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# Authorship

Eliot Marcus

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# Authorship

During World War II the Jewish people endured unimaginable pain and suffering. Roughly six million Jews died while the majority of the survivors watched helplessly from behind the walls of concentration camps. Those that escaped the clutches of the Nazi party lived in fear, concealed in basements and makeshift hideaways. A proud people that finally found a home in Europe were uprooted once more. With their religion banned, and their brothers and sisters captured and killed, the Jewish people lost control over their history. A culture rich with accomplishments both spiritual and academic is now studied mainly in the context of their near extermination at the hand of the Nazis. Only one third of the Jews in Europe survived the Holocaust, and the dignified roar of the Jewish people was reduced to a murmur.

Jewish authorship suffered under Nazi oppression during the Holocaust. Jewish authorship is the idea that writing is a form of power, a stamp of authority that the author puts on his subject matter. An author establishes his voice, but also takes control of his life through writing. Jewish culture was founded on various interpretations of the Talmud. It is the ultimate form of Jewish authorship, a massive religious text that provides ethic guidance, philosophical reflection, and the basis for Jewish law, amongst other things. While the idea of authorship is not concrete, its importance to Jewish culture is undeniable. From Elie Wiesel's Night to Anne Frank's The Diary of a Young Girl, Jewish people have used writing to give life to their story. As the voices of Holocaust era Jews were heard, the rebuilding process began. Once again Jews took control of their history; they wrote the stories of their lives rather than playing the role of victim, a role written for them by the Nazis.

After the Holocaust, the Jewish people began the slow process of recovery. Many European Jews immigrated to the United States in hopes of starting afresh in the land of opportunity. There they joined Jews who were fortunate enough to have begun their lives in the United States before the Holocaust. While the Jewish population in Europe bloomed once again, Jews also established their identity in America. The Germans surrendered on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1945. For the next decade, Jews worked their way through the American hierarchy, continually striving for a better life. While many spent their lives preserving old world Jewish culture and memories both joyous and tragic, others sought to assimilate completely, and forget the ordeal of their people in order to truly become American. The ability to forget the past is an important part of American authorship. America represents a new life where an immigrant's wildest dreams of success and fortune are within reach, but he must shed his old world identity, or risk being marked as an 'other' and seeing his dreams crumble. Throughout the late fifties and early sixties the Jewish image changed. During this post-war period a new generation of Jewish Americans used their newfound authorship to continue the legacy of their culture. In these works, the pull of old world Judaic authorship and the powerful draw of American authorship are both prevalent.

After World War II, Jewish authors sought to re-imagine Jewish male authorship. This process began with a new image of Jewish masculinity. Previously, Jewish men were seen as weak and submissive, but through this fresh wave of authorship, that image changed. In this analysis we will examine Jewish, American, and Jewish American authorship in America. All of the authorship we analyze will be masculine. In the post-war texts we will interpret, Jewish authorship is characterized by silence. The few characters that refuse to adapt to the new world are robbed of their voices. Jewish authorship in America is a whisper against a jet engine. It is an antiquated concept struggling to survive in a foreign land.

American authorship begins with masculinity. The American man is a distant, callous, and merciless figure, a cold-killer without emotion. American authorship is distinguished by its ability to embrace violence as a replacement for intellect. Finally, it is at the same time an authorship which depends upon, and rebels against authority. Unfortunately, the power exerted by American authorship is as blind as the rebellions it causes.

Jewish American authorship, which is perceived as less masculine than American authorship, depends upon the ability to perceive masculinity in terms that stray from the norm such as homosexuality and empathy. The Jewish American male author values his self and individual identity. He depends on intellect: a mixture of rhetoric, logic and interminable compassion which allows him to act morally in order to promote social change. Jewish American male authorship is also informed by introspection. The ability to examine your 'self', religion, and institution is essential. This leads to an acceptance of flaws which serves as the foundation for eventual betterment.

One of the preeminent Jewish authors of the late fifties and sixties is Philip Roth. A first generation Jew, Roth wrote the critically acclaimed collection Goodbye, Columbus which contains the short stories *Defender of the Faith* and *The Conversion of the Jews* which we will examine. Roth's stories are semi-autobiographical, and maintain a laser focus on authorship.

Joseph Heller, the author of the satirical masterpiece Catch-22, is another first generation Jewish author who helped re-shape the idea of Jewish masculinity. Like Roth, his characters, especially Yossarian, the protagonist of Catch-22, are extensions of himself. It is never explicitly stated in the novel that Yossarian is Jewish, but Heller has stated that the character is based on his own war experiences as a bombardier. Catch-22 examines the difficulties of balancing Jewish

American and American authorship in an upside-down world while simultaneously drawing attention to the importance of authors as creators of texts which serve as a catalyst for social change.

Neil Simon is a Jewish American playwright whose play Biloxi Blues is also a semi-autobiographical tale of a young Jewish man in the U.S military. His play was adapted into a movie of the same name. Simon wrote the movie's screenplay, and uses his source material to explore the power of writing, but also the dangers of perceived authorship.

Finally we will look at Mel Brooks' 1968 film The Producers. It is a comical film, and a satire which examines the dangers of Jews with no authorship. It further explores the intoxicating effect that America and the American dream of wealth and status have on potential Jewish authors.

Jewish American authorship is most effective, and most powerful, when it is comprised of a balance between Jewish authorship and American authorship. To have one without the other is to risk disappearance or a decidedly not Jewish hardening of the soul, respectively. Under the umbrella of Jewish American authorship, there are two main forms. First, there is the Jewish American author who leans more towards old world Jewish authorship, but uses it cunningly to assert his control in America. Second is the Jewish American author who retains the identity of the tough, battle-tested American man, but cuts it with Jewish compassion and morality. Philip Roth's *Defender of the Faith* paints a complete picture of these two types of Jewish American male authorship.

*Defender of the Faith* is a short story centered around Nathan Marx, a Jewish sergeant in the United States Army who has just returned from the European theatre. As Marx settles in to a

more bureaucratic role at Camp Crowder in Missouri he comes face to face with his own Judaism in the form of Sheldon Grossbart, a private in the military and a fellow Jew. Marx's primary conflict stems from his hesitation to embrace his Judaism, and defend the manipulative Grossbart. Marx is a man of power; he has authorship over his story. With this authority comes responsibility and difficult decisions concerning what it means to be Jewish, and what it means to be a man in America.

Marx narrates his story, and thus his authorship is both undeniable and unavoidable. The reader sees the world through his eyes. All descriptions and interactions are filtered through his consciousness. We are given no reason to doubt the authenticity of the tale as Marx portrays himself neither as protagonist or antagonist. He seems indifferent to the reader's opinion as he is much more concerned with an introspective look at his own actions and motivations. This form of authorship is inherently Jewish. The Jewish people place a very high value on Talmudic interpretation. Certainly, Nathan Marx's psyche is no Talmud, but he uses his power as an author to lay bare his insecurities and flaws for his own reflection. In a hyper-masculine military base he writes that a slight movement of Grossbart's wrist "seemed, in fact, to exclude everything about the two of us except our hearts" (Roth, 163). It is important to note how Marx uses his authorship to communicate sides of his being which may scare him, in this case intimacy towards another Jewish man. It is with reluctance and a tinge of dread that Marx accepts "that they were right – that like Karl and Harpo, I was one of them" (165). Although it is shameful to admit, Marx feels no pride in his culture. The Jewish American man is taught to doubt himself in a land in which he is in the vast minority. Marx's authorship gives voice to one of the Jewish male's primary anxieties, and allows readers facing a similar predicament to honestly contemplate their own Jewish uneasiness.

