the temptation to get rich by telling the truth?" (229). Sinclair called socialist truth a "gold-mine" and magazines finally moved away from "camouflaged propaganda" as "half a dozen magazines were able to build up half a million circulation, by no other means whatever than telling what the newspapers were refusing to tell?" (229).

Journalists' reaction to Roosevelt's muckraking term demonstrates the term did not adequately represent journalism's goal. The muckraking term became a new word continuing the sensationalism critique American newspapers faced from their inception. President Roosevelt's extended Wilmer's 1859 "excitement breeder" generalization to the twentieth century, accusing exposé journalists of only writing about "vile and debasing" topics (qtd. in Tarbell 242). Tarbell plainly stated in her autobiography the President had "misread" Bunyan. She explains Roosevelt should have "named the rich sinners of the times. . . 'muckrakers of great wealth'" (242). When Tarbell argued with Roosevelt, he responded by saying, "I don't object to the facts. . . but you and Baker are not *practical*" (242, emphasis in original).<sup>70</sup> Sinclair would have agreed with Tarbell that Roosevelt's main reason for drawing negative attention to exposé journalists stemmed from a fear of socialism (241).

Implicated by Roosevelt, Ray Stannard Baker's autobiography quotes the entire April 9, 1906 letter he received from Roosevelt after the muckraking speech. Roosevelt informed Baker "I want to 'let in light and air,' but I do not want to let in sewer gas.'" Roosevelt's letter reveals he developed the term from specific newspapers. Roosevelt chose the early-twentieth-century "excitement breeders," revealing "that Hearst's papers and magazines are those I have in mind at the moment, as well as, say the New York



*Herald* and similar publications” (qtd. in Baker 203). Roosevelt regarded these publications as an enemy to those “who are really striving in good faith to expose bad men and drive them from power” (qtd. in Baker 203).<sup>71</sup>

Muckraking articles generated engaging reading; readers created the enormous demand *McClure's*, *Collier's*, *Cosmopolitan* and other magazines offered. As Baker estimated, “Month after month [readers] would swallow dissertations of ten or twelve thousand words without even blinking—and ask for more” (184). Muckraking, from its beginning, created a congenial fact-fiction dialog with realism. Muckrakers, like realists sought to depict truth with straightforward writing. As Roggenkamp suggests “The emphasis placed on documenting life and producing works that could almost stand alone as fact meant that the fictions realists produced could be virtually indistinguishable from the stories the newspaper reporters created” (24). As more novelists apprenticed in muckraking, they brought the cynicism they developed in their reporting to the novel. Hicks argues muckrakers caused “the connection between the progressive movement and the literature of the period” (176). Muckrakers engaged readers’ interest in American big business and politics, then Lewis, Sinclair, Schuyler and other post-World War I novelists sought to bring the reader’s interest to fiction because society found “the dramatic value in the lives of great financiers and big bosses and in the struggles for supremacy” (176).

Sinclair’s *Brass Check*, like Roosevelt’s speech, criticizes newspapers. But Sinclair did not misread Bunyan as Roosevelt did; he placed the newspaper industry with “the rich sinners of the times” (Tarbell 242). Sinclair found “societal flaws were economic in origin, and therefore curable, rather than rooted in unchanging human nature” (Arthur 5). Sinclair sought significant change when writing *Brass Check* and *Oil!*. While Sinclair

found evidence *Brass Check* caused change, “The book was ignored or condemned by the newspapers he maligned, and Sinclair was chastised by journalism professors and by Associated Press spokesmen” (Arthur 181).<sup>72</sup> Sinclair’s method for *Brass Check* focused on saturating the reader with details and evidence. In his own words, Sinclair set out to take “the witness-stand in the case of the American public versus Journalism” (9) and presented the following thesis: “our newspapers do not represent public interests, but private interests; they do not represent humanity, but property; they value a man, not because he is great, or good, or wise, or useful, but because he is wealthy, or of service to vested wealth” (125).

While the investigative spirit toward social ills continued in journalism-derived realism such as Dreiser’s *The American Tragedy* (1925), magazine muckraking lost much of its earlier demand well before 1927. As Mott clarifies, “The number of these magazine crusades, and the lack of restraint of some of them at length wearied and sickened the public” (575). Sinclair’s reason for muckraking’s downturn in *Brass Check* appears more charged, writing “For, of course, the industrial autocracy very quickly awakened to the peril of these ‘muck-raking’ magazines, and set to work to put out the fire” (229).<sup>73</sup> While magazines stopped muckraking, several novelists who remained loyal to realism continued to investigate and circulate their findings in fiction. Sinclair for one never changed his style from *The Jungle*. He maintained the muckraking tradition in *Oil!* by examining recent developments in his home state: the oil boom and Hollywood. Sinclair blended these American developments with a newspaper critique since the media played a large role in the proliferation of these industries, diverting citizens from the truth Sinclair’s muckraking fiction could reveal.

***The Brass Check in Fiction***

“[The American daily] is, in the true sense, never well-informed. It is seldom intelligent, save in the arts of the mob-master. It is never courageously honest. Held harshly to a rigid correctness of opinion by the plutocracy that controls it with less and less attempt at disguise, and menaced on all sides by censorships that it dare not flout, it sinks rapidly into formalism and feebleness.”

— H. L. Mencken *Prejudices: Second Series* (1922), 75-76

Reading *Oil!* as an extension of *Brass Check* helps provide insights to how Sinclair presented arguments against the oil industry, Hollywood, Russia, Presidential elections, worker’s rights, and more. Sinclair presents many of his views through what Bunny Ross says or hears, though many characters read newspapers or create news in the media-saturated environment depicted in *Oil!*. Examining how Bunny’s father influences the news and how Bunny becomes news provides evidence for the facts Sinclair provided in *Brass Check*. Sinclair’s attempt to expose the newspaper’s ideological control blends with Bunny’s expanding socialist doctrine to produce muckraking fiction. Through a *bildungsroman* Bunny will eventually reach the same conclusions about the press Mencken proposed. As Bunny says to his newspaper co-worker and future wife when he attempts to defend his current girlfriend’s propaganda film, “‘It’s hard to realize how ignorant people can be, when they read nothing but American newspapers and magazines’” (362).

In *Brass Check* Sinclair reminds readers all his evidence derives from fact, even outlining the research and writing process as work. Sinclair contends, “There are no mistakes in it, no guesses, no surmises; there are no lapses of memory, no inaccuracies. There are only facts. You must understand that I have had this book in mind for twenty

years. For twelve years I have been deliberately collecting the documents and preserving the records, and I have these before me as I write” (10).<sup>74</sup> *Oil!* also contains a preface classifying the novel as “a picture of civilization in Southern California, as the writer has observed it during eleven years’ residence. The picture is the truth, and the great mass of detail actually exists” (iii). Sinclair explains only the Presidents appear as recognizable figures, but all other characters convey the reality created by real citizens.

Sinclair does not mention Los Angeles newspapers in the preface, but several comments in *Brass Check* manifest in *Oil!*. Sinclair’s fiction in *Oil!* derived from the same method used for *Brass Check*, namely muckraking’s allegiance to “thoroughness of preparation and sincerity of purpose” (Baker 169). Muckraking seeks truth, but Sinclair suggests in *Brass Check* and *Oil!* newspapers print fiction with a “sincerity of purpose” in proliferating political and business gains. According to Sinclair, fictional details or faked stories control newspaper readers who still believe the capitalist newspaper intends to print objective news.

Bunny functions as the muckraker who learns the truth, aided by his experiences with his oil tycoon father, experiences in Hollywood, and the proclamations made by the narrator. The novel moves between a fictionalized *Brass Check* and plots surrounding Bunny’s adventures since Sinclair remained “firmly resolved it should be a real novel rather than merely a transcription of contemporary events interlarded with propaganda” (Harris 236). The aspects Sinclair believed made it a novel still connect to newspapers on several occasions as Bunny, his father, and his girlfriends appear in the press as celebrities. The newspapers present one view of the characters, while the novel presents a more negative portrayal.

The novel also functions as a *bildungsroman* of Bunny Ross from young, naïve child to a married, beleaguered, future labor college president. The novel grants significant coverage to Bunny's adolescence and his relations with two women, Eunice Hoyt and Vee Tracy. As the "Socialist Doctrine" review explains the split in the novel, "There is sugar coating to the pill of Socialist doctrine in the shape of 'Bunny's' various amatory adventures—introduced as much for spice as for the purpose of riddling the moral pretensions of the capitalist régime" (22). Arnold J. Ross's hard work and success ensured Bunny's entry into the upper class, where Bunny meets and entices these women. Outside California high society Bunny struggles to maintain his socialist worldview and keep fighting battles for people who receive no press from Angel City newspapers. Bunny's two-sided life facilitates his growth and generates his exposure to corporate newspapers' hypocrisy.

Arnold Ross's character develops through his involvement with newspapers, including the press coverage he receives and the stories he creates. The novel opens with Arnold Ross powerfully speeding down a highway since he views officers who set speed traps as enemies. Further background on Ross's social stature becomes clear when the narrator informs readers the newspaper has published Arnold's view on speeding: "The newspapers had put that on the front page all over the state: 'Oil Operator Objects to Speed Law: J. Arnold Ross Says He Will Change It'" (10). The newspaper headline grants Ross's importance because out of all who speed, his objection appears in newspapers. A business celebrity, Ross appears as the first character mentioned whose press coverage determines their significance. Another example appears when Bunny's first girlfriend enters the plot with the announcement "Eunice Hoyt was the daughter of 'Tommy' Hoyt,

of Hoyt and Brainerd, whose advertisements of investment securities you saw on the financial pages of the Beach City newspapers” (193). Sinclair’s novel indicates how everything comes back to public image, and this image springs forth from newspapers rather than personal interaction.<sup>75</sup>

Sinclair returns to the appearance in newspapers versus reality theme throughout the novel. Readers learn newspapers portray Ross as personifying the American Dream. As the narrator explains: “The papers printed his picture, and a sketch of his life—a typical American, risen from the ranks, glorifying once more this great land of opportunity” (33). Bunny and readers will later understand how much success Ross creates by illegal business deals and press manipulation. Anything relating to Ross’s Paradise oil fields makes major news. Sinclair documents the oil drilling with full journalistic detail as the novel “contains some interesting reporting on the technique of oil production” (“Socialist Doctrine” 22). More importantly Sinclair draws attention to the press coverage. The landowners try to keep the oil strikes secret “But suddenly there was no possibility of secrecy; literally all the world knew—for telegraph and cable carried the news to the farthest corners of civilization. The greatest oil strike in the history of Southern California, the Prospect Hill field!” (25). Sinclair’s description matches the reports in the *Los Angeles Times* in such articles as “Strike Oil at Signal Hill” The article informs readers “The finding of oil in the well after the tools had passed through the cement was soon known throughout the city, and thousands of person flocked to the scene” (II1).

The strike excitement appears like the Nevada silver mining as Twain depicted in *Roughing It*. When the workers start pumping the oil “The newspapers reported the results, and a hundred thousand speculators and would-be speculators read the reports, and

got into their cars and rode out to the field where the syndicates had their tents” (72). Sinclair’s description matches “Oil Excitement At High Pitch” (May 27, 1921), as the article describes “Temple avenue, one of the streets on which the well is located, has become the busiest thoroughfare in the city and the hill around the well is black with automobiles from early morning until after dark” (II6). When the Paradise oil strike results arrive, the news becomes too important not to share because “it just didn’t lie in the possibility of human nature not to tell; the newspapers bulletined the details” of 1600 barrels per day, making the owner \$20,000 per day (76-77). News of a boom draws wide readership for newspapers. The exact dollar figures the newspapers report suggests wealth for Ross, greater celebrity stature, and higher social standing for his family. The increased money does hold one downside. When the figures appear in print Ross’s soon-to-be ex-wife seeks an increase in her allowance (78).

Ross’s newspaper manipulation occurs soon after the oil boom to maximize future profits. Ross needed new roads for his trucks to transport oil so the newspapers fake a story to start a petition for new roads. Ross plants a story in the “Eagle” about a rancher who planned to sue each member of the county for neglect because he broke his collarbone when his wagon overturned on the roads to the Paradise oil field. The “Eagle” reports a petition will circulate around the country for fixing the roads, and they encourage everyone to sign. Ross takes the fiction writer’s role in creating his story. He knows that everyone in the area remains interested in the oil field and the rising property rates. Ross also knows any bad press or lawsuits would hurt all citizens with money invested in nearby property. “Oil Excitement at High Pitch” expressed the real estate boom that followed the Signal Hill oil activity, writing “The scramble for leases and property in the district of the well

during the past few days has been a wild one” (II6). Upon seeing the *Eagle* article Ross laughs, and laughs harder one day later when he signs the petition. Bunny, still too inexperienced to understand the ramifications of his father’s actions, remarks “gee, it was wonderful to see what Dad’s money could do!” (141).

Bunny’s socialist maturation process begins when the Paradise oil workers go on strike. As Jon A. Yoder defines Bunny’s growth in *Upton Sinclair* (1975), “Bunny will mature in the course of the book, which means he will come to Sinclair’s conclusions about sex, the movies, college and capitalism” (71). The workers strike and Bunny takes their side against his father. As the narrator explains the dilemma, “He, Bunny, wanted the men to win; but did he want it at the cost of having his father carry this extra burden?” (176). Bunny sides with the workers after realizing his father gets rich off them while the workers perform dangerous tasks to earn barely enough to feed their family. As Sinclair explained in *Brass Check*, “Whenever it comes to a “show-down” between labor and capital, the press is openly or secretly for capital—and this no matter how “liberal” this press may pretend to be” (346).

This strike creates the first major instance when Bunny realizes how the newspapers frame stories to aid big-business. Bunny, away from the oil fields since he returned to school, “had to get his news about the strike from the papers, and these did not give him much comfort” (180). Using World War I as a reason the strikers should return to work, “The papers thought the strike was a crime against the country in this crisis, and they punished the strikers, not merely by denouncing them in long editorials, but by printing lurid accounts of the strikers’ bad behavior” (180). Bunny does not believe the violent mob scenes depicted in the newspapers because he personally knows the men who



just want to provide enough food for their families. Yet the Angel City newspapers follow the formula Sinclair exposes in *Brass Check*: “Great strikes are determined by public opinion, and public opinion is always against strikers who are violent. Therefore, in great strikes, all the efforts of the employers are devoted in making it appear that the strikers are violent” (353). Unfortunately, Bunny feels like “some kind of freak” because everyone he knew and “Nine people out of ten read these things in the papers and believed them” (180).

America’s entry into the war pushes the oil strike off the page but Bunny reads a non-corporate newspaper for the first time. The strike committee puts out their own paper “The Labor Defender” and “Here Bunny got the truth, he got it face to face with the men and women he knew; and they he would remember the tales he had read in the newspapers—and would hate himself, because he lived upon money which had been obtained by such means!” (186). Reading the newspaper makes Bunny aware he rests on the side of the proletariat and all his luxury stems from the hard work provided by his laborer friends.

When America enters the war the government ends the Paradise oil field strike for the nation’s greater good. Ross grows excited over the newspaper reports about dangers to capitalism posed by Bolsheviks. In *Brass Check* Sinclair exposes “The Problem With Russia.” He wrote “You might say that all previous experience of the capitalist press of America in perverting and distorting the news was but training for what it was to do to the Russian revolution” (385). In regards to the war reports from Russia “Dad, as a good American, believed his newspapers. He considered that this ‘Bolsheviki revolution’ was the most terrible event that had happened in the world in his life-time; his face would grow pale as he talked to Bunny about it” (208). After Paul Watkins, a Russian-sympathizer

within the army argues with Ross, he expands Bunny's cynicism toward the press. Paul says to Bunny "Suppose you had never been to Paradise, and didn't know the strikers, but had got all your impressions from the Angel City newspapers! Well, that's the way it seems to me about Russia; this is the biggest strike in history, and the strikers have won, and seized the oil-wells. Some day maybe we'll know what they're doing, but it won't be from newspaper stories made up by the allied diplomats and the exiled grand dukes"

(213). These comments match Sinclair's Russian discussion when he writes newspapers and the government could not allow "a hundred and eighty million people who rose up and actually put an end to privilege and exploitation upon half of two continents" (*Brass* 385).

The stories Ross reads and argues over stemmed from carefully constructed war coverage. The government controlled newspapers at unheard of levels during World War I, especially in regards to President Wilson's Committee on Public Information in 1917. According to Schudson the committee "wrote, collected, and distributed information favorable to the American war effort. It churned out 6,000 press releases" (142). This massive control of information changed journalism forever as "journalists began to see *everything* as illusion, since it was so evidently the product of self-conscious artists of illusion" (142). Bunny also begins to seriously consider how newspapers document history inaccurately, and will devote his time to newspapers countering corporate-owned newspapers. From this period on, Bunny stays involved in the socialist movement.

Bunny's rising celebrity status complicates his increased interest in the socialist movement. Bunny works on the Southern Pacific University newspaper, "The Investigator," "a four-page weekly sheet of all kinds of truth-telling" (272). Bunny's celebrity status harms the newspaper when their paper reaches the second edition of "the

Angel City 'Evening Booster'" (274) with the headlines "Millionaire Red in College!" "Son of Oil Magnate Backs Soviets!" (275). Bunny's fame grows and he soon gets involved with the actress Vee Tracy. Bunny soon learns how Hollywood serves the propaganda machine with their films and creation of celebrity culture. Their relationship largely functions to drive publicity for Vee's upcoming films as indicated by her quick marriage to her leading man, the Prince of Marescu of Roumania one page after Bunny breaks up with her (474). In "Forecasts Pure Press for the Future" (December 2, 1923), a reporter quoted *Hollywood Citizen* editor Harlan G. Palmer declaring "The time is coming when the journalistic genius will step outside of the slop and the slime of present-day journalism and develop a type of news that will not only be clean but that will interest the general public" (II2). Palmer further indicated "I believe that the great masses of our citizens can be interested in something besides the filth of police and divorce courts" (II2). Bunny's time in the Hollywood spotlight exhibits Sinclair's pessimism toward more respectable journalism.

Bunny quickly emerges in Hollywood society news when he dates Vee. His socialist identity creates a desired sense of danger and "served to lend him that same halo of mystery and romance, which the public assigned to Annabelle as a luminary of the screen world" (315). Though many critics chastise Sinclair for Bunny's amatory adventures, though they caused Boston to ban the novel, his experiences in Hollywood do expose Sinclair's view that newspapers glamorize an immoral world while creating news. Through Bunny's Hollywood exploits Sinclair shows how newspapers shape events into fiction by showing their skewed version of plot developments.

Bunny learns several industry secrets about Hollywood through Vee. Vee confesses Hollywood glamour made her a victim because in order to succeed “the man that came with the cash and offered me my first real start in a picture—he was just about the same as a god to me, and it was only decent to give him what he wanted” (339). The couple enjoys reading newspaper accounts of the events, outlining who wore what and who came together. The relationship causes Bunny to negotiate his allegiance to the socialist movement when he discovered a disturbing development “in some of the gossip about the screen world which filled pages upon pages of the newspapers. Vee Tracy was working on a picture about Russia!” (347). A media circus surrounds the movie and Bunny gets caught up in the newspaper’s need to print news on every angle: “The reporters laid siege to the young prince, and sweet, sentimental sob-sister ladies sought to lure him into revealing how it felt to be the very, very dearest dear friend of such a brilliantly scintillating star of the movie heavens” (354).

As the movie news continues Bunny stops supplying information, but the newspapers keep publishing material. Bunny notices: “One day it was rumored they were engaged to marry, and the next day they were not; and if they said nothing, the reporters knew what they ought to have said. And when Bunny would not give his picture, they snapped him on the street, and when he turned his face away, they gave it a jolly caption: ‘Oil Prince Is Shy!’” (354-55). Bunny’s avoidance of the press even becomes news due to all the attention Hollywood receives. Charles L. Ponce de Leon contends in *Self-Exposure: Human-Interest Journalism and the Emergence of Celebrity in America, 1890-1940* (2002), “although explicitly crafted to resemble the fruit of independent journalistic initiative, celebrity journalism in reality was a publicity medium conceived by celebrities,

their press agents, and friendly reporters” (104). Bunny sought no publicity, but Vee and her film company would need the attention to boost film sales.

Even though Bunny accepts Vee’s acting solely as a sex object in her films, his ability to accept Vee’s working in propaganda films hurts his socialist conscience. Vee tried to keep Bunny away from all stages of filming, while working on this project. She realized the film went against all Bunny believed in as a “Bolshevik,” for as Yoder explains, the film serves “tantamount to propaganda for a war with Russia” (77). Bunny still goes to the premiere for “*The Devil’s Deputy*,” where Russians are portrayed as anarchists, men who harm women for enjoyment and “there was no wickedness these creatures did not do” (356) and all he can say is that “it is up to standard. It will sell” (357). Later when Rachel Menzies asks Bunny how the film incorporated the Russian revolution he answers, “there was not much in it for us” (358). Bunny did not fathom how completely the film industry used his love interest as a pawn in a larger game of propaganda.

