Suppressed Subjectivity: Representations of Affect, Money, and Universalized Modernity In Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises*

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The vast majority of the critical attention that has been given to Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises* has focused on themes of suppressed affect, impotence, loss of male autonomy, monetary value, and the shifting moral landscape of the twentieth-century. Undoubtedly, each of these subjects of inquiry constitutes an essential aspect of the novel’s societal representation; and the analytical work on these topics is by no means yet complete. However, what has up until now remained conspicuously absent from Hemingway studies is an attempt to link together these much-discussed motifs into a single cohesive foundational basis, to trace them back to a singular origin.

But that is not to say that steps have not been made in this direction. Rather, it seems instead that no comprehensive account has penetrated far enough, and that – specifically – these studies have often articulated WWI or the rise of consumer culture as the fundamental basis underlying the issues raised by the text. The project of this paper, however, is to address this scholarly omission by appealing to what I believe is not only a frequently unelaborated and yet consistently underlying component of paradigmatic SAR criticism, but also a submerged, though nonetheless central, element of the novel itself.

The technological innovation and demographic urbanization that occurred during Hemingway’s lifetime corresponded to far-reaching, fundamental reorganizations in the method and content of expressive production throughout the Western milieu. Perhaps most significantly, these evolutions of technology and population dispersion functioned as catalytic impetuses for a revolutionary alteration of that milieu’s relationship to money, and led to radical revisions in the essential character of Western society’s discursive systems. At its heart, and inherent in the central mechanism by which the novel represents modern times, *The Sun Also Rises* functions as a reproduction of the role played by modern expressive medias in altering the essential character of the human relationship between self and society.

The Evolution of Expression

In Friedrich Kittler’s *Discourse Networks 1800/1900* he constructs an argument concerning the evolution of medias and social structures by engaging the analysis of specific literary fragments. It is this structural aspect of his work that is of primary interest to the present discussion, and that, I believe, sets a precedent for the compositional framework of this thesis. Thus, in my subsequent quotation of some of his ideas, my intent is not to implicitly evoke the central argument of *Discourse Networks* but, rather, to frame my own discussion as structurally consonant with his. In accord with these aims, the following selection is taken from an introduction to Kittler’s work.

…if literature is medially constituted – that is, if it is a means for processing, storage, and transmission of data – then its character will change historically according to the material and technical resources at its disposal. And it will

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1 *SAR* is an abbreviation designating *The Sun Also Rises*
likewise change historically according to the alternative medial possibilities with which it competes. (Wellbery xiii)

Literature is a media technology, and as such it is an essential component of the inextricably interconnected network that both embodies and facilitates the entire system of human communication. Implicit in the invention of every new metaphor, neologism, or narrative technique is an expansion of this network, and thus, an increase in the potential for meaningful human expression. On a grander scale, the same is true for the development of any new media technology. Discursive systems as widely varied and seemingly divergent as smoke-signals, the phonetic alphabet, sign language, Morse code, and the radio all constitute mutually-influential and interdependent nodes of a single, constantly-evolving, continuous, communicative network.

Friedrich Kittler writes, “Within the realm of all sounds and words, all organisms, white noise appears, the incessant and ineradicable background of information. For the very channels through which information must pass emit noise” (1800/1900 183). Though speaking here exclusively in terms of auditory communication, what Kittler is pointing out is an idea applicable to all forms of information transmission: that communicative forms only transmit meaning by virtue of their relationship to a non-meaning, from which they must be differentiated. To return to smoke-signals, for example, it is only by virtue of the clear spaces of air between puffs of smoke that the smoke clouds themselves are able to communicate anything meaningful. This is similarly true of written language; the relative size and shape of the white spaces between letters and words is nearly as essential to the conveyance of meaning as the ink of the printed letter itself. It is only in contrast, in the differentiation of white noise from signifying apparatus, that meaning exists.

Thus, all media technologies must inherently contain a mechanism for producing transcendent meaning out of this ubiquitous “background of information,” which is impossible to either eliminate or to silence. It is by virtue of this mechanism that all discursive systems and media technologies become mutually influential. The emergence of a nascent communicative system, and its subsequent coexistence alongside the already-existing body of expressive media, represents the introduction of a new method for differentiating meaning from non-meaning. It represents an expansion of communicative possibilities. The result, therefore, is that information that was formerly either inexpressible or that was transmitted via channels of an older discursive system, will thereafter be conveyed by virtue of the influence of a new medium. But this new medium need not represent a complete replacement of the old. Rather, it will simply manifest itself as an addition to, and revision of, the preexisting aggregation of multiple, interrelated discursive forms. To put it simply, increasing possibilities for expression will inevitably lead to increasing combinations of expression.

One convenient example, though occurring slightly after the time period with which this discussion is primarily concerned, can be found in the film industry. Film, when it first emerged as a new media technology – and thus, as a new discursive system – consisted of silent black-and-white moving pictures, often accompanied by short fragments of written text. Then, as sound recording and transmitting technologies became more sophisticated, Talkies were introduced, which consisted of sound tracks being played in simultaneous conjunction with the moving images. Eventually color film, musical scoring, sound editing, and now even computer graphic enhancements, have all been combined to produce films that present information in ways unimaginable from the standpoint of the media systems available at the time of film’s inception. The inventions of these individual filmmaking technologies – as with any discursive system – correspond to the development of innovative new systems of human expression. Their creation
and implementation, which was made possible only by virtue of preexisting medias, led to the alteration of the communicative systems from which they emerged. Subsequently, this caused a reorganization of the diverse and widely-varied apparatus by which meaning is created and transmitted from out of the ever-present white noise of non-meaning.

Another, more subtle and yet also more revealing, example can be found in late nineteenth-century newsprint. In addition to citing revisions in the common method of reporting parliamentary speeches, one scholar claims, “the widespread adoption of [...] the interview in British magazines and newspapers during the 1880s and 1890s offers a concrete example of [the] aspiration towards the reproduction of oral forms” (Salmon 31). It is no coincidence that this increasingly common attempt to translate oral forms into the written format of the news press also coincides with the proliferation of the gramophone and similar sound recording and reproducing technologies. Because these new media forms made possible the capture and reproduction of auditory information, their influence extended throughout the entire network of discursive apparatus of which they are a part. Thus, newsprint, though a radically different discursive system than the gramophone, was revised due to the appearance of a technology that captured and transmitted auditory information. Within the limits of its own form, it too began to capture and transmit sound.

As these examples illustrate, the evolution of discursive and expressive systems is largely a function of technological innovation. The period leading up to and shortly following the turn of the twentieth-century saw an historically unprecedented level of technological production throughout Western society. During this time, revolutionary technologies such as the airplane, the automobile, the telephone, and the electric telegraph were invented. This period also saw the proliferation of electric streetlights, of assembly line mass production, and the birth of modern advertising. Due to these radical innovations, especially those facilitating transportation and communication methods, international and transcontinental contact became more accessible, cheaper, and enormously more instantaneous than at any other time in history. Thus, the period leading up to WWI—after which stricter standards of passport control were established—has been described as “the closest approximation to an open world in modern times” (qtd. in Torpey). This meant that disparate languages, ideologies, and cultural values came into mutual contact with an ever-increasing frequency and to an ever-increasing degree. It meant that collisions between geographically distant systems of discourse were beginning to take place on a massive scale, and that limitations formerly imposed by geographical division were being rapidly effaced. Subsequently, it implied a fundamental revision of the affective character and expressive production of the modern Western milieu.

