Universidade de Lisboa
Faculdade de Letras

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD, NATHANAEL WEST AND THE DISSOLUTION OF THE AMERICAN DREAM

Mestrado em Estudos Ingleses e Americanos
Especialidade em Estudos Norte-Americanos

FILIPE GOMES SARAMAGO

2024

Dissertação especialmente elaborada para a obtenção do grau de Mestre, orientada pelo Professor Doutor Mário Carlos Fernandes Avelar

Acknowledgements

For his encouragement and counsel, I would like to thank my dissertation supervisor, Professor Mário Avelar, who was always available whenever I asked for help. I would also like to thank my family and friends, who were always supportive, especially my parents, who have encouraged me to continue my studies.

Abstract

As the Great Depression took its toll on commercial theater and the publishing industry, a wave of Eastern writers moved to Los Angeles during the 1930s in order to work in the movies. Penned by sometime scriptwriters who never found the work fulfilling, several Hollywood novels of that decade denounced the dissolution of the American Dream. The film industry itself being then largely seen by the literary world as one that had a disregard for genuine artistic expression, this work analyzes and contextualizes the novelist's response to Hollywood through the cases of F. Scott Fitzgerald and Nathanael West. Those two writers having been part of a group of intellectuals who, disillusioned with their country's political system, came to at one point see in communism a desirable path of development for the nation, F. Scott Fitzgerald and Nathanael West's disenchantment with America was also be discussed as part of that wider trend. The first chapter of this work provides historical background on some aspects of the development of the American identity, as it diverged from that of its early European settlers. F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, a novel that exposes the country's egalitarian myth as illusory, was analyzed in this part of the text. In the second chapter, F. Scott Fitzgerald's perspective on America's past and future was explored, as was his ambivalent relationship with the idea of a communist future for the country. Budd Schulberg's *The Disenchanted* was analyzed in this chapter, it having been selected for its description of studio culture in 1930s Hollywood and its fictionalized depiction of F. Scott Fitzgerald. In the third chapter, the focus shifted to Nathanael West and his Hollywood novel, *The Day of the Locust*. The novel was analyzed, and its ending was interpreted in light of Nathanael West's political stances.

KEYWORDS: Hollywood; Individualism; Great Depression; F. Scott Fitzgerald; Nathanael West.

Resumo

Estando a população americana ainda a sofrer os efeitos da Grande Depressão, vários romances acerca da indústria cinematográfica americana dos anos trinta do século passado trataram a cidade de Los Angeles, e o seu subúrbio de Hollywood em particular, como um símbolo da dissolução do sonho americano. Neles são recorrentes motivos de artificialidade, distorção do tempo, disfunção sexual e falta de significado do trabalho. Muitas vezes escrito por guionistas que nunca encontraram satisfação no seu trabalho para os estúdios de cinema, entre os autores que deram o seu contributo para este tipo de produção literária estão Nathanael West, F. Scott Fitzgerald ou Horace McCoy. Sendo o cinema à altura considerado por muitos escritores uma arte menor, alguns foram, no entanto, atraídos para Hollywood por necessidade financeira, tendo a indústria cinematográfica interesse em contratar autores já consagrados.

Tendo a elaboração desta dissertação sido motivada por um interesse em compreender o que levou um grupo de escritores americanos na década de trinta do século XX a perder fé na sociedade em que estavam inseridos, esta dissertação analisa e contextualiza a opinião do escritor seu assalariado relativamente à indústria cinematográfica e Hollywood, através dos casos de F. Scott Fitzgerald e Nathanael West, escritores que em Hollywood procuraram estabilidade financeira e lá encontraram confirmação para muitos dos estereótipos negativos que eram associados à indústria do cinema e ao local onde esta produzia o seu produto. Sendo que estes dois escritores a determinado ponto fizeram parte de um conjunto de intelectuais americanos que, insatisfeito com o rumo do país, era favorável à adoção nos Estados Unidos de alguma forma de comunismo, a descrença de F. Scott Fitzgerald e Nathanael West relativamente ao futuro da nação é discutida como parte desta mais vasta tendência.

Esta dissertação foi organizada em três capítulos. No primeiro procedeu-se à análise do desenvolvimento de alguns aspetos da identidade americana, à medida que esta divergiu daquela que os colonos europeus trouxeram consigo do Velho Continente. Nesse âmbito, foi estudado o aparecimento e evolução da ideia de que a iniciativa individual seria um crucial fator de progresso e desenvolvimento, sendo o trabalho um veículo de ascensão social. Tendo a busca pela felicidade sido eventualmente incorporada no ideário norte-americano, o conceito de felicidade de Thomas Jefferson, que o inscreveu na declaração de independência dos Estados Unidos e que este partilhava com outras figuras ligadas à independência americana, foi explorado. Mais do que a obtenção de riqueza, este conceito privilegiava princípios de coragem, moderação e justiça.

A meio do século XIX, Henry Thoreau viria, no entanto, a denunciar em *Walden*, obra que foi neste trabalho analisada, o que interpretava como um excessivo materialismo da sociedade americana do seu tempo. Thoreau recomenda um regresso a uma vida mais simples e em contacto com a natureza como forma de levar o indivíduo a reconsiderar as suas escolhas e aspirações, experiência que funcionaria como ritual de purificação. A ideia de que no contexto americano o indivíduo se podia regenerar, libertando-se do seu passado histórico, estando já presente no pensamento dos colonos puritanos que no século XVII se estabeleceram no continente, continuou patente na argumentação do período revolucionário, tendo também sido explorada de diferentes formas por vários escritores durante o século XIX.

Tendo sido intenção dos puritanos continuar no continente americano a Reforma Protestante que acreditavam ter ficado incompleta na Europa, criando no Novo Mundo aquilo que consideravam ser uma sociedade modelo, analisado foi também como esse propósito se converteu num desígnio de conduzir o mundo rumo ao Reino Milenar descrito na Bíblia. A ideia de que os Estados Unidos beneficiavam de um ascendente moral sobre as demais nações, reforçada pelo processo revolucionário que levou à sua independência, eventualmente traduziu-se naquela que ficou conhecida como doutrina do destino manifesto, uma crença segundo a qual, ao expandir as suas fronteiras em direção ao Pacífico, civilizando o resto da América do Norte à sua imagem, o país estaria a dar cumprimento a uma vontade divina. O pioneiro americano tornou-se no rosto dessa missão civilizadora. Outrora considerado um pária, o pioneiro, encapsulando o espírito americano, passou a ser tido como um exemplo de autossuficiência e audácia.

Por fim, foi ainda examinada no primeiro capítulo deste trabalho como a rápida industrialização do país após a Guerra Civil, algo que esteve associado a um crescimento dos centros urbanos e do número de trabalhadores assalariados, desafiou a ideia de que o indivíduo teria à sua disposição os meios para ascender na hierarquia social. Se por um lado alguns procuraram aplicar o conceito de sobrevivência do mais apto, popularizado por Charles Darwin, à existência do indivíduo em sociedade, caracterizando a competição entre indivíduos por recursos como parte de uma lei da natureza que deveria ser respeitada, por outro, o movimento progressista procurou expor uma falta de correlação entre mérito e estatuto social. Denunciado era o facto de que, ao mesmo tempo que muitos viam os seus esforços para ascender na hierarquia social frustrados, grandes industriais conspiravam com o poder político e entre eles de forma a manter o seu estatuto e poder. O romance *The Great Gatsby*, de F. Scott Fitzgerald, foi analisado pelo seu retrato da luta do indivíduo no sentido de obter independência financeira e felicidade, dois conceitos que se confundiam no imaginário americano do século

XX. Tendo começado na pobreza, Jay Gatsby conseguiu assegurar a sua independência financeira. No entanto, tal não se traduziu em felicidade, uma vez que o classismo dos ricos impediu Gatsby de realizar os seus sonhos. Juntando-se a isto o facto de que Gatsby apenas havia conseguido sair da pobreza por meios menos legítimos, traída é nesta obra a ideia de uma sociedade americana igualitária, onde o trabalho era um veículo de ascenção social.

No segundo capítulo deste trabalho, a perspetiva de F. Scott Fitzgerald relativamente à trajetória de desenvolvimento dos Estados Unidos foi explorada, tal como a sua postura ambivalente no que dizia respeito à adoção de um modelo de sociedade de inspiração comunista, sendo que alguns dos motivos que levaram outros escritores a associar-se à esquerda radical são também são discutidos. Estando a insatisfação de alguns destes intelectuais, Fitzgerald incluído, ligada à cultura de consumo que se havia instalado, e tendo esta como um dos seus principais símbolos a indústria cinematográfica, *The Disenchanted* de Budd Schulberg foi analisado neste capítulo, tendo este romance sido escolhido para tratamento nesta dissertação pelo retrato que faz da cultura corporativa e funcionamento dos estúdios de cinema americanos, sob ponto de vista do escritor. Publicada em 1950, esta obra, tendo por base a experiência do seu autor quando colaborou com F. Scott Fitzgerald na elaboração de um guião para o filme *Winter Carnival* em 1939, é tematicamente similar a outros romances acerca da indústria cinematográfica americana publicados durante os anos trinta.

O terceiro capítulo teve como foco o romance *The Day of the Locust*, assim como o seu autor, Nathanael West. Nesta obra, West retrata o cinema como satisfazendo uma necessidade de dar esperança àqueles que, numa sociedade que o autor considera decadente, poucas possibilidades têm de concretizar os seus sonhos. Patente neste romance é uma artificialidade que vai da paisagem da cidade de Los Angeles à aparência e comportamento alguns dos seus habitantes. Membros da classe média que migraram da Região Centro-Oeste dos Estados Unidos, com o objetivo de usufruir de uma vida de lazer possibilitada pelas poupanças que acumularam ao longo de uma vida de trabalho árduo, à medida que começam a ver para além dessa fachada de artificialidade, julgam-se traídos. A vida pela qual trabalharam durante décadas revela-se vazia, contrastando negativamente com o padrão de vida que havia sido normalizado pelos filmes. Embora o final desta obra possa ser interpretado como um passo final rumo ao abismo para o qual a sociedade americana se encaminhava, a possibilidade de uma sociedade regenerada emergir da insurreição popular descrita nas suas páginas finais é deixada em aberto. Esta hipótese foi contextualizada, tendo em conta o posicionamento político de Nathanael West e traçando paralelos com o pensamento de outros intelectuais que durante os anos trinta do século XX foram atraídos pelas soluções que a esquerda radical apresentava.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Hollywood; Individualismo; Grande Depressão; F. Scott Fitzgerald; Nathanael West.

Table of Contents

Introduction

In the 1930s, the Great Depression having taken its toll on commercial theater and the publishing industry, a wave of Eastern writers made their way to Los Angeles in order to work in the movies (Springer 76), the industry having a particular interest in names that held some publicity value (78). That happened even if by then the film industry was still largely seen by the literary world as one that had a disregard for genuine artistic expression, a result of the streamlined manner with which it produced its product (Schulteiss 14).

The downbeat mood of the nation during that period would transpire into a number of Hollywood novels published during the 1930s (Springer 133). Writers like Nathanael West, F. Scott Fitzgerald or Horace McCoy, sometime scriptwriters who never found the work fulfilling (Davis 37), treated Hollywood as a microcosm of America and a symbol of consumer culture, them through motifs of artificiality, distortion of time, sexual dysfunction, and the meaninglessness of work, criticizing the corruption of the American dream (See 200-02).

It having been born out of a desire to understand how a number of American writers lost faith in American society during the 1930s, this work will analyze the novelist's response to Hollywood through the cases of F. Scott Fitzgerald and Nathanael West, writers who were drawn to Hollywood by the need to make a living and found there confirmation for many of the negative stereotypes that were associated with the motion picture business and the place it called home. Those two writers having been part of a group of intellectuals who, disillusioned with their country's political system, came to at one point see in communism a desirable path of development for the nation (Bell 142), F. Scott Fitzgerald and Nathanael West's disenchantment with America will also be discussed as part of that wider trend.

As part of this work, Budd Schulberg's Hollywood novel *The Disenchanted* will be examined. Published two decades after the decade ended, it has the 1930s as its setting and is thematically similar to other Hollywood novels of that decade. A fictionalized retelling of Schulberg's experience collaborating with F. Scott Fitzgerald on the script of a low-budget picture called *Winter Carnival* (Chipman 107), Schulberg's novel is one that has been overlooked by scholars, its examination in this dissertation being an element of originality. Bruce L. Chipman's analysis in *Into America's Dream Dump* having analyzed this novel, Chipman in his book does not, however, delve into the political inclinations of the authors of the novels he analyzes.

This dissertation will be divided into three chapters. Since both Nathanael West and F. Scott Fitzgerald to an extent correlate America's decadence with a deviation from its historical

principles and ideals, the first chapter will provide historical background on some aspects of the development of the American identity, as it diverged from the one that its early European settlers brought from the Old World. An initial subchapter (1.1) will trace how the emancipated individual came to be held as the prime agent in the promotion of social progress and public welfare, while a subsequent section (ch. 1.2) will chart how the nation's ideals developed in the nineteenth century. Finally, in subchapter 1.3 the ways in which the rapid industrialization of the country posed a challenge to the concept of individualism that had developed will be examined. F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* will in this part of the text be analyzed as a depiction of individual struggle to attain wealth and happiness in twentieth century America, the accrual of material comforts and happiness in life having over the years become inextricably connected in the public consciousness.

In the second chapter of this work, F. Scott Fitzgerald's perspective on America's past and future will be explored, as will be his ambivalent relationship with the idea of a communist future for the country. The motivation of others to endorse such a solution will also be considered (ch. 2.2). That analysis will be preceded by a section (ch. 2.1) where the state of the film business in the 1930s and its development up to that point will be examined. Budd Schulberg's *The Disenchanted* will be analyzed in this chapter, it having been chosen both for its description of studio culture in 1930s Hollywood and its fictionalized depiction of F. Scott Fitzgerald, not too long before his untimely death, as he was working in the film industry.

The third and final chapter will shift focus to Nathanael West and his only Hollywood novel, *The Day of the Locust*. The chapter being divided into two parts, an initial one (ch. 3.1) will analyse the novel, while the second part of this chapter (ch. 3.2) will examine its ending, taking into account Nathanael West's political stances and linking them with those of other intellectuals during the thirties.

1. Historical Background

From the colonial period to the twentieth century, this chapter will trace how American society came to hold the free individual responsible for his own fate and station in life, an ideal that would increasingly be threatened by the perception that opportunities to succeed had become limited as the country grew less rural and more populous.

Explored in this part of the text will be F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, novel that tells the story of Jay Gatsby, an affluent young man, as he attempts to rekindle his relationship with an old love in early twentieth century America. With sales numbers that fell short of Fitzgerald's previous novels, critics were split on *The Great Gatsby* when it launched in 1925 (Bruccoli, Introduction xx-xxi). H. L. Mencken, one of the most influential literary critics of the decade, in his review for *The Evening Sun* labels the lead character a sentimental "clown" with expensive tastes. Also noted by him was, however, the accuracy with which "the florid show of modern American life—and especially the devil's dance that goes on at the top" is depicted, making the novel, in Mencken's view, worthy of study for the social historian (121-23). Still considered merely a period piece by the time Fitzgerald passed away in 1940, reader interest in *Gatsby* was sparked by the writer's untimely death and the posthumous publication of *The Last Tycoon*, Fitzgerald's unfinished novel about Hollywood. Several new editions and reprints of *Gatsby* eventually led to a critical reassessment of the novel in the 1950s (Bruccoli, Introduction xxiii-xxiv), it being generally thought of as a classic by the time that decade drew to a close (Tanselle and Bryer 424). The analysis of this novel will also serve as an introduction to its author's understanding of the problems affecting American society.

1.1. The Promise of the New World

Individual pursuits being tightly regulated by the community in the earlier New England colonial settlements, the gradual loosening of that communal grasp over individual behavior will be here considered, a trend that was bolstered by the revolutionary ethos of the nation's foundational period. That same ethos, conjoining elements from secular theory and religious heritage would lay the basis for America's national identity and establish many of its guiding principles.

In the early part of the eighteenth century, a time when more orthodox forms of Calvinism still had a tight grasp on American society, influential Puritan minister Cotton Mather wrote on the relationship between religion and business. To him, the former fitted

under a general calling to serve God, while the latter found its place under a personal calling, one that had merit as resting on the usefulness of the individual's professional occupation to his community. Each of those realms of action served as complement to the other, one having to be useful to society in order to fulfill his obligation to God, the individual in turn having a certain place in the social structure where he could be most useful. By assuming the role that had been to him ascribed and being diligent in his work, one would be rewarded with material comforts (Griswold 478-80).

Whereas the Puritan settlers of New England, as close followers of Calvin, had generally been "predestinarian, anti-democratic, and anti-individualist" (Frank 289), Mather portrayed salvation as something to be attained in this life and the accumulation of wealth as evidence of God's approval. After all, "wealth was 'not always to them who are sharpest at inventing the most probable methods of coming at it,'" he once cautioned, too much ambition being ill-advised. A. Whitney Griswold found him to be one of the first to correlate material success with religious piety in such an explicit manner, individual enterprise continuing to be normally encouraged by the different Protestant denominations that rose to prominence in the years and decades that followed (482-83).

Under the belief that God's design was for them to in New England advance the Protestant Reformation that had been started in Europe (Tuveson 97-99), early settlers had formed closed-knit communities that took their religious and moral teachings from their local church (Grabb et al. 523). With time, this concept morphed into one that placed the colonies as having been selected by God as their agents to bring about the Millennial Kingdom prophesized in the Bible (Tuveson 101). This millennialist ideal can be found in more fully developed form in Congressionalist minister Timothy Dwight's 1771 poem "America," it having started to more clearly emerge in the previous decade, Ernest Lee Tuveson has found (101-03). The poem at first gives an unfavorable image of the period that preceded the Puritan colonization of New England (Dwight, "America" 3-4). After it, a time of peace was interrupted by the Indian wars (5-8), prosperity following in a society that is described as free, moral and just (9). As the poem continues, a divine figure commands the people of New England to war. Holding a scepter with the word "freedom" written on it, the angelic figure tasks the Protestant settlers of America with the replication of their accomplishments in other lands, "To roam from land to land, from pole to pole" and "'stretch their sway to regions yet unknown'" until "Love reign triumphant, Fraud and Malice cease,/And every region smile in endless peace." To this "heavenly kingdom" would "the waves obey" and through it would "Th' Almighty Saviour his great power display" (10-12).

While Dwight stresses freedom as one of New England's achievements under Protestant rule, the political liberty that the Puritans had coveted was one that applied to them as a collective, not to the individual inhabitant of their society (Frank 288-89). Gradually, a more Arminian set of beliefs took root in American society. Namely, stressed was God's benevolence and goodness, whereas the Puritans had emphasized "God's omnipotence, majesty, justice, and . . . inscrutability" (Persons 92). Free will and self-determination were given relevance and the idea that personal happiness was to be a worldly objective started to gain traction (94-96, 103).

Millennialist rhetoric would be incorporated into the revolutionary ethos, the Continental Congress in 1777 publishing *Apocalypse de Chiokoyhickoy, Chef des Iroquois*, purportedly a translation of a document written by the Iroquois Indians 472 years prior (Tuveson 113). Written as a prophecy, this text describes the arrival of "five human monsters" (qtd. in Tuveson 114) that would attack and enslave the Indians, the monsters acting as a stand in for the different European powers that attempted to establish colonies in North America. Eventually, a minority within one of those groups would split from it and "bring forth a new people" to overthrow the others (Tuveson 115). They were "destined to become . . . the agent of a blessed revolution, which is to bring peace, prosperity, [and] innocence to the new world" (qtd. in Tuveson 115).

John Jay, delegate from New York to that same Congress, could be found building on the idea that the United States had been blessed by God, as he praises the country's trajectory up to that point:

> Providence has been pleased to give this one connected country to one united people—a people . . . very similar in their manners and customs, and who, by their joint counsels, arms, and efforts, fighting side by side throughout a long and bloody war, have nobly established general liberty and independence. (Hamilton et al. 38)

Adding to it, Alexander Hamilton, one of the Framers of the Constitution, at the time writing in support of the ratification of that same document by the requisite number of states, portrayed the nation in those early years of its existence as

> an empire in many respects the most interesting in the world . . . [, as] it seems to have been reserved to the people of this country, by their conduct and example, to decide the important question, whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government

> from reflection and choice[.] . . . [A] wrong decision of the part we shall act may . . . deserve to be considered as the general misfortune of mankind (Hamilton et al. 33)

More than a different approach, the American system of government was to be taken as part of a Providential design, and an evolutionary step for mankind. It was up to the people of the United States to continue to live up to the demands of a democratic form of government, and therefore uphold the status of their society as one that constituted an example for the world to follow.

To be protected by American democracy were certain inalienable rights, among them being, famously, "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness," as Thomas Jefferson words it in the Declaration of Independence (US 1776), statement that is generally taken as a twist on John Locke's assertion that governments were instituted to protect one's "life, liberty and estate, against the injuries and attempts other men" (Locke, *Two Treatises* 259). Yet, as Carol V. Hamilton points out, in a 1690 essay Locke also considers the pursuit of happiness to be "the foundation of liberty. According to him, that happiness should be "true and solid happiness" and its pursuit necessarily "careful." In other words, one's actions must be directed at attaining lasting happiness, that not necessarily aligning itself with the satisfaction of every momentary desire (Locke, *Essay* 171). Hamilton places Locke's concept of happiness in the intellectual lineage of, among others, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Epicurus. To them, happiness was "bound up with the civic virtues of courage, moderation, and justice," both Locke and Epicurus being likely sources of inspiration for Jefferson, him also being well-acquainted with the latter (C. Hamilton). Jeffrey Rosen in *The Pursuit of Happiness* adds Aristotle, Algernon Sidney and Cicero to the list of Jefferson's influences, him also noting that Locke starts his two most famous books, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and *Two Treatises on Civil Government* with epigraphs from the Roman philosopher (95). Common to those poets and philosophers was a view that a virtuous existence was a prerequisite to happiness (89), a belief that was shared by the Founders (C. Hamilton).

Americans ought to be "mutual guardians of their mutual happiness" argued James Madison in *The Federalist* (Hamilton et al. 103). That was to be facilitated by the Federal Constitution, which made the individual an active participant in federal politics. Given the right to vote for the House of Representatives and the Presidency,[1] every American was both a citizen of the United States and his own state, "under two constitutions, two sets of laws, two sets of courts and officials" (Palmer 229). It was to be what Madison characterized as a

[1] A degree of mediation in the election of the president was maintained through the Electoral College.

republican form of government, a representative democracy where the elected representatives of the people acted as a filter to ideas most susceptible to negatively affect the general well-being and prosperity. Were, Madison argued, some of those representatives to themselves be "[m]en of factious tempers, of local prejudices, or of sinister designs," thus betraying the interests of those that elected them, such a large republic as the one being proposed for the United States could still contribute to protect the public good as it was unlikely that any given undesirable interest would constitute a majority faction in enough places for that to be of consequence. On the contrary, direct democracy would lead to tyrannical rule, he believed, a tyranny of the majority (Hamilton et al. 81-82), him pointing to what had happened in some states, where measures had been enacted for the sole benefit of transient majorities with disregard for the consequences that the defeated opposition would bear. Devised in the Constitutional Convention, Madison believed, was a system of government that could balance different competing interests and cope with the natural impulse of individuals to seek their own benefit, was it to run against the "permanent and aggregate interests of the community" (77-78).

The institutional break from the past that characterized the foundational period of the United States, besides opening the door to innovation in government, led to an impetus to rethink other rules and traditions that had guided the country during the colonial period. Thomas Jefferson would argue that each generation should only govern for itself, allowing the yet unborn to enjoy the same freedom his generation had to reform its institutions and laws and encourage them to rethink how they went about governing themselves. As he himself put it: "The Earth belongs to the living, not the dead . . . we may consider each generation as a distinct nation with a right, by the will of its majority, to bind themselves, but none to bind the succeeding generation, more than the inhabitants of another country" (Jefferson, "Thomas Jefferson to John"). Furthering this goal, Jefferson in a 1789 letter to James Madison proposed that any laws, including the constitution, automatically expired nineteen years after being enacted ("To James").

An inheritor of Jefferson's idea that the present is sovereign, Henry Thoreau would develop it with a focus on the individual and its avenues for self-improvement. Published in 1854, *Walden* is a retelling of Thoreau's experiences and observations as he withdraws himself from civilization to a house he built with his own hands, "on the shore of Walden Pond." For those "whose misfortune it is to have inherited farms, houses, barns, cattle, and farming tools" he reserves sympathy, as "those are more easily acquired than got rid of." With those "inherited encumbrances," the "young men" Thoreau is referring to are condemned to be "serfs of the

soil" (Thoreau 27-28). Justifying the negative outlook is something else that usually was inherited along with the enumerated items, debts that "sometimes outweigh the value of the farm, so that the farm itself becomes one great encumbrance" (47). The inheritor was thus forced to continue the business, whether he wanted to do so or not, past generations having conditioned the possibilities of present and future ones (29-30). While fond of the farmer's lifestyle, Jefferson had himself argued that his principle would dictate that one's debts died with him, instead of burdening inheritors (Jefferson, "Thomas Jefferson to John").

"One may almost doubt if the wisest man has learned anything of absolute value by living. . . . I have lived some thirty years on this planet, and I have yet to hear the first syllable of valuable or even earnest advice from my seniors," Thoreau contends further along in the same chapter, adding: "What everybody echoes or in silence passes by as true to-day may turn out to be falsehood to-morrow" (31). More radical than Jefferson's idea of a sovereign present, the same call for eschewing the ways of the past, merely reconsidering them not being enough, is something Thomas Paine had previously been a proponent of:

> [T]he case and circumstances of America present themselves as in the beginning of the world; and our enquiry into the origin of government is shortened, by referring to the facts that have arisen in our own day. We have no occasion to roam for information into the obscure field of antiquity, nor hazard ourselves upon conjecture. We are brought at once to the point of seeing government begin, as if we had lived in the beginning of time. The real volume, not of history, but of facts, is directly before us, unmutilated by contrivance, or the errors of tradition. (Paine 182)

Not only does Paine hold the sort of exercise that Madison embarked on in attempting to devise a system that avoided the problems that led to the downfall of previous democracies as inevitably hamstrung by the urgency that was required, he goes further by arguing that it could be counterproductive. The examples provided by history, being inevitably endowed with an element of entropy, would mean that the present served as a better guide. Echoing this sentiment and transferring it from the realm of institutions to individuals, Thoreau would write: "Age is no better, hardly so well, qualified for an instructor as youth, for it has not profited so much as it has lost" (31).

Society being the result of the accumulated toils and ideas of those who came before, propensity existed for the creation of "professors of philosophy, but not philosophers," as the thinkers of his present society, Thoreau argues, had grown detached from the practical problems of life. A form of luxury, the men of his time had lost touch with the natural world

and, while acquainted with the thoughts of others, had grown unable to think for themselves. Unable to escape the mental framework of their elders, "[t]hey make shift to live merely by conformity, . . . and are in no sense the progenitors of a nobler race of men." In decrying the comforts made possible by progress as having a degenerative effect on the human condition, Thoreau recounts the observation made by British naturalist Charles Darwin during one of his travels, that the native inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego would be almost naked and nonetheless sweating while, at the same time, him and his party were "well clothed," sitting closer to the fire, and still feeling "far from too warm." From there, Thoreau wonders if it would be "impossible to combine the hardiness of these savages with the intellectualness of the civilized man." The way to reconcile those two traits, he seems to suggest, would be to experiment to "live a primitive and frontier life, though in the midst of an outward civilization, if only to learn what are the gross necessaries of life" (33-35), him both giving advice and communicating to the reader the purpose of his stay at Walden Pond.