The novel shows the confrontation after the premiere, while the subsequent newspaper coverage makes up a story. After the movie Vee slaps Rachel for implementing the propaganda against her people and placing Bunny in such a precarious situation. Since the press covered every aspect of the event, this confrontation creates news. The next day, Bunny and Vee find the newspaper headline “STAR SLAPS RIVAL IN LOBBY. There it was! The reporter, having been unable to get the real story, had made the inevitable romantic assumption. Another triangle of the screen world! He had written a highly playful article of the world-famous star” (361). Bunny’s sensibilities about socialist

propaganda, his father's corrupt dealings and newspaper fiction will soon cause his break from Hollywood and the oil industry.

Ross finds more oil land but a small company beat him to a lease. Ross now works with larger oil companies and can utilize major influence. The narrator indicates the small company "would have to be ejected, and it must be done quietly, they must fix matters up with the newspapers somehow" (401). Bunny recognizes his father has influenced the press and the government with this scheme because "You began to notice in the newspapers items to the effect that the navy department was greatly worried because companies occupying lands adjoining the naval reserves were drilling, and draining the navy's oil" (405). The newspapers report the navy should dole out government contracts in the government's best interests. The government's best interest is to take bribes from Ross's company, seize the land from the smaller company, then give the contract to Ross. Bunny reacts to his father's illegal dealings by wondering how one can possibly get away with buying newspaper men and government officials (417).

For the Tea Pot Dome scandal very little protest arose. As Aucoin explains, only one journalist, Paul Y. Anderson, "[revealed] how President Warren G. Harding's Interior Department officials took bribes to sell national oil reserves stored at Teapot Dome to major oil companies at discounted prices" (35). After more negative dealings with the press, Bunny finally realizes "The newspapers of Angel City have a policy which any child can understand—they never print news which injures or offends any business interest" (515). This statement from Bunny serves as his, and Sinclair's conclusion toward the newspaper. Through Ross's business deals and Bunny's experience in what the newspaper decides to print, *Oil!* depicts each part of Sinclair's four point thesis against newspapers.

Sinclair wraps up Bunny's adventures in a standard way. Bunny will get married and he and Rachel discuss their future plans. Bloodsworth writes "for years he suffers from moral lapses when women of his own class are involved, until he finally marries an intellectual daughter of the working class" (109). By choosing Rachel, Bunny has listened to Paul's advice who assured him he must find a woman who creates a "harmony of ideas." Rachel is also a socialist who worked diligently on Bunny's socialist paper, at times even taking over. She has stayed true to the cause the whole time, unlike Bunny who often exited into the world of the "pleasure seekers." As Bunny looks to stay tied to his socialist world, he knows Rachel will stay with him even though he has lost his wealth and access to the upper class when his father remarries and dies soon after. Bunny and Rachel look forward to the prospect of building a labor college, and they will build their relationship through their shared ideology. Yet Coolidge's election (514), the death of Paul Watkins and the subsequent suicide of his sister who throws herself down an oil well (524) hinders their happiness.

### **From Muckraking to Satire**

"When muckraking lost its ability to shock audiences in the years around 1910, those who wished to carry on the spirit of this influential style of journalism shifted focus. They rejected the moral tone of late-nineteenth-century styles of muckraking for a morally ambiguous, ironic, and comic mode of presentation."

—Jeffrey B. Ferguson's *The Sage of Sugar Hill: George S. Schuyler and the Harlem Renaissance* (2005), 55

Several journalists-turned-novelists took turns parodying newspapers. The *Camelot Weekly Hosannah and Literary Volcano* satirizes the penny press in Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889). After reading the premier issue, protagonist Hank Morgan describes it as "good Arkansas journalism, but this was not Arkansas" (155). As explained in chapter three, Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street* includes sections from the *Gopher Prairie Weekly Dauntless* to depict small-town America's narrow-mindedness. Upton Sinclair also attempted satire in *They Call Me Carpenter* (1922). Sinclair's novel satirizes the Easter story, placing Carpenter, the socialist "Red Prophet" in "Mobland." Newspaper headlines follow Carpenter, but newspapers do not play the central role in Sinclair's satire as they do in Schuyler's *Black No More*.

As in *Oil!* Schuyler includes a protagonist who stays involved in all aspects portrayed in the novel, including a major industry. Both Sinclair's muckraking and Schuyler's satire seek to expose truth by presenting realities in fiction newspapers or other media outlets ignore or misrepresent. Muckraking's exposure of truth matched the African-American weeklies' challenge to expose wrongdoings precipitated by the dominant race. Schuyler moved from newspapers to the novel by maintaining his satirical voice and forming racial issues into a narrative. He generated his narrative to show race as a social construct manipulated and enforced by the media, the government, and even African-American leaders. In *Black No More* Schuyler writes several comedic scenes, but more importantly he directs a serious critique against American race relations, and big businesses' major role in maintaining the racial divide.



### **The Foundation for Furor in the African-American Press**

“Glance over a Negro newspaper (it is printed in good Americanese) and you will find the usual quota of crime news, scandal, personals, and uplift to be found in the average white newspaper—which, by the way, is more widely read by the Negroes than is the Negro press. In order to satisfy the cravings of an inferiority complex engendered by the colorphobia of the mob, the readers of the Negro newspapers are given a slight dash of realistic seasoning.”

— George Samuel Schuyler’s “The Negro-Art Hokum” (1926), 15

Schuyler’s long career in the African-American press made him an industry leader. In *The New Leader* Schuyler contributed “Inside the Negro World—What They Are Reading and Thinking: George S. Schuyler Tells the Story of the Huge Negro Press” (June 26, 1943). Schuyler opens his historical review by writing most Americans know nothing of the longstanding Negro press because “The ignorance of most American white people about this proscribed tenth of the population is a tribute to the efficacy of our color caste system” (4).<sup>76</sup> Schuyler’s history sets up the intersections between satire and news in the African-American press that could not concentrate solely on news. Whereas the rural press printed the old news, the African-American weekly turned to social protest and exposing society’s wrongdoings. As Ferguson explains, “these publications always stood on precarious ground. Like all weeklies, black newspapers placed a great emphasis on editorials and commentary while presenting the news only in highly edited form” (102).

The African-American press maintained a cynical tone since they continually wrote for societal change which never occurred. As Schuyler explains, the African-American press “is editorially critical, often suspicious, sarcastic, cynical. This is understandable

since the words ‘democracy’ and ‘freedom’ coming from white editors and statesmen make the average Negro cynical.” He explains the press represents the African-American voice in a veiled manner because “none would dare print all of what the average Negro thinks” (“Inside” 4). Schuyler expressed his feelings in a very outspoken manner throughout his career. *Black No More* provided him an outlet to convey nationally-focused ideas within a novel that includes Harlem, Atlanta, Mississippi, Washington D.C., California, and newspapers from all over New York and the South.

Schuyler’s journalism experience began with satire, and he maintained his voice up through the period of *Black No More*. While stationed in a Honolulu army base in 1916 “he began writing satirical skits for *The Service*, a weekly magazine edited by civilians for the military” (Bell 142). Schuyler’s newspaper career developed after World War I with the socialist New York *Messenger*, where he worked with Wallace Thurman. Then he began his nearly forty years at one of the leading African-American newspapers, the *Pittsburgh Courier*. The *Courier* achieved a circulation of 277,900 by 1947 (Wallace 60) as their mission emphasized “treating all subjects affecting Negroes with vigor, of stressing their progress, of criticizing their faults, and of maintaining an optimistic outlook” (Pride and Wilson 139). While working for these weeklies Schuyler benefited from the free-reign editors allowed him. As Ferguson explains in the recent Schuyler biography, “In addition to editorials Schuyler contributed innumerable feature articles, short stories, anonymous articles, and reviews to the *Courier*, all in a distinctive writing style” (1). Schuyler never viewed his newspaper work as an apprenticeship like the other journalists-turned-novelists in this study. He turned to the novel in 1931 because “So energetic and prolific a writer as Schuyler also turned to books and articles as outlets for his work” (Wolseley 232).

Schuyler garnered a wide range of journalism experiences prior to 1931, when he published both *Black No More* and *Slaves Today*.<sup>77</sup> Henry Louis Gates Jr. explains few other African-Americans represent Du Bois's notion of the African-American "double-consciousness" more than Schuyler, calling him "one of America's boldest and most controversial journalists, essayists and satirists" ([1992] 31). Schuyler mixed voices in his newspaper writing as he blended reporting with editorializing like E. W. Howe. As Schuyler explained his aggressive writing in his autobiography, "Since I wrote both the editorials and a column in the *Pittsburgh Courier*, I possessed a double-barreled shotgun" (*Black* 191). Schuyler consistently presented this iconoclast view in newspaper columns "Shafts and Darts" and "Views and Reviews," essays such as "The Negro Art Hokum" (1926) and became known as the "Black Mencken." Specifically for *Black No More*, Schuyler used his career in the African-American press to develop his satirical voice and views on race. He also used his newspaper career to assess journalism's limitations in reducing the color line.

Since Schuyler grew up in the northeast, his travels south to report on the African-American struggles in the South proved key to the development of *Black No More*. In 1925 Schuyler completed Sinclair-like research as he embarked "on a nine-month tour of the Confederate South and to Kentucky and Oklahoma; he visited every city with more than five thousand Negroes" (Simmons 47). This "satiric touch" he used to present the results often began with his own race because Schuyler hoped his reports "would arouse them to the need to better themselves" (Simmons 48). In *Black and Conservative* Schuyler admitted that this trip proved valuable to his career since he could "learn at first hand about the people I had been largely generalizing about" (153). Specific moments and people he

met or witnessed on his tour became literary material. He developed other characters from lives newspapers regularly documented, such as Marcus Garvey and W. E. B. Du Bois (Santop Licorice and Dr. Shakespeare Agamemnon Beard in the novel). Schuyler's novel can encompass so many characters in different dimensions of society with a wide scope that would require dozens of weekly columns since generalizations or type characters prove fundamental to satire.

Schuyler witnessed several problems and transgressions in the Jim Crow South. His humor and cynicism kept him more of a reporter than an editorialist during his tour. Schuyler took an observant view, exemplified in his comment that "my purpose was not to reform the South, but to report on it, and to try and improve the *Courier's* reputation and increase its sales. If local Negroes had not been able in decades to improve their lot, what alien could do so in a couple of days, or should even try?" (*Black* 155). In *Black No More*, Schuyler took a similar view, but the novel begins in Harlem, moves to Atlanta, and then later focuses on a federal election to expand the scope.

Two editorials written to the *New York Times* will exemplify the mixed voice Schuyler offered in journalism and within *Black No More*. As he explained his independent voice, Schuyler admitted "Most Negro publications, then as now, were solemn and serious, containing little wit and humor except in comics. To me nothing was above a snicker, a chuckle, a smile or guffaw" (*Black* 142). An editorial written to the *New York Times* called "The Case of the Negro: Group Economy Theory is Called Attractive But Unsound" (January 11, 1930). Here Schuyler suggests with all seriousness, "It is almost childish to expect the negro group, suffering as it does from almost disheartening industrial jim-crowism, woeful lack of investment capital and the burden of illiteracy and

inadequate educational facilities, to ‘build up its own social and economic life’ as if it were a separate entity and not an integral part of our national life, subject to all of the influences and trends that mold and shape the white people” (16). He suggests philanthropists need to do more than donate money to schools, but industries need to end the color division so African-Americans can “make a decent living and advance in the social and economic scale, not as negroes but as Americans” (16). Schuyler’s novel will make African-Americans change to Americans through science fiction, but in the year before his novel he hoped society could negotiate an easier way to reach equality.

An editorial written to the *New York Times* called “Tourists Feared” (April 28, 1935) focused on what aliens would find upon visiting earth. Here Schuyler less seriously opens with “It is indeed comforting to learn that interstellar travel is at least a century off. One shudders to think of the unanswerable questions that might be put to us by curious tourists fresh from Venus and Mars, notebooks in hand, and eager to understand the whys and wherefores of our civilization” (E9). Though Schuyler writes about a science-fiction topic here, his social message remains serious. The editorial concludes with “Let us be thankful that science has been so busy with mundane matters such as perfecting more deadly poisonous gases that making interstellar travel possible must wait another century. By that time our wits may be sharper” (E9).

After Schuyler published novels his cynicism about society’s likelihood for change increased. In May 20, 1939’s “Views and Reviews,” he reflected back on his career and wrote ““Once upon a time I was full of zeal to save humanity from evil forces encompassing it. Now I frankly do not give a damn”” (qtd. in Young 93).<sup>78</sup> For readers interested in African-American journalism or satire, *Black No More* conveys Schuyler’s

worldview and his ability to keep readers engaged in the material in a fast-paced narrative, while avoiding Sinclair's excessive documentation. Schuyler makes the newspapers' control over American society as explicit as in *Oil!* while using satire and science fiction to highlight the absurdity of 1930s America's color bias.

**“This sounds like a novel”**

“It is when African American satire utilizes the broad rhetorical trope of irony that it has the distinctive advantage of being an excellent tool for those wishing to speak the otherwise unspeakable; it is the primary tool of the iconoclast.”

— Darryl Dickson-Carr's *African American Satire: The Sacredly Profane Novel* (2001), 42

When Bunny finds Matthew in Atlanta after serving time for adultery, he explains he followed Matthew's ascension through newspapers. He followed the story of the Grand Exalted Giraw, but indicates “until I recognized your picture in last Sunday's paper I didn't know who you were” (84). When Bunny learns Matthew married the same white girl from the club who turned Max down on New Year's Eve, he exclaims, “Well, hush my mouth! This sounds like a novel” (85). Schuyler announces he too can write compelling fiction with this satirical joke; he also suggests lives documented in fiction often taxes a reader's imagination, or creates unattainable expectations for reality. Yet with newspapers' dominant role, Schuyler's novel suggests newspapers facilitate events and ideologies. *Black No More* also suggests newspapers control society's reactions to events since they intend to dictate rather than become the people's voice.

As Matthew continues to receive an update on the North he wonders if Negro newspapers still publish. Bunny answers, ““Nope, they’re a thing of the past. Shines are too busy getting white to bother reading about lynching, crime and peonage”” (90). This development matches Schuyler’s report in the *New Leader* article, where he explained “The Negro press system exists because of America’s color caste system which smears every facet of American life and causes Negroes to smirk or flinch at the mention of democracy. When this color caste system is abolished, the Negro press will be unnecessary” (“Inside” 7). The whitened African-Americans stand as an unrepresented race without a press to cover their hardships, and must do their best to assimilate to the white race by hiding their transformation. As shown by Matthew’s writing for *The Warning*, any African-Americans writing for a white press adapts to the audience’s desire. In Matthew’s case, he provides new ways for the Knights of Nordica to express their hate, while also relying on the established Jim Crow South hateful traditions.

Newspapers logically receive scorn in *Black No More* since Schuyler’s satire attempts to chastise every aspect of society. However, the 1930s dominant mass media proves central to the plot as characters continually manipulate or respond to the press. Schuyler emphasized how white dailies and African-American weeklies failed to present a realistic societal depiction, maintaining the color line for financial gain instead. Schuyler used his experiences as a journalist while seeking the literary freedom granted by the novel to expand his satire. In *Black No More* Schuyler shared Sinclair’s desire to make readers aware how business interests manipulated newspapers and the public. While Sinclair wrote his critique in fiction as an observer and needed to provide as much evidence as possible, Schuyler presented his ridicule from the inside. Without the muckraker’s need

for truthful depiction, Schuyler focused on conveying a message readers would grow angry about while laughing at the ridiculous nature of colorphobia.<sup>79</sup>

Schuyler's preface intends to make his science-fiction representative of current or near-future technology. Schuyler explains how chemists "have been seeking the means of making the downtrodden Aframerican resemble as closely as possible his white fellow citizen" (xix). He also informs readers Dr. Yusaburo Noguchi told reporters in 1929 he whitened an African-American through "glandular control and electrical nutrition." He also quotes an engineer who suggests the surplus of pigment could be drained (xix-xx). Yet Schuyler developed his novel from "a favorite recurrent joke that circulated around the *Messenger* office during its heyday. . . .invited playful speculation about what would happen if a scientist invented a formula that would allow blacks to turn white" (Ferguson 212-213). Schuyler had already laughed at these products' inclusion in African-American newspapers, for he stated, "One of the ironies of the time was the huge skin-whitening advertisements in *The Negro World* opposite flaming editorials extolling pride of blackness" (*Black* 123). Regarding all the skin-whitening and hair-straightening products advertised in the African-American weeklies, Schuyler considered what would happen if the products caused permanent change.

Schuyler's science-fiction in *Black No More* challenges the passing novel. Dr. Crookman's invention turns the protagonist Max Disher, a "tall, dapper and smooth coffee-brown" whose "negroid features had a slightly satanic cast" (3) into a white Matthew Fisher. Max starts the transformation the day after a beautiful white woman rejects him, saying, "I never dance with [negroes]!" (8).<sup>80</sup> Dr. Crookman's invention breaches the longstanding racial divide in a more literal and permanent fashion than if Max passed as



white. Fittingly, the protagonist's name switches from a designation of serving ("dish") to a designation of taking ("fish") as his color reduction opens up possibilities to succeed in the American economy. As a white man, Max decides he will head south for "At last he felt like an American citizen" (29). When any other African-American who can save \$50 follows, Dr. Crookman's invention creates the perception of equality the African-American press had campaigned for since its inception. These newspapers never presented a uniform voice on how to solve race issues in the United States, but Crookman presents a quick, easy, and permanent solution. In "American Racial Discourse, 1900-1930" (1997), Jane Kuenz finds Max has already left his race behind before he enters Black-No-More" since "At no time are the novel's 'blacks' as 'white' as they are before their actual physical transformation. . . wanting to be white is a really white thing to do" (176). Since \$50 can solve their problems, the novel depicts how African-Americans save dimes, refuse to pay for straightening their hair, and other assimilationist procedures. The characters' desire to live white largely comes through the media and all the stories accentuating the positives in the white world, contrasted by all the negatives found in the black world.

Schuyler understood the celebrity status people could instantly gain through newspapers. A notice indicating Crookman's upcoming press conference to explain his "Remarkable Discovery" pertaining to how he "Can Change Black to White in Three Days" (9) sparks Max's interest. The press conference appears on the page and while Crookman does not explain his secret formula, his invention "was the talk of the town and was soon the talk of the country. Long editorials were written about the discovery, learned societies besieged the Negro biologist with offers of lecture engagements, magazines

begged him for articles” (13). When Crookman turns down all these offers, the media “stated that nothing more could be expected from a Negro” (13).

Max pays his \$50 fee and begins his progress toward freedom. When he emerges white on the third day the journalists make him an instant celebrity. He exits the building “only to be set upon by a mob of newspaper photographers and reporters. As the first person to take the treatment he was naturally the center of attraction for about fifteen of these journalistic gnats” (19-20). Realizing the commercial value of his story, Max auctions his story while “The reporters, male and female, begged him almost with tears in their eyes for a statement” (20). A female reporter from *The Scimitar* offers Max \$1,000 as her newsboys already sell extras about Dr. Crookman. A few hours later the paper has dictated and printed Max’s story. Newsboys sell the extra edition with “A huge photograph of him occupied the entire front page of the tabloid” (21). As a celebrity in the making, Max is upset with the photograph, not the story, because the visual image could allow “everybody [to] know who he was” (21). He doesn’t want to become a transformed race leader since it conflicts with his plans to find and marry the woman from the club.

As Matthew Fisher, his identity only comes into question after the national inquest spearheaded by Republicans into determining who passes the one drop rule. Yet one must wonder how the photograph of Max does not reach all the major papers. Or perhaps his story did reach the nation, and Schuyler suggested the anger and hate fall on the entire Crookman institution, not on any single individual. Or Schuyler suggests whites can only identify and focus on African-Americans as a generalized group, not as individuals.

The novel points to specific newspapers to indicate the South vehemently opposes Crookman and the millions he makes. After a short time of running Black-No-More, one

of Crookman's business partners voices his concern on the newspaper response to their operation, saying "You know how easy it is to stir up the fanatical element. Before we know it they're liable to get a law passed against us" (31). Crookman reads clippings from such papers as the *Richmond Blade*, the *Memphis Bugle*, the *Dallas Sun*, the *Atlanta Topic*, the *St. Louis North American* and the *Oklahoma City Hatchet*. The most fearsome anti-Crookman words derive from the *Hatchet*, which believes that the "welfare of [their white] race must take precedence over law" though their editors are "Opposed as we always have been to mob violence as the worst enemy of democratic government." Despite such a noble editorial policy, the *Hatchet* presents their call to action as follows: "we cannot help but feel that the intelligent white men and women of New York City who are interested in the purity and preservation of their race should not permit the challenge of Crookmanism to go unanswered, even though these black scoundrels may be within the law" (31). Crookman and his business partners decide they will need to pay off government officials before big businesses who own newspapers get to the government first.

