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Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Mass-Market Magazines:

Aspects of the Relationships between Writers and “Magazinedom” (Jack London)

Introduction

Both Hemingway and Fitzgerald were very much connected with “big,” mass-market magazines. Maybe the two modernist writers most associated with big periodicals, they contributed to *Esquire*, *Vanity Fair*, *Harper’s*, *Scribner’s*, *Collier’s*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *Woman’s Home Companion*, *McCall’s*, *the Saturday Evening Post* (the then largest weekly magazine in the world), and even *Life*, to name but a few, as well as *The Smart Set*, *the transatlantic review*, *The Double Dealer*, *The Dial*, *transition* and other small magazines. A lot of references to big magazines fuel their fiction and their nonfiction, in particular their correspondence. My goal here is to look at their discourse on big magazines, show their ambivalence, and reflect on what that ambivalence suggests about the interactions between writers, magazines, and the editing world, at a time when magazines had become a dominant medium.

The Presence of Magazines in Fitzgerald’s and Hemingway’s Fiction

It is a well-known fact that magazines and newspapers, in the first half of the 20th century, enjoyed a status they hadn’t known so far, and haven’t known afterwards. All the textbooks that retrace the history of the press, in the U.S. and in other countries as well, insist on the fact that the years 1910-1960 corresponded to a golden age for the magazines, after a period of strong growth and diversification of the market, with a shift to big business, between more or less the Reconstruction Era and WW1. Many facts reveal the strength of magazines, not only in the editing world, but also in the world at large, as some magazines went beyond their editing mission, launching philanthropic campaigns during the Progressive Era (such as *The Delineator’s* Child-Rescue Campaign between 1907 and 1911), creating correspondence schools (*Cosmopolitan* launched one in 1897, *Les Annales politiques et littéraires* in France did the same ten years later), and even offering to intervene in the world’s affairs: as Tebbel and Zuckerman recall in their history of the magazine in America, *Cosmopolitan* “sent a representative to the Spanish government offering to purchase Cuban independence for \$100 million, offered a plan to save the nation from depression through a credit system, advocated a commission to establish an international language, and proposed a World Congress”¹.

That magazines were then a dominant, powerful medium emerges from many of Hemingway’s and Fitzgerald’s short stories and novels. Hemingway refers to magazines (and newspapers) to give local color to exotic scenes (in *The Garden of Eden*, “The patron was sitting at one of his tables on the terrace of the long house with a bottle of wine, a glass and an empty coffee cup reading the *Eclairneur de Nice* (...)” beg chap 10 Scribner 1995, p. 83). Both Hemingway and Fitzgerald use references to the press to shape specific atmospheres. In

¹ John Tebbel and Mary Ellen Zuckerman, *The Magazine in America 1741-1990*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991, 77.

Across the River and Into the Trees, Colonel Cantwell and a young woman he has met engage in escapist dreams partly derived from the reading of *Vogue*:

“Where will we leave the Cadillac?”

“Is it a Cadillac now?”

“Yes. Unless you want to take the big Buick Roadmaster, with the Dynaflo drive. I’ve driven it all over Europe. It was in the last *Vogue* you sent me.” (chap 37 Scribner 1998 p. 228).

In *The Beautiful and Damned*, the presence of *Vanity Fair* on a table helps build an atmosphere of luxury and sophistication: “A faint string of smoke was rising from a cigarette-tray – a number of *Vanity Fair* sat astraddle on the table.” (Book 3, chap 1, Penguin Edition 2001 p. 290).