A main component of authorship is the ability to write your own story. Even if you are not a literal author, as long as you take an active part in shaping the course of your existence, you gain authorship, and thus, control and power. At the start of *Defender of the Faith*, Nathan Marx is an American author. His heart has been steeled by the military. During the war he slept at “German farmhouses whose books we’d burned to warm us” (170). In the midst of war, the Jewish American male must sacrifice intellect for pragmatism. The self disappears in the military, an institution founded on a rigid command hierarchy, and Jewish authorship is nearly unobtainable. In Europe, Marx “couldn’t bother to mourn” and “shut off all softness” while even denying himself “the posture of a conqueror” over the soldiers who made the lives of his people a living hell (170). In short, Marx cut all ties with his Judaism in order to survive and blend in. Marx is able to regain his Jewish American authorship only after meeting Grossbart, an American Jew trying to survive in the heart of America.

Both Marx and Grossbart are military men born in America to Jewish homes, but there is a fundamental difference in the way they approach their own narratives. Marx understands how to be a man in America. You must kill without mercy, live without emotion, and hide your Jewishness. However Grossbart’s incessant badgering awakens Marx’s Jewish compassion and Marx must negotiate the fact that, at heart, he is a Jewish American. Captain Barrett, the prototypical gentile alpha-male, sums up the predicament best: “Look, Grossbart, Marx here is a good man, a goddam hero. When you were sitting on your sweet ass in high school, Sergeant Marx was killing Germans. Who does more for the Jews, you by throwing up over a lousy piece of sausage, a piece of firstcut meat – or Marx by killing those Nazi bastards” (180).

Grossbart has no desire to kill, and most importantly, has no desire to be killed. This is not necessarily an act of cowardice; as we will see in Catch-22, as a response to the brutal

extermination of European Jews during the Holocaust, survival is an essential facet of Jewish American authorship. Grossbart uses the argument that Jews must stick together to survive in an attempt to manipulate Marx and other Jews training at Camp Crowder. Grossbart's conniving knows no boundaries. He creates a narrative of selfish yet brilliantly persuasive behavior in order to live a life that he views best for himself as an American Jew. Grossbart believes that Jews must help other Jews regardless of circumstance only in situations where he can directly benefit. Although he is American, his character is reminiscent of emasculated old world Jewish stereotypes. He is a physically weak nineteen year old afraid to face the inevitable hail of bullets and explosives in the Pacific Theatre. All of his primary actions stem from words rather than physical actions. He sees language and rhetorical control as a way to control his fate. He knows that if he goes to Europe or the Pacific he risks losing the Jewish half of his Jewish American authorship. When Marx refuses to grant the Jews kosher food at the military base, Grossbart exclaims "That's what happened in Germany...They didn't stick together. They let themselves get pushed around" (174). He uses his authorship to establish a voice which guilt's Marx into embracing his Judaism. With his final act of authorship, Grossbart manipulates another Jewish American man and has his name removed from the list of those being shipped to the Pacific. However, his salvation is short-lived.

It is imperative that the power struggle in *Defender of the Faith* takes place between two Jewish Americans. If, for example, it were between Grossbart and Barrett it would be easy to see the latter as a bully and the former as a victim. This would obscure the driving force of the novella and stymie the re-imagining of the Jewish American man. There is no hero and no villain; Marx and Grossbart are two men facing the same predicament: how can the Jewish man survive in America without abandoning his Judaism? While their approaches to authorship are

different, and the American reader is predisposed towards the man of action that is Marx rather than the man of cunning represented by Grossbart, neither character's approach is fundamentally right or wrong. Jewish American authorship is not a well-marked road; it is an intricate maze with more than one path to the final goal.

Throughout the short story, Marx's authorship undergoes an evolution. As mentioned earlier, he begins the story as an American author whose Jewish authorship lies latent and untouched deep in his soul. Eventually Grossbart's ability to convey intimacy sparks a metamorphosis. In almost all of the texts we will look at, sexuality is strictly homosocial. It is as if, for the Jewish American man, the most intimate moments can only be had with men in the same standing. For the American Jew, women are not an obstacle. The Jewish American author only has power when he indulges in a relationship with another Jewish American author, and therefore better understands himself. Grossbart pleads with Marx to allow him and the other Jewish men to attend religious service on Friday nights rather than cleaning the barracks, but Marx is hesitant to get involved. However, when Marx relays this concern to Captain Barrett "it seemed to the Captain that I was not so much explaining Grossbart's position as defending it" (166). Marx uses his position of authority to help a fellow Jew and thus embraces his role as a Jewish American author. His authority is a sign of his American authorship while the empathy he feels towards Grossbart marks the beginning of his Jewish authorship. Marx is able to successfully fuse the two and become a Jewish American author. Later in the story, he writes leave passes for Grossbart and two other Jews (Fishbein and Halpern) despite the fact that only Captain Barrett is authorized to do so. His authorship must be in the form of forgery because Jewish authorship and American authorship resist each other. They do not fit together perfectly like yin and yang; their differences can only be negotiated by a Jewish American author who

understands the world and himself. These forged passes allow the three Jewish soldiers to attend Pesach in St. Louis. Grossbart calls Marx a “good Jew” and Marx writes that “Those last three words touched me more than any words from Grossbart’s mouth had the right to” (190). In return for the passes Marx only asks that Grossbart bring him back a piece of gefilte fish. When Grossbart returns with an eggroll and the excuse that he misread the date of the Seder, he unknowingly seals his own fate. The egg is an insult, manipulation without the cleverness of cunning, an act of disrespect which allows Marx to send Grossbart to the Pacific while still toeing the lines of morality.

Marx receives the eggroll and realizes he has been duped by Grossbart, a man he trusted as a fellow American Jew. He feels rage and writes “It engulfed me, owned me, till it seemed I could only rid myself of it with tears or an act of violence” (197). Marx can cry, and be marked as a Jew, or toss this foul egg roll out of the window and establish himself as a Jewish American author who will not be weakened by manipulation. In short order, the egg roll is defenestrated. When Marx learns that Grossbart has avoided duty in the Pacific, he uses his authority, and a bit of Grossbart-esque cunning, to send Grossbart back into the fray. He tells Grossbart “For each other we have to learn to watch out, Sheldon. You told me that yourself” (200). Marx is referencing both Grossbart’s previous comments about Jewish unity and the problem of deceiving a fellow American Jew.

The final line of the story is as follows: “And then, resisting with all my will an impulse to turn and seek pardon for my vindictiveness, I accepted my own” (200). By the end of *Defender of the Faith* Nathan Marx is Roth’s construction of the Jewish American author. His decision to send Grossbart to battle shows he still has the heart of a hardened soldier. However, through logic, he does maintain his Jewish identity. In his mind, he is not sending Grossbart to

certain death. He is sending him to a space in which Grossbart can become a Jewish American man. Marx takes authorship over Grossbart's life. It is the Jewish American author's job to take control of the lives of other Jewish Americans in hopes that they too will obtain Jewish American authorship. In the Pacific, Grossbart will be able to protect Fishbein and Halpern as long as he sees "some profit for himself" (200). Marx is able to defend Judaism by forcing his fellow Jewish soldiers to adapt to American sensibilities. He retains a sense of Jewishness in the sense that he is able to interpret the catalyst of his actions, realize they are laden with both spite and generosity, and accept himself as an American Jew.

Marx is finally able to question himself, but in Philip Roth's *The Conversion of the Jews*, the question is taken a step farther. The novella explores the idea of Jewish American authorship, but this time through the lens of Ozzie Freedman, a Jewish adolescent who establishes his Jewish American authorship through a repeated questioning of the Jewish faith in the face of his stern Hebrew School teacher, Rabbi Binder. The short story is framed by a plane crash at La Guardia in which eight (or nine, according to Ozzie's grandmother, who sees Miller as a Jewish last name) Jews die. This, coupled with Roth's use of fading light imagery, represents the slow decline of old world Judaism in the face of a new land, America. Ozzie's primary conflict is a result of his belief that, if God could create the world in six days, he could also have birthed Jesus through Immaculate Conception. When he confronts Rabbi Binder with this logic, the Rabbi becomes angry and slaps him, resulting in Ozzie taking refuge on the synagogue's roof.