In an article entitled “Government By Journalism,” published in 1886 by a journalist named W. T. Stead, the claim is made that “The telegraph and the printing press have converted Britain into a vast agora, or assembly of the whole community, in which the discussion of the affairs of State is carried on from day to day in the hearing of the whole people” (qtd. in Salmon 30-1). As he points out, media technology has the power to obliterate limitations imposed by distance and to bring together a vast community into near-immediate communication with one another. By the 1920s, technologies like the telephone and the electric telegraph had expanded the community he identifies into a gathering that spanned intercontinental divides and included much of the Western world.

It is important to note, however, that Stead’s assembled community is only able to carry on its discussion by relying on the unifying discursive medium of the news press. This, in turn, implies reliance upon another system of universalized expression because “the representative
function of the newspaper is ratified on a daily basis via the medium of its exchange as a commodity” (Salmon 31). Thus, it was the newspaper – a medium disseminated and rendered participatory only by virtue of monetary exchange – that facilitated discourse amongst the community of Great Britain by utilizing the communicative technologies of the printing press and the telegraph. But what then is the medium of discourse for the much larger and much more highly diversified community that forms around the impetus of later media technologies? What discursive system can convey information and value assessments across national, cultural, and linguistic divides?

The answer – as this thesis will explore – is that quantification, as exemplified by monetary discourse, became the transcendent and recursive communicative system through which the newly restructured and technologically assimilated Western milieu transmitted information. Therefore, as with any communicative system, its influence can be seen throughout all other mediums of expression with which it came into contact. Thus, the discourse of money is apparent in societal productions as widely diverse as art, architecture, fashion, news media, and even industrial manufacturing. *The Sun Also Rises*, being no exception, is also permeated with this discourse of money, which is a fundamental source of its structural suppression of the outward affective expression of its characters. Furthermore, the language of money becomes a central vehicle for the representation of value throughout the narrative, and functions as a substitutional placeholder for all of those values that are ineluctably defined by emotional content. Thus, monetization is one of the primary means by which Hemingway divorces actions from affect, and into which he is able to imbue the weight of unspoken feeling.

Two Temporal Perspectives

The contrast between this real truth of nature and the lie of culture that poses as if it were the only reality is similar to that between the eternal core of things, the thing-in-itself, and the whole world of appearances: […] tragedy, with its metaphysical comfort, points to the eternal life of existence which abides through the perpetual destruction of appearances…(Nietzsche 29)

Nietzsche was twenty-eight years old when he wrote these words in one of his early essays on the nature of tragedy. Over half a century later, and in an entirely different sociopolitical landscape, a twenty-seven year old Ernest Hemingway released *The Sun Also Rises*, which opens with two epigraphs that reverberate with a congruent idea and present the same dichotomy between nature and culture, truth and appearance. The first of these epigraphs is a quotation of a casual remark made by Gertude Stein in a conversation she was having in the mid-1920s with the young Hemingway in the now famous living room parlor of her Parisian apartment. “You are all a lost generation,” she said, implying that World War I had resulted in the destruction and loss of the entire generation of which Hemingway was a part. It appeared, at least to her, as if the violence of the First World War had been so horrific that it had effectively thrown the whole milieu of young men who fought in it somehow off-track; it had rendered them directionless.

As Hemingway would later write in *A Moveable Feast*, a memoir that recounts the day Stein made that comment, it was a rather dramatic claim. He tells how he went home afterwards and remarked to his wife, “You know, Gertrude is nice, anyway […] But she does talk a lot of rot sometimes” (31). What the young writer noticed in Miss Stein’s comment, whether
consciously or not, was its inherent perspectival irony. This same type of irony, created by a disparity between competing conceptions of time, is an essential component in the workings of all tragic drama. As Nietzsche observed, tragedies function as cathartic reproductions of the kind of everyday disasters that result from the inevitability of change. Death, for example, is one such inevitable change that no human being can avoid. Thus, it tends to be viewed by the individual as a catastrophic event. However, when the perspective from which the event is viewed is enlarged, what was seen as individually catastrophic becomes a mere triviality. So, what Nietzsche identifies as metaphysical comfort and what I termed above as cathartic reproduction of everyday disaster is the result of the tragic drama’s function as a representation of disastrous destruction, which is contextualized and made spectatorial by the reassurance of its own fictionalization and, therefore, its ultimate insignificance.

Temporality is the defining feature of this relationship between apparent destruction and contextual reassurance. Because the human relationship to time – to set aside the controversial notion of an afterlife – is largely conceived of in reference to a lifespan bounded at the point of approximately one hundred years, and because “the eternal life of existence” is an indefinitely bounded conglomeration of an ever-expanding progression of moments, what often appears to humans as complete destruction is, when pictured in relation to the grander physical scheme, only a tiny ripple in “the perpetual destruction of appearances.”

In Hemingway’s introduction to his own tragic novel he creates a microcosmic tragedy by vetting his first quotation of Gertrude Stein’s affective claim of destruction and loss against a second epigraph, taken from Ecclesiastes in the King James version of the Holy Bible, which carries the force of undermining the first one in its presentation of a conflicting temporality. He trivializes Stein’s casual comment – which was actually the retelling of something she had heard her auto-mechanic say in reference to his lazy assistant – by balancing it against a quote from one of the most widely read and highly revered texts ever written (Moveable Feast 29). The biblical quote compares the passing of generations of humans with the rising and setting of the sun and the shifting of the wind from south to north; they are merely insignificant changes that take place continually upon the earth, which “abideth forever” (Holy Bible, Ecclesiastes 1:4).

However, like Stein’s claim, which is based on the perspective of the individual lifespan, this biblical passage is informed by a contextually dependent temporal perspective. It adopts a position that transcends human time. In other words, it adopts the temporal perspective of scientific abstraction. It aligns itself with the purely rational outlook and, in so doing, excludes the affective basis that gives meaning to Stein’s claim. Her comment does not attempt to present an objective viewpoint, nor was it spoken with the intent of addressing a widespread audience or espousing an acutely accurate claim. Its truth, in so far as it has one, is an emotional truth: the expression of a personal feeling about a group of her contemporaries.

Thus, Hemingway uses SAR’s two epigraphs to offer up a miniature version of the temporal conflict that frames all tragic drama. His quotation of Stein carries all the emotional weight that the individual experiences during upheavals and disasters in the span of their lifetime. His biblical quote hints back to what Nietzsche deems “the eternal life of existence,” offering a cathartic frame of reference within which to diffuse the weight of disaster. Because of this, the temporal tension between the two epigraphs is also a tension between two divergent social perspectives; the first is emotionally based and internal, and the second is rational, physically based, and fundamentally divorced from the individual affective viewpoint. Hemingway is thereby setting up a dichotomy that will dominate The Sun Also Rises: the human-
temporal, emotionally-based perspective contrasted against the eternal physicality of the
t backdrop whereupon these social interactions take place.