If the many references to newspapers and magazines we find in Hemingway’s fiction tell a lot about the special relationship Hemingway had with the press, in particular through his work as a journalist, they also suggest that he thought he had those references in common with his readers. Otherwise, a sentence such as “She looks like anybody’s mother in an illustration in ‘*The Ladies’ Home Journal*,’ the Colonel thought” (*Across the River* chap 9 p. 78) would make no sense. Fitzgerald too seems to rely on his readers’ knowledge of “magazinedom” as he refers to magazines and newspapers to contribute to characterization. In *The Beautiful and Damned*, the fact that “we’ve got to be very quiet. Mother sits up reading *Snappy Stories*” (Book 3, chap 1, Penguin Edition 2001 p. 267) is meant to ridicule the speaker, Dorothy. Pulp magazines are also used in *To Have and Have Not* to suggest the social gap between Richard Gordon, a writer, and a veteran he meets in a bar: “You haven’t got a book with you?” asked the other Vet. “Pal, I’d like to read one. Did you ever write for *Western Stories*, or *War Aces*? I could read that *War Aces* every day.” (chap 22, Charles Scribner’s, McMillan, 1988, p. 210) Those examples suggest that Hemingway’s and Fitzgerald’s readers were familiar, to some extent at least, with the world of magazines, which reflects the domination of magazines in the media landscape of the time, and their influence on society at large. In fact, the social domination of magazines was both highlighted and criticized by Hemingway and Fitzgerald.

The Criticism of the Power of Magazines, Big, Small, and Otherwise, in Hemingway’s and Fitzgerald’s Fiction, with References to *Martin Eden*

Social power and prestige, as well as decisive career benefits, could be obtained through associations with magazines, as young Amory, in Fitzgerald’s largely autobiographical first novel *This Side of Paradise*, realizes: “Amory found that writing for the ‘*Nassau Literary Magazine*’ would get him nothing, but that being on the board of the ‘*Daily Princetonian*’ would get anyone a good deal.” (Book 1 chap 2 Cambridge University Press ed. James L. W. West 1995 p. 49). Of course, the lexicon chosen by Fitzgerald (“get,” “deal”), as well as the fact that Fitzgerald himself published his first texts in the *Nassau Literary Magazine* – the magazine that would get Amory nothing – reveal the gap between Amory’s and Fitzgerald’s notions of the magazines.

But before Amory “is through – as far as ever being a power in college is concerned” (Book 1 chap 3 p. 96), his success is tightly associated to his future career in the *Nassau Literary Magazine*: “I want to pull strings, even for somebody else, or be ‘*Princetonian*’ chairman or Triangle president. I want to be admired, Kerry.” (Book 1 chap 2 p. 51). And the professional

prestige linked to Amory's association with the *Princetonian* has a price, or is supposed to have one, on the matrimonial market. As Amory flirts with Isabelle, "They had now reached a very definite stage. They had traded accounts of their progress since they had last met, and she had listened to much she had heard before. He was a sophomore, was on the 'Princetonian' board, hoped to be chairman in senior year." (Book 1 chap 2 p. 69). In the same way, in *The Beautiful and Damned*, Anthony, when dreaming of his future career, sees himself as "editor of a brilliant weekly of opinion, an American *Mercure de France*" (Book 2, chap 2, p. 185). (In reality, the *American Mercury* was founded two years after the publication of the novel, in 1924, but in 1922, Fitzgerald knew of Mencken's and Nathan's project).

Just as Fitzgerald highlights and puts into question the social importance of magazines through Amory's and Anthony's destinies in *This Side of Paradise*, and *The Beautiful and Damned*, Hemingway also mocks the social aura and educational mission of magazines in *Torrents of Spring*, a satirical novella the young writer published in 1926. In *Torrents of Spring*, writer Scripps O'Neill marries a waitress, Diana, before leaving her for another, younger waitress, Mandy. Distraught by her eviction, Mandy does everything she can to keep Scripps. Mostly, she reads magazines, as she's convinced that sharing her readings with Scripps will enable her to save her couple. But of course, if Amory can nourish some hope of seducing Isabelle by being on the 'Princetonian' board, there's little hope for Mandy to rescue her marriage by subscribing to magazines. Her helplessness pervades the end of the novella:

Scripps was fascinated by Mandy. Diana admitted that to herself. But she might hold him. That was all that mattered now. To hold him. To hold him. Not to let him go. Make him stay. She looked into the mirror.

