A Reporter’s Story:
The Significance of Hemingway’s Early Work in Journalism

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“It is always instructive to observe a giant in the process of becoming a giant.”

Matthew Bruccoli
Introduction

My first significant exposure to Ernest Hemingway was during my sophomore year at Wellesley. In a seminar taught by Professor Cain, I studied the parallels between Hemingway and Orson Welles. The class moved chronologically through the careers of both men, dedicating a week to one artist then switching to the other. I almost feel obligated to apologize to the memory of Welles. Though I enjoyed viewing his films, it was Hemingway’s life and writing that captured my attention all semester.

Part of what I found so interesting was the context surrounding the author’s success. When we studied Hemingway’s beginnings, Professor Cain spoke briefly about Ernest’s high school years. We learned that Hemingway never attended college but instead went abroad to volunteer with the U.S. army efforts during World War I. He was seriously wounded, fell in love with a nurse, moved back to the United States, and experienced his first real heartbreak. Hemingway then spent a few years working on newspapers before moving to Paris, where he started his career as a writer.

When one’s emphasis is on Hemingway’s short stories and novels, this abbreviated synopsis captures all major biographical components. But with great respect to Professor Cain—and indeed, as he later helped me to realize—to view Hemingway’s writing career as one that began in Paris is not entirely correct. Hemingway’s six months working for the Kansas City Star introduced the eighteen-year-old to the basics of professional writing, and with the journalistic freedom that the Toronto Star provided, he spent four years growing as both a writer and observer. These newspaper jobs that Hemingway held in his late teens and early twenties were
neither insignificant nor minor. When combined, the number of articles that Hemingway wrote in these early years totals nearly two hundred.

Of the extensive body of Hemingway scholarship, though, only a small portion is dedicated to understanding the author’s beginnings in journalism. Most significant is Charles Fenton’s *The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway*, which offers a contextual background for Hemingway’s journalism and presents it in relation to his later creative work. J.F. Kobler’s *Ernest Hemingway: Journalist and Artist* is important, too, as it provides a more interpretive study of Hemingway’s early newspaper articles. A large section of Ronald Weber’s *Hemingway’s Art of Non-Fiction* is dedicated to the negative impact that journalism had on the author, and Robert Stephens’s *Hemingway’s Nonfiction* suggests that while some of Hemingway’s journalism can stand on its own, most of it serves only the purpose of deepening appreciation for the fiction.

Though Hemingway wrote nearly a century ago, he is still very much a part of today’s literary world. Restored editions with never-before-published pieces of *A Moveable Feast* and *A Farewell to Arms* became available to readers in 2009 and 2012, respectively. Paula McLain’s thoroughly researched 2011 novel about Hemingway’s first marriage, *The Paris Wife*, still holds a spot on the *New York Times* Best Sellers list. In 2012, the National Endowment for Humanities granted funding for scholars’ efforts to publish a multi-volume collection of Hemingway’s letters. Today, even people who have never read Hemingway’s fiction are familiar with the stereotypes of his persona: Hemingway the outdoorsman, the alcoholic, the ever-serious writer, *Papa*.

The study of Ernest Hemingway is not slowing. His life and writing offer new insights to readers of the twenty-first century. He is a key figure in American literary history, but there is a
hole in our common conception of his career. An artist so familiar to so many, an important aspect of Hemingway’s life is too often unknown or disregarded. The young reporter’s story is missing.

My interest in Hemingway’s journalism stems from the wide range of knowledge that I find myself gaining by reading his newspaper work. In the early articles, I see empirical evidence of a young man growing in his mastery of writing. I see a motivated new professional, working diligently to impress editors. I see a budding storyteller, eager to create true characters, dialogue, and action. Though prior to this project I had studied most of Hemingway’s short stories and novels multiple times, it was not until I was well into the journalism research that I truly felt I began to understand the full complexity of his creative writing.

It is important to clarify that the main argument of my thesis is not that Hemingway’s early newspaper work is significant on its own. The articles are neither examples of quality journalism nor pieces interesting enough on their own to merit interpretive attention. I recognize, too, that had Hemingway not become one of the world’s most famous authors, this journalism would be unstudied. What the newspaper work does, however, is help to paint a rich, comprehensive portrait of the writer. The study of Hemingway’s journalism career allows the young artist to emerge as a very real character. By following Hemingway’s life from behind the reporter’s notepad, we study the lens through which he viewed his early career in writing—the details important to a story and the tools he needed to bring a scene to life.

To truly understand Hemingway’s career, we must explore his upbringing, the methods through which the young writer approached the literary field, and the reasons he thought he was prepared to enter it. In its most basic form, then, my thesis aims to introduce today’s Hemingway readers to an often-overlooked chapter in the author’s life story. Through contextual studies and
a collection of close readings, my project investigates Hemingway’s early newspaper work in its effect on our understanding of his career. My hope is that this study helps to elucidate Hemingway’s emergence into the literary world, his development as a creative writer, and much of his early fiction itself.
Chapter I

Beginnings: Oak Park and Kansas City

At the end of the nineteenth century, Oak Park, Illinois, was a town dedicated to community. Families, schools, and churches emphasized strong moral principles and a steadfast dedication to both self- and community-improvement. Protestantism dominated the Chicago suburb, but with the new century brought a welcomed acceptance of more progressive lifestyles. In a small town connected by a shared vision of the past, Oak Parkers joined together to embrace these emerging new values. Family affairs were known by everyone, and everyone knew the Hemingway family.

On July 21, 1899, Ernest Miller Hemingway was born to one of Oak Park’s most respected families. Clarence Edmonds Hemingway, Ernest’s strait-laced father, was a man devoted to his sense of duty. A doctor of medicine, his work kept him constantly busy seeing patients at their homes, his office, and the obstetrical section of a nearby hospital. But though the doctor’s professional life required a nonstop schedule, Clarence never abandoned his duty to community. He was quick to volunteer for speaking engagements as a frequent lecturer at boys’ clubs, and he taught a Sunday school class at one of Oak Park’s Congregational churches. To his family, too, Dr. Hemingway embraced paternal responsibility far more than the era required.

Kenneth Lynn, a leading biographer of Hemingway, writes about Clarence: “For years, he did the food shopping for his family and frequently the cooking as well. In the course of a house call, one patient remembered, Dr. Hemingway phoned home and told whoever answered that it was time to remove a pie from the oven” (34). Michael Reynolds, another prominent Hemingway scholar, adds that Clarence Hemingway was a strict, conventional man: “neither
political nor social” (38), “opposed to smoking, drinking, dancing and card playing” (38), and highly aware of the expectations he had for himself and his family.

What the doctor lacked in vigor, Grace Hall Hemingway more than made up for. A classically trained singer and Oak Park’s resident voice instructor, Grace’s temperament was as powerful as her operatic singing voice. Ernest’s mother was “a woman in advance of her time. She absolutely refused to submerge her talents beneath the waters of a male-dominated society” (Reynolds 107). Key in this resistance to conformity was the fact that Grace earned more money through her music lessons than her husband did through his medical practice. Moreover, though she loved her six children, Grace did not regard herself as a mother first and foremost. Reynolds states: “Grace Hall Hemingway never cherished, accepted or resigned herself to the role of housewife and mother” (108). With significant help from various maids and cooks, the Hemingway parents kept house and raised a family.

However distant Mrs. Hemingway might have been from Ernest, she sought to instill in him religious fervor and a strict set of moral principles—and for many years she was mostly successful: “Self-control, self-denial, caution, Christian precepts, moral growth—these are the watchwords young Hemingway heard all too often at home” (Reynolds 110). According to Oak Park standards of the time, the Hemingways did everything right: educated, religious, and active participants in their community, the family was one “respected not for its wealth but for its integrity” (Reynolds 3). Along with his older sister, Marcelline, and his four younger siblings, Ernest was raised in a financially stable and well-accomplished home.

Of all the traits that Ernest inherited from his father, an appreciation of the outdoors is most significant. A frequent hiker, hunter, and fisherman, Dr. Hemingway was an avid
outdoorsman, and he shared this love of nature with his children. In a letter dated September 10, 1910, then eleven-year-old Ernest wrote to his father, “I went fishing by myself yesterday morning off the jettie. I caught 13 sea Trout. They are very gamy fish and fight like black bass” (Spanier 9).

Hemingway dedicated his early childhood to the pursuit of science. In 1915, he made a pact to himself to “specialize in the sciences in college,” (Reynolds 29) and after, “to do something toward the scientific interests of the world.” Though Hemingway eventually distanced himself from science, his attraction to nature spanned his entire life and influenced much of his writing.

A fine education was important to Clarence and Grace, and the library at the Scoville Institute in Oak Park was a popular afterschool destination for the Hemingway children, Marcelline and Ernest in particular. But Clarence wanted to ensure that his young children read only upstanding books, and so he prohibited them from possessing individual library cards. If Marcelline or Ernest wanted to bring books home, they had to rent them through their parents’ accounts—a requirement that came with a great deal of embarrassment. Reynolds states about Ernest, “By the time he was fourteen, most of his classmates had cards of their own, but his father refused him that privilege. The Doctor wanted to know what his children were reading” (Reynolds 41).

Still, Ernest found plenty of opportunities to read what he desired. Rudyard Kipling, author of the highly creative The Jungle Book and Just So Stories, was among Hemingway’s favorites. Later in his life, too, Hemingway looked back on his young Kipling attraction with gratitude and appreciation. He referred to Kipling as a great short story writer, one whose writing style Hemingway himself strived to achieve in his own work. Kenneth Lynn examines the

\[1\] Many of Hemingway’s early letters contain misspellings and errors. I have kept all quotes in their original language.
reasons that Hemingway might have been so attracted to the British author: “The sense that Kipling communicated of possessing an insider’s knowledge of things and his fascination with men of moral fortitude on the verge of collapse were qualities that would mark Hemingway’s fiction as well” (Lynn 61). Additionally, the wonder of international adventure is present throughout Kipling’s body of work. Reading about the wild jungles of Africa inspired the young Hemingway to imagine a world outside of Oak Park. Perhaps, too, it contributed to Ernest’s own eagerness to set his fiction in various locations around the world.

Surprisingly, Hemingway never demonstrated any early academic excellence: “It would be a distortion…to conceive of Hemingway as a predominantly bookish or literary high school student” (Fenton 10). At Oak Park and River Forest Township High School, more commonly known as Oak Park High, Ernest was an average pupil. His grades were by no means exceptional. Still, Hemingway did at least show some promise as a writer. Comments about his English papers referred to his work as “highly individual” (Fenton 6), and though not reflected through high marks and letter grades, Hemingway began to find his voice at the high school.

Its curriculum said to rival those of nearby colleges, Oak Park High was one of the finest American secondary schools of the early twentieth century. Hemingway took what was then considered a “standard precollege curriculum: six semesters of science, four of math, six of Latin, eight of English literature and composition, four of history, two of applied music, and two years of orchestra” (Nagel 30). Through the course distribution requirements alone, we see that Oak Park High greatly valued language and literature. The school’s extra dedication to the study of English was deliberate; John Calvin Hanna, principal of the school from 1898 to 1913, believed that the most important education for a student to receive was a comprehensive foundation in English language and literature.
Morris Buske, founding chairman of The Ernest Hemingway Foundation of Oak Park and former teacher at Oak Park High, examines Principal Hanna’s contributions to the school:

…during the fifteen years of his tenure at Oak Park, Principal Hanna had implemented remarkable reforms that were particularly advantageous for students with Hemingway’s gifts and interests. In particular, Hanna believed that for American students the study of English—with emphasis on both composition and English literature—should form the core of every secondary school program for all students. Hanna left Oak Park…too soon to have any recorded personal relationship with Hemingway. But this extraordinary educator’s philosophical beliefs, staffing, and curriculum guidelines remained in force, creating a structure and atmosphere in which students with a budding talent for writing could thrive. (Buske 3)

Buske points to the lucky coincidence in Hemingway’s attending Oak Park High. Had the school focused on a different discipline, or had Hemingway attended a less elite, less literacy-intensive school, he perhaps might not have had the preparation needed to become a writer.

The English classes at Oak Park High introduced students to a thorough collection of classic literature:

At Oak Park High School, the required reading in freshman English in 1913-1914, the year Marcelline and Ernest took the course, consisted of Bible stories, old English ballads, Tennyson’s *Idylls of the King*, Coleridge’s ‘Rime of the Ancient Mariner’ and Sir Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe*, plus Benjamin Franklin’s *Autobiography*. In their sophomore, junior, and senior years, Marcelline and Ernest were assigned several Shakespeare plays; Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*; essays by Addison, Macaulay, and Carlyle; George Eliot’s *Silas Marner*; Dickens’s *David Copperfield*; extensive selections from the poetry of Chaucer, Milton, Pope, Shelley, Keats, Browning, and Matthew Arnold. (Lynn 23)

More than just a study of literature, though, the English curriculum also required coursework in the history of language, rhetoric, formal debate, and various styles of composition. A third or fourth year English class at the high school was commonly said to be comparable to an introductory course at the University of Chicago, and Oak Park High’s English syllabus makes this claim seem highly believable.
Additionally, Hemingway’s relationships with his English teachers were important to his development as a writer. As a junior, Hemingway enrolled in English classes with Margaret Dixon. As Fenton suggests, Miss Dixon “was not professionally unique, nor was her relationship with Hemingway an unusual one, but it was a piece of extreme good fortune that she was available to Hemingway” (8). Buske states that Dixon “devoted enormous time and energy to teaching her students to write” (36). A former classmate of Ernest’s recalls, too, this same passionate dedication: Dixon “pushed the creative side, and urged us to use our imagination and dare to try putting into writing our original and interesting thoughts…She was salty in her criticism, proud and full of praise for our efforts and quite ready to rip at what was not good” (Fenton 8). According to Miss Dixon, the dynamics of Ernest’s junior year English class were so special that she requested the group remain together for the following year.