Reduced to the bare necessaries, one would have

> an individual emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestry, untouched and undefiled by the usual inheritances of family and race; an individual standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling, ready to confront whatever awaited him with the aid of his own unique and inherent resources. (R. Lewis 5)

Drawing from biblical imagery, this individual is what R. W. B. Lewis characterizes as a new Adam, America providing a "second chance for the human race, after the first chance had been so disastrously fumbled in the darkening Old World" (5). Thoreau himself would be quite explicit in establishing that parallel:

> Perhaps on that spring morning when Adam and Eve were driven out of Eden Walden Pond was already in existence, and even then breaking up in a gentle spring rain accompanied with mist and a southerly wind, and covered with myriads of duck and geese, which had not heard of the fall. (152)

To this writer, a place like Walden Pond, having retained its original purity, is an adequate location for the individual to recoup his own innocence. As part of such experiment in seclusion, some books could be of use if interpreted with a practical mindset and not as a purely theoretical exercise (89-90). Especially fond of the classical authors, *Walden*'s narrator considers that one "may read Homer or Aeschylus in the Greek without danger of dissipation or luxuriousness, . . . even if printed in the character of our mother tongue, [those] will always

be in a language dead to degenerate times" (86). Reading those books would constitute its own kind of purification ritual, for the knowledge contained had been mostly lost to time. Even then, Thoreau does not shy away from undermining the authority of those literary sources, Robert Klevay pointing out that the narrator consciously stretches and distorts the teachings of the classical works he alludes to throughout the narrative, a device that intends to reveal to the reader "how easily they themselves could manipulate classical literature for their own purposes" (205). Overall, regardless of how unpolluted Thoreau considered those ancient texts to be, nature was still the only truly authoritative source for knowledge, reading possibly being a means to enhance one's understanding of the natural world, but never a replacement for direct interaction.

Several writers would put the myth of the Adamic hero to use, developing it in different ways. Emerson, Melville, Whitman, or Hawthorne would be among them, the theme becoming a recurrent one in American literature from the nineteenth century onward, it either providing reason for hopefulness in the face of a new beginning or nostalgia for a lost innocence (R. Lewis 6-7).

From a place fit for a model society that observed the teachings of the Bible, as interpreted by the Puritans that settled in New England, America had come to be seen as the agent of a Providencial mission to lead the world to the biblical Millennium. While in the process the role of the individual in society was enlarged and the pursuit of personal goals legitimized and even encouraged, a regard for communal welfare was still expected. The portrayal of the Adamic myth in American fiction having come to be increasingly characterized by the hostility of the environment (R. Lewis 111), in the course of the next section of this text this development will be explored, as it relates to America's conception of itself and its role in the world.

1.2. Westward Expansion and Shifting Perceptions

The emphasis on the environment's hostility in American fiction came as the ever expanding Western frontier was built up as a place of opportunity and its settlement construed as fulfilling a Providential design for the nation. The self-reliant pioneer was depicted as the face of that effort. At the same time, the pursuit of material riches was to a larger and larger extent heralded as the paramount goal to have in life. It was also during this period that the country started to let go of the idea that it was to remain a predominantly agrarian, a notion that had historically found some support. Those developments will be the focus of this subchapter.

Benjamin Franklin's inspirational writings serve as example of America's shift in priorities as time progressed. As he met Mather early in his life, in a visit that seemingly left a lasting impression (Griswold 483), Benjamin Franklin would, decades later, credit Mather's *Essays to Do Good* as having been of influence to him. This work details at length its author's theory of religion and business as complementary callings (485). In it, to those who have been blessed with wealth, he recommends charity as a means to ensure the continuance of their good fortune, as those who are charitable "frequently . . . have been rewarded with remarkable success in their affairs, and increase of their property" (Mather, qtd. in Griswold 485). Such passages, leaning towards the utilitarian, would become a staple of Franklin's writing.

Correlating the practice of Puritan virtues with occupational success, he opens "Advice to a Young Tradesman" by telling the reader: "Remember that *time* is money." From there, the text is infused of Puritan morality and virtue, seemingly only insofar as the multiplication of money and generation of wealth stands to be positively impacted. Honoring credit obligations is crucial, for "[h]e that is known to pay punctually . . . may at any time . . . raise all the money his friends can spare," maximizing one's available credit having its own relevance, as "money is of a prolific generating nature. Money can beget money." If nothing else, fully respecting credit arrangements "makes you appear a careful, as well as an honest man," the focus being on "appearing", thus not necessarily being honest, as that is enough to augment one's ability to get credit. Still, Franklin refers to industry and frugality as aspects that can supersede in importance one's concerns regarding creditworthiness, his reasoning being that the less money one spends, the more he will have to invest and the faster it will be able to multiply it and grow wealthier (37-38). Franklin finishes the article by claiming that his prescription for business success is set to result, unless "that Being who governs the world, to whom all should look for a blessing on their honest endeavours, doth not, . . . otherwise determine" (39). On the whole, piety seems to function more as a preventative measure against failure in business than as an active participant in the success one might find in that realm.

An archetype of the self-made man, Benjamin Franklin was in many ways an ideal messenger for "the personal virtues that a nation of businessmen was to practice and cherish" (Rossiter 301), something that the revival his self-help writing experienced in the first decades of the nineteenth century seems to corroborate (Bruchey 195). Yet, even as he lured his readers with promises of riches, as Robert Bremner suggests, if his goal was simply to make them rich, "with his knowledge of the world, he could have offered more practical suggestions than maxims of self-help" (16). Rather, as he leads the reader to cultivate an image of virtuousness and respectability, Franklin belies an attempt to have him become the character he is to emulate.

Accumulation of wealth or, at the very least, economic independence, was to be an attainable goal, no matter the point from which each individual started, the underlying belief being that "work was always available for those who sought it—an assumption sufficiently plausible to be generally held. After all, there was a great and growing demand for labor" (Klebaner 386). If "left undisturbed to gain their livelihood and their future security by selling their labor," individuals would only be able to hold themselves accountable for their fortune in life, Benjamin Franklin believed (Williams 84).

Taking a clear stand against measures of support for the poor, Franklin drew from experience in contending that "the more public provisions were made for the poor, the less they provided for themselves, . . . the less was done for them, the more they did for themselves, and became richer" ("On the Price"). In attempting to explain such observation, he adds: "To those indeed who have been educated in elegant plenty, even the provision made for the poor may appear misery, but to those who have scarce ever been better provided for, such provision may seem quite good and sufficient" ("From Benjamin"). Up until that point poor relief had been perceived as a communal obligation, but nonetheless a tendency for the erosion of the responsibilities that communities had in tending for the poor had been present for some time (Rothman 13-14). Provided by Franklin is a rationale to justify an almost complete elimination of existing social safety nets. Social reformers in the 1820s would make use of that argument, and associate non-institutional public relief with idleness and vice (Rothman 165-66). Even as the population growth in cities had started to contribute to a depression of wages (Klebaner 386), some writers continued to make it seem as if "[t]he very act of applying for aid from tax-raised funds . . . contaminate[d] the applicant by breaking down his spirit of self-reliance," a number of them instead pointing to private charity as a viable alternative. Its unreliable character would supposedly encourage the recipient to seek alternative sources of income (393).

Having in the mid to late eighteenth century considered that financial independence was attainable to anyone who was disciplined enough to achieve it, Benjamin Franklin also had warned about the risks of overpopulation, something that would supposedly lessen opportunities for personal advancement. Concerned with the social consequences of industrialization, something that almost inevitably entailed an increase in the power of the wealthy, Franklin shared Thomas Jefferson's view that the country should retain a predominantly agrarian character (Miller 492). That desire can be traced to an association common in eighteenth century republican America between larger scale manufacturing and decadence in society. More complex forms of industrial production were thought to correlate

with the existence of a significant landless population, one that would therefore be available for employment in manufacturing (McCoy 51).

Regardless, an attempt was made to accelerate industrial development in the period that preceded Jefferson's ascent to the presidency in 1800, Alexander Hamilton and others in the Federalist Party considering that to be the most expedient way to strengthen America's position in the world. To that effect, government would need to enlarge its scope of action in order to more directly shape economic development (Pangle 100-01).

In his effort to convince the rest of the country's political leadership of the merits of economic diversification, Hamilton was aided by his assistant, Tench Coxe, who tried to make the proposal more palatable by arguing that machinery could make the need for human labor in manufacturing residual (Marx 153-54). Furthermore, the work that still needed to be performed would be suitable to women and children, that leaving men free to continue dedicating themselves to farming. By making use of those who would otherwise be idle, Coxe could contend that manufacturing, under the terms he proposed, would play a subservient and complementary role to agriculture (Marx 156). Further attempting to distance the kind of manufacturing he envisages from the one that existed in Europe, he argues that the natural conditions that existed on his side of the Atlantic made the country better suited to some types of manufactures. In his reasoning, the "'clean air and powerful sun of America will give producers of linens a distinct advantage over their overseas competitors, . . . [t]hus textile production is more 'naturally' suited to America than Europe." The heavy reliance on machinery, coupled with the more suitable environment, would supposedly translate into a "capacity of the New World environment to 'purify' the system" (Marx 158), that rendering a negative outlook on manufacturing unjustified.

Over the course of his first term in the presidency, Jefferson became more intimately familiar with the writings of political economist Thomas Malthus (McCoy 192), that having the effect of reinforcing his resolve to steer the country toward an agrarian future (195). According to the theories of this British writer, the natural tendency was for population growth, that meaning that the need for food would at some point outstrip its availability. When that happened, a state of overpopulation had been achieved (190), misery being "an absolutely necessary consequence of it" and vice "a highly probable consequence" (Malthus 20). As the thinking went, one would be correct in considering that such a society had lost its youth (McCoy 190).

A pessimist, Malthus deemed efforts to prevent the natural advancement toward overpopulation to be destined for eventual failure (McCoy 190-91). Even then, he admitted

that such evolution could be delayed by maximizing agricultural output, him also proposing that poor relief measures were gradually abolished, that working to discourage from having children those who had no means to support them (Malthus 127-30).

Despite having previously declared that "[t]he mobs of great cities add just so much to the support of pure government, as sores do to the strength of the human body" (Jefferson, *Notes* 175), even Jefferson would in 1805 observe that manufacturing workers were not necessarily any more corrupt or dependent than those who dedicated themselves to agriculture. Instead, he attested to the notion that "the factory system, when transferred to America, is redeemed by contact with 'nature' and the rural way of life." Jefferson did, however, also mention in that same letter that the special character of manufactures in America was contingent on the continued existence of vacant land (Marx 159). Like Franklin, Jefferson was a proponent of the notion, popular in some circles, that the West and its unsettled expanses functioned as a safety-valve. The idea not having remained static, in Jefferson's incarnation of it, whenever there was a tendency for a race to the bottom in terms of the pay being offered in the cities, some would respond by resettling in the West, hoping to secure a better standard of living. Through that mechanism, those who stayed behind in the cities would stand to benefit as well, the lessening of the availability of labor leading to better employment conditions being on offer (Smith 202-03). Ignored was the fact that the costs involved in such resettlement would be prohibitive to someone whose income had never amounted to much (Berthoff 203 un).

Irrespective of the softening of his opinion on industrialization, Jefferson would write in a personal letter, after his presidency:

> I have often thought that if heaven had given me choice of my position & calling, it should have been on a rich spot of earth, well watered, and near a good market for the productions of the garden. No occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth, & no culture comparable to that of the garden. ("Thomas Jefferson to Charles")

More than a rational stance, to Jefferson, the pursuit of an agrarian future for the nation was an emotional one. Even after his two terms in office, during which his stance on manufacturing had changed, he had not abandoned the ideal of an agrarian nation. In commenting on the population theory of Malthus, he considered that America was in a unique position to escape a state of overpopulation, given the possibility of colonizing new territories, land being a resource he perceived to be almost limitless, at least in comparison to the need there could conceivably be for it (McCoy 193-94).

Those who shared Malthusian concerns saw the Louisiana purchase, through which the country greatly expanded its territorial claims, as a way to make Jefferson's idea of development through space as a means to stall society's otherwise natural development through time feasible (McCoy 200-01), ensuring that "American society was to grow prosperous and civilized without succumbing to luxury" (237). While the annexation of Canada and other European possessions in North America had been a goal ever since independence had been achieved, that was mostly out of national security concerns and, as such, with a reasonably defined scope (Weinberg 20-22), republican thought traditionally associating territorial "expansion and empire with luxury, corruption, and especially despotism," a somewhat similar thought pattern to the one engendered by large manufactures. Those that defended an agrarian outlook sought to turn the tables and portray such a form of expansion as the only viable way to preserve the republican ideal of the country (204-05).

Expanding the country's borders carried with it its own challenges to the American psyche. From the early stages of settlement in North America that Puritan ministers had looked at the frontier as a threat to public morals and traditions, "Cotton Mather called it a heathen influence, and Joseph Easter Brooks looked on many frontier towns as 'ruinous heaps of confusion'" (Hine 47). The fur trapper, a nomadic and solitary figure, in a way epitomized a sort of self-reliant individualism that would later be heralded as a mark of Americanism. Yet, in the 1820s, *The Western Monthly Review* could still be found describing this figure on the frontier as "furnish[ing] an impressive proof, that there is no mode of life intrinsically so repulsive and painful, but man may become reconciled to it by habit" ("Missouri Trapper" 28). Trappers would unite in groups, but only insomuch as was required to ensure a minimum degree of safety against the many hazards of the wilderness (Hine 58). Keeping the groups small was advisable to maintain efficiency, some sources estimating that six would be the maximum if being productive was the only concern. Besides that more practical aspect, there was the notion that "[t]he American fur trapper, above all, was charged and sustained by that impulsion toward separateness. His occupation had selected him, a social renegade perhaps, a pursuer of loneliness" (50-54). Under this view, solitude was not a burden but a perk, any collaborative effort being temporary, groups of trappers seemingly prone to regular separations and realignments among their members (58).

Other threats to the good customs and morals in the frontier also existed. Those who moved west in hopes of securing land could themselves end up deviating from the traditional image of family and community. As they started their journey, the same need for protection in numbers often relied on by trappers usually encouraged the formation of groups that traveled

together. Commonly moving as family units, “they were old enough to cherish the memories of rural village cohesiveness, a legendary unity that presumably would continue to support them on the trail” (Hine 60). Yet, while the hardships of the trail could engender different dynamics, either contributing to disharmony or unity, by the end of the journey any sense of community would most frequently be left behind, each individual or family going its own way (66-68). The vastness of the territory seemingly led to a greater degree of mobility, Robert Hine noting that “[s]ources of plains history are records of mobility” (97). Differing personal interests made for bonds that were circumstantial and, consequently, communities that did not have the strength, possibly also the will, to impose restraints on individual behavior (120-22).

With the agrarian ideal having the virtuous and independent farmer as its hero, an attempt was made to draw a distinction in the public consciousness between that figure and that of the pioneer types that inhabited the frontier. Writing near the turn of the century, Timothy Dwight largely follows previously established thought patterns when he describes those he deems “foresters, or Pioneers”:

> The business of these persons is no other than to cut down trees, build log-houses, lay open forested grounds to cultivation, and prepare the way for those who come after them. These men cannot live in regular society. They are too idle; too talkative; too passionate; too prodigal; and too shiftless; to acquire either property or character. . . . [T]hey manage their own concerns worse than any other men. (*Travels* 459)

Such pioneer is a misfit, rejected by society he is banished to places where the grasp of civilization is still tenuous or non-existent. Unable to resist the temptation to sell, since he “hates the sober industry, and prudent economy, by which his bush pasture might be changed into a farm, and himself raised to thrift and independence,” the pioneer paves the way for “a better husbandman,” one that would not be at ease in the complete wilderness but who would be more amenable to the prospect of taking over an already tamed landscape. This second occupant is the one Dwight truly considers a farmer (460).

Another challenge to the agrarian ideal became evident as the nineteenth century progressed, there normally being no way to adequately transport goods from their local of production to the place where they would be transformed or consumed. Eager to efficiently sell his produce, the farmer himself “agitates for highways and canals, for improved navigation of the rivers, and later for railways. Developing commerce creates depots like Cincinnati and Louisville – cities in the wilderness” (Smith 155). At first, there seemed to be a perception that better means of transport and communication would only help the agrarian cause, by ensuring

the means to extend "the society of virtuous yeomen to a wider area" (157), the railroad being crucial in connecting the West to the Atlantic Seaboard and thus creating conditions for the inhabitants of the expanding frontier to be productive members of society (34). A pattern had nonetheless emerged, by which human development would follow the movement further and further inland. As the frontier leaves a place behind, its development continues, commerce depots growing into cities, those cities attracting more and more commerce and manufacturing as time marches forward, to the point that "eventually it is they, rather than the farming communities that set the tone of the West" (155).

Whereas the West had previously seemed an almost endless avenue for expansion, the limits to that growth eventually started to become palpable. In 1815, Daniel Drake was celebrating a future where the West would develop virtuously due to its isolation from the older settlements in the Eastern Seaboard, "secluded from foreign intercourse, and thereby rendered patriotic, . . . possessed of a greater proportion of freehold estates than any people on earth, and of course made industrious, independent and proud" (qtd. in Smith 157). That sense of a healthy seclusion of the Western inhabitants was nowhere to be found when, about a decade and a half later, James Hall, editor of the *Western Souvenir*, exalted the virtues of technological progress, namely the steamboat, declaring that with its invention Robert Fulton "has extended the channels of intercourse, and multiplied the ties which bind us to each other" (qtd. in Smith 158). Here, development in transportation is no longer a guarantee of sustainability for an agrarian model, but rather a foreshadowing of its demise. Some writers, as late as in the middle of the century, still nonetheless persisted in declaring the West as having a mostly agricultural future ahead of it, an assessment that by then evidenced some detachment from reality (Smith 159).

Having also become increasingly clear as the century progressed was the fact that territorial expansion no longer primarily meant the safeguard of the achievements and traditions of the past in face of present and future challenges, but rather a way to bolster the country's status among peers, the idea of the nation having not only a right, but a responsibility to occupy and civilize the rest of the continent as part of its millennialist mission taking shape. Eventually known as Manifest Destiny, this belief rationalized the conquest of the West and, eventually, other parts of the continent (Pratt 213).

Its first known written description can be found in an 1845 article published in the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* titled "Annexation" (Pratt 222-23). Authored by one of the magazine's co-founders (217-18, 25), John O'Sullivan, the circumstance that the article directly responds to and merits its title, was the possible annexation of Texas, the writer

defending it as part of a "manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions," efforts to deny this destiny being supposedly backed by foreign nations "in a spirit of hostile interference" (O'Sullivan 5). The latter part of the article lays the path to California's independence from Mexico, "a thousand miles distant, inheriting from Spain a title good only for those who have none better," the claim for independence being eventually justified by way of Anglo-Saxon migration to the region, something that would happen naturally and without the need for government intervention. From there, California would either be annexed or expand from its Pacific Coast until eventually its and the United States' borders meet and the "Empires of the Atlantic and Pacific" merge into one (9). Use of the expression "Manifest Destiny" would spread to other publications after O'Sullivan's 1845 article, and appear in congressional discourse by the time the Oregon territory policy, until then jointly occupied with the British, was being discussed (Pratt 224).

In this quest for an American empire, the pioneer, with his adventurous spirit and restless character, became the hero of a nation that perceived itself to embody those traits. Decades before the expansionist tendency of the country had been articulated into theories of Manifest Destiny, a change in portrayal of this character had already started to take shape. John Filson would in 1784 publish "The Adventures of Col. Daniel Boone" which, according to historian Richard Slotkin, marked "the first nationally viable statement of a myth of the frontier." The hero of this narrative, "a character who was to become the archetypal hero of the American frontier, copied . . . innumerable times under other names and other guises" (269), is someone who leaves behind his home in North Carolina "to wander through the wilderness of America, in quest of the country of Kentucke. . . . [A] long and fatiguing journey through a mountainous wilderness, in a westward direction" (Filson 40). The titular character being a real-life frontiersman, Filson's portrayal does not attempt to be fact-based, instead drawing from legend as much as it did from Boone's own statements (Slotkin 278). Emphasized is the bountifulness and vastness of the land, with an "abundance of wild beasts of all sorts, . . . [buffaloes] browsing on the leaves of the cane or cropping the herbage on those extensive plains, fearless, because ignorant, of the violence of man," it is ripe for human development and economic exploitation, if not for the perils that lurk within. Compounding the element of danger was the presence of the natives, who captured Boone and his party. Outsmarting their captors, they managed to escape, only for Boone to eventually find himself alone after everyone else that had accompanied him either returned to their homes or ended up "killed by the

savages" (Filson 40-42). Nonetheless, he was happy with that existence: "[I]t was impossible I should be disposed to melancholy," Boone recalls (44).

Later in the story, Boone is captured again, but this was an incident that happened after the "savages . . . [had] learned the superiority of the . . . Virginians, by experience; being out-generalled in almost every battle. [With that, o]ur affairs began to wear a new aspect." After that point, Boone was able to learn more of the ways of the Indians (Filson 48-50) and, by the end of the story, the land of Kentucky was being cultivated (56) and the Indians had been forced into a less aggressive stance (60). As pointed out by Slotkin, it is a story that pits man against the wilderness and, through individual will and perseverance, man proves himself worthy of the resources of the land, the Indian serving as a reminder of the consequences of defeat for, having failed to tame the wilderness, he has become part of it (274-75). For his contribution in civilizing Kentucky, Boone is rewarded with "peace and safety, . . . the sweets of liberty, and the bounties of Providence" (Filson 62).

Near the end of the nineteenth century, Frederick Jackson Turner enunciated his frontier thesis in "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." This 1893 essay, one whose influence would decisively shape American thought (Billington 13-16), developed the theory that the frontier had been the most preponderant element in American history up to that point. Perceiving the territory through which the country had expanded as having been previously vacant and bereft of human development, he considers that to have led to a process of repeated contact with the wilderness, a "continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society" (Turner 2-3).

If the frontier is the source of what is most distinct about America, those who most directly interact with it would also the ones who better personified the spirit of the nation. According to Turner:

> The wilderness masters the colonist. It finds him a European in dress, industries, tools, modes of travel and thought. It takes him from the railroad car and puts him in the birch canoe. It strips off the garments of civilization and arrays him in the hunting shirt and the moccasin. . . . [t]he environment is at first too strong for the man. He must accept the conditions which it furnishes, or perish, and so he fits himself into the Indian clearings and follows the Indian trails. Little by little he transforms the wilderness; but the outcome is not the old Europe . . . [t]here is a new product that is American. (4)

Described is a process remarkably similar to the one endured by Boone, in Filson's account of it. One's "Americanness" is seemingly graded by the level of detachment from European

customs and traditions, the conditions of the frontier forcing the pioneer to adapt, at first eliminating most traces of his Old World origins, that happening as he learns the ways of the native which will allow him to survive in the wilderness. After this ritual of rebirth, as he starts being able to shape the natural world and make it more comfortable to human existence, he himself is also still being shaped by that world he is transforming, he is becoming an American. As the process repeats itself in the westward movement, the more there is of America and the less there is of Europe (4), the European roots in a way preventing the American temper from emerging in its fullest form. A consequence of tying the nation's identity to the experience at the frontier was "a composite nationality for the American people," an individual being as American as any other who went through a similar experience "[i]n the crucible of the frontier" (22-23), regardless of cultural background.

Learning, out of necessity, to be self-reliant in the frontier, the individual who comes out of the transformative experience described by Turner is one whose "tendency is anti-social," one that has come to enjoy the self-reliance once foisted upon him by the environment. The frontiersman interprets attempts to control any aspect of his life as illegitimate and any attempts to tax him as oppressive (Turner 30). Described is a form of liberal individualism that had taken hold of American society in a gradual manner over that century as a result of several different historical trends, namely the increase of economic opportunities and the breakdown of religious intolerance (Grab et al. 526-27). This ideal of individual self-reliance, what then-presidential candidate Herbert Hoover in 1928 termed "rugged individualism" ("Principles"), came to be a trait that Americans would consider characteristically theirs for years and decades to come, even as the frontier had been finally conquered and, with that, the more immediate and tangible goals of Manifest Destiny had been accomplished (Grab et al. 527-28).

Apparent in Turner's thesis is the influence of Charles Darwin. *On The Origin of Species*, published in 1859, was the English naturalist's defense of a theory of natural selection, a process he described as "the doctrine of Malthus, applied to the whole animal and vegetable kingdoms." Each species generating more offspring than can possibly survive, some organisms develop traits that help them better resist adverse conditions, meaning that they live longer and generate more offspring. Hereditary transmission playing its role in the process, individuals possessing a beneficial trait gradually become a bigger share of an overall population of a species (Darwin 5). Those that are unable to adapt to changed conditions will dwindle in numbers and eventually go extinct, only the fittest surviving (80-81, 109-10). In many ways a denial of divine creation, Darwin's ideas seemingly found easier acceptance in America than they had in Europe, gaining popularity after the Civil War. In some circles, "*The Origin of*

Species became an oracle, consulted with the reverence usually reserved for Scripture" (Hofstadter, *Social* 14-16). Turner's frontier thesis transplants to the American context the notion of an organism adapting to a new environment, as the European becomes an American. As Turner writes in a later essay on the subject of the frontier: "The history of our political institutions . . . is a history of the evolution and adaptation of organs in response to changed environment, a history of the origin of new political species" (205-06).

As Frederick Jackson Turner was presenting his frontier thesis, the availability of Western land to colonize had already dwindled and, with that, an era of American history was drawing to a close (Turner 32). The image of the restless and self-reliant pioneer helping to fulfill America's Manifest Destiny to expand west would endure, that part of the national myth furthering the idea of the individual as a preponderant factor in the progress of the country. The notion that organisms can evolve and adapt to changing conditions that Charles Darwin advanced was also adapted in other ways, as some would go further than Turner had and develop a general theory of social development based on those same precepts. That development will be explored over the course of the next section of this text.

1.3. The Rise of the City

In this subchapter, perceptions of the prospects of the individual in the interconnected industrial economy that had started to take shape after the Civil War will be analyzed. While previously the need to justify America's expansionist ambitions in the public consciousness had made the frontiersman a hero to be celebrated, for his self-reliance and resourcefulness, later it was the self-made businessman that rose to prominence as a model of success, him standing as proof that the social hierarchy remained fluid. Explored in this part of the text will be F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, a novel that exposes the country's egalitarian myth as illusory.

By the time Jefferson was softening his stance on the development of manufactures, an industrial future was already taking shape. According to the census, the share of the population engaged in farming declined from three-quarters in 1820 to half of the labor force by 1880, New York City counting a million inhabitants. That happened even as the country expanded west and new land to cultivate was still available. The nation, not only more urban, had also become much more centralized and stratified, those changes having been the result of progressively increasing levels of industrialization. Another consequence of those developments was an exponential increase in the national wealth, its distribution being however

more unequal than under previous economic paradigms the country had gone through (Mills 16; Baltzell 6-7).