Colorphobia does not disappear when the first round of African-Americans pay their fee to receive the transforming miracle of Crookman's invention. Before any character has contemplated the situation, the *Tallahassee Announcer* warns citizens that the offspring of the transformed African-Americans will not be white: "This means that your daughter, having married a supposed white man, may find herself with a black baby! Will the proud white men of the Southland so far forget their traditions as to remain idle while this devilish work is going on?" (32). As Mencken suggested, the American press reduces "all issues into a few elemental fears" (75). In this case, the newspapers constantly appeal

to white males to protect the virtue of white womanhood. In other words, newspapers convince readers which people act on the side of good and must oppose those constructed as evil. Directly after the newspaper story, Bunny reads a newspaper story of a black baby to a white mother, and these stories proliferate as one gestation period passes since the arrival of Black-No-More. Crookman had considered the complications of mixed-births, and establishes lying-in hospitals that will quickly transform the child and restore order. These lying-in hospitals will remain in operation to continue Crookman's income after his sanitariums change all African-Americans.

The hate fueled by the newspapers and the public campaign to stop Black-No-More eventually causes disaster in Cincinnati. As the narrator describes, "Finally, emboldened and inflamed by fiery editorials, radio addresses, pamphlets, posters and platform speeches, a mob seeking to protect white womanhood in Cincinnati attacked a Crookman hospital, drove several women into the streets and set fire to the building" (132). Newspapers' constant coverage causes the terrible violence: "A dozen babies were burned to death and others, hastily removed by their mothers, were recognized as mulattoes. The newspapers published their names and addresses. Many of the women were very prominently socially either in their own right or because of their husbands. . . . The nation was shocked as never before" (132-33). All the sensationalism without education turns to violence. The nation does not express shock toward murdering babies, but the shock falls upon the society's prominent members who have slept with former black men.

Max can easily alter his name and identity and succeed in the South regardless of the constant newspaper coverage. His success stems largely from his ability to take advantage of the Reverend Givens and the members of the Knights of Nordica's low

intellect. As the narrator explains, Matthew infiltrates the Knights of Nordica to gain status and wealth. Givens first established the Knights of Nordica when he read about the activities of Black-No-More in newspapers (47). In his initial meeting with Reverend Givens, Matthew impresses him with a discussion of anthropology gleaned from a Sunday supplement (47). After the meeting, Givens looks up *anthology* in the dictionary and reads it twice without understanding it (49). Later, Matthew will edit the Knights of Nordica paper “*The Warning*, an eight-page newspaper carrying lurid red headlines and poorly-drawn quarterpage cartoons. . . .The noble Southern working people purchased it eagerly, devouring and believing every word in it” (78-79). Matthew writes convincing fiction in *The Warning* using “14-point, one-syllable word editorials” to convey his message (79). In Matthew’s editorials he “Very cleverly he linked up the Pope, the Yellow Peril, the Alien Invasion and Foreign Entanglements with Black-No-More as devices of the Devil. He wrote with such blunt sincerity that sometimes he almost persuaded himself that it was all true” (79).

Matthew’s success as the trickster figure allows a nobody to change to someone who decides the Democratic nomination for President. Despite this American Dream story, he also receives the narrator’s scorn. Bunny’s definition of the corrupted American Dream appears as “He had had such a good time since he’d been white: plenty of money, almost unlimited power, a beautiful wife, good liquor and the pick of damsels within reach” (148-149). Before Matthew fully realized how to manipulate the business world he remained “surprised at the antagonistic attitude of the newspapers toward Black-No-More, Incorporated. . . .Business men, he found were also bitterly opposed to Dr. Crookman and his efforts to bring about chromatic democracy in the nation” (44). In Haslam’s “The

Open-Sesame of Pork Colored Skin” (2002), he writes “Schuyler’s novel ironically depicts an American society in which the class system and bigoted racial categories both create and are created by each other, in a seemingly endless cycle of reproduction” (16). African-American newspapers and welfare leagues lament their exhausted funds when race problems vanish, Southern companies lose all their cheap labor, and all Jim Crow train cabins need refurbishing since only white people ride them.

Schuyler expounds newspapers’ role in federal elections as the political agenda revolves around Black-No-More. The few African-American leaders had tried to put a stop to Black-No-More but Crookman’s money influenced the government to ignore the issue. The Democrats run on an anti-Crookman platform, while the Republicans function on large donations from Crookman. At the Democratic convention Matthew proves he has raised the Knights of Nordica’s power to the highest levels as Givens wins the Vice-President nomination during the back-room dealings. The leaders decide on Anglo-Saxon Association President Arthur Snobbcraft as the Presidential candidate. Snobbcraft had “devoted his entire life to fighting for two things: white racial integrity and Anglo-Saxon supremacy” (120). The campaign proceeds through newspaper coverage presenting both men as indicative of the American Dream and their party’s values: “Rev. Givens told the reporters: ‘It is my intention, if elected, to carry out the traditional tariff policy of the Democratic party’ (neither he or anyone else knew what that was)” while “President Goosie averred again and again, ‘I intend to make my second term as honest and efficient as my first.’ Though a dire threat, this statement was supposed to be a fine promise” (131). Schuyler portrays newspapers’ ability to communicate messages quickly and thoroughly in order to influence citizens on ideas no one really understands. Schuyler indicates not even

the highest level of citizens put thoughts to words; people just keep holding on to the same tired and unfair logic society has suffered under for years.

The federal election intersects the novel's race issue as a government study exposes most American citizens derive from at least one African-American. The "tar brush" taints the Givens family, Snobbcraft, and all others involved in the Democratic election bid. Society quickly turns on these men outed in newspapers with the headline "Democratic Leaders Proved of Negro Descent" (152). As Bridget T. Heneghan's *Whitewashing America* (2005) explains America's one drop law as a chosen construct, "'Purity' is essentially a description of components: an ideal of 100 percent desirable ingredient and 0 percent contaminants" (132). When Helen gives birth to a dark-skinned child, she believes her family is to blame as Buggerie finds Givens is "only four generations removed from a mulatto ancestor" (143). As Givens exclaims after escaping from the ten thousand people who waited to murder him at his office (153), "I guess we're all [Negroes] now" (155). Helen does not mind her husband is African-American because her revulsion toward the race "was seemingly centuries ago when she had been unaware of her remoter Negro ancestry. . . . They had money and a beautiful brown baby. What more did they need?" (154). Matthew's trickster skills prove handy since he has procured a plan and the Knights of Nordica's money to fly his family to Mexico.

Schuyler best exemplifies the newspaper's control over society with the Democratic Party's fallout. The newspaper readers do not consider they likely share the same black strain and seek to murder the politicians who fooled them. Snobbcraft and Buggerie barely escape in a plane, then crash in Happy Hill, Mississippi. Happy Hill's citizens live as hermits without daily newspapers or radio. On Election Day they vote for

Givens and Snobbcraft due to their opposition to Black-No-More, “not having heard of the developments of the past twenty-four hours” (169). When Snobbcraft and Buggerie crash in Happy Hill they apply shoe polish to their face since “real [Negroes] are scarce now and nobody would think of bothering a couple of them, even in Mississippi” (163).

Unfortunately the newspaper blows their cover when “an ancient Ford drove up to the outskirts of the crowd and a young man jumped out waving a newspaper” (173). The driver yells out to the crowd ““They’ve found out th’ damned Demmycratic candidates is [Negroes]. See here: Givens and Snobbcraft. Them’s their pictures. They pulled out in airplanes last night or th’ mobs wouldda lynched ’em”” (173-74).

In a moment suggesting how quickly newspapers can turn people’s opinions, the Rev. McPhule holds up the newspaper and asks them if their likeness appears on the cover. McPhule says ““It’s you and you’re a [Negro], accordin’ to this here paper, an’ a newspaper wouldn’t lie”” (174). McPhule has previously prayed “If the Lord would only send him a [negro] for his congregation to lynch! That would, indeed, be marked evidence of the power of Rev. Alex McPhule” (168). Happy Hill has a cherished lynching reputation, believing “that the only Negro problem in Happy Hill was the difficulty of getting hold of a sufficient number of the Sons or Daughters of Ham to lighten the dullness of the place” (165). Happy Hill lynches the two men, even “two or three whitened Negroes” who held back until they saw the inquisitive glances when “they did not appear to be enjoying the spectacle as thoroughly as the rest” (176). Without the newspaper appearing at the precise moment to vilify Snobbcraft and Buggerie no lynching would have occurred.



The race war continues for some time after the lynching until Dr. Crookman announces how white his invention made former African-Americans. Dr. Crookman, now the Surgeon-General of the United States, finally explains “the new Caucasians were from two to three shades lighter than the old Caucasians, and that approximately one-sixth of the population were in the first group. The old Caucasians had never been really white but rather were a pale pink shading down to a sand color and a red” (177). This explanation throws society into an uproar: “What was the world coming to, if the blacks were whiter than the whites?” (177). The media constantly covers the issue as numerous products arrive to combat the new prejudice against pale people. This prejudice includes possible school segregation since Professor Handen Mouthe “was convinced they were mentally inferior” after three weeks study (178). Pale citizens begin to spend considerable time tanning, buying dark face powders and skin stains to transform to the desired image. Halsam suggests the ending solidifies Schuyler’s notion that “freedom and privilege are not positive things that exist in and of themselves, but rather are based on an inescapable and constantly reproduced oppression of a constructed ‘other’” (22). Newspapers play a large role in the oppression, constantly strengthening the desired standards when they emerge.

The novel concludes with an update on the Fisher and Givens family as they appear in the newspaper. Dr. Crookman looks at a newspaper photograph taken in Cannes “of a happy crowd of Americans” (179). The photo includes whitened African-Americans, Bunny Brown’s “real Negro wife” and the Givens with Matthew Crookman Fisher. Fittingly, Matthew Junior’s middle name is Crookman. Crookman has no children, yet he has fathered an entire race of African-Americans changed to whiter-than-whites. The

entire book is about ancestry, from the dedication page, which indicates the book is for all those in the dominant race “who can trace their ancestry/back ten generations/and confidently assert that there are no/Black leaves, twigs, limbs or branches on/their family trees” (xvii). “Crookman” is the only real name the child possesses, since both Matthew and Fisher are Max Disher’s alter-ego, and Matthew has decided to name the child after the father of his altered identity, rather than Helen’s father. The middle name also suggests that no conflict exists between the Givens and Matthew’s racial identity, due to the realization that the Givens have at least one drop of colored blood in their genes. Perhaps Matthew continues to play the trickster figure, and would not allow his namesake to take after a father-in-law he considers a stupid bigot, and a wife he won for revenge and still considers a trophy wife.

### **“The Freedom of the Press” to Shape America**

The artist’s critical view toward society proved a valuable asset. When Lincoln Steffens looked to hire writers he wanted “any one who, openly or secretly, hoped to be a poet, a novelist, or an essayist. I could not pay them much in money, but as an offset I promised to give them opportunities to see life as it happened in all the news varieties” (314). Steffens, whose own writing career developed through muckraking, sought writers who could view the world from an artist’s perspective. Steffens, Phillips, Tarbell, and Baker proved engaging writing could stem from investigated findings. These writers supplanted imagination with details because they desired readers to change their worldview, to see society’s faults and the reasons those faults occurred. Novelists carried

the investigative tradition into fiction, mixing enough facts with their fiction so readers would recognize the work as social protest directed at a specific group or idea.

Sinclair and Schuyler sought to inform readers of the fiction and propaganda provided in the news when they realized the corporate press did not attempt to balance truth with profit. If readers did not view newspapers with critical eyes, than the news, the editorials, the advertisements, and all other materials blended together to form ideas about right and wrong. Sinclair and Schuyler argued newspapers divided right and wrong according to the divisions corporations found advantageous. This shaping of public opinion occurs as a gradual process for certain topics, but Schuyler's novel showed how prejudice remained an innate part of society even when black became good. Sinclair shows some hope at the end as Bunny's union with Rachel and their proposed labor college will continue to spread the truth in memory of Paul Watkins. As *Black No More* ends Schuyler saw each development in society decided by their commercial potential.

Sinclair presents a socialist ideology in his novel, seeking the same influence as newspapers and the business empire. While his dissenting opinion presents another side to a complicated issue, he does not offer any gray area. Sinclair's muckraking fiction presents the powerful as evil, the common working man as good. His observational realism requires extensive details and evidence for him to only present one side. Schuyler's novel presents a direct challenge to realism since it is both a work of science fiction and satire which seeks social change. Schuyler's satire moves society outside the real world Sinclair's fiction exists in, granting freedom and comedy to handle serious issues. The common ground between Schuyler and the realists lies in the quest for truth.

Therefore Schuyler moves not toward sensationalism, but the more politically-charged satiric found in the African-American literary tradition.

## Chapter Five

### Modernist Histories and the Journalist-Narrator, 1931-1938: Cather's *Shadows on the Rock* and Dos Passos's *U.S.A.*

As I examined in chapter four, Upton Sinclair overloaded his novels with details, functioning as a reporter rather than an artist. After *Oil!* Sinclair moved onto documenting the Sacco-Vanzetti case several novelists protested against, including John Dos Passos. Sinclair's research resulted in *Boston* (1928), a two-volume, 755 page novel. In his preface, Sinclair repeated truth claims from *The Brass Check*, creating a fact-fiction dialog incorporating historical events. Sinclair's documentary realism contrasts Cather and Dos Passos's modernism, who produced anti-novels challenging the newspaper reading public. *Shadows on the Rock* and *U.S.A.* also exceed Sinclair's historical novel in their ambition to artistically preserve and circulate cultures.

In Sinclair's preface, he again classifies himself as "a historian" rather than a novelist (vi). For Sacco and Vanzetti's depiction Sinclair explains "everything they are represented as doing they actually did, and their words have been taken from their letters, or from the dictation of friends and enemies" (v). Sinclair also included the other real-life participants in the investigation and trial "under their own names" (v). Sinclair set up a clear boundary between fact and fiction as "the characters who are real persons bear real names, while those who bear fictitious names are fictitious characters" (v). Sinclair closes his preface by remarking why the American experience facilitates engaging fiction: "let no fiction-writer imagine that his powers of invention can rival those of the Great Novelist who makes up history!" (vii). Accordingly, Cather and Dos Passos found plenty to assess and reshape into fiction once they examined history's canvas.

All writers in this study shaped history into engaging fiction by blurring the boundaries between journalism and fiction. *Shadows on the Rock* and Dos Passos's *U.S.A.* implicate two completely different writing styles to accomplish a modernist history during the Great Depression. In the works previously studied, Twain, Howe, Anderson, and Lewis wrote fiction heavily based on their own lives. Howells, Dunbar, Sinclair, and Schuyler situated their characters within Presidential elections, urban migration, the mass media, corporate growth, and other American realities to provide historical accuracy. Whereas Sinclair's *Boston* and the other works document history in almost exclusively a linear fashion, Cather and Dos Passos disrupt the chronological narrative of realism and naturalism, while expanding their histories to numerous plotlines. In the preceding chapters, only Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*, examined here as a modernist work, correlates to Cather and Dos Passos's writing style.<sup>81</sup> However, Cather and Dos Passos expand the functions of the Old Man who wrote "The Book of the Grotesques," broadening George Willard's scope as a purveyor of local stories to create an artistic rendition of French-Canadian, and American culture, respectively.

Cather's efforts to write and circulate French-Canada of 1697-1698, and Dos Passos's exhaustive efforts with twentieth-century America's first thirty years began with journalistic research and ended with esoteric presentation. I argue in *Shadows on the Rock* and in *U.S.A.* the narrator functions as a journalist much more mature than George Willard, closer to the Old Man. I do not suggest Cécile and Auclair serve as journalists, though Dos Passos includes several journalists. However, the narrator moves among the characters, observing their actions and speech, theorizing their thoughts, blending in historical research to provide background, and crafting an artistic narrative. Richard H. Millington's

“Willa Cather’s American Modernism” (2005) suggests readers should approach *Shadows on the Rock* as an “anthropological” text (59), making the narrator an anthropologist. Yet read beside *U.S.A.*’s newspaper-inspired biographies, Newsreels, and Camera Eye sections, one further recognizes how Cather’s history mimics the newspaper’s immediacy. Cather does not portray her characters in the past; they receive documentation as they move forward, creating history, not serving as relics. The narrators in *Shadows on the Rock* and *U.S.A.* match what Fishkin surmises about Dos Passos: “He seemed to enjoy the role of observer with notebook in hand” (168).

To read *U.S.A.* alongside *Shadows on the Rock* and all other texts in this study within a fact-fiction dialog further highlights the hypertextual scope, or anti-novelistic qualities of the trilogy. Discussing modernists implementing journalism, Humphries argues “incorporating journalism into literary works provided writers with the means of shaping formal literary experiments that such readers found appealing” (4). While *U.S.A.* readers and reviewers find the newspaper headlines appealing, they fail to recognize Dos Passos’s journalistic writing or the journalist-narrator crafting the story. Instead, reviews such as “Movie Methods Feature Novel by Dos Passos” (1930) by *Chicago Daily Tribune*’s Fanny Butcher identified Dos Passos’s allegiance to movies in *The 42<sup>nd</sup> Parallel* and the other two volumes. While one can conceptualize *U.S.A.* as an ensemble film presenting several strains in the American existence, the characters’ lives appear as they would in continuing newspaper issues. Newspaper writers commenting on *U.S.A.* also miss or ignore the repeated references characters make within the plot about newspapers’ decision to hide truth. Like *Shadows on the Rock*, *U.S.A.*’s multiple plot-lines emphasize human contact and storytelling’s ability to preserve culture better than newspapers. In the

final section I attempt to present commonalities in subject material between the ten texts examined in this study in a Dos Passos-like fashion. This method best addresses the wide range and accuracy in Dos Passos's trilogy within a reasonable amount of space.

Though their overall approach and styles shares similarities, Cather contrasts the American experience by depicting a French Canada maintaining its culture through storytelling. Dos Passos delves into the American experience to explore how the mass media defines and saturates culture. Cather chronicles a forgotten past, while Dos Passos chronicled a history readers lived a few years ago. However, both artists sought to circulate the past to contrast modern society's forgetfulness. Dos Passos's *New Masses* article "Sacco and Vanzetti" (1927), expresses his disbelief in society's "idiot lack of memory. Tabloids and movies take the place of mental processes, and revolts, crimes, despairs pass off in a dribble of vague words and rubber stamp phrases without leaving a scratch on the mind of the driven instalment-paying [sic], subway-packing mass" (99).

This chapter will outline Cather's experiences in journalism, indicating Cather's focus on art, whereas Dos Passos's emphasized social protest. I then explore the anti-novelistic qualities in *Shadows on the Rock* and *U.S.A.*, indicating the journalist-narrator's role in depicting the included cultures. In *U.S.A.*, I pay special attention to reactions from newspaper reviews. As the final text, I explore how *U.S.A.*, the most ambitious journalism-derived text in this study, includes elements utilized by all other journalists-turned-novelists in this study. By drawing connections to earlier chapters, Dos Passos's trilogy implicates most fact-fiction debates, providing closure on American literary developments made by journalists-turned-novelists up to 1938. Taken as a whole, this chapter argues though Cather distanced her art from a journalistic influence, her modernist



history employs a journalist narrator to present a French-Canadian culture developed without newspapers. This chapter also argues Dos Passos's *U.S.A.* trilogy best exemplifies the journalist-narrator method for fusing facts and fiction.

### **Cather's Dissention with Documentation**

“If the novel is a form of imaginative art, it cannot be at the same time a vivid and brilliant form of journalism. Out of the teeming, gleaming stream of the present it must select the eternal material of art. There are hopeful signs that some of the younger writers are trying to break away from mere verisimilitude, and, following the development of modern painting, to interpret imaginatively the material and social investiture of their characters; to present their scene by suggestion rather than by enumeration.”