Also during Hemingway’s junior year, Fannie Biggs, his former English teacher, led him down a new literary path. Miss Biggs recommended Ernest’s name to Arthur Bobbitt, a history teacher and overseer of the school’s weekly newspaper, the Trapeze. Bobbitt worked hard to recruit Hemingway for the newspaper staff, mentioning to the young boy that Bobbitt had often heard others speak of Hemingway’s wit and writing. Ernest initially declined, but Bobbitt’s praises eventually persuaded him to give in. Writing for the Trapeze quickly became Ernest’s most significant afterschool activity during his later high school years.

Hemingway wrote articles for the paper for an entire year before ever receiving a formal introduction to the art of journalism. During his senior year, he enrolled in English VI, an elective journalism course taught by Miss Biggs. According to Marcelline, who also enrolled in the class, the atmosphere of English VI was very similar to that of a real newspaper office: “We each had daily assignments covering the various phases of a small-town sheet. We took turns
being editor, special columnists, writing the advertisements, doing features, straight news and sports” (Sanford 139). Miss Biggs was strict but enthusiastic, demanding only the best work from her students. There was a special pupil-teacher relationship between Miss Biggs and Ernest. She became a close family friend of the Hemingways, maintaining her role as “confidante” (Buske 60) to Ernest for many years after his graduation.

Hemingway’s first assignments² for the *Trapeze* represent a semi-reluctant sixteen-year-old’s³ attempt at journalism. His early reporting duties primarily covered the Hanna Club meetings. Named for John Calvin Hanna, the former principal whose dedication to literacy still resonated through the school, the Hanna club hosted “prominent businessmen” (Fenton 11) to give inspirational lectures at monthly dinners. In “Hanna Club Tomorrow Night,” Ernest’s second article for the paper published on January 27, 1916, he attempts to convince readers to attend the club’s meeting. After a fairly respectable pitch promising “a great speech, a superb dinner, and some rare jokes” (*Oak Park* 23), Hemingway concludes: “So dig down in your watch pocket among the locker keys and Lincoln pennies, and painlessly extract that two bits piece you have been wondering what to do with, and purchase one of those little red pasteboards that will open the gates to an hour and a half of the happiest time you ever spent” (*Oak Park* 24). Here, a budding sense of the young Hemingway’s casual charisma emerges on the page. Through an order to “dig down” in our pockets, avoiding the “Lincoln pennies” and reaching instead for “that two bits piece”—a quarter—we see the young Hemingway seeking an outlet for his quirky language and gaining confidence in his writing.

On May 4, 1916, the *Trapeze* published Ernest’s most sarcastic piece yet. “Junior Debates” is a brief article examining the importance of high school debates. In the piece,

² Like his letters, much of Hemingway’s high school writing contains spelling and grammatical errors. I decided to keep everything as it appeared in Maziarka and Vogel’s compilation.
³ See Appendix I
Hemingway reveals that many students question this importance. He then offers the opinion of a Chicago jurist: school debates “teach confidence, self-reliance and ease in speaking” (Oak Park 34). Next, Hemingway describes a more personal endorsement for the debates:

There is also something gratifying in seeing a huge, athletic fellow, who usually emphasizes his remarks by poking his fist under his opponent’s nose, be squelched, crushed and verbally sat upon by a little ninety-eight pound lad who had hitherto been in abject awe of the rough person with the large mouth. (Oak Park 34)

The article ends here, leaving readers with the image of a petite bookworm dominating over a big, athletic bully. In this blunt conclusion, we see more of Hemingway’s character beginning to emerge. Though involved in many facets of Oak Park High’s athletics, Ernest was never a star player himself. These concluding remarks, then—remarks in which the underdog uses confidence in language to win—reveal more about Hemingway than might appear on the surface.

Over the course of his junior year, Hemingway wrote only seven articles for the Trapeze, but when offered the chance to be one of the six editors for the following year, he accepted. Hemingway’s new position elevated his responsibilities on the newspaper and perhaps increased his enjoyment of writing for it. As a senior, Hemingway wrote twenty-four articles for the Oak Park High newspaper. The majority of this work published during his senior year covered the athletic news of the school, and much of it was written in the style of Ring Lardner, the popular Chicago Tribune sportswriter.

Though Oak Park High was known for its rigorous English programs, the school promoted few literary role models to whom the young Hemingway could relate. Lynn notes that the high school’s library owned very little American literature. This led Hemingway to find inspiration elsewhere, and the young boy turned to Lardner. During Hemingway’s high school years, Lardner was a well-known figure in Chicago’s literary world. Known for his satirical sports columns and short stories, Lardner divided his professional writing between fiction and
journalism, a balance that likely resonated with Hemingway. As Jonathan Yardley, a biographer of Lardner, states, Lardner’s impact reached many promising young voices across the country, but “of all those prominent writers influenced by Ring to one degree or another…it was Hemingway who felt the influence most deeply, who made the most original use of it” (Yardley 182). Hemingway never wrote about the same subjects as Lardner and never demonstrated the same precise knowledge surrounding sports, but he was drawn to Lardner’s comic, carefree tone and sought to emulate it in his own writing.

In an article titled “‘Ring Lardner Junior’ Writes About Swimming Meet: Oak Park Rivals Riverside,” Hemingway writes in Lardner’s relaxed, jocular style. He begins by addressing “Pashley,” then says:

“Well Pash since you have went and ast me to write a story about the swimming meet I will do it because If I didn’t you might fire me off the paper and then when I would want to sling the stuff that Perkins the new air line pilot is named after I would have to go be a military lecturer or something.” (Oak Park 60)

This long, juvenile sentence demonstrates exactly the style of writing that Hemingway learned not to produce. The informality was unusual for the newspaper and highlights the fact that Hemingway was working hard to achieve a different, more casual voice. Moreover, Hemingway disregards news about the swim meet for the first half of the article and instead discusses his own writing. Hemingway admits that his Lardner writing has received mixed reviews: “You see Pashley everytime I write anything for your paper a lot of guys want to clean me so this time I will be very careful and only write about myself and about guys what I ain’t ascairt of” (Oak Park 60). By noting that the other editors of the Trapeze were critical of his Lardner pieces, Hemingway reveals that his new style gained at least some kind of attention.

However negative the attention might have been, Hemingway thrived off of it. Lardner proved to be a good fit for a role model to Hemingway, too. Lardner himself never attended
college. He went straight into the newspaper world and then proceeded into fiction writing. In Lardner’s work, his voice gained fame and recognition for its casualness and slang, and by emulating Lardner, Hemingway learned that his writing could do the same. Journalism became the means through which he received attention for expressing himself. Marcelline recalls: “I think I can truthfully say that the hours spent in our class in English VI, our after-school work on the paper with congenial friends, our headline writing and proofreading at the local printing office were some of the happiest hours of our schooling” (Sanford 140). At Oak Park High, Ernest’s in-school and extracurricular work in journalism provided him with an understanding of what life could be as a professional newspaperman.

Aside from the Trapeze, Hemingway was involved in a wide range of activities from orchestra and theater to football and swimming. He kept himself busy after school, and by graduation his list of activities took up eight lines in the senior edition of the high school’s Class Book: “Only the class president and one of its star athletes exceeded him in the length of their paragraphs” (Fenton 10). Hemingway was a frequent attendee of both the debate club and the Hanna Club. During his junior year, he submitted two stories to the Tabula, Oak Park High’s literary magazine, and by the end of the year, he was invited to participate in the Story Club, a creative writing workshop led by Miss Biggs.

In total, Hemingway wrote three short stories, four poems, and the senior year class prophecy for the Tabula. Of all the pieces, the prophecy best highlights the young writer’s skills; Ernest’s jovial tone demonstrates the ease with which he wrote freely about his friends and classmates. The poems are less inspired, mostly using the verse to express his distaste for the literary form: “Oh, I’ve never writ a ballad / And I’d rather eat shrimp salad” (Oak Park 101). Hemingway’s Tabula fiction does, however, possess striking similarities to his later Nick Adams
The young Hemingway’s knowledge of the outdoors comes through in each story, and elements of violence and physical brutality play important roles. Overall, though, the stories lack complexity and sophistication.

Hemingway loved seeing his name and work in print. The *Tabula* allowed for this, but his work for the *Trapeze* was more original and more himself. In his late teens, Hemingway was very much unlike the disciplined older writer with whom today’s readers are primarily familiar.

The young Ernest was well known in school, and his personality bustled with energy:

> There were some girls in the school who knew him well and found him overbearing and stuck on himself, but the boys tended to forgive his egotistical qualities on the grounds that no one could talk more excitingly about baseball or boxing or books, that no one had a better sense of humor or a keener wit and that no one was more fun to be with on an overnight hike or a canoe trip. (Lynn 59)

Journalism provided the outlet to which Hemingway offered his animated voice. At times he was sarcastic and crude, but his writing was almost always entertaining. As Fenton states, “The cleverness which his Oak Park classmates discovered in Hemingway went beyond the casual wit and horseplay of high school friendships. It also took the more permanent form of publication” (14). Through various praises and criticisms in response to his editorials, Hemingway recognized that he could use his writing skills to win attention.

Overall, Oak Park High’s writing program, designed by Principal Hanna and implemented by teachers like Miss Biggs and Miss Dixon, paved a very straightforward path toward a literary career for Hemingway. According to Buske, the program “focused particularly on the nuts and bolts of writing, developing not only the technical craftsmanship but also the disciplined work habits that are essential for a professional writer in any field” (68). Hemingway constantly received feedback on his academic writing, and his participation in literary elective classes and afterschool activities provided him with the attention any high school boy might
desire. “Buoyed by the pleasure of seeing his work in print and by Miss Dixon’s encouragement” (Buske 42), Hemingway left Oak Park prepared and eager for the world of professional writing.

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Just before leaving Oak Park High, Hemingway told his teachers and classmates that his plan was to study journalism at the University of Illinois. After graduation, however, Hemingway watched many of his older male peers leave Oak Park to volunteer with U.S. army efforts abroad and realized he could do the same. Suddenly, Hemingway wanted nothing more than to join the war. He craved action and excitement, but at eighteen he was a year too young to register. Besides, his father’s opposition was stern and final; Dr. Hemingway’s preference was for his son to attend school and particularly for him to follow in the family tradition at Oberlin College in Ohio. Still, Hemingway was not interested in college. In a letter to his grandfather dated August 6, 1917, he wrote: “…I am not going to the U of Illinois this fall. When I get home I am either going out to Uncle Leicesters or try and get a job with the Chicago Tribune” (Spanier 41). Perhaps Hemingway felt unprepared for college. More likely, he was all too anxious to learn from experiences rather than textbooks. If both his age and his father prevented him from heading overseas, then getting out of Oak Park and working for a newspaper was Hemingway’s next best option.

Though Hemingway might have dreamed of beginning his adult life in Chicago, the smaller but still bustling Kansas City proved to be a much more promising option. Hemingway’s friend, Carl Edgar, was working for a fuel oil company in the city. Despite a decade age difference, Hemingway and Edgar had a great deal in common: Edgar also dismissed the idea of attending college, stating in a letter to Ernest that it was “‘of damn little practical value’ for novice writers” (Reynolds 99). Both boys were eager to join the military efforts abroad.
Surprisingly, Clarence Hemingway was not worried about his son spending time in Edgar’s company. He hoped that the twenty-some-year-old’s maturity would “have a steadying influence” (Fenton 28) on young Ernest.

The Hemingway’s Oberlin College connection ended up playing a helpful role after all; Clarence’s younger brother Tyler, a “prominent Kansas City lumberman” (Lynn 67), was a former Oberlin classmate of Henry J. Haskell, then chief editorial writer for the Kansas City Star. Once Ernest convinced his father that college could wait, Dr. Hemingway reached out to his younger brother. He asked whether or not Tyler might be willing to put in a good word for Ernest at the Star. As Lynn states, Haskell “liked what Tyler told him about his nephew in Oak Park. A cub reporter’s position would be opening in the fall, Haskell told Tyler; all his nephew would have to do in order to be hired would be to show up at the proper time” (67). Hemingway did just that. On October 15, 1917, he arrived by train in Kansas City and began his job at the Star soon after.