After the Civil War and up to the turn of the century the economy had come to be dominated by large businesses controlled by relatively few hands as government, particularly at the state level, reflected the general mood of the nation as it sought to stimulate economic growth through regulation, subsidies and public works, in the process continuously chipping away at legislation of a social character (Berthoff 170). In this new industrial era, commonly referred to as the Gilded Age, the captains of industry formed a new aristocracy whose social status, John M. Mecklin has found, rivaled the one previously reserved to the Puritan New England minister (416). Others would be inspired to follow in the footsteps of such self-made men and become success stories of their own (Mills 5-6).

This foreshadows the world of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, one where the individual looks for opportunity in the big urban centers and not the remote expanses that had characterized the American West. Reflecting this change of paradigm, Nick Carraway, Daisy Buchanan's cousin and the novel's participant narrator, finds his Midwestern home to no longer be "the warm center of the world," but instead "the ragged edge of the universe." Recently returned from the war in Europe and desirous to do something of his life, it only took him a few days after having resettled in the East to find himself in a situation where he felt as "a guide, a pathfinder, an original settler," as he gave directions to a more recently arrived stranger. To Nick, it felt like a new beginning (Fitzgerald, *Great* 6-7).

Carraways of previous generations having experienced a modicum amount of financial success, in his new situation, Nick was nonetheless clearly among the have-nots, with his father only having agreed to support him for a year and his new residence being "squeezed between two huge places," one being Jay Gatsby's, a large mansion "with a tower on one side, . . . a marble swimming pool, and more than forty acres of lawn and garden" (Fitzgerald, *Great* 8). He lived in West Egg, one of

> a pair of enormous eggs, identical in contour and separated only by a courtesy bay, . . . [t]hey are not perfect ovals—like the egg in the Columbus story[2] they are both crushed flat at the contact end—but their physical resemblance must be a source of perpetual confusion to the

[2] When faced with the observation that, had it not been him, someone else would sooner or later have discovered America, Christopher Columbus allegedly responded by challenging the critics to make an egg stand on its tip. No one being able to do so, Columbus broke the tip of the egg, that having flattened it, therefore allowing him to complete the challenge (Schlup).

> gulls that fly overhead. To the wingless a more arresting phenomenon is their dissimilarity in every particular aspect except shape and size. (7-8)

Each side of the bay being inhabited by people of distinct social status, East Egg by generational wealth and West Egg by social climbers, like the egg of Columbus, they both stand on their own, imperfect and isolated, an image of a divided America. Not only aiming to become a bond broker, but also "that most limited of specialists, the 'well-rounded' man," Nick had "so much to read for one thing and so much fine health to be pulled down out of the young breath-giving air" (7). Like the Western settlers of a previous era, he had to learn the skills that would help him in his new environment.

At this point the notion that wage labor condemned someone to a life of poverty had been largely replaced by a more optimist outlook that provided several paths to achieve independence and wealth, accommodating the changing times and maintaining the spirits of those who found employment in the manufacturing and office jobs that had started to proliferate. Among those who contributed to the perpetuation of that ideal was Horatio Alger Jr., his rags-to-riches stories, almost invariably taking place in New York City, inspiring many young boys that grew up between the Civil War and the First World War (Allen, *Big* 63-64). Noteworthy in Alger's stories is the fact that luck invariably played a preponderant role in the hero's path to financial independence (Weiss 53-54). Chance not being something that could be relied upon, a degree of moderation in one's aspirations was normally encouraged in post Civil War success literature (100). In common with Benjamin Franklin's writings, Richard Weiss notes, said material generally "contained much advice on the general conduct of life, very little on the art of accumulating fortunes" (97). Within that context, different paths to success were supposed to exist: "The worker became a foreman and then an industrialist; the clerk became a bookkeeper or a drummer and then a merchant on his own. The farmer's son took up land in his own right" (Mills 260). Still lingering was a semi-conscious delusion that anyone could achieve at least a modicum of success, one that William Ghent described as akin to "the gambler's faith, the conviction that, though everything be against him, he will somehow 'beat the game'" (123-24).

Despite the rhetoric, a path to prosperity had not presented itself to all Americans. In *Gatsby*, the novel taking place after the country had benefited from decades of industrialization, Nick at one point describes a place situated between West Egg and New York, the Valley of Ashes: "a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens, where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke and finally, with

a transcendent effort, of men who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air" (21). Despite the propensity of Americans to think of the land they came to occupy as a place of civilizational rebirth, a Garden of Eden it was not, that image of the garden having been forever lost to progress. Instead, the valley, with its desolate scenery, represents the version of an industrial future that Malthus or Jefferson most feared. It being a place where the poorest members of society were left to wither in almost uninhabitable conditions, those who were better off in life avoided even having to acknowledge its existence, the road that leads to New York running parallel to the railroad "as to shrink away" from the valley. Overlooking the lifeless scenery, there were "[t]he eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg[,] blue and gigantic. . . . They look out of no face but, instead, from a pair of enormous spectacles which pass over a nonexistent nose." Being described is a billboard, the doctor in it passing as a godlike presence, towering over the barren landscape. The eyes of Dr. Eckleburg, "dimmed a little by many paintless days under sun and rain" but having a "persistent stare," had been observing the valley as it decayed, the hopes and dreams of its inhabitants having, like the billboard, faded. In the meanwhile, just as the oculist that put up the billboard had seemingly forgotten about it, so did those who traveled between West Egg and New York forget about the valley (21-22).

The competitive element had been given more relevance, Darwinist ideas having relatively swiftly turned into theories of social Darwinism, as thinkers in a diverse range of social disciplines investigated how some of the innovations brought about by the British naturalist could apply to their own areas of knowledge (Hofstadter, *Social* 4). Precepts of natural selection and survival of the fittest had helped legitimize competition between individuals as standing in accordance with a natural law (45), that happening to the detriment of the notion that each individual had a position in society they had been destined to rise to, were they to prove themselves worthy of it (Cawelti 171).

A proponent of such ideas was Scottish thinker Herbert Spencer. Initially drawing from other more primitive notions of evolutionary biology, as well as Malthus (Spencer, *New* 5, 8), who himself had framed his theory on population growth as deriving from a law of Nature, observable among plants and animals (Malthus 20). Years before the publishing of Darwin's seminal work, Spencer wrote *A New Theory of Population* where, despite his self-professed agreement with Malthus (5), Spencer considers that rather than stalling the march of progress and initiating a degenerative cycle, a continuous pressure of population on the means of subsistence provided additional incentive for individuals to compete in order to raise their standing in society and, with that, be in better condition to secure those goods. Without said competition, "more thought would not daily be brought to bear upon the business life; greater

activity of mind would not be called for; and development of mental power would not take place." To Spencer, it is the necessity to exercise human faculties that leads to their evolutionary improvement, him applying the general law Darwin would enunciate less than a decade later, that those who are fittest survive longer and generate more offspring (41-42), to social development.

Like Franklin and Malthus before him, Spencer refused to acknowledge utility in public measures to directly help the poor, the reason for that stance not being however entirely the same. Having no illusions about the ability of the poor to help themselves, Spencer thought that providing help to someone who had not kept up with his peers in the race for a livable income would be a distortion of the natural course of events, one that "brings into play forces of many kinds, incalculable in their strengths and tendencies" (*Study* 106). Looking at the opposite end of the social scale, Spencer's theory could be used to legitimize the accumulation of wealth as part of a design of nature. Also justifiable would be a contrarian stance toward reforms that could result in some measure of wealth redistribution, the idea being that a slow development of the social structures was preferable to wide-ranging reforms, the evolution of species postulated by Darwin taking place over long periods of time (Hofstadter, *Social* 5-7). Such was the hold that this philosophy had on Edward Youmans, founder of *Popular Science* magazine, that even as he denounced the pervasive corruption that existed among New York politicians, Youmans nonetheless contended that nothing should be done about it: "It's all a matter of evolution. We can only wait for evolution," he posited (qtd. in Hofstadter, *Social* 47-48).

Andrew Carnegie, one of the most successful businessmen of the period and a self-professed disciple of Herbert Spencer (Carnegie, *Autobiography* 333-34*)*, demonstrating to be more of a practical thinker than Youmans, found it acceptable to invest on the structural and sustainable improvement of society, in areas like education, culture, or healthcare.[3] It was philanthropy instead of charity, "the improvement of the future rather than the amelioration of the past," a distinction that President Roosevelt, in an attempt to appease conservatives, was keen to make in the Great Depression era when defending his policies, him arguing that

[3] The extent to which the generality of the business community identified with Darwinist beliefs, as it pertained to the nature of the social development, has probably been overemphasized, historian Irvin G. Wyllie points out (630-32). Still, the swift acceptance of such ideas by several intellectuals and the recurrence of defamatory campaigns associating those precepts with the captains of industry were probably enough to instill the perception that successful businessmen of the country were guided in their actions by the likes of Herbert Spencer, a notion that would be prevalent well into the twentieth century (629, 634-35).

proposed by him was reform, as opposed to relief (Kirkland 148). In an article titled "Wealth," Carnegie attempted to convert others in his wealth bracket to the ways of philanthropy. Through philanthropic work, one would be able to cultivate a good public image and secure a place in the collective consciousness of generations to come (Carnegie, "Wealth" 659-60), Carnegie's way of giving ultimately working as a preventative against labor unrest and a substitute for social reform.

One of the most prominent Congregational ministers of his time, Henry Ward Beecher, would in 1878 endorse the ideas of Herbert Spencer, him four years later also expressing his support for Darwin's evolutionary doctrine (McLoughlin 30). His thinking being to some extent reminiscent of Henry Thoreau's, Beecher heralded nature as "a perpetual letter from God, freshly written every day and each hour" (Beecher, "Morals" 234). The natural world standing alongside the Bible as one of the "two records of God's creative energy," its study was to be encouraged and the findings resulting from that endeavor conciliated with those of the Scriptures (Beecher, *Evolution* 44). That he did with ease, for he had no qualms about questioning or outright rejecting certain applications of evolutionary principles (3), in a similar manner to which one normally ended up giving a "different weight and value to different parts of the Bible" (142). Overall, by explicitly opening up theology to the influence of science, Beecher in all likelihood relieved the conscience of his middle-class following, to whom some aspects of Herbert Spencer's thinking could prove compelling.

The use of science in an attempt to legitimize various aspects of the social structure is present in *Gatsby*, most explicitly in the character of Tom Buchanan, Daisy's husband. An inhabitant of East Egg he is, fittingly, a representative of inherited wealth and lives a life of leisure. Before coming to East Egg, he "had spent a year in France, for no particular reason, and then drifted here and there unrestfully wherever people played polo and were rich together" (8-9). After his introduction in the novel, Tom quickly reveals somewhat of an obsession with the idea that "the white race will be . . . utterly submerged" if precautions were not taken, him mentioning a "fine book" titled *The Rise of the Coloured Empires*, by an author named Goddard, as having elicited that concern, him claiming such theory to be a scientific one. According to the author he cites, the likes of Tom and Nick, as part of the dominant race, the "Nordics," would be at risk of being subjugated by other races, provided they were complacent (14). From the description of Tom as someone whose most notable trait was his physicality, which he perceived as giving him ascendancy over others (8-9), one can envisage how effortless it must have been for him to accept the concept of a superior race, especially one that he was a member of. A couple of chapters after Buchanan first mentions Goddard's book, a

guest at one of Gatsby's parties picks up a volume of *Stoddard Lectures* (14), suggesting that to be the writer Tom had been referring to previously. This “middle-aged man with enormous owl-eyed spectacles,” elsewhere in the book referred to as Owl Eyes, would express surprise at the fact that the books were “absolutely real” rather than props, him praising Gatsby as “a regular Belasco,” in reference to the famed Broadway producer. Yet, even if the books were real, their function was still performative, for the pages were uncut, indicating they had not been read. That aspect, Owl Eyes construed as a sign that Gatsby was not overdoing the image he sought to portray. Whether or not Gatsby was also a fan is unclear, that book being just one among many that he had on some shelves (37-38).

By that point immigrants came to the United States mainly from Southern and Eastern Europe, whereas before 1890 the country had primarily attracted immigration from Germany, Scandinavia, Great Britain and Ireland. Besides the Irish, all of those groups were predominantly Protestant. Contrastingly, later immigration was chiefly Catholic, Greek Orthodox or Jewish and less educated. Many felt that their culture and institutions were under threat (Parkes and Carosso 83-85), as was their relative standing in the social hierarchy (Baran and Sweezy 265). The growing resentment toward immigrants led Congress to in 1921 pass the Emergency Quota Act, strengthened in 1924 by the National Origins Act. The aim was to severely restrict immigration and simultaneously freeze the ethnic makeup of the American population, that being achieved through a system of quotas (Parkes and Carosso 343-44).

The title bringing to mind the one Buchanan mentions in the story, Lothrop Stoddard's *The Rising Tide of Color* saw publishing in 1920, this writer theorizing about the supposed threat that motivated Tom's tirade. Stoddard believed that conflict between races was the lens through which international affairs should be interpreted (5). To him, the Great War had largely been a conflict between white peoples and, as such, from the perspective of other races a display of disunity. That, along with the fact that every other race cultivated its own special distaste for whites (10-11), would make for the inevitability of a “general race-cataclysm” at some point in the twentieth century (16). In that violent globe-spanning confrontation, the white race, of “superior heredity,” would fight for its very survival (300).

Daisy and Tom, living lives of symbolic consumption made possible by generational wealth, would have both been representatives of what Thorstein Veblen termed the “leisure class” in his 1899 exposé of the lives of the rich, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. In it, Veblen argued that, to cement his reputation, the gentleman of leisure must engage in the conspicuous consumption of valuable goods. For that purpose, he will give out expensive presents and organize costly events, thus enlisting others to vicariously consume for him and in the process

assert his pecuniary ability (75-76). After all, an increase in mobility that fostered the accelerated growth of cities had simultaneously led to decreased social intercourse between neighbors, such public displays of wealth consequently assuming a heightened role in asserting one's reputation within the community (86-87). Active participation in the community, as well as the extent of that participation, became a matter of personal choice. It was, in Morris Janowitz's words, “a community of ‘limited liability’” (211). During that period the old ideals of frugality and thrift had been eroded (Ewen 25), advertisers in the 1920s having perfected strategies designed to exploit one’s craving for social prestige and other basic instincts (35). Of aid in their task was the normalization of installment purchasing (58), that leading to a situation where “individuals sought an elevation of status through the purchase and display of goods whose appearance counted for more than their substance” (Orvell, qtd. in Springer 278n13), that oftentimes entailing the purchase of cheap manufactured goods that attempted to pass as more expensive handmade items (Springer 278n13).

Influenced by Veblen’s ideas, F. Scott Fitzgerald had himself in 1924 already written about the wasteful and parasitic behavior of the inheritors of great wealth in a syndicated article published under variant titles (Canterbery 302). The inheritor of great wealth in America, he considers in this article, either spends his life selfishly adding to his father's fortune or, “assuming that aristocracy is a sort of drunken reel between two long lines of bribed policemen, spends his life and money in a riot of extravagance and petty vice.” Regardless of path chosen, little has this leisure class contributed to human advancement (“What Kind” 191-92). On the contrary, “the American ‘leisure class’ . . . [is] probably the most shallow, most hollow, most pernicious leisure class in the world.” Many of its members, “from their inability to pay the heavy financial cost of post-prohibition entertainment, have become nothing more than sponges and parasites,” Fitzgerald argues (188).

Many of the fortunes that this leisure class dissipated had been amassed relatively recently, rendered possible by the process of rapid industrialization that followed the Civil War. As business developed, out of the free market business monopolies and oligopolies had started to emerge, a largely new development. Whereas government had historically granted monopoly privileges to certain private entities or individuals, portraying such decisions as beneficial to the public interest, the patent system being part of that, powerful monopolies arising out of the market and not as a result of government decree had previously been rare (Trachtenberg 4, 6). This was made possible, at least in part, by a judicial interpretation of the Constitution that the Founders had not envisaged. Corporations were granted the same private property protections that only a natural person was previously deemed to have. As such,

government regulation of business could only be of a limited scope (Parkes and Carosso 25). Theoretically cooperative endeavors, many of the biggest corporate entities of the post-Civil War era were created and dominated by individual figures, who had dug themselves out of poverty. It would take another generation for corporate control to become more diffuse and management to normally be assumed by salaried executives (22, 361).

Infatuated with this business elite, the country nonetheless resented the stranglehold such large industrial combinations had on the marketplace (Parkes and Carosso 22). As stories involving them in dubious or outright corrupt practices continued to surface (Weyl 80), the first major piece of federal antitrust legislation, the Sherman Antitrust Act, in 1890 passed both houses of congress virtually unopposed (Stigler 5-6). With the passage of time, even

> [t]he little individualist, recognizing his individual impotence, realizing that he did not possess within himself even the basis of a moral judgment against his big brother, began to change his point of view. He no longer hoped to right all things by his individual efforts. He turned to the law, to the government, to the state. (Weyl 49-50)

For the competitive spirit to continue animating the individual, he needed to perceive himself as having an attainable path to get ahead in life, even if in the end it turned out to be illusory. Big business conglomerates, either able to accrue sympathy from government officials, to coerce suppliers and middlemen or outright absorbing them, were able to kill or severely constrain competition. Rather than almost exclusively a threat to meritocracy in the marketplace, government would have to act as its guardian.

If anything, antitrust efforts merely drove such arrangements underground, Walter Lippmann would observe. In his view, more could have been accomplished by accepting the tendency and focusing public policy in harnessing its potential to contribute to the public good (27-28). This sentiment would be shared by Weyl and other progressives (Forcey 84; Duncan-Clark 29), their movement being one that had started to gain traction around the turn of the century and held that, in the technological society then taking shape, government would need to take a more active role in safeguarding and promoting social progress (Forcey x-xi). The trend toward concentration of capital would continue to be a preponderant factor in American business (Rayback 191), one of the country's most prominent bankers acknowledging it in 1933 when he remarked, "We are becoming a nation of hired men, hired by great aggregates of capital" (Leffingwell, qtd. in Schlesinger 491).

Hoping to keep alive the illusion that the social order of America was fundamentally sound, even the proponents of self-improvement found themselves denouncing the business

world. *Success* magazine would in 1901 publish an article characterizing the business community as

> so one-sided in its preoccupation with mere questions of gain that . . . [t]he man who can 'make' a million or two 'on the street' in a day, without rendering any service to mankind, is considered pre-eminently a 'successful man.' As no man can get something without earning it, unless some one else earns it without getting it, the result is that the main occupation of the business world now is to get away other people's earnings from them. (qtd. in Cawelti 190)

Hinted at is the idea that the system could be manipulated with apparent ease, wealth not being necessarily correlated with the virtue of its possessor. *Success* magazine and other publications of its ilk would regularly run articles condemning corruption, wherever they found it, alongside their more inspirational material (Cawelti 190). The corruption they denounced could either be that of the lower classes, who had fallen prey to the deleterious influence of alcoholic beverages, or that of "the unscrupulous monopolists and financial manipulators." When they criticized the latter, the solution proposed tended to take the form of antitrust legislation, a punishment of the abusers, and not a reconsideration of the system and its incentives (191). Regardless of one's ultimate aims, the general sense was that "[s]uccess in the great corporation seemed to have a very dubious relation to character and enterprise" (Hofstadter, *Age* 10), capital appearing to be a bigger enemy to the aspirations of the individual than government was. Notably, Horatio Alger's novels reached the height of their popularity during this period, as if America needed reassurance that its social order remained on sound footing (Veitch 167n13).

With a nebulous past (Fitzgerald, *Great* 40-41), Jay Gatsby would represent proof that the social ladder still functioned, were that image not to be tainted by the fact that he found his way to wealth through less than legitimate means. Having from an early age made an effort to save and educate himself on the avenues for self-improvement (135), like the Algerian hero, Gatsby would end up meeting a benefactor in Dan Cody. Diverging from Alger's formula, Scott Fitzgerald characterizes Cody as "the pioneer debauchee who during one phase of American life brought back to the eastern seaboard the savage violence of the frontier brothel and the saloon" (78). Neither was he the "genteel aristocrat of Alger's stories," nor Frederick Jackson Turner's Western pioneer (Decker 62). After he was cheated out of some money that was supposedly his after Cody's death, victim of legal shenanigans that he never quite understood (77-79), Gatsby was left penniless and eventually got involved in organized crime,

with bootleggers, that being what financed his lavish lifestyle. Also suggested was his involvement in fixing the 1919 World Series (105, 133).

At that point in time Prohibition had outlawed the production, distribution, or sale of alcoholic beverages, Gatsby's way to wealth being similar to that of others during that period, one of rising criminality and political corruption (Parkes and Carosso 409-10). The Eighteenth Amendment had been ratified by the requisite number of states in January 1919, a majority of them already living under some form of prohibition by then (Sinclair 244). H. G. Levine traces the path that led to this legislative accomplishment to the late eighteenth century realization that dependence was a factor in the consumption of certain substances. Whereas previously the matter had mostly been relegated to the realm of personal choice, the individual being assumed to always be in control of his behavior, addiction slowly came to be interpreted as dependence on the substance itself and not as a habit that one simply chose to perpetuate (43-46).

Protestant clergy led the early temperance efforts, Increase Mather once explaining, "Drink is in it self a good creature of God, and to be received with thankfulness, but the abuse of drink is from Satan; the wine is from God, but the Drunkard is from the Devil" (4) By 1831, the cause had started to gain favor in Congress (Furnas 57-58) and by 1836 the American Temperance Union had been founded (67-68). At that point the temperance movement was committing itself to total abstinence, not just moderation (H. Levine 47-48). At the same time, agricultural papers came to increasingly deny any link between the consumption of ardent spirits and increased facility in enduring arduous labor, many employers of farm labor growing increasingly concerned with worker efficiency as well as safety, on account of the introduction of machinery in the threshing and harvesting processes (Tyrrell 103). With time, persuasion came to be supplemented by efforts to use legislative power to effect change. Petitions to legally limit the number of taverns gave way to a movement to withhold the renewal of the licenses that were required for their legal operation (Furnas 162-63), Maine's 1851 state-wide ban, the first of its kind, marking the rising preponderance of legal prohibition as the device of choice for the advancement of temperance reform (167). To those that concerned themselves with the legitimacy of such laws, the argument was often made (Sinclair 245) that it was "wholly impossible for the drinker, moderate or excessive, to keep the unfortunate consequences of alcohol to himself." In other words, as a result of his drinking, he would at some point inevitably impinge on the liberty of others (Warner 145). Even as, in 1915, Matthew S. Hughes, presents "the salient points of the prohibition side" (3), and admits that some might be able to control their drinking, he nonetheless places those "men in the intermediate state of 'real temperance'" as "the tempters of mankind." Those temperate drinkers have, Hughes

continues, “no moral right to cross a shaky and treacherous bridge when he knows that a proportion of those who follow his example will fall into the stream and be drowned” (60). More than that, alcoholism was thought to have a hereditary component, that leading to concerns over racial degeneration (Sinclair 48).

Reflecting a shift in the center of support for the temperance movement from the Northeast to the more rural South (Blocker xii-xiii), organizations like the Anti-Saloon League portrayed Prohibition as fight between a more conservative rural population and a more sophisticated urban one: “The vices of the cities have been the undoing of past empires and civilizations. . . . If our Republic is to be saved the liquor traffic must be destroyed,” warned the league’s general superintendent in 1914 (Baker 16). In their fight, the prohibitionists were joined by progressives, convinced that drinking, besides a health hazard, was also one of the root causes for poverty (Sinclair 4).

Urban immigrants posed a particular challenge to reformers, which thought them immune to the scientific evidence that, according to them, vouched for the nefarious consequences of alcoholic beverages. As such, still maintained were the habits that migrants had brought from their old countries. Most concerningly, those immigrants, divided by nationality, had created powerful voting blocks in several cities, each city being but a “conglomeration of colonies, separated by language, customs and Old World Antagonisms, from each other and from older American and Native-born sections,” declared Harry S. Warner in *Prohibition, An Adventure in Freedom* (42-46). Within those silos, “the most vicious surroundings to be found anywhere in the country” (194), the lower classes were “getting together and . . . laying down definitions to Americans regarding the motive of our constitution and laws,” declared the Anti-Saloon League in 1908 through the *American Issue*, part of its publishing arm (qtd. in Odegard 31). At best, immigrants were being lured by their political leaders into a false sense of Americanism (Warner 194).

Americans of native stock were supposedly left at the mercy of powerful liquor interests, a nefarious and powerful force with a vested interest in pushing increasing quantities of alcohol on them, backed by corrupt officials and an easily manipulated immigrant population. Those pernicious influences congregated in the saloon, turning it into a breeding ground for un-American ideologies like communism. As the Nashville, Tennessee chapter of the Anti-Saloon League would caution, “Bolshevism flourishes in wet soil. Failure to enforce Prohibition in Russia was followed by Bolshevism. . . . Bolshevism lives on booze” (qtd. in Kobler 12).

Despite his American birth, to Tom Buchanan Gatsby personifies the immigrant menace. His past being shrouded in mystery for most of the novel, he was the son of poor farmers from North Dakota, his parents having named him James Gatz (Fitzgerald, *Great* 76), a surname that is suggestive of a Jewish background, he had that in common with his point of contact with the criminal world, Meyer Wolfshiem (104). Nick, however, chooses to see Gatsby as an embodiment of the American dream (120), admiring him for how he "sprang from his Platonic conception of himself" (77). Leaving the past behind and assuming a new identity, he was "a self-created innocent," a hero in the Adamic tradition (R. Lewis 197). Gatsby's mansion being the scene of numerous riotous parties (39-40), he was a "source and symbol of the loud and jazzy night." Still, he was nonetheless "sober, polite, cool, and not a participant in the comic rot that flows from his party" (Stern 235). Insulating himself, Gatsby "reshapes reality to fit his own delusions" and thus, in a way, preserves his innocence (Bigsby 136).

In parallel, the sort of commitment that Owl Eyes praised serves as evidence of his ambition. Imbued of "an extraordinary gift for hope" (Fitzgerald, *Great* 6), Gatsby refused to accept that his goal was unattainable, that the ability to fulfill his dream "was already behind him, somewhere back in that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled in under the night" (141). Old World prejudices and antagonisms having been imported into the New, twentieth century America had turned Jefferson's ideal of a rural and egalitarian democracy to ash. As Fitzgerald would write in a short story published not too long after *Gatsby* came out: "the very rich . . . are different from you and me. . . . They think, deep in their hearts, that they are better than we are because we had to discover the compensations and refuges of life for ourselves" ("Rich Boy" 1-2). The class divide between Gatsby and Daisy was therefore one that the story's hero was never to bridge. When he dies, only his father, Nick and Owl Eyes are present at the funeral. Nick would return West (Fitzgerald, *Great* 136-37). Progress having made the differences between East and West practically disappear, his "final gesture is a mere salute to the memory of a vanished America" (Marx 364).

The country having grown increasingly industrialized and urban, there was no longer an untamed frontier where opportunity awaited. Owning no land of their own and living in an economy controlled by vast aggregates of capital, most had to work for a wage and faced limited possibilities for career advancement. Immigrants were scapegoated as a subversive force and a source of competition for the American worker, while the rich, if celebrated for their success, were also looked upon with distrust by some, who thought them to have a corrosive influence in American society. Progressives drew attention to the dubious practices

of many corporations and the promiscuity between business and politics, their perception being that the government would need to do more to protect the public and safeguard democracy. F. Scott Fitzgerald in *Gatsby* develops the notion that there was something broken in the country's system of incentives and rewards. Not only does Gatsby's ambition prove to be no match for the class consciousness of the rich, but the only path to wealth that presented itself to him was of an illegitimate nature.