The novel begins with Ozzie questioning a powerful source of authorship, the Bible. Jews are taught to question their religious texts, but Ozzie's opposition to authority seems to stem from the American part of his character rather than the intellectual Jewish aspect. In reference to the creation of the world, Ozzie asks his friend Itzie if "He could make all that in six days, and

He could pick the six days he wanted right out of nowhere, why couldn't He let a woman have a baby without having intercourse" (141). Like Marx, Ozzie narrates his own story. Through his adolescent voice, seemingly naïve questions gain new meaning. Ozzie asks Rabbi Binder how he "could call the Jews 'The Chosen People' if the Declaration of Independence claimed all men to be created equal" (141). The fact that he does not yet fully comprehend "political equality and spiritual legitimacy" is secondary to his ability to question his own faith and establish himself as a Jewish American (141).

With American masculinity comes the ability to question anything from faith to sexuality. In *The Conversion of the Jews*, Ozzie has not yet been bar mitzvahed. He simultaneously strives to become an American and Jewish man, but cannot find a bridge between the two. After he is slapped by Rabbi Binder, Ozzie flees to the roof of the synagogue. He is literally and figuratively towering over the Jewish faith. As he first alights on the roof Ozzie asks himself "Can this be me?" (147). Despite his adolescent confidence he must take a moment to examine the gravity of his situation. The Rabbi and his fellow classmates sprawl out below him. He alone holds the power. He alone can speak, and be heard. Ozzie stands in the cloud as an author, but also a creator of a new masculinity, that of the Jewish American. Through his first steps of authorship, Ozzie begins his transition from Freedman to man freed of a perceived old world Jewish submissiveness.

Ozzie's mother, a devout Jew and his only living parent asks Rabbi Binder why Ozzie is on the roof. He responds "He's doing it for them. He won't listen to me. It's them," (155). Ozzie has become a martyr for his fellow Jewish American adolescents. He will jump off the roof, and die as the champion who questioned Judaism. Ozzie hopes to usher in a new era of Jewish American masculinity which balances old world intellect and an American bravery which rises

from a distrust of authority. The question changes from “Is it me?” to “Is it us?” (156). He continues to establish his authorship by forcing his classmates, his mother, the Rabbi, and the custodian, Yakov Blotnik, to kneel in the Christian prayer position. Roth uses Ozzie’s affinity for using power to humiliate to remind the reader that, while he is a Jewish author in a sense, he is still a boy not fully matured. Public humiliation is a trait particular to Ozzie’s character, not Jewish American authorship. Ozzie also demands that the Rabbi admit that Immaculate Conception is possible, and the Rabbi obliges. Next he demands the same of his mother, and the result does not change. In his final act of authorship Ozzie demands that everyone admit they believe in Jesus Christ, which they do, and then he leaps from the roof. He would rather risk death than fail to tell his story. This is central to both Jewish American and Jewish authorship as many Holocaust survivors risked their lives to keep a written record of their experiences, but it also shows that Ozzie does not reach a final resolution.

Ozzie uses his power in attempt to escape what he sees as the rigid doctrine of Judaism. Even at a young age he dreads the shackles that old world Judaism places on an American man. The ability to critique through authorship is essential for the American Jew’s masculinity. However it must be asked whether Ozzie achieves his goal of shedding the aspects of Judaism that prevent him from being recognized as an American man. Ozzie’s path to the roof of the synagogue is layered in the same deception that marked Grossbart as Jewish. He uses the threat of his own suicide to guilt his mom into accepting his beliefs. In the end, Ozzie is more caught up in the thrill of authorship than the fact that Christ may have been God’s son. Ozzie does not escape his Judaism nor does he find the balance of a Jewish American author. He has all the elements in his reach, but in the end chooses to jump off the roof rather than come to any

conclusion regarding himself or Judaism. He comes close, but in the end he falls victim to the lure of American rebellion.

Besides Ozzie, there are two other male Jewish voices in *The Conversion of the Jews* which illuminate the difficulties in establishing Jewish American authorship. The first belongs to Rabbi Binder. While technically an American Jew, his profession binds him to old world ideas of authorship, and therefore masculinity. He adheres strictly to the texts which he has been taught in synagogue. He does not write his own story, he teaches someone else's. Binder's voice is referred to as "monumental" and his body as statuesque (139). Jewish authorship is like a statue, beautiful but unable to adapt to the times; valuable, but slowly decaying. When Rabbi Binder tries to slap Ozzie on the cheek he ends up breaking his nose. Even when he tries to demonstrate authority, he is emasculated. A true Jewish American man has mastered the balance between necessary violence and kindness, Binder has not. At the end of the story he ends up on his knees "crying into the dome of his hands" (154). The Rabbi cannot evade the fact that while he is an American Jew, and teaches American children thus demonstrating a Jewish American authorship, his soul belongs to the old world. He is caught in the purgatory of Jewish American masculinity, as opposed to the successful version attained by Marx.

Despite living in America, Yakov Blotnik makes no attempt to achieve Jewish American masculinity. He was born in the old world, and moved to America, but his soul stayed behind. Ozzie describes him as "a relic, towards whom they were alternately fearful and disrespectful" (144). Blotnik's lack of American masculinity robs him of American, and thus Jewish American, authorship. He is like a museum artifact, something appreciated for its past novelty rather than its current presence. He can only watch from the sidelines as Ozzie threatens to martyr himself in the name of Jesus Christ, son of God. While the Rabbi's voice is monumental, Blotnik's is a

mere mumble. Ozzie believes that he “had been mumbling so steadily for so many years” that he had “memorized the prayers and forgotten all about God” (144). His authorship is both a literal and figurative murmur. Yakov’s entire life is divided into two sets of actions: those that are good-for-the-Jews and those that are bad-for-the-Jews. Ozzie’s situation falls into the latter so Blotnik calls the fire department. Even when he exerts authorship it is only to call a group of saviors with “feelingless” (read gentile) faces and a net that is compared to an “overgrown halo” (151 and 158). Because Blotnik only has Jewish authorship, he is thwarted in his attempt to turn Ozzie’s spectacle into something that is positive for the Jewish people. In America, Jewish American authorship will always trump old world sentiments.

The plot of Neil Simon’s Biloxi Blues shares much in common with Roth’s *Defender of the Faith*, but Simon uses his movie to show the difference a between Jewish American man who is rendered a passive author in his pursuit of American masculinity and a Jewish American author who successfully negotiates the world he inhabits. The story’s protagonist, Eugene Jerome, trains with the military in Biloxi, Mississippi. Throughout the movie Eugene trains to become a Jewish American author and an American soldier. The movie’s opening shot consists of a train full of soldiers crossing a bridge over calm water. The scene represents Eugene’s transition from Jewish American to Jewish American man, or at least the beginning of his training. The shot is interrupted by Eugene’s first voiceover. Immediately, the audience knows that this is the story of Eugene Morris Jerome as told by the man himself. As with Marx, we must trust his version of his narrative. In his opening voiceover, Eugene takes a warm stance towards World War II before subverting it. He says “It was in a sense an okay war. We knew why we were fighting it, and we felt pretty proud of ourselves for being in it. We liked the songs, we liked the uniforms, we liked the girls, we liked that everyone liked us... except if you were

just a kid the year out of high school heading south in a troop train knowing that in two months you'd be in some mud hole fighting for your life." While Marx's authorship is ever-present, and Eugene's authorship is secure at the beginning of the *movie*, the character Eugene must undergo the metamorphosis from a spectator to a Jewish American male author.