Hemingway wrote for the Kansas City Star from October 1917 to April 1918, and scholars agree that the six-month experience was instrumental to his development as a writer. Regarding the Star’s lasting influence on Hemingway, Fenton suggests: “Language and words could never from this point on be lightly regarded. The effort would always be toward authenticity, precision, immediacy” (32). Indeed, perhaps the most significant lesson that Hemingway learned at the Star was an appreciation for succinct writing. It was a lesson the paper’s editors constantly emphasized to young writers. These editors “took pride in hiring young men without experience and bending them to the Star way” (Weber 11). Editors worked closely with new reporters, helping them to master the techniques of good writing.
To assist young cub reporters like Hemingway, the Kansas City Star’s founder and first editor, William Rockhill Nelson, drafted a collection of strict guidelines for “writing vigorous journalistic English” (Lynn 68). Composed of one hundred and ten rules for good writing, this style sheet provided a stylistic foundation for the newspaper, and it was assistant city editor C. G. Pete Wellington’s job to make sure that this foundation was maintained. As Fenton states, “American journalism was just emerging from a period of heavy, turgid prose. Like the Star rules, Wellington’s careful, frugal use of adjectives, in which the fresh and evocative was always sought, was evidence of the Star’s creative attitude toward prose” (33). Very quickly, the Kansas City Star environment provided a wake-up call to Hemingway. Fenton explains: “The inevitable verbosity he had brought from high school theme-writing, despite the efforts of Miss Dixon and Miss Biggs, as well as the prose vices of premature independence in Trapeze reporting, could not survive in such an atmosphere” (31). The Kansas City Star newsroom required Hemingway’s writing to be informative and gripping but also sharp and concise.

The style sheet’s first rule gives lessons for clear, straightforward writing: “Use short sentences. Use short first paragraphs. Use vigorous English. Be positive, not negative” (Star Copy). Here, we begin to see that Hemingway’s early work in journalism greatly influenced his creative writing style, one epitomized by short sentences, short paragraphs, and vigorous language. Hemingway acknowledged this influence; later in his life, he reflected upon the importance of Wellington’s instruction and the comprehensiveness of the Star’s style sheet. In 1940, he stated to an interviewer: “I can never say properly how grateful I am to have worked under him…Those were the best rules I ever learned for the business of writing…No man with any talent, who feels and writes truly about the thing he is trying to say, can fail to write well if

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4 See Appendix II
he abides by them” (Lynn 68). Coming from Hemingway, who believed that writing truly is an author’s primary task and struggle, this is a major testament to the value of the style sheet.

Though there is particular significance in the style sheet’s opening lines—lines which Fenton argues “might well stand as the First Commandment in the prose creed which is today synonymous with the surface characteristics of Hemingway’s work” (30)—the entire collection should not be overlooked. Rules of particular interest to the young Hemingway might have been the ninth: “Eliminate every superfluous word,” the twenty-first: “Avoid the use of adjectives, especially such extravagant ones as splendid, gorgeous, grand, magnificent, etc.,” and the ninety-third: “Avoid using that too frequently, but govern use largely by euphony and strive for smoothness.” All three rules remind readers familiar with Hemingway’s fiction of the deliberateness with which he wrote every sentence. From his careful use of repetition to his dedication to writing supremely true sentences, Hemingway was very intentional in his writing, and he was consciously aware of the effect each word provided.

Additionally, the Kansas City Star provided Hemingway with daily opportunities to develop his skill of writing dialogue. Rule sixty-four of the style sheet states: “Try to preserve the atmosphere of the speech in your quotation. For instance, in quoting a child, do not let him say ‘Inadvertently, I picked up the stone and threw it.’” The rule calls for careful attention to be placed on the “atmosphere”—the aura or undercurrent of a person’s dialogue—so that reporters can recreate and craft speech convincingly in print. This advice helped Hemingway to think seriously about the conversations he had as a reporter. It was a reminder to preserve the original nature of dialogue.
The rule must also have been important given the fact that Hemingway’s assignments covered a wide range of city areas and required talking to people from many different backgrounds:

At the police station he covered reports of small crimes. At the railroad station he checked on the activities of various shady characters of his acquaintance and interviewed celebrities who were passing through. At the hospital he spoke to the victims of accidents and crimes of violence. (Lynn 68-69)

Interviewing people across the city exposed Hemingway to various accents, idioms, and ways of speech. At a prime age in his development as a writer, the *Star* presented Hemingway with opportunities to further develop his listening skills, his keen ear for memory, and his ability to put dialogue on paper.

When analyzing the context of Hemingway’s *Kansas City Star* experiences, we should also note the role that the paper played in helping Hemingway to learn to find stories:

As a cub reporter on the *Kansas City Star*, he learned that the surface of things could be misleading. Beneath the veneer of city politics, he saw graft and corruption. Beneath the jaunty confidence of the tank captain, he sensed the hidden fears of a man shipping out to war. He studied the cool exteriors of emergency room doctors and police captains, men accustomed to violence, wearing cynicism like armour to shield whatever vulnerabilities remained. The world, he learned, was made up of professionals and amateurs who did not fully understand the rules. He knew which side he wanted to be on. Professionals were experts who knew the precise details that gave them credence. He worked at learning details… In Kansas City he learned what it was about a person that caught a reporter’s attention. (Reynolds 17)

With this in mind, Hemingway’s position on the *Kansas City Star* might have been much better suited for him than any university journalism program. As an energetic eighteen-year-old eager to head into the world, there could not have been a better fit for Hemingway than the *Star*’s cub reporter position. Under the guidance of Wellington, Hemingway began his professional writing career in a supportive environment that had an “atmosphere of diligent and thoughtful professionalism” (Fenton 32). The style sheet provided a precise set of rules and expectations
that obliged the young writer to master the art of good, clean writing. Lastly, the task of heading into the city to find stories provided Hemingway with the drive to become an expert who searches for a narrative’s interesting details.

At the *Kansas City Star*, reporters were assigned certain areas or landmarks to cover each day. Hemingway’s assignments included speaking with the city’s undertakers and visiting hospitals and the city’s Union Station. At each location, his task was to discover whether or not there was a story from that day worth reporting. Perhaps an unavoidable consequence of these assignments, most of the eleven *Star* articles now attributed to Hemingway present Kansas City as a dark and disheveled town. Daily visits with undertakers, hospital workers, and train station workers provided Hemingway with a saddened portrait of everyday life. The subjects in his Kansas City articles demonstrate the small town’s listlessness, its defeat and despair.

Published for the *Star* on January 20, 1918, “At the End of the Ambulance Run” is a collection of vignettes about the late-night events at one of Kansas City’s hospitals. From the beginning, Hemingway highlights the eeriness and dejection of the scene: “The night ambulance attendants shuffled down the long, dark corridors at the General Hospital with an inert burden on the stretcher” (*Cub* 27). Hemingway’s language points specifically to the lethargy of the workers’ routines. We can visualize the attendants dragging their tired bodies down these “long, dark corridors,” frustrated at the man on the stretcher for crushing their hopes for a quiet night.

Hemingway continues:

They turned in at the receiving ward and lifted the unconscious man to the operating table. His hands were calloused and he was unkempt and ragged, a victim of a street brawl near the city market. No one knew who he was, but a receipt, bearing the name of George Anderson, for $10 paid on a home out in a little Nebraska town served to identify him. (*Cub* 27-28)
Here, Hemingway’s descriptions of the roughened body call particular attention to the city’s brutality. The young cub reporter might have simply mentioned that a man was involved in a physical flight. Instead, Hemingway describes the pocket contents of the patient and uses terms to illustrate the condition of his “unkempt and ragged” body. This concern for detail suggests Hemingway’s eagerness to paint a disturbing portrait of his subject. Moreover, the incomplete identification of “George Anderson” adds to the richness of Hemingway’s description. Hemingway offers small facts—the precise amount listed on a receipt and the location of the man’s purchase—to provide an element of clarity to the semi-ambiguous subject.

Toward the end of the article, we discover what happened to the patient:

“George” merely lifted a hand as though groping for something. Attendants hurriedly caught hold of him to keep him from rolling from the table. But he scratched his face in a tired, resigned way that seemed almost ridiculous, and placed his hand again at his side. Four hours later he died. (Cub 28)

Most striking here is Hemingway’s ability to give color to the narrative. In an era when newspapers had none of the widespread, detailed photographs with which readers of the twenty-first century are familiar, reporters of the early 1900s were challenged to make their stories visual and descriptive. By referring to the specific ways in which “George” lifts and resigns his hand, Hemingway brings to life the actions of the dying patient. These aspects of the narration reveal Hemingway’s early storytelling skills and clarify his natural progression from journalism to fiction.

The sorrow of Kansas City is represented in the following section of “At the End of the Ambulance Run.” Hemingway states:

It was merely one of the many cases that come to the city dispensary from night to night—and from day to day for that matter; but the night shift, perhaps, has a wider range of the life and death tragedy—and even comedy, of the city. When “George” comes in on the soiled, bloody stretcher and the rags are stripped off and his naked, broken body lies on the white table in the glare of the surgeon’s light, and he dangles
on a little thread of life, while the physicians struggle grimly, it is all in the night’s work, whether the thread snaps or whether it holds so that George can fight on and work and play. (Cub 28)

This passage dramatizes Hemingway’s vision of the city’s almost lifeless routine. By adding small interjections such as “and from day to day for that matter” and “and even comedy,” Hemingway paints a fuller portrait of Kansas City, one that highlights its distresses but also showcases its beauty. His subtle descriptions about the city are chillingly similar to those about George. Hemingway’s Kansas City is a place dangling “on a little thread of life,” and just as the “glare of the surgeon’s light” shines on the “naked, broken body,” so too is Hemingway casting his own glare of a reporter’s analysis onto the city.

Hemingway continues “At the End of the Ambulance Run” by offering a look into the poignancy of Kansas City:

At one time a man from out in Kansas, a fairly liable and respectable sort of man, to look at him, went on a little debauch when he came to Kansas City. It was just a little incident that the folks in the home town would never learn about. The ambulance brought him from a wine room, dead from a stroke of heart disease. At another time (it happens quite often) a young girl took poison. The physicians who saved her life seldom speak of the case. If she had died her story might have been told—but she has to live. (Cub 32)

Hemingway accentuates life’s constant coincidence and unpredictability. These themes add to his portrayal of Kansas City, providing a deep sense of honesty and reality. By stating, “It was just a little incident that the folks in the home town would never learn about,” Hemingway sheds light on the fact that however unimportant, so often there are unseen events of a town. He proceeds with this exposure, implying an apathetic routine that consumes life in Kansas City.

And so the work goes on. For one man it means a clean bed and prescriptions with whisky in it, possibly, and for another, it is a place in the potters’ field. The skill of the surgeon is exercised just the same, no matter what the cause of the injury or the deserts of the patient. (Cub 32-33)
Like a surgeon’s work, the work of a reporter “goes on,” and it is Hemingway’s job to “exercise” skill “just the same, no matter what the cause of the injury” is to the city or its subjects.

While “At the End of the Ambulance Run” highlights the sorrowful nature of Kansas City, “Battle of Raid Squads” and “Throng at Smallpox Case” each project the city’s disorder. Published for the Star in January and February of 1918, the articles cover Kansas City’s proneness to major logistical flaws. In “Battle of Raid Squads,” we read about two couples of detectives, each sent to raid the same house and who each end up shooting at the other. Like any reporter, Hemingway searches for a story within the story. In the article, he reports: “While on the surface the shooting of the two government officers appeared to be a case of mistaken identity, elements of a mysterious nature which Francis M. Wilson, United States district attorney, refused to make public, crept into the case last night” (Cub 22). More significant about the article, however, is Hemingway’s ability to describe the scene. Again, we should remember that while consumers of news today are accustomed to collections of photographs that accompany reports, Hemingway and his newspaper contemporaries relied primarily on words to tell their stories.

Toward the end of the article, Hemingway states:

Conrad and Kritzer found a sack containing a quantity of heroin, morphine, opium and two complete “hop smoking” outfits hidden in the house. Conrad says he was talking to Rose Fuqua in the front of the room of the 5-room frame house when he heard a knock on the door. A man entered. The woman said, “Hello, Jack, how are you?” (Cub 25)

By noting that there were “two complete ‘hop smoking’ outfits,” and including the small detail hidden in the description of the “5-room house,” Hemingway begins to add clues to his article that might help readers to possess better visual pictures of the scene. With this technique,
Hemingway makes his reporting more immediate and accessible. He pinpoints the otherwise unnoticed details of a setting and adds specificity in description, implication, and tone.

In “Throng at Smallpox Case,” Hemingway reports on a sick patient at the train station and, more significantly, on Kansas City’s inability to help. The article begins:

While the chauffeur and male nurse on the city ambulance devoted to the carrying of smallpox cases drove from the General Hospital to the municipal garage on the North Side today to have engine trouble “fixed” a man, his face and hands covered with smallpox pustules, lay in one of the entrances to the Union Station. One hour and fifteen minutes after having been given the call the chauffeur and nurse reported at the hospital with the man…The ambulance had been repaired. Behind that vehicle was an ambulance from the Emergency Hospital, ordered to get the patient by Dr. James Tyree…after repeated calls from the station. (Cub 34)

While the opening sentence demonstrates the young Hemingway’s occasional lack of clarity and brevity, it does get across the sense of a sorry, failed attempt. Hemingway uses sarcastic quotation marks when describing the reason for which the chauffeur and nurse were running late; he implies that to the ambulance drivers, fixing the vehicle was a more immediate need than finding a way to rescue the sick man. Moreover, Hemingway’s specific language choices stress the failed nature of the story; the chauffeur and nurse are not merely assigned to smallpox cases but rather “devoted” to them. Similarly, Hemingway mentions that there had been “repeated” calls from the station. He makes very clear that there were efforts to help the sick man, but these efforts were not immediately successful.