Still, the idea that thrift and hard work paid dividends was kept alive, with popular rags-to-riches stories like those of Horatio Alger Jr. remaining popular into the twentieth century. A new art form, cinema, would similarly trade on people's dreams and aspirations, while at the same time reassuring them that the social order remained on sound footing. The next chapter will delve into that industry's development and the relationship of its creative professionals with the constraints that were imposed on them by business executives, as well as those that were inherent to the medium's technical limitations, with the focus being placed on the writer.

2. Budd Schulberg, F. Scott Fitzgerald and the Film Industry

Having grown up in Hollywood during its ascendancy as the film capital, his father being an important player in the nascent industry, it was from a relatively early age that Budd Schulberg got acquainted with the filmmaking process (Schulberg, *Moving* 135-36, 190). His Hollywood novel *The Disenchanted* will be used in this chapter as a starting point to explore the challenges posed by the film industry to the creative authorship of the writer in its employ.

In *The Disenchanted*, Schulberg chose to recount his experience with F. Scott Fitzgerald working on *Winter Carnival* under a thin veil as "Walter Wanger becomes Victor Milgrim, Dartmouth is renamed Webster College, Schulberg is Shep Stearns, and Fitzgerald is cast as Manley Halliday" (Chipman 107). Even as Schulberg, years after the novel came out, felt the need to dispute the idea that his characterization of Manley Halliday was directly based on Fitzgerald (*Four* 97). An earlier account by Schulberg of the time he shared with F. Scott Fitzgerald in February 1939, published in *The New Republic*, betrays the extent to which Halliday is a depiction of the Fitzgerald he knew (Piper 250).

In Halliday, Schulberg accentuates Fitzgerald's role as a symbol of the myth of the twenties (Piper 251), one that, in Murray Kempton's description of it, "had involved the search for individual expression, whether in beauty, laughter, or defiance of convention." Such emphasis on the self had, however, come to be thought of as "selfish and footling and egocentric" in the thirties (2). F. Scott Fitzgerald's struggle to adapt his skills to the demands of screenwriting, as well as his gloomy outlook for the future of western civilization, will also be analyzed in this chapter, the Great Depression having taken its toll on the morale of the country.

2.1. The Studio System and the Writer

In this section, the development of the moving picture as an entertainment medium up until the 1930s will be charted. In addition, one of the main themes of Budd Schulberg's novel, that of the distaste of the writer for the executives that held control over film production, will be explored. Helping to explain some of the demands that could be imposed on writers were pressures that were placed on the still young industry by some sectors of society and the fact that it still lacked credibility as an art form.

The first decade of the twentieth century saw the rise of the motion picture as a form of popular entertainment. The new medium, reaching "millions of mentalities that had been

immune or semi-immune to the enlivening influence of the printed word and almost totally unacquainted with the spoken drama," posed a challenge to writers and actors who found their previous experience to be of little use in catering to that audience (Hampton 39-40). With time, the complexity and quality of the finished product increased, that bringing with it the same division of labor that had already taken place in other areas of the economy: "Clever camera men or actors were designated as directors, and professional players were sought for leading rôles." Professional screenwriting, commanding better pay than journalism, established itself as a worthwhile occupation (30-31).

In those early years, a multiplicity of studios operated from a number of different cities across the country. While most stayed afloat only for a brief period of time, the creation of new ones more than made up for those that disappeared (Hampton 33). That was until the second decade of the century, as a move toward feature-length films was paralleled by the growing popularity of Hollywood as a place for film production (112, 116). There, land was plentiful, sets could be produced cheaply, and the weather was good year-round. "Extras . . . were available at two or three dollars a day, and thrifty producers sometimes obtained big mobs merely by providing a barbecue lunch and giving amateurs the fun of working in the movies" (115).

After the First World War the interest of the public in antitrust efforts waned and, with that, "[m]agazines had forgotten the existence of octopi and malefactors of great wealth, and . . . newspapers for the most part dealt with the subject perfunctorily" (Hampton 368). Crucially, the more astute started to notice that neither did the powerful end up facing jail time as a result of those processes, nor did dismembered business units lose much of their value. The door was open for consolidation to become a major factor in the film business (184).

In parallel, the narrative structure and scope of movies evolved and (Hampton 397) by the time the Depression hit talkies, a novelty only three years prior, were seen as the medium's future (383, 390). Deemed by experts to be a problem of confidence, stock market speculators being the ones at fault, the economic downturn was initially dismissed. Given the diagnostic, the prescribed solution was to simply wait for the economy to self-correct, measures designed to stimulate recovery generally thought to be unwise, too much government intervention invariably leading to unforeseen consequences (Galbraith 41-42). Acting in accordance with this diagnosis, federal policy focused on the maintenance of apparent normality rather than reform: "Employers were to keep on expanding their plants, ordering their materials, producing and selling. They were not to reduce prices or wages. Labor was not to rock the boat." If everyone did its part, confidence would be restored and a healthy economy would follow

(Soule 162). Even as in private President Hoover reportedly had from the start of the crisis believed it to be more serious than what he and most experts publicly suggested, his opinion was that such a plan would nonetheless be the best course of action, as the economy would inevitably pick up, the business cycle running its course (Bernstein 252). The voluntary character of the conduct that Hoover wanted to promote was, in his view, proof that the federal government was not unduly interfering in private business, something he was keen to point out in an address to the Chamber of Commerce (Hoover, "Remarks").

Signs that the different economic agents were not keeping to their end of the bargain inevitably started to mount. Financial pressure and a creeping sense of uncertainty meant that consumers stopped replacing their durable goods, their "automobiles, houses, rugs, and even clothing." Even before then, while the stock market had boomed and attracted plenty of "two hundred dollar capitalists," consumption had not been keeping up with the increase in production. That trend, Edward E. Filene would identify as a root cause for the crisis, as when "the masses of wage-earners gamble in stocks instead of buying the things which they want, they gamble not merely with their savings but with their jobs" (48-49). Used to hold saving as a virtue, Americans discovered that not consuming enough was bound to threaten their livelihood.

At first, the burden to care for the unemployed remained mostly with friends and family, local government assuming a bigger role as the situation unfolded (Soule 170). An expansion of federal responsibility was something that Hoover resisted, him chiefly fearing that a more vigorous government would impinge on individual liberty and weaken the "rugged" American spirit (Hoover, *Challenge* 55, 166). A different approach would be had by his successor in the presidency, expenditures on relief rising from $208 million in 1932, to over $3 billion by 1935 (Leuchtenburg, *FDR* 255). Yet, even if the country had rejected Hoover's relative inaction when it came to supporting individuals and families in a time of crisis, as help was provided those who benefited "felt a deep sense of shame for being in such a dependent position." Victims of external circumstances, Americans nonetheless had a tendency to internalize responsibility for the misfortune that befell them (L. Levine 213-14). "[C]ontinued dependence upon relief induces a spiritual and moral disintegration fundamentally destructive to the moral fibre" Roosevelt would in 1935 declare, echoing this sentiment, as he promised to find employment for the 3.5 million able-bodied Americans who were still by then unemployed ("Annual Message").

As the country entered a recessive spiral it would take the remainder of the decade to recover from, the motion picture business proved more resistant to the crisis than other sectors

of the economy, establishing itself as one of the few safe investments that remained (Jowett 261). A sign of maturity for an industry that had traditionally been deemed risky from an investment standpoint. Confidence from investors was further reinforced by the fact that "organization had replaced individualism in motion pictures," the film business being dominated by five key players by the time the recession hit in 1929. Earlier in that decade, the independent production houses largely went out of business, victims of growing production costs and the emergence of large theater chains, while the bigger studios, backed by Wall Street, became more risk-averse. With that, those who had spurred the industry to such great heights eventually faded out of the picture (Hampton 409, 416).

Victim of the industry's growth and concentration was innovation and self-expression. The multitude of distributors and producers that someone who tried to start a career could try to convince on the potential of some novel idea, production costs being relatively low and potential gains sizable if the experiment succeeded, were replaced by a few large and highly bureaucratic organizations. In alignment with the Hollywood novel's most common portrayal of the industry during the 1930s, Benjamin Hampton describes this corporate environment as one where "[a] multitude of alleged experts awaited the fellow with the new thought, and when his innovation had completed the circuit of the studio's intricate system there was seldom a trace of originality or novelty left in it" (416-17). As Shep Stearns, Budd Schulberg's fictionalized version of himself in *The Disenchanted*, would describe it:

> You wait to get inside the gate, you wait outside the great man's office, you wait for the assignment, you wait for instructions on how to write what they want you to write, and then, when you finish your treatment and turn it in, you wait for that unique contribution to art, the story conference. (3)

A Webster graduate, Shep's contribution to the medium was to be made as a writer, him hoping his talent and ideas would eventually be allowed to surface in the final product. His move to Hollywood was a return home, for he grew up there. Confident in himself and his skills, Shep was nonetheless aware that he would have to wait before his name could be known by the movie going public. He would have to start off by writing with an eye on attracting a wide audience, success in the motion picture business being perceived to lie in escapism, in providing an avenue through which people could momentarily forget their troubles and inhabit a dream world, that encouraging them to "return, and return again, for further hours of dreaming" (Overstreet 220-21). With that in mind, he wrote *Love on Ice* (Schulberg, *Disenchanted* 3-4), light romances being popular in film at the time (Gurko 234). The script

was one that he optimistically labeled a “means to an end,” a way for him to get a foot in the door. The effort succeeding, he was hired on a trial basis as a junior writer. Paid “a sub-respectable hundred dollars a week” (Schulberg, *Disenchanted* 4), Shep had managed to find a place within an industry that had massively grown in size over the preceding decades, but where artistic expression and employment opportunities seemed limited.

As he met with the “great man” to discuss his script, Stearns quickly found himself being introduced to “the rare creature of success who manages to remain a regular fellow, who somehow achieves high office without the usual medieval maneuvering.” Him putting up a performance seemingly designed more for the satisfaction of his own ego than any other purpose (Schulberg, *Disenchanted* 14-15), Victor Milgrim seemingly fitted the characterization screenwriter Leo Rosten would make of such Hollywood figures: “[They are] engaged in an endless search for deference—from the world, their colleagues, themselves. They seem to be lost in a long, unhappy effort to win respect from symbolic juries” (Rosten 44). Playing a role in Milgrim’s effort to impress, his office, expensively furnished and decorated, had its walls adorned with several autographed photographs, in the midst of which used to be one of Mussolini. The Fascist leader having fallen out of favor with the American public after Italy’s invasion of Ethiopia, his image had been recently removed, as would in all likelihood be that of Frank Merriam, the Republican governor of California that months earlier had been defeated at the polls by a Democratic opponent. While “Milgrim was nominally a Republican, just as he was nominally a monogamist, . . . his first loyalty was to success, contemporaneous success.” His own life having been a rags-to-riches story, Milgrim’s respect for personal achievement meant that he would receive as “honored guests of the studio” anyone in a position of prominence, including film producer and lieutenant in the Italian Air Force Vittorio Mussolini, “fresh from aerial triumphs over naked Abyssinians” (11-12), that taking place after the apparent recognition that having the image of Vittorio’s father on display in his office had ceased to benefit his public persona.

When Milgrim sings the praises of his film adaptation of John Millington Synge’s *The Playboy of the Western World*, which he regards as “a marvelous job” and “a labor of love,” he reckons that what made it to the screen was very different from the play it was based on, confessing: “I honestly didn’t think you could change so much of what Synge wrote and still come so close to the original flavor.” If one were to believe Milgrim’s claim that financial return was no consideration for him when making the picture (Schulberg *Disenchanted* 14), the changes from the original material could still be well justified, a creative constraint that

Hollywood writers had to contend with having to do with the limitations imposed on the exploration of certain topics.

Said limits were put in place after the nascent industry started to face opposition from some sectors of society. Cities like New York or Chicago having ordered the closure of movie theaters or otherwise made it more difficult for them to operate, producers collaborated in the creation of censorship boards designed to screen-out objectionable content (Sklar 30-32). Such efforts continued under different guises over the years, and even if the demand for film censorship legislation was not necessarily representative of the will of a majority of moviegoers, attempts were made to establish a federal film review board (MacGregor 165). Supporting that effort, Senator Henry Lee Myers would in 1922 list some of the scandals involving film celebrities. There were "such characters as Fatty Arbuckle, of unsavory fame, notorious for his scandalous debauchery and drunken orgies," or "Valentino, now figuring as the star character in rape and divorce sensations." Those stars, not knowing what to do with their newly acquired wealth, had in Hollywood, "the source of the moving pictures," formed "a colony . . . where debauchery, riotous living, drunkenness, ribaldry, dissipation, free love, seem to be conspicuous." Created by morally bankrupt people, their character would, he contended, manifest itself in the kind of content that the industry put out, him deeming it to oftentimes be of a pernicious nature (US Congress, 62: 9657). Sensationalistic articles about Hollywood and its people gave credence to the idea that the film business not only profited from normalizing objectionable behavior, but it was also made up of people that had no sense of morals (Hampton 286-87, 296; Sklar 79).

The industry responded by in 1922 establishing the MPPDA, under the leadership of former Postmaster General Will Hays. The organization, which at the time of its inception represented about 80% of producers and distributors in the country (US Congress 74: 3839), gave self-censorship a more relevant role, in hopes of preventing government intervention, in 1924 adopting a resolution that reaffirmed its commitment "to establish and maintain the highest possible moral and artistic standards," part of that consisting of "a special effort to prevent the prevalent type of book and play from becoming the prevalent type of picture" (qtd. in Federal Council of the Churches 116-17). Artistic merit and commercial prospects were to be kept in check in order to safeguard the public perception of the industry.

Many in the industry worked out ways to circumvent or at least limit the effect of the content rules that the MPPDA had imposed (Powdermaker 65). Still, there could be limits to the malleability of the rules. The pernicious effect of censorship was something that the National Committee for Better Film in January 1925 recognized when it put out a document

repudiating attempts to legally prevent certain films from being screened. In it, this organization, which traced its roots to the National Board of Censorship and dedicated itself to the rating of movies based on their suitability for children (Barrett 177-79; H. Lewis 373), contended that censorship had "been a powerful aid in the distortion of even the best literature and drama transferred to the screen," striking fear in screenwriters "of its arbitrary dictums and misconceptions" (qtd. in H. Lewis 374). Despite the stated public position of the organization, some states and cities continued to rely on the ratings of the National Board in deciding if or under which circumstances movies were allowed to be screened (Federal Council of the Churches 61-62).

In *The Disenchanted*, Milgrim, while proud of how *Playboy* turned out despite an extensive revision of the source material, at the same time acknowledges that the content rules could make other adaptations unfeasible. Manley Halliday's *Friends and Foes* or *The Night's High Noon*, he would adapt to the screen "in a flash," if only he could find a way of doing so that would "lick the Hays Office angle" (16), the opportunity to adapt content that had already proven itself on the market being always enticing from a business standpoint (Fine 46).

Under the pretense that it would be a valuable element in the creative process, Victor Milgrim insists in flying Stearns and Halliday to Webster for Winter Mardi Gras (Schulberg, *Disenchanted* 76, 78-79). His real intent in dragging the writing duo along with him to Webster, if previously speculated on (203), is only confirmed late in the story, as Halliday is informed that he is expected at a luncheon with faculty staff, his presence being crucial in order to bolster Milgrim's credibility in the eyes of "the heavy thinkers in the lobby." It would take his resistance to being put "on public exhibition like a two-headed calf" (315-17) to force Victor to come clear and admit that attaining "the co-operation, the respect of the College" had been what he hoped to achieve by bringing him there when he could have otherwise brought "just any Tom-Dick" (319).

Halliday at that point was deep in debt, struggling with alcoholism and attempting to revive a floundering literary career (35, 39-42). Still, he managed to convince himself that a recovery of his old life was possible (30). As his real-life counterpart would once write, "One should . . . be able to see that things are hopeless and yet be determined to make them otherwise" (*Crack-Up* 69). Awaiting Halliday was an audience that still admired him for his past successes, one to whom he was the main attraction, not Victor Milgrim. Reflecting on the producer's words, Halliday had a sudden change of mind and has only too happy to go downstairs and be put "on exhibition," even as Milgrim had grown fearful that the appearance would prove an embarrassment to the two of them (Schulberg, *Disenchanted* 319-20). The

concern not being unfounded, alongside Stearns as he descended to the lobby was a man with "a bloodless face behind a three-day beard, a crumpled body in a stained and crumpled suit," "a grotesque figure" that stood in "humiliating contrast to the orderly people gathered to honor him." The dean would mutter something about the situation starting "to look like a real Hollywood cocktail party, complete with drunks who got two thousand a week" (322), a statement that was indicative of Hollywood's lingering reputation among faculty staff. In the end, it all boiled down to a business transaction, Milgrim still able to negotiate an honorary degree in exchange for some donations and a lecture, the faculty staff no less eager to receive a sizable donation than Milgrim was to get his degree (332-34). As Halliday had previously thought to himself, in reference to producers and agents: "These men are in business but they're more emotional than business men. And they're involved with art but they're altogether too business-like for artists" (74). This double allegiance is one that creative personnel tended to resent, that holding true for both Halliday and his real-life counterpart.

Still a relatively new medium by the 1930s, film had not yet accrued the level of prestige that other art forms enjoyed. Responding to that, executives in the industry sought to elevate their product by adapting literary works for the screen and enlisting renowned literary figures to work in the movies. Budd Schulberg's *The Disenchanted* portrays another facet of such a craving for prestige, as Victor Milgrim, a successful producer in his own right, hopes to elevate his social standing by attaching himself to an accomplished writer. That fact notwithstanding, as the film industry came to be dominated by a handful of highly bureaucratic and risk-averse organizations, business considerations assumed a primordial role in their decision-making process. An example of that were the self-imposed constraints on the content that could be featured in movies, that being done in order to appease some sectors of society that perceived the medium as a threat to morals. Many writers would have difficulty navigating those roadblocks, something that will be further explored in the next section of this text.

2.2. Creativity and Capitalism: F. Scott Fitzgerald's Ambivalence

The analysis of *The Disenchanted* will in this section extend to the two main character's political stances, them sharing a negative outlook for the United States and the world. Manley Halliday's personal decline will in this section of the text be used as a starting point to discuss F. Scott Fitzgerald's predicament, some degree of optimism as to the success of his adaptation to the bureaucracy of the film studios and the demands of screenwriting giving way to disillusionment within a relatively short timeframe. The appeal of communism as a solution

for the problems of the country will be explored, as will Fitzgerald's stance toward the radical left.

In 1936, three years before Budd Schulberg and F. Scott Fitzgerald were to cross paths, *Fortune* magazine, based on a poll, interviews and questionnaires, created a composite profile of the college student of the time ("Youth" 401). They found him to be intellectually curious, but also fatalistic, for he did not believe in his ability to change the course of history. "He may deplore war, but he can't see himself thwarting the forces that make for war" (402-03). In *Fortune*'s assessment of it, the student of the day had replaced "Fitzgerald cockiness" with fearfulness and frustration. He "drinks less and wenches less, . . . because the stuff of the newspaper headlines is on his mind" (410).

Schulberg's Shep Stearns seemingly fitted that mold. Like other "[c]hildren of the depression," he had been "guided by hearsay knowledge of Marx and Freud" (Schulberg, *Disenchanted* 5) and had collaborated with the League Against War and Fascism, one of the many Communist-backed organizations that existed in America at the time, him priding himself in having done so "in the years when most of the faculty hesitated to even sign a petition against the Nazis" (325). Over breakfast, he at one point deplores the "[t]hree do-nothing years of sophistry and hypocrisy" that allowed the Spanish Civil War to take the course that it had, as he read of Mussolini "hailing the achievements of his Blackshirts." Despite the outcome, "Hollywood, as a whole, had done its share," Shep acknowledges (44), referencing the sums that the Communist Party had raised, supposedly to help in the fight against fascism in Spain (Klehr et al. 9). Other communities throughout the country had not been as supportive, Stearns suggests, as he wonders if the loss in Spain had "meant bankruptcy for the Western world" and if he himself could have done more to help (Schulberg, *Disenchanted* 44). Not that the overall mood of the nation differed from that of Hollywood on this matter, if polling is to be relied on. In 1937, Gallup had found that a majority of Americans who declared to have an opinion on the matter favored the republican side in the Spanish Civil War. A year later, that support had only increased (Gurko 7). About three thousand Americans fought in that war (Warren 127).

In *The Disenchanted* when, in conversation with Halliday, Shep talks up some concessions negotiated by the Screen Writers Guild, he discovers that the famed writer was less than impressed with such accomplishments, reasoning that "no kind of writer has any dignity unless he can control his own material," something he did not foresee happening in an industry whose growth seemed limitless (Schulberg, *Disenchanted* 48), the complaint being a common one among screenwriters (Fine 122). Channeling the socialist in him, Stearns would add to Halliday's point by expressing his belief that the methods of production were

determinative of the kind of society that exists at any given time, an idea that Halliday was not ready to either endorse or reject, a mixture of cynicism and skepticism being more apparent in his rhetoric than any definite ideological stance (Schulberg, *Disenchanted* 48-49). Such attitude was only symptomatic, given Halliday's attachment to what he considered to be his generation and the world it inhabited, him seemingly being among those who had been taught by the experience of the First World War to distrust any formulas for lasting prosperity or world peace. Despite the Allied victory, the First World War had ended in disillusionment for the American people. President Wilson had justified American participation in the war as part of America's messianic mission, as a purely altruistic effort to help restore order and promote democracy in the world (Hofstadter, *Age* 276-77). Instead, the Versailles Treaty created the conditions that would precipitate another globe-spanning war two decades later.

Looking too old for his age, the Halliday that Stearns met in 1939 seemed stuck in a different era, assuming the role of "an interloper, if not a phantom, . . . who spoke of himself as ten years dead," seeing the fondness with which he talked of the pre-Depression period, of "his heroes—his beauties—his songs" (Schulberg, *Disenchanted* 54).

As he would himself admit, F. Scott Fitzgerald had let his friend Edmund Wilson be his "intellectual conscience" for twenty years of his life. More than that, for the latter half of that period he had grown to be completely uninterested in politics (*Crack-Up* 79). Like Wilson (Turnbull 226), Fitzgerald "always cherish[ed] an abiding distrust, an animosity, toward the leisure class" (Fitzgerald, *Crack-Up* 77), and yet, as Wilson's thought developed, and he came to believe some form of communism would be the key to develop society, his and Fitzgerald's beliefs started to diverge. On that, the latter would note, "a decision to adopt Communism . . . must of necessity be a saddening process for any one who has ever tasted the intellectual pleasures of the world we live in" (*Letters* 230). He came to see conversion to communism as a form of cowardice, a way to "explain away not only the world's inadequacies but one's own" (551). More than that, it was a foreign ideology and therefore a threat to the American way of life (Turnbull 226-27).

Helping to explain that concern was the popular image of the radical agitator which, Leo Lowenthal and Norbert Guterman found, was that of "a crackpot whose appeals and goals derive neither from domestic conditions nor from native attitudes. . . . [T]he assumption [is] that he can succeed in enlisting public support only through deception." (xv). In alignment with that, during the First World War, especially after the United States officially joined the war effort, those who, like the Socialist Party of America, opposed American involvement were looked upon as possibly nurturing a foreign allegiance. The party's offices were raided by

federal authorities and some of its leaders prosecuted and convicted, the charges being based on recently enacted espionage and sedition laws (Rayback 280-81). The fact that a significative number of the members of the more prominent socialist and communist groups were of foreign origin (Leuchtenburg, *Perils* 67-68) would only serve to intensify the cloud of suspicion. Many Americans, hearing of the Bolshevik movement's triumph in Russia and its advances in other European countries, feared that American institutions were at risk (Rayback 283), some large-scale strikes that took place at the time being a contributing factor to that perception (285-87), the press helping to portray labor action as inspired by foreign events (Lens 208, 212-13).

Such attacks were not novel in the American scene, *The New York Times* having in 1874 noted that the participants in a demonstration of the unemployed that took place at the time "seem[ed] all to have been foreigners." That the article's writer found unsurprising, for "Communism is not a weed of native growth" (qtd. in Dulles 116). The attack tactic still proving effective in post-WWI America, many felt the need "to reconfirm long-standing American images, to purify the nation and call it back to its historic mission by ridding it of intruding ideologies and groups" (L. Levine 193). The supposed un-Americanism of organized labor providing cover, employers in several instances coordinated with local authorities to repress meetings or protests, whether not they were conducted in an orderly manner (Lens 208-10). Even if criminal prosecution of radical and labor leaders continued (222-23), public hysteria over Bolshevism would start to abate by the summer of 1920. Frederick Lewis Allen in his social chronicle of the 1920s describes the nation as "spiritually tired" by that point (*Only* 124).

While radical movements and labor unions would be left to languish throughout most of the decade (Leuchtenburg, *Perils* 125-26), the conditions created by the late twenties crash would give American Communists renewed impetus, them finding some success in organizing the unemployed (Bernstein 426). In one instance, the American Communist Party sent representatives to organize Pennsylvanian coal miners, to some initial success. After a some time, the miners would start to take issue with the fact that they were being used to disseminate communist messaging, that putting an end to the collaboration (Adamic, *My America* 325-28). This episode would be representative of a wider picture, as the American proletariat apparently remained unconvinced of the need for fundamental change to their system of government. Either that, or it was too exhausted to fight for it, the focus being on more immediate concessions (Bernstein 435-36). Overall, a number of successful demonstrations around the country ended up arousing the interest of the political class who, considering communism to be a threat to national security, in 1930 voted on the creation of a congressional committee to

investigate communist activities (Bernstein 427-28). This committee would mark the start of a decades-long attempt on the part of Congress to establish an indissociable link between sympathy for the communist cause and allegiance with the Soviet Union, congressmen not letting themselves be deterred by a seeming lack of a basic understanding of the subject they were investigating (Goodman 6-8).

Edmund Wilson, who ended up reporting on the initial hearings of this committee (Goodman 7), would point to events that preceded this period of heightened agitation in explaining how he became entangled in the debate over communism that would occupy the minds of several intellectuals during the 1930s. As he tells it, even before the stock market collapse of 1929 "a kind of nervous dissatisfaction and apprehension had begun to manifest itself in American intellectual life" (Wilson, *Shores* 492), him not having been immune to it. Something was amiss and, when economic indicators took a turn for the worse, he "couldn't help being exhilarated at the sudden unexpected collapse of that stupid gigantic fraud" (498).

In the Empire State Building, the tallest building in the world upon its completion in 1931, he had seen a monument to excess, a manifestation of the "'capitalistic contradictions' inevitable in the competitive system" that Karl Marx had described (Wilson, *American* 298). With "86 stories, not counting the mast," "if it were full, there would be 25,000 people working there and 40,000 more people going in and out every day." Yet, as a consequence of the adverse business environment, the mammoth structure would sit mostly empty, at least for the first few years of its life, Wilson predicted (133), him writing after he attended the formal opening ceremony. Among the highlights of the event was Franklin D. Roosevelt's speech, the then-governor of New York stating that the project, having an eye on the future, answered the needs of the city, as well as the nation at large. If one was to focus more strictly on the present, however, features like the building's four-story-high entrance hall, covered in "a strange specially imported marble," stood in contrast with the growing expanses of "barracks, with scarcely a garden, scarcely a park, scarcely an open square" that could be seen from the building's top floors, no matter which direction one looked (134-36). The fact that such a "purposeless and superfluous" structure could be generally heralded as a triumph at a time when most were having to make do with less would, to Edmund Wilson, signal the bankruptcy of "the planless competitive society" (136).