This preliminary acknowledgement of the tragic mode transforms SAR into something of
a meta-tragedy. Ordinarily dramas create this temporal interplay through the notion of their own
fictionality. In other words, the tragedy is made cathartic in that the audience is able to observe
its drama as being temporally dissociated from their own because its entire progression takes
place in the time it takes to watch a play, read a book, or view a film. A tragedy that develops
and concludes in the space of two hours seems trivial and emotionally entertaining in comparison
to the hundred-year scheme of our own temporality, and the tragedy of SAR, of course, functions
under this same premise. Hemingway, however, refuses to allow his work to operate under the
relative confines of this paradigmatic human-centered catharsis. He removes his audience from
the position of superior detachment into the realm of implicated inclusion by imposing the
temporality of the earth onto the text. Rather than his readers being able to adopt the stance of
the static background over which the drama of his plotline plays itself out, he allows the natural
landscape to adopt this role, thereby shattering the notion that his characters’ tragedy is divorced
from the tragedy of his readers’ insignificant place amongst the eternality of existence. In so
doing he explicitly frames the temporal conflict of the novel as the same one inherent within the
social milieu of his readers, thus inviting the recognition that his characters’ relationship to
emotionality and physicality parallels that of his readers.

Mobile Modernity

For the purposes of this thesis, the two divergent temporal perspectives at play in the
narrative will hereafter be designated by the terminology of human-internal and human-external
time. Human-internal time refers to the conception of time based on the limits of human
mortality. Human-external time, on the other hand, is not limited by mortality and is therefore
based on the external perspective of physical eternality.

The tension arising from the disparity between these human-external and human-internal
temporalities is an underlying conflict that, in addition to framing the text, also permeates many
of its internal elements. For example, it is apparent in aspects of Hemingway’s landscape
descriptions. The scholar Emily Watts, in her discussion of the interactions between the
painterly works of Cezanne and the literary works of Hemingway, argues that both artists
employ various technical strategies, such as constructing their landscapes as a series of multiple
planes, giving distinct boundaries to natural structures, and placing emphasis on repeated
geometrical forms and their solidity as a “means to assert that there is order in the [apparent]
chaos” of the natural environment (40). She goes on to explain, in words that seems to resonate
with particular forcefulness in relation to the Nietzschean conception of the temporal
preconditions of tragedy, that, “even the leaves of trees were given a solid form by Cezanne and
Hemingway. There is a permanence implied in this solidity – a permanence unrelated to man.
Curiously enough, neither Hemingway nor Cezanne often depicted people as part of their
landscapes…” (41). Watts’ identification of this sense of permanence being conveyed by
Hemingway’s natural settings, which contrasts distinctly against the ephemerality of the human
lifespan and the emotional upheavals occurring in the lives of SAR’s characters, is an indication
of the extent to which this central thematic element pervades the story and serves as the
background against which the human emotional events of the plotline are juxtaposed.
In another part of her text Watts’ makes the important observation that “Movement of some sort precedes [these landscape descriptions], and movement follows [them], but the action stands still for the description itself” (30). What she is noting in making this claim is that the world of the story seems to pause while Hemingway orients his readers to the natural surroundings wherein his scenes take place. She uses this observation to make a parallel between the static canvas space of a Cezanne painting and the similarly static scenes evoked by Hemingway’s prose. This stasis, in its implication of permanence, contributes to the interplay of the competing notions of time that are created by the divergent human-internal and human-external perspectives that frame the novel. Subsequently, it calls attention to the relationship between movement and temporality, the conceptions of which are also both determined by perspective.

If time is a feature of SAR that figures prominently in its organization and meaningfully contributes to its emotional appeal, then so too is movement. Published in 1926, the novel was written in a social landscape that was undergoing major transformations due to recent revolutionary innovations in the transportation industry. This meant that the scope, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness of long-distance travel rapidly increased to the point that Hemingway and many of his contemporaries were able to literally travel around the world and back again with an ease and security that simply had not been possible for previous generations. The result of this entirely new access to widespread international movement was an indelible shift of perspective, not only in terms of culture, linguistics, and ideology, but also temporally and spatially.

This socially-nascent perspectival reorganization, still limited to the relative few who were economically fortunate and ambitious enough to engage in frequent large-scale travel, can be seen from the very outset of SAR. At the beginning of the third chapter Jake Barnes is riding in a horse-cab along a Parisian avenue dotted with both motorcars and animal driven vehicles when the following exchange takes place.

The cab passed the New York Herald bureau with the window full of clocks.
‘What are all the clocks for?’ she asked.
‘They show the hour all over America.’
‘Don’t kid me.’ (23)

Shortly before these lines, Jake asks her why, if she doesn’t like Paris, she doesn’t go somewhere else. She responds by telling him that there, “Isn’t anywhere else” (23). Thus, what Hemingway is portraying in this scene is the juxtaposition of two different perspectives: one that has been revised by recent revolutionary technological advancements and the other that has not. Jake, being a world traveler, represents the perspective of a modern man whose life has been touched by the influence of the technological innovations of his era. His international travel has forced him to be cognizant of the fact that different geographic locations have different time zones and individually unique temporal perspectives. Therefore, the text later describes how he “stood in line with [his] passport, opened [his] bags for customs,” and even “set [his] watch again […] [after having] recovered an hour by coming to San Sebastian” (237-8). When he hears that his companion doesn’t like the city she lives in, his natural reaction is to wonder why she hasn’t gone elsewhere. His understanding of the fragmentation of time across different parts of the globe, which informs his knowledge about the clocks in the window of the newspaper bureau, corresponds with his propensity toward and experience of large-scale movement.

The prostitute, on the other hand, thinks he is teasing her by saying that there are different times all over America. Although she claims to hate Paris, the idea of going someplace else does not even present itself as an option to her. She is a character who represents a pre-
technologically revised conception of time and movement. For her there is only Paris time, just as there is only Paris to stay in geographically. Due to her social and economic position, she has been unable to experience the perspectival shift that inevitably accompanies exposure to the technological innovations that were beginning to permeate the society of her day. Thus, in a scene framed within the environment of a metropolitan street filled with both old and new transportation technologies, the conversation between Jake and Georgette reveals the impact that these technologies have on the psyche and perspectives of the people whose lives they affect.

Georgette’s ignorance of the multiplicity of temporal perspectives, apparent in her disbelief that there are different times all over America, is useful in shedding some light onto the nature of this technologically driven perspectival reorganization, the nature of which is not simply one of replacement, but rather division. Her temporal and spatial imagination, having remained unexposed to recent technological innovation, is characterized by singularity. She conceives of time as one pervasive element that is continuous and unaffected by geographical division. However, as Jake’s character illustrates, the imposition of technological apparatus transformed the singularity of the pre-twentieth-century imagination. Jake understands that Paris time is only one of a myriad of unique temporal perspectives, and thus, his perspectival imagination is divided into a corresponding multiplicity.