Adding to the complexity of the confusion, Hemingway writes about the sick man:

Brewer, a life insurance agent, arrived from Cherryvale, Kas., this morning. At 9 o’clock James McManus, officer in charge of the police station at the depot, found him lying in the west entrance to the lobby. Streams of persons, hurrying past, eddied about Brewer while solicitous passerby asked the trouble. At 9:50 McManus placed a policeman near the sick man to keep persons away…McManus says he called the contagious department of the hospital immediately after finding Brewer. An ambulance was promised. Two calls were sent the hospital later and each time, so McManus says, he was told the ambulance was on the way. (Cub 34-35)
Once more, Hemingway highlights the failure of life in Kansas City. The ambulance was "promised" rather than "dispatched" or "sent"; each time, McManus was "told" the ambulance was on the way, not "each time, the ambulance was sent on the way." We can assume that Hemingway viewed Kansas City the way his journalism depicted it: disheveled, downcast, and not totally put together. Community residents and professionals all attempt to make Kansas City functional but perhaps not always with the right efforts. In Hemingway’s reportage for the Star, he might have subconsciously conveyed his own possible sentiments toward the city. Coming from the strict, efficient, and thoroughly well structured Oak Park, Hemingway surely must have found Kansas City to be a wild, bedraggled town.

In the spring of 1918, Hemingway left Kansas City to join American war efforts in Italy. Some scholars might argue that Hemingway’s desire to be in the center of action was the leading drive behind his move, yet his growing dissatisfaction with the Kansas City Star should not be overlooked. In a letter dated April 16, 1918, Hemingway wrote to his father:

This is what makes you mentally fagged. Having to write a half column story with every name, address and initial verified and remembering to use good style, perfect style in fact, and get all the facts and in the correct order, make it have snap and wallop and write it in fifteen minutes, five sentences at a time to catch an edition as it goes to press. To take a story over the phone and get everything exact see it all in your minds eye, rush over to a typewriter and write it a page at a time while ten other typewriters are going and the boss is hollering at some one and a boy snatches the pages from your machine as fast as you write them. (Spanier 93)

However frustrated Hemingway might have been, his experiences in the Kansas City Star newsroom were important. By the end of Hemingway’s six-month tenure with the Star, he averaged “over a column a day” (Spanier 90), a significant amount of work for any new reporter of the time. Fenton notes, too, that Hemingway’s “trained reporter’s eye” from Kansas City would “enable him to profit considerably more from his Italian experiences than if, for example, he had been able to enlist directly from high school the previous June” (Fenton 49).
Like Hemingway’s high school writings, these *Kansas City Star* articles possess no great independent value. They were written by a young, emerging reporter still with a great deal to learn about the business of writing. When studied alongside Hemingway’s later fiction, however—specifically, the fiction set in Kansas City—the articles do offer insight into the early stages of his career and show his fluctuating attachment to the city itself. Both “A Pursuit Race” (1927) and “God Rest Thee Merry, Gentlemen” (1933) take place in Kansas City, but in each story the city plays an insignificant role. At each beginning, Hemingway deliberately mentions that the setting is Kansas City, but there is nothing specific about either story that requires its action to occur there.

Unlike the dreary late-night halls of a hospital or crowded areas of a train station represented in the Kansas City journalism, the Kansas City fiction does not portray a lifeless routine at all. For the fiction, Hemingway borrowed more from the action-packed theme of “Battle of Raid Squads”; both “A Pursuit Race” and “God Rest Thee Merry, Gentlemen” tell tales of two highly unusual events. Yet the two stories, one about a drunken man’s interactions with a burlesque show manager and the other about self castration, feature themes that paint the same dark, dejected portrait as those depicted in Hemingway’s earlier Kansas City journalism. In the majority of both this journalism and this fiction, Kansas City, the character, remains eerily the same.

The connection here is Hemingway, the insider. In each Kansas City newspaper article and short story, Hemingway offers readers inside perspectives into action and setting; in “A Pursuit Race,” Hemingway takes us into the hotel room of a burlesque show’s advance man, William Campbell. Hemingway presents Campbell intimately: his is in a sloppy drunken state and reveals his crumbling business relation with the show’s manager. “God Rest Thee Merry,
“Gentlemen” also represents an exclusive look into action. Hemingway leads us into a hospital where we hear a Dr. Fischer and a Dr. Wilcox explain to an unnamed narrator the quite unusual events of the previous day.

Most surprising, then, is Hemingway’s depiction of Kansas City in “Soldier’s Home” (1925), a short story about a young man, Harold, nicknamed Krebs. The story presents a different picture of the city than anything with which Hemingway’s readers might already be familiar. After returning from war, Krebs rejoins his family at their home in Oklahoma. When he asks his little sister for the newspaper, he is presented with the Kansas City Star: “He folded The Star open and propped it against the water pitcher with his cereal dish to steady it, so he could read while he ate” (Collected 90). Immediately, we hear from Krebs’s mother: “…please don’t muss up the paper. Your father can’t read his Star if it’s been mussed’” (Collected 90).

Hemingway makes a deliberate statement about Kansas City. Regardless of whether or not Kansas City is the Oklahoma family’s closest metropolis, the Star is their primary source of information. We can assume that its news coverage is important to the family and that it provides a reliable and thorough report of the topics that interest them.

More importantly, we later learn that Krebs views Kansas City as a potential safe haven, a place that might offer him freedom and opportunity while allowing his parents to feel reassured. At the end of the story, Hemingway writes about Krebs: “He had felt sorry for his mother and she had made him lie. He would go to Kansas City and get a job and she would feel all right about it” (Collected 93). This description—one that promotes the city as a parent-approved destination for young sons—provides an interesting glimpse into Hemingway’s own relation with the city. Constant communication and family nearby allowed Ernest’s parents to feel at ease. They knew that he was keeping safe and busy in Kansas City. But however many
social outings and work opportunities Hemingway had there, and however critical his learning experience at the Star proved to be, Hemingway must have left the city with a deep and not altogether positive impression. Hemingway’s Kansas City writing, both the articles written in the city and the short stories written about it much later, reveals a city caught in its own failed efforts and unable to escape its unchanging routine.
Chapter II

*Life on the Star: Toronto and Abroad*

In the spring of 1918, Hemingway was at last able to fulfill his dream of joining the American war efforts abroad. After signing up through the Red Cross, passing the required medical exams, and receiving his new U.S. Army officer’s uniform complete with “full insignia, leather aviation puttees, and officer’s shoes” (Lynn 73), Hemingway departed for Italy. He was stationed in Fossalta di Piave and began work as an ambulance driver. Quickly, though, Hemingway began to see his job as tedious and uninteresting, and he looked for ways to make the work more thrilling.

On July 8th, Hemingway bicycled to the west bank of the village where the front line stood. He was delivering chocolates to the soldiers when a trench mortar shell exploded, nearly taking his life. Hemingway’s injuries were severe, and he was sent to an American hospital in Milan. There, he met a twenty-six-year-old nurse named Agnes von Kurowsky. Hemingway remained in the hospital for the rest of the year, healing his wounds and falling deeply in love with Agnes.

When Hemingway returned to the United States from Italy in January 1919, his childhood home felt narrow and limiting. After surviving a war, a life-threatening injury, and a first true love, he had outgrown the Illinois neighborhood in which he grew up. In pursuit of a new setting and an opportunity to focus on his writing, Hemingway escaped Oak Park by heading to Petoskey, Michigan. Charles Fenton notes: Hemingway stayed in Michigan “a long time, fishing, writing, reading” (Fenton 72). Kenneth Lynn adds that Hemingway spent his Michigan months writing “from early in the morning until close to midday” (Lynn 113).

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5 See Appendix III
Hemingway’s time spent in northern Michigan inspired the settings for a number of his later short stories, but this inspiration was only one of Petoskey’s contributions to the writer’s career. Along with the rejuvenation provided by the quiet outdoor setting, it was in Michigan that Hemingway took his next step into the literary world.

At the beginning of his time in Petoskey, the young Ernest formed a friendship with the older Ralph Connable, a longtime “friend of the Hemingway family” (Fenton 74). As Lynn explains, the situation began with Connable’s wife, Harriet Gridley Connable. On a temporary visit to the area, Mrs. Connable attended a lecture organized by the local Ladies’ Aid Society. The valiant Hemingway’s mesmerizing account of being a young American in wartime Italy captured Mrs. Connable’s attention. Lynn states:

Afterwards, a distinguished-looking, white-haired woman came up to speak to him… The Connables lived in Toronto, but would be going off to Palm Beach sometime in January with their twenty-six-year-old daughter Dorothy. Would Hemingway, she wanted to know, be willing to live in their house during their absence and look after Ralph, Jr.? (113)

At the time searching for a way to avoid returning to Oak Park, Hemingway was quick to accept the offer. Within weeks, he was living at the Connable’s house in Toronto.

Hemingway’s position was ideal. Ralph, Jr. was old enough to entertain and care for himself, and it seemed that the Connable’s only motivation in hiring Ernest was that the young Ralph had a physical disability that prevented him from leaving the house on his own. On nights when Ralph, Jr. wanted to attend “plays, concerts, boxing matches, or hockey games” (Lynn 113), Hemingway would be a chauffeur and chaperone. For all of the remaining hours, though, Hemingway was free to spend his time as he pleased.

Lynn continues the story: “On learning that Hemingway had literary ambitions, [Connable] took him downtown and introduced him to some of the executives at the Toronto
One such executive was the paper’s feature editor, Gregory Clark, who offered young Ernest the opportunity to write for the “feature-laden Saturday edition called the Star Weekly” (Lynn 114). Lynn concludes: “All told, the Weekly bought twenty-six pieces from him in 1920, on subjects ranging from how to rent an oil painting to the hazards of accepting free shaves at a local barbers’ college” (114-115).

Lynn’s biographical account, thorough and accurate as it is, does not comment on or explicate the writing that Hemingway submitted to the Toronto Star. Lynn gives no other description of “Circulating Pictures” and “A Free Shave,” the opening two pieces in the extensive Dateline: Toronto: The Complete Toronto Star Dispatches, 1920-1924. Lynn’s comments therefore suggest that though he understands Hemingway’s experiences in journalism to be important, his regard for the collection of articles itself is brief, sketchy, and unformulated at best.

Fenton’s study, however, examines the Toronto journalism in more detail; he looks to Hemingway’s previous newspaper experience in comparison:

The Toronto Star Limited, the organization within which the two papers operated, was as appropriately suitable to Hemingway’s training requirements at this stage as the Kansas City Star had been ideal as a preliminary school. The American and Canadian papers, indeed, were of such diverse natures that had his relationship with them been reversed—had he gone to Toronto in 1917 and to Kansas City in 1920—the entire pattern of his apprenticeship would have been seriously altered and damaged. (Fenton 75)

Next, Fenton describes the different natures of the newsrooms and the different styles of material that Hemingway wrote. This contextual information is important; the culture of the Toronto Star was far different from that of Hemingway’s previous workplace. “In Kansas City,” says Fenton, Hemingway had worked under conscientious editors who took with the greatest seriousness their responsibilities to the profession in general and to young reporters in particular” (75-76). It was
the *Kansas City Star* that provided its staff with the explicit style guide, deliberately instructing young reporters how to construct their sentences. This nurturing editorial structure and environment was nowhere to be found in Toronto.

More importantly, in Toronto, Hemingway was no longer writing for a newspaper that covered solely the events of the town. Rather, the *Star Weekly* sought to give its readers material tailored to their interests. This open-ended approach to journalism was new and welcoming to Hemingway, and it provided him with opportunities to explore a variety of subject matters. Hemingway’s editor at the *Star Weekly*, J. Herbert Cranston, was a lucky match for the up-and-coming reporter, too. Fenton writes: “All Hemingway’s gifts for narrative and for ironic impressionism were encouraged in such surroundings and under such an editor” (77). Though the Toronto newsroom lacked a careful and detailed attention to style, it nevertheless gave to Hemingway a freedom and variety of assignment that proved crucial for the development of his writing.

Like Lynn, Fenton makes reference to “Circulating Pictures” and “A Free Shave,” Hemingway’s first two pieces for the *Star Weekly*. In regard to the former, Fenton notes that the piece “was verification that [Hemingway] could establish himself as a free lance” (82), but, he adds, “No one but a clairvoyant could have foretold from the article that he would ever write any notable fiction; nor, on the other hand, was there anything in it so clumsy or dull that such a prophesy could be outlawed” (82). Fenton’s study of “A Free Shave” is more specific; he highlights the “bait” (82) of Hemingway’s opening lines and the “exaggerated hyperbole” (83) present in the text. He continues: “The story was semi-professional; its tricks and effects indicated his growing facility and confidence” (83). Yet neither Lynn nor Fenton delve much
into this *Toronto Star* journalism. The implication is that the articles are interesting but insignificant.

Both in style and subject matter, we find revealing parallels between Hemingway’s Toronto pieces and his early short stories. As Fenton suggests (94), the article “Plain and Fancy Killings, $400 Up” pairs with one of Hemingway’s most gripping short stories, “The Killers.” Written for the *Star Weekly* in December 1920, Hemingway’s feature piece on Chicago’s underground hit-man community describes the city’s violence in a surprisingly pragmatic way.

Though scholars have noted that Hemingway himself did not write his own headlines (White xxx), the title “Plain and Fancy Killings” is highly appropriate for this article; using a “plain” and declarative voice, Hemingway describes the city’s “fancy” and elaborate system of hired assassination.