Similarly disillusioned, during the twenties many American writers and painters sought refuge in Europe. Behind them, they left a nation that, in their view, had lost its youth and vigor, having become too corrupt and intolerant (Sinclair 329-30). After a less than enjoyable first experience in the Old Continent at the beginning of the decade (Fitzgerald, *Letters* 326),

Fitzgerald ended up spending some time in Europe over the years that followed, at one point considering the experience to be an exhausting but valuable one, given how much he was able to learn from it (Piper 161). In Manley Halliday, however, the reader finds someone who considers such escapades to have mostly resulted in the opposite of what they were supposed to achieve. According to him, writers who spent too much time abroad ended up alienating themselves from the American public. “Success uproots 'em. Isolates 'em,” claimed a clearly inebriated Halliday (Schulberg, *Disenchanted* 183-84). Most of those who remained in Europe, by 1930 were forced to return home as their sources of funds dried up due to the Depression (Cowley 163).

No less disenchanted with America than Edmund Wilson, F. Scott Fitzgerald for a relatively brief period of time toyed with the idea of a “Great Change” and associated himself with some movements on the left, that happening even as he admitted to having trouble conciliating their radicalism with his conservative class-based view of society (Fitzgerald, *Letters* 417). It was mainly that desire to do something that led many actors and writers to contribute to the many causes that the Communist Party endorsed over the years (Goodman 306). Hollywood’s status as a major source of funds for the Communists did not, however, result in much influence over film content. Gilbert Seldes, in *The Great Audience* notes that, “[u]nless inflamed by foreign demagogues,” industrial workers were normally portrayed in film as living in a reality devoid of labor conflict or reason for discontent (86). Unwittingly attesting to the lack of politically deviant messaging in movies, the House Committee on Un-American activities in 1952 congratulated itself in having prevented Communists from turning film into a medium to propagandize their cause (Goodman 308). As the thirties wore on, the anti-communist viewpoint gradually came to its own and communism, more than ever, became a contentious topic for the American intellectual elite. By August 1934 Fitzgerald had put any idea of collaborating with the left behind him (Fitzgerald, *Letters* 417) and, later on, a succession of show trials where several prominent Soviet revolutionary leaders were convicted to death would end up providing incontrovertible evidence that Soviet-style communism was not living up to its promise (Bell 150-51).

Yet, to many, a different form of oppression was a more immediate concern. In the words of Hortense Powdermaker,

> Hollywood represents totalitarianism. Its basis is economic rather than political but its philosophy is similar to that of the totalitarian state. In Hollywood, the concept of man as a

> passive creature to be manipulated extends to those who work for the studios, to personal and social relationships, to the audiences in theaters and to the characters in the movies. (327)

As such, even if one was to distrust the Communists and, more specifically, their foreign backers, the kind of oppression that Hollywood and its institutions represented loomed larger. The American Communist Party and many of the organizations it sponsored, by providing artists and intellectuals opportunities to exchange views, nurtured in many of them a sense of belonging and self-importance (Susman 173), that translating into continued, if more subdued sympathy for the Soviet regime (Warren 163-64).

From Fitzgerald's perspective, the totalitarian forces of Hollywood and communism were working to relegate the novel, "the strongest and supplest medium for conveying thought and emotion," to irrelevance (Fitzgerald, *Letters* 78), him feeling as a "factory worker" (284), "telling stories fit for children" (48). The novel had, in his view, been replaced as a storytelling medium by "an art in which words were subordinate to images, where personality was worn down to the inevitable low gear of collaboration" (Fitzgerald, *Crack-Up* 78). Dialogue playing a supporting role to the image, the relevance of the former was diminished, and creative freedom supposedly curtailed as consequence, the fate of the writer akin to that of the artisan of yesteryear, whose job was taken over by machines to whom human labor played a supporting and pleasureless role.

Fitzgerald's experience writing for the screen would echo the one he previously had when he decided to write a play. Underestimating how difficult it would be to translate his skills to the medium, he thought *The Vegetable* would be an incredible success and make him rich. Despite the fact that three different producers had rejected the play before it made it to the stage, "Fitzgerald thought it the funniest play ever written." When it premiered, "the dream sequence in the second act confused the audience, who got bored and walked out in droves." The play was abandoned a mere week after that, several revisions during that period not being enough to rescue it (Turnbull 140). Years later, Fitzgerald, having established himself as one of the top American writers of his generation, would pen a film script for United Artists (171). Overestimating his ability as a writer, he considered himself to be "a sort of magician with words," something that in retrospect was "an odd delusion," he would later confess (*Letters* 16). The script was turned down, and he put his association with Hollywood on pause for a while (Turnbull 171). By the time Fitzgerald collaborated with Schulberg for *Winter Carnival*, he had already faded from the public consciousness. Three years prior, the *Saturday Evening Post* had already "portrayed him as a hopeless drunk crying he would never write again[,] . . .

in the tone usually reserved by tabloid sports reporters for broken-down fighters." Fitzgerald's time in the limelight seemed to be over by then, he himself having doubts about his future as a top-shelf writer (Kazin 16).

In Schulberg's account of it, many of the established writers who went to work in the movies still had "dreams of returning in triumph to their first creative love, their plays, their books. . . . Yet, almost without exception, ten years later they were bankrupt men, broken financially, creatively, even physically. Alcoholism had spread like plague among them" (qtd. in Schultheiss 19). F. Scott Fitzgerald would himself admit to be among those who, realistically, "had nothing to lose, either talent or vitality, when they sold out" to Hollywood (*Letters* 550). Trying to control his alcoholism, Halliday had not drank in several months, while the screenwriting job provided him a much needed source of income (Schulberg, *Disenchanted* 35). Still missing was a level of financial stability that would allow the disgraced writer to fully dedicate himself to the completion of a new novel (33). In an unfortunate turn of events, Halliday would resume his drinking habit right at the beginning of the Eastern trip Milgrim had been so insistent on (98).

A point of divergence between F. Scott Fitzgerald and Halliday, as pointed out by Schulberg, was in the former's respect for the motion picture as a medium. Although both him and his fictional counterpart considered themselves novelists first and foremost, Fitzgerald had dedicated some time to studying filmmaking and felt his skills could be put to good use in the industry (*Four* 97). Where he converges with Halliday is in the opinion that said skills ended up never being leveraged by the studio bureaucracies. Fitzgerald's contentment in 1937 that the work he did for the movies could be "occasionally creative" (*Letters* 557), only three months later had given way to resentment. A script he produced in one of his many attempts to write for Hollywood being "arbitrarily and carelessly torn to pieces," him writing producer Joe Mankiewicz: "To say I'm disillusioned is putting it mildly. . . . [M]y dialogue is supposedly right up at the top. But . . . you've suddenly decided that . . . you can take a few hours off and do much better" (*Letters* 563). From Mankiewicz's perspective, the script was simply too elaborate for the screen: "The actors . . . absolutely could not read the lines. It was very literary dialogue, novelistic dialogue that lacked all the qualities required for screen dialogue" (qtd. in Bruccoli, Afterword 227). It was decided to bring in veteran screenwriter E. E. Paramore to collaborate with Fitzgerald on a final version (Piper 246). Despite Fitzgerald's "desperate plea to restore the dialogue to its former quality" going unattended and his prediction that the movie would flop (*Letters* 563-64), *The Three Comrades* released to critical and commercial success (Piper 246-47).

The film adaptation of Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* would similarly be the cause for complaints on the part of the novel's author, him going as far as suing the studio responsible, as well as Budd Schulberg's father, who had served as producer for the film (Schulberg, *Moving* 393). At stake was the distortion of the source material, after an initial screenplay by renowned Soviet director and screenwriter Sergei Eisenstein was dropped, that happening despite an overwhelmingly positive initial response to it from B. P. Schulberg himself (Merck 2). Paramount ended up caving in to public pressure and demand Eisenstein's removal from his position at the studio, on account of his supposed ties with the Soviet regime. Not having helped matters was the fact that American institutions were to be portrayed negatively under Eisenstein's treatment (69-70). The choice of Josef von Sternberg to replace the Russian director displeased Dreiser, who thought that Sternberg had a tendency to focus too much on cinematography and not enough on character development. The novelist's chief concern was that millions of people who were unacquainted with the source material would watch the film and his reputation as an author would be tarnished (79).

Interestingly, Josef von Sternberg would in his autobiography reserve some sympathy for the Hollywood writer. Discussing the circumstances surrounding the adaptation of Dreiser's novel, namely the lawsuit that was brought against the studio that produced the film, he makes it known that the disgruntled author's lawyers had made a mistake in not bringing him on as a witness, for he would have testified on his behalf (259). In Sternberg's estimation of it, the "camera writes its own language, and, more often than not, to the consternation of the man who used a pen to compose the theme, . . . [it] has altered and transformed the intended meaning" (54). Such stance is unsurprising if interpreted in light of the director's own struggles with the intrusion of sound into the filmmaking process:

> With one fell swoop the directors and the cameraman were relegated to a distant past, the master of the stage was now a sound engineer, whose eyes were on a dial which indicated the fluctuation of decibels. His earphones were the master instruments, and a nod from him was like a benediction, a shake of his head would stop the camera. (320-21)

The camera no longer dictated the flow of the production process, it having been replaced in that role by the microphone. In the early years of sound film, cameras had to be placed inside soundproof compartments, given the amount of noise that they generated. Unable to be moved from those fixed positions, in Sternberg's view, they stood merely as a reproductive instrument, the creative role they previously assumed being muted. Even if technological advancement had allowed the camera to regain its former mobility, sound nonetheless remained "a barrier to

the fluid language of the silent image," the famed director reasoned. It was hard to manipulate for artistic effect, while at the same time being condemned to "always play a supplementary role to the image" (321-22). Regarding the silent image as supplying him the best avenue for artistic expression, Sternberg was no more enthused about the market's demand for sound than F. Scott Fitzgerald was about the popular appetite for film, to the detriment of the written word.

Early in his career, before he was quarreling with movies and the challenge they posed to creative authorship, Fitzgerald had tried to conciliate the negativism that was characteristic of his writing with the need to finance his lifestyle. Magazines at the time tended to strive for an optimistic tone, leading the young writer to ask his agent: "does realism bar a story from any well paying magazine no matter how cleverly it is done?" When he again asked his agent a similar question, that time with regard to a novel he was planning, he added: "I'm asking you for an opinion about this beforehand because it will have an influence on my plans" (qtd. in Turnbull 104), evidencing the fact that, even if perhaps not to the same extent as film, writing for print was not altogether free from the deleterious influence of capitalism.

In *The Last Tycoon* Fitzgerald was to extend the notion that impersonal market forces conspired to restrict individual agency and creativity within industrial organizations, depicting the hero of the novel, Monroe Stahr, as a dying breed of paternalistic business mogul, "the last of the princes" (Fitzgerald, *Last* 37). His education having been "founded on nothing more than a high-school course in stenography" (26), Stahr ascended to a position of prominence in the film industry by virtue of his dedication and leadership skills. Fashioning himself as a firm but fair manager, Stahr would be ill prepared to deal with the diffusion of power that resulted from higher levels of worker unionization and the divorce between ownership and control, the trend being towards the disappearance of charismatic business leaders who were knowledgeable on the different aspects of the craft (Wilson, Story Synopsis 154). They were being replaced by opportunists like Stahr's business associate and main antagonist Pat Brady, someone who "talked that double talk to Wall Street about how mysterious it was to make a picture, but . . . didn't know the ABC's of dubbing or even cutting" (38), or Mort Fleishacker, the company lawyer and "a man totally without conscience or creative brains" (Wilson, Story Synopsis 156). Stahr's rapidly declining health not helping matters (Fitzgerald, *Last* 128), he faced a losing battle in trying to conciliate his vision for the business with the wishes of shareholders and the demands of workers (Wilson, Story Synopsis 152).

While in New York Schulberg's Manley Halliday had taken the opportunity to visit Jere, his ex-wife (Schulberg, *Disenchanted* 161), only to find in her place a "carping middle-aged impostor" (168). When she begged him to give their relationship another chance, it was

Halliday assuming the role of the realist and refuse to entertain the idea, reasoning: “We can’t go back to the dream and we can’t go on to anything else” (167). The Jere he missed was not the one in front of him at that moment, but rather a younger, idealized version of her, one that inhabited a time and circumstance he was no longer sure if it had ever existed. When Halliday attempted “to remember one party in detail, . . . what came back to him most sharply were the casualties.” One time, he recalls, Jere’s friend Mitzi Sedgwick, “drunk as usual” and in a fit of rage, hit an unintended target at a party with a cocktail glass, one of several “tragedies” that Halliday could remember from those times. Betty Lou Vanner was rushed to the hospital, for the situation seemed serious. She “would be alright except for having to lose the eye,” the doctor wound up declaring (103). Yet, at the time, they were having too much of a good time to have it spoiled by such events (104). Like *Gatsby*’s Tom and Daisy Buchanan, they had time and time again “smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money on their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess” (Fitzgerald, *Great* 139).

Things started to unravel after a French physician labeled Jere an addict, on account of her drinking, pointing to the alcoholic content of a concoction that was supposed to take care of a cough. In Berlin, Dr. Simmel would elaborate on what he called “the post-war disease of dipsomania” and recommend one to two years of treatment, of “a kind of engineering of the soul” designed to “rebuild the ego,” something Halliday could not help but think not just Jere, but their entire generation could take advantage of (Schulberg, *Disenchanted* 260-61).

“Fitzgerald [too] felt that his generation’s departure from the good, gone world of the old commandments of work and discipline and politeness was a symptom of a general breakdown and insanity in Western civilization” (Stern 290). Of influence in shaping that outlook was Oswald Spengler who, in Fitzgerald’s assessment of it, “believed that the Western world was dead, and he believed nothing else but that” (*Letters* 289). This German thinker’s pessimistic outlook for the future was based on the fact that a constant state of war preparedness had become the norm as the nineteenth century progressed. His view, as expressed in *The Decline of the West*, was that the existence of big permanent armies had in itself been a factor in heightening tensions between nations (vol. II: 428-29). The world had entered “the age of gigantic conflicts” (416), as that tension would inevitably be periodically discharged. Claiming to have in 1911 predicted the First World War (vol. I: 46), Spengler was already in the 1920s anticipating that other similar conflicts were forthcoming, stating: “The Hague Conference of 1907 was the prelude of the World War; the Washington Conference of 1921 will have been that of other wars” (vol. II: 430). While *The New Republic* had in 1917 predicted that “the

entrance of the Russian and American democracies" in the war would prove "a stimulus to democrats everywhere" and culminate in "democratic revolution the world over" ("Great" 280), Spengler, on the contrary, augured that democracy would be defeated and give way to authoritarianism. In his view: "Money organizes the [democratic] process in the interests of those who possess it" and the public, "tired to disgust" of the political process, was starting to look for alternative forms of government or otherwise sit in the sidelines (vol II: 464, 506-07).

Looking back, Fitzgerald could identify signs that finance was the true master of the American political system. Writing in 1931 and looking back at the social unrest that briefly made itself felt after the end of the First World War, Fitzgerald recalls the violent repression from the police and groups of servicemen that the protesters were met with on May 1, 1919, and which he had previously documented on "May Day" (Tuttleton 150), framing it as: "the sort of measure bound to alienate the more intelligent young men from the prevailing order." Recognizing that business interests had had a hand in influencing the government's response, he concludes: "If goose-livered business men had this effect on government, then maybe we had gone to war for J. P. Morgan's loans after all" (*Crack-Up* 13). Later, and on a more personal level, Fitzgerald would come to think of his alcoholism and his wife Zelda's mental ailments as "painful symbols of the disintegration of a time and a nation" (Stern 290).

Still, despite his disenchantment with the political process, his dissatisfaction with his work, and regretting the fact that he and others of his generation had in the twenties been led to adopt a lifestyle similar to the one that he had himself criticized in *Gatsby* through the Buchanans and in "Rich Boy" deemed parasitic, Fitzgerald could not bring himself to endorse the institutional break with the past that a communist revolution would represent. While in the United States political radicalism had come to generally be regarded as a sign of foreign allegiance, Fitzgerald's reasoning to consider associating himself with the left derived from a sense that the country had abandoned its principles and ideals. Over the next chapter of this text, cultural decadence and the powerlessness of individual are themes that will continue to be explored.

3. Nathanael West: Hollywood as a Mechanism of Mass Deception

Through the lens of Nathanael West's satirical portrait of Hollywood, *The Day of the Locust*, this chapter will continue to analyze America's decadence and Hollywood's deception, West's depiction of America in the novel being then linked with his political stances during the thirties.

Published in 1939, *Locust* was greeted with mixed reviews when it came out and sold poorly. Despite having by that point found some success as a scriptwriter, West had not found the work fulfilling: “I don’t mind doing those C movies at Republic [Pictures], . . . they’re so chintzy they’ll shoot anything,” Nathanael West once told Budd Schulberg, adding: “I watch my friends struggling to get their social messages into their million-dollar situation comedies and it seems to me it takes too much out of them,” effort that would go further if they put it into their own material, West cautioned (qtd. in Schulberg, *Four* 174). Previously, he had himself been one of those who struggled with the demands of the job, having gone “from despair to resignation to ironical delight” as he grew indifferent toward the artistic merit of the films he contributed to (Martin 287). West not having accrued much notoriety as a writer by the time of his death, aged thirty-seven, posthumous reprints of his novels helped to spark interest in them, critics being almost unanimous in their acclaim when his *Complete Works* were published in 1957 (Light, *N. W.: An Interpretative* 189).

3.1. Hollywood and the Illusive Dream

In this subchapter, Nathanael West’s *The Day of the Locust* will be analyzed and contextualized, the four motifs that Carolyn See identifies as pervasive in the Hollywood novel of the 1930s all being present, those being: artificiality, distortion of time, sexual dysfunction and the meaninglessness of work (200-02).

His status in the public consciousness rivaling that of the self-made businessman or the pioneer of a different era, the screen actor in the twentieth century became a model of success in America. Studying the development of the biographical genre in popular magazines of the first four decades of the twentieth century, sociologist Leo Lowenthal noticed a shift in the type of subjects that were chosen. The post-WWI trend was for a constant increase in the proportion of entertainers that were featured, in detriment of businessmen and politicians (205). During this period, the “idols of production” were slowly but surely replaced by the “idols of consumption” (208). Screen actors, in particular, had come to represent a new model for

success in America, one that eschewed the traditional virtues commonly ascribed to the self-made man. Instead, Hollywood stars were "believed to lack impressive brains and given to profligate ways" but nonetheless admired across the nation and exceedingly well rewarded for their performances (Rosten 12-13). Early attempts on the part of producers to keep the identity of actors confidential had given way to the existence of magazines whose main selling point was their exhaustive coverage of the lives of film stars (Jowett 55-56). To the average person, such access to the lives of the stars made them more relatable than businessmen or politicians, many feeling that their success could be more easily emulated as it depended more on luck and circumstance than vocation or hard work (Rosten 13). In that sense, film stars deviated from Veblen's concept of the leisure class, him having argued that conspicuous consumption "underscored the remoteness of the leisure class from all other social groups" (Springer 89).

Over the 1930s, widespread joblessness had reinforced existing migratory tendencies, as thousands were compelled to go out of their comfort zone on the lookout for a job (Baxter 149). Whereas Orison Sweet Marden, editor of *Success* magazine, had in 1903 heralded migration from the farm to the city as crucial to the latter's development, arguing that cities "would decay from their own unnatural conditions were it not for the constant streams of fresh, honest, vigorous manhood and womanhood constantly flowing in from the suburbs and the country at large" (3), the inhabitants of 1930s Los Angeles would resent it. Most migrants coming from out-of-state, Californians feared they would be a drain on public resources and a threat to public order, those migrants generally having, long before they reached the state, been drained of their vigor and health (Manchester 100). Giving voice to those concerns, the California Unemployment Commission in November 1932 issued a report where it acknowledged the existence of an "army of homeless [that] grows alarmingly," a lack of adequate solutions to handle the matter leading to "questionable methods of 'getting by' [to] rapidly develop." Recognizing that most of those who had found themselves homeless had "neither desire nor inclination to violate accepted standards of society," this commission nonetheless saw no option other than to leave them to be harassed by the police which largely treated them as criminals (qtd. In Bernstein 322).

Some of them, having come to work in the movies, ended up becoming extras and, consequently, "'[a]cting' and 'make-up' schools which guaranteed studio jobs, 'influential' commercial placement agencies, and still less legitimate enterprises flourished" (Ross 65). With the introduction of spoken dialogue, a much sharper division between actor and extra became apparent, since one got speaking parts while the other did not. As that happened, being an extra became more of a career dead-end, cases of stars that lost relevance and got smaller

and smaller roles being more numerous than those of extras rising to stardom (86). F. Scott Fitzgerald would sum up the situation: “Except for the stage-struck young girls people come here for negative reasons—all gold rushes are essentially negative—and the young girls soon join the vicious cycle” (*Crack-Up* 282).

Nathanael West’s Tod Hackett lived among that multitude of nobodies, in a three stories high nondescript building, “the back and sides of which were of plain, unpainted stucco, broken by even rows of unadorned windows” (West, *Day* 263). In the first chapter of the novel, as he leaves work at the end of the day and makes his way there, Tod notices that, in an evening crowd, many could be found wearing sports clothes which in reality were nothing but fancy dress: “the man in the Norfolk jacket and Tyrolean hat was returning, not from a mountain, but an insurance office; and the girl in slacks and sneaks with a bandana around her head had just left a switchboard, not a tennis court.” Those West calls “masqueraders,” as they pretend to live a life of leisure despite needing to work regular jobs to support themselves (261). “[T]he styles should go as far as possible in proving that the owner does not have to work for a living,” Paul Nystrom explains in *The Economics of Fashion* (103). Others, Tod noticed, wore cheap clothing and “loitered on the corners or stood with their backs to the shop windows and stared at everyone who passed. When their stare was returned, their eyes filled with hatred.” At that point, not three months having yet passed since his arrival in the West Coast, the young painter “knew little about them except that they had come to California to die. . . . They were the people he felt he must paint” in his next creation, *The Burning of Los Angeles* (West, *Day* 261).

Artifice continues to be a focus as Tod passes through Pinyon Canyon and notes that the structures that overpowered the landscape were made of “plaster, lath and paper.” Those materials, “know[ing] no law, not even that of gravity,” failed to impose on builders any degree of moderation, the outcome being the existence of houses of radically different styles in close proximity to each other. Initially, angry at the way such structures polluted the landscape, Tod had suggested that only the use of dynamite would be of any help, stance that was softened as he noticed that such hideous structures had been built of the same flimsy materials that were normally used to construct film sets (West, *Day* 263). Those buildings were part of Hollywood’s deception: made to look aspirational, to function as “the residential equivalent of costume, offering roles that their occupants can adopt” (Seed 273), they were made on the cheap, the region’s climate providing cover for their structural flaws.

Having rented a cottage in Pinyon Canyon, Homer Simpson used to be a bookkeeper at a hotel in Wayneville, a small town near Des Moines, Iowa. It was not the need to make a living or a craving for fame that led him to California but medical advice, rest being recommended

as he was recovering from pneumonia. A Middle-Westerner with “fever eyes and unruly hands,” Homer “at first glance . . . seemed an exact model for the kind of person who comes to California to die.” That impression was not to last long however, as Tod is quick to notice that he is an introvert and as such “only physically the type.” He had accepted the doctor’s advice due to his “authoritative manner,” just like he rented the second house that the real estate agent showed him “because he was tired and the agent was a bully” (West, *Day* 285-87). Indifference and a lack of vitality would characterize Homer, him dreading sleep “[n]ot because he had bad dreams, but because it was so hard for him to wake again. When he fell asleep, he was always afraid that he would never get up” (289). Sleep disturbance being deemed “the most obvious symptom of repressed conflict,” in Homer West portrays “a classic case study of an Oedipal-induced neurosis which culminates in catatonia,” Victor Comerchero has argued (145).

Also, noteworthy is Homer's robotic stiffness, him being compared at one point late in the novel to a “badly made automaton” (West, *Day* 412). In that, West mirrors James Whale's Frankenstein eponymous monster, Stephanie Sarver considers, the 1931 film having achieved widespread popularity at the time, as did horror films in general. Providing a clue as to the film's influence in the novel, Sarver argues, is a scene where Adore Loomis, a child actor that Homer and Tod meet in the second half of the story, contorts his face into a caricature of Frankenstein's monster, a performance that he directs at Homer. Much like Mary Shelley's monster, Homer is “a consolidation of inharmonious parts” that “are disassociated from one another, often functioning independent of any control he may attempt to exert over them” (217-18). As he woke from a nap, Homer “lay stretched out on the bed, collecting his senses and testing the different parts of his body. Every part was awake but his hands. . . . They demanded special attention.” Then, “[h]e got out of the bed in sections, like a poorly made automaton” (West, *Day* 289). His hands being of particular significance in the novel, they are big and clumsy and once awake they were difficult for him to control: “they seemed to have a life and a will of their own” (296). In Whale's film, similar emphasis is placed on the creature's hands. As the only visible part of his body in the early scenes of the movie, and being of a disproportionate size, they are the first visible sign that Dr. Frankenstein succeeded in bringing to life the mismatch of body parts he had assembled together. When the creature finally appears in full view, “his white hands and wrists, which are highlighted to emphasize their size, are sutured at the wrist to excessively long arms.” Unable to speak, the creature relies on his hands and facial expressions to convey emotion (Sarver 218). Similarly, Homer through his hand movement reveals that which his mind attempts to repress.

In the first day at his new Los Angeles home, Homer felt “miserable and lonely” and a memory “kept crowding into his mind,” that of a run-in with a prostitute back in Wayneville. Having been sent to her room in order to demand payment of the thirty-one dollars she owed the hotel, he started to notice how excited he was as he prepared the bill. “When he got off at the sixth floor, he felt almost gay. His step was buoyant and he had completely forgotten his troublesome hands.” Homer ended up paying the prostitute for sex, only for the phone to ring and him to lose the courage to go through with the act. That was one of the few excitements Homer ever had in his life. (West, *Day* 290-96). In this instance, sexual anticipation provides an alternative outlet for Homer's autoerotic proclivity (Comerchero 146).

For most of a month he would not be much bothered by bad memories, that lasting until he met Faye Greener. She was accompanying her father, Harry, as he went door-to-door selling a concoction he labeled as silver polish (West, *Day* 298-99, 302), which he produced in his bathroom, “out of chalk, soap and yellow axle grease” (284). Having been immediately taken by her youth and beauty (304), for the rest of that afternoon Homer's hands “trembled and jerked, as though troubled by dreams,” him growing increasingly worried as the days passed and his mind would not let go of Faye: “he somehow knew that his only defense was chastity, that . . . [h]e couldn’t shed it even in thought. If he did, he would be destroyed.” Unlike others, Homer could not afford to drop his guard, as that “would be like dropping a spark into a barn full of hay” (313-14). Homer’s apathy was a defense, as he feared being consumed by wishes whose fulfillment would be denied. He had escaped from the incident with the prostitute, but in that case the struggle to control his impulses in the days and weeks that followed had been facilitated by the tiring nature of his job at the hotel (West, *Day* 294), the routine helping to alienate him from his own emotions (Rhodes 47).