Diana subscribing for *The Forum*. Diana reading the *Mentor*. Diana reading William Lyon Phelps in *Scribner's*. Diana walking through the frozen streets of the silent Northern town to the Public Library, to read the *Literary Digest* 'Book Review.' Diana waiting for the postman to bring the *Saturday Review of Literature*. Diana, bareheaded now, standing in the mounting snowdrifts, waiting for the postman to bring her the *New York Times* 'Literary Section.' Was it doing any good? Was it holding him?

At first it seemed to be. Diana learned editorials by John Farrar by heart. Scripps brightened. A little of the old light shining in Scripps's eyes now. Then it died. Some little mistake in the wording, some slip in her understanding of a phrase, some divergence in her attitude, made it all ring false. She would go on. She was not beaten. He was her man and she would hold him. She looked away from the window and slit open the covering of the magazine that lay on her table. It was *Harper's Magazine*. *Harper's Magazine* in a new format. *Harper's Magazine* completely changed and revised. Perhaps that would do the trick. She wondered. (Scribner's 1987, end of chap 9, p. 42-43)

Eventually, her failure to keep her husband is symbolized by her failure to keep a copy of *The Century* in her hand. "She felt she couldn't hold him. As she looked out of the window, a copy of *The Century Magazine* dropped from her nervous hand." (Chap 10, p. 44).

While those examples reveal an implicit criticism of the power of magazines, in other cases Hemingway and Fitzgerald are more straightforward. In his final novel, *The Garden of Eden*, Hemingway looks back on some of his own experience as a young writer through David's interactions with the editing world. As David reads a letter from his publisher congratulating him on his second novel, which "validated all the promise his first had shown," he feels a growing frustration with his submission to both his publisher and the magazine world: "(...)

the hell with the promise he had validated. What promise to whom? To *The Dial*, to *The Bookman*, to *The New Republic*? No, he had shown it. Let me show you my promise that I'm going to validate it. What shit.” (chap 7 p. 59) More humiliation is in store as, later in the novel, his wife Catherine, who has burned some of his manuscripts out of jealousy, wants to give him money for his loss. In order to set a price, she offers to have his stories appraised by “such people as the editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*, *La Nouvelle Revue Française*” (chap 26 p. 226). David's cold anger comes, in part, from his incapacity to grant these magazines any power to assess the value of his fiction:

‘Just what is it you propose to do?’

‘I'll have their value determined and I'll have twice that paid into your bank.’

‘Sounds very generous,’ David said. ‘You were always generous.’

‘I want to be just, David, and it's possible that they were worth, financially, much more than they would be appraised at.’

‘Who appraises these things?’

‘There must be people who do. There are people who appraise everything.’

‘What sort of people?’

‘I wouldn't know, David. But I can imagine such people as the editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*, *La Nouvelle Revue Française*.’

‘I'm going out for a while,’ David said. ‘Do you feel all right?’ (p. 226-7)

As we can see, the magazines Hemingway mentions in these two passages are not necessarily big magazines. *The New Republic* would be better described as a quality magazine, while *The Dial* is usually considered a little magazine. What Hemingway, through David's voice, denounces, is the power of magazines, which can derive either from their economic or their cultural capital. Fitzgerald's criticism develops in a similar way: it centers on magazines as places of power, and encompasses student magazines, as we saw earlier, and quality magazines such as *The New Republic*. In *This Side of Paradise*, Amory explains to his friend Tom, a critic on *The New Democracy* (probably an alias for *The New Republic*) that his work goes against ethical values:

Look at you; you're on *The New Democracy*, considered the most brilliant weekly in the country, read by the men who do things and all that. What's your business? Why, to be as clever, as interesting, and as brilliantly cynical as possible about every man, doctrine, book, or policy that is assigned you to deal with. The more strong lights, the more spiritual scandal you can throw on the matter, the more money they pay you, the more the people buy the issue. (p. 212)

As for Anthony, in *The Beautiful and Damned*, he reflects on the difficulty to enter the magazine world at large: “It was palpably impossible to get on a magazine unless you had been on one before.” (Book 2, chap 2, “Winter,” p. 185).