Eugene's narrative is also reminiscent of Ozzie's plight in *The Conversion of the Jews*. Ozzie's development is sparked by his inability to stop speaking out against authority. The story begins with Itzie wondering "What do you open your mouth all the time for" (Roth, 139). Eugene is immediately singled out by his authoritative drill sergeant because he cannot comply with the military's standard form of greeting. Instead of answering his sergeant's roll call with a simple "Ho!" he adds this grunt to the beginning and end of his sentences. The establishment of oratory control is an essential part of Jewish, and Jewish American masculinity. The oral component of Jewish American male authorship is a result of the need to question authority and long-standing cultural norms. Jewish American authorship is defined by rhetorical mastery, and the ability to use this rhetoric to combat the oral proclamations of authority figures. The rhetorical component of Jewish American authorship is tied to both the American and Jewish sides. A Jew's intellect spawns this skill, which is then used to question authority, create personal authority, and establish American masculinity. Where Ozzie questions the logic of Judaism, Eugene questions the absurdities of war. He begins to build his authorship through a refusal to be silenced by the hierarchy-obsessed United States military.

Eugene's quest for authorship is blurry, a voyage muddled by the philosophizing of his Jewish comrade-in-arms, Epstein. Eugene goes by his first name to hide his Judaism while Epstein has no qualms displaying his Jewish identity. This pride and courage allows Epstein Jewish American authorship while Eugene struggles to cement his own. We will arrive at

Epstein a bit later, but from the onset Eugene's voice is complicated. He has the beginnings of authorship, but until the end of Biloxi Blues he does not realize its potential. Early on he plays a game with a few of his fellow soldiers. The idea is that you have one week to live before you are killed in action. Each soldier will describe his ideal final week, and Eugene will judge the responses and assign the monetary prize. He is both the judge and a participant. In Eugene's fantasy, he wins the Pulitzer Prize for literature, loses his virginity, and falls in love with the perfect girl. It is a genuine and telling moment. His final week is judged by another soldier. Eugene's entry reveals his Jewish American anxieties. The Pulitzer Prize represents his quest for authorship, and the final two elements show his fear of emasculation and potential homosexuality. This scene is complex and full of possible interpretations. On one hand, the game is Eugene's idea. His fellow soldiers respect his voice as that of an authoritative figure. Conversely, despite his previous authority, his own fantasy is judged by an American man. He cannot hold on to the title of judge in the face of American masculinity. Eugene's authorship is also perplexing because the game is a form of escapism. Some authors see escapism as a form of power (Manuel Puig's Kiss of the Spider Woman), but for the Jewish male mental, escape is a path loaded with danger. Escapism will not avoid another Holocaust. In this scene, Eugene's Jewish American authorship progresses, but is not finalized.

After the voiceover that opens the movie, Eugene is shown scribbling in a marble notebook. It is his private diary in which he records his daily activities and personal thoughts. It is easy to see these pages as proof of Eugene's authorship, and at the beginning of the film, it is a valid assumption, but as Biloxi Blues progresses Eugene's diary becomes a point of contention for his Jewish American authorship. Like the above game, the power of his diary is open to debate. Its authority is fluid throughout the film. Eugene meets a beautiful Christian girl at a

USO sponsored dance and he tells her that he started his diary at the age of fourteen. Only after he becomes a man in the Jewish sense can Eugene begin his attempt at authorship. It is important to note how this scene corresponds with his fantasy. His diary is the first step towards winning the Pulitzer Prize for Literature, and the girl, Daisy, is a milestone on the road to meet the perfect gentile woman who was unattainable for old world Jewish men. Eugene, still in his formative state of authorship, cannot help but conflate sexuality and literature. He immediately likens this beautiful Christian girl to Daisy Buchanan from F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby. It is as if he cannot conquer sexuality without first cementing a control over literature, and therefore gaining authorship. For Eugene, manhood is unattainable without authorship. Clearly Eugene fancies himself an author, but it takes a moment of tension between him and Epstein for his struggle to be revealed.

Arnold Epstein and Eugene Jerome are both Jewish American soldiers singled out by their comrades, but they boast undeniably different presences. Epstein is marked as an old world Jew. He has a large nose, a nasally stereotypically Jewish voice, and could not be more layered as the emasculated Jewish nerd, albeit one posing as a soldier. On the troop train, Eugene, played by Matthew Broderick, is characterized by his boyish handsomeness, and ability to at least attempt to fit in with the rest of the platoon. Epstein spends the voyage curled up on his side, alone, only spoken to in mockery. Epstein's first trait presented to the audience is his inability to cease passing gas. Like Grossbart, he attempts to remove himself from the obligation of eating the military's cafeteria food. While Grossbart uses cunning to successfully obtain better food, Epstein's letter from his 5<sup>th</sup> avenue doctor is denied. His first attempt at authorship is literally ripped into pieces by his American gentile superior. Eugene sees Epstein as his "only hope for intelligent conversation" but also a boon in his quest for Jewish American authorship. Eugene

seeks the approval of the American man, not a fellow Jew. In Biloxi Blues the Captain Barrett-type American male figure manifests itself in the form of Joseph Wykowski, a burly trainee, and the de facto leader of the group. After losing the fantasy game, which is won by Epstein, Wykowski says “It’s always the Jews who end up with the money.” Epstein confronts him face to face and states “I’m not going to take that Jew crap from you anymore, Wykowski. I know you could probably beat the hell out of me, but I’m not going to take it.” With his unwavering bravery in the face of an intimidating physical force Epstein asserts his Jewish American masculinity and in the act of cutting off Wykowski’s authorship, begins to form his own. He refuses to be a passive witness to his own humiliation. In another voiceover, which we assume is a passage from his diary, Eugene admits he does not defend Epstein because the troops seem to have taken a liking to him, and he does not want to disturb his precarious state of peace, and status as an American male. Instead of searching for the equilibrium which defines the Jewish American male author, Eugene believes he can cement his masculinity by framing Epstein as the Jew.

Towards the middle of the film, drill sergeant Toomey steals Wykowski’s wallet and proceeds to blame the rest of the platoon. It is an effort to wage even more psychological warfare on his platoon. Toomey, an American author, knows he can control his platoons’ physicality with pushups and sit-ups, but he has not yet conquered their minds. He knows the culprit will not step forward because there is no culprit. Much to his surprise, in front of all his fellow soldiers, Epstein admits he stole the wallet and proceeds to repay the missing cash. When asked by Toomey why he chose to return the money and face the consequences, Epstein replies calmly “I chose to...the army has its logic, I have my own.” Epstein sees his life as a product of his actions, not the result of an insane sergeant or bigoted platoon. When Eugene asks him the same

question, Epstein answers “It’s my job.” He sees it as his job to make a personal sacrifice in order to save an entire group of people from unnecessary humiliation and punishment. Unlike Ozzie, he is mature and realizes a Jewish American author cannot stand for humiliation at the hands of an authority figure. Here we again see the importance of morality in the search for Jewish American authorship. Epstein’s actions are successful; they allow the rest of the troop a forty-eight hour leave period. However, Epstein’s actions are not without selfishness. He admits to Wykowski that he did what he did for his own benefit. What this benefit is remains unclear. It could be that his life will be easier now that he has more respect from the platoon, or that he took pleasure in teaching Toomey a lesson. In response Wykowski, who previously offered Epstein a handshake to symbolize camaraderie says “I’m not going to make anymore Jew cracks at you Epstein, because you are a shitheel no matter what you are.” In a subversive manner, Epstein forms his own authorship while shedding the idea of old world Jewish passiveness which previously served to hold him back.