In the San Bernardino Arms also lived Faye Greener (West, *Day* 263). One of Hollywood's stage-struck young girls that Fitzgerald mentions, Faye is the dream personified. Standing for “studied, mechanical, and commercialized sexuality” (Lokke 44), she at one point in the novel puts forth her plan to achieve success as an actress, juxtaposing it with her understanding on the making of great Hollywood careers: “She mixed bits of badly understood advice from the trade papers with other bits out of the fan magazines and compared these with the legends that surrounded the activities of screen stars and executives.” In the process, what she at first presented as career possibilities quickly became certainties (West, *Day* 386). Like the film factory itself, for her dreams Faye repurposed old stories, which she kept in a large mental catalogue. Thinking of each one as a card in a pack, “she would go over them in her mind, . . . discarding one after another until she found one that suited” (316).

As part of a study carried out between 1929 and 1932 titled *Movies and Conduct*, which focused on the effect of film on the conduct of young people, participants were asked to write about their experiences with the medium (Blumer 3-4; Charters viii-ix). Roughly two-thirds of the inquired high-school students indicated that the content of movies played a crucial role in stimulating their imagination, a tendency that also observable in the other age groups that were part of the study, if to a slightly lesser extent (Blumer 59-60). “I think it was during early adolescence that the movies had its greatest effect on me,” wrote a female college student that participated in this study. “I slipped off to sleep in planning and dreaming about the pictures I should play in. . . . I was a bit hazy as to how I should accomplish all this[, but] I felt quite comfortable about it all coming true,” she confessed before proceeding to tell of her surprise when she found that a friend shared that same aspiration to become a film star (62).

Trapped in a similar mindset, West’s Faye Greener was too immersed in her dreams to acknowledge that they were not getting nearer to fruition, as “[s]he seemed always to be struggling in their soft grasp as though she were trying to run in a swamp” (West, *Day* 320). Faye’s parents having both been actors (309), holding her back was the fact that she was “an actress who had learned from bad models in a bad school.” Unable to ever drop her artistic persona and lacking in her ability as an actress, Faye’s voice was artificial, and her mannerisms were odd (304), sometimes to the point of comedy (387).

Harry Greener, a clown with forty years of experience in vaudeville and burlesque, evidenced that same artificiality, as he had in the early years of his stage career “probably restricted his clowning to the boards, but now he clowned continuously. It was his sole method of defense.” This protective mask he had come to rely on, he normally paired with “a special costume, dressing like a banker, a cheap, unconvincing, imitation banker. . . . His outfit fooled no one, but then he didn’t intend it to fool anyone” (West, *Day* 282), his deception being of a different kind. Having moved to Hollywood in hopes of getting some comedic roles in the movies, little demand had existed for Harry’s services, hence why he had to support himself by selling his homemade concoction (284). When he felt sick during the sales pitch at Homer's house, the script involving him pretending to suffer from a momentary indisposition, Harry found himself doubting whether he was still acting or the condition was real. Having continued the performance,

> [s]uddenly, like a mechanical toy that had been overwound, something snapped inside of him and he began to spin through his entire repertoire. The effort was purely muscular, like the dance of a paralytic. He jigged, juggled his hat, made believe he had been kicked, tripped, and shook

> hands with himself. He went through it all in one dizzy spasm, then reeled to the couch and collapsed. (301)

Only after this episode is he able to deduce that the indisposition was real and not part of the performance, seeing that he had already gone through the sales pitch multiple times that day with nothing of the sort having taken place (301). To Harry, role-playing had become automatic, his body expressing suffering by way of a performance that was exaggerated to the point of comedy. What started as a mask had morphed into the entirety of his personality.

The mechanization motif had become a recurrent one in early film criticism (Marcus 40), finding new relevance when the first talkies made it to market, due to the robotic quality of their spoken dialogue. Cinema "is not yet free from dry mechanism and it acts in the same manner as one winds the mechanism of a doll," Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw told *The New York Times* in 1929 (Shaw 59), an analogy having been drawn by poet and novelist H. D. between the talking picture and Edison's talking dolls. Conceptualized at around the same time that Thomas Edison started toying with the idea of adding synchronized audio to the silent picture, such dolls made use of a phonograph to reproduce a short message (Marcus 28-29). H. D. would in a 1927 article for *Close Up* magazine question the real improvement such robotic dolls represented, the variety of dolls that had traditionally existed being replaced by more life-like ones, in the sense that they produced sound, but that were also necessarily bulbous and stiff due to the need to house and protect the phonograph inside. Perhaps, she pondered, this lack of variety in terms of shapes and materials, coupled with the existence of a predetermined voice, made for a less stimulating experience. Similarly, "The projection of voice and the projection of image were each in itself perfect[, and if experienced separately] would have left us to our dreams. The two together proved too much," H. D. argues, as she reflects on a recent experience at a demonstration of an early sound-on-film system. To her, sound felt as if it was "welded" and not "wedded" to the image, the mechanical element being exacerbated by the addition of synchronized pre-recorded sound and therefore the experience ended up diminished. "I want to help to add imagination to a mask, a half-finished image, not have everything done for me," she would add (114-16). Described is an experience that, instead of stimulating the imagination, overloads the senses and dulls the mind.

Those self-contained experiences were ones that the studios endlessly recycled. Interpreting it as a "dream dump," West's Tod Hackett at one point describes a large field where sets, flats, and props were piled up after having been used to give shape to the imaginary worlds of the pictures that were mass-produced on a studio lot: It was "[a] Sargasso of the

imagination," a "dream dump" that "grew continually" as more material was discarded there by the truckload. In that dumping ground, "a history of civilization" was available to be reused or repurposed as needed. "Many boats sink and never reach the Sargasso, but no dream ever entirely disappears. Somewhere it troubles some unfortunate person and someday, when that person has been sufficiently troubled, it will be reproduced on the lot" (West, *Day* 353). Others will in turn also be troubled by it, in an endless cycle of hope and disappointment, one is led to assume. This repository of dreams exists in a world where a miniature Rhine castle can sit next to "a little highly colored shack with domes and minarets out of the Arabian Nights," in La Huerta Road (262) and Waterloo is "A Charles H. Grotenstein Production" (354), Hollywood's product reducing the historical battle to "mere slapstick, a vaudeville of dehumanization" (Long 128). The overall picture being that of an unreal reality, devoid of a sense of time or place.

Mike Davis in *City of Quartz*, his book about Los Angeles and the forces that shaped its history, points to Louis Adamic's essay "Los Angeles! There She Blows!" as the inspiration behind West's loitering crowd (32-33). Adamic calls them "the Folks, . . . the retired farmers, grocers, Ford agents, petty hardware and shoe merchants from the Middle West, . . . who have worked harder than any one should through their best years." They migrated in large numbers to California, hoping to get some rest in a dry and sunny climate, the state having long been advertised as the perfect place for the sick and the fatigued to recover their fitness. "[U]nwell, vacuous, biologically finished men and women, neurotic, incapable of new ideas," the Folks made up most of the city's population, many of them inhabiting the garish and flimsy houses that overpowered the landscape (Adamic, "Los Angeles"). As West would tell it, the life of leisure those people had labored for seems hollow as "they discover that sunshine isn't enough," that not much difference exists between Southern California and any other place in the country. With nothing better to do with their time, they read newspapers and watch movies to occupy their time: "Both fed them on lynchings, murder, sex crimes, explosions, wrecks, love nests, fires, miracles, revolutions, wars" (*Day* 412), that only underpinning just how empty their lives were.

The rich and successful try to capture some of that excitement, their lives being portrayed by West as an endless effort to keep boredom at bay. Claude Estee, a thriving screenwriter, impersonates a Civil War colonel when he welcomes Tod to a party at his Southern style mansion in one of the early chapters of the story. As part of the act, he pretends that his Chinese servant is a black house slave (West, *Day* 271-72), the eccentricity of this character, the only one in the novel that had found success in Hollywood, leading him to have

a rubber horse at the bottom of his swimming pool, “a life-size, realistic reproduction” of a dead horse. While Tod does not bother to hide his indifference, other guests at the party try to act excited about this frivolous purchase (274-75). Commenting on the attempt to gratify status claims through leisure, C. Wright Mills notes: “Just as work is made empty by the process of alienation, so leisure is made hollow by status snobbery and the demands of emulative consumption” (256). The regular folk who migrated from the East, unable to either afford or enjoy the leisure activities and eccentricities of the rich, live bereft of any sort of excitement. With time, “[t]hey realize that they’ve been tricked and burn with resentment. . . . They have slaved and saved for nothing” (West, *Day* 411-12).

In a set of lithographs that Tod was working on they would make up a crowd that stared as Faye, Harry and Abe Kusich (West, *Day* 263-64), another inhabitant of the San Bernardino Arms (269), danced in front of them, each of the performers to be depicted in a different plate, all of them dancing in front of the same crowd. The performers, who “spin crazily and leap into the air with twisted backs like hooked trout” (264), are both victims and victimizers, inspiring others to chase the Hollywood dream while being unable to attain it themselves (Chipman 58-59). Cheated by mass media and mass advertising, the starers in *The Day of the Locust* assume a role goes beyond that of mere spectators: “It was a mistake to think them harmless curiosity seekers. They were savage and bitter, especially the middle-aged and the old” (411). During the 1930s, those age groups had demonstrated the most propensity to join political movements that were oftentimes deemed to be of a fascist character or at least bordering on it.

Francis Townsend, a Midwesterner, had attracted a cult-like following as he became the face of a political movement that appealed to the same instincts that animate *Locust*’s cheated lower middle class. After the First World War, he moved to Southern California, seeking to safeguard his frail health and revive his career as a physician. His investment in a dry ice manufacturing business proving a failure, the Depression did not spare either Townsend’s private practice or his real estate dealings, with which he had supplemented his income. Providing him a lifeline, he was appointed to the Health Department of the City of Long Beach, a position that he lost in 1933 as a result of budget cuts. At sixty-seven years of age by then and financially struggling, Townsend's message appealed to the retirees who had lost their savings as a result of the Depression (Starr 134-35). In 1933 a proposal to institute universal old age pensions, to be funded by a federal sales tax, made his name known (Holtzman 35-36). Merely a year and a half later, Townsend Clubs counted over half a million dues-paying members, a figure that had quadrupled by the end of 1936 (Starr 135).

For the second time in as many years, in 1939 Californians were asked to vote on a proposition that would implement a version of the Ham and Eggs pension plan, it having drawn, among other sources, from Townsend's earlier pension proposal, the measure being defeated by a bigger margin than in the previous year (Starr 202-03, 215). The day after the vote, *The* N*ew York Times* reported of an old man commenting after the results were known: "I don't know what happened, but something was done behind closed doors. Somehow they stole it from us." Taking out a piece of paper, the old man wrote, "This will never be settled peacefully" (qtd. in Hanne 223).

The movies played to the same basic instincts that could lead one to commit acts of violence, some argued. Sympathizing with those who wanted to control film content, Gilbert Seldes provides a window into the thought process of the censor when he states, "[I]f young and simple minds can be turned to evil by the contemplation of evil, the movie was infinitely the most contagious of mediums. . . . In the darkness, under the spell of music, . . . the crowd is helpless against suggestion" (*Hour* 113). Drawing from "the good parts of Freudism," Huntly Carter would consider adults to also be at risk from the suggestive powers of the motion picture, him reasoning that "a very large number of Cinema-goers regress to a primitive state . . . in sight of their favorite 'stars,'" a sort of hypnosis where they "put themselves unconsciously into star parts" (26-27).

Validating this theory, the researchers behind *Movies and Conduct* found that, under the influence of the moving picture, the individual "is carried away from his usual trend of conduct. His mind becomes fixed in certain imagery, and impulses usually latent or kept under restraint gain expression or seriously threaten to gain expression" (Blumer 74). Young men would, the authors of the study found, take advantage of this and "deliberately employ passionate motion pictures as a means of inducing a greater attitude of receptiveness on the part of their girl companions." Exemplifying this behavioral pattern, a seventeen-year-old male respondent confessed, "By viewing one of those intense love pictures, I get a certain burning sensation within me to perform those things which I see done on screen, and I must admit that in doing so I get a great deal of pleasure" (Blumer 108). The effect being initially transient, repetition of the experience might lead to permanent changes in the conduct of the individual, that in turn having an impact on moral standards, the researchers speculate (116). More certain of that correlation between exposure and desensitization, Harmon B. Stephens expressed concern, writing, "Many of the most dangerous influences never produce violent shock. Their effect is so gradually cumulative that the evil is not recognized till it is almost beyond repair" (154). Backlash against the movies often placing a special focus on the effect of pictures in

children (Pettijohn 161), Monsignor Cicognani in late 1933 warned Catholics of an ongoing "massacre of innocence of youth" and summoned them to a "vigorous campaign for the purification of cinema," the medium having allegedly become "a deadly menace to morals" (qtd. in Jowett 248).

Movements to censor film content or prohibit the consumption of alcohol were only part of a broader trend to restore and preserve traditions, a response to industrialization and the erosion of a sense of belonging. Namely, Darwin's evolutionary theory came to be under attack after the First World War, many Protestant ministers from the more sparsely populated parts of the country having long defended that the Bible was to be interpreted literally. No concessions of the kind that Henry Ward Beecher and others had made were to be accepted as valid (Leuchtenburg, *Perils* 218). Certain parts of the country awoke to this view in the 1920s, one of the results being the production of legislation at the state level dealing with the teaching of evolution in schools (220). Also renewed was the drive to celebrate the Constitution, in what William E. Leuchtenburg calls "a kind of magical nativism," a way to somehow bring back the social conditions that existed when the document was written and ignore over a century of progress (*Perils* 204).

Late in Nathanael West's novel, Tod decides to spend part of his time at some of the churches that existed around Hollywood and draw the worshipers he found there. Places like "the 'Church of Christ, Physical' where holiness was attained through the constant use of chestweights and spring grips" or "the 'Tabernacle of the Third Coming' where a woman in male clothing preached the 'Crusade Against Salt,'" and a man angrily went through "a crazy jumble of dietary rules, economics and Biblical threats." Regardless of how convoluted his reasoning was, the man's speech provoked a reaction from the audience: "They sprang to their feet, shaking their fists and shouting. On the altar someone began to beat a bass drum and soon the entire congregation was singing 'Onward Christian Soldiers.'" Evoking such response was the speaker's "messianic rage," the violence that he promised (*Day* 365-66). Markedly different was the response Bach's "Come Redeemer, Our Saviour," which was played at Harry's funeral. The music exhorted God to return, "and the invitation was to a lawn fete, not to the home of some weary, suffering sinner; It didn't plead, it urged with infinite grace and delicacy, almost though it were afraid of frightening the prospective guest." Amongst those that were in attendance the response was muted, "Bach politely serenading Christ was not for them" (West, *Day* 348), sough after by the people of Los Angeles being an avenue to channel their anger and release them from apathy.

Flirting with risk, Homer had at one point agreed to allow Faye to temporarily live with him, in what both described as merely a business arrangement: “They were keeping a record of every cent he spent and as soon as she clicked in pictures, she would pay him back with six per cent interest.” With Homer providing financial backing, it was only a matter of time until she revived her career (West, *Day* 357-59). The relationship between them having deteriorated in the meanwhile (366), Homer wakes up one night to find Faye naked in bed with Miguel (401), him having begrudgingly let the Mexican, one of Faye’s friends, live in his garage (372, 374). She packs up her things and leaves after this incident (403). For Homer, the consequence of that encounter is the catatonic withdrawal mentioned by Comerchero (147): “He had curled his big body into a ball. His knees were drawn up almost to his chin, his elbows were tucked in close and his hands were against his chest (West, *Day* 402-03). Like the movies, Faye promises a payoff for the alienation engendered by modern society and the repetitive labor that feeds the machine of mass consumption. Yet, as a product of said machine, its effect “is ultimately just as disempowering and exploitative as the labor” (Rhodes 47). As with *The Great Gatsby*'s Daisy Buchanan, Faye provokes destruction, only to escape the situation unscathed.

Toward the end of the novel, Tod’s attention is drawn to Kahn’s Persian Palace Theatre as searchlights illuminate the evening sky, signaling that a new picture is about to premiere. With several hours to go before celebrities would arrive at the scene, people were already gathering there by the thousands. The destructive power of the crowd is something to be feared as “[i]ndividually the purpose of its members might simply be to get a souvenir, but collectively it would grab and rend” (West, *Day* 409). “A crowd has its own character, and it is not an accumulation of various characters, but seems to have been welded into another unit that no longer resembles any of its components,” states Sternberg in his autobiography (69). As people joined West's premiere crowd, they turned arrogant, almost bellicose, when before they reached the line to attend the premiere they had “looked diffident, almost furtive.” Having a mind and a will of its own, “[a]t the sight of their heroes and heroines, the crowd would turn demoniac. . . . [T]hen nothing but machine guns would stop it” (West, *Day* 409). A movie audience, if large enough, turns into a “homogeneous herd, united on its lowest level, easily swayed by is most common denominators,” Sternberg adds (69). A man with a portable microphone riles up *Locust*'s crowd, the response he got being similar to that of the cultist leaders Tod had previously observed. Few working men could be seen there, the crowd's members being mostly of the lower middle class. The tension being palpable, policemen were noticeably worried. Acting accordingly, “[i]f they had to arrest someone, they joked good-naturedly with the culprit, making light of it until they got him around the corner, then they

whaled him with their clubs" (408-10). Separated from the group, the individual no longer posed a threat.

Preparing to leave the place before it got too crowded, Tod saw Homer. Feeling dejected, Homer intended to go back to Wayneville. His "features were set in a rigid, mechanical grin" and he lurched from side to side as he walked (West, *Day* 412). More than at any other point, he was having trouble coordinating the different parts of his body. Even if he was an introvert, a breaking point was about to be reached, triggering a violent reaction from the crowd. Adore Loomis reappears to prank Homer, who remained impervious until the child ended up throwing a stone at his face. At that moment Homer snapped and started to stomp Adore, who had fallen on the ground as he attempted to flee. Chaos ensued, the crowd turning into a violent mob. Homer was to "rise above the mass for a moment, [as he was] shoved against the sky." Then, "[a] hand reached up and caught him by his open mouth and pulled him forward and down," to be consumed by the mob (414-17). By being unable to control his impulses, he sealed his fate. In the last version of his painting, Tod envisages "a great united front of screwballs and screwboxes." They had been "stirred by the promise of miracles," and were under the command of "[a] super 'Dr. Know-All Pierce-All'" who had made "the necessary promise." The victims of the mass culture's false promises had found a purpose, boredom was no longer an issue (420).

As providing inspiration for *The Burning of Los Angeles*, at different points in the novel several different painters are mentioned, among them being names like Goya, Salvator Rosa, Francesco Guardi or Monsu Desiderio. West's mention of those "painters of Decay and Mystery" (*Day* 352), by way of contrast, serves to reinforce the ephemeral character of the products of the motion picture industry and the anonymity of those who worked on them behind the scenes (Strychacz 157). Tod's intent being to engage in social criticism with his painting, he wanted the image to be prophetic: desperation would lead the "cream" of "America's madmen" to burn down Los Angeles, and "their comrades all over the country would follow. There would be civil war." Tod "was going to show the city burning at high noon," the daylight disguising the fact that depicted was "a terrible holocaust. He wanted the city to have quite a gala air as it burned, to appear almost gay. And the people who set it on fire would be a holiday crowd" (West, *Day* 334-35).

An incident in the *Book of Revelation* inspired Nathanael West in his choice of a title for the novel. In *Revelation*, opening a shaft to a bottomless pit, an angel releases a locust swarm (Chipman 64), the violent mob functioning as a stand-in for the ravaging locust. An end times judgment from God there is then revealed through a set of seven symbolic seals. The first

four, as they are opened, release the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, normally taken to represent war, anarchy, famine, and death. They are alluded to at the beginning of the novel (Young 105), as a film shooting that is taking place outside Tod's office: "Around quitting time, Tod Hackett heard a great din on the road outside his office. . . . An army of cavalry and foot was passing. It moved like a mob; its lines broken, as though fleeing from some terrible defeat." In this disorganized army, "Tod recognized the scarlet infantry of England . . . , the black infantry of the Duke of Brunswick, the French grenadiers with their enormous white gaiters, the Scotch with bare knees under plaid skirts" (West, *Day* 259-60), the four Biblical horses being, respectively, red, black, white, and pale.

As Gloria Young notes in "The Day of the Locust: An Apocalyptic Vision," the horse imagery continues (105), as Abe Kusich tells Tod of a horse he should bet on, Tragopan, "a certain, sure winner" (West, *Day* 29) and, not much later in the narrative, Claude Estee's rubber horse is introduced. One of Faye's suitors, Earle Shoop "was a cowboy from a small town in Arizona. He worked occasionally in horse-operas" (322). In what Young interprets as a reference to St. John, regarded as the author of *Revelation*, a battle at Mont St. Jean was going to be filmed for *The Battle of Waterloo* when Tod visits the set. "[S]warmed with grips, property men, set dressers, carpenters and painters," that part of the set was still being finished when a French cavalry regiment charged into it, only for the set to collapse: "The noise was terrific. Nails screamed with agony as they pulled out of joists. . . . Lath and scantling snapped as though they were brittle bones. The whole hill folded like an enormous umbrella," as the panicked performers attempted to flee (West, *Day* 129-31), West using and corrupting the symbols of the Apocalypse in service of his parody (Young 105).

As the book closes, the siren of a police car makes itself heard. Tod "at first thought he was making the noise himself." Realizing that was not the case, "he began to imitate the siren as loud as he could" (West, *Day* 421). Being alluded to are the seven trumpets that are sounded, one at a time, after all seven seals of *Revelation* have been broken, as God continues to punish humanity for its sins (Young 109).

The threat of mob violence had been given serious consideration in the early days of the United States as an independent country. When the Constitutional Convention took place in 1787, the memory of Shay's Rebellion, an armed uprising that had taken place in Massachusetts, was still fresh. James Madison's concern with the power of factions had in fact been justified, at least in part, by the fear that a demagogue could capitalize on popular dissatisfaction and launch a violent uprising (Rosen 171-72). Depicted by Nathanael West in *Locust* is a country that, more than 150 years later, had failed to heed Jefferson's advice and

adapt, to reinvent itself and its institutions, so that it could fulfill its messianic mission. As a result, it once again sat on the verge of destruction, middle-class resentment, historically at the root of movements to safeguard morals and preserve traditions, finding in *Locust* an outlet in violence. Gloria Young, aligning Nathanael West with most Old Testament prophets, saw in West's writing no indication that God's punishment of this world would be followed by salvation (104, 110). Yet, as she also mentions, in *Revelation* St. John foretold that humanity would survive the fall of the doomed city of Babylon (110). Similarly, one can interpret *Locust*'s apocalyptic ending as a prompt for social regeneration, a setback for mankind, and not the end.

3.2. Creativity and Capitalism: Nathanael West and the Need for Catharsis

Nathanael West in *Locust* drawing from biblical imagery at multiple points in the narrative, an additional source of inspiration for the novel's course of events can be found in the communist ideology that had gained traction among American intellectuals during the thirties. That influence will in this section be explored alongside West's political allegiances, which will in turn be juxtaposed with those of other intellectuals during the thirties. The idea that the novel's ending foreshadowed a moment of catharsis will be developed.

"Only the working classes would resist," West had written in the penultimate draft of *Locust* (qtd. In Martin 319), the removal of this passage for the final version being possibly motivated by the worry that a more clearly defined and optimistic ending would have lessened the aesthetic impact of the novel or diminished the perceived severity of the social issues it depicts (Brown 196). Having gotten himself increasingly involved in leftist politics during the thirties (Widmer 12), West himself suggests it when he writes fellow novelist Jack Conroy: "If I put into *The Day of the Locust* any of the sincere, honest people who work here and are making such a great progressive fight, those chapters couldn't be written satirically" (qtd. in Light, "N. W. and the Ravaging" 47). Neither did West want to compromise the artistic integrity of the novel, nor did he want to portray the left in a bad light (Light "N. W. and the Ravaging" 47)

The Communist Manifesto envisaged a civil war that would overthrow capitalism and pave the way for a system controlled by the proletariat (Marx and Engels 28). Perceiving the history of humanity as the history of class struggle (12) and decrying the fact that industrialization had reduced the workman to a slave of the machine and the "bourgeois State," it proposed to put the proletarian class in power by way of revolution (20-22), one of

the aims being a fairer distribution of the fruits of labor (31-32), with the end goal of a classless and free society (42).

Years before he worked on Locust, West had written a poem that has been oftentimes held as the inspiration for Tod Hackett's *The Burning of Los Angeles*. Resembling *The Communist Manifesto* in tone, rhetoric, and imagery (Veitch 18), only a shortened version of it was published during West's lifetime (146n13). In this poem, it is Marx and not Jesus who "Performs the miracle of loaves and fishes" (West, qtd. In Veitch 18), the abridged version that appeared in *Contempo* magazine (Martin 328) inciting the "Workers of the World" to "Unite" and "Burn Jerusalem" (West, qtd. in Veitch 18). The most direct source of inspiration for the poem was however Louis Aragon's "Red Front" and not *The Communist Manifesto*, West seemingly aligning himself with Aragon in defending that a revolution to end capitalism was pre-requisite to liberate the mind and fulfill the goals of the Surrealist movement, that being at the time a point of divergence within its midst (Veitch 17-18).

Marxism's focus being on economic freedom, the Surrealists concerned themselves instead with the liberation of the mind (Klaus 2), an early Surrealist tract, dating from 1925, declaring: "The immediate reality of the surrealist revolution is not so much to change anything in the physical and apparent order of things as to create a movement in men's minds" (qtd. in Nadeau 104). At the time Louis Aragon himself, as a device to effect change, believed "in the infinite powers of thought" (qtd. in Short 5), Surrealists drawing from Freud's psychoanalysis to explore the unconscious and use it as inspiration for their works (Short 4). Later, most members of the movement came to emphasize the role of the capitalist system as an oppressive force, given that they believed it subjugated the imagination to the tangible world. To them, Surrealism could not be attained in a capitalist society (Nadeau 202).

"When we look backward, we see our American past like a great tidal wave that is now receding[.] . . . The great wave piled up too much wreckage—of nature, of obsolete social patterns and institutions, of human blood and nerve," claimed a manifesto in support of the Communist ticket signed by a group of over fifty intellectuals in the lead up to the 1932 election (League of Professional Groups 3). With the fragile state of the economy during the thirties legitimizing doubts as to the very survival of the American institutions of government, the Soviet promise of a government that, through careful planning, could prevent economic downturns proved appealing to some. A belief existed that communism could deliver more economic liberty without compromising democratic rule, the Soviet Union having gradually come to be perceived by many in the American left as being on a path toward "American Democracy and technical efficiency plus socialist elimination of unearned profits" (Wilson,

Shores 723). Reflecting this spirit, Edmund Wilson, Sherwood Anderson, John dos Passos and other writers would in 1932 sign a manifesto that, among other things, called for "[a] temporary dictatorship of the class-conscious workers . . . , as the necessary instrument for abolishing all classes based on material wealth." Freed from its subordination to capital, Man would finally be able to pursue spiritual and intellectual fulfillment (Wilson, *Letters* 222-23). In 1935, Nathanael West would sign his name to a similar manifesto, committing himself to "personally helping to accelerate the destruction of capitalism and the establishment of a workers' government" (qtd. in Light, *N. W.: An Interpretative* 149).