Writing in the 1920s and later, Hemingway and Fitzgerald were not the first to put into question the intellectual legitimacy and the working methods of American magazines. Jack

London, in the autobiographical² novel *Martin Eden*, written in 1906, famously developed a thorough criticism of “magazinedom,”³ as he writes, as a realm of stupidity and violence, in particular towards writers, and questioned the role of actors such as literary critics and editors.⁴ His denunciation of the effects of an “inhuman editorial machine” (*Martin Eden*, p. 250⁵) seems at times to foreshadow Pound’s 1930 outburst against big magazines: “[Martin] was amazed at the immense amount of printed stuff that was dead. No light, no life, no color, was shot through it. (...) the magazine short stories seemed intent on glorifying the Mr Butlers, the sordid dollar-chasers, and the commonplace little love affairs of commonplace little men and women.”⁶ However, London’s analysis of “magazinedom” is quite different from Pound’s. He doesn’t oppose small and big magazines, as Pound will later do, but magazines that pay and magazines that don’t. As Martin remarks, the opposition between magazines that pay and magazines that don’t pay is far from intuitive: *The Transcontinental*, a “staid, respectable,” “high and lofty”⁷ magazine, in other words, an established quality magazine, doesn’t pay, while *The White Mouse*, which he had thought “a third-rater,” “pay[s]

² London wrote that he “narrated therein all [his] personal experiences from the very beginning of [his] attempt to kick into the writing game.” (*The Letters of Jack London*, 2 April 1915, vol 3, p. 1437).

³ p. 344: Brissenden: “Love Beauty for its own sake (...) and leave the magazines alone. (...) You are cutting your throat every day you waste [in these cities] trying to prostitute beauty to the needs of magazinedom.”

⁴ p. 251: Praps and Vanderwater as “the two foremost literary critics in the US. Every school teacher in the land looks up to Vanderwater as the Dean of American criticism.” Idem for Praps. “Not a comma is out of place” and the tone is “lofty, so lofty”. He is the best-paid critic in the US. / But he’s not a critic at all. They do criticism better in England. But the point is, they sound the popular note... so beautifully and morally and contentedly. (...) They are the popular mouthpieces. They back up your professors of English, and your professors of English back them up.” English professors described as “microscopic-minded parrots”.

p. 322: “The chief quality of 99% of all editors is failure. They have failed as writers. Don’t think they prefer the drudgery of the desk and the slavery to their circulation and to the business manager to the joy of writing. They have tried to write, and they have failed. And right there is the cursed paradox of it. Every portal to success in lit is guarded by those watchdogs, the failures in literature.”

⁵ p. 250: “the inhuman editorial machine ran smoothly as ever. (...) Surely there were no live, warm editors at the other end. It was all wheels and cogs and oil-cups – a clever mechanism operated by automatons.” The same metaphor appears on p. 160. Such criticism is made explicit on p. 300: “Encouraged by his several small sales, Martin went back to hackwork. Perhaps there was a living in it, after all. Stored away under his tale were the twenty storiottes which had been rejected by the newspaper short-story syndicate. He read them over in order to find out how not to write newspaper storiottes, and so doing, reasoned out the perfect formula. He found that the newspaper storiotte should never be tragic, should never end unhappily, and should never contain beauty of language, subtlety of thought, nor real delicacy of sentiment. Sentiment it must contain, plenty of it, pure and noble, of the sort that in his own early youth had brought his applause for “nigger heaven” – the “For God my country and the Czar” and “I may be poor but I am honest” brand of sentiment. (...) The formula consisted of three parts: 1) a pair of lovers are jarred apart; 2) by some deed or event they are reunited; 3) marriage bells.