It is no accident that an expression of this transformation of perspective reveals itself in a scene describing a newspaper bureau, the function of which is modern information transmission. That a news agency during this era would even be concerned with knowing the various times across the globe, as we see by Georgette’s reaction, was something of a novelty. The electric telegraph, which had only recently come into widespread use throughout Western society, made it possible for newspapers to communicate with their correspondents around the world and to print stories as they developed in a myriad of geographically dispersed locals. Thus, the Parisian office of the New York Herald needed its clocks in order to efficiently communicate with its main headquarters across the Atlantic—a six hour time difference. This implied that stories in modern newsprint were not only being gathered across a diversity of temporal conceptions, but also that they were the manifestation of a conglomeration of culturally, geographically, ideologically, and linguistically unique perspectives.

As this would suggest, changing temporal conceptions and access to rapid communication across large geographic divides provoked major reorganizations in both the method and content of newspaper’s transmission of information. As Hannah Barker explains in her discussion of late eighteenth-century English newspapers, both London-based and provincial publications attracted readership “by exploiting, through their contents, a peculiarly local appeal” (8). What this highlights is the fact that news press being published in the period before the invention of the telegraph and late nineteenth-century advancements in transportation technologies limited itself primarily to local news. Furthermore, as can be seen in the contrast between Figures 1 and 2, newsprint from this era tended to be much less spatially fractured, and typically displayed far fewer headlines and column divisions.
These earlier newspapers also tended to adopt a “rhetorical posture of self-abstraction,” which attempts to convey and preserve the voice of the “common interest against the infiltration of private or particular interests” (Salmon, 32). This rhetorical characteristic is apparent in the lack of authorial signatures and in the prevalent use of ‘we’ and ‘us’ that pervaded eighteenth-century periodicals, and that expressed information through the apparent voice of a single perspective. Salmon goes on to explain, however, that after the 1860’s this authorial effacement and unified perspectival voice “came under sustained and systematic attack” (32). He further notes that “it is surely not coincidental that [these attacks came] at the very moment when the material basis of the press made it harder to locate an individuated source of authorial value” (29). Thus, as foreign correspondents began to contribute their geographically fragmented perspectives more and more frequently in correlation to the proliferation of the electric telegraph, many modern newspapers began to print the names of their writers.

So, as we have seen, the geographical dispersion of contributing correspondents occurred in conjunction with the physical fragmentation of newspapers. It also created a tension between the singular perspectival voice of the newspaper as a whole in contrast with the divided and individual perspectives of the writers. What these evidences from contemporary popular media point to is an important aspect of the nature of the expressive and affective revision that influenced the Western milieu of this period, which was manifested in various forms of fragmentation throughout the societal imagination.

Thus, inherent in Marshall McLuhan’s comment, “that the new spatial orientation such as occurs in the format of the press after the advent of the telegraph, the swift disappearance of perspective, is also discernible in the new landscapes of Rimbaud in poetry and Cezanne in painting,” is the claim of a connection between the transformations taking place in news media and those taking place in the art world (12). What he is pointing out is the extent to which reorganizations in artistic expression and information transmission belong to the same technologically-impacted mechanism. That the electric telegraph made it possible, in a sense, for information to move faster than linear time, meaning that a story breaking at 6pm in Paris could be reported at 12pm in New York, implied not only that the entire system of news transmission would undergo a radical transformation, but that the entire perspectival organization of the modern person would be revised. This, of course, was manifested in changes seen throughout not only the production of news and artistic medias but also throughout the widely-diverse expressive and affective networks of the modern milieu.
In fact, Hemingway himself, in a 1940 letter to his editor Charles Scribner, acknowledged this same continuity between expressive forms when he remarked on his writing habits, “I always count them [the words] when I knock off and am drinking the first whiskey and soda. Guess I got in the habit writing dispatches. Used to send them from some places where they cost a dollar and a quarter a word and you had to make them awful interesting at that price or get fired” (qtd. in Phillips 57). This comment – in addition to being resonant with McLuhan’s claim of a connection between technology, news media and artistic production – is also significant because of its evocation of money. It highlights the notion that discursive technologies, while facilitating new avenues of communication, also mediate them through a mechanism of monetization. The nature of the expressive exchange, in other words, is shaped by the monetary exchange that underlies it.

What I mean to illustrate by this observation, and what I will further elaborate later in this discussion, is the idea that expressive forms do not subsist and cannot transmit meaning independently from their vehicle of dissemination. Thus, reorganizations in the nature of that disseminating vehicle, in so far as they apply to numerous communicative systems, will result in homologous revisions throughout those various systems.

McLuhan indentifies some of these parallel revisions when he makes a connection between the disappearance of a single perspective in newspapers and the congruent dissipation of perspective in the proto-Modernism of Cezanne and Rimbaud. What can be seen in the discontinuity of the lines of a tabletop and the shape of a hat in Cezanne’s Card Players or in the “extravagant images that [seem] to be resolutely discontinuous and incoherent” in Rimbaud, and that would later find even more overt expression in the abstractions of Picasso’s cubism and Joyce’s multivocal stream-of-consciousness prose, is the same multiplicity of perspective that characterizes modern newsprint (Everdell 91). In SAR, this perspectival multivocality can also be seen in the language of Jake Barnes’ narration and its seamless interweaving of various languages, which occurs on the level of individual words, idiomatic expression, and even grammatical construction.

Linguistic Perspectives

The most obvious manifestation of SAR’s linguistic pastiche is Hemingway’s direct insertion of French and Spanish words into sentences that are otherwise dominated by English. This appears throughout the novel in dialogue and narrative prose alike, conveying a perspectival multiplicity that unmoors – both physically and otherwise – the structural underpinnings of the conventional unilingual sentence. Inherent in this claim of physicality is an implication of place. It is intended to highlight the inevitably that languages retain an inextricable connection to the geographies from which they originate. Because of this, the character of their expressive framework is also fundamentally bound up in that same culturally-implicit connection: a connection that necessarily extends into any unilingual sentence. A sentence that speaks in the tongue of multiple languages, however, is not confined to the limitations of a single linguistically discrete discourse. Instead, its culturally-informed perspective is free to drift within the wider discursive space opened up by the interplay between the multiple languages of which it is the aggregate.

What this means is that the interruption of an English sentence by the unanticipated appearance of a foreign word represents a shift in the expressive lens through which the sentence’s meaning is being conveyed. This shift, however, occurs subtly. Rather than signaling
the appearance of an entirely new voice – as, for example, with the transition between parallel newspaper columns written by geographically disparate authors – the voice remains consistent, while the perspectival shift occurs on the level of the culturally- and ideologically-implicit vehicle through which the voice speaks. This means that within a single sentence and through the medium of one expressive voice, Hemingway is able to encapsulate multiple viewpoints by juxtaposing disparate languages that each carry their own distinct, geographically-coded baggage.

One result of this linguistic discontinuity is a level of abstraction, or opacity, that it contributes to the text. As with much of the art associated with the Modernist movement, the comingling of many perspectives within the piece obscures its ostensive clarity. Readers unfamiliar with French and Spanish are left to either guess at the meanings of these foreign words, which often go unexplained, or are forced to look outside of the text for an explanation. However, although the interpolation of diverse languages into the text detracts from its immediate clarity, it simultaneously heightens its veracity of representation in regards to the experience of international travel, wherein one inevitably encounters disparate and unfamiliar geolinguistic spaces.