In that same year, Edmund Wilson could be found dismissing concerns over a purge of supposed conspirators that had taken place in Russia. "[I]t seems to me a mistake to form any too definite opinion because we really know nothing about it," he would write Dos Passos, any hint of Bonapartism being a carryover from the Tsarist regime. After all, Napoleon "had megalomaniac imperialist ambitions which one can hardly imagine Stalin entertaining," Wilson posited (Wilson, *Letters* 255). As a totalitarian state, the Soviet Union was able to exert a great degree of control over the flow of information leaving the country. The vagueness of the news that made it to American shores regarding the purges that took place under Stalin's rule allowed many to rationalize the events or outright refuse to believe the reports (Klehr et al. 10). Even then, by 1938, three more years having passed, Wilson would not be as sure that the comparison was unwarranted (Wilson, *Letters* 309-10). Wilson's disenchantment with the Soviet regime being evident by that point, he denounced the "barbarism of Stalin and the administrative ineptitude of the Russians," which had brought the country to a worse condition than the one that existed when it started its experiment with communism (311).

Having previously opposed it, worrying about the impact such a program could have on the nation's appetite for revolution (Thomas 101; Wolfskill and Hudson 123-26, 130), in 1935, at the behest of the Soviets, American Communists embraced President Roosevelt's New Deal and made the defeat of fascism their main goal, the socialist revolution being put on indefinite hold. Franklin D. Roosevelt had in 1932 been elected to the presidency promising "bold, persistent experimentation" (Roosevelt, "Oglethorpe"), with special focus given to the struggle of the "forgotten man at the bottom of the economic pyramid" (Roosevelt, "Radio"), since there no longer was "a Western prairie to which those thrown out of work by the Eastern economic machines can go for a new start" (Roosevelt, "Campaign Address"). The Democratic program proposed an expansion of the role of government in the interest of stimulating economic growth and employment (Roosevelt, "Address Accepting"), historian Rowland Berthoff suggesting that the New Deal, more than anything else, was an attempt to restore the

same type of community control on individual behavior that had existed until the nineteenth century (357). While government regulation of business had in the early part of the twentieth century been construed as an effort to protect the public, it evolved to encompass the protection of businesses from each other, from the cutthroat competition that was perceived as being one of the factors that caused the economic downturn of the thirties (Flynn 123-24).

Justifying the change of approach of the Communists was the concept of a "Popular Front" that would aggregate various movements and groups on the left for the purpose of preventing the spread of Fascism (Warren 103). The de-emphasis of the idea of revolution seemingly made it more palatable for liberals to associate with Communists (115), the Spanish Civil War ending up furthering the perception that the survival of democratic forces anywhere in the world was at stake, the time being one for unity (128). According to *The New Republic*, in an August 1936 issue, Spain was "the battleground of the reactionary versus the progressive forces of the entire world" ("World" 5).

Never having developed much of a liking for the Soviet regime to begin with, Nathanael West had been nonetheless drawn to the plight of the workers, to the point that in 1935 he found himself participating in a strike, that leading to his arrest for obstructing traffic (Light, *N. W.: An Interpretative* 114). Over that decade farmworkers went on strike with some regularity, the Communists who were involved in those protests, in the words of historian Kevin Starr, "daydreaming of a Marxist-Leninist utopia as they negotiated for free drinking water and truck rides into the fields on behalf of workers more interested in tortillas, beans, and grits than revolution" (82). During that period of economic turmoil and unrest, Nathanael West joined the Screen Writers Guild and was an active member of the organization (Widmer 13), ending up making generous contributions to the progressive forces that fought in Spain (Light, *N. W.: An Interpretative* 150).

As creative personnel in the film industry were in many instances forced to accept temporary pay cuts during the Depression, executives and craft employees, protected by union contracts, were generally spared (Banks 30-31). A tendency existing for writers to consider themselves artists first and foremost (56-57), in that time of hardship some started to more seriously accept the fact that they were salaried workers and thus needed to make use of collective bargaining to defend their interests (31-32). Established in the fall of 1920, the Screen Writers Guild aimed to protect the rights of writers and elevate their status within the film industry. Over that decade, one of prosperity for the country, it however grew into more of a social club than a policymaking organization (33-34). Only in 1933 was it relaunched as a union for screenwriters (28). In 1941, after years of acrimonious negotiation, writers were at

last recognized the same collective bargaining rights that directors, actors, stagehands, or electricians had come to enjoy as years progressed (Rosten 318-19).

While apparently never a member, West grew closer to the Communist Party as the decade wore on (Widmer 13). Oswald Spengler's ideas having resonated with him to some extent (Martin 253), he was unable to avoid the pessimism that permeated his writing, "[h]e didn't really believe mankind could save himself . . . by politics or any other thing—but was trying hard to believe it." That is according to Jerome Chodorov, who had discussed politics with West in a few occasions (qtd. in Martin 389). As Malcolm Cowley, literary editor of *The New Republic*, would tell it: "First it was the Russian Five Year Plan that impressed us, then the rise of Hitler that frightened us, then the war in Spain that engaged our sympathies" (350).

Circumstances having led many American writers and other intellectuals to endorse a communist future for the nation, that stance was more than a reflexive reaction to the Great Depression or the fascist threat from Europe. Rather, it was also a response to a longstanding dissatisfaction with the country's trajectory of development, something that has been discussed throughout this text. Technological progress and economic prosperity had fostered an increasingly materialistic perspective of life, while creative expression was devalued. Indifferent to such considerations, during the Depression, the average American placed his hopes for a return to economic prosperity in Roosevelt's New Deal. It was the sense that there was a deeper rot in American society that would provide added incentive for intellectuals to look elsewhere for answers, many of them operating under the belief that communism was compatible with the nation's ideals and aspirations.

Conclusion

This work sought to analyze the novelist's response to Hollywood during the 1930s, a time of economic hardship and uncertainty for the United States of America and the world. Examined were the cases of F. Scott Fitzgerald and Nathanael West served, two writers who there found confirmation for many of the negative stereotypes that were associated with the film industry and the city of Los Angeles, and its Hollywood neighborhood in particular. The two writers having been part of a group of intellectuals who, disillusioned with their country's political system, came to at one point see in communism a desirable path of development for the nation, F. Scott Fitzgerald and Nathanael West's disenchantment with America was also discussed as part of that wider trend. Their negative outlook on the country's trajectory of development and consequent turn to the radical left was traced to a longer-stretching process of disenchantment with America, one that long predated the economic downturn of the thirties. More than a rejection of America's historical principles and ideals, this disaffection with the country's political process constituted a rejection of the ways in which they had been hollowed out. Namely, whereas the individual had been cast as an active participant in shaping his own future, the political direction of the country, coupled with its rapid industrialization and urbanization, had rendered that power, more than ever, illusory.

The first chapter of this work traced how American society came to hold the free individual responsible for his own fate and station in life, an ideal that would increasingly be threatened by the perception that opportunities to succeed had become limited as the country grew less rural and more populous.

The emancipation of the individual in America was analyzed, it having resulted from the revolutionary process and taking place after a gradual erosion of ecclesiastical authority, a factor that was coupled with an increase in relevance of Protestant denominations that endorsed individual enterprise. Also of help in that development was the fact that the accrual of material possessions came to be seen as proof of an adherence to the Protestant work ethic, that in turn being interpreted as evidence of God's approval. The role of the individual in society having continued to evolve, when in his almanacs Benjamin Franklin, as part of his formula for wealth and happiness, recommends observance of Christian virtues, valued is their immediate benefit to the individual in his quest for riches. The attainment of Providential favor is relegated to the status of a preventative against misfortune, not that of a goal worth pursuing for its own sake. Franklin, through his self-help texts, widely read in their time and in decades that followed,

was able to tap into the country's increasingly materialistic ambitions, while at the same time casting upward social mobility as mainly dependent on individual conduct.

The country having in the nineteenth century coalesced around the idea of a Manifest Destiny to expand west, it fully embraced the frontiersman as part of the national mythology. If this character's ability to adapt to a hostile environment was emphasized, so was his capacity to tame the wilderness, that creating the conditions for civilization to establish itself and prosper. In his frontier thesis, Frederick Jackson Turner developed the idea that the western expansion of the country had been the most preponderant element in American history up to that point and exalted the role of the pioneer in that process. Yet, as Turner himself recognized, by the time he was enunciating his thesis, close to the end of the nineteenth century, the West had largely been conquered, that completing the pioneer's task. Regardless, he argued, the pioneer's spirit had become a constituent part of the American identity.

As the country grew more industrialized and urban, it was the turn of the self-made businessman to be glorified as an example of thrift and hard work. Turner having for his frontier thesis borrowed from Charles Darwin's idea that organisms, through a process of natural selection, evolve in order to better adapt to their environment, the ones who fail to do so eventually going extinct, others used it to justify a more extreme form of individualism. Emphasizing the competitive element, thinkers like Herbert Spencer argued that measures designed to limit the power of the wealthy, to distort what he perceived to be the natural course of events, were unwise and could have unforeseen consequences, social development ultimately being hampered. Such beliefs, advanced at a time when vast aggregates of capital had come to dominate some sectors of the economy and there was concern with the opportunities that were afforded to the individual, proved appealing to some in the business community, who therefore justified their position in the social hierarchy.

The notion of individual impotence at the hands of big corporations, which oftentimes colluded with corrupt government officials to further their stranglehold on the marketplace, would lead to the formation and rise to relevance of the progressive movement in the early part of the twentieth century. F. Scott Fitzgerald's portrayal of the social climber in *The Great Gatsby* furthers the idea that thrift and hard work were not a sure path to happiness. Having needed to resort to illegitimate means to amass wealth, class consciousness ultimately proved to be an insurmountable obstacle to the hero of the story in his quest for happiness. Ironically, the very class that denied Gatsby the fulfillment of his romantic ideal and sits atop the social hierarchy is in the short story "Rich Boy" construed by Fitzgerald as being of a parasitic character: inheritors of great wealth either continued to ruthlessly add to the family's fortune

or mindlessly spent it by living in extravagance. On the whole, not only was merit not rewarded, the system that Fitzgerald described promoted or at least tolerated conduct that was detrimental to the health of the country.

America's tolerance for parasitic conduct would be at odds with the assumption that the country enjoyed a moral ascendancy over other nations, by virtue of the distinctly moral character of its citizens and the superiority of its system of government. This belief had evolved from the intent of the early Puritan settlers of New England to in the New World give continuance to the Protestant Reformation that had been started in the Old and create a model society that glorified God, a design that would come to be interpreted as part of a Providential mission to lead the world toward the Millennial Kingdom mentioned in the Bible. That ideal was in turn secularized during the revolutionary period, as the country was to set an example for others to follow. The democratic system of government that was then adopted being construed as an evolutionary step for mankind, a particularly virtuous citizenry was necessary to ensure that the nation would continue to live up to the demands of its messianic task. Furthermore, the Declaration of Independence having laid claim to a right to the pursuit of happiness, in the Framers' concept of it, them drawing from Greek and Roman philosophy, real and lasting happiness was tied to principles of courage, moderation, and justice.

Apparent in Henry Thoreau's *Walden*, published halfway through the nineteenth century, is such disenchantment. In it, Thoreau denounced what he interpreted as the stagnation of Western society. Material prosperity having not been synonymous with intellectual progress, his advice was to forsake books and turn to the natural world as a primary source of knowledge. In that proposal, he conjoins elements from Thomas Jefferson's principle that each passing generation was to rethink its institutions and laws, and do so unburdened by the decisions of its ancestors, with Thomas Paine's stance against the use of history as a guide in devising the country's system of government. Just as the Puritans of the seventeenth century perceived America as a Garden of Eden, a place for civilizational rebirth, the return to nature envisaged by Thoreau, as he sought to encourage the individual to think for himself rather than simply repeat the thoughts of others, was its own form of redemption. The idea that America had somewhere along the way lost its innocence having from the nineteenth century onward been explored by different authors, when writers of the twentieth century decried the state of the country, their complaints were not a new development, but rather part of a decades-long literary tradition.

In the second chapter of this work, F. Scott Fitzgerald’s struggles with creative authorship in film production were explored, as was his ambivalent stance toward the radical

left. The analysis of Budd Schulberg's *The Disenchanted* was of aid in establishing the writer's perception of the role that was ascribed to him by film studio excutives, and in explaining some of the demands that could be imposed on writers, them being in part justified by pressures that were placed on the still young industry by some sectors of society.

Manley Halliday, Schulberg's fictionalized version of F. Scott Fitzgerald in the novel, served as an introduction to the famed writer's state of mind in the final months of his life. Cynical about formulas for lasting prosperity, his stance contrasted with the youthful optimism of Shep Stearns, a young writer who reached adulthood in the thirties, and a fictionalized depiction of the author. Having grown up hearing about the theories of Marx and Freud, he had no qualms about endorsing communism as a desirable path of development for the nation or embracing the causes that the American Communists supported. In common with other Hollywood novels of the 1930s, *The Disenchanted* denounced Hollywood as a place where the writer's creativity was curtailed by studio bureaucracy and the conflicting interests of the different stakeholders whose cooperation was needed in order to produce the finished product.

To F. Scott Fitzgerald, Hollywood was representative of America's struggle to conciliate its conception of itself with the realities of an industrial society. Like other established writers, who during the 1930s were led by financial necessity to Los Angeles to work in the movies, F. Scott Fitzgerald had not found the job satisfying, nor did he manage to revive his literary career while there. He had difficulty adapting his writing to a different medium and took offense at seeing his work modified by others, collaboration being required in the filmmaking process. He felt himself to be a factory worker, responsible only for a small part of a product that he had no creative input over. Simultaneously, Fitzgerald envisaged a grim future for the novel, his preferred form of creative expression, as it was threatened in the marketplace by film. That was, in his perception of it, part of the same broader trend toward the disempowerment of the individual, at the hands of moneyed interests and the impersonal forces that drove the economy, and that had previously been identified by the progressive movement.

The third chapter, through the lens of Nathanael West's satirical portrait of Hollywood in *The Day of the Locust*, continued to explore themes of decadence, mass media deception and alienation, West's depiction of the United States in the novel having then been linked with his political stances during the thirties.

Fitzgerald's sense that, in a modern working environment, the laborer was alienated from his work was extended by Nathanael West in *Locust*. There, he developed the idea that in 1930s America, the individual lived alienated from both reality and himself. If the worker was

estranged from his work, the performance of that same labor could estrange the individual from his own emotions. In the novel, West most evidently portrays such alienation from the self through the motif of mechanization. Feeling that allowing himself to pursue the kind of excitement and romance that the movies promised their audience would only lead to frustration, Homer Simpson attempts to repress his impulses. The result was a lack of bodily coordination, a robotic stiffness that is accentuated as the narrative develops and he has more difficulty repressing his emotions, him having previously been aided in that task by the repetitive nature of his work back in Wayneville. Evidencing further detachment from his own sentiments, Harry Greener had grown unable to ever drop his stage persona, he himself having difficulty distinguishing his acting from genuine emotional expression. When he got sick, that manifested itself through a performance where he went through his entire repertoire like a malfunctioning mechanical toy. His daughter, Faye, representing those who chased stardom in Hollywood, exhibits signs of detachment from reality itself. There being no signs that her career was ever to go anywhere, Faye nonetheless continued to convince herself that things would at any moment take a turn for the better, it being only a matter of time. Members of the middle class that, like Homer, had come from the Midwest to enjoy a life of leisure in California after decades of hard work eventually found their lives empty when contrasted with the unrealistic standards that were set by the movies. They realized that they had been tricked and that financial independence was not necessarily synonymous with happiness. Overall, denounced by Nathanael West in *Locust* was the materialistic interpretation of the American dream that was commonplace in twentieth century America.

Given the impossibility of rolling back time and returning to a pre-industrial era, Fitzgerald and West both saw in communism an opportunity to correct the different forms of alienation that they perceived to exist in modern society, to reconnect the individual with the fruits of his labor, with the rest of society and, ultimately, himself.

Works Cited

Adamic, Louis. “Los Angeles! There She Blows! *Outlook Magazine*, 13 Aug. 1930. *libcom.org*, libcom.org/article/los-angeles-there-she-blows-louis-adamic. Accessed 18 July 2023.

---. *My America*. Harper and Brothers, 1938. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/myamerica19281930000adam. Accessed 4 Jan. 2023.

Allen, Frederick Lewis. *The Big Change*. Harper and Brothers, 1952. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/TheBigChange. Accessed 1 Oct. 2022.

---. *Only Yesterday*. 1931. *Only Yesterday and Since Yesterday*, Bonanza Books, 1986. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/onlyyesterdaysin0000alle. Accessed 8 Jan. 2023.

Baker, P. A. “The Next and Final Step.” *The Anti-Saloon League Year Book, 1914*. Edited by Ernest H. Cherrington, The Anti-Saloon League of America, 1914, pp. 16-17. *HathiTrust*, hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015012172915. Accessed Apr. 30 2023.

Baltzell, Digby E. “Introduction.” *The Search for Community in Modern America*, Harper and Row, 1968, pp. 1-13. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/searchforcommuni00balt. Accessed 5 Mar. 2022.

Banks, Miranda J. *The Writers*. Rutgers UP, 2015. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/writershistoryof0000bank. Accessed 8 Jan. 2023.

Baran, Paul A. and Paul M. Sweezy. *Monopoly Capital*. Monthly Review Press, 1966. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/monopolycapitale00bara. Accessed 18 Apr. 2024.

Barrett, Wilton A. “The Work of the National Board of Review.” King and Tichenor, pp. 175-86.

Baxter, Peter. *Just Watch!*. British Film Institute, 1993. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/justwatchsternbe0000baxt. Accessed 16 Feb. 2023.

Beecher, Henry Ward. *Evolution and Religion*. 1885. Part I, New York: Fords, Howard & Hulbert, 1886. *HathiTrust*, hdl.handle.net/2027/inu.30000038189720. Accessed 18 Sept. 2023.

---. “The Morals of Fishing.” *Star Papers*. 1885. Applewood Books, 2009, pp. 231-39. *Google Books*, books.google.gg/books?id=cYnHmOcWfA0C&lpg=PP1&hl. Accessed 18 Jan. 2023.

Bell, Daniel. *Marxian Socialism in the United States*. Rev. ed., Princeton UP, 1967. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/marxiansocialism00bellrich. Accessed 2 Jan. 2023.

Bernstein, Irving. *The Lean Years*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/leanyearshistory0000bern_f7p8. Accessed 4 Oct. 2022.

Berthoff, Rowland. *An Unsettled People*. Harper and Row, 1971. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/unsettledpeoples00bert. Accessed 8 Apr. 2024.

Bigsby, C. W. E. "The Two Identities of F. Scott Fitzgerald." *The American Novel and the Nineteen Twenties*, edited by Malcolm Bradbury and David Palmer, Edward Arnold, 1971, pp. 129-49. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/americannovelnin0013unse_c8x1. Accessed 4 Apr. 2023.

Billington, Ray A. *America's Frontier Heritage*. 1966. U of New Mexico P, 1978. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/americasfrontier0000bill_b7d9. Accessed 26 Feb. 2022.

Blocker, Jack S. *American Temperance Movements*. Twayne Publishers, 1989. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/americantemperan0000bloc. Accessed 18 Apr. 2023.

Blumer, Herbert. *Movies and Conduct*. Macmillan, 1933. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/moviesandconduct00blumrich. Accessed 10 June 2023.

Bremner, Robert H. *American Philanthropy*. 1960. Midway, 1982. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/americanphilanth0000brem_d7c6. Accessed 22 Jan. 2022.

Brown, Daniel R. "The War Within Nathanael West." *Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 20, no. 2, summer 1994, pp. 181-202. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/26279932. Accessed 22 Mar. 2024.

Bruccoli, Matthew J. Afterword. *F. Scott Fitzgerald's Screenplay for Three Comrades*. Popular Library, 1938, pp. 219-34. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/fscottfitzgerald0000fitz_p9q9. Accessed 2 Apr. 2024.

---. Introduction. *The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald*. Cambridge UP, 1991, pp. ix-lv. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/greatgatsby0000fitz_t1j1. Accessed 28 Mar. 2022.

Bruchey, Stuart. *The Roots of American Economic Growth, 1607-1861*. Harper and Row, 1965. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/rootsofamericane0000stua. Accessed 18 Dec. 2021.

Canterbery, E. Ray. "Thorstein Veblen and 'The Great Gatsby.'" *Journal of Economic Issues*, vol. 33, no. 2, June 1999, pp. 297-304. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/4227440. Accessed 10 Apr. 2024.

Carnegie, Andrew. *Autobiography of Andrew Carnegie*. Constable, 1920. *Project Gutenberg*, gutenberg.org/ebooks/17976. Accessed 11 Jul. 2023.

---. “Wealth.” *The North American Review*, vol. 148, no. 391, Jun. 1889, pp. 653–64. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/25101798. Accessed 9 Mar. 2022.

Carter, Huntly. *The Literature of Cinema*. Arno Press & The New York Times, 1970. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/newspiritincinem0000cart. Accessed 16 June 2023.

Cawelti, John G. *Apostles of the Self-Made Man*. U of Chicago P, 1965. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/apostlesofselfma0000cawe. Accessed 18 July 2022.

Charters, W. W. Preface. *Movies and Conduct* by Herbert Blumer. Macmillan, 1933. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/moviesandconduct00blumrich. Accessed 10 June 2023.

Chipman, Bruce L. *A Postmodern Study of the Hollywood Novel*. UP of America, 1999. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/intoamericasdrea0000chip. Accessed 18 May 2023.

Cid, Teresa. *Sobreviver pelo riso - a escrita de Nathanael West*. 1989. Universidade de Lisboa Faculdade de Letras, PhD thesis.

Comerchero, Victor. *Nathanael West: The Ironic Prophet*. Syracuse UP, 1964. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/isbn_9780815620716. Accessed 31 Mar. 2024.

Cooke, Alistair. *A Generation on Trial*. Alfred A. Knopf, 1950. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/generationontria0000alis_k6n0. Accessed 8 Feb. 2023.

Cowley, Malcolm. *Think Back on Us...* Edited by Henry Dan Piper, Southern Illinois UP, 1967. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/thinkbackonuscon00cowl. Accessed 5 Feb. 2023.

Darwin, Charles. *The Origin of Species*. London: John Murray, 1859. *Darwin Online*, darwin-online.org.uk/content/frameset?itemID=F373&viewtype=text&pageseq=1. Accessed 27 Oct. 2023.

Davis, Mike. *City of Quartz*. 1990. Verso, 2006. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/cityofquartzexca0000davi. Accessed 18 May 2023.

Decker, Jeffrey Louis. "Gatsby's Pristine Dream." *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, vol. 28, no.1, autumn 1994, pp. 52-71. *JSTOR*, DOI: 10.2307/1345913. Accessed 28 May 2024.

Dulles, Foster Rhea. *Labor in America*. Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1949. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/laborinamerica0000fost. Accessed 18 June 2023.

Duncan-Clark, S. J. *The Progressive Movement*. Small, Maynard and Company, 1913. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/progressivemovem00dunc_0. Accessed 27 Nov. 2022.

Dwight, Timothy. "America." New-Haven: Thomas and Samuel Green, 1780. U of Michigan Library Digital Collections, name.umdl.umich.edu/n13258.0001.001. Accessed 30 May 2024.

---. *Travels in New-England and New-York*. Vol. II, New-Haven: Timothy Dwight, 1821. *HathiTrust*, hdl.handle.net/2027/nyp.33433081780433. Accessed 7 July 2023.

Ewen, Stuart. *Captains of Consciousness*. McGraw-Hill, 1976. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/captainsofconsci0005ewen. Accessed 12 Dec. 2022.

Fausold, Martin L. *The Presidency of Herbert C Hoover*, UP of Kansas, 1985. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/presidencyofherb00faus. Accessed 30 Apr. 2023.

Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, Department of Research and Education. *The Public Relations of the Motion Picture Industry*. 1931. *HathiTrust*, hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.$b293510. Accessed 9 Apr. 2023.

Filene, Edward A. *Successful Living in this Machine Age*. Simon and Schuster, 1931. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/successfulliving00filerich. Accessed 12 Dec. 2022.

Filson, John. "The Adventures of Col. Daniel Boon." *The Discovery, Settlement and Present State of Kentucke (1784)*. Edited by Paul Royster, *UNL Digital Commons*, 2006, pp. 39-62. digitalcommons.unl.edu/etas/3. Accessed 22 Feb. 2022.

Fine, Richard. *Hollywood and the Profession of Authorship*. 1979. UMI Research P, 1985. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/hollywoodprofess0000fine. Accessed 5 June 2024.

Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Crack-Up*. 1931. Edited by Edmund Wilson, New Directions, 1945. *Internet Archive*. archive.org/details/cerackup0000fsco. Accessed 22 Feb. 2023.

---. *The Great Gatsby*. Cambridge UP, 1992. *Internet Archive*. archive.org/details/greatgatsby0000fitz_t1j1. Accessed 28 Mar. 2022.

---. *The Last Tycoon*. 1941. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/lasttycoonunfini00fitzrich. Accessed 20 Mar. 2023.

---. *The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald*. Edited by Andrew Turnbull, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/lettersoffscottf0000andr. Accessed 22 Feb. 2023.

---. "Rich Boy." *All the Sad Young Men*. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926, pp. 1-56. *HathiTrust*, hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015002203357. Accessed 18 June 2024.

---. "What Kind of Husbands Do 'Jimmies' Make?. *Baltimore American*, 30 Mar. 1924, p. 7. *F. Scott Fitzgerald In His Own Time: A Miscellany*, edited by Matthew J. Bruccoli

and Jackson R. Bryer, The Kent State UP, 1971, pp. 186-92. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/fscottfitzgerald0000bruc. Accessed 10 Apr. 2024.

Flynn, John T. "Business." *America Now*. Edited by Harold E. Stearns, The Literary Guild of America, 1938, pp. 119-31. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/americanow0000haro_b7u2. Accessed 30 Apr. 2023.

Forcey, Charles. *The Crossroads of Liberalism*. Oxford UP, 1961. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/crossroadsoflibe0000unse_b1h8. Accessed 27 Nov. 2022.

Frank, Jerome. *Fate and Freedom*. Rev. ed. The Beacon Press, 1953. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/fatefreedomphilo0000fran. Accessed 28 Apr. 2024.

Franklin, Benjamin. "Advice to a Young Tradesman." *Memoirs of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. II, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1860, pp. 37-39. *Project Gutenberg*, gutenberg.org/ebooks/40236. Accessed 28 Oct. 2022.

---. "From Benjamin Franklin to Peter Collinson, 9 May 1753." *Founders Online*, founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-04-02-0173. Accessed 20 Jan. 2022.

---. "On the Price of Corn, and Management of the Poor." 1766. *Founders Online*, founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-13-02-0194. Accessed 20 Jan. 2022.

Furnas, J. C. *The Late Demon Rum*. A. H. Allen, 1965. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/lifetimesoflated00furn. Accessed 30 Apr. 2023.

Galbraith, John Kenneth. *The Affluent Society*. Houghton Mifflin, 1958. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/affluentsociety0000unse. Accessed 27 July 2022.