Immediately following the episode with Wykowski, Epstein and Eugene’s vastly different senses of authorship collide. Eugene sees Epstein deny Wykowski’s handshake, and miss an opportunity to cement his place in the platoon. Eugene asks “Why is it we come from the same background, but I can’t understand you?” He unknowingly strikes at the heart of his own problem. As Epstein points out, Eugene cannot understand him because Eugene is a witness. If he has a shred of authorship it is in the most passive sense, one gained from ignoring the greater issues such as Jewish unity and focusing more on acting as a subservient chameleon to the anti-Semitic members of the military. Epstein accuses Eugene of “Always standing around watching what’s happening.” He says “You’re scribbling in your book what other people do. You have to get in the middle of it. You have to take sides. Make a contribution to the fight.” Here Eugene is

forced to face the possibility that his authorship is an illusion. Not every Jewish American man with a pen is an author. Writers battle for a cause, whereas Eugene transcribes events to fulfill the idea of himself which he created. At this point in the film he does not have the intellectual courage of a Jewish man, and cannot to write his own story. Despite being belittled and ostracized, Epstein has Jewish American authorship because, like Ozzie and Marx he stands up for what he believes in and accepts the consequences.

The power, or lack thereof, of Eugene's diary is revealed after Wykowski steals it from his unlocked trunk. Epstein agrees not to read what Eugene has written about him, but states that it will irrevocably destroy the honest relationship the two share. In a redeeming moment, Eugene lets him read the passage in which he wrote "Often I hold back showing my love and affection for Arnold...it just happens to be my instinctive feeling that Arnold is homosexual, and it bothers me that it bothers me." In this moment, with Epstein's help, Eugene realizes two things; first, that Jewish American authors have the ability to see past traditional ideas of masculinity. Second, he sees the importance of writing and the process that begets authorship. Whether he has achieved Jewish American authorship becomes momentarily irrelevant. All authors, even those without a true sense of authority, are to be held responsible. People have a tendency to believe what they read, regardless of the source. Later, Eugene offers to tear up the page in which he labeled Arnold a homosexual. Epstein forbids him, and says "Once you start compromising your thoughts, you are a candidate for mediocrity." Eugene will never have authorship, much less a Pulitzer Prize, if he cannot take responsibility for his writing, even if it is erroneous. On the subject of writing, in a voiceover, he says "I learned a very important lesson that night. People believe whatever they read. Something magical happens once it's put down on paper. They figure no one would have gone through the trouble of writing it down if it wasn't the truth." This

voiceover marks the moment where Eugene, through atonement, gains some authorship. Like Marx before him, he has peered into his own being, and realized there are some flaws, such as his ideas of masculinity, that he can change, and others, like his past writing, that he must accept.

The moment where Epstein convinces Eugene not to rip up his writing is another example of Epstein's authorship. With this action, Epstein chooses a path ripe with danger, but also power. Epstein, who is never explicitly shown as a homosexual, takes a stand. For him, homosexuals are like Jews, a minority unjustly persecuted. He shows that the Jewish American author can simultaneously be a homosexual and a man. Epstein's refusal to deny his potential homosexuality, much like his ability to accept blame for Wykowski's wallet, shows that he refuses to let others control his life simply because he is different. The ability to be proud of a difference is old world Jewish, and the ability to make this stance known with words is a product of Jewish American character. The idea that a man in America does not have to be straight is also groundbreaking. Epstein's authorship changes conceptions, not only of Jewish American masculinity, but American masculinity in general. He uses his Jewish American authorship to alter American consciousness, and aid the birth of a new author, Eugene, albeit one who was previously uncomfortable with the idea of Eugene as an American man.

The birth of Eugene as an author is not the end of his narrative. The audience sees his authorship continue to grow through an unlikely conduit, drill sergeant Toomey. Toomey, played by a wild Christopher Walken, is an American man. He is cold and feeling; however, he is also unstable which goes against the grain of traditional American masculinity. His goal is to dehumanize the troops in hopes that they will lose their sense of selves, and his biggest obstacles in creating the perfect platoon are Arnold Epstein and Eugene Jerome. The climactic scene of Biloxi Blues begins with Epstein reading Dostoevsky's The Possessed more commonly known

as Demons while lying on his bed. Dostoevsky's novel focuses on the difficulties that occur when conflicting ideologies meet, and provides a nice context for the following encounter.

Toomey emerges from his quarters with a drunken swagger and a loaded pistol. He demands that Epstein accompany him in his room, but Eugene intervenes. He finally builds up the nerve to defend his friend and fellow Jew. With Epstein's teaching, Eugene is able to seize control of the narrative. Toomey barks "Get out of here Jerome, before I start hating you again. If I kill the both of you they can still only hang me once," but Eugene does not back down. Toomey makes his intentions clearer; he tells Eugene to leave "unless you want to write in your memoirs that you're dead." Though it could be unintentional, Toomey hands Eugene the keys to accessing his authorship, and Eugene accepts the responsibility willingly. He takes Epstein's place in the bedroom of the off-kilter sergeant. In the room, Toomey holds a gun to Eugene's neck and forces him to drink whiskey. The gun and the strong liquor are symbols of American masculinity. It is a collision of worlds: the tough gentile American and the sweat-drenched, puppy-eyed Jewish man desperately trying to establish his Jewish American identity. They are physically linked by the sergeant's gun, the tangible key to American masculinity. Toomey admits "There's something about you New York boys, riles my ass." Eventually he tells Eugene that he will be relieved of his duty and sent to a veteran's hospital. He shows Eugene the note and tears it in the exact same manner in which he tears Epstein's doctor's note. The message is clear: Toomey retains his American authorship, and his final act, and the exclamation point on his transition to a character with aspects of American Judaism, will be to ensure the authorship of his soldiers. He explains to Eugene that he overheard the fantasy game, and wishes to play. His wish is to turn Epstein and Eugene into American men, or as he puts it, disciplined soldiers. "You're my last hope, Jerome," he says. Here authorship undergoes the change from game to reality. Eugene is no longer a

passive observer; he sits in the fire with a piss-drunk sergeant aiming a loaded gun at the back of his head. With perverse pleasure Toomey forces Eugene to wrestle the gun from his hands. As soon as the task is done, the music stops and the tension ceases. Eugene has the gun and the power, but he uses the gun to steer Toomey down a peaceful path instead of killing him or having him arrested. This is the mark of a Jewish American author.

Eugene and Epstein's authorship does not end in the sergeant's quarters. Toomey asks that he be arrested in front of his entire troop. He finds pleasure in the power he has transferred to Eugene. On one hand, Eugene is able to finally obtain his sense of authorship, but on the other, becomes an example of Toomey's authority. Toomey's goal was to turn Eugene and Epstein into disciplined soldiers and by disarming Toomey and reporting his unlawful actions, Eugene carries out his duty in exemplary fashion. Again, we see a balance in which Eugene's American side is able to vanquish the authority figure, and his Jewish side is able to retain compassion and mercy. Instead of arresting Toomey, Eugene leaves the punishment to Epstein. Still influenced by his original answer in the fantasy game, the wish to see Toomey drop and do two hundred pushups, Epstein chooses just that as just punishment. He too becomes one of Toomey's disciplined soldiers while simultaneously sealing his status as a Jewish American author.

This scene explains Eugene's nostalgia in his opening voiceover. He never sees combat, as the war ends six days after his eventual deployment, and he is ridiculed for his religion, but the army also provides a space for establishing authorship. Like Marx, he is able to truly become a Jewish American author. The road is paved with cowardice, aspects of self-loathing, and illusions of control, but the result is indelible. These aspects are parts of the whole that is Eugene's Jewish American authorship. In his final voiceover it is revealed that Biloxi Blues is

the name of Eugene's first play and that he hopes it will one day become a movie. He also alerts the audience that Epstein goes on to become the District Attorney of Brooklyn, known by the mafia as "The most feared man in New York." Finally, the Jewish American man controls his narrative, and the ability to act as its final judge.