As is apparent in the following selection, however, Hemingway’s incorporation of various languages into the body of *SAR* is prevalent to an extent that penetrates far beyond the mere incorporation of foreign words into an English prose piece.

Did I want to stay myself in person in the Hotel Montana?

Of that as yet I was undecided, but it would give me pleasure if my bags were brought up from the ground floor in order that they might not be stolen. Nothing was ever stolen in the Hotel Montana. In other fondas, yes. Not here. No. The personages of this establishment were rigidly selectioned. I was happy to hear it. Nevertheless I would welcome the upbringal of my bags.

The maid came in and said that the female English wanted to see the male English now, at once. (244-5)

The appearance of the word “fonda” demonstrates the most obvious way in which fragments of foreign language pervade the work and are interwoven into the prose. Hemingway’s blending of languages, however, also takes place on a much more sophisticated level wherein the Spanish and English form a sort of pentimento, with Spanish expressions and grammatical constructions beginning to emerge from within the framework of the English prose. In other words – assuming a metaphorical apparatus that imagines the two languages as individually distinct paintings of the same subject – the linguistic construction in question functions in parallel to a canvas wherein an explicitly Spanish depiction, thinly painted over with an English one, displays evidences of the former bleeding through into the latter and thereby influencing the form of its structural composition. Thus, the use of verbs such as “upbringal” and “selectioned” represent Hemingway’s neologistic overlay of English diction onto Spanish predicates. Similarly, the use of “female English” and “male English” instead of Englishwoman and Englishman are the expression of Spanish grammatical constructions and subject-adjective orderings being imposed upon the text. Hemingway stylizes his prose in this way in order to highlight the notion that this conversation between Jake Barnes and the hotel manager is taking place in Spanish. Functionally, though, its is an attempt to recreate as nearly as possible – within the limitations of an English prose piece – the precise physical ordering of spoken words that would have occurred in this Spanish conversation. Therefore, because it represents an attempt to strip the prose of subjective expression, even to such an extent that it seeks to eliminate the
subjectivity of a translation of grammatical constructs; it is the manifestation of yet another instance of *SAR*'s suppression of personal, affectively-informed experience in favor of physical objectivity.

Furthermore, unlike much of the novel’s blending of languages, which usually appears in the form of individual French and Spanish terms being inserted into the prose, this passage contains unsignaled shifts, not just in perspective, but also in voice. Using neither quotation marks nor spatial line division, the prose alternates from sentence to sentence between lines spoken by Jake and ones spoken by the hotel worker. This Modernist technique of multivocality, as mentioned before, parallels the nascent fragmentation that characterizes turn-of-the-century newsprint. In both mediums, there is a vocal shift denoted by nothing more than a small column of blank space on the page. In *SAR*, this space extends from the period at the end of a sentence to the first letter of the following one. In newsprint, it is the thin blank space between parallel articles.

This vocal fragmentation is significant to the present discussion because it represents a foothold whereby the stylistic techniques apparent in *SAR* can be contextualized, in resonance with other contemporaneous media forms, as part of a broader revision to the expressive production of the modern milieu. The comparison between the multivocality of newsprint and that of Hemingway’s novel is one manifestation of that continuity. However, merely identifying the interrelated manifestations of that changing milieu is of superficial importance. To move closer to indentifying some of the core elements that influenced and sustained that shift, it is necessary to assess the impacts of these manifestations.

Opacity is one such already-indentified result of fragmentation. Just as Hemingway’s use of multiple languages within his prose contributes to its greater inaccessibility, so too does the type of multivocality apparent in the selection above. Both correspond to the imposition of multiple perspectives onto the expressive apparatus of the novel. It is no coincidence that *SAR*, along with many other media forms of the era, were reflecting the influence of many perspectives at the precise historical moment when large percentages of the Western population began moving into metropolitan cities and innovations in communication and transportation technologies were facilitating the spread of information and bodies to an hitherto unprecedented extent (Gamba 3). Thus, the emergent expressive trend of representing perspectival multiplicity was a direct result of an attempt to more accurately recreate the experience of modern life. However, in both life and media representations, an increase in the number of divergent perspectives produces a situation of increased opacity and complexity.

Translated Into Money

This positive relationship – meant in the mathematical sense rather than qualitatively – between an increasing number of perspectives and a subsequently increasing level of opacity has some resounding implications in regards to the function of money in modern times. As many scholars have previously noted, money and value are two themes of enormous importance to *SAR* that recur persistently throughout the entire course of its narrative. In fact, “value” is the second most frequently repeated word in the novel, with the blank modifier “nice” being the first (Brogan 34). Therefore, juxtaposed alongside prose that attempts to present a variety of geographically diverse perspectives and the implicit cultural and ideological values that are bound up within them, there is a constant undercurrent of monetary discourse – a tallying of quantitative values.
This signifies a mechanism for coping with perspectival multiplicity that functions in direct contrast to the system of linguistic inclusion that is the project of many of Hemingway’s multivocal grammatical constructions. Whereas that system of discourse represents an attempt to aggregate distinct perspectives into a coherent expressive medium while preserving aspects of their individual characters – resulting in an increased level of complexity and opacity – the system of quantification inherent in monetary discourse is a reductive one that seeks the utmost simplicity. Rather than preserving the original character of its component parts, monetization is a means of obliterating them.

To the extent that money, with its colourlessness and its indifferent quality, can become a common denominator of all values, it becomes the frightful leveler – it hollows out the core of things, their peculiarities, their specific values and their uniqueness and incomparability in a way which is beyond repair. They all float with the same gravity in the constantly moving stream of money. They all rest on the same level and are distinguished only by their amounts. (Simmel 14)

The distinction I mean to establish is this: inherent in Hemingway’s use of language is the project of illustrating a diversity of cultural and ideological perspectives consistent with those encountered by his geographically- and internationally-mobile characters. However, inherent in the physical reality of that mobility is a reliance on money as a means of bridging the gap between those geographically divergent perspectives, which effectively entails subjection to an exchange system characterized by perspectival effacement. As people move geographically they simultaneously move across boundaries of cultural and perspectival division. Movement, in other words, especially internationally, entails navigating between the diverse social norms and outlooks of people whose ways of life are divergent in correspondence to their physical separation. The perspectival multivocality of Hemingway’s work is an expression of this, but it is also juxtaposed against an insistently recurring mention of money, which effectively functions as a system wherein the multivocal discourse is silenced in favor of the universal.

The image of a taxicab is a good one to latch onto for a means of illustrating the nature of this relationship. It is the vehicle that most frequently conveys the characters of SAR from one place to another, and it is a transportation service defined explicitly in terms of the monetary. In a literal sense, it reduces the distance between two disparate places to a quantifiable sum of money. All other values, perspectives, ideologies, and linguistic variations are irrelevant. A monetary sum transcends them all, effaces them, and abrogates their differences: the farther the distance, the larger the disparity between them, the larger the sum.