Ghent, William J. *Our Benevolent Feudalism*. Macmillan, 1902. *Project Gutenberg*, gutenberg.org/ebooks/53052. Accessed 28 Oct. 2023.

Goodman, Walter. *The Committee*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1968. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/committee0000unse. Accessed 4 Jan. 2023.

Grabb, Edward, et al. "The Origins of American Individualism." *The Canadian Journal of Sociology/Cahiers Canadiens De Sociologie*, vol. 24, no. 4, autumn 1999, pp. 511–533. *JSTOR*, DOI: 10.2307/3341789. Accessed 19 Aug. 2021.

"The Great Decision." *The New Republic*, vol. X, no. 127, 7 Apr. 1917, pp. 279-80. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/sim_new-republic_1917-04-07_10_127. Accessed 24 Mar. 2023.

Griswold, A. Whitney. "Three Puritans on Prosperity." *The New England Quarterly*, vol. 7, no. 3, 1934, pp. 475–93. *JSTOR*, DOI: 10.2307/359674. Accessed 26 Jan. 2022.

Gurko, Leo. *The Angry Decade*. Dodd, Mead and Company, 1947. *Internet* Archive, archive.org/details/angrydecade0000leog. Accessed 6 Feb. 2023.

Hamilton, Alexander et al. *The Federalist Papers*. 1787-88. New American Library, 1961. *HathiTrust*, hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.32106001170155. Accessed 3 July 2024.

Hamilton, Carol V. "Why did Jefferson change 'property' to the 'pursuit of happiness'?" *History News Network*, historynewsnetwork.org/article/why-did-jefferson-change-property-to-the-pursuit-o. Accessed 22 July 2024.

Hampton, Benjamin B. *History of the American Film Industry*. Dover Publications, 1970. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/historyofamerica0000hamp. Accessed 18 Sept. 2022.

Hanne, Daniel. "'Ham and Eggs' Left and Right." Southern California Quarterly, vol. 80, no. 2, summer 1988, pp. 183-230. *JSTOR*, DOI: 10.2307/41171894. Accessed 14 July 2023.

H. D. "The Mask and the Movietone." *Close Up*, vol. 1, no. 5, Nov. 1927, pp. 114-20. *Close Up: 1927-1933*, edited by James Donald et al., Cassell, 1998. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/closeup192733cin0000unse_f9d1. Accessed 16 June 2023.

Hine, Robert V. *Community on the American Frontier*. U of Oklahoma P, 1980. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/communityonameri0000hine. Accessed 12 Mar. 2022.

Hofstadter, Richard. *The Age of Reform*. Alfred A. Knopf, 1955. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/ageofreformfrom000hofs. Accessed 12 Apr. 2022.

---. *Social Darwinism in American Thought*. 1955. Rev. ed., Beacon Press, 1968. *Internet Archive*. archive.org/details/socialdarwinismi0000unse. Accessed 12 Apr. 2022.

Holtzman, Abraham. *The Townsend Movement*. Bookman, 1963. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/townsendmovement0000holt. Accessed 14 July 2023.

Hoover, Herbert. *The Challenge to Liberty*. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/challengetoliber00hoov. Accessed 9 Oct. 2022.

---. "Principles and Ideals of the United States Government." 22 Oct. 1928. *Miller Center*, millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/october-22-1928-principles-and-ideals-united-states-government. Transcript. Accessed 25 Oct. 2021.

---. "Remarks to a Chamber of Commerce Conference on the Mobilization of Business and Industry for Economic Stabilization." 5 Dec. 1929. *The American Presidency Project*, UC Santa Barbara, presidency.ucsb.edu/node/208196. Transcript. Accessed 12 Oct. 2022.

Hughes, Matt S. *The Logic of Prohibition*. Star, 1915. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/logicofprohibiti00hughrich. Accessed 5 May 2023.

Janowitz, Morris. *The Community Press*. 3rd ed., U of Chicago P, 1967. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/communitypressin0000jano. Accessed 18 Apr. 2022.

Jefferson, Thomas. *Notes on the State of Virginia*. Philadelphia: Prichard and Hall, 1788. *Documenting the American South*, docsouth.unc.edu/southlit/jefferson/jefferson. Accessed 8 June 2024.

---. "Thomas Jefferson to Charles Willson Peale, 20 August 1811." *Founders Online*, founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-04-02-0090. Accessed 22 Jan. 2022.

---. "Thomas Jefferson to John Wayles Eppes, 24 June 1813." *Founders Online*, founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-06-02-0200. Accessed 17 Apr. 2022.

---. "To James Madison from Thomas Jefferson, 6 September 1789." *Founders Online*, founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/01-12-02-0248. Accessed 17 Apr. 2022.

Jowett, Garth. *Film: The Democratic Art*. Little, Brown and Company, 1976. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/filmdemocraticar0000jowe/. Accessed 3 Feb. 2023.

Kazin, Alfred. Introduction. *F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Man and his Work*. World Publishing, 1951, pp.11-19. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/fscottfitzgerald00kazi. Accessed 3 Sept. 2022.

Kempton, Murray. *Part of Our Time*. Dell Publishing, 1955. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/partofourtime0000kemp. Accessed 29 Dec. 2022.

King, Clyde L., and Frank A. Tichenor, editors. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science: The Motion Picture in Its Economic and Social Aspects*. Vol. CXXVIII, Nov. 1926. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/annalsofameric128217clyd. Accessed 9 Apr. 2023.

Kirkland, Edward Chase. *Dream and Thought in the Business Community, 1860-1900*. Cornell UP, 1956. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/dreamthoughtinbu0000unse. Accessed 25 May 2022.

Klaus, Robin S. "Surrealism, Communism, and the Pursuit of Revolution." *Black and Gold*, vol. 2, 2016. openworks.wooster.edu/blackandgold/vol2/iss1/1. Accessed 18 May 2024.

Klebaner, Benjamin J. "Poverty and Its Relief in American Thought, 1815-61." *Social Service Review*, vol. 38, no. 4, Dec. 1964, pp. 382–99. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/30017111. Accessed 22 Jan. 2022.

Klehr, Harvey, et al. *The Secret World of American Communism*. Yale UP, 1995. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/secretworldofame0000kleh. Accessed 9 Jan. 2023.

Klevay, Robert. “The Reader and the Classics in Thoreau’s ‘Walden.’” *The Concord Saunterer*, vol. 19/20, 2011-12, pp. 192–222. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/23395218. Accessed 23 Apr. 2022.

Kobler, John. *Ardent Spirits*. G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1973. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/ardentspiritsris00kobl. Accessed 10 Apr. 2023.

League of Professional Groups for Foster and Ford. *Culture and the Crisis*. Workers Library, 1932. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/CultureAndTheCrisisAnOpenLetterToTheWritersArtistsTeachers. Accessed 21 June 2024.

Lens, Sidney. *The Labor Wars*. Doubleday, 1973. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/laborwarsfrommol0000lens. Accessed 7 Oct. 2022.

Leuchtenburg, William E. *The FDR Years*. Columbia UP, 1995. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/fdryearsonroosev0000leuc_i4q5. Accessed 14 Nov. 2022.

---. *The Perils of Prosperity, 1914-1932*. 2nd ed., The U of Chicago P, 1993. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/perilsofprosperi00leuc_0. Accessed 11 Nov. 2022.

Levine, Harry G. “The Discovery of Addiction.” *Journal of Substance Use and Addiction Treatment*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1985, pp. 43-57, DOI: 10.1016/0740-5472(85)90022-4. Accessed 8 Apr. 2023.

Levine, Lawrence W. *The Unpredictable Past*. Oxford UP, 1993. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/unpredictablepas0000levi. Accessed 31 Dec. 2022.

Lewis, Howard T. *The Motion Picture Industry*. D. Van Nostrand, 1933. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/motionpictureind0000howa. Accessed 8 Apr. 2023.

Lewis, R. W. B. *The American Adam*. 1955. U of Chicago P, 1959. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/americanadaminno00lewi. Accessed 17 Apr. 2022.

Light, James F. *Nathanael West: An Interpretative Study*. Northwestern UP, 1961. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/nathanaelwestani00ligh. Accessed 5 June 2023.

---. “Nathanael West and the Ravaging Locust.” *American Quarterly*, vol. 12, no. 1, spring 1960, pp. 44-54. *JSTOR*, DOI: 10.2307/2710189. Accessed 12 June 2023.

Lippmann, Walter. *A Preface to Politics*. Mitchell Kenerley, 1914. *HathiTrust*, hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.32044010508299. 3 Feb. 2023.

Locke, John. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. 1690. 27th ed., London: Tegg, Wise and Company, 1836. *Google Books*, books.google.pt/books?id=vjYIAAAAQAAJ&hl. Accessed 22 July 2024.

---. *Two Treatises on Government*. 1690. London: John Bumpus, 1821. *HathiTrust*, hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.32044012646311. Accessed 22 July 2024.

Lokke, V. L. "A Side Glance at Medusa." Southwest Review, vol. 46, no.1, winter 1961, pp. 35-45. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/43467241. Accessed 11 June 2024.

Long, Robert Emmet. *Nathanael West*. Frederick Ungar, 1985. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/nathanaelwest0000long. Accessed 16 May 2023.

Lowenthal, Leo. *Literature and Mass Culture*. Transaction Books, 1994. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/literaturemasscu0001lowe. Accessed 1 Jan. 2023.

Lowenthal, Leo, and Guterman, Norbert. *Prophets of Deceit*. Harper and Brothers, 1949. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/prophetsofdeceit0000leol. Accessed 1 Jan. 2023.

MacGregor, Ford H. "Official Censorship Legislation." King and Tichenor, pp. 163-74.

Malthus, Thomas R. "An Essay on the Principle of Population." 1798. Edited by Philip Appleman, W. W. Norton and Company, 1976, pp. 15-130. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/essayonprinciple0000malt. Accessed 21 Mar. 2023.

Manchester, William. *The Glory and the Dream*. Little, Brown and Company, 1974. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/glorydreamnarrat01manc. Accessed 13 Feb. 2023.

Marcus, Laura. *The Tenth Muse*. Oxford UP, 2007. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/tenthmusewriting0000marc. Accessed 16 June 2023.

Marden, Orison Swett. *The Young Man Entering Business*. Thomas Y. Crowell, 1903. *HathiTrust*, hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.hw1xni. Accessed 12 Feb. 2023.

Martin, Jay. *Nathanael West: The Art of His Life*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1970. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/nathanaelwestart00mart. Accessed 4 June 2023.

Marx, Karl and Frederick Engels. *The Communist Manifesto*. Translated by Frederick Engels, Chicago, Charles H. Kerr, 1888. *HathiTrust*, hdl.handle.net/2027/osu.32435004242087. Accessed 18 May 2024.

Marx, Leo. *The Machine in the Garden*. 1964. Oxford UP, 1967. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/machineingardent0000marx. Accessed 5 Feb. 2022.

Mather, Increase. *Wo to Drunkards*. Cambridge: Edmund Ranger, 1673. *Evans Early American Imprint Collection*, name.umdl.umich.edu/N00124.0001.001. Accessed 28 Apr. 2023.

McCoy, Drew R. *The Elusive Republic*. W. W. Norton and Company, 1980. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/elusiverepublicp0000mcco. Accessed 24 June 2022.

McLoughlin, William G. *The Meaning of Henry Ward Beecher*. Alfred A. Knopf, 1970. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/meaningofhenrywa00mclo. Accessed 19 Jan. 2023.

Mecklin, John M. *An Introduction to Social Ethics*. Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1920. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/introductiontoso00meck. Accessed 22 Sept. 2022.

Merck, Mandy. *Hollywood's American Tragedies*. Berg, 2007. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/hollywoodsameric0000merc. Accessed 26 Jan. 2023.

Miller, John C. *This New Man, The American*. McGraw-Hill, 1974. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/thisnewmanameric0000unse. Accessed 20 Jan. 2022.

Mills, C. Wright. *White Collar*. 1951. Oxford UP, 1969. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/whitecollarameri00mill. Accessed 10 Mar. 2022.

"The Missouri Trapper." *The Western Monthly Review*, vol. I, May 1827-Apr. 1828, pp. 27-28. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/sim_western-monthly-review_may-1827-april-1828_1. Accessed 12 Mar. 2022.

Nadeau, Maurice. *The History of Surrealism*. 1975. Translated by Richard Howard, Harvard UP, 1989. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/historyofsurreal0000nade. Accessed 18 May 2024.

Nystrom, Paul H. *Economics of Fashion*. The Ronald Press Company, 1928. *HathiTrust*, hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015009354666. Accessed 3 May 2024.

Odegard, Peter H. *Pressure Politics*. Columbia UP, 1928.

O'Sullivan, John L. "Annexation." *The United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, vol. XVII, no. LXXXV, Jul.-Aug. 1845, pp. 5–10. *Google Books*, books.google.pt/books?id=JvE7AQAAMAAJ. Accessed 10 Feb. 2022.

Overstreet, H. A. *The Mature Mind*. W. W. Norton and Company, 1949. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/maturemind0000haov. Accessed 28 Mar. 2023.

Paine, Thomas. *Rights of Man*. J. M. Dent and Sons, 1915. *HathiTrust*, hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015004164797. Accessed 5 Mar. 2024.

Palmer, R. R. *The Age of the Democratic Revolution: The Challenge*. 1959. Princeton UP, 1974. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/ageofdemocratic00palm_0. Accessed 7 Oct. 2021.

Pangle, Thomas L. *The Spirit of Modern Republicanism*. U of Chicago P, 1988. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/spiritofmodernre0000pang. Accessed 29 Jan. 2022.

Parkes, Henry Bamford, and Vincent P. Carosso. *Recent America: A History*. Vol. 1, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1963.

Persons, Stow. *American Minds*. 1958. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/americanmindshis0000pers. Accessed 8 May 2023.

Pettijohn, C. C. “How the Motion Picture Governs Itself.” King and Tichenor, pp. 158-62.

Piper, Henry Dan. *F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Critical Portrait*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/fscottfitzgerald0000henr. Accessed 26 Mar. 2023.

Powdermaker, Hortense. *Hollywood, The Dream Factory*. 1950. Arno Press, 1979. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/hollywooddreamfa0000powd. Accessed 7 Sept. 2022.

Pratt, Julius W. “John L. O'Sullivan and Manifest Destiny.” *New York History*, vol. 14, no. 3, Jul. 1933, pp. 213–234. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/24470589. Accessed 12 Feb. 2022.

Rayback, Joseph G. *A History of American Labor*. The Free Press, 1966. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/historyofamerica0000rayb_f5x7. Accessed 17 Oct. 2022.

Rhodes, Chip. *Politics, Desire and the Hollywood Novel*. U of Iowa P, 2008. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/politicsdesireho0000rhod. Accessed 22 May 2024.

Roosevelt, Franklin D. "Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago." 2 July 1932. *The American Presidency Project*. presidency.ucsb.edu/node/275484. Transcript. Accessed 18 May 2024.

---. "Annual Message to Congress." 4 Jan. 1935. *The American Presidency Project*. presidency.ucsb.edu/node/208864. Transcript. Accessed 18 May 2024.

---. “Campaign Address on Progressive Government at the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco, California.” 23 Sept. 1932. *The American Presidency Project*, presidency.ucsb.edu/node/289312. Transcript. Accessed 16 Oct. 2022.

---. "Oglethorpe University Address." 22 May 1932. *Pepperdine School of Public Policy*, publicpolicy.pepperdine.edu/academics/research/faculty-research/new-deal/roosevelt-speeches/fr052232. Transcript. Accessed 16 Oct. 2022.

---. "Radio Address From Albany, New York: 'The 'Forgotten Man' Speech.'" 7 Apr. 1932. *The American Presidency Project*. presidency.ucsb.edu/node/288092. Transcript. Accessed 16 Oct. 2022.

Rosen, Jeffrey. *The Pursuit of Happiness*. Simon and Schuster, 2024.

Ross, Murray. *Stars and Strikes*. Columbia UP, 1941. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/starsstrikesunio0000ross. Accessed 8 Oct. 2022.

Rossiter, Clinton L. *Seedtime of the Republic*. Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1953. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/seedtimeofrepubl0000ross. Accessed 27 Nov. 2021.

Rosten, Leo C. *Hollywood: The Movie Colony, The Movie Makers*. 1941. Arno Press, 1970. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/hollywoodmovieco1993rost. Accessed 13 June 2022.

Rothman, David J. *The Discovery of the Asylum*. Rev. ed. Little, Brown and Company, 1990. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/discoveryofasylu00roth. Accessed 22 Aug. 2023.

Sarver, Stephanie. "Homer Simpson Meets Frankenstein." *Literature/Film Quarterly*, vol. 24, no. 2, 1996, pp. 217-222. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/43796722. Accessed 21 Mar. 2024.

Schlesinger, Arthur M. *The Coming of the New Deal*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1958. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/comingofnewdeal0000schl_u8h3. Accessed 6 Nov. 2022.

Schlup, Murielle. "Columbus' Egg." *Swiss National Museum*, 2 Feb. 2024, blog.nationalmuseum.ch/en/2022/02/columbus-egg. Accessed 28 Aug. 2024.

Schulberg, Budd. *The Disenchanted*. Random House, 1950. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/disenchanted00schu. Accessed 16 Aug. 2022.

---. *The Four Seasons of Success*. Doubleday, 1972. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/fourseasonsofsuc0000schu. Accessed 3 Sept. 2022.

---. *Moving Pictures*. Stein and Day, 1981. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/movingpicturesme00schu. Accessed 26 Jan. 2023.

Schultheiss, John. "The 'Eastern' Writer in Hollywood." *Cinema Journal*, vol. 11, no. 1, autumn 1971, pp. 13-47. *JSTOR*, DOI: 10.2307/1225347. Accessed 8 Sept. 2022.

See, Carolyn. "The Hollywood Novel: The American Dream Cheat." *Though Guy Writers of the Thirties*, edited by David Madden, Southern Illinois UP, 1968, pp. 199-217. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/toughguywriterso00madd. Accessed 22 Aug. 2024

Seed, David. *Cinematic Fictions*. Liverpool UP, 2009. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/cinematicfiction0000seed. Accessed 15 July 2023.

Seldes, Gilbert. *The Great Audience*. The Viking Press, 1950. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/greataudience00seld. Accessed 23 Mar. 2023.

---. *An Hour with the Movies and the Talkies*. 1929. Arno Press, 1973. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/hourwithmoviesta0000seld. Accessed 22 Mar. 2023.

Shaw, George Bernard. “Shaw Finds Talkies Opening New Field.” *Bernard Shaw on Cinema*, edited by Bernard F. Dukore, Southern Illinois UP, 1997, p. 59. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/bernardshawoncin00shaw. Accessed 15 June 2023.

Short, Robert S. "The Politics of Surrealism, 1920-36." *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1966, pp. 3-25. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/259920. Accessed 18 May 2024.

Sinclair, Andrew. *Prohibition: The Era of Excess*. Little, Brown and Company, 1962. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/prohibitiontheer006613mbp. Accessed 8 Jan. 2024.

Sklar, Robert. *Movie-Made America*. Rev. ed., Vintage Books, 1994. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/moviemadeamerica0000skla_o8y4. Accessed 12 June 2023.

Slotkin, Richard. *Regeneration Through Violence*. Wesleyan UP, 1973. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/regenerationthro0000slot_p1h0. Accessed 12 Apr. 2022.

Smith, Henry Nash. *Virgin Land*. Harvard UP, 1950. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/virginland0000henr. Accessed 11 June 2023.

Soule, George. *The Coming American Revolution*. George, Rutledge and Sons, 1934. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.264061. Accessed 16 Oct. 2022.

Spencer, Herbert. *A New Theory of Population*. 1852. New York: Fowlers and Wells, 1853. *Internet Archive*, resource.nlm.nih.gov/101696158. Accessed 15 Mar. 2022.

---. *The Study of Sociology*. London: Henry S. King and Company, 1873. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/dli.bengal.10689.7347. Accessed 19 Mar. 2022.

Spengler, Oswald. *The Decline of the West*. Vol. I. Translated by Charles Francis Atkinson, Alfred A. Knopf, 1926. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/declineofwestfor01spen. Accessed 8 Mar. 2023.

---. *The Decline of the West*. Vol. II. 1928. Translated by Charles Francis Atkinson, Alfred A. Knopf, 1966. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/declineofwestper0002unse. Accessed 8 Mar. 2023.

Springer, John Parris. *Hollywood Fictions*. U of Oklahoma P, 2000. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/hollywoodfiction0000spri. Accessed 24 July 2023.

Starr, Kevin. *Americans and the California Dream*. Oxford UP, 1973. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/americanscalifor0000star. Accessed 10 July 2024.

Stephens, Harmon B. “The Relation of the Motion Picture to Changing Moral Standards.” King and Tichenor, pp. 151-57.

Stern, Milton R. *The Golden Moment*. U of Illinois P, 1970. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/goldenmomentno00ster. Accessed 16 May 2022.

Sternberg, Josef von. *Fun in a Chinese Laundry*. Macmillan, 1965. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/funinchineselaun00vons. Accessed 28 Jan. 2023.

Stigler, George J. "The Origin of the Sherman Act." *The Journal of Legal Studies*, vol. 14, no. 1, Jan. 1985, pp. 1–12. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/724314. Accessed 28 Mar. 2022.

Stoddard, Lothrop. *The Rising Tide of Color*. 1920. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921. *Project Gutenberg*, gutenberg.org/ebooks/37408. Accessed 9 July 2023.

Strychacz, Thomas. "Making Sense of Hollywood." *Western American Literature*, vol. 22, no. 2, summer 1987, pp. 149-62. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/43024023. Accessed 18 July 2023.

Susman, Warren I. *Culture as History*. Pantheon Books, 1973. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/cultureashistory00susm. Accessed 17 Jan. 2023.

Tanselle, G. Thomas and Jackson R. Bryer. "The Great Gatsby: A Study in Literary Reputation." *New Mexico Quarterly*, vol. 33, no. 4, 1963, pp. 409-25. *UNM Digital Repository*, digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmq/vol33/iss4/5. Accessed 20 Mar. 2023.

Thomas, Norman. *The Choice Before Us*. Macmillan, 1934. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/choicebeforeusma0000norm. Accessed 13 Oct. 2022.

Thoreau, Henry D. *Walden*. 1854. George Routledge and Sons, 1904. *HathiTrust*, hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015012249465. Accessed 21 Oct. 2023.

Trachtenberg, Alan. *The Incorporation of America*. 2nd ed., Hill and Wang, 2007. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/incorporationofa0000trac. Accessed 15 June 2023.

Truman, Ben C. *Homes and Happiness in the Golden State of California*. 4th ed., San Francisco, H. S. Crocker, 1887. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/homeshappinessin00trum. Accessed 12 July 2023.

Turnbull, Andrew. *Scott Fitzgerald*. Grove Press, 1962. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/scottfitzgerald00turn_0. Accessed 27 July 2022.

Turner, Frederick J. *The Frontier in American History*, Henry Holt and Company, 1921. *Project Gutenberg*, gutenberg.org/ebooks/22994. Accessed 12 Sept. 2023.

Tuttleton, James W. *A Fine Silver Thread*. Ivan R. Dee, 1998. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/finesilverthread0000tutt. Accessed 17 Mar. 2023.

Tuveson, Ernest Lee. *Redeemer Nation*. The U of Chicago P, 1968. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/redeemernationid0000tuve. Accessed 8 June 2024.

Tyrrell, Ian R. *Sobering Up*. Greenwood, 1979. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/soberingupfromte0000tyrr. Accessed 28 Apr. 2023.

United States, Congress, Senate. *Congressional Record*, vol. 62, part 9, pp. 9643-83. GPO, 1922. *Congress.gov*, congress.gov/bound-congressional-record/1922/06/29/senate-section. Accessed 26 Apr. 2023.

---. *Congressional Record*, vol. 74, part 4, pp. 3830-79. GPO, 1931. *Congress.gov*, congress.gov/bound-congressional-record/1931/02/03/74/senate-section/article/3830-3879. Accessed 6 Oct. 2022.

Veblen, Thorstein. *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. 1899. B. W. Huebsch, 1919. *HathiTrust*, hdl.handle.net/2027/iau.31858013334077. Accessed 8 Apr. 2024.

Veitch, Jonathan. *American Surrealism*. U of Wisconsin P, 1997. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/americansuperrea0000veit. Accessed 8 June 2023.

Warner, Harry S. *Prohibition, An Adventure in Freedom*. The World League Against Alcoholism, 1928. *HathiTrust*, hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015020129881. Accessed 29 Apr. 2023.

Warren, Frank A. *Liberals and Communism*. Indiana UP, 1966. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/liberalscommunis0000warr. Accessed 19 Jan. 2023.

Weinberg, Albert K. *Manifest Destiny*. John Hopkins P, 1935. *HathiTrust*, hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015062112365. Accessed 8 Apr. 2023.

Weiss, Richard. *The American Myth of Success*. Basic Books, 1969. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/americanmythofsu0000weis_v3e1. Accessed 12 Feb. 2023.

West, Nathanael. *The Day of The Locust*. *The Complete Works of Nathanael West*, Decker and Warburg, 1957. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/completeworksofn0000west. Accessed 2 June 2023.

Weyl, Walter E. *The New Democracy*. Macmillan, 1912. *HathiTrust*, hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015008414164. Accessed 3 Oct. 2023.

Widmer, Kingsley. *Nathanael West*. Twayne, 1982. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/nathanaelwest0000widm. Accessed 18 July 2023.

Williams, Howell V. "Benjamin Franklin and the Poor Laws." *Social Service Review*, vol. 18, no. 1, Mar. 1944, pp. 77–91. *U of Chicago P Journals*, DOI: 10.1086/634737. Accessed 28 Jan. 2022.

Wilson, Edmund. *The American Jitters*. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932. *HathiTrust*, hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015003972356. Accessed 20 Jan. 2023.

---. *Letters on Literature and Politics*. Edited by Elena Wilson, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/lettersonliterat00wils. Accessed 22 Jan. 2023.

---. *The Shores of Light*. Farrar, Straus and Young, 1952. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/shoresoflight030291mbp. Accessed 22 Jan. 2023.

---. Story Synopsis. Fitzgerald, *The Last Tycoon*, pp. 151-56.

Wolfskill, George and John A. Hudson. *All but the People*. Macmillan, 1969. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/allbutpeoplefran0000wolf. Accessed 19 Oct. 2022.

"World War in Spain." *The New Republic*, vol. 88, no. 1132, 12 Aug. 1936, pp. 4-5. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/sim_new-republic_1936-08-12_88_1132. Accessed 28 Jan. 2023.

Wyllie, Irvin G. "Social Darwinism and the Businessman." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, vol. 103, no. 5, 1959, pp. 629–35. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/985421. Accessed 19 Mar. 2022.

Youmans, Edward L. "The Recent Strikes." *The Popular Science Monthly*, Sept. 1872, pp. 623-24. *Google Books*, books.google.pt/books?id=_R8DAAAAMBAJ. Accessed 20 Mar. 2022.

Young, Gloria. "The Day of the Locust: An Apocalyptic Vision." *Studies in American Jewish Literature*, no. 5, 1986, pp. 103-10. *JSTOR*, jstor.org/stable/41205637. Accessed 9 May 2024.

"Youth in College." *Fortune*, Jun. 1936. *The Thirties: A Time to Remember*. Edited by Don Congdon, Simon and Schuster, 1962, pp. 401-12. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/thirtiestimetore0000cong. Accessed 7 Nov. 2022.