⁶ p. 160: “He was amazed at the immense amount of printed stuff that was dead. No light, no life, no color, was shot through it. (...) He wanted to glorify the leaders of forlorn hopes, the mad lovers, the giants that fought under stress and strain, amid terror and tragedy, making life crackle with the strength of their endeavor. And yet the magazine short stories seemed intent on glorifying the Mr Butlers, the sordid dollar-chasers, and the commonplace little love affairs of commonplace little men and women. Was it because the editors of the magazines were commonplace? he demanded. Or were they afraid of life, these writers and editors and readers?”

⁷ p. 264: “Five dollars for ‘The Ring of Bells,’ five dollars for five thousand words! Instead of two cents a word, ten words for a cent! (...) And he would receive the check when the story was published [and not upon acceptance] (...) The Transcontinental sold for 25 cents, and its dignified and artistic cover proclaimed it as among the first-class magazines. It was a staid, respectable magazine, and it had been published continuously since long before he was born. (...) And the high and lofty, heaven-inspired Transcontinental paid five dollars for five thousand words!”

on acceptance and two cents a word.”⁸ *The White Mouse*, probably an alias for *The Black Cat*, a Boston literary magazine published between 1895 and 1922, and to which London contributed, defined itself as “a monthly magazine of original short stories”. While definitely a smaller magazine than *The Overland Monthly*, the reputed San Francisco-based periodical disguised as *The Transcontinental review* in *Martin Eden*, *The Black Cat* was in no way a little magazine. Although Pound’s article on “Small Magazines” and London’s analysis of “magazinedom” and the editing world in *Martin Eden* do not compare, London’s analysis being much more thorough and sociological, reading both side by side is an interesting experience which helps to take distance with the dominant opposition between little and big magazines. Indeed, such an opposition reflects the experience of some writers – and probably the experience of those “expressing vociferously radical views upon all creation,”⁹ as London writes in *Martin Eden*, i.e. the avant-garde scene to which Pound himself belonged –, but probably not the experience of most writers, among whom London himself.

If Jack London is radical, not in his “views upon all creation,” but certainly in his denunciation of the ills of the editing world, he was careful to find fictional aliases for the magazines he attacked. *Martin Eden*, after all, was first published in a magazine, the *Pacific Monthly*, which, “recognizing the thinly veiled attack” against the *Overland Monthly*, “published a substantially rewritten version of the chapter when it serialized the novel.”¹⁰ Being cautious might have been a legal necessity, but it was probably as well a way of protecting his own interests. As the editors of *The Letters of Jack London* recall, “During the first decade of the twentieth century, scarcely a month passed without his contributions appearing in popular magazines like *Century*, *Cosmopolitan*, and the *Saturday Evening Post*. In less than twenty years he produced some five hundred nonfiction pieces, nearly two hundred short stories, and twenty novels (over fifty books in all).”¹¹

This leads me to the third and last part of this talk, about the mutual interests tying together writers and big magazines.

Beyond Conflicts: Mutual Interests and Circulations

Although Hemingway and Fitzgerald could be fierce in their criticism of magazines, and big ones in particular, they probably did not have the means, starting with the financial ones, to push their complaints too far. One obvious reason for publishing in big magazines was that they paid their contributors, when the little magazines usually did not, or paid very little. As Thomas Wolfe sarcastically wrote to Norman Pearson in 1938, “There’s one thing to be said

⁸ p. 271: “Pay on acceptance and two cents a word (...) And he had thought the White Mouse a third-rater! It was evident that he did not know the magazines. He had deemed the Transcontinental a first-rater, and it paid a cent for ten words.”