Though the article’s hook is shocking, its opening lines demonstrate complete objectivity in reporting: “Gunmen from the United States are being imported to do killings in Ireland. That is an established fact from Associated Press dispatches” (*Dateline* 65). With only these two short sentences, Hemingway seizes the reader’s attention and trust. He reports an unsettling certainty and then uses a verifiable and matter-of-fact tone to cite a well-known source as extra confirmation. The article’s following lines, however, move the piece toward satirical hearsay and subjective voice: “According to underworld gossip in New York and Chicago, every ship that leaves for England carries its one or two of these weasels of death bound for where the hunting is good” (65). Hemingway’s use of the words “underworld,” “weasels of death,” and “hunting” drastically darkens the tone of the article. He abandons the extreme accuracy and neutrality that was established at the start and offers readers an exclusive look into a dangerous world.
Next, Hemingway turns to descriptions of a gunman’s payment. After revealing that the price for a “simple killing, such as a marked policeman…is four hundred dollars” (65), Hemingway writes, “It may seem exorbitant…but the gunman is a specialist and his prices, like those demanded by prizefighters, have advanced” (Dateline 65). Important here is Hemingway’s reference to prizefighting, specifically in its comparison to the world of assassination. Ever since childhood, the world of boxing fascinated Hemingway. He and his friends often “practiced whacking each other with boxing gloves” (Sanford 137), and in high school, Hemingway played on the “lightweight football team” (Lynn 24). Perhaps it was the physicality and brutality inherent in the sport that attracted Hemingway. Boxing was an interest that continued throughout his life, finding its way into much of the author’s creative writing.

Hemingway continues the article with an interview of a thirty-eight year old former gunman. The ex-killer’s language is unconventional and striking: “Some of those birds are sure grabbing off the soft dough in Ireland. It’s mush to pull a job in that country but trust the boys to get theirs” (65). Here, Hemingway again boasts his insider’s knowledge. He showcases a person with whom the average Toronto Star reader would be unlikely to associate. Most important than just an exclusive look inside a gang, though, is this element of language. Like his work in Kansas City, Hemingway’s work for the Toronto Star constantly allowed him to interview many different types of people, introducing the impressionable twenty-some-year-old reporter to new and unfamiliar styles of language. These interactions helped to tune Hemingway’s ear to appreciate the many flavors and nuances of speech. It was training that undoubtedly benefited the author’s later creative work, much of which was regarded highly for its astuteness of dialogue.
Also striking are Hemingway’s harsh remarks about this former gunman. By describing the man as a “retired shuffler off of mortal coils who honors me with his acquaintance” (65), Hemingway’s sarcastic commentary refers to the ex-gunman’s lack of humanity. Borrowing the term “shuffled off this mortal coil” from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Hemingway alludes to the struggles of human life that gunmen seem entirely to disregard. In this section of the article, Hemingway dehumanizes the former gunmen not only by pointing to his loss of human emotions but also by making a bizarre and constant use of parallels to animals. Hemingway builds on the snide “weasels of death” comment with references to the man’s appearance: “…he is about as handsome as a ferret, has fine hands, looks like a jockey a bit overweight” (66). These illustrations dramatize the animalistic traits of the gunman and his profession.

Still, Hemingway’s article maintains an element of respect for its subject. Throughout, he refers to the gunmen’s bravado and good intentions: “…the gunman believes in taking a chance. He believes that if he can make enough of a stake he can settle down and quit the business. But it is hard for him to quit, for there are very few professions outside of prizefighting that pay so well” (65). By referring to money, Hemingway asks readers to consider a gunman’s financial situation, and this defense of gunmen continues later in the article, too. Hemingway writes about the ex-killer: “Now he is a man-about-town and bond salesmen call on him. When I talked with him he kept steering the subject away from gunning” (66). Hemingway might very well have left out this last piece of the interview to make his subject seem less worthy of empathy. Instead, he includes that the gunmen “kept steering” the conversation away from killings, featuring the gunman’s abhorrence of his former profession.

Hemingway relies on repetition—insistence, as his later friend and mentor Gertrude Stein preferred to call it. We see this first in the article when Hemingway recalls his conversation with
the former gunman: “He’s heard that most of the guns were Wops—Dagoes, that is. Most
gunmen were Wops, anyway. A Wop made a good gun” (66). Hemingway repeats both “gun”
and “Wops”—which the Oxford English Dictionary defines as an offensive word for “an Italian
or other southern European”—three times. The insistence of these monosyllabic words highlights
the piercing effect of their meanings. Similarly, Hemingway’s repetitions continue soon after
with a section about the getaway:

In the U.S.A. they nearly always worked out of a motorcar, because that made the
getaway much easier. That was the big thing about doing a job. The getaways.
Anybody can do a job. It’s the getaway that counts. A car made it much easier.
(Dateline 66)

Through the repetition of four key words, Hemingway reiterates that a “getaway” with a “car”
makes the killing “job” much “easier.” Here, it is the insistence of insistence that is noteworthy;
there is a formulaic approach to success in the killer’s field. This section then shows
Hemingway’s translation of that approach in its application to writing. By repeating the
necessary words of a strict procedure, Hemingway reveals “a new means of communicating
emotion” (Lynn 141), reiterating the idea that using a formula can lead to success.

Hemingway ends the piece with this description: “He isn’t a heroic or even dramatic
figure. He just sits hunched over his whiskey glass, worries about how to invest his money, lets
his weasel mind run on and wishes the boys luck” (66). As Fenton observes, these concluding
remarks possess a “poised, confident tone, closer now to the idiom of his early fiction than had
been the sometimes forced, precocious material he had sold Cranston at the beginning of 1920”
(94). At this point, Hemingway’s reader is almost encouraged to sympathize with the gunman-
turned-commoner. The conclusion shows not only the full portrait of a killer’s humanity but also
a suggested “poised, confident tone” of its author.
By this point in his early twenties, Hemingway had known for some time that he wanted to become a creative writer. Though he likely enjoyed the thrill of his newspaper assignments and certainly benefited from the act of writing every day, he consistently referred to journalism as a way to pay the bills (Lynn 173-174). It is interesting then to view Hemingway’s journalism as a workshop for his creative writing. In early articles such as “Plain and Fancy Killings,” we see the first traces of the writer’s creative style beginning to emerge. From a repetition of words to vigorous dialect and dialogue, Hemingway makes use of and experiments with the basic techniques that he later implements in his short stories and novels.

In his study of the journalism, Fenton points to details in “Plain and Fancy Killings” that Hemingway employs later in the story “The Killers.” Published in the 1927 collection Men Without Women, the story follows Hemingway’s beloved Nick Adams—a character many believe to be based on the young Ernie himself—as he encounters two gunmen at a diner. At the story’s inception, we see Hemingway’s trademark of repetition. The story begins with Nick Adams sitting at the counter of a diner. Two men enter and sit at the opposite end of the counter. The men fumble with George, presumably the diner owner, and they admit that neither one knows what he wants to eat. Hemingway then says: “Outside it was getting dark. The street-light came on outside the window. The two men at the counter read the menu. From the other end of the counter Nick Adams watched them” (Collected 204). With double uses of both “outside” and “the counter,” Hemingway presents to readers the two locations that deserve extra attention. There is a hidden complexity in this insistence. Hemingway’s intentions are clear and straightforward, yet the underlying simplicity in tone is filled with vagueness and ominousness.

More use of repetition soon follows. After much debate, the two men finally settle on meals to order:
‘I’ll take ham and eggs,’ the man called Al said. He wore a derby hat and a black overcoat buttoned across the chest. His face was small and white and he had tight lips. He wore a silk muffler and gloves.

‘Give me bacon and eggs,’ said the other man. He was about the same size as Al. Their faces were different, but they were dressed like twins. Both wore overcoats too tight for them. They sat leaning forward, their elbows on the counter. (Collected 204)

Here, Hemingway calls attention to three words: overcoat, face, and tight. The repetition of these words—paired with the story’s disturbing title—dramatizes the threatening nature of the plot. The “too tight” black overcoats, a “white face,” and “tight lips” suggest something hidden; one of the men even dons extra accessories that help to conceal his identity. These efforts by the characters to cover their bodies are perhaps Hemingway’s attempt at arousing anxiety in the reader. There is a sense of preoccupation and disguise in the air. Readers are instructed to be attentive to the dusky outside, a setting from where two men enter a restaurant unprepared to order meals. Moreover, the physical descriptions of the men allude to darkness, faintness, and eeriness. Hemingway does not reveal many specific hints in his opening page, but he reiterates important messages and makes clear the suspenseful tone of the story.

As George delivers meals to the counter, he and Nick receive a brief pestering from the two men, Al and Max. Then, Al takes Nick and the cook back to the kitchen where he ties them against the wall. Max interrogates George at the counter, and we finally learn the intentions of these two men: “We’re going to kill a Swede. Do you know a big Swede named Ole Anderson?” (207). George confirms, and then bravely asks about their decision to kill him:

‘What are you going to kill Ole Anderson for? What did he ever do to you?’
‘He never had a chance to do anything to us. He never even seen us.’
‘And he’s only going to see us once,’ Al said from the kitchen.
‘What are you going to kill him for, then?’ George asked.
‘We’re killing him for a friend. Just to oblige a friend, bright boy.’ (Collected 207)
Note here the ruthlessness of the dialogue. Max’s responses seem quick and hostile. In both instances, he reaches a heightened level of viciousness by adding an extra, amplifying phrase after his initial response. The phrases “He never even seen us” and “Just to oblige a friend, bright boy” each intensify already established threats.

Moreover, Hemingway repeats part of his description of the two killers in the middle of the story: “The two of them went out the door. George watched them, through the window, pass under the arc-light and cross the street. In their tight overcoats and derby hats they looked like a vaudeville team” (209). By again alluding to their overcoats, Hemingway uses his repetition technique to guide readers toward a certain dark emotion.

Fenton remarks on the similarities apparent in “Plain and Fancy Killings” and this short story: “The Star Weekly article even included, as would ‘The Killers,’ a juxtaposition of crime and the ring” (Fenton 94). Even though there are not many direct correlations, the analysis can be taken further. Both the newspaper article and the short story contain suspenseful shock factors in their underlying tones and subject matters. Lynn even claims that it was specifically Hemingway’s background in journalism that provided such viciousness and brutality to the story:

Behind “The Killers” lay some obvious influences: Hemingway’s firsthand acquaintance with petty criminals in Kansas City, his close observation of the men entering the back room in the Venice Café and the steady attention he paid in the twenties to journalistic accounts, in European as well as American newspapers, of the blood-drenched careers of Chicago’s hoodlums. (Lynn 112)

Indeed, readers of “The Killers” should not be surprised to discover that it was this same author who wrote “Plain and Fancy Killings.”

As a whole, Hemingway’s collection of Toronto articles is supremely subjective; his work contrasts with today’s natural expectation for objectivity in journalism. His use of first person is reoccurring throughout the Toronto collection. In many of the articles, Hemingway
even calls upon personal experiences and relationships, making reference to his everyday activities, thoughts, and interests. This kind of personal reporting provides readers with an intimate look into the author’s early adulthood. It is a technique that Hemingway continued to use later in his writing career as well. Scholars often point to aspects of the author apparent in Jake Barnes of *The Sun Also Rises*, Frederic Henry of *A Farewell to Arms*, and Robert Jordan of *For Whom The Bell Tolls*.

One such example of this highly personalized writing is found in Hemingway’s written accounts of his lifelong connection to the outdoors. In 1920, he wrote five short pieces about fishing and camping for the *Toronto Star Weekly*: “Trout Fishing,” “Trout-Fishing Hints,” “Camping Out,” “Ted’s Skeeters,” and “The Best Rainbow Trout Fishing.” These articles read as matter-of-fact instruction manuals seemingly intended for the working family men of Toronto. Hemingway’s teenage years were filled with carefree fishing and camping voyages, and there is little surprise in the fact that each article illustrates the young writer’s sense of youthfulness and joy. Additionally, the pieces provide empirical evidence of Hemingway’s refined fishing and camping skills, the same outdoors skills later demonstrated by his short story character, Nick Adams.

The first outdoors piece in the collection is “Trout Fishing,” published in the *Toronto Star Weekly* in April 1920. Hemingway begins: “Spring is only spring to the majority of city dwellers” (*Dateline* 14). He describes the rut in which these business people find themselves: “…in the evening when the office toiler walks home from the car line he has a wordless feeling that things aren’t right. He feels that he wasn’t meant for this, and that somehow if things had gone differently he wouldn’t be doing just this.” Hemingway then contrasts the sentiments of these “city dwellers” with those of nature enthusiasts. He highlights the escape and rejuvenation
found in venturing outside for a weekend. To those who embrace nature, spring has a much
greater depth of significance; it is the best time of the year for trips to the river and afternoons
spent trout fishing.

Quickly, the article develops into a how-to manual for fishers. Hemingway’s instructions
are incredibly precise. First, he discusses the necessary gear: the Hemingway-approved trout
fishing outfit includes “a good steal rod nine and a half feet long,” a “half-dozen three-foot gut
leaders,” “twenty-five yards of excellent bait line,” any reel—as “you don’t need to do any
casting with it”—and a “box of number four Carlisle hooks, one hundred in a box” (14). With
this specific gear, Hemingway claims that an outdoorsman is “equipped for bait fishing on any
type of stream that you have to ‘horse’ the trout out of.” “Horsing,” he explains, “is a technical
term for that free arm motion that causes the trout to suddenly desert the stream he has been born
and raised in and go for a flying trip through the air” (14).