— Willa Cather's "The Novel D meubl " (1922), 48

Though readers experience Cather's "imaginative art" in *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (1927), greater challenges arise in *Shadows on the Rock*. Cather moved readers further back in time (1697-1698, plus an epilogue set in 1713), and sent her American readers to a Canadian province few knew about. Beyond the when and where, Cather's continued emphasis on episodes and community storytelling forces readers to work through over thirty inset stories (see Appendix). Though challenging a reader expecting plot-driven observable details, these inset stories comprise Cather's "suggestion" of French-Canadian culture and the ways such pioneers managed to "live decently" on their rock.<sup>82</sup>

Cather's worldview concerning what created art (and what did not) developed not merely from the drama reviews she wrote for newspapers. Cather's interactions with

journalism occurred on a broader scale than the “One Way of Putting It” column she first wrote for *The Nebraska State Journal* in 1893 or “The Passing Show Column” she first wrote for *The Lincoln Courier* in 1895. Analyzing this early writing, Parisier indicates “Her Nebraska journalism reveals her growing awareness of the power in her meat-ax pen and her disgust in the treatment of artistic work as a commodity” (125). As Parisier and Humphries argue, Cather’s associations with journalism continued long after her 1906-1913 employment at *McClure’s*, where she served as managing editor beginning in 1911.

Cather grew to regard fact-finding journalism as a genre opposing art during her long association with journalism. Cather openly criticized both realism and journalism in newspaper articles, interviews, speeches, letters, and particularly in essays such as “On the Art of Fiction” (1920), “The Novel D meubl ” (1922), and “Escapism” (1936). However, Cather utilizes journalistic writing to facilitate the anti-novelistic style she infused into *Shadows*. The stories compiled and shared by Cather’s journalist-narrator serve two major purposes: to allow isolated characters to form a community, and to explore how storytelling created the foundation for the Quebec community’s longstanding resistance to assimilation. Like *Winesburg, Ohio* the journalist-narrator moves from one story to another, suggesting patterns and meanings.

Since *Shadows on the Rock* focuses on shared stories, Cather’s lack of plot subverts the chronological narrative realism and journalism favored in her lifetime. Questioning realism’s affinity for cataloguing material objects and physical sensations, Cather pondered in 1922: “But is not realism, more than it is anything else, an attitude of mind on the part of the writer towards his material, a vague indication of the sympathy and candour with which he accepts, rather than chooses his theme?” (“The Novel D meubl ” 37).

Examining *Shadows on the Rock*, Millington argues in “Where is Cather’s Quebec?: Anthropological Modernism in *Shadows on the Rock*” (1999) Cather answered this representational plea by “drawing our attention to the meaning-life of objects, to the way they function within the field of meanings that this particular community composes” (29). Extending the strategy to “draw” objects to the inset stories, Cather’s journalist-narrator depicts whichever themes her characters must share to maintain their French culture.

Cather’s novel repudiates the separation between subject and object developed in newspaper reporting after the Civil War.<sup>83</sup> From the earliest stages of her writing career, Cather realized journalism’s emphasis on objectivity hindered its ability to convey individual identity and express meaning. She noted in 1894 that “when a newspaper paragraph is fortunate enough to have any meaning at all, it is very seldom personal. To be frank, most reporters and editors are very busy, much too busy to spend time digging individuals” (*World and the Parish* 123). Conversely, in *Shadows on the Rock*, Cather’s characters identify themselves with oral stories in a world with no American hustle, best exemplified when the narrator indicates there were “no vehicles to rumble” and interrupt the church bells on All Souls’ Day (94). To connect subjects and objects, characters even use “our” when speaking about deceased subjects who remain alive to them (Mother Juschereau speaking of Mother Catherine de Saint-Augustin supplies a representative example [38]).

Eudora Welty’s “The House of Willa Cather” (1974) stated Cather’s historical writing embodied passion largely from memory. Welty found “in lost hidden places that wait to be found and to be known for what they are. Such history is barely accessible, the shell of it is only frailly held together, it will be loseable again. But the continuity is *there*”

(7, emphasis in original). The Quebec community, like other cultures, preserves its frail history and establishes a collective identity. This survival process occurs when characters feel personally connected to regional story subjects and take pride in domestic customs. Cather's journalist-narrator does not merely transcribe what characters do; the narrator provides the "continuity" so readers recognize how the French revere the past.

Unlike the immediacy of the twentieth-century newspaper, Auclair calculates handwritten personal updates take around six weeks to reach their readers in France (11). Receiving one or two letters a year, much time exists for the characters to anticipate, share, memorialize, and reflect on the meaning of stories. Their world opposes Cather's 1920 view of the newspaper environment where the "especial merit of a good reportorial story is that it shall be intensely interesting and pertinent today and shall have lost its point by tomorrow" ("On the Art of Fiction" 102). For Cather's characters, a story becomes important once someone attaches it to his or her identity, and those subjective identifications require time and careful reflection.

Cather experienced such storytelling in *Red Cloud* when younger than Cécile. As O'Brien indicates in *Willa Cather: The Emerging Voice* (1987), "Listening to women's talk as she crouched under the quilting frames, the young girl heard the unwritten history of the community that never entered written records or public history" (29). More than any other novel, Cather's *Shadows* supplants plot-driven details for sharing episodes to make her written text capture, as one anonymous Canadian reviewer, expressed (1931), "the atmosphere of the beautiful old city and of that picturesque age" (qtd. in Murphy and Stouck 370). The atmospheric realm, where readers find a community's stories collective effect approaches Cather's "imaginative art."

Cather's comments about newspapers indicate the artistic escape she felt when the apprentice ended in 1912. When Cather exited the world containing the *Hesperian*, the *Nebraska State Journal*, and the *Courier* (all in Lincoln); the *Home Monthly* and the *Pittsburgh Leader* (both in Pittsburgh); and *McClure's* (in New York City) she left behind another American industry. Cather conceded in Ethel M. Hockett's "The Vision of a Successful Fiction Writer" (1915) "newspaper writing did a great deal of good for me in working off the purple flurry of my early writing" (12). In Eva Mahoney's "How Willa Cather Found Herself" (1921) she believed she "came to have a definite idea about writing" during her six years as editor at *McClure's* (37).

However, despite these positives, Cather certainly applied her "meat-ax" to the writing the journalism industry created. As early as an 1895 *Courier* article she argued "Journalism is the vandalism of literature. It has brought to it endless harm and no real good. It has made an art a trade. The great American newspaper takes in intellect, promise, talent; it gives out only colloquial gossip. . . .Newspapers have no style and want none" (*World* 272). In "Willa Cather Mourns Old Opera House" (1929) Cather also rejected the newspaper rule "to insist that everything is much better than it used to be" (184). Consequently, in Quebec she found a culture who embraced subjectivity, personal details, and even multiple versions. Unlike detail-filled newspapers and realism, Cather's modernism did not allow readers to skim for important facts; she never saw the need to remove "excess" emotion and creativity.

A return to Cather's "On the Art of Fiction" (1920) aids this study since Cather focuses her displeasure with journalism on an article's content. In the essay she loathes journalism's fascination with novelty, "never a very important thing in art. They gave us,

altogether, poor standards—taught us to multiply our ideas instead of condense them. They tried to make a story out of every theme that occurred to them and to get returns on every situation that suggested itself” (101-02). In *Shadows on the Rock*, the characters could supply enough material to write multiple imitations *Song of the Larks* (1915), a novel Cather admitted in “My First Novels [There Were Two]” (1931) “told everything about everybody” (96).<sup>84</sup> Even *Shadows on the Rock*’s epilogue skips several interesting plot options: for example, Cécile’s marriage to Pierre Charron, their four sons’ births, Jacques’ sea adventures, his conversations with Auclair during his visits, Auclair’s continued medical advancements, such personalities as Laval and Father Hector’s deaths, and all the ramifications of France’s power change for those in Quebec. While each plotline would present a noteworthy story (as would the lives of minor characters such as Blinker), Cather realized a “first-rate novel or story must have in it the strength of a dozen fairly good stories that have been sacrificed to it” (“On the Art of Fiction” 103). The journalist-narrator allows Cather to portray characters fighting social forces from their actions and stories, as opposed to an omniscient narrator supplying background information. This unifying struggle even occurs as community members remain largely isolated during their daily activities.

When writing about Quebec, Cather had already realized several lessons about research and writing. However, two stylistic aspects led to her “imaginative art.” The first important lesson was “Art. . .should simplify. That indeed, is very nearly the whole of the higher artistic process” (“On the Art of Fiction” 102). A complimentary lesson learned by Cather: “Too much detail is apt, like any other form of extravagance, to become slightly vulgar; and it quite destroys in a book a very satisfying element analogous to what painters

call ‘composition’” (“My First Novels” 97). The impetus on listing novel and complex details became the antithesis for *Shadows on the Rock*’s composition. The fluidity and seeming disconnectedness from spoken communication allows Cather to escape conventional narratives and move into the realm of oral history. George Greene’s “A Colloquy with Clio: Willa Cather’s *Shadows on the Rock*” (1990) explains oral histories include such anti-novel details as: “tales of courage relayed around campfires and only later recorded, family anecdotes, diaries, even the minutiae of domestic routine” (220). This disconnect also causes the reader to discern the complexity embedded in characters’ daily lives while on the page or in an inset.

In the discussion of journalists-turned-novelists, Cather deserves recognition as a writer with the ability to cherish the positives, while writing away from the negatives. Cather experienced a vast range of life experience, the rigors of researching and implementing diverse information during her journalism years. Cather also learned to pay careful attention to detail and verifiability. As McClure told her: “when a writer himself knows the facts he does not realize how important it is to put the reader into possession of the same” (qtd. in Wilson 192). To heed McClure’s advice Cather asked a Catholic friend to double-check her Catholicism depiction before publication (Woodress 432).

Cather’s apprenticeship led to a worldview toward art. For example, in Cather’s 1912 short story “Behind the Singer Tower,” Humphries explains Cather showed “how journalism can offer the means for imagining a more unified community to be realized in the future” (17). Later in her career Cather would realize such community identification would not occur and she saw journalism as “a means of converting words into dollars” (42). Therefore, as a developed artist, Cather’s journalism critique dealt largely with

substance, impact, and style. Accordingly, the construction of *Shadows* stems from Cather's mixed experience in the journalism profession. To evoke community as "imaginative art," Cather returned to the oral tradition she experienced as a child but had not found in 1930s America. While Cather's anti-novel presents several reading challenges, Cather values community-building and artistry over novelty.

### **Utilizing a Journalist-Narrator to Create "Imaginative Art"**

Cather's "anti-novel" approach in *Shadows on the Rock* creates a domesticated history where occurrences often happen in the past, off the page, or receive mention in passing as her characters lives move forward from October 1697.<sup>85</sup> The journalist-narrator groups the community's religious traditions, current fascinations, and past struggles develop into thematic patterns through the more than thirty inset stories, or extended summaries. These inset stories interrupt time between the French ships, forcing the characters and readers to stop progress and give their prolonged, uninterrupted attention to the storytellers. Before Frichette tells a story, Auclair appeals to him to "Begin at the beginning, Frichette, my daughter and I have all evening to listen" (139). No need for a lead paragraph, a quick summary, or the inverted pyramid when Auclair and his daughter have ample time to hear Frichette's six and a half page forest survival story. Frichette's story, like many others, moves the anti-narrative beyond the domestic safety Auclair and Cécile maintain in order to better "suggest" the communal experience in the new territory.

The various interjections lead the reader back into the past, or to France to allow a greater understanding of the history shaping Quebec's citizens. These shorter narratives add to a modernist and experimental writing style Woodress describes as "intensely



pictorial” (430), and Edward Wagenknecht suggests in “Willa Cather and the Lovely Past” (1952) “Here, and not in *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, is the real suggestion of Puvis de Chavannes” (320).<sup>86</sup> Yet most importantly, *Shadows on the Rock* adheres to a French-Canadian style. As Phillip Stratford explains in his introduction to *Stories from Québec* (1974), “Instead of a dynamic plot developing in linear fashion and increasing in complexity towards a complex resolution, there is a tendency in the Quebec story. . .to heap similar incident on similar incident until after much repetition and hyperbole the story reaches a sudden dénouement” (n.pag.). Thus the repeated themes in the inset stories indicate Cather’s alertness to capture a writing style her character’s descendants would develop to fend off assimilation forces.<sup>87</sup>

The thirty plus anti-narrative-creating inset stories materialize throughout the text, leading up to the distanced epilogue set in 1713. The epilogue furthers Cather’s commitment to storytelling, since it largely functions as an update Auclair furnishes to the recently returned Bishop Saint-Vallier. In fact, only twice does an inset story not appear for an extended number of pages, and these gaps occur during the liveliest times for the characters: Christmas day, and the ships’ return from France. “The Ships from France” best exemplifies the collective quality the insets offer because though “Not even on great feast-days did one see so many people come together” (204-05), readers require no background on the numerous anxious characters mentioned. Readers contemplate such disparate characters’ stories as Bishop Laval, Madame Pommier, ‘Toinette and “Even Monseigneur de Saint-Vallier, though he was so proud, had a chair placed in the highest part of his garden” (205) at the pivotal moment when New France reconnects to France. Funda correctly stresses through the inset stories “Cather demonstrates how the act of

storytelling as a dynamic process of negotiation and reciprocity can lead individuals from isolation to involvement, then to intimacy, ultimately to community, and frequently to transcendence” (169-70). Through “negotiation and reciprocity,” Cather’s journalist-narrator offers noticeable patterns as most inset stories contribute to one or more of the following motifs: to introduce readers to community members, to reveal Catholic faith stories, to indicate people’s kinship with Quebec, to document the developing community creation, to reveal the injustices occurring in France, and to emphasize several cases of isolation and death.

Several characters receive a turn to tell a story during 1697-1698. The journalist-narrator presents most insets, often from Auclair’s viewpoint. Cécile, Captain Pondhaven, Pierre Charron, Mother Juschereau, Frichette, Father Hector, Blinker and Count Frontenac all share one or more stories. Compared to Cather’s other novels, *Shadows on the Rock* increases the amount of space for inset stories, the number of characters who take part, as well as the importance of stories to the movement and understanding of the novel. As Susan J. Rosowski explicates in *The Voyage Perilous: Willa Cather’s Romanticism* (1986), the storytelling from so many sources allows “individual lives [to join with] timeless legends” (171). Although the action took place once, the event proves less important than the story passed on multiple times as a cherished relic of Quebec history. For example, a character such as the tormented Noël Chabanel does not serve much tangible purpose for his community during his lifetime. However, Chabanel’s story becomes an important reference point for Father Hector to indicate faith and ultimate sacrifice, transforming Chabanel’s futile life into legend (150-53).

Since Cécile remains the most fascinated with stories and brings them to life the most regularly, she becomes the novel's artist for more than her domestic duties. The protagonist's age presents an initial challenge to the reader's expectations for receiving a reliable depiction. Once one considers the journalist-narrator crafting her daily life into art, the problem subsides. For instance, Cécile's refusal to listen to the didactic conclusion in Mother Juschereau's Mother Catherine de Saint-Augustin story receives the rebuke, "You always say that, little naughty! *N'expliquez pas!*" (39). But readers recognize Cécile's maturity when she prays for the subject in the chapel and then carefully reflects on the story (40-42). Her maturity is heightened by Mother Juschereau's thoughts, who calls Cécile "intelligent" (39), believes she "has an eager mind" (40), and wishes she could "train that child for the Soeur Apothicaire of her hospital" (39). Readers will soon realize Cécile best represents the hopeful pioneer spirit surviving the present, while also gathering stories to share with future generations.

Although Cécile's childhood contains considerable homemaking duties, Mother Juschereau worries Auclair's raising of Cécile will make her artistic and scholarly rather than pious and feminine. Mother Juschereau worries Cécile may be too full of "the glow of worldly pleasure" and "not the rapture of self-abnegation." She even asks Auclair if "he had forgotten that he had a girl to bring up, and not a son whom he was educating for the priesthood" (40). Yet Cécile's "glow" very often stems from intermingling religious faith, history, and storytelling. On All Souls' Day, for instance, "all the stories of the rock came to life for Cécile; the shades of the early martyrs and great missionaries drew close about her. All the miracles that had happened there, and the dreams that had been dreamed, came out of the fog; every spire, every legend and pinnacle, took on the splendour of

legend” (94). On multiple occasions Cécile even questions her father’s devotion to Quebec and his religion. For example, when she hears angels visited Jeanne Le Ber she wonders if her father’s “appreciation of miracles was not at all what it should be” (129). Such devotion to her small place’s history, and a grand passion to keep stories alive makes Cécile a much needed French Canadian guardian. Cécile will fulfill a traditional wife and mother role in the epilogue. Yet her artistry and religious zeal hints Cécile will maintain her individuality and empower other French Canadians against future identity struggles.<sup>88</sup>

Jacques regularly hears Cécile’s wide-ranging stories she hears and tells as a girl. As a woman, Cécile’s sons and Charron will receive a more expansive range from a mature story-teller. Thus Cécile serves as more than a mere substitute for Charron’s unrequited love in Le Ber, as Linda Karell suggests in *Creating Safe Space: Violence and Women’s Writings* (1998) (157).<sup>89</sup> While Cather’s novel spans the four seasons to provide unity and balance, the non-chronological narrative causes “imaginative art” led by Cécile, the domestic storyteller and listener. In *Shadows on the Rock*, a mature, maternal child becomes the journalist-narrator’s guide through an anti-novel exploring how people who feel a constant isolation can form and strengthen a community through storytelling.

While the emphasis on storytelling provides insight into the dominant isolation theme, it also illustrates how often violence plays a role in the separation. The characters naturally live isolated from their homeland, as emphasized in the opening scene when the ships leave Quebec. The journalist-narrator, in crisp, journalistic style, begins with “One afternoon late in October of the year 1697, Euclide Auclair, the philosopher apothecary of Quebec, stood on top of Cap Diamant gazing down the broad, empty river far beneath him.” After setting up the essential information, the narrator explains the significance:

“Now for eight months the French colony on this rock in the North would be entirely cut off from Europe, from the world. . .no news of what went on at home” (3). Most “cut off” characters suffer emotional distress because few conduct themselves like Cécile and Jacques, “the true Canadians” who feel little or no affiliation with France (278). With more than twenty insets depicting characters struggling to overcome unwanted, prolonged isolation (see Appendix); it emerges the most and usually combines with a violence motif.

Although every character in the novel feels the effects of the physical distance between their rulers and providers in France, characters suffer isolation on Quebec soil for various reasons. Cather’s anti-novel approach allows her to minimize plot and background on lesser characters, yet the isolation of community members remains a constant emphasis. For instance, when readers meet Blinker they learn “many people were afraid of him” because of his appearance, yet he is the one who often “hides in his cave” due to his fear of the Iroquois (16). To learn the reason for Blinker’s isolation and torment in Quebec, readers must wait nearly 150 pages to listen (along with Auclair) as Blinker reveals his torturer days in France (159-62).

Readers more quickly learn about Count Frontenac’s isolation, and even Georgio the drummer boy. The journalist-narrator introduces Count Frontenac and supplies details about his military life and appointment to Governor General of Canada. Yet readers learn he felt “lonely in his town house. Many of his old acquaintances had accomplished their earthly period and been carried to the Innocents or the churchyard of Saint-Paul while he was far away in Quebec” (30-31). For Georgio, his isolation arises as his main characteristic: “often the days passed one after another when the drummer had no one to salute but the officers of the fort, and life was very dull for him” (56). Later, readers learn

Georgio must travel seven miles to Montmorency and endure “a long walk after he got over to the island, too” in order to attend the Christmas Mass with his family (109). As the reader persists and hears about Sister Anne de Saint Rose, Father Hector, the Pommiers, and Noël Chabanel, it appears everyone except perhaps Cécile (who always possesses her stories and only feels isolated when she leaves her community with Charron) struggles to deal with his or her solitary confinement on their “rock.”<sup>90</sup>

The other major child in the novel, six-year-old Jacques, appears isolated due to the negligent upbringing by his mother. The reader meets Jacques in Book Two, when Auclair witnesses him “kneeling devoutly at one after another of the Stations of the Cross” (49). The journalist-narrator then gives Jacques’s history and how his “irreclaimable” mother, born in Canada, fell in love with a sailor, “drove her old sweethearts away, and married him” (50-51). But after Jacques’s birth his mother returned to her improper ways and his father left, supposedly saved by his shipmates, who had “taken him home” (51). Since his mother continues to help run two questionable lodging houses, Jacques regularly finds himself alone.

Some twenty pages after Auclair’s reflection, Jacques’ isolation becomes clear in an inset story recounting how, at age four, Jacques received medical attention from Bishop Laval (who determines Jacques’ presence as a reminder of the Christ child). After his mother’s delayed return following her sledding expedition, Jacques faces forced isolation at their home due to his mother’s guilt, “until the summer ships came, bringing new lovers and new distractions” for her (77); then his isolation shifts to the streets. Jacques’ experiences as a youth strikes similarities to Captain Pondhaven’s inset story detailing his parent’s death and his subsequent sea travels by age twelve (218). Therefore, Pondhaven’s

isolation story foreshadows Jacques's seaman future as an outlet available to male orphans. Within Cather's anti-novel, readers work forward and backward to find connections developing the thematic patterns suggested in *Shadows on the Rock*.