In fact, money facilitates every type of large-scale travel that occurs in the story, whether it be by train, hired car, limousine, taxi, or bus. This presents an interesting dichotomy. It means that the physical process of moving across distinct geolinguistic spaces, which is itself the primary catalyst for perspectival multiplicity, is governed by a monetary system that orients itself as perspectiveless – as purely quantitative. Thus, the increasing complexity of the perspectival aggregate corresponds with the increasing simplicity of the expressive and discursive systems of translation.

This function of money as a mechanism of conflation is apparent all throughout the novel. One particularly illuminating manifestation, however, is apparent in chapters nine and ten, and arises in relation to the group’s travel arrangements. Brett and Mike have made plans to meet up with Jake, Bill, and Cohn in Pamplona. But before they can do so, they will have to wait in San Sebastian for their money to arrive. Thus, both the timeline for and the physical access to their means of travel are predicated upon money. This is also true in relation to Jake,
Bill, and Cohn, who spend the night and part of the following day in Bayonne where they got off their respective trains from Paris and Hendaye. In the approximately two pages that Hemingway dedicates to describing their time in Bayonne, there is at least a quarter of a page spent explicitly discussing matters of money. The reader learns that they hire a car for four hundred francs to take them into Pamplona, it is due to pick them up in forty minutes, during that time they pay their hotel bill and have beers at a café, which cost “only sixteen francs apiece for Bill and me [Jake], with ten per cent added for service” (97). Shortly before this, they also buy a fishing rod and two landing-nets. Then, upon their subsequent arrival in Pamplona, a conflict arises between Bill and Cohn, and it results in their betting one hundred pesetas on whether or not Brett and Mike will arrive on time. Ironically enough, this is effectively a bet as to whether or not the couple’s money will arrive on time.

As these examples illustrate, the geographic movement that occurs in the novel is inextricably bound up in the discourse of monetary sums. Interestingly, money is also the determinant factor of time. Without the arrival of their money, Mike and Brett are not able to meet at the planned time. Furthermore, their failure to keep to their schedule results in a monetary exchange between Bill and Cohn. This monetary exchange, however, stands in for a more important underlying exchange of animosity: the first signal of Cohn’s incompatibility with the rest of the group. In fact, as we eventually learn, this is also the case with Brett and Mike’s lateness, which will later be attributed to Brett needing rest because “she was supposed to be ill” (148). What these examples signal is the use of monetary language as a stand-in for emotional discourse. Monetary exchange replaces an exchange of anger for Bill and Cohn, and in the case of Brett and Mike it assumes the role of implied relationship troubles. Thus, Hemingway’s prose effectively subsumes or replaces the expression of emotional value with the discourse of monetary value.

Significantly, this literary technique mirrors the mechanism by which money functions within our society. As Simmel observes, money represents a lowest common denominator of all values. Thus, its discourse of value is one of both simplicity and clarity. In achieving that simplicity, however, comprehensiveness is necessarily lost, which is a point that can be more clearly illustrated by elaborating on Simmel’s mathematical metaphor. In order to do so, it is first necessary to define some variables. Let us assume an arbitrary object $\Omega$ that is valued individually by John, Tom, and Mary. Further suppose that $v$, $w$, $x$, $y$, and $z$ represent various reasons for valuing $\Omega$. Let $x$ represent $\Omega$’s monetary value. Now imagine that John values $\Omega$ for reasons $(x, y, z)$, that Tom values $\Omega$ for reasons $(w, x, y)$, and that Mary values $\Omega$ for reasons $(v, w, x)$.

It follows that the only statement of the form ‘John, Tom, and Mary all value $\Omega$ for ___ reason’ is the assertion that they all value $\Omega$ because of $x$, its monetary worth. Thus, in speaking of the group valuation of $\Omega$ we can name monetary value as the one universal – as the common denominator of value. Admittedly, though, this is a gross simplification and, of course, one can imagine the likelihood that a group of this size would also find other common reasons for valuing a given object. But what happens when the group is vastly expanded in number? What universal values can be established across national boundaries and throughout the world in an environment where transportation technologies and the electric telegraph connect people throughout the globe?

The fact of the matter is that, after the Industrial Revolution, value discourse and value exchange were forced to rely on quantification for the sake of clarity and efficiency. The enormous abundance of diverse individual perspectives and viewpoints, each with its own
personal and cultural conceptions of value, that come into contact with one another in the modern world make a dependence on the universality of monetary discourse inevitable. And yet, even in a modern landscape permeated with communicative systems that frequently collapse qualitative values into quantitative figures, there of course still remains a vast multiplicity of non-monetary valuation – remember, the aggregate of the group valuation of \( \Omega \) is \((v, w, x, y, z)\). These values, however, are expressively repressed beneath the convenience, clarity, and greater objectivity of quantified discourse.

From out of this incongruous relationship between the universal and the individual there arises a dichotomy of description. On the one hand there is the universality of quantified monetary discourse. It is characterized by simplification, translatability, reduction, and by its perspectiveless nature. On the other hand is the discourse of the individual. That is to say, discourse that displays itself as uniquely perspectival, that sacrifices universal clarity for specificity, and that, being uninhibited by the constraints of widespread compatibility, is open to a vast array of varied expression. This latter discourse is apparent in Hemingway’s use of language to create multivocal, multi-layered, perspectivally-inclusive sentences, as discussed above. The monetary discourse, however, is also constantly present and placed in insistent juxtaposition.

This dichotomous relationship that is inherently built into the language of SAR runs parallel to the temporal relationship apparent in the novel’s epigraphs, which similarly evokes the relationship of the individual to the universal. As with the notions of human-internal and human-external time, these divergent descriptive constructions are distinguished by their respective subjective and objective characters. Monetary language – as with the human-external perspective – is characteristically objective, devoid of affective expression, and universalized. Perspectivally multivocal discourse, however, represents individuality and its essentially affective and subjective nature.

These two distinct systems of discourse, however, are not discrete, and their interplay within the novel is indicative of a parallel societal transformation that was taking place at the time the story was written. The Western milieu was undergoing a process of reorganization – metonymically manifest in the spatial restructuring of modern newspapers – that reflected the influx of geographically- and culturally-diverse perspectives, which flowed in after the advent of the electric telegraph and the contemporaneous advancements in transportation technologies. This increase in diversity bolstered a need for the universal language of money, and society began to be saturated with its discourse to an ever-increasing degree. Thus, what I have referred to above as the discourse of the individual began to be influenced by and transformed through its contact with the language of monetization, which fundamentally revised the expressive and affective relationship between the individual and the modern milieu.