Though the majority of the article is written in this informative style—a style regarded by
Fenton as “basic to all successful journalism” (Fenton 87)—a few lines stand out against the
simple and practical instructions. After a short address on the most promising season for a certain
application of fishing bait, Hemingway states: “Just now he is contributing to the prevailing
unrest of labor owing to a vision of a certain stream that obsesses him” (15). The verbosity of
this sentence is striking; it is very different from phrases written in Hemingway’s typically spare
language. Similarly, the subsequent line is also of interest: “It is clear and wide with a pebbly
bottom and the water is the color of champagne.” By alluding to this “color of champagne,”
Hemingway adds a hint of poetry. Though only a minor addition, it guides readers to consider a
kind of volatile boundary imposed on journalism. Perhaps unknowingly, Hemingway suggests
that his journalism’s distance from creative writing might be narrowing.
These same traces of fiction appear in “Ted’s Skeeters,” where Hemingway tells the story of a camping trip he made with a friend, Ted. Toward the end of the piece, Hemingway describes a scene in which the two young men are trying to survive bite-free after Ted admits to spilling the mosquito repellent:

Just then a warm breeze commenced to blow from the south across the cedar swamp up toward the high ground of our camp and a keen observer could have seen what looked like a cloud of dust coming up from the swamp. Then I began to appreciate mosquitoes.

We built two smudges and sat between them. The mosquitoes stuck around and every once in a while made a dash through the smoke.

Then we built four smudges and sat inside of them. The mosquitoes came in through the cracks in the smoke. We began to feel like smoked hams. I suggested as much to Ted.

“We are,” he said.
Then I started to cheer him up.

“Suppose,” said I, “that mosquitoes were as big as crows? What chance would we have then?” He said nothing.

“Suppose they ate fish? There wouldn’t be a fish in the stream.” He didn’t reply.

“We’ve got a lot to be thankful for,” I said.

“Oh, shut up!” he said in a very unmannerly way. (Dateline 49)

This section begins like a piece of fiction. Hemingway sets the scene with the hint of an impending conflict. By including “Then I began to appreciate mosquitoes,” Hemingway, the reporter, becomes a character in his own story. He calls upon his repetition technique to bring anticipation to the conflict: first, the boys build “two smudges”—an effort unable to prevent the bugs from entering in “through the smoke.” Next they build “four smudges”—again, though, allowing some mosquitoes to come in “through the cracks in the smoke.” This double construction of “smudges,” intended to prevent mosquitoes from sneaking in through “smoke,” adds suspense to the article in the same way that it might to a piece of fiction.

Hemingway’s use of dialogue in this section is also worth noting. The characters’ words seem casual, impromptu, and realistic. Their conversation rings explicitly true, and readers can
easily assume that dialogue similar to this took place in the reporter’s own life. It is this kind of fine-tuned ability to hear, recall, and transpose dialogue that allows Hemingway’s characters—both in his reporting and his fiction—to come to life on the page. Later in his life, Hemingway took special pride in his ability to present dialogue, and in his journalism we see his first efforts to show and develop this skill.

“The Best Rainbow Trout Fishing,” however, does not have the same fictional qualities that can be found in the other camping and fishing pieces. Fenton might have been referring to “The Best Rainbow Trout Fishing” when he wrote that when compared to some of Hemingway’s more satirical pieces of journalism, the fishing and camping articles were “less impressive as prose” (87). Fenton continues: “Perhaps Hemingway was too familiar with the material to erect with care the neat structures and developments of several of his satires” (87). Here, however, Fenton’s observation disregards the fabric of “The Best Rainbow Trout Fishing”; he does not recognize the structure of the piece.

As the title suggests, the article begins by distinguishing the very best settings and circumstances for rainbow trout fishing. Hemingway states that no rainbow trout fishing is better than that available in the “rapids of the Canadian Soo” (*Dateline* 50). He proceeds to describe the area’s fish, their characteristics, and the adventure that comes from trying to catch them. Then, Hemingway narrows in on a certain area of the river, suggesting to the reader that “to get the proper picture you want to imagine in rapid succession the following fade-ins.” He says:

A high pine-covered bluff that rises steep up out of the shadows. A short sand slope down to the river and a quick elbow turn with a little flood wood jammed in the bend and then a pool.

A pool where the moselle-colored water sweeps into a dark swirl and expanse that is blue-brown with depth and fifty feet across.

There is the setting. (*Dateline* 50-51)
Hemingway continues:

The action is supplied by two figures that slog into the picture up the trail along the riverbank with loads on their backs that would tire a packhorse. These loads are pitched over the heads onto the patch of ferns by the edge of the deep pool. That is incorrect. Really the figures lurch a little forward and the tump line loosens and the pack slumps onto the ground. Men don’t pitch loads at the end of an eight-mile hike. (51)

By reporting an imagined situation rather than an actual account, Hemingway fluctuates between the boundaries of journalism and fiction. His writing is poetic and descriptive, yet there is a tight structure that controls the movement of the piece. Fenton’s argument—that Hemingway was “too familiar” with fishing material to create a kind of careful structure—therefore is misleading.

This same structure appears in “Trout-Fishing Hints.” Hemingway describes three different kinds of earthworms and the specific instances in which each should be used as bait:

There are three kinds of earthworms. Two of them are good for trout fishing and the third is absolutely useless. The big night crawlers come out of their holes in the grass in the night, and enough for a good canful can be easily picked up after dark with the aid of a flashlight. They are really too large and thick for trout bait and are much better for bass, but are far better than nothing.

Common angleworms are easy to get in the spring but are sometimes impossible to find in a long dry spell in the summer. They can be dug after a rain and kept alive in a big box full of earth until they are needed. A large quantity of worms can be transported a long way by keeping them in a small tin pail full of moist coffee grounds. Coffee grounds stay moist and keep the worms much better than earth, which dries and does not absorb the water evenly. Too much water will kill the garden hackles as quickly as not enough. Worms kept in coffee grounds will be clean and fresh for fishing.

Pale yellowish worms which are found under manure piles look like angleworms, but are really a distinct species. They have an offensive odor and taste and trout do not like them. (Dateline 23)

Though the author’s humor and personality shine through, the piece lacks any scholarly significance. In language, implication, and content, it is without any underlying sophistication.

Like the other fishing and camping stories, this article is purely informative and instructional.
Fenton notes the straightforwardness but continues his analysis of these articles by addressing the positive aspects of the fishing and camping pieces:

They contained occasional paragraphs of vigor and imagination. They were competent and effective in terms of the medium for which they were designed; it would be unrealistic to belittle the expository and narrative gifts they represented in a twenty-year-old high school graduate. It would be equally unrealistic to aggrandize them. The articles emphasize again the crucial importance of experiences and associations which would occur during the next three years. (Fenton 89-90)

Perhaps, then, what makes the Toronto articles distinctly journalism is their matter-of-factness, their utility, and their bluntness whereas the language in the short stories is carefully colorful. In the journalism, Hemingway writes casually what he knows to be true about the crafts of fishing and camping; in the fiction, he uses very intentional language to illustrate the stories of a well-versed outdoorsman.

These five fishing and camping pieces show significant parallels to “Big Two-Hearted River,” one of Hemingway’s most cherished Nick Adams stories. “Camping Out,” published for the Star Weekly in June 1920, offers insight into the first section of “Big Two-Hearted River.”

Both pieces address the task of finding a spot to set up camp for a night. From the journalism:

Nearly all outdoor writers rhapsodize over the browse bed. It is all right for the man who knows how to make one and has plenty of time. But in a succession of one-night camps on a canoe trip all you need is level ground for your tent floor and you will sleep all right if you have plenty of covers under you. Take twice as much cover as you think that you will need, and then put two-thirds of it under you. You will sleep warm and get your rest.

When it is clear weather you don’t need to pitch your tent if you are only stopping for the night. Drive four stakes at the head of your made-up bed and drape your mosquito bar over that, then you can sleep like a log and laugh at the mosquitoes. (Dateline 45)

From the short story:

Nick dropped his pack and rod-case and looked for a level piece of ground. He was very hungry and he wanted to make his camp before he cooked. Between two jack pines, the ground was quite level. He took the ax out of the pack and chopped out two projecting roots. That leveled a piece of ground large enough to sleep on…
He smoothed the uprooted earth. He did not want anything making lumps under the blankets. When he had the ground smooth, he spread his three blankets. One he folded double, next to the ground. The other two he spread on top…

…Across the open mouth of the tent Nick fixed cheesecloth to keep out mosquitoes. He crawled inside under the mosquito bar with various things from the pack to put at the head of the bed under the slant of the canvas. (Collected 147-148)

Here we see the same three very deliberate actions occurring in both the journalism and the short story. Hemingway first describes the importance of a level sleeping ground, then moves to covers, then mosquito netting. Though there are small discrepancies in some of the specific details, the fundamental instructions from Hemingway’s 1920 camping feature article are exactly those that in 1925, his famous short story character, Nick Adams, follows.

There are, however, major differences in the tones of the two pieces: “Camping Out” is casual and instructional while “Big Two-Hearted River” is quieter and subtler. The journalism is expository; the fiction is narrative. Nick of the fictional story is alone in the woods, his solitude highlighting the tranquility of the setting. Moreover, his outdoors expertise is featured, as he is able to build an ideal setting for his camp. We can imagine Hemingway, the journalist, describing in “Camping Out” the exact process that the fictional Nick Adams undergoes.

Another precise comparison between the article and short story is regarding the culinary skills and techniques of the camper. Hemingway’s pancake instructions in “Camping Out” demonstrate a simple yet specific approach:

With the prepared pancake flours you take a cupful of pancake flour and add a cup of water. Mix the water and flour and as soon as the lumps are out it is ready for cooking. Have the skillet hot and keep it well greased. Drop the batter in and as soon as it is done on one side loosen it in the skillet and flip it over. Apple butter, syrup or cinnamon and sugar go well with the cakes. (Dateline 46)

Hemingway’s words arrive straight at the point; nearly each sentence begins with an instructional verb. The article explicitly describes how to make pancakes, staring with a list of initial ingredients and following through to final “apple butter, syrup or cinnamon and sugar”
toppings. Hemingway’s directions verify his expertise—the precise expertise that the fictional Nick Adams also demonstrates in the prose published five years later. Alone in the wilderness, Nick Adams finds himself hungry in the woods and eager for flapjacks:

Rapidly he mixed some buckwheat flour with water and stirred it smooth, one cup of flour, one cup of water… On the smoking skillet he poured smoothly the buckwheat batter. It spread like lava, the grease spitting sharply. Around the edges the buckwheat cake began to firm, then brown, then crisp. The surface was bubbling slowly to porousness. Nick pushed under the browned under surface with a fresh pine chip. He shook the skillet sideways and the cake was loose on the surface. I won’t try and flop it, he thought. He slid the chip of clean wood all the way under the cake, and flopped it over onto its face. It sputtered in the pan. When it was cooked Nick regreased the skillet. He used all the batter. It made another big flapjack and one smaller one. (Collected 154)

Though these pancake instructions are similar to those in the Star article, Nick’s cooking descriptions are far richer. The heightened significance stems from the fact that Hemingway’s words are no longer a simple set of culinary rules but rather a young man’s reality. As readers, we find ourselves in the moment with Nick. There is an urgency to his story. He rushes, knowing that he has to feed his empty stomach before he can start his day: “Nick was excited. He was excited by the early morning and the river. He was really too hurried to eat breakfast, but he knew he must” (Collected 153). The fiction possesses elements of desperateness and solitude that its journalistic companion lacks.

As a creative writer, Hemingway here has the ability to add tension to the story. He can imply and intimate underlying ideas without stating them explicitly. Throughout this scene, we see Nick struggling to control his thoughts and urges. We are not wholly aware of Nick’s immediate past, but we know that he heads to the woods in an attempt to divert and distract himself. This technique of subtlety contrasts starkly with those used in Hemingway’s journalism pieces. The medium of journalism forces its writer to be direct. Hemingway’s duty was to report a clear scene or situation. His journalism does not leave any aspect of a story implicit.
Fenton concludes his study of Hemingway’s fishing and camping newspaper pieces: “He was already following wherever possible the fundamental edict of his creative writing; a man should write only about what he has known” (88). Yet from the Toronto pieces, we discover far more than a mostly subjective portrait of Hemingway’s young character. Hemingway prepared for, and enriched, his fiction through his work as a journalist. Elements of depth, complexity, and mystery compose “Big Two-Hearted River.” It is more than a report of a young man gone fishing and camping—a young man who eats his pancakes in the same way that a young journalist might: “covered with apple butter” (Collected 154). In the fiction, Hemingway transforms the experiences that he describes in his journalism. A study of his fishing and camping newspaper articles allows us fully to appreciate Nick’s fictional situation. Without a knowledge of this journalism, our comprehensive understanding of the creative writing suffers.

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Hemingway spent only a year and a half in Toronto. In the fall of 1920, he relocated to Chicago, though still continuing to write freelance articles for the Toronto Star. It was in Chicago that he met Hadley Richardson. Kind, nurturing, and nine years Ernest’s senior, Hadley became a perfect match for the young reporter. In September 1921, they married in Horton Bay, Michigan. The newlyweds honeymooned briefly at the Hemingway family cottage on Walloon Lake, then returned to Chicago.