Another wanderer, Pierre Charron faces long isolation periods, and the journalist-narrator supplies Charron's background using Auclair's thoughts. Charron, who readers recognize as important since the anti-novel names Book Four after him, has "the good manners of the Old World, the dash and daring of the New" (72). Charron's life story begins with the time he unsuccessfully sought Jeanne Le Ber's hand in marriage, and the "disappointment had driven young Charron into the woods" (173). Charron finds some companionship in the woods because he makes friends with the Indians, largely since they trusted his fur-trading father (who drowned in Lake Ontario). Charron also succeeds in the fur trade giving "half the profits of his ventures to his mother; the rest he squandered on drink and women and new guns, as his comrades did" (173). Losing his father, denied the chance to marry Le Ber, and worried about his mother's illness in Montreal, Charron experiences isolation during his hedonistic days in town and in the unyielding woods.

The character who personifies isolation in *Shadows on the Rock*, Le Ber, fittingly receives the title "the recluse." After Blinker tells Cécile angels repaired Le Ber's spinning-wheel, the journalist-narrator provides Le Ber's life with a six page inset story, shaping the stories around details Cécile has previously heard and shared. Her life details include: the leading merchant's only daughter, her early education in the convent, her evasion of material items, and how at seventeen she "took the vow of chastity for five years and immured herself within her own chamber in her father's house" even though many suitors vied to marry her (132). Five years later, she renews her seclusion vow, only

emerging for Mass, and not even appearing at her mother's deathbed. After nearly ten years, she encloses herself in a cell behind the altar of the chapel to pray, not even leaving to escape the intense summer heat since she described her room as “*mon paradis terrestre; c'est mon centre; c'est mon élément*” (136). More than any other character, Le Ber finds belonging, an identity, and a home in her isolated rock.

Le Ber's extensive story becomes very important within a novel full of shorter narratives, storytellers and religious faith. The community has claimed authorship over the “recluse's” life as Le Ber resides within Quebec's pious history. The community celebrates Le Ber due to her religious sacrifice, yet her sedentary life makes her more alive in the stories than in her self-designed tomb. Le Ber's reason to exist comes from the impact her recent story creates on “many a fireside,” including Cécile's: “the story was a joy to her. She told it over and over to little Jacques on his rare visits” (136). Angels visiting Le Ber bring a miracle to Quebec, a sign God has not forgotten about them. The angels' visit also grants a communal story residents can retell “with loving exaggeration during that severe winter” (136).

The most revered stories for Cécile and others contain mystical elements; characters share these stories so often they transform into something tangible. The narrator explains the community longs for miracles because “From being a shapeless longing, it becomes a beautiful image; a dumb rapture becomes a melody that can be remembered and repeated; and the experience of a moment, which might have been a lost ecstasy, is made an actual possession and bequeathed to another” (137). Reserving the mystical for the inset stories also provides an effective strategy for Cather to “suggest” fantastical elements in *Shadows* without depicting otherworldly experiences on the page. Such scenes would



require much detail and explanation, while also placing more focus on sensational stories. Though Le Ber has chosen to isolate herself away from the community, and Cather has not depicted scenes from “the recluse’s” viewpoint, Le Ber has given her people ample opportunity to focus on mysteries and promises. She has also created the prospect to share in celebrating a Canadian miracle. Le Ber becomes a community gift as her very essence becomes a possession Cécile and others can utilize to enact community solidarity.

Since isolation appears in nearly two-thirds of the inset stories, the theme supplies the anti-novel’s central thread and begins with the opening scene. The theme most often derives from a loss, whether from no supervision, a loved one dying, or a character losing importance in the community. Isolation merges with most other motifs as citizens deal with homesickness, unfulfilled expectations, adverse conditions on the “rock” and the dangers that wait within the surrounding forest. Yet through storytelling and reflection, a shared experience emerges, causing comfort and belonging when the community does not gather for holy days, the market, or the French ships return. In *Shadows*, Cather’s “imaginative art” develops the strengths to allow *les Québécois* to survive as long as they share and revere their stories in their own language.

The Quebec community struggles with recurrent violence experienced physically or secondhand through storytelling. For instance, Cécile’s mother influences her daughter’s life, yet she has passed on before the novel begins. Blinker has traveled across the ocean in hopes of escaping his torturer past, yet his demons find him in Quebec. Count Frontenac’s death impacts many citizens in the final chapter. Cécile and others spend much more time listening to several violent stories, and Bichet’s execution (90-93) receives as much prominence as the great famine in France when people ground up human

skeletons into a poisonous paste they tragically ate (126-27). Noël Chabanel's constant struggles with the Iroquois include cannibalism and ultimately prove fatal (150-53), and the King's carp eating his caretaker's daughter (240-41) provide the most gruesome details in the anti-novel.

These horrific stories also mix with all the daily events that could lead to violence. In an aside from the journalist-narrator, the reader learns after only the second inset story that despite all the storytelling to follow, "it was not because there was nothing happening in the present. At that time the town of Quebec had fewer than two thousand inhabitants, but it was always full of jealousies and quarrels" (20). Yet beyond all these stories and events occurring off the page, a greater and more powerful violence awaits Cather's *les Québécois*, namely their land's capture and assimilation forces.

Cather's primary interest in the history of Quebec became the reliance the early settlers placed on traditions. While E. K. Brown's *Willa Cather: A Critical Biography* (1953) indicates before writing *Shadows on the Rock* "Cather had been in Canada much more than most American writers," he more importantly points out "there had been nothing in her Canadian associations to give her an awareness, let alone a feeling, of what was remarkable in the French region of that divided country" (204). When Cather visited Quebec in the 1920s, she immediately recognized the impressive effort exerted by French Canadians to remain French. Edith Lewis indicated Cather's first reaction to Quebec: "she was overwhelmed by the flood of memory, recognition, surmise it called up; by the sense of its extraordinarily French character, isolated and kept intact through hundreds of years, as if by a miracle, on this great un-French continent" (qtd. in Woodress 414-15).<sup>91</sup> After

extensive research and further developing her episodic writing style, Cather prepared herself to share Quebec's early stories with her largely American audience.

Through Catholicism, the language, the stories passed down, or even in making good soup, Cather's characters feel order's importance when they maintain Old World customs. In *Shadows*, readers witness a community whose French values and customs root too securely for the British forces to abolish. *Shadows on the Rock* depicts the foundational "Three Pillars of Survival" for French Canadians: "our faith," "our language," and "our institutions" (Bélanger). While the journalist-narrator does not refer to "The Three Pillars," the phrase "*Inferretque deos Latio*" from the *Aeneid* invokes the idea that proper New World colonization develops around "graces, tradition, riches of the mind and spirit. Its history will shine with bright incidents, slight, perhaps, but precious, as in life itself, where the great matters are often as worthless as astronomical distances, and the trifles dear as the heart's blood" (98). The community did not try to establish a vision of progress, but as Cécile diligently fulfills her mother's last wishes, so too do the characters hope France and heaven will reward their unwavering devotion. Understanding French Canada's longstanding resistance to assimilation and "Distinct Society" status makes the stories shared by Cather's characters and their heritage-inducing daily activities much more powerful.

With a number of measures enacted to safeguard and celebrate the French Canadian identity, Cather could not have selected a more complicated North American Old World-New World conflict to write about. From the 1774 Quebec Act to the sovereignty referendums in 1980 and 1995, no other transplanted pioneers in North America have dealt with the dual-identity dilemma for as many generations as Cather's French Canadian

descendants. Within Cather's anti-novel, Great Britain's intent to seize New France by force, receives mention in passing, or off the page. When Cécile and Jacques worship in the Notre Dame de la Victoire, the journalist-narrator gives the church's history, with the detail "the Count had driven off Sir William Phips's besieging fleet" five years ago while people used the church as a shield (64). The second mention occurs when Auclair, Cécile and Charron listen to Captain Pondhaven's stories, and he shares that the English "plundered" a French ship and destroyed religious relics while searching for treasure (220). While Captain Pondhaven meekly hopes for revenge, Count Frontenac later tells Auclair "Nothing is more unpopular at Court than the geography of New France. They like to think of Quebec as isolated, French, and Catholic. The rest of the continent is a wilderness, and they prefer to disregard it. Any advance to the westward costs money—and Quebec has already cost them enough" (239-40). These early attacks, and France's lack of interest in New France, all become steps in the process for Wolfe to defeat Montcalm in the pivotal 1759 battle for Canada's identity.

The defeat suffered by the French makes the stories Cather's characters tell crucial to their extended existence as a distinct culture. Her community has less than a full century to establish customs before its borders will no longer hold back the English's influence. The traditions set in France and adapted in Canada (such as eating beaver meat on Fridays during Lent) must be widely shared and respected if Catholic Quebec is to remain connected with "the homeland, France, [that] had abandoned its colony in political terms" (Robinson 26-27). These adaptations must also keep Quebec connected within its own borders in a non-Catholic, British Commonwealth country. While George believes the marriage of Cécile and Charron produces the Adam and Eve "of the Canadian version

of the New World Dream” (259), such a Canadian dream will instead turn to a culture-saving process for French Canada when British and American forces determine their borders.

Cather must have been intrigued how the early protection and unification of Quebec did not benefit from pamphlets or newspapers. The French monarchy held the medium of print under tight control during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries since “Printing presses were simply banned in Quebec, so books had to be imported, and there were no newspapers. French rule produced more widespread illiteracy in New France than in France itself” (Starr 49).<sup>92</sup> Upon discovering Quebec’s past, Cather found pioneers whose reliance on communal, subjective histories matched experiences she cherished from her childhood. This contrasts to American reading history where citizens sent newspapers to friends and family as a greeting card and update on their community. Leonard explains “The reason the gift of news was followed in all social classes is that no matter what one’s station in life, it was easier, emotionally, to send a newspaper than a letter. One’s own news may be difficult to set down and disappointing to those who receive it” (12). French Canadians did not require this emotional distance in their storytelling. If storytellers picked listeners such as Auclair they knew they would receive understanding rather than disappointment when sharing a difficult story.

Cather’s novel grows in importance if one breaks from the historical reading and reflects on *Shadows on the Rock* from today. Despite Cather’s French culture celebration, historically informed readers know Auclair’s safety at the novel’s end serves as irony. Cather hints at the upcoming struggle facing her characters by setting her epilogue in 1713, the same year as the Treaty of Utrecht. This treaty reestablished the uneasy peace

disrupted by the Queen Anne's War beginning four years after the final chapter. Yet the treaty required France to surrender the valuable Hudson Bay Territory, Newfoundland and Acadia regions, surrounding the French Canadians. Readers know Great Britain, looking to avenge Sir William Phips' failed 1690 attack, only wait a little more than half a century to defeat Quebec.

When readers know French-English relations history from the 1600s-2007 (or even the 1600s to 1931), it makes the French Canadians' efforts to establish their heritage in Quebec much more poignant. A sense of urgency dwells on each page because even though Quebec will stay French for the 300 plus years after the novel, in 1697-1698, they are not yet the "other" in regards to Canada (only a "new" version of France). They must continually deal with their Old World versus New World dilemma and live their life three main ways: they can long to return to France as Auclair does until the novel's end, retreat to the wilderness like Charron, or find tranquility in their domestic space like Cécile.<sup>93</sup> Usually upon reaching "other" status, lifestyles become defined for the minority in opposition to the majority. But before 1759, *les Québécois* remained unrestricted in their attempts to maintain and adapt "The Three Pillars of Survival."

Preserving Old World values intrigued Cather and she chronicled Quebec's early formation as a difficult transition process. Even more extraordinary, the displaced pioneers developed and maintained the culture themselves; no one imposed upon them.<sup>94</sup> Since the community took it upon itself to share stories and develop traditions based on a French Catholic faith, Cather did not intrude on their history. She began in 1697 and allowed the journalist-narrator to draw the reader away from a year's period in order to give a history lessons on people and places, or to show the problems people faced adjusting to the new

land.

Without the thirty-plus inset stories, *Shadows on the Rock* would largely function as a *bildungsroman* of Cécile and appear much closer to realism. Cather would have documented Cécile's life in detail like Thea Kronborg's. Though the time period would cause a much different novel, the approach would move toward detail-fascinated journalism or realism, not "imaginative art." Due to the inset stories, Cather's anti-novel composes and circulates isolation, community, Catholic faith, injustices in France, kinship to a dangerous Quebec, youth and more. However, the inset stories also allow the community members to author their new home, free of scorn, and away from the future's pressures. The assimilation "suggestion" facing Cather's characters looms for informed historical readers, functioning much like the unstated conclusions drawn in Dos Passos's *U.S.A.*. This suggestion adds an important layer of urgency, solidarity, and strength to the actions and insets included in the novel. In 1697-1698 Quebec, the citizens feel isolated and unsure, but their storytelling succeeded in developing a strong, proud minority that has withstood the English and American presence at their borders for over three centuries, so far.

### **From an Evasion of American Culture to Saturation**

I would not expect any newspaper book review to hypothesize Cather partially wrote *Shadows on the Rock* to show how a community thrived without newspapers. Few reviews for novels with newspaper content go beyond briefly mentioning a character worked as a reporter, or a newspaper setting appeared in the text. Especially with the texts examined in this study, newspaper book reviews avoided what would have created a fact-

fiction dialog about two issues. First, reviews could have assessed the writer's accuracy in portraying the newspaper environment. Reviewers could still have provided concise details about the newspaper environment even if they remained reporters in another department. Reviewers situate better with novelists and their intent since they spend more time with literature than the other newspaper departments. This exposure to art should have allowed reviewers to concentrate on how novelists attempted to raise questions about the newspaper experience through fiction.

Reviewers also lost an opportunity to examine the newspaper's cultural influence as presented in the text. The reviewer could have assessed how newspapers influence the characters and the overall text to draw these conclusions. As mentioned in chapter three, Humphries analyzed the *Eagle's* function in Winesburg, but no *U.S.A.* book review, or *The 42<sup>nd</sup> Parallel, 1919*, or *The Big Money* book reviews give prolonged consideration to Dos Passos's portrayal of newspapers. While reviews mention the Newsreels, they fail to analyze how the newspaper functions in the plot, or what characters say about newspapers. The reviews miss an opportunity Dos Passos presented while writing a recent modernist history to expose the newspaper's ideological control like Sinclair and Schuyler. Dos Passos presents constant challenges to newspapers while fitting as many American experiences as he could in one modernist trilogy.

### **Protesting While Covering the Story**

Dos Passos's journalism apprenticeship differs from that of the other journalists-turned novelists in this study since financially he never needed the work. However, Dos Passos sought out journalism to travel around the world, receive exposure to several



American realities, gain a political worldview, and develop his craft. Like Sinclair Lewis, Dos Passos edited his Ivy League school's newspaper, *The Harvard Monthly* where he reviewed literature such as Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* (July 1915), and provided "A Humble Protest" (June 1916) questioning why "There is a tendency abroad to glorify, in sounding journalistic phrases, the age in which we live and the 'wonders of science' which we have brought about" (30). Dos Passos's literature discussion "Against American Literature" (October 14, 1916) appeared very early in his writing career in *The New Republic*. He presents the difficulty for literature to make sense of the modern world. He questions the tradition of letters where "The tone of the higher sort of writing in this country is undoubtedly that of a well brought up and intelligent woman, tolerant, versed in the things of this world, quietly humorous, but bound tightly in the fetters of 'niceness,' of the middle-class outlook" (270). Dos Passos seeks a literature critically reacting to and questioning modern developments, but he admits "it becomes harder every day for any race to gain the lesson of the soil. An all-enveloping industrialism, a new mode of life preparing, has broken down the old bridges leading to the past, has cut off the possibility of retreat" (271). In *U.S.A.* Dos Passos would present his challenge to American literature of the past, critiquing ideologies created by the media while challenging the novel's conventions.

Leading up to *U.S.A.* Dos Passos regularly contributed to *The New Republic* and *The New Masses*. Melvin Landsberg's *Dos Passos' Path to U.S.A.* (1972) explains the *New Republic's* influence on Dos Passos. Landsberg identifies the *New Republic* as "a periodical which became for a while a 'major rallying ground' for young cultural nationalists—and he undoubtedly responded to some of its arguments, but his writing in no

sense mirrored them and at times took decisive issue with them” (34). Dos Passos developed his political views in 1921 during travels to Spain, Turkey, Russia, Iran, and other parts of the Middle East while “he carried credentials from the *Metropolitan Magazine* and the *New York Tribune*, for both of which he intended to do color articles” (34)

Back in America, Dos Passos covered and took part in protests he would later portray in fiction. Like Mary French, Dos Passos covered a 1926 textile strike in New Jersey. The subsequent *New Masses* article “300 N. Y. Agitators Reach Passaic” (June 1926) expressed an apology for not taking direct action. In the article he describes his “perspective was from a motorcade of intellectuals” who created little impact (Carr 221). Dos Passos’s group protested until the police arrested one member, then “The people who had come from New York climbed back into the shiny sedans of various makes and drove away” leaving the strikers to fend for themselves (79). The 1927 Sacco-Vanzetti case increased his cynicism toward the American judicial system and government propaganda. Dos Passos joined several writers in protest, including Katherine Ann Porter, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Susan Glaspell, Zona Gale, and Upton Sinclair. When arrested for his involvement “Dos Passos appealed his ten-dollar fine on the grounds that he had been there as a reporter for the *Daily Worker*” (Carr 227).<sup>95</sup> The third major protest took place at a 1931 Kentucky mining strike. His travels with Anderson and Dreiser (among others) to the mining strike resulted in *Harlan Miners Speak*. This text served as practice for *U.S.A.* as it combined “a ‘series of reportages in which characters appeared and re-appeared’” (qtd. in Rosen 78). Dos Passos’s work as a reporter functioned as an artist’s training since he remained personally involved, and passionate about the subjects receiving

press coverage. Dos Passos did not merely observe and report, he wrote for publications that allowed him to present the greater significance of why events occurred.

### **The Whole Story in Various Forms**

“He has been able to use effectively more of the available ways of story-telling, and with them he has been able to get into a book more of the life of his day than any other modern American novelist.”

— Charles Poore’s “Books of the Times” (January 28, 1938), 19

Dos Passos paid more attention to narration in *U.S.A.* than Cather did in *Shadows on the Rock*. While Cather uses oral storytelling to contrast print media, Dos Passos fills his novel with newspaper headlines, characters working as reporters, characters publishing newspapers, and characters reacting to newspapers. Dos Passos also uses a journalist-narrator to lead readers through the Newsreel sections, Camera Eye sections, the various plotlines, and biographies. One could apply Millington’s idea of the anthropological narrative to *U.S.A.*; however, the extensive newspaper content, including actual headlines better suggests a modernist journalist-narrator. The journalist-narrator provides a nation that is described in the opening of the trilogy as “the slice of a continent. . .a radio network. . .a chain of moving picture theatres. . .a public library full of old newspapers and dogeared historybooks with protests scrawled on the margins in pencil. . . .But mostly U. S. A. is the speech of the people” (2-3). Dos Passos extends and complicates the journalist-narrator developed by Anderson and Cather. Dos Passos’s research in completing the Newsreel sections, plus the newspaper-oriented view facilitated by facts encompasses the entire text around journalism in ways Anderson and Cather did not.<sup>96</sup>

Newsreel I sets the Manifest Destiny tone for the entire trilogy. The statement issued in Newsreel I derives from Senator Albert J. Beveridge welcoming the twentieth century. The senator predicts “*The twentieth century will be American. American thought will dominate it. American progress will give it color and direction. American deeds will make it illustrious*” (12, emphasis in original). The senator’s proclamation comes true because as Susan Hegeman explains in *Patterns for America: Modernism and the Concept of Culture* (1999), “For intellectuals from Italy to Japan, ‘America’ was taken to be synonymous with the massified modernity that presented such an object of combined horror and fascination” (21). In *U.S.A.* readers will watch history unfold as America grows to superpower status. Along the way, Dos Passos will make readers sort through fact and fiction, appearance versus reality. The media plays a large role in depicting history and sorting fact and fiction. As Tom McGlamery’s *Protest and the Body in Melville, Dos Passos, and Hurston* (2005) argues “*U.S.A.* is a collectivist novel about the function of media in the formation of collectives, how these media organize and manage bodies, how they member (animate and enervate) them, how they remember them” (60, emphasis in original). The media constructs much of the narrative as several characters and people written into biographies work in the media or receive media attention. The journalist-narrator who leads the reader through the disorder only heightens the media’s hold on what appears in the trilogy.