On the topic of Toomey's absence, Eugene says "Our new sergeant was a sane, logical, and decent man, and after four weeks with him we realized how much we missed sergeant Toomey. One should never underestimate the stimulation of eccentricity." In the first chapter of Catch-22 Joseph Heller writes "The Texan turned out to be good-natured, generous, and likable. In three days no one could stand him" (10). Catch-22 is similar to Biloxi Blues insofar as both focus on World War II, masculinity, and the idea of authorship, however, the former is much more difficult to process both in form and the vastness of its subject matter. Perhaps Heller uses this fragmented form to highlight the building-block nature of Jewish American authorship. Jewish American authorship begins with a foundation, and then must be built and maintained. As seen with Eugene, one redeeming scene does not an author make. The novel is fragmented; most chapters are dedicated to a single character rather than the continuity of chronology. Though the scope of the novel makes a fluid close reading which connects the entire novel a near impossibility in comparison with a novella like *The Conversion of the Jews*, Heller's Catch-22 is filled with moments in which Jewish masculinity and authorship are negotiated.

The novel begins with Yossarian cooped up in a military hospital with phantom liver pains. He is far removed from the pain of war and his days consist of decent food, chess games, and conversations with his friend, Dunbar. The novel is told in the third-person, but Yossarian establishes his authorship almost immediately. He wants no part of the war, and at first he writes to his friends and family that he is in the hospital, but then decides on another course of action.

“To everyone he knew he wrote that he was going on a very dangerous mission. ‘They asked for volunteers. It’s very dangerous, but someone has to do it’” (8). The novel begins in media res, and, by the first chapter, Yossarian already shows the balance which marks Jewish American authorship. He fakes illness to avoid the war, an action which could easily be interpreted as that of a neurotic or frightened Jew, but only after he has spent months bombing and killing countless enemies. American masculinity is characterized by the ability to kill with impunity. Yossarian does his duty as a soldier for as long as his soul can bear it before retreating to the sanitary walls of the hospital. He is a Jewish American man, able to survive and even thrive at times in America, but not without reckoning with his Judaism, and therefore his ability to feel and sympathize. The way in which he begins his authorship is telling. As a Jewish American author, he must put his narrative in print. However, instead of admitting he is avoiding the war he tells those closest to him that he is on a secret mission, presumably full of risk and combat. As a Jewish American author he must push back against the idea of his own emasculation. This resistance can best manifest itself through authorship. The fact that Yossarian lies is inconsequential in regards to his morality but highlights the chasm between Jewish American authorship and American masculinity. What is more important is that he is able to write his story, even when operating under the confines on the United States military.

While in the hospital ward, Yossarian’s contribution to the war effort is reduced to censoring letters sent by fellow soldiers. Censorship, even when legally required, is inherently problematic for Jewish and Jewish American authors. It is a concept which brings to mind the horrors of the Holocaust, when most of the world remained unaware of the daily horrors in Europe. In the midst of the Holocaust, most Jews believed their letters would become the last remaining proof of Judaism. Despite the heavy censorship of the Nazi party, Jews sent out as

many letters as they could to their loved ones. Catch-22 is a satirical novel, and avoids direct references to concentration camps, but Yossarian's form of censorship is as poignant as it is comical. "To break the monotony he invented games. Death to all modifiers, he declared one day, and out of every letter that passed through his hands went every adverb and every adjective...He reached a much higher plane of creativity the following day when he blacked out everything in the letters but *a*, *an*, and *the*. That erected more dynamic intralinear tensions, he felt, and in just about every case left a message for universal" (8). Yossarian uses censorship, an idea which he abhors, to further his Jewish American authorship. Only in the insane world of Catch-22 does the Jewish American man turn to censorship to further his authorship. This is linked to Marx's need to forge documents. Jewish American authorship is not easily accessible, and is problematic because of the conflicting nature of Jewish and American authorship. This form of authorship is problematic, but Yossarian is first and foremost a survivor. At this point in the novel, Yossarian accepts that the military still controls a portion of life, and thus reduces his authorship. He uses censorship not because he wants to, not because he believes he is exuding Jewish American authorship, but because he must in order to stay sane. His censorship of the letters is strategic, a delay until he sees an opportunity to allow his Jewish American authorship to freely blossom.

Eventually Yossarian grows weary of censoring the contents of the letters. "When he had exhausted all possibilities in the letters, he began attacking the names and addresses on the envelopes, obliterating whole homes and streets, annihilating entire metropolises with careless flicks of his wrist as though he were God," (8-9). This is one of the most crucial passages in the novel in that it establishes the absolute power of authorship. Cities disappear as their names are erased from the records. There is a reason why the names of Holocaust victims are engraved on

memorials throughout the world. Writing is the antidote for lost history. With his censorship, Yossarian continues to forge his role as an author while simultaneously bringing to light the problems that haunt his people. So how, then, is this action that of a Jewish American author instead of that of a Jewish author? The fact that Yossarian compares himself to God shows he is not unlike Ozzie from *The Conversion of the Jews*. He too is enchanted by the raw power of authorship. He relishes the control, not with plans of using it to guide a moral compass, but simply because it feels good. The Jewish American male author can never be perfect; the thrill of succeeding in America is as corrupting as it is beneficial.

To avoid repercussions, Yossarian does not attach his name to the letters. His choice for a pseudonym is that of the famous American author, Washington Irving. Heller writes “On those he did read he wrote ‘Washington Irving.’ When that grew monotonous he wrote, ‘Irving Washington’” (9). Yossarian’s decision to use a pen name can be interpreted as an expression of one of his fantasies. His desire to be an Irving Washington-type figure is open to interpretation, but seems to be, at least, a valid argument. Irving is a shining example of American authorship, but he was also one of the first American authors to have success in Europe. His writing transcended boundaries. Much like Irving, Yossarian strives to be an author understood in America and the old world. As shown by his hesitancy to fight, he has no desire to be considered an American man. He admires Irving because he was able to author works whose sensibilities resonated with Americans and Europeans.

Yossarian’s pen name is also problematic. If his goal is to become a Jewish American author, why does he not use the name of an already established Jewish American author? There are two possible explanations. One, Yossarian does not see any examples of Jewish authors that precede him, and this drives him to survive and ensure the development of his authorship. In this

view Roth and Heller's generation are the first Jewish American authors, as they benefit from a life spent entirely as Jewish American men. The second explanation is that Yossarian does not believe the previous generation of Jewish American authors are powerful (or, maybe, American) enough. This darker analysis paints Yossarian as a man with faith in some characteristics of American masculinity such as the ability to become a dominant alpha-male. In the end, the first explanation seems to better fit his character although it is a sweeping generalization to say that there were no Jewish American authors before World War II.

For most of the novel, Yossarian and the rest of the men fear their inevitable mission to Bologna. The word Bologna hangs over Yossarian like a dark cloud, a constant threat of meaningless death. "The evidence was there vividly in the narrow red ribbon tacked across the mainland: the ground forces in Italy were pinned down forty-two insurmountable miles south of the target and could not possibly capture the city in time. Nothing could save the men in Pianosa from the mission to Bologna" (136). The red ribbon is the bomb line which indicates at which point it is safe to drop bombs without risking friendly fire. Bologna is a suicide mission. As long as the bomb line does not encompass Bologna, the men must fly. The entire troop holds a "macabre vigil...hoping to move the ribbon up by the collective weight of their sullen prayers" (137). The night before the bombing, Yossarian moves the line by hand and tricks his commanding officers into believing that the Allied troops conquered Bologna. He has progressed from demonstrating authority over the military, to using his authority to influence the entire war. He saves the lives of his men while continuing to wage war against his superiors. The rebellion against authority, coupled with the ability to save lives rather than take them, is a staple of Jewish American masculinity. Yossarian eventually confesses that he moved the bomb line because cannot live with the guilt of endangering the ground troops. This mixture of guilt,

survival instincts, and sacrifice constitutes a significant portion of Jewish American male authorship, although Yossarian's authorship is once again problematized, this time because of his willingness to sacrifice American men to ensure his well being.