By that time, Hemingway had been writing for the Toronto Star for nearly two years. He wanted an exciting change for his new family and convinced John Bone, an editor at the Star, to hire him as the paper’s first European correspondent. Though Hadley’s trust fund would allow the newlyweds to live comfortably overseas, Hemingway was determined to contribute financially to the family. He and Bone came together to agree on the logistics for Hemingway’s
Whenever he was on assignment, he would be paid seventy-five dollars a week, plus expenses, and for every unassigned piece that the paper accepted he would be paid at the rate of a penny a word” (Lynn 147). In December, Ernest and Hadley left Chicago for New York, where they boarded the Leopoldina for Paris.

The Hemingways adjusted easily to their new European life. In a letter to a friend shortly after their arrival, Ernest wrote, “Paris is cold and damp but crowded, jolly and beautiful” (Baker 60). Ernest’s high school background in Latin helped him to master the spoken language of his new home, and he turned to local sports articles to learn the more “colloquial” (Lynn 159) language of the city. Often, Ernest and Hadley made trips to various destinations around Europe. They were frequent hikers and travelers, and in Paris they were almost always social. The couple quickly became regulars at Sylvia Beach’s Shakespeare and Company, a library and bookstore treasured by the expatriate community. They befriended Gertrude Stein and her partner Alice Toklas, and the two couples met often for tea and literary discussion.

Today, readers are quick to associate Ernest Hemingway with Paris. In Woody Allen’s Midnight in Paris, Hemingway is portrayed as a serious and ever-dedicated creative writer—a stereotype brought about by Hemingway’s book about his Paris years, A Moveable Feast, which was written in the final years of the author’s life. Though its posthumous publication is still debated by scholars and surviving Hemingway family members, the memoir does offer insight into the author’s time in Paris. It reveals an older artist’s nostalgia for his younger years.

Hemingway’s journalism written in and about Paris, however, shows his young, everyday European life. He took advantage of his flexible new arrangement with the Star, and this creative independence is represented in the journalism: “He had complete freedom of movement and choice of material and was expected to cultivate a lively, intimate, and subjective approach in his journalism: “He had complete freedom of movement and choice of material and was expected to cultivate a lively, intimate, and subjective approach in his journalism.”
articles (Stephens 10). Hemingway’s creative freedom in journalism led to articles that illustrate the beauty of Paris and that bring the city to life: “There is a magic in the name France. It is a magic like the smell of the sea or the sight of blue hills or of soldiers marching by. It is a very old magic” (Dateline 260). More importantly, though, in the journalism we see a side of the author never revealed to us in his memoir.

“Living on $1,000 a Year in Paris,” Hemingway’s first Paris article for the *Toronto Star Weekly*, offers an introduction to expatriate life abroad. Published on February 4, 1922, Hemingway begins the article casually, providing a quick overview and writing as if it might be a letter to a friend at home: “Paris in the winter is rainy, cold, beautiful and cheap. It is also noisy, jostling, crowded and cheap. It is anything you want—and cheap” (Dateline 88). Hemingway then switches tones. He quickly becomes a more informative reporter, offering details about exchange rates and the differences between the franc, Canadian dollar, and U.S. dollar. Next, Hemingway returns to the more casual writing style and continues these back-and-forth changes in tone for the rest of the article.

Additionally, the piece shows the Hemingway couple’s skills in frugal living. Ernest states that their room at the Rue Jacob costs the couple “twelve francs a day for two” (88) and is “clean, light, well heated, has hot and cold running water and a bathroom on the same floor.” Hemingway mentions the low cost and accessibility of transportation: “After dinner you can go anywhere on the subway for four cents in American money or take a bus to the farthest part of the city for the same amount” (88). Moreover, he writes about two young American women whom he and Hadley met: “We ran into two girls from New York the other day in the Luxembourg Gardens…they had gone to one of the big, highly advertised hotels. Their rooms were costing them sixty francs a day apiece, and other charges in proportion” (89). Hemingway
states that he and Hadley, upon meeting these young women, offered suggestions about cheaper options in the city, and the girls graciously heeded their advice. In the article, Hemingway comes across as a former outsider who adapted quickly and who now considers himself a proud, Parisian local.

Many of Hemingway’s other early Paris articles confirm more of his day-to-day interactions with the French that *A Moveable Feast* never reveals. In another February 1922 article titled “Clemenceau Politically Dead,” Hemingway discusses the French locals and their reactions to their statesman, Georges Clemenceau. Hemingway illustrates the nonchalance of his French neighbors by describing their casual talks in cafés:

> In the cafés the Frenchmen have nothing to gain or lose by the things they say, so they consequently say the things that they believe. Of course if they have been sitting in a café too long they sometimes say even more than they believe. But if you catch a Frenchman when he has been in the café just long enough to come to a boil, and before he has begun to boil over and spill on the stove, you will find out what he really thinks of Clemenceau or anything else. And if you catch enough Frenchmen in different parts of France, you will have the national opinion; the real national opinion, not the shadow of the national opinion that is reflected in elections and newspapers. *(Dateline 94)*

Here, Hemingway discloses to the *Star*’s Canadian readers two key revelations about France. First, he illustrates the frankness of the French, their regular social habits and their unconcerned natures about speaking candidly with neighbors. Secondly, this section in the article reveals insight into Hemingway’s opinion about France’s media. By stating that the “real national opinion” is not “reflected in elections and newspapers,” Hemingway implies that the country’s newspapers are biased. As a still relatively young reporter who developed harsh sentiments against journalism later in his life, Hemingway’s critical commentary here is noteworthy.
Published for the *Star Weekly* on March 11, 1922, the article “Wives Buy Clothes for French Husbands” offers another look into Hemingway’s early Paris years. He begins the piece with a comical explanation of one of France’s more bizarre fashion statements:

> At last the balloon-shaped, narrow-at-the-bottom trousers of the French workman are explained. People have wondered for years why the French workingman wanted to get himself up in the great billowy trousers that were so tight at the cuffs as to hardly be able to pull over his feet. Now it is out. He doesn’t. His wife buys them for him. (*Dateline* 105)

Hemingway continues, explaining the men’s operation to get rid of these trousers:

> Recently at the noon hour in French factories there has been a great trading of clothing by the men. They exchange coats, trousers, hats and shoes. It is a revolt against feminism. For the wife of a French workingman from time immemorial has bought all her husband’s clothes, and now the Frenchman is beginning to protest against it. (105)

A vivid description of the silly affair, Hemingway’s explanation makes known the lighter, more entertaining nature of his life in Paris. His observations in the article reveal a cultural portrait of European life likely unknown to the *Star*’s North American readers.

> “Clemenceau Politically Dead” and “Wives Buy Clothes for French Husbands” each show Hemingway’s comments about the French, but additionally he wrote many articles for the *Toronto Star* about Americans in Paris. As Lynn notes, when Ernest and Hadley arrived in Paris in December 1921, they followed and were joined by a large crowd of fellow expatriates: “From 1920 onward, the transatlantic migration steadily grew from a trickle to a flood, so that by 1927 there were fifteen thousand American residents in Paris alone” (149). Just as Parisian nightlife enraptures Jakes Barnes in *The Sun Also Rises*, so too did it captivate Barnes’s creator. In fact, there are many similarities we can draw between Hemingway and the fictional Jake Barnes. Both Americans wounded in World War I, they each found their ways to Paris where they worked in journalism. But while *The Sun Also Rises* illustrates what might be a semi-autobiographical
portrait of Hemingway, it is unquestionably a work of fiction. *A Moveable Feast* was written three decades after his Paris experiences, and so the vivid descriptions provided in *Toronto Star* journalism become the most reliable source that we can use to decipher Hemingway’s life in the city.

Though Hemingway worked most mornings and afternoons, he certainly found time to enjoy himself in Paris, and topics such as the music and nightlife of the city became highly desired material for the *Star*. Hemingway begins “Wild Night Music of Paris” by uncovering the created magic of the city: “After the cork has popped on the third bottle and the jazz band has brayed the American suit- and cloak-buyer into such a state of exaltation that he begins to sway slightly with the glory of it all, he is liable to remark thickly and profoundly: ‘So this is Paris!’” (*Dateline* 117). His descriptions, however, call more and more attention to this created atmosphere: “It is an artificial and feverish Paris operated at great profit for the entertainment of the buyer and his like who are willing to pay any prices for anything after a few drinks” (117). Hemingway discusses the desires of tourists to see the real Paris, noting that a tourist’s idea of this real Paris might not actually be desirable. After mentioning price scams of alcohol, dance halls, and cab fares, Hemingway admits that every so often, the unfortunate tourist discovers the underground Paris:

> Occasionally the tourist does come in contact with the real nightlife. Walking down the quiet hill along some lonely street in a champagne haze about two o’clock in the morning, he sees a pair of hard-faced kids come out of an alley. They are nothing like the sleek people he has just left. The two kids look around down the street to see if there is a policeman in sight and then close in on the night-walking tourist. Their closing in and a sudden dreadful jar are all that he remembers. (118)

These descriptions might have been surprising to Toronto readers, but Hemingway writes in such a way that he reassures them of his own street skills. From the perspective of an insider aware of
the city’s money scams and dangerous late-night alleys, Hemingway wins the confidence and esteem of his readers.

From *A Moveable Feast*, readers today might expect that Hemingway fit in well with other Parisian expatriates of his time, but the article “American Bohemians in Paris” suggests otherwise. Published for the *Star Weekly* in March 1922, the article begins harshly and Hemingway’s opinions are directly at the forefront:

The scum of Greenwich Village, New York, has been skimmed off and deposited in large ladles on that section of Paris adjacent to the Café Rotonde. New scum, of course, has risen to take the place of the old, but the oldest scum, the thickest scum and the scummiest scum has come across the ocean, somehow, and with its afternoon and evening levees has made the Rotonde the leading Latin Quarter showplace for tourists in search of atmosphere. *(Dateline 114)*

As the article unfolds, his observations get more astute and unkind:

It is a strange-acting and strange-looking breed that crowd the tables of the Café Rotonde. They have all striven so hard for a careless individuality of clothing that they have achieved a soft of uniformity of eccentricity. A first look into the smoky, high-ceilinged, table-crammed interior of the Rotonde gives you the same feeling that hits you as you step into the birdhouse at the zoo. *(114)*

In these sections, Hemingway provides readers with a comical, albeit judgmental, surface image of American “bohemians” living in Paris, but there is also an element of complexity to this. As an American reporter for a Canadian newspaper, Hemingway is technically an outsider in Paris. His vicious appraisal of these American bohemians is interesting, then, as it is directly targeted at the act of an outsider attempting to fit in.

Hemingway moves forward in the article by countering this parallel, distinguishing himself from the crowd previously mentioned: “You can find anything you are looking for at the Rotonde—except serious artists…The artists of Paris who are turning out creditable work resent and loathe the Rotonde crowd” *(115)*. These defenses, along with similar lines in an article called “The Mecca of Fakers,” reveal Hemingway’s confidence in his own artistic talent. By 1922, he
had already begun working on his first collection of creative writing, *Three Stories and Ten Poems*. Indeed, though Hemingway’s career in journalism provided a stable source of income, in Paris he became far more invested in creative writing projects. His identity of himself as a journalist weakened in Paris. His writing interests and strengths naturally progressed toward creative writing, and for the first time in his professional life, he was financially able to follow these passions. It was, however, a distinct move away from journalism on Hemingway’s part. As he grew more serious about fiction writing, he became more critical about the art of journalism.

Occasionally, this criticism came across in his work for the *Star*. Published in March 1922, an article titled “Papal Poll: Behind the Scenes” tells the story of Hemingway’s weekly discussions with fellow expatriate journalists. The article begins promisingly, alluding to the skills of the reporters. Quickly, though, it becomes nuanced with criticism:

> Once a week Anglo-American newspaper correspondents resident in Paris meet to talk shop. If the world could have a Dictaphone in the room it would have such a backstage view of European politicians, conferences, coronations and world affairs that it would spin very fast for quite a time from the shock.

> All week the correspondents have been mailing or cabling dispatches giving the news as they say it as trained professional observers. For a couple of hours each Wednesday they talk it over as they saw it as human beings watching human beings instead of newspapermen with diplomas. *(Dateline 99)*

Here, Hemingway’s words are charged with hidden meaning. He writes that when the reporters come together as a group of companions rather than of colleagues, their dialogue changes: as “human beings” watch other “human beings,” they discover a truer view of the world. Moreover, Hemingway’s mention of diplomas is striking. His fellow North American reporters were likely a crowd of college graduates. As we recall, Hemingway never received a college degree. He chose instead to head straight from high school to the newspaper room in Kansas City. Perhaps then, by highlighting the fact that journalists reveled in this work break, one that provided them the opportunity to view the world as “human beings” rather than as “newspapermen,”
Hemingway began to feel that journalism was not as validating and verifiable as he had once believed.

Furthermore, during Hemingway’s years as foreign correspondent for the *Toronto Star*, weak reporting and ethical dilemmas damaged his journalistic success. Later in the spring of 1922, the *Star* sent Hemingway to Genoa for an International Economic Conference. As Kenneth Lynn states, Hemingway’s writing faltered there:

Hemingway’s reporting from Genoa was inadequate. Unversed in economics to begin with, he made next to no effort to understand the significance of the proceedings, contending himself instead with dashing off dramatic accounts of rhetorical clashes between rival delegations and vivid descriptions of various people who caught his eye. (174)

Lynn’s comment holds a great deal of truth; Hemingway’s Genoa articles offer little analysis. Published on April 10, 1922, the two-paragraph “Canada’s Recognition of Russia” demonstrates laziness in reportage. The final paragraph contains only two short phrases: “Canada will act as a unit with the Empire delegation, Sir Charles said. This makes his statement extremely significant” (*Dateline* 126). In another Genoa piece, “Tchitcherin Speaks at Genoa Conference,” Hemingway concludes a short summary of a politician’s statements by reporting that “the telephone service is horrible and the Soviets are dissatisfied with their quarters so distant from Genoa” (*Dateline* 127).