⁹ p. 290: “Sometimes I am fairly sure I am out of water, and that I should belong in Paris, in Grub Street, in a hermit’s cave, or in some sadly wild Bohemian crowd, drinking claret – dago-red, they call it in San Francisco, – dining in cheap restaurants in the Latin Quarter, and expressing vociferously radical views upon all creation.”

¹⁰ Joseph R. McElrath Jr, “Jack London’s *Martin Eden*, The Multiple Dimensions of a Literary Masterpiece,” in *Jack London, One Hundred Years a Writer*, edited by Sara S. Hodson and Jeanne Campbell Reesman, San Marino (Calif.): Huntington Library, 2002, p. 90.

¹¹ “Introduction,” *The Letters of Jack London, Volume One: 1896-1905*, edited by Earle Labor, Robert C. Leitz III, and I. Milo Shepard, p. XV.

about getting published in the *New Masses*: you never have to bother about an income tax.”¹² Just as David in Hemingway’s *Garden of Eden* engages into complicated mathematical calculations, minutely detailed to the reader, as soon as he receives a letter from his publisher,¹³ Fitzgerald is equally straightforward when writing to the *Post* fiction editor Adelaide Neall in 1937: “Thanks for your note and for scheduling the Trouble story. 1937 better be good – 35’ and 36’ were one long doctor’s bill.”¹⁴ Two years later, while seemingly delicate about “his price,” as he writes to the fiction editor of *Collier’s*, he is nonetheless quite blunt about it: “I don’t know what my price is – only once did I get under \$3000. from the *Post* and was in a year (1937) when they got only one story.”¹⁵

But obviously, selecting magazines for publication was not just a question of money, otherwise writers would have targeted big magazines only. Many modernist writers published in big and small magazines, because they developed different strategies at the same time, “making a respectable income while creating a public image,”¹⁶ as Faye Hammill and Karen Leick wrote in their contribution to Brooker’s and Thacker’s encyclopedia on modernist magazines. Fitzgerald and Hemingway, as well as London, who “pioneered in the art of using the media to project the writer as public celebrity,”¹⁷ had a very good knowledge of, and interest in, “magazinedom,” and both London’s and Fitzgerald’s correspondences use sociological notions, such as “field,” “market,” and “writing game,” when referring to magazines, showing their willingness to produce a scientific analysis of the editing world. London was eager to give writers advice: “Magazines do not like horror-stories.” “under no circumstances [study] Latin.” “Instead, read the magazines and newly published novels, in short, study your market.”¹⁸ In 1907, London was able to list 12 magazines to be contacted successively for the publication of a short story.¹⁹ In 1930, addressing his agent, Fitzgerald engaged in a similar exercise: “About Zelda’s sketches, have you tried *Century*? They printed my little skit on Scotty. But better still – send them to the *New Republic*, attention of Edmund Wilson, under the blanket title of Stories from a Swiss Clinique. Failing that I’ll try *This Quarter* here in Paris. Unfortunately *transition* has quit.”²⁰ It is interesting to notice that quality magazines such as *Century* and the *New Republic* were preferred to little magazines such as *This Quarter* and *transition*, probably for financial, and maybe circulation reasons. The same text could find its way into different magazines, but different strategies could also be used according to the type of text to be published. As Leick and Hammill show in their piece for Brooker and Thacker, “Modernist writers rarely placed experimental work in

¹² *The Letters of Thomas Wolfe*, edited, with an introduction, by Elizabeth Nowell, NY, Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1956, p. 702.

¹³ *The Garden of Eden*, chap. 7, around p. 59.

¹⁴ *Correspondence of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, edited by Matthew J. Bruccoli and Margaret M. Duggan with the assistance of Susan Walker, New York, Random House, 1980, p. 472.

¹⁵ P. 539. Similarly, in a post scriptum to Maxwell Perkins in 1925, he nonchalantly remarks that “The *Post* have raised my regular price to \$2500. a story. This is confidential.” p. 183.