After much delay, the day of the bombing of Bologna arrives. Yossarian takes off, but returns to base under the pretense that his intercom does not work. From a strictly American standpoint this is an act of cowardice; American men do not fear death, however his unwillingness to sacrifice his own life and that of his crew for a cause in which he does not believe is admirable, and that of a Jewish American author. The fact that his excuse is a faulty intercom highlights the connection between communication, and thus authorship, and survival. The Jewish American male author must communicate to learn about others, and thus, himself. He must survive to ensure the continuation of his authorship. The irony is that "Bologna was a milk run. There had been no flak there at all" (166). Yossarian must come face to face with his flaws. He uses his authorship to avoid a mission which poses no danger to himself, and in the process risks endangering the lives of others. Unfortunately, as punishment, Yossarian is forced to fly over Bologna a second time, and on this run he barely escapes death. He is described as "cold, with a compassionate kind of fear" (174). This is an apt description of Yossarian and the Jewish American author. The American numbing of emotions is constantly at war with the Jewish ability to sympathize and empathize. The Jewish American author manages to combine these elements into an authorship which struggles to be, at the same time, beneficial to the self and the group.

The Jewish American author's capacity to empathize and feel compassion is constantly in conflict with his need to use violence as a way to prove his American manhood. Jews are a people renowned for their ability to articulate, and use words as a substitution for violence, but in

America, in the middle of one of the most deadly wars in history, language is not sufficient. The Jewish American man must come face to face with the rage embedded in his being. This anger stems from years and years of ridicule and emasculation. The Jewish American author must find a place where anger and violence are used, but only after much deliberation. Violence, like language, is most effective and controllable when it is manifested through thought and logic, rather than blind passion. Yossarian's objective is to survive the war, and his main opposition is Colonel Cathcart, a man who continues to raise the number of missions required of a pilot before he can go home. One of Yossarian's pilots, Dobbs, hatches a plan to assassinate Cathcart, but claims he cannot go through with it without Yossarian's permission. He says "Just tell me to go ahead and I'll blow his brains out" (261). Again, Yossarian is in position to control the narrative. An American soldier refuses to act without Yossarian's permission. He is a Jewish American author in control of his fate, and the fate of others. Yossarian hates Cathcart, but questions Dobbs' plan. He asks "You want us to kill him in cold blood?" (259). While Yossarian can drop bombs on enemy camps, he cannot go through with pre-meditated murder. He tells Dobbs "I don't think I could kill him" and "He's got a right to live, too, I guess" (260). For the Jewish American author, violence must be justified. The search for social justice is a key component of Jewish American authorship. Yossarian can bomb Nazis because they try and kill him with anti-aircraft fire. He cannot take the life of Cathcart while simultaneously claiming his own right to live. Cathcart sends him into dangerous situations, and sees Yossarian as expendable, but he makes no direct attempts on his life. Had Yossarian agreed to kill Cathcart under the false logic that Cathcart tries to murder him by sending him on sixty missions, he would have secured his position as an American author with no sense of Jewish kindness.

Yossarian's decision to spare Cathcart shows that he is an individual figure with the ability to think for himself. Jewish American authorship, especially when living in the shadow of the United States army, is a constant battle to separate oneself from the group and retain or create independence. Jews were falsely accused of going to concentration camps like sheep to the slaughter. This characterization of Jews as a passive herd is unfair, but sadly, it exists in the minds of others. The military is another faceless mob whose partisans must obey every command regardless of its danger or illogicality. Yossarian does everything in his power to avoid his fate as a mere statistic, and as a result everyone considers him insane. Conversely, Yossarian believes all others are crazy because they do not fear death. Authorship is a form of power, and a way to distinguish and reaffirm the self. After being struck by enemy flak Yossarian once again winds up in the hospital with Dunbar. He and Dunbar command low ranking soldiers to leave their beds, and when they occupy the now empty beds, Dunbar and Yossarian *become* those soldiers. When he first wakes up, Yossarian sees Dunbar sleeping in another man's bed. Dunbar claims to be someone else and "sure enough, Dunbar was right: he was not Dunbar anymore but second lieutenant Anthony F. Fortiori" (334). Yossarian uses this newfound form of authorship to become Warrant Officer Homer Lumley. Soon he "wanted to be Yossarian again" and has his penchant for identity theft questioned by a nurse (335). She asks "I suppose you just don't care if you lose your leg, do you," to which Yossarian replies "It's my leg" (335). His knees buckle when she calls him "a gear" (336). It is only when Yossarian assumes the identities of others that he fully realizes the importance of his own. His leg could be interpreted as a phallic symbol; Jewish American masculinity is defined in part by self-identity. His two greatest fears are death and invisibility. To have authorship, one must first be an individual with a concrete self. Yossarian chooses not to stay in Lumley's bed despite the fact that Lumley has a father in the

state legislature and is, presumably, an important American man. To become only an American man as opposed to remaining a Jewish American man is to risk vanishing as a person.

That Dunbar takes the identity of Anthony F. Fortiori is no coincidence. A fortiori is, by definition, an argument with greater reason or more convincing force. This concept is known in the Talmud as a kal wa-Chomer. The man who is scared of the dark, being a fortiori, is surely afraid of being locked in closets with no lights. Before Yossarian tells the nurse that his leg belongs to him, she asks him: “I suppose you just don’t care if you kill yourself, do you” and he responds “It’s my self” (335). This simple act of authorship is all Yossarian needs to establish his self as his own, and separate from the United States military. While Marx and Eugene are content to find a balance within the army, Yossarian must establish his self outside the army because, unlike the previous two Jewish American men, he faces the threat of death on a daily basis. If he does not separate himself from the army, and thus Cathcart’s control, he will die and so will his authorship. If a man is in complete control and possession of his self, then surely he is in complete control and possession of his leg. Yossarian uses Jewish logic to protect his authorship and masculinity from being merged into the American machine. Jewish intellect, once stereotyped negatively, is now ballast which holds the Jewish American author from swaying too far towards the side of American, and therefore losing his individuality.

Because Yossarian is able to inhabit a world outside the military, he interacts with female sexuality. He spends much of his leisure time with Italian prostitutes. Yossarian spends a night with a beautiful woman named Luciana, and when he offers to pay her, she denies his money and instead gives him a piece of paper with her name and address. As soon as Luciana is gone, he tears up the paper in the same manner that Toomey tears Epstein’s doctor’s note and his own letter from the veteran’s hospital. The message is clear: he uses her as a sexual object and does

not respect her authorship. In essence, he believes that one is not an American man, and therefore has no chance for Jewish American masculinity, unless he crushes the authorship of women. Yossarian's sexuality is complicated and needs its own section, but, in short, he is a womanizer who easily falls into what he calls love, but in reality, is lust. Almost immediately after Yossarian rips up her note, he begins to miss Luciana. He "choked on his toast and eggs at the enormity of his error in tearing her long, lithe, nude, young vibrant limbs into tiny pieces of paper" (188). Yossarian's actions are intrinsically that of a Jewish American because he tears the paper in order to feel "like a big shot because a beautiful young girl like Luciana had slept with him" but is immediately racked by guilt (187). In this scene he does not use his authorship in a positive manner, but part of being a Jewish American author is the ability to recognize the importance of emotional consequences which stem from power moves. Yossarian ends up taking to the street "in search of the tiny bits of paper in the gutter," but he is unsuccessful (188). Destruction is also a form of authorship, and writing, even in the metaphorical sense, that is destroyed can never be recovered. Epstein knows this, and wisely counsels Eugene not to tear up any page of his diary. The use of authorship as destructive force is similar to killing for the Jewish American author; if it must happen, it must be then examined under the gaze of morality and judgment.