Regarding ethical dilemmas, Hemingway ran into a bit of trouble with the *Toronto Star*. In October 1922, the *Star* sent him to Constantinople, where he was to cover the recent events of the Greco-Turkish War. While still in Paris, Hearst International News Service also contacted Hemingway about receiving his Constantinople reports. Hemingway accepted Hearst’s offer, fully aware that it was violating his terms with Bone at the *Star*. Once in Constantinople,
Hemingway believed that the Star’s Toronto office would not follow the matter closely, and he sent duplicate copies of his reports to the Star and to Hearst. Lynn explains:

Back in Toronto, Bone noticed that the stories coming over the INS wire were virtually identical to those he was receiving from the Star’s own correspondent. He cabled this suspicions to Constantinople. Hemingway ultimately managed to squirm out of trouble, but his relations with the Star were never quite the same again. (181)

Later that year while reporting on a Peace Conference in Lausanne, Switzerland, Hemingway lost more of his journalistic credibility: “Not only did he continue to send reports to INS—being careful this time to avoid duplications of phrasing, so that Toronto wouldn’t know what he was doing—but he entered into a clandestine arrangement with Universal News Services as well” (Lynn 184).

Ernest and Hadley returned briefly to Toronto during Hemingway’s tenure as a foreign correspondent. In September 1923, Hadley insisted that the couple leave Paris; she was very soon expecting a baby and wanted to give birth in the comfort of North America. Ernest worked temporarily from the Toronto office, finding himself in another round of trouble with the Star’s editors. Lynn explains:

At the Star, he expected to be assigned strictly to local stories, so that he would be able to take Hadley to the hospital when she went into labor. Unfortunately, the sadistic city editor, Harry Hindmarsh, under whom he now was working, felt that Hemingway was a cocky, duplicitous young man who needed a few lessons in humility. No sooner did he show up at the office than Hindmarsh ordered him to cover a story in Kingston, Ontario. (219)

At this point in his career, Hemingway seemed to search for shortcuts in his work, and journalism became very much of a tedious day job to him. John Hadley Nicanor Hemingway—nicknamed Bumby—was born in October, and Ernest’s first collection of creative writing, Three Stories and Ten Poems was soon published. The new parents moved back to Paris with their
wide-eyed, young companion in tow, and Hemingway’s last piece for the Toronto Star was published on January 19, 1924.

It is important to revisit the topic of Hemingway’s Paris journalism from the perspective that he had thirty years later. In A Moveable Feast, Hemingway writes very little about his time on the Star. His references to journalism are short, unclear, and infrequent. When he does mention the newspaper, his words are vague and laden with a sense of long-lost indifference. Hemingway recalls journalism as a task done solely for money. He does write about quitting journalism but never extensively about working as a foreign correspondent or his journalism itself.

The first reference to the Star appears early in the memoir: “I had written journalism for Toronto and the checks for that were due. I could write that anywhere under any circumstances” (Moveable 7). Here, Hemingway highlights the flexibility provided to him by the Star, but his regard for the paper seems as if it was more a hobby than a full-time job. Later, Hemingway tells about his passion for watching horse races, explaining that it was the Star that provided the funding to make his attendance possible: “Some money had come from the Toronto paper that I did newspaper work for and we wanted a long shot it we could find one” (50). Hemingway states that in Paris he was “making good money then at journalism…” (74).

When Hemingway discusses leaving the Star and transitioning full time to creative writing, his words become more revealing. He writes of the sorrow experienced “when you had given up journalism and were writing nothing that anyone in America would buy…” (Moveable 69). To Sylvia Beach, he explains his trouble selling creative stories: “I can write them. But nobody will buy them. There is no money coming in since I quit journalism” (71). Soon after, Hemingway had a sort of panic attack, cursing at himself for the failure he thought he became:
“You God damn complainer. You dirty phony saint and martyr, I said to myself. You quit journalism of your own accord” (72).

* A Moveable Feast * recalls primarily poignant memories, and in it Hemingway writes that he quit journalism out of a desire to focus on his creative writing and with a firm belief that he would become a literary success. In letters to friends, Hemingway wrote that the newspaper business was ruining him. He just “didn’t really want to be a newspaperman anymore,” Lynn writes. “He was appalled at how much of his time it took” (Lynn 173). Gertrude Stein discouraged Hemingway from continuing in journalism, warning that if he kept writing for newspapers, he “would never see things” (Lynn 197), that he would “only see words.” Of course, eventually—and indeed not long after he left the *Star*—Hemingway’s creative writing career took off and he became one of the most successful writers of the twentieth century.

For all of its revealed clarity, *A Moveable Feast* does contain a noteworthy ambiguity. In the memoir, Hemingway writes extensively about his work but rarely clarifies whether he is referring to journalism or creative writing. “I would have to work hard tomorrow. Work could cure almost anything, I believed then, and I believe now” (21). Here, we are led to believe that Hemingway must be alluding to fiction writing, as he was unlikely to think that writing newspaper pieces could “cure anything.” Though Hemingway leaves us without complete transparency, context provides clues that help us to determine the writing style to which the author refers.

Indeed, Hemingway’s contradictions with journalism become clear in *A Moveable Feast*. When recalling his creative writing process, Hemingway states: “I had learned already never to empty the well of my writing, but always to stop when there was still something there in the deep part of the well, and let it refill at night from the springs that fed it” (*Moveable* 26). With
journalism, Hemingway could not adhere to this approach; a journalist rarely knows the next
day’s news. Hemingway’s fiction stories were planned and methodical whereas the journalism
required a writing style that gave importance to keen eyes, quick writing skills, and ease with
both unpredictability and ephemerality.

A passage in *A Moveable Feast* sheds a concluding light on Hemingway’s beliefs about
the difference between journalism and creative writing:

In Toronto, before we had ever come to Paris, I had been told Katherine Mansfield
was a good short-story writer, even a great short-story writing, but trying to read her
after Chekov was like hearing the carefully artificial tales of a young old-maid
compared to those of an articulate and knowing physician who was a good and simple
writer. Mansfield was like near-beer. It was better to drink water. But Chekov was not
water except for the clarity. There were some stories that seemed to be only
journalism. But there were wonderful ones too. (133)

Here, Hemingway makes clear his regard for the newspaper world. By writing that there were
“some stories that seemed to be only journalism,” Hemingway explains that journalists simply do
not have the potential to reach the full extent of depth and artistry that is achievable by creative
writers. As such, scholars tend to disregard the importance of Hemingway’s journalism. When
considering the whole span of the author’s career, his years spent in journalism seem minor and
inconsequential. As we have seen through a study of the Paris journalism, though, Hemingway’s
newspaper work reveals a new, more intimate comprehension of the author and his work. The
study of Hemingway’s Paris journalism complements *A Moveable Feast*, allowing us to
understand at greater depth the overall significance of Hemingway’s work in Paris.
Conclusion

Though Hemingway arrived in both Kansas City and Toronto eager to thrive in newspaper jobs, journalism work did not always excite him. Later in his life, in fact, Hemingway harbored a deep-rooted animosity toward journalism. When Charles Fenton reached out to Hemingway in 1951, telling the renowned author of his plans to study the early newspaper work, Hemingway cooperated at first. Quickly, however, the relationship became one of rage and disrespect. Hemingway thought it unfair that Fenton—an “amateur FBI operative” (Baker 819), in Ernest’s words—was digging up his early writing. He was convinced that Fenton’s search for his “literary history, or the secret of creative writing” (Baker 805) was an insolent and frivolous waste of time.

Bothersome as the Yale doctoral student’s requests to Hemingway might have been, Fenton was right in continuing his pursuit. He believed that Hemingway’s work experiences in Kansas City and Toronto directly influenced the author’s later creative writing. In a 1952 letter to Fenton, however, Hemingway disputed this claim by proposing an alternative effect:

In newspaper work you have to learn to forget every day what happened the day before. Everything was wonderful to me in Kansas City…but I was working on a newspaper and so I cannot remember as I should. You might note for your book that newspaper work is valuable up until the point that it forcibly begins to destroy your memory. A writer must leave it before that point. But he will always have the scars from it. (Baker 765)

Later in his life, Hemingway offered different reasons for disliking the field of journalism. Hemingway once told the Daily Princetonian, “I hated newspaper work because I was shy and didn’t like to ask people questions about their private lives” (Bruccoli 100). To George Plimpton of the Paris Review, Hemingway said that “journalism, after a point has been reached, can be a daily self-destruction for a serious creative writer” (Bruccoli 116). In 1952 he
wrote, “I know few things worse than for another writer to collect a fellow writer’s journalism which the fellow writer has elected not to preserve because it is worthless and publish it” (Baker 787).

With this quote in the back of my mind, there have been periods working on this project when I have felt divisive and unfair to Hemingway. With all due respect to his memory, however, I submit this thesis to the honors committee with hope that it unveils a far too often unacknowledged chapter of the author’s life. For in addition to specific parallels between Hemingway’s early journalism and creative writing, we see broader significances when studying his two literary forms side by side. The study of Hemingway’s journalism reveals a rich and holistic portrait of the author. Knowing the young reporter’s story leads us to a fuller understanding of his work as a creative writer. Indeed, to understand Hemingway’s life and career, we must not only read his creative writing and letters but also understand the significance of his beginnings in journalism.
Appendix

I.

Ernest Hemingway at age sixteen.
February 1916
II.

Use short sentences. Use short first paragraphs. Use vigorous English. Be positive, not negative.

The style of local communications is To The Star: in italics, out-of-town communications in this form. Salina, Kas.—To The Star:

Never use old slang. Such words as sturt, cut out, got your, come across, sit up and take notice, put one over, have no place after their use becomes common. Slang to be enjoyable must be fresh.

Use Kas., not Ken., or Kans., as an abbreviation for Kansas; use Ok., not Okla., for Oklahoma; Cal., not Colo., for Colorado; Cal., not Calif., for California.

Write your sequence of tenses. “He said he knew the truth,” not “He said he knew the truth.” “The community was amazed to hear that Charles Wakefield was a thief,” not “was amazed to hear that Charles Wakefield was a thief.”

The style of The Star is 9:30 o’clock this afternoon or this morning or tonight; not 9:30 this forenoon, 9:30 p.m., or 9:30 this evening. Also let the hour precede—not this morning at 9:30 o’clock. He walked twelve miles, not a distance of twelve miles; he earned $10, not he earned the amount or sum of $10; he went there to see his wife, not for the purpose of seeing his wife. He was absent during June, not during the month of June.

“Goods valued at about $25 were stolen,” not “about $25 worth of goods were stolen.”

“Several fountain pens were stolen,” not “a number of fountain pens”—if you know the number, specify.

Eliminate every superfluous word as “Funeral services will be at 2 o’clock Tuesday,” not “The funeral services will be held at the hour of 2 o’clock on Tuesday.” He said is better than he said in the course of conversation.

In reference to specified time the word on is superfluous. Why write on January 16; on Tuesday? January 16 and Tuesday are enough.

Don’t split verbs: He probably will go, not he will probably go. It previously had been shown better; not it had previously been better shown.

The verb precedes the time: He said yesterday afternoon; not he yesterday afternoon said. In certain instances, should, like to see these abuses corrected.

Don’t say “He had his leg cut off in an accident.” He wouldn’t have had it done for anything.

“Suffered a broken leg in a fall, not ‘he broke his leg in a fall’” He didn’t break the leg, the fall did. Say a leg, not his leg, because presumably the man has two legs.

“The work began,” not the work began.”

“He was graduated from Manual,” not “he graduated from Manual.”

Say Mary went shopping with Mabel—not “in company with Mabel.”


Say “John Jones of St. Louis,” not “in St. Louis.”

“Mr. Roosevelt is a leader who, we believe, would succeed,” not whom, we believe, would.

Mr. Roosevelt is a leader whom, we believe, the people 4th choose, not “who, we believe.”

“None saw him except me” not “none saw him but me.” Don’t use but as a proposition.

Use or after either, nor after neither, as a general rule. Certain deviations from this statement are good English, but extreme care in usage is best.

Judgment of a candidate, not endorsement.

Say Chinese, not Chinaman.

Bodies are not shipped or sent—say The burial will be in Ottumwa, Ia.

Several persons were in the room,” not “several people.” The people of Kansas City is correct.

Both persons were pleased, not “both parties were pleased.” “Both parties to the contract” is correct.

“‘He knew no good reason that he should not run’ is better than ‘He knew no good reason why he should not run.’

“‘He threw the stone’ not ‘He threw the rock.’ Rock is unquarried stone.

Write 250,000, 500,000, 750,000 and 1,000,000, ½ million, ¼ million, ¾ million and 1 million respectively.

Numbers less than 100 should be spelled out, except in matters of statistical nature, in ages, time of day, numbers and comparative figures or dimensions.

In writing of animals use the neuter gender except when you are writing of a pet that has a name. T

Partial image of the Kansas City Star style sheet. Circa 1915.
III.

Ernest Hemingway driving an American Red Cross ambulance in Italy. Summer 1918
IV.

Ernest and Hadley vacationing in Chamby, Switzerland.
Winter 1922
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Print.