One major fact-fiction dialog in several chapters centered upon critics and the public’s expectations for novelists to offer credible fiction. Writing a historical novel so close to the present, Dos Passos adds historical moments and recent events to draw attention to the factuality of his text. The biographies outline key figures, historical figures

receive mention in the Newsreels, and certain characters meet historical figures. For example Mac works on Chicago newspapers and listens to Upton Sinclair's talk on the Chicago stockyards. While at this meeting he meets a Fred Hoff of the IWW who tells them they're going to publish a paper in Goldfield, Nevada (83). Mac will eventually follow the IWW and work on *The Mexican Herald* "at thirty mex dollars a week" while they wait for a revolution (267). Mac's life moves in a new direction at a pivotal moment when Sinclair gave a speech precipitating from *The Jungle*. Mac's development does not receive exposure in a chronological narrative as the journalist-narrator presents several other stories in-between Mac's updates. These sketches create a newspaper-like reading experience rather than a novel-reading experience. Readers need to keep moving through several issues in American history before a certain character receives exposure again. All the cultural tags Dos Passos included offer readers fiction that constantly refers them back to actual moments. This allows Dos Passos to include fictional moments or interpretations of actual moments that readers will read as if a newspaper or history book provided the information.

Whereas Cather's journalist-narrator would present the stories told by Quebec citizens, by the twentieth century characters do not grant time to hear long stories. Instead they glance quickly at a newspaper, or hear a brief summary from the radio. As Charley and Doc notice while walking toward Times Square during World War I, "Everywhere people were reading newspapers" (350). The Newsreel sections capture the brief updates citizens receive about their world; the "whole" story reduced to a phrase or sentence. The Newsreels function like Howe's "Country Town Sayings" in the *Globe* as they appear one after the other. The reader must find the patterns, discrepancies, or messages as they work

through them. As Charles Marz explains in “Dos Passos’ Newsreels: The Noise of History” (1979), “Our sense of scale is annihilated; experience in the public sphere is reduced to formula, cliché, echo—headline. . . In a world in which private voices give way to the public noise, all private experience soon becomes public knowledge” (196). Dos Passos captures the media’s saturation process, including a reduction of people’s lives to a headline so more stories can fit in one text.

The Newsreels also function as a group to provide collective meaning within each section. Marz suggests the voices in the Newsreels collide with one another and with the rest of the text to “generate grotesque ironies” (194-95). Upton Sinclair’s review in *New Masses* (April 1930) discussed the Newsreels, saying “All newspaper headlines are absurd, as soon as they become a year or two old. They are like our fashions: revealing a stupid and vicious people trying to appear magnificent and important to themselves” (88). The absurd headlines dealing with newspapers and journalists include Newsreel XXIII and “NEWSPAPERMAN LEADS THROUGH BARRAGE.” In what appears to refer to the same story, another part of the Newsreel evokes the barrage scene: “it was a pitiful sight at dusk every evening when the whole population evacuated the city, going to sleep in the fields until daylight. Old women and tiny children, cripples drawn in carts or wheeled in barrows men carrying chairs bring those too feeble and old to walk” (450).

Newsreel XLIV emphasizes government control over the press. The emphasis begins with the following decree: “but has not the time come for newspaper proprietors to join in a wholesome movement for the purpose of calming troubled minds, giving all the news but laying less stress on prospective calamities” (775). This situation places the country’s overall good and citizens upbeat attitude over the newspapers’ mission to print

the truth. “MAY GAG PRESS” appears in the same Newsreel, suggesting the process of censorship will soon begin (776). Each newsreel presents the newspapers’ view of society and popular culture’s view of society at a frantic pace. Readers might speed through the Newsreels to move to the next chapter as they scan newspapers by glancing at headlines. The Newsreels function as a text within themselves, a collage of opinion, facts, worldviews, and protest that proves difficult to differentiate. The Newsreels also act as foreshadowing as they preserve moments in history and convey the American experience one can find through archives.

### ***U.S.A.’s Connections to the Previous Texts***

As in Twain’s *Roughing It*, *U.S.A.* presents the entrepreneur spirit as young men and women explore new American frontiers to realize the American Dream. Mac explores new frontier in Mexico as a journalist, giving details about publishing his newspapers like Twain supplied in his travel narrative. The biographies also cover certain journalists’ lives, such as Jack Reed the “Playboy,” who “created a legacy as the last of the great race of war-correspondents who ducked under censorships and risked their skins for a story” (373). Bennett-style storytelling comes through in the violent headlines similar to the early *Herald* issues I analyzed in chapter one. Newsreel XLVIII includes “GYPSY ARRESTED FOR TELLING THE TRUTH” (805), while “Horsewhipping Hastens Wedding” suggests a wedding article focusing on details other than the ceremony, similar to the cake theft in “Wedding Extraordinary.” “Woman of Mystery Tries Suicide in Park Lake” indicates a despair story similar to the Sharon O’Donald article; “Olive Thomas Dead From Poison” harkens back to the “miscreant” attempting to poison the doctor with grapes. This

Newsreel section also includes the horrific “BODY FOUND LASHED TO BICYCLE” (806), a headline Bennett would have appreciated.

J. Ward Moorehouse, modeled on the creator of public relations, Ivy Lee, works for the *New York Herald's* Paris edition. Moorehouse's job “consisted of keeping track of arriving American business men, interviewing them on the beauties of Paris and on international relations. This was his meat and enabled him to make many valuable contacts” (175). As Twain progressed from one growing place to another, J. Ward later works on *The Times Dispatch* in Pittsburgh “and spent six months writing up Italian weddings, local conventions of Elks, obscure deaths, murders and suicides among Lithuanians, Albanians, Croats, Poles, the difficulties over naturalization papers of Greek restaurant keepers, dinners of the Sons of Italy” (215). While Twain continued west, Moorehouse continues east to New York.

Dos Passos relates to Howe's *The Story of a Country Town* since the Newsreels and their format follow in the tradition of Howe's “Country Town Sayings.” Each group of short phrases, facts or opinions appears as a modernist text requiring reader involvement to attach meanings. Where Howe provided the revolt-of-the-village tradition, Dos Passos creates the revolt-of-the-nation text in more depth than any other novel in this study. Whereas the *Herald's* human-interest stories made one man's experience indicative of a larger group, Dos Passos follows twelve protagonists and includes several biographies to indicate the American experience in every region. J. Ward Moorehouse also complains about his newspaper work like Ned Westlock. Each man despises the people newspaper work causes one to interact with, as well as the day-to-day operations. As the journalist-narrator explains “Down at the newspaper office it was noisy with clanging presses and



smelt sour of printer's ink and moist rolls of paper and swearing copyboys running around in green eyeshades. And not to know any really nice people, never to get an assignment that wasn't connected with working people or foreigners or criminals; he hated it" (217). Moorehouse finds his rest from newspapers by creating the public relations industry.

Dos Passos best relates and moves past Howells's *A Modern Instance* through the journalist characters. Dos Passos also presents more "modern instances" Howells would have found challenges to propriety and art. As Josh Chamberlain's review of *1919* "News Novel" (March 13, 1932) offers, "no one has ranged as widely in post-Dreiserian and post-Howellsian America as Mr. Dos Passos" (BR2). Characters make immoral business decisions like Bartley Hubbard, such as when Charley Anderson hears about a boom in airplane stocks from the *Evening Post* (940). Charley follows the story and resorts to insider trading: "Next day airplane stocks bounced when the news came over the wires off a bill introduced to subsidize airlines. Charley sold everything he had at the top, covered his margins and was sitting pretty when the afternoon papers killed the story" (1072).

*U.S.A.* draws heavily from Pulitzer's legacy of sensational journalism as two years of *New York World* headlines serve the Newsreel sections in *1919* and *The Big Money* (Pizer 81). Mary French follows in Nellie Bly's footsteps, posing as a social worker to get a story about the Steel Trust for the Pittsburgh *Times-Sentinel*. After completing her investigative report her editor does not respond as Pulitzer would. Her editor tells her "you've written a first-rate propaganda piece for the *Nation* or some other parlour-pink sheet in New York, but what the devil do you think we can do with it? This is Pittsburgh" (882). While Pulitzer does not receive a biography, Hearst does. The biography, called "Poor Little Rich Boy" connects Hearst to Pulitzer by explaining "In New York he was

taken by Pulitzer's newfangled journalism. He didn't want to write; he wanted to be a newspaperman. (Newspaperman were part of that sharpcontoured world he wanted to see clear, the reallife world he saw distorted by a haze of millions, the ungraded lowlife world of American Democracy)" (1163). After Hearst buys the *Morning Journal* he raced with Pulitzer "as to who should cash in most/on the geewhiz emotion" (1164).

Dos Passos and Dunbar each present the dangers in the metropolis. Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer* (1925) indicates the metropolis's dangers, and Dos Passos came back to New York City during the trilogy. The sensational journalist Skaggs finds a counterpart in the reporters who wait for an Italian dancer to die so they can send in their story. "Adagio Dancer" covers Rudolph Valentino's life and death. As he nears death "*Late in the afternoon a limousine drew up at the hospital door (where the grimyfingered newspapermen and photographers stood around bored tired hoteyed smoking too many cigarettes making trips to the nearest speak exchanging wisecracks and deep dope waiting for him to die in time to make the evening papers)*" (928, emphasis in original).

The Camera Eye sections function like the warnings or contemplations provided by the narrator as he regards the Hamiltons' slow deterioration. Overall, the world in *U.S.A.* compares to *The Sport of the Gods*, as it depicts "spoiled lives reaching out for mean and momentary alleviations of debauch at the one end and a grinding, soul-searing poverty at the other" (Stuart BR10). Also like the Hamiltons, the main characters in *U.S.A.* "All seem to move through their lives too rapidly to comprehend what is happening to them" (Rosen 80-81). While readers find out what happens to the Hamiltons, several characters in *U.S.A.* continue to move on as the text ends.

Dos Passos moves toward Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* by exposing the intimate secrets in the character's lives, and how small moments or secrets alter a person's identity and future. The biographies serve as "portraits," often reducing the person to one legacy, to one sustained adventure. Fanny Butcher's review of *1919*, titled "A Slice of Life, Describes Book of Dos Passos" (March 12, 1932) suggests "'Dos Passos may be, more than Dreiser, Cather, Hergesheimer, Cabell, or Anderson, the father of humanized and living fiction—not merely for America but for the world'" (10). In *U.S.A.* Dos Passos presents portraits of people with appropriate titles: Eugene Debs receives the characterization "Lover of Mankind" (30), Henry Ford becomes "Tin Lizzie" (806), Frank Lloyd Wright becomes "Architect" (1128), and William Randolph Hearst becomes "Poor Little Rich Boy" (1160). The journalist-narrator presents these lives in narrative form, as a series of related events creating the one sustained adventure and truth relating to their title.

Dos Passos spans the nation and follows Lewis's *Main Street* by focusing on small towns and the escape citizens feel once they recognize what rural areas lack. Donald J. Adams's review of *The Big Money*, "John Dos Passos Pictures the Boom Years" suggests Dos Passos's "close acquaintances with American types, groups and classes is probably wider than that of any other well-known American novelist. . . . Lewis has not yet, at least, tried his hand at working-class characters; our best regional novelists seldom venture beyond the types peculiar to their several regions" (BR2). Gopher Prairie's problems and boosterism expands to national boosterism in *U.S.A.* despite problems depicted in the Newsreels and elsewhere. The difference between events and what a newspaper prints appears several times in *U.S.A.* Ben Compton tells Mary French "'After supper I'll look at the papers you brought in. . . . If the kept press only wouldn't always garble what we say'"

(1141). When Ben considers the work he did to protect Sacco and Vanzetti he remarks “Now let me see what the papers did to what I said” (1141).

Dos Passos provides even more detail than Sinclair’s *Oil!*, but the presentation creates a completely different reading experience. Dos Passos does not present propaganda in *U.S.A.* since a reader needs to make meaning. Sinclair complained about Dos Passos’s style, writing, “he is so afraid of being naïve that he can’t bring himself to sit down and tell us a plain straight story, that we can follow without having to stand on our heads now and then, or else turn the page upside down” (89-90). Both novelists completed an enormous amount of research to provide evidence and proper details as Dos Passos shares Sinclair’s goal for exposing or muckraking the newspaper’s ideological control.

Dos Passos also shares Sinclair’s disdain for the press agent and their effect on what the newspaper prints. When the Ward and Mac storylines connect in Mexico, Ward says “all the newspaperman wanted was to give each fresh angle of the situation its proper significance in a spirit of fair play and friendly cooperation, but that he felt that the . . . American press was misinformed about the aims of Mexican politics” (276-77). Another example occurs when readers meet Jerry Burnham, who covers the Red Cross for the United Press. Burnham admits “his work disgusted him, how a correspondent couldn’t get to see anything anymore, how he had three or four censorship on his neck all the time and had to send out prepared stuff that was all a pack of dirty lies” (544). Evoking Sinclair’s critical view of newspapers, Mary tells Don Stevens “My dear Don, you ought to know by this time that we hocked our manhood for a brass check about the time of the first world war. . .that is if we had any” (1152).

Dos Passos and Schuyler's *Black No More* match most closely with the political corruption exposed by both. Doc Stevens, who writes for socialist papers *The Call*, *Metropolitan Magazine*, and the *Masses*, tells Eveline America will soon enter WWI and how "The entire press was bought and muzzled. The Morgans had to fight or go bankrupt. 'It's the greatest conspiracy in history'" (471). "The House of Morgan" biography includes the behind-the-scenes deal that caused America's involvement in World War I: "By 1917 the Allies had borrowed one billion, ninehundred million dollars through the House of Morgan: we went overseas for democracy and the flag" (647). Morgan's influence receives further emphasis in the conclusion of the biography as "by the end of the Peace Conference the phrase *J. P. Morgan suggests* had compulsion over a power of seventyfour billion dollars" (647, emphasis in original). Dos Passos presents several Newsreel sections with satire as he juxtaposes contradictory ideas or sayings. For example "MACHINEGUNS MOW DOWN MOBS IN KNOXVILLE" precedes "America I love you" (755).

### **The Boundaries of Modernism in Cather and Dos Passos**

*Shadows on the Rock* and *U.S.A.* exemplify how a novelist or journalist who receives freedom from time and conventions can act as a historian. Naturally, the journalist-narrator idea I have argued derives from an artist who seeks to circulate events and ideas to the reader in a credible and artistic way. However, the journalist-narrator presents more cultural aspects than one narrative could hold by selectively choosing the moments and background to supply to the reader. No author can tell the whole story, even if Dos Passos added a fourth volume. Therefore the journalist-narrator offers the culture's

stories, newspaper headlines, song lyrics, biographies, and other cultural tags to guide the reader through the overall suggestion of what does and does not appear on the page. For Cather's *Shadows on the Rock* her history ends with Auclair looking toward the future with promise. Though the British will seize French Canada and make Cather's characters the minority; French Canada survived the oncoming assimilation without any media. Dos Passos's history conveys how the media overwhelms people while keeping them ignorant of several truths about societal influences and the American Dream. The trilogy ends with a sick vagrant wandering aimlessly down a highway near Las Vegas, a victim of the American Dream. In an airplane overhead a rich man "vomits into the carton container the steak and mushrooms he ate in New York" (1240). Society will keep moving toward something, but Dos Passos questions what destinations people reach, and what occurs along the way.

Albert Larnard's review "Dos Passos and 'The Functional Novel'" (January 30, 1938) candidly sums up the challenges created by modernist histories. In referring to the trilogy, Larnard states "To read it may require patience, but the rewards are considerable. It may be argued: why write so that readers must seek to fathom meaning? It may be answered that every new art form has brought complaint and derision from the stick-in-the-muds, the formalists, the resisters of innovation" (B10). The challenge for modernists like Cather and Dos Passos lies not only in the idea they may lose reader's attention or engagement, but their texts must remain tied to history. In *Shadows on the Rock* and *U.S.A.* readers can not always make meaning from context within the text. Realism and naturalism avoids this problem with observation and straightforward language to depict events and ideas. If a reader does not bring a substantial historical background to *Shadows*

*on the Rock* and *U.S.A.* the culturally specific material either loses meaning or turns to fiction. Readers without knowledge of Quebec's history could assume Cather created all the stories shared by characters and documented by the journalist-turned-narrator. To explain this idea another way, what if a reader who never heard of Quebec reads *Shadows on the Rock*? Without being told the novel proves historically accurate the reader could assume all the historical references derived from Cather's imagination.

While many would argue any reader would recognize *U.S.A.* as historically embedded, certain content in the anti-novel can get lost in the past. Readers can approach the text and assume Dos Passos imagined all or some of the Newsreel's song lyrics, newspaper headlines, quotes, etc. if they do not receive prior instruction. The Camera Eye sections suggest this lack of reference issue as readers must work through stream-of-consciousness writing to decipher how much relates to Dos Passos's life. If readers do not know The Camera Eye sections follow Dos Passos's development as an artist, they respond as did Sinclair who wrote they do not belong because "These are queer glimpses of almost anything, having nothing to do with the story or stories, and told as if they were fragments from an author's notebook, or perhaps from his dreams" (88). While the answer to the above problems lies in studies such as this one, modernism requires experienced, knowledgeable, investigative readers to decode texts so readers can approach even a small percentage of the meanings and interpretations offered. Without extra guidance readers either give up or struggle through a reading experience modern society does not grant time for.

## Conclusion

I hope this study encourages more investigation into the shared space newspapers and novels inhabited in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. Journalism and literature blended together from their earliest beginnings in the English language. The earliest regularly published British newspaper, Nicholas Bourne and Thomas Archer's 1622 *Weekly Newes*, received the designation "news book" since it averaged twenty-two pages (Payne, *Mr. Review* 3). As publishers continued to print newspapers, people regularly referred to them as novels (Hartsock 50). In America, Benjamin Harris's newspaper appeared only two years after Aphra Behn wrote what many consider the first novel, *Oroonoko* (1688).

The connections between journalism and novels continued to precede American novelists with the "Father of the Novel," Daniel Defoe, and Henry Fielding. These early journalists-turned novelists based their plots and style on their reporting experiences, plus materials they read in newspapers. For example, Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722) reads like a female thief's documentary, with observational details Moll causes or reacts to. The narrator supplants Moll's subjective feelings with a constant inventory of her possessions to lend credibility. Fielding then emulated Defoe's reportage style of *Moll Flanders* to write *Jonathan Wild* (1743). Fielding used facts from Defoe's *True and Genuine Account of the Life and Actions of the Late Jonathan Wild* (1725), and details from Sir Robert Walpole's life to create his satire. Dorothy Van Ghent implies the literature-journalism connection in *The English Novel: Form and Function* (1957) when she designates *Jonathan Wild* as an "objective, reportorial, photographic representation" (37). As lengthy prose texts grew in numbers, Terry Eagleton's *The English Novel* (2005) explains the



subsequent definition for novel “meant sensational fantasy, which is why writers like Henry Fielding and Samuel Richardson called their works ‘histories’ instead” (11).

Each journalist-turned-novelist examined in this study sought engaging fiction to serve as a “history.” These writers captured, then circulated important moments in a rapidly developing America to raise their readers’ cultural awareness. American journalists-turned-novelists documenting society in the late-nineteenth century and early-twentieth-century found numerous developments and trends to devote their attention to. The texts they created with the intent to document history, preserve their legacy, and raise cultural awareness culminated in Cather and Dos Passos’s modernist histories. Their work transforms the historical novel from documentation to a performance precipitated by characters surviving their modern world.

While my study builds on earlier works exploring connections between journalism and literature, the subject can continue to offer valuable insights to both fields. My chapters leave plenty of room for more extended analysis of how realism, naturalism, and modernism intersects sensationalism, urban journalism, country journalism, muckraking and other aspects of newspaper writing. My study covered a number of important issues and fact-fiction dialogs, but to maintain such a wide scope my study often moves toward documentation rather than full analysis. My study also leaves room for other interpretations as to how the newspaper environment or reporter characters function symbolically in the examined texts. Several other journalists-turned-novelists could receive extensive study, and the newspaper appears in texts written by novelists who did not apprentice in newspapers.

I hope future studies into journalism and literature analyze genres other than the

novel. While short stories and poetry offer two options, other factual texts could provide valuable insights to the benefits they procured from their journalism apprenticeships. Examinations into the travel writing by several authors examined in this study could offer knowledge into their observational writing and expand readers' understanding of realism. Twain's *Roughing It* functioned as a travel narrative, but he also wrote about his experiences in Europe. Howells wrote about Italy before he became a novelist; Howe and Anderson wrote travel narratives near the end of their writing careers. While Anderson wrote about America, Howe left Kansas behind and traveled as far as Asia. For these writers and others, travel writing performed a function similar to their novels as they tried to convey insights and themes about a place and time through a narrative. Yet travel writing also implies writers wanted to explore unfamiliar regions to lose the control a novelist holds over the work he or she creates.