¹⁶ Hammill, Faye, and Karen Leick. “Modernism and the Quality Magazines: *Vanity Fair* (1914-36); *American Mercury* (1924-81); *New Yorker* (1925-); *Esquire* (1933-).” In *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines: Volume II, North America 1894-1960*, 196. Edited by Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, 176-96.

¹⁷ “Introduction,” *The Letters of Jack London, Volume One: 1896-1905*, edited by Earle Labor, Robert C. Leitz III, and I. Milo Shepard, p. XV.

¹⁸ p. 1469-70.

¹⁹ P. 695. Idem p. 744.

²⁰ FSF, *A Life in Letters*, 1995, p. 201.

Esquire, but instead used the publication to promote their personal interests and concerns. (...) Many modernist writers appeared in the magazine, but they submitted pieces that were not experimental, and were instead instructive, reflective, or usually mainstream.”²¹ All this points to complex authorial strategies, and complex negotiations for writers, but also for magazines themselves.

Donal Harris opens *On Company Time, American Modernism in the Big Magazines*, on an analysis of “This is a Magazine,” a satirical text on a popular magazine, probably the *Saturday Evening Post*, which Fitzgerald published in *Vanity Fair* in 1920. He shows Fitzgerald’s “ambivalence toward the role of popular magazines,” since the mass-market magazines he targeted “are the very ones that provided him with his foothold in the literary market.”²² But the publication of “This is a magazine” also allows us to pinpoint two converging strategies, Fitzgerald’s and *Vanity Fair*’s. By writing a satire on a *SEP*-like type of magazine, Fitzgerald made sure he was not associated with the most commercial big magazines only, and suggested that he did belong in more sophisticated big mags such as *Vanity Fair*. Making sure he was not seen exclusively as a “*Post* writer,” even though he did “*Post* stories” was crucial, as he needed a plurality of outlets for his short stories. And indeed, the 11 short stories composing *Tales of the Jazz Age*, published by Scribner’s in 1922, were first published in a wide range of periodicals: the *Metropolitan*, the *SEP*, the *Smart Set*, *Collier’s*, the *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, and *Vanity Fair*. And if being published in *Vanity Fair* was interesting for Fitzgerald, it was equally interesting for *Vanity Fair* to define itself, through such publication, as not being like the *Saturday Evening Post*, as being more distinguished, more sophisticated.

Less frequently, differentiation, one of the keys to survival for a magazine, meant less distinction, less sophistication, as Carol Ingalls Johnston narrates about the publication of “An Angel on the Porch,” a short story by Thomas Wolfe: “Perkins chose to publish the story for the same reason Wolfe had been willing to sacrifice it: the coarseness and unconventionality of the subject matter. (...) Scribners, with its long background of religious and academic publications was particularly conservative, but by 1928 the firm had reached a turning point. Perkins and some of the younger staff members at Scribners had come to feel that *Scribner’s Magazine* and the publishing house it represented were in a rut. To rectify this, Perkins had, in early 28, approached Hemingway about serializing his next novel in the magazine.”²³ In any case, magazines, just like writers, were dependent on their reputations, and the most knowledgeable writers, such as Fitzgerald, knew how to use the competition they were engaged in in order to advance their own interests. In a 1934 letter to the same Perkins, Fitzgerald alluded to the possibility, for *Scribner’s*, to differentiate itself from the *SEP*, in order to push two stories slightly outside of the magazine’s usual framework: “PS: if you do

²¹ “Modernism and the Quality Magazines,” p. 193.

²² Donal Harris, *On Company Time, American Modernism in the Big Magazines*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2016, p. 4. Such ambivalence is comically illustrated by Hemingway in *Torrents of Spring*. If Scripps is quite happy with the \$450 he got for a story he published in the *SEP*, he nonetheless expresses his despise for the magazine. *Torrents of Spring*, p. 14: “He turned and walked into the silent, deserted Northern town. Luckily, he had four hundred and fifty dollars in his pocket. He had sold a story to George Horace Lorimer just before he had started out with his old woman on that drinking trip.” / p. 16-17 : A propos de Brown’s Beanery : “Ah, these big beanery owners were wise fellows. They knew how to get the customers. No ads in The *SEP* for them. THE BEST BY TEST. That was the stuff. He went in.”