Marshall McLuhan claimed that language “can be utterly changed by the intrusion of another language, as speech was by writing, and radio by television,” which is exactly the effect that the intrusion of monetary discourse had on the already established communicative systems of the era (6). Similarly, Simmel argues that inhabitants of modern metropolitan cities, which are the “seat of [the] money economy,” adopt a distinctly matter-of-fact and blasé demeanor because of their immersion in an environment characterized by “many-sidedness and [a] concentration of commercial activity” (12). Apparent in both of these claims is the implication that contact between distinct communicative systems produces an evolution of expressive forms. Of course, this type of discursive evolution and its ties to technological innovation will also be manifested in subsequent literary productions, which are themselves discursive systems.
In *SAR*, Hemingway engages directly with this notion of discursive evolution and its effects on the expressive and affective landscape of the individual psyche. In the latter portion of the novel, Jake and fellow aficionado Montoya have a discussion regarding the young bullfighter, Pedro Romero. Montoya has been given an invitation to pass on to Romero requesting that he join the US Ambassador in the Grand Hotel for coffee that evening. Together, Jake and Montoya decide that the message should not be given to Romero because “He shouldn’t mix in that stuff” and because the American politicians “don’t know what he’s worth. They don’t know what he means. Any foreigner can flatter him. They [the bullfighters] start this Grand Hotel business, and in one year they’re through” (176). What this scene illustrates is the novel’s acknowledgement of the powerful influential effect that systems of discourse can have upon one another. Jake and Montoya are worried that mere exposure to the systems of monetary discourse and value, which the internationally-mobile Americans in their luxury hotel represent, will be enough to somehow spoil Romero’s ability to evoke real emotion: the quality that makes him a brilliant bullfighter. The claim that these men don’t know what Romero is *worth* evokes the notion that they would confuse his unquantifiable cultural and emotional value, recognized amongst the true aficionados, with the monetary values that largely define their international and metropolitan perspective.

This same idea also finds expression in a pivotal scene that occurs a few pages later. Jake, Brett, and Romero are sitting at a café table where Jake has arranged to help set Brett up with the young bullfighter. Romero reveals that he can speak English, but tells Brett that he “must not let anybody know […] [because] it would be very bad, a torero who speaks English” (190). This revelation is an indication that, despite Jake and Montoya’s hopes, Romero has already been exposed to the effects of globalization and the perspectival multiplicity of the modern world, though he makes efforts to hide it. Not coincidentally, the revelation also corresponds with Romero’s use of explicit monetary discourse. When Brett offers to read his palm, he says, “Tell me I live for always, and be a millionaire” (189). Shortly after, he winks at Jake and mentions that his bullfights earn him “a thousand duros apiece” (189). Thus, the text contains direct acknowledgement of the connection between perspectival multiplicity and monetary discourse; and, in what is arguably the saddest scene of the novel, Romero – upon signaling his participation in the revised expressive milieu of his contemporary society – leaves the café to begin his affair with Brett.

It is my view that Hemingway’s *SAR* reflects an historically pivotal transformation of the expressive productions that govern the nature of the Western milieu’s communicative systems – that apparent in the stylistic nuance and originality of his prose is a reflection of a widespread, technologically-driven reorganization of Western society’s discursive and affective networks, at the heart of which is a drastically new relationship between society and money.

If there is one aspect of universality that is essential above all others, it is repetition. In mathematics, for example, repetition is the defining feature of a common denominator. This is true because the common denominator represents a figure that can evenly divide every number of the set that it applies to, and is thus characterized solely by its repetition as a multiple amongst the numbers of that set. The nature of money, too, is characteristically repetitive. Each bill and coin in common usage is a repetition of the form and value of its numerous counterparts, and this repetition is the basis upon which equivalent exchange is established. Thus, in naming the foremost aspects of what I have termed monetary discourse, repetition is a primary focal point.

Not coincidentally, it is also a major focal point of critics who discuss Hemingway’s style. Watts, for example, emphasizes Hemingway’s repetition of simple geometric forms in his
landscape descriptions (40). As stated above, Brogan notes that “nice” is the most frequently occurring word in SAR; but its repetition is hardly unique, and there are many other individual words and phrases that crop up again and again throughout the story (34). Hemingway, furthermore, is often noted for his heavy reliance on short declarative sentences, which he uses with striking frequency throughout the novel, creating a persistent structural repetition in his refusal to follow the paradigmatic strategy of varying the length and organizational model of his sentences. Repetition occurs thematically, too, and it seems that on every other page someone is ordering another drink, climbing into a taxi, or discussing value. Also, the nature of Brett and Jake’s tragic relationship seems to recur in cycles, and it is no surprise, therefore, that Jake has “that feeling of going through something that has all happened before” (SAR 70). Even the book’s title hints at repetition, evoking the daily redundancy of the rising and setting sun.

A second aspect of monetization, and one that has already been briefly touched upon, is its functional mechanism of simplification through the process of reduction. In describing value, for instance, monetary discourse collapses all aspects of a given object’s intrinsic worth into the simplicity and objectivity of a number. This reductive mechanism, though, is essential in preserving money’s characteristic universality, as there can be no universality without commonality, which entails the elimination of that which is distinctly individual or uniperspectival. It is in this elimination of everything subjective and non-translatable that the language of monetization emerges from amongst the clamoring din of a vast abundance of unique and widely varied discursive systems, with its simplicity and clarity, as the voice that speaks to all.

This same reductive expressivity can be seen throughout Hemingway’s stylistic approach to SAR in a number of different ways. The first, discussed above, is apparent in SAR’s conflation of affective expression into the language of monetary discourse. But it is also apparent in the novel’s grammatical constructions because “the complex sentence with its central reliance on ordering experience into the independent and the subordinate evaporates [in Hemingway’s prose] in favor of serial, simple sentences asserting the integrity of each thing that happens” (Ziff 151). The complex sentence, in other words, is constructed as a comparative apparatus; it depends upon the layering of multiple expressive parts. Its expressive sum, therefore, is a result of conglomeration or aggregation, not reduction. Thus — and in resonance with the paradigm of monetary discourse — Hemingway’s prose is characterized by a reliance on the simple sentence, which functions as a discrete unit of description in a way analogous to the function of a price tag, refusing comparison in favor of a simple, direct and clear assertion.

Another stylistic movement toward this type of reductive universalization is apparent in Hemingway’s marked attempt to create prose that reflects colloquial rather than esoteric discourse. Matthew Stewart remarks on the author’s tendency to use “locutions [that] carry a particularly American demotic flavor,” pointing out a passage from In Our Time where the phrases “couldn’t hardly,” “puked,” “hollered,” and “it looked like him or the bull” all appear (19). Although it is true that these expressions, being distinctly American, are far from universal, they nonetheless represent a clear departure from discursive systems of limited potential engagement. Esoteric discourse is, by nature, non-inclusive and therefore incompatible with the essentially inclusive character of monetary discourse. Thus, this use of the colloquial language corresponding to the demographic of his primary audience represents an aspect of Hemingway’s broader project to “assiduously weed out fine writing, superfluous narratorial commentary, and rhetorical adornment,” which in this instance he accomplishes by using language that is immediately recognizable and familiar to his readership amongst the American
masses (Stewart 20). In avoiding esoteric language and weeding out superfluous prose, Hemingway opens up SAR’s language to consumption by a wider audience, thereby moving it closer to displaying the common denominator quality that is distinctly characteristic of monetary discourse.