Studies could also assess the journalist-turned-novelist trend in other countries. Colombian Gabriel García Márquez worked as a journalist before his fiction career. Did he follow an established apprenticeship? Does journalism prove valuable for writers in countries with literary traditions not established in the western world? Is there another path to fiction other countries follow? These represent just a few of the questions that analyzing a nation's media history could answer. One could also look to the future and consider how those who contribute to electronic newspapers, web-journals, e-zines, or blogs might transition into novel writing. Or perhaps these members of the electronic media might someday change expectations for the novel. Whatever future studies hold, attention to the media and literature solidifies the dominant, ever-present voice these texts offer society.

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<sup>1</sup> The top ten novels read by public library patrons in Mabie's list: Dickens's *David Copperfield* (1849), Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1819), Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), Wallace's *Ben-Hur* (1880), Eliot's *Adam Bede* (1859), Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1847), Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1847), Lytton's *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834), and Mulock's *John Halifax, Gentleman* (1857). The top ten suggests American realists and naturalists had not replaced the Victorian literature they sought to displace.

<sup>2</sup> Other texts examining an author's "circulation" include Stephen Greenblatt's *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (1988), and David Trotter's *Circulation: Defoe, Dickens and the Economies of the Novel* (1988). Trotter's work on Daniel Defoe and Dickens complements my study since Defoe and Dickens fit into the journalist-turned-novelist category. These texts emphasize the intellectual circulation writers caused, or how they acted as a purveyor of a worldview.

<sup>3</sup> After the *World* unveiling, the *Chicago Daily Inter Ocean* made sure to report the building cast in its "shadow the tall tower of the *Tribune*" ("The New York *World* yesterday" 4).

<sup>4</sup> Kwiat recognizes his essay's groundbreaking focus since he explains the "significance of newspaper work" for the Crane, Norris, and Dreiser's fiction-writing careers "has not been widely recognized" (99).

<sup>5</sup> Fishkin also includes chapters on Walt Whitman and John Dos Passos. As Robertson's title suggests, Crane's journalism career draws the major emphasis, receiving

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four chapters. These Crane chapters analyze his early career, his experiences with New York journalism, his travel journalism, and his war reporting.

<sup>6</sup> Howells's "Editor's Study" columns appeared monthly in *Harper's* from 1886 to 1892.

<sup>7</sup> Another reason Bierce regards Howells as a Victorian society reporter surfaces later in the editorial. Of Howells, Bierce writes, "He can tell nothing that he has not seen or heard, and in his personal progress through rectangular streets and between trim hedges of Phillistia, with lettered old maids of his acquaintance courtseying from doorways, he has seen and heard nothing worth telling" (5). While Howells never ventured into the slums for material like Stephen Crane or Dreiser; he provided an early rejection of romantic storytelling by circulating an objective depiction of life.

<sup>8</sup> While focusing on Charles Dana's *New York Sun's* human-interest stories, Mott writes "This was a little article which was interesting not from the significance of the person or event reported, but because (as in fiction) it was amusing or pathetic or meaningful as a bit of the texture of our universal human life. Thus the *Sun* picked up the story of a Chinese laundryman, a witty policeman, a lost child, and made each readable. This would have been banal without good writing" (376).

<sup>9</sup> While writing about Lewis, Mencken mentions other authors included in this study who, like Lewis, ensured their "apprenticeship in the cellars of the tabernacle was not wasted" (19). Mencken mentions the following journalists-turned-novelists with the following questions: "Is it so soon forgotten that Willa Cather used to be one of the editors of *McClure's*? That Dreiser wrote editorials for the *Delineator* and was an editor of dime novels for Street & Smith? . . . That E. W. Howe was born a Methodist? . . . As I say, they

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occasionally break out, strange as it may seem” (17). Jack London’s *Martin Eden* (1908) issued several complaints toward the same artistic “cellars.” After several rejections, Martin “began to doubt that editors were real men. They seemed cogs in a machine. . . .He poured his soul into stories, articles, and poems, and intrusted [sic] them to the machine” (119).

<sup>10</sup> For example, Cahan’s assignment begins Hartsock’s first chapter in *A History of American Literary Journalism*. Hartsock indicates “What makes Steffens’s advice remarkable is just how much its intention is literary” (21).

<sup>11</sup> The fictional text with the most sustained newspaper environment setting may be Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur’s play *Front Page* (1928). The play takes place in the action takes place in the press room inside the Criminal Courts Building in Chicago. Hildy, who intends to leave the newspaper business behind to marry and find more respectable work in New York, provides several unflattering portraits of journalists. For example, Hildy calls journalists “wage slaves” (59) and summarizes the position in the following manner, worth citing in full: “Journalists! Peeking through keyholes! Running after fire engines like a lot of coach dogs! Waking up people in the middle of the night to ask them what they think of companionate marriage. Stealing pictures off old ladies of their daughters that get raped in Oak Park. A lot of lousy, daffy, buttinskis, swelling around with holes in their pants, borrowing nickels from office boys! And for what? So a million hired girls and motormen’s wives’ll know what’s going on” (37). Hildy ends up staying with the newspaper because he provides the scoop on a prison break.

<sup>12</sup> The New York published *Forum* began in 1886. The Boston published *Writer* began in 1887. The English published *Journalist* began in 1908.

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<sup>13</sup> When the cook finds a slice missing, “The delinquent burst into a horse laugh at the discovery, and received a sound thrashing from the enraged cook, who boxed his ears with her shoe, and nearly sent him headforemost down stairs. The spree has excited considerable merriment” (2). Whether the cook or the thief offered a proud retelling to the *Herald* proves difficult to determine.

<sup>14</sup> This 1009 word article, a biography of Charles T——’s last years, details how this man from an important family inherited \$180,000 and quickly lost all of his money, morals and self-respect. Charles mostly spent his money on “all the debaucheries of that gay capital” Paris (1). Upon returning to the United States Charles got involved with an estranged wife who uses his remaining money to run a whorehouse. Charles soon lost all “the delicacy, taste and nice feelings of virtuous society” (1), quickly turning violently ill amongst squalid conditions. Everyone abandons Charles but the poor Irish woman praying for his soul. Charles suffers from delusions and calls for the devil, saying ““there is surely a very devil knawing my very heart—hark! hark!—dont you hear how he tears it in pieces—peace—ye murderous spirit, peace! peace!”” (1). Following the youth’s death, the final paragraph offers the moral: “Thus ended a youth, who with more firmness and fortitude to resist the first approaches of temptation, might have been an honor to his country, to his family, to human nature. Alas! that such young men should throw themselves away!” (1).

<sup>15</sup> Issue one, page one also emphasizes newspaper business. Column one lists the “Terms for Advertising,” with one square a year costing thirty dollars (sixteen lines make a square), or a square for one day costing fifty cents (1). Other first-page business items include: “Banks: Their Rules and Regulations,” and a listing of “Courts in the City of New

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York.” Literary writing does appear on page one, namely a sentimental poem and the first installment in “Amateur Pencil Sketches” series, “A Jaunt.”

<sup>16</sup> When local news could not elicit a sensation, the *Herald*, like other newspapers, would borrow tantalizing stories. “Fatal Results of Frightening a Child” from seventeenth and eighteenth-century British actor and playwright *Colley Cibber’s Life* appeared on November 24, 1835. The article includes a disclaimer: “The subject being too delicate to allow the mentioning of names, we shall avoid such an exposure, but, at the same time, we pledge ourselves for the correctness of narration” (2). Thus while the story leaves out key details, those deletions prove necessary and do not create fiction. The story narrates how in a Yorkshire town, servants partied during the homeowners’ absence. The homeowners left their children to the servants, and when one child would not sleep, a servant put a “terrific figure at the bottom” of the bed to scare the child to sleep (2). The son had already died before the mother returned, apparently frightened to death (2).

<sup>17</sup> Perhaps Bennett should have followed the words of wisdom regularly included at the bottom of page one. The wisdom for September 1, 1835, might have proved useful: “Good sense is a feeble light which illuminates a confined horizon, and is sufficient to conduct him safely, whose views do not extend beyond it” (1).

<sup>18</sup> Wilmer finds his overall solution for journalistic evils through the church. He argues, “I earnestly desire to see the power of the pulpit arrayed against that of the press—since there is no other power in the land bold enough to contend with this diabolical enemy” (378). Wilmer also believes, “If we had a Christian party in politics, we might hope for some legislation which would make journalism a *tolerable* grievance, —if any greater improvement in it is out of the question” (379, emphasis in original).

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<sup>19</sup> Country journalism's business practices come to light in the rewards received for Twain's sensational issue. Twain explains how Orion "softened when he looked at the accounts and saw I had actually booked the number of thirty-three new subscribers, and had the vegetables to show for it, cord-wood cabbage, beans, and unsalable turnips enough to run the family for two years" (1).

<sup>20</sup> Twain even poked fun at journalism in this scene, calling reporters a "kind of cattle that did never smell good in any land" (1).

<sup>21</sup> Wilmer regarded reporters faking negatively. He suggests "when the supply of *facts* happens to fall short [reporters] have the strongest and inducements to resort to fiction, or to rumors, which, if they are not altogether false, are sure to present the truth in distorted shapes, and with more or less amplification" (275, emphasis in original). Whereas Hill sees "faking" as a method for stories more readable and charged with purpose, Wilmer views "faking" as selfishly distorted reality to meet quotas.

<sup>22</sup> Hills further explains why such invented details do not result in trickery. Hills indicates faking relies on "the exercise of common sense" when completing stories. Hills informs readers, "the unimportant details, which serve only the purpose of making the story picturesque, and more interesting to the reader, may not be borne out by the facts, although they are in accordance with what the correspondent believes is most likely to be true" (154).

<sup>23</sup> The *Atchison Globe* included a review of Howells's *A Modern Instance* that suggests a more critical reading than Howe admits. Certainly, the review might be from another *Globe* writer, but since Howe read Howells's novel while writing his own newspaper-in-fiction story, Howe likely wrote (or at least closely read) the review. The



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review (August 18, 1882) begins with: “Mr. Howells, in his new story, ‘A Modern Instance,’ draws a picture of the American newspaper man.” The review suggests Howells consciously “paints him as a coarse, conceited, thick-headed specimen of humanity, familiar with strong-smelling restaurants, and given much to beer” (1) in order to receive lots of press. The reviewer believed Howells “has been sadly disappointed” because “From the forbearance of the American press, we infer that it has arrived at that stage where it can afford to be indifferent as to what is said about it by the novelist and snarling magazine contributor” (1).

<sup>24</sup> Howe includes a sampling of these sayings in chapter thirty, presented as a submission from Mr. Biggs (317). Unlike Howe, Mr. Biggs includes titles with his quips.

<sup>25</sup> While I cannot confirm the included fake murders all derived from Howe, his involvement in the entire writing process and propensity for faking suggest he either wrote one or more of these stories, or similar stories.

<sup>26</sup> Ned’s antagonism to the citizens’ religious views comes across most clearly in one summation he offers in the “More of the Village of Twin Mounds” chapter. Reflecting on how citizens fill their time when not farming or completing domestic duties, he explains “the citizens spent their idle time in religious discussions” (169). Already jaded by his father’s minister days, Ned mocks their faith, thinking “I do not remember that any of the questions in dispute were ever settled. They never discussed politics with any animation, and read but little, except in the Bible to find points to dispute, but of religion they never tired, and many of them could quote the sacred word by the page” (169).

<sup>27</sup> The murder/love-triangle story coverage continues on December 30, 1880, when the *Globe* reported the court released Mrs. Sminder and the youth due to a technicality.

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“As we predicted yesterday, Mrs. . . . has been declared innocent,” and the article speculates Mrs. Sminder “is now at liberty to marry the young man who aided her to murder her husband” (1).

<sup>28</sup> Pulitzer’s *New York World* remained under his careful control even after he had publicly “relinquished direct control of the paper in 1886” and formally retired in 1890. As Stevens clarifies, Pulitzer “still oversaw every detail of the building and of the paper” (67).

<sup>29</sup> Howells admits in this *Editor’s Study* installment, “It would be hard to give a more exact and vivid statement of the artistic intention in the American novel.” However, Howells adds the equality emphasis in American novels. Howells argues novelists exhibit an “inherent, if not instinctive perception of equality: equality running through motive, passion, principle, incident, character and commanding with the same force his interest in the meanest and the noblest, through the mere virtue of their humanity” (266).

<sup>30</sup> For writers who had already “struck” divorce in fiction, see Basch’s *Framing American Divorce: From the Revolutionary Generation to the Victorians* (1999). Basch examines *A Modern Instance*’s historical accuracy to begin her prologue; she then examines earlier divorce novels such as T. S. Arthur’s *Divorced Wife* (1850) and *Out in the World* (1864), Lady Charlotte Bury’s *The Divorced* (1853), and Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Pink and White Tyranny* (1871). Basch discovers divorce stories “proliferated” in mid-nineteenth century America and Britain in both journalism and fiction, most often highlighting the dangers caused by eradicating the marital sanctity. Basch asserts, “Newspaper editors learned to exploit the pathos of the accused wife’s suffering by

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providing readers with detailed coverage from the courtroom; and where newspapers led, sentimental fiction followed” (6-7).

<sup>31</sup> Howells’s realism and romance analysis also counters his reputation as a genteel writer or lingering romanticist. Powers summation in his Mark Twain biography epitomizes Howells’s longstanding reputation. Powers writes, “Two misfortunes debilitated [his] project: Henry James did it better; and Howells crippled his own legacy with one colossally badly chosen phrase: American writers, he declared in the 1890s, should concern themselves with ‘the smiling aspects of life.’ He meant to promote a contrast to the death-obsessed Russian novelists, but his detractors seized on the remark as revealing a fatally insipid sensibility. Instead of the lasting honor he deserved for steering the post-Civil War revitalization of American letters, he was saddled with the legacy of America’s pioneering suburban sage” (370). For analysis centered on the context behind Howells’s phrase “the smiling aspects of life,” which counters the prevailing negative reputation, see Davidson’s *The Master and the Dean* (2005), 99-103.

<sup>32</sup> Keeler published a travel book, *Vagabond Adventures* (1871) Howells felt deserved “more remembrance than it seems to enjoy” (*Literary Friends* 231).

<sup>33</sup> “What Divorce Does” in the *Milwaukee Sentinel* (24 Feb. 1880) puts divorce’s danger in more direct language. The full article appears as follows: “Wm. Theison shot and killed his divorced wife, Mrs. May Rodewalk, in the city this morning. Cause: Jealousy. Theison was arrested shortly after the shooting” (1).

<sup>34</sup> For a discussion explicating *Medea*’s impact on *A Modern Instance*, see Gerald M. Sweeny’s “The *Medea* Howells Saw” (1970).

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<sup>35</sup> In *A Modern Instance*, the following characters find love does not lead to fulfillment: Marcia, Marcia's mother, Halleck, and Henry Bird. In *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, the Laphams believes Basil March courts their beautiful daughter, Irene, when he actually loves their intellectual daughter, Penelope. In *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, Beaton cannot convince Alma Leighton to marry him because as she tells her mother, "I shall pick and choose as a man does; I won't merely be picked and chosen" (414).

<sup>36</sup> Ironic for this chapter (but otherwise tangential), on the same page indicating Pulitzer's purchase, Howells receives mention. The *Globe-Democrat* reprinted a notice found in the *Post-Dispatch* which indicated, "Mr. W. C. Howells is about to resign his Toronto Consulship. This means that Mr. Howells now feels able to write books and magazine articles at his own expense." The *Globe-Democrat* indicates the mistake by writing, "You've got the wrong Howells by the way. The Toronto Consul is not the man who 'writes books and magazine articles,' but the father of the same" ("Mr. W. C. Howells" 5).

<sup>37</sup> Bartley apparently cast a lasting influence at his former newspaper. A decade later in *The Quality of Mercy*, the narrator explains his legacy in detail. The narrator indicates the *Events*, "had been in the management of a journalist once well-known in Boston, a certain Bartley Hubbard, who had risen from the ranks of the reporters, and who had thoroughly reporterized it in the worst sense" (118-19). The narrator then indicates management attempted several changes, but "the *Events* continued what Bartley Hubbard had made it, and what the readers he had called about it liked it to be: a journal without principles and without convictions, but with interests only; a map of busy life, indeed, but glaringly colored, with crude endeavors at picturesqueness" (119).

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<sup>38</sup> Readers receive no details for articles Bartley writes when he must use the mail and telegraph (175), when he writes literary notices and drama critiques (256), or advertising articles (304).

<sup>39</sup> Howells certainly understood the impact caused by exposés. In 1869, with editor James T. Fields on holidays, Howells decided to publish Harriet Beecher Stowe's "The True Story of Lady Byron's Life." The article focusing on Lord Byron's affair with his half-sister caused a severe backlash, resulting in 15,000 terminated subscriptions (Cady 136).

<sup>40</sup> In an oft-cited expression, Howells believed the "*entente cordiale* between the two professions seems as great as ever" (*Literature and Life* 22).

<sup>41</sup> On April 15, 1871, the *Boston Daily Advertiser* reported on July 1 Howells would move from assistant editor to editor upon James T. Fields's retirement. The *Advertiser* indicated the change "does not involve any change in the general aim and scope of the periodical with which his name has been so long connected. . .the literary taste and standing of Mr. Howells furnish sufficient guarantee as to the future of the Atlantic under his management" (1).

<sup>42</sup> Howells wrote to Edmund Clarence Stedman, a staff member at the *World*, informing him he had "journalized for four or five years, and [knew] something of political and other writing" (*Selected Letters* 1: 78n). Howells did not receive a position since the *World* had just begun publishing and had no openings.

<sup>43</sup> Howells would continue to connect literature and journalism throughout his career, and he actively wrote in both forums. For example, he responded to the Haymarket Riot of Chicago in 1884 through New York newspapers, he commented on newspapers in

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his “The Editor’s Study” column, and wrote numerous book reviews. A connection lacking attention took place in 1891 when Howells serialized *The Quality of Mercy*, another novel focusing on journalists, in the *New York Sun*. S.S. McClure then distributed the novel through his syndicate to six American newspapers, the *Toronto Globe* and the story also appeared in one British newspaper under a different title (Elliot xviii). The serialized novel’s emphasis on how journalists construct their stories with artistic touches should have caused newspaper readers to question the various facts sharing the issue with Howells’s novel.

<sup>44</sup> This meeting between Howells and Pulitzer, highly important men in late-nineteenth-century American letters receives no attention in their respective biographies, or any other study. This meeting deserves recovery work as the two men likely discussed each other’s cultural influence and views on writing.

<sup>45</sup> As I mentioned in the introduction, Henry James also wrote about a sensational newspaper in *The Reverberator*. James’s Bartley-figure, George Flack, covets a newspaper similar to Bartley and Pulitzer, for he wants to create “the most universal society-paper the world has seen” (38-39). He imagines a paper where high society individuals document their day “from day to day and from hour to hour and served up hot at every breakfast-table in the United States: that’s what the American people want and that’s what the American people are going to have” (39). After publishing gossip about an aristocratic European family (the story then gets picked up by European dailies), the harmed family believes Flack “ought to be shot, he ought to be burnt alive” (92).

<sup>46</sup> Du Bois’s article provides several other facts illustrating the accuracy in the Hamilton’s flight and discord in the North. For instance, Du Bois argues the 385,000

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African-Americans living in the North face a tradition where “since early Colonial times the North has had a distinct race problem” (SM10). Du Bois also indicates “About a third of the Northern negroes were born North, partly of free negro parentage, while the rest are Southern immigrants” (SM10). Informing readers how the Wilmington riot sent thousands of African-Americans northward, he argues “The North, therefore, and especially great cities like New York, has much more than an academic interest in the Southern negro problem. Unless the race conflict there is so adjusted as to leave the negroes a contented, industrious people, they are going to migrate here and there. And into the large cities will pour in increasing numbers the competent and the incompetent, the industrious and the lazy, the law abiding and the criminal” (SM10).

<sup>47</sup> Bell calls Sadness “the first blues figure in the Afro-American novel” (71). Bell further classifies him the “most unique outsider” in the novel and “Instead of turning to the Bible, the bullet, or the bottle to cope with the searing experience of racism, Sadness survives by plumbing the depths of his soul and affirming the resiliency of the human spirit” (73-74).

<sup>48</sup> Joe’s character parallels another observation Dunbar made about African-Americans who migrate North in his “The Negroes of the Tenderloin.” Dunbar wrote such citizens become “deceived by the big city glitter, and once there they lose their simple, joyous natures and become hard, mean, and brutal” (qtd. in Metcalf 84). Dunbar felt African-Americans would fare better if they remained working the open fields surrounding their southern homes.