²³ Carol Ingalls Johnston, *Of Time and the Artist, Thomas Wolfe, His Novels, and the Critics*, Columbia, S. C., Camden House, 1996, 36.

not like ‘The Night before Chancellorsville’ please tell me frankly. My idea is that this and ‘The Fiend’ would give people less chance to say they are all standardized *Saturday Evening Post* stories, because, whatever can be said about them, they are not that.’²⁴

In order to sell more widely, writers adapted their discourses to suit a variety of magazines, which had in turn to differentiate themselves from one another in an ever-developing and increasingly competitive field. Most big magazines did not rely exclusively on the aggressiveness of their economic model, but tried to find their own balance between economic profitability and cultural distinction, generally trying to appear smart but not lofty. By integrating some aspects of modernism in order to look culturally attractive, in a context of a growing belief in the virtues of education and self-education, big magazines thus participated in the mainstreaming of modernism, which in turn made the integration of modernism into middlebrow magazines easier. All this suggests that the life of “magazinedom” was based on circulations. Writers, but also editors (such as Crichton and Kerfoot in the first *Life* magazine) easily moved between different types of magazines, and magazines kept evolving in order to survive in a constantly changing field. Readers themselves were also malleable to a certain degree: among other examples, the parody of a wide range of magazines in the 1928 Burlesque number of *Life* magazine suggests that *Life* readers were familiar, to some extent at least, with magazines such as *Poetry* and *New Masses*. The study of magazines reveals ongoing conversations between constantly moving actors, with some decisive encounters, such as Fitzgerald and Lorimer’s, or Fitzgerald and Perkins’s, across the categories of big or small magazines. To give but one example, in a 1930 letter, Fitzgerald, who was then in Paris, sent Perkins a list of writers from the little magazine sphere, whom Perkins could be interested in publishing, and mentioned participation to *transition* magazine as evidence of quality – thus showing once more that the opposition between small and big magazines underlying Pound’s article published the same year was in many ways more rhetorical than real.²⁵

Conclusion

The study of the relationships between writers such as Fitzgerald and Hemingway on the one hand, and magazines on the other hand, point to the close intertwining of various types of ties, such as:

- Fitzgerald’s and Hemingway’s acknowledgement of magazines’ influence on society and on themselves
- Their antagonism towards magazines exerting their power over them (magazines with economic or cultural capital were concerned, not just big magazines)
- self-promoting authorial strategies emphasizing antagonism in order for H and F not to appear too closely associated with big mags, and therefore less distinguished.
- mutual interests: many big magazines were interested in publishing writers such as Fitzgerald and Hemingway to look culturally upscale, while F and H needed big magazines for the money involved but also to “creat[e] a public image,” as Faye

²⁴ Correspondence of F. Scott Fitzgerald, edited by Matthew J. Bruccoli and Margaret M. Duggan with the assistance of Susan Walker, NY, Random House, 1980, p. 396.

²⁵ p. 107 (21 Jan 1930).

Hammill and Karen Leick wrote (*Modernism is the Literature of Celebrity*, to use the title of a book by Jonathan Goldman, and refer to Leick's pioneering work entitled *Gertrude Stein and the Making of an American Celebrity*)

- respect, friendship, and professional collaborations involving the circulation of authors between writers like Fitzgerald and some big mags editors like Lorimer

Of course, not all writers whose work was not primarily targeted to big magazines were in a position to develop all of these links with big magazines. But many did share some of them. Flux appears as one of the most important characteristics of the relationships between writers and magazinedom; for strategic reasons, writers and magazines constantly repositioned themselves, and an important number of writers and editors exchanged information and circulated across publishing venues.