In a related technique, Hemingway employs what Larzer Ziff identifies as “blank modifiers,” which can effectively be thought of as the lowest common denominator of adjectival value statement (148). Apparent in the oft-repeated use of words like “nice” and “swell” there is an inherent sense of reduction or distancing. Just as monetary discourse is only capable of expressing a very limited and vague sense of value, which is entirely contained in a numeric amount, these blank modifiers likewise provide a limited value description of the object they are used to modify. Ziff goes on to explain that, because these modifiers are “as apt to be used in dismission, ironic disapproval, or absented-minded ejaculation as they are in approval,” their context is what determines their meaning (152). So too is true with the language of money. It provides a value assessment in the highly condensed form of a numeric amount, but gives no other information. For this reason, in order find out why a certain monetary value is assigned to a given object, it is necessary to appeal to the other ways in which that object is valuable. This involves a personal assessment: a retreat from the universalized value system of monetary discourse into a system of individual, subjective, and personal value judgment.

Hemingway’s prose works via the same mechanism, and to some extent, so does all writing. However, Hemingway amplifies the subjective demands on his readers with his uniquely persistent repetition of non-specific qualifiers – the recurrence of which only serves to increasingly strip them of meaning. The reader is therefore forced to develop his or her own interpretation of the indeterminate adjectives based upon plot events and context in order to color their blankness. Thus, what is explicitly written on the page does not necessarily represent the underlying value qualifications being latently expressed by the text. Instead, it represents a distilled and simplified version of those values, which are present even without their explicit naming.

During an interview for the Paris Review, Hemingway discussed this attribute of his prose in terms of what has since become famously known as his Iceberg Theory: “…I always try to write on the principle of the iceberg. There is seven-eighths of it underwater for every part that shows. Anything you know you can eliminate and it only strengthens your iceberg. It is the part that doesn’t show” (Plimpton 34). But the author was not explicitly referring to his use of blank modifiers in making this claim. Rather, he was explaining his stylistic technique of omitting direct mention of affect in his fiction, preferring instead to construct a series of physical descriptions that implicitly evoke the emotion. “If a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing about,” Hemingway claims, “he may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them” (Death in the Afternoon 192). As Susan Beegel explains in her book, Hemingway’s Craft of Omission, “The underwater part of the iceberg is the emotion, deeply felt by reader and writer alike, but represented in the text solely by its ‘tip’ – the objective correlative” (91). Her reference to T.S. Eliot’s idea of the ‘objective correlative’ is one that has often been used by critics to describe the workings of Hemingway’s prose and to associate him with the Imagist movement. Eliot described it in the following terms.

The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an “objective correlative”; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts,
which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked (qtd. in Beegel 90).

Thus, it is a literary strategy wherein the objective physical event stands in place of the absent, yet nonetheless implicit, affective expression.

Its significance to the present discussion arises from its evocation of the dichotomistic relationship between physicality and emotionality, which is also of fundamental importance to both the temporal and linguistic structures that pervade SAR. Thus, as previously touched upon, this aspect of Hemingway’s prose runs functionally parallel to monetary discourse, which represents a similar expressive medium wherein a simplistically reduced signifying physical form stands in place of the more subjective, affective, individually perspectival, and yet unexpressed whole.

For a final clarification of this point, it is useful to return to our earlier mathematical example. As previously stated, the language of money is the expression of value x. However, despite explicitly limiting itself to the numeric expression contained by x, the discourse of money still implicitly evokes the whole range of unexpressed and non-numeric values of v, w, y, and z that are associated with Ω. These values, however, remain merely implicit because of their incompatibility with the constraints of monetization’s necessary universality. The value, in other words, that is widely displayed to the universal public eye is the monetary tip of the iceberg. All other values, being subjective, remain submerged.

Conclusion

Over the past century, one of the most widely noted and variously contextualized aspects of Hemingway’s work has been its stylistic suppression of affect. In consequence of history’s tendency to repeat, it is with this same established critical paradigm that my own reading ultimately aligns itself. That there has been so much scholarly attention focused in the same direction, I believe, is a testament to the fact that this feature of Hemingway’s prose is the central mechanism whereby his writing achieves its widespread aesthetic appeal. Subsequently, this stylistic device has been evidenced in support of countless, often-conflicting claims. In light of this, rather than offering yet another competing interpretation, the intent of my scholarship is to establish a comprehensive framework whereby the diverse and hitherto ostensibly divergent arguments concerning Hemingway’s affective suppression can be identified as interrelated aspects of a broad societal change.

Throughout this discussion I have referred frequently to and illustrated numerous manifestations of what I have deemed a revision of the expressive production and affective character of the modern Western milieu. It is my position that the specific nature of this revision was a movement toward the greater objectivity and universality of twentieth-century expressive forms. Somewhat counterintuitively, the primary impetus for this shift was the increased diversity and multiplicity of competing perspectives that characterize modern metropolitan spaces, the populations of which began to rise dramatically after the turn of the century. Thus, in 1900 the percentage of people living in an urban environment was thirteen percent, but by 1950 that figure had risen to twenty-nine percent (Gamba 3). This increase of concentrated diversity corresponded with the rise of the money economy, and thus, as we have seen, with the pervasive spread of monetary discourse. Similarly, this period witnessed the proliferation of assembly-line mass production and the birth of modern advertising.
What these examples point to is the nascent prevalence of widespread mass production at the outset of the twentieth-century. In Walter Benjamin’s landmark text, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” he claims, “that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art” (221). Benjamin’s concept of “aura” evokes the sense in which an original work of art retains an intrinsically subjective character and individuality that cannot be recreated in subsequent copies. Thus, what Benjamin is essentially identifying is the loss that occurs in the eclipse of the individual by the universal – the effacement of the unique by a saturation of the mass produced. But there seems to be no reason why this principle should be limited exclusively to artwork. All expressive and discursive medias, being vehicles for translating subjective experience into a more objective physicality, presumably drift even farther from their aural sense of subjective character and authenticity when they are adjusted to the masses by subjugation to a system of mass production.

This discussion’s brief engagement with Nietzschean philosophy was intended to highlight the notion that the inherent function of tragedy is an evocation of the disparity between objective and subjective experience. SAR unquestionably engages this same dichotomy between the objective and the subjective: the physical and the emotional. However, SAR is also a text characterized by its effacive suppression of manifestations of subjective emotionality. Georg Simmel held that “The deepest problems of modern life flow from the attempt of the individual to maintain the independence and individuality of his existence against the sovereign powers of society, against the weight of […] the external culture” (11). If expressive production – which I intend in a broad sense to include all communicative and discursive medias – is the vehicle by which individuals expose and assert their subjective experiences, what then are the implications of a milieu whose expressive productions tend to increasingly be the creation of universalized, homogenized, and mass-produced manufacture?

I propose that the tragedy of SAR – which is perhaps also Hemingway’s representation of the tragedy of modernity – is built into its stylistic structure. Having established that Hemingway’s novel is a modern expressive production whose internal form collapses the subjective into the objective, the question that now remains to be answered is whether or not the newly-revised modern milieu has given rise to conditions under which the normative standard of expression is defined by this same mechanism of collapse. If so, perhaps an aspect of tragedy pervades our society to an extent that has gone hitherto unrecognized.

Works Cited