<sup>49</sup> When Colonel Saunders learns Skaggs’s true identity and what precipitated from his interview, he “was distinctly hurt to think that his confidence had been imposed on, and

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that he had been instrumental in bringing shame upon a Southern name” (138). Colonel Saunders chastises himself in front of others for speaking to “such a common, ordinary reporter. . . as if he were a gentleman!” (138-39). One citizen tells Colonel Saunders he is not at fault, the real problem is “the average Northerner has no sense of honour” (139). However, this citizen feels Berry Hamilton does not desire freedom and will be “leaving his prison with tears of regret in his eyes” (139).

<sup>50</sup> While the courts reviewed the trial leading to Berry’s pardon, newspapers the *Universe* scooped also seek justice. These newspapers “asked why this man should be despoiled of his liberty any longer?” (139). No permanent changes result from the pleas presented by the newly interested newspapers.

<sup>51</sup> For Anderson’s *Agricultural Advertising* articles, see *Sherwood Anderson: Early Writings* (1989) edited by Ray Lewis White.

<sup>52</sup> Anderson found no partisanship issues in owning one Democrat and one Republican newspaper. In “Editorial Statement” (July 19, 1928) he explained, “The editor is not stating his own position in this fight. . . . Our purpose is to run newspapers. Political matter is not going to swamp news in either of our papers” (99). Anderson’s standoffish stance toward politics shows another difference between his editorship and the efforts to enter politics shown by Bennett, Pulitzer, Hearst, and other urban editors.

<sup>53</sup> Modern America’s disorder remains a constant theme in his fiction, connecting him with modernism. Anderson’s travel narrative *Puzzled America* (1935) seeks to find stories representing how citizens living in poverty within a rich country, “do not want cynicism. We want belief” (xv). Anderson further highlights how, “The outstanding,



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dominant thing now in almost all of the Americans I have been seeing is this new thing, this cry out of their hearts for a new birth of belief” (xvi).

<sup>54</sup> Like George, Ned Currie felt a position on a city newspaper would help him “rise in the world” (96). However, in a detail potentially foreshadowing George’s failure, “The young newspaper man did not succeed in getting a place on a Cleveland paper and went west to Chicago” (97).

<sup>55</sup> Later in his “Apology,” Anderson admits he has no answers for “how far a man may go on the road of subjective writing,” because although it was the path artists must explore, “There is something approaching insanity in the very idea of sinking yourself too deeply into modern American industrial life” (200).

<sup>56</sup> Anderson simplifies the difference between rural and city journalism with the following: “City papers are always getting up a crusade for some good cause. . . . We aren’t however, quite so ambitious. Up to date we have taken up but one cause and that is the Marion Band” (75).

<sup>57</sup> As mentioned earlier, *Winesburg*’s genre and style enter into contested debates, and critics hesitate to classify the text as either realism or naturalism. For instance, in “Anderson’s Expressionist Art” (1990), David Stouck offers, “The style in the *Winesburg* stories is not the realistic, conventional prose style of the period, but rather a vastly simplified kind of writing in which image, rhythm, and what Anderson calls ‘word color’ stand out sharply as the crucial elements in the writing” (33). In “The Philosophy of Sherwood Anderson” (1970), Julius W. Friend argues, “If one must label this kind of writing, it is symbolism rather than naturalism” (58).

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<sup>58</sup> Returning to “The Newspaper Office” highlights Anderson’s continued dissent toward urban journalism. He writes, “In spite of all their efforts to prevent it, the modern newspaper, like most modern things, has lost all track of life. Life has pretty nearly been syndicated out of it” (98).

<sup>59</sup> With comments solidifying Lewis’s accurate fiction, the reviewers commend Lewis for knowing “his library patter, his understanding of the technicalities of classification and cataloguing down fine, and so makes Carol’s experience most convincing” (Ford and Ford III54). The experience the reviewers point to is Carol’s urban library experience, an experience that does not prepare her for Gopher Prairie or her inactivity while living there.

<sup>60</sup> Carol’s ponderings continue and she also speculates on the region’s future, wondering if it will become “a future of cities and factory smut where now are loping empty fields?” (21). Carol evokes all the pastoral images before she witnesses the impression Gopher Prairie makes on her.

<sup>61</sup> Most party-goers avoid the game by sitting against the wall but a number do take part, “Whether by shock, disgust, joy of combat, or physical activity, all the party were freed from their years of social decorum” (71). When Carol turns on the light the participants are exposed in various stages of disarray, especially one young woman, whose “blouse had lost two buttons, and betrayed more of her delicious plump shoulder than was regarded as pure in Gopher Prairie” (70).

<sup>62</sup> Carol expresses her disdain to the local celebrity in a verbal editorial. Percy Bresnahan, a millionaire Boston motor car company president, returns to a warm welcome from everyone but Carol. Carol chastises him and says, “Do you know that men like you,

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prominent men, do quite a reasonable amount of harm by insisting that your native towns and native states are perfect? It's you who encourage the denizens not to change. They quote you, and go on believing that they live in paradise, and. . .The incredible dullness of it!" (257). Dr. Kennicott had mentioned Bresnahan as one of Gopher Prairie's own in order to validate the town when he courted Carol (12).

<sup>63</sup> The partisan nature found in the *Dauntless* article concerning Carol fits within the booster campaign during World War I. A major part of the campaign involves a baseball team with citizens as "'rooters,' in a special car, with banners lettered 'Watch Gopher Prairie Grow,' and with the band playing 'Smile, Smile, Smile.' Whether the team won or lost the *Dauntless* loyally shrieked, 'Boost, Boys, and Boost Together—Put Gopher Prairie on the Map—Brilliant Record of Our Matchless Team'" (374-75).

<sup>64</sup> Sinclair defends his fictional portrayal, explaining, "There had been several cases, but always the packers had seen to it that the widows were returned to the old country" (120).

<sup>65</sup> Press agents' rapid increase and influence in journalism caused "Press agents for corporations, banks, railroads, and politicians [to] outnumber journalists in New York City by 1930" (Fishkin 170).

<sup>66</sup> Sinclair further explains, "My main concern had been for the fate of the workers, and I realized with bitterness that I had been made into a 'celebrity,' not because the public cared anything about the sufferings of the workers, but simply because the public did not want to eat tubercular meat" (47).

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<sup>67</sup> To defend his writing style in *The Jungle* Sinclair pointed out, “whatever you may think of it as literature, you must admit that it was packed with facts which constituted an appeal to the American conscience” (*Brass* 36).

<sup>68</sup> Bloodworth suggests Sinclair’s early writing sought financial goals over artistic ones because “Sinclair must have been mainly aware that jokes and the word games were often worth a dollar apiece, and that he had the capacity to produce them” (20).

<sup>69</sup> For example, in “Signal Hill Well Gives Oil Stream,” the “exclusive dispatch” provides the following explanation: “The 400 feet of casing represents the amount of oil sand pierced by the drillers below the 2000-foot mark. The well is now 3100 feet deep, where drilling stopped late this afternoon. Pipe connections have been made with two 3000-barrel steel tanks and two smaller ones, and every precaution has been taken to see that the well does not get away during the process of coming in” (III).

<sup>70</sup> Roosevelt’s speech impacted Tarbell’s work when she published her book on Standard Oil. Tarbell admits, “I had hoped that the book might be received as a legitimate historical study, but to my chagrin I found myself included in a new school, that of the muckrakers” (241).

<sup>71</sup> Though Roosevelt shared these feelings in private, magazine editors and newly-identified muckrakers asked Roosevelt for further public explanation and discussion. Roosevelt did not yield his position, as “Amid protestations by the magazine writers that . . . all diligent reporters would be tarnished with the appellation ‘muckraker,’ Roosevelt repeated his speech in public. It was immediately pinned on all exposé specialists” (554).

<sup>72</sup> Sinclair expressed his positive influence in his autobiography. He believed “many of the newspapers have learned something about ethics. I venture to think that

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reporters all over the country read the book and took courage from it. Many of them are now editors, and while they still have to ‘take policy,’ they don’t take it quite so completely” (224). Sinclair’s comment suggests newspapers still overpower their conscientious employees who understand the implications for printing biased material. Bunny will notice the same strategy when reporters must glorify Calvin Coolidge. Bunny notices how all the reporters “were helpless, their papers at home would take only one kind of news” (481).

<sup>73</sup> Sinclair’s view receives backing from Aucoin, who writes in *The Evolution of American Investigative Journalism* (2005), “The practices also faltered because of libel suits, the purchase of some of the leading magazines by the businessmen they targeted, and growing disinterest from the public” (33).

<sup>74</sup> The importance Sinclair placed on factual writing in his fiction and non-fiction stemmed from libel. Sinclair challenges *Brass Check* readers to sue him because “There are things on every page of this book which are libelous unless they are true” (429). No libel suits developed from his exposé.

<sup>75</sup> Even when Bunny sees a dead squirrel on the road the detail comes back to newspapers. Bunny considers pointing out the deceased animal to his father but, “he would remark that squirrels carried plague, or at least they had fleas which did; every now and then there would be cases of this disease and the newspapers would have to hush it up, because it was bad for real estate” (15). Bunny hiding the squirrel’s death foreshadows greater cover-ups and more death as the novel proceeds.

<sup>76</sup> Schuyler provides evidence for African-Americans’ involvement in the newspaper from the beginning, explaining, “The pressman of the first newspaper printed in

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New Hampshire was a Negro slave, named Prince Fowle, while the slave of John Campbell of Boston aided him in printing the first permanent newspaper in the English colonies, *The Boston News Letter*” (4).

<sup>77</sup> Northeastern University Press published and annotated Schuyler’s two serialized science-fiction novels, *Black Empire* (1936) and *The Black Internationale* (1938), in *Black Empire* (1991). Serialized weekly, *Black Empire* includes a reporter for the *Harlem Blade*. Writing about Schuyler and other African-American journalists, Gates surmises, “There are thousands of works of fiction that remain buried in black newspapers and magazines” (43).

<sup>78</sup> Schuyler’s tone would later turn from cynicism to acceptance. To indicate how much his views changed at the end of his life, consider the following 1966 comment: “Once we accept the fact that there is, and will always be, a color caste system in the United States, and stop crying about it, we can concentrate on how best to survive and prosper within that system. This is not defeatism but realism. It is tragic and pointless to wage war against the more numerous and more powerful white majority, and so jeopardize what advantage we possess” (122). Views such as these and Schuyler’s opposition to Martin Luther King Jr. continue to complicate his legacy in African-American culture and American culture as a whole.

<sup>79</sup> Gary Taylor’s *Buying Whiteness: Race, Culture, and Identity from Columbus to Hip Hop* (2005) reports, “The word *colorphobia* was used at least as early as 1838 in an African American newspaper, *The Colored American*, and it remained in part of the African American vocabulary until at least 1926” (4).

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<sup>80</sup> I have replaced Schuyler's use of the N-word with "negroes" in all quotes (by either African-Americans or whites) including the term. While "negro" is not a word I would use, I try to maintain the context of Schuyler's novel and his dialog the best I can.

<sup>81</sup> Cather and Dos Passos both expanded on previous historical novels in writing *Shadows on the Rock* and *U.S.A.*. Cather wrote *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (1927), depicting the mid-nineteenth-century American Southwest. Dos Passos wrote *The Manhattan Transfer* (1925), depicting America's twentieth-century urban center.

<sup>82</sup> My study takes a similar approach to Evelyn I. Funda's focus on gift-giving in "New World Epiphany Stories: Transformation and Community-Building in *Shadows on the Rock*." Funda asserts Cather includes "nearly thirty narratives" in the novel (169).

<sup>83</sup> For a thorough discussion on the separation between subject and object in journalism, see Hartsock's *A History of American Literary Journalism*. Hartsock discusses the epistemological shift journalists-turned-novelists sought in novels because they "critically detected this alienating gulf between subject and object in mainstream journalistic practice" (60).

<sup>84</sup> Humphries devotes considerable attention to *The Song of the Lark*, suggesting Thea succeeds "by taking on the role of a reporter at a key moment in her artistic development and by later engaging the power of journalism, she is able to influence the expectations and values of her audience according to her own ideas of the power of art" (23-24). Humphries explains how, like the journalist-narrator I argue operates in *Shadows*, Thea's ability to observe different social aspects "and make connections across different aspects of modern life" such as the Chicago stockyards, leads to her success (25). For further journalism-oriented explanations in regards to Thea, see pages 26-30.

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<sup>85</sup> One recalls how in “Joseph and His Brothers,” Cather’s appreciation for Thomas Mann’s story of 1700 B.C. shepherds stems from how he “gets behind the epoch of his story and looks forward” (98). Mann’s approach allows his characters to function at a pace much different from Cather’s time, which she described as an “age of blinding speed and shattering sound!” (99). American society’s speed functions as another contrast Cather directs her reader’s to.

<sup>86</sup> Clinton Keeler’s “Narrative Without Accent: Willa Cather and Puvis de Chavannes” concludes with statements applicable to *Shadows*. Keeler writes, “The distance, the detachment, with which she treats her historical subjects has the effect of a monumental style. Historical events are contained in the style not as an ‘actuality,’ nor as anarchic forms within the mind, but as events ordered by tradition. In this tradition, as in a legend, light is a correlative of belief, and space is a correlative of freedom. Thus the style and subject are closely related” (126).

<sup>87</sup> Several of Stratford’s other points about French Canadian writing connect to *Shadows*. Stratford explicates the “joyful sense of the traditional tale-teller that all the stories convey. . . Each speaker in this narrative conversation reveals himself by telling a tale, and the sum of the stories cross-referenced and woven together makes up fabric of the whole.” Stratford also indicates “The Quebec writer. . .often condenses a whole life into a few pages and even when the span is shorter, writes a kind of shorthand fiction quite uncommon to American or British practice” (n. pag.).

<sup>88</sup> This analysis of Cécile appears to move toward Rosowski’s oft-quoted declaration in *The Voyage Perilous* (1986) suggesting Cécile will become the “Canadian Holy Mother” (184). However, I hesitate to use such a classification largely due to the



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complex issues of Canadian federalism when discussing French Canada. While Canada stays French by the end of the novel, and Cécile has risen as the artist and future matriarch, the epilogue hints at Canada's end as a French nation (as discussed later in this chapter).

<sup>89</sup> In "Safe Space and Storytelling," Linda K. Karell focuses on story versions and whose version characters believe. She argues the insets "enact the novel's internal debate between the liberating potential of safe spaces that signify 'home,' and the threat of women's socialization, erasure, and silence that structure those homes" (148).

<sup>90</sup> Following Cather's anti-narrative approach, even Pommier's foot models share an isolation and violence story (82). Pommier informs Cécile and Jacques how each pair represents the person's travels. This leads to Robert Cavelier de La Salle story, who Pommier tells them was murdered all alone, "a thousand miles from here" (83). His death contributes to loneliness in Pommier, whose mother rarely leaves the house due to injuries sustained from falling on ice (80).

<sup>91</sup> For a discussion exploring the memories Cather cherished in relation to the French-Canadian residents near Red Cloud, see Kathleen Danker's "The Influence of Willa Cather's French-Canadian Neighbors in Nebraska in *Death Comes for the Archbishop* and *Shadows on the Rock*." Danker theorizes Cather's acquaintance with a French-Canadian settlement "probably dates from her earliest years in the state" (36).

<sup>92</sup> The following literacy statistics show French Canada relied heavily on storytelling for identity-creation, as opposed to print. As Star reports, from 1750-1765, when literacy rates in New England had reached 85 percent for males and around 60 percent for females (52), the literacy rate in New France "was about 25 percent, only 11 percent in rural areas" (50). Literacy rates remained a major problem in Quebec, since

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between 1838-1839, “73 percent of adults—88 percent of rural francophones and 40 percent of rural anglophones—were illiterate” (106). These numbers further point to Cécile’s artistry, as one with speaking and writing talents.

<sup>93</sup> As Wolfe will inevitably seize Quebec for the English in 1759, so too must Cécile grow up and become a woman and mother. However, Cather’s anti-narrative skips ahead fifteen years with an epilogue where Cécile does not appear. Through Auclair’s stories the reader learns Cécile married Charron, they live “beyond the Ursuline convent” with four sons Auclair calls “the Canadians of the future” (278).

<sup>94</sup> Writing in 1995, Robinson noted, “To this day, many Québécois maintain their links to the Old World, searching genealogical records for the first ancestor who landed in Nouvelle-France and establishing contacts with cousins in Brittany, the Poitou, or the Limousin” (27). The long-time slogan on Quebec license plates, “*Je me souviens*” (“I remember”), also points to memory and identity’s fundamental importance.

<sup>95</sup> Mary faces the national prejudice against Sacco and Vanzetti as she works for the campaign to free them. The narrator explains Mary’s job situation as: “Her job was keeping in touch with newspapermen and trying to get favorable items into the press. It was uphill work. Although most of the newspapermen who had any connection with the case thought the two had been wrongly convicted they tended to say that they were just two wop anarchists, so what the hell?” (1147).

<sup>96</sup> The Library of America edition of *U.S.A.* provides a “Chronology of World Events” depicted in the text, along with endnotes. These prove especially useful for examining the Newsreels.

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## Appendix A

### Inset Stories in *Shadows on the Rock* and Corresponding Motifs

1. Blinker's character and lifestyle in Quebec (15-16): community creation, kinship to Quebec, isolation
2. Auclair tells Cécile about his youth in France and his early connection to the Count (18-20): community creation, kinship with Quebec
3. The Auclairs arrival in Quebec, followed by Madame Auclair's deteriorating health and death (22-27): arrival in the New World, death, and isolation
4. Count Frontenac's military life (27-33): community creation, kinship with Quebec, injustices in France, isolation
5. How Canada became a refuge for Auclair (29-33): kinship with Quebec, death, and isolation
6. Mother Juschereau tells Cécile and Auclair another Mother Catherine de Saint-Augustin story (37-39): Catholic faith, isolation
7. Cécile reflects on Catherine de Saint-Augustin's life (40-42): kinship with Quebec, Catholic faith, and death
8. Auclair's reflection on Jacques, his family, and his friendship with Cécile (50-53): community creation, kinship with Quebec, isolation, and devotion
9. Georgio the drummer boy's character, his musical and military aspirations (55-57): community creation, kinship with Quebec, monotony, and isolation
10. Cécile reflects on her former teacher, Sister Anne de Saint Rose (60-61): community creation, faith, death, and isolation
11. The Notre Dame de la Victoire's story and an extended description (63-66):



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community creation, Catholic faith, and safety

12. Jacques's reflection on meeting Bishop Laval two years ago (70-77):

community creation, Catholic faith, youth, and isolation

13. The Pommiers's story (80): community creation, injury, and isolation

14. Cécile reads the Saint Edmond story of Jacques twice - it appears once, in French (84-86): Catholic faith, youth

15. Auclair tells Cécile the Bichet's execution story (90-93): injustice in France, death, and isolation

16. The Ursulines and the Hospitalières's history (96-98): community creation, Catholic faith, and isolation

17. Bishop Saint-Vallier's trip to France and reflecting on his Canadian duties (120-25): community creation, Catholic faith, injustices in France, kinship with Quebec, isolation

18. Auclair tells the great famine in France story to Cécile (126-27): injustices in France, death

19. Jeanne Le Ber's life in exile (130-36): community creation, Catholic faith, and isolation

20. Frichette tells Auclair and Cécile his struggle to survive in the forest story (139-45): community creation, Catholic faith, Quebec's dangers, and isolation

21. Extended background on Father Hector's life (146-47): community creation, kinship with Quebec, isolation

22. Father Hector tells Auclair and Cécile Noël Chabanel's story (150-53): community creation, Catholic faith, kinship with Quebec, Quebec's dangers, death, and

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isolation

23. Blinker tells Auclair about his torturer days and subsequent grief (159-62):

injustices in France, kinship with Quebec, pain, isolation

24. Auclair's reflections on Charron (171-73): community creation, youth, kinship with Quebec, isolation

25. Charron tells Auclair about his two meetings with Jeanne Le Ber (178-83): Catholic faith, isolation

26. Charron tells Cécile about the worst food he ever ate (188): pain, Quebec's dangers, isolation

27. Captain Pondhaven tells Auclair, Cécile and Charron about his past (218-19): community creation, youth, and isolation

28. Captain Pondhaven tells Auclair, Cécile and Charron how the English seized a French boat (220): English injustice, Catholic faith

29. Captain Pondhaven tells Auclair, Cécile and Charron about a circus ape that kidnapped a child (223-24): Catholic faith

30. Count Frontenac reflects on his Canadian assignment, and his accomplishments (237-38): community creation, kinship with Quebec, isolation

31. The Count tells Auclair about his two visits with the King (240-41): injustices in France, Catholic faith, and death

32. The Count's dream (243-46): isolation

33. The Count's death (262-63): Catholic faith, isolation, and death