Winston Churchill is often credited with saying "History is written by the victors." Had the Nazis won World War II they would have undoubtedly destroyed the evidence of their crimes against humanity. They would have done their best to strike Judaism from the annals of history. For Jews, authorship ensures the survival of their people and sacred traditions. As long as history is recorded, hope remains. Yossarian believes that "every victim was a culprit, every culprit a victim" and that "somebody had to stand up sometime to try to break the lousy chain of

inherited habit that was imperiling them all” (465). As an example of this habit he uses African children who are sold to cannibalistic barbarians. Nobody stops this horrible practice because they are accustomed to it. It is an author’s job to change human consciousness, instill their fellow humans with knowledge, and alter their senses of morality. Catch-22 details Yossarian’s attempt to use his authorship to illuminate the horrors, both foreign and domestic, of World War II in hopes that it will not be repeated. Jews are well aware of the cyclical nature of history, but through authorship, they hope to prevent a reoccurrence of the Holocaust. Yossarian’s authorship is Jewish American because he is able to critique his own army. The Axis forces in Italy are vilified far less than his own military. Only through understanding the complex problems of his own country can he reckon with the external enemy. Authorship can be undermined through lack of introspection, an ability which is vital to Jewish American authorship. A critique of the Axis feels more genuine written by a Yossarian rather than a Cathcart, because the reader knows Yossarian acknowledges his own flaws. The Jewish American author relies on self-understanding to create an ethos which furthers his authority.

Catch-22, a rule which states that when a pilot attempts to have himself grounded due to insanity, he is shown to be of a rational mind, and therefore sane, begins as a way to ensure that members of the Air Force can never stop flying, and throughout the novel it spirals even further out of control. Catch-22 says the military has “a right to do anything we can’t stop them from doing” (467). It is a product of the United States military, but also shows the perilous state of Jews in Europe. The Nazis were able to imprison them in concentration camps, and kill them based on their culture because the Jews were outnumbered, and lacked the power to stop them. The Nazi ‘right’ to kill did not stem from a constitution or a democratic decision; it came through force and fear. There was no text stating the full intent of the Nazi party, just rumors that

spread from town to town and sadly were not heeded in time. An old woman tells Yossarian, “They don’t have to show us Catch-22...the law says they don’t have to” (467). When he asks what law, she responds “Catch-22” (467). This scene shows the danger of a lack of text. In a space with a lack of (or, in the case of the Nazis, hidden) text there is no accountability or responsibility, and blind violence reigns supreme. Yossarian and the old woman are talking because the Carabinieri, Italy’s national police force, stormed one of Yossarian’s friends’ apartments, and removed the residents with no cause or explanation. One of the residents was dating Nately, a U.S soldier and friend of Yossarian. The old woman tells Yossarian that Nately’s girlfriend is gone and Yossarian says “I know she’s gone. But did anyone hear from her? Does anyone know where she is?” (468). The woman can only tell Yossarian that Nately’s girlfriend, and the rest of apartment’s tenants, were chased into the streets with no time to pack anything. Innocent people are missing, potentially dead, but nothing can be done. There is no proof of their whereabouts or that they ever existed. Heller never explicitly states that anyone in the apartment is Jewish, but he does not have to. There is no text for Yossarian to fight back against, no opposing author; there is only a whisper in the air: Catch-22. He leaves the apartment while:

Cursing Catch-22 vehemently as he descended the stairs, even though he knew that there was no such thing. Catch-22 did not exist, he was positive of that, but it made no difference. What did matter was that everyone thought it existed, and that was much worse, for there was no object or text to ridicule or refute, to accuse, criticize, attack, amend, hate, revile, spit at, rip to shreds, trample upon or burn. (469)

This may be the single most important passage in *Catch-22*. There is a reason Jewish American masculinity is not solely established through violence and sexuality. Jewish American masculinity hinges on authorship because it is a way to simultaneously control and understand

the narrative. You cannot destroy an enemy or an idea without first gaining an understanding of its nature. It is difficult to reckon with Nazi authorship: surely they had control and power, but there was no understanding or compassion. They created a horrible narrative only to wipe their tracks after every step, thus avoiding consequences and opposition for far too long. Catch-22 serves as a counter to the Nazi's authorship. The Nazi text sought to destroy the authorship of others, but they were unsuccessful. Characters in the novel abide by Catch-22 because there is no proof of its existence, and therefore no proof that it is invalid. Catch-22 is not the creation of an author, but an idea spawned by fear, conformity, and confusion. In the above passage, Yossarian stamps his mark of authorship on the entire war. In a brilliant Jewish American manner he critiques himself and his comrades in order to create a text which then is used to condemn the atrocities of the Nazi party. Only through first examining the self, can Yossarian then bring to light the narrative of the others, in this case, the Nazi party and American military. There is an unmistakable danger when a narrative takes form without an author. The Nazis cloaked and disguised their brutal authorship in order to continue their genocide.

With a lack of authorship comes death and denial of responsibility. So what happens when a Jewish American man does not have authorship? From the beginning of the novel the reader is aware that Yossarian shares his tent with a dead man. The reason Yossarian must share his tent with a dead man is that no one will claim responsibility and move the man's stuff out of Yossarian's living space. We later learn that the dead man is Mudd, a member of the Air Force who is killed before he can officially register as having arrived at camp. Mudd's presence, or lack thereof, constantly bothers Yossarian because he is a double for what Yossarian fears he will become: A Jewish American robbed of self and identity, and thus, authorship, in other words, a victim. Because Mudd is never officially listed as a member of the squadron, no one has

the authority to remove his belongings from the tent. He is both a liminal and eliminated character, both forever forgotten and eternally present. His existence is Yossarian's worst nightmare: a presence characterized by its inability to speak, a mute figure forever mocked as a symbol of weakness by those who oppose Jewish American authorship. Heller writes, "Because he had never officially gotten into the squadron, he could never officially be gotten out" (124). For most of the unit, Mudd is the forgotten Jew. He represents both the Jewish Americans killed in combat in World War II and the European Jews who fell victim to the Nazis. Heller writes, "No one could recall who he was or what he had looked like" but "Yossarian, on the other hand, knew exactly who Mudd was" (124). As a Jewish American author, Yossarian refuses to let a death go unnoticed or unremembered. Yossarian knows the "only thing anyone ever did know about all the unknown soldiers – they never had a chance" (125). The message is clear: A Jewish American without authorship is bound to disappear, either by death or the fragility of human memory.

Mudd is an unknown soldier, but the cause of his death is illuminated in chapter twenty four of Catch-22. His death is indirectly caused by the squadron's mess officer, Milo. Milo is an ambitious character who begins his quest for profit in the mess halls of his base camp selling eggs, but quickly expands his business into a worldwide syndicate where every member of the army supposedly has a share. As with almost every character in Catch-22, there is no mention of Milo's religion, but it is almost impossible not to interpret him as a fading Jewish character. He is the Jew who has lost himself in American capitalism, and in the process vanished as a Jew and become an American man. His insatiable desire for money is not a commentary on the perceived greed of Jews, but the dangers of American capitalism. Through his syndicate Milo becomes the Assistant Governor-General of Malta, Vice-Shah of Oran, and the Mayor of Sicily amongst other

titles. Milo's authorship is difficult to define. As shown by his political conquests he has power, and controls his own life. At first glance his knack for business seems to be old world Jewish, but upon further examination Milo is an example of what happens to a Jew when he becomes an American man without bothering to attempt a negotiation of American Judaism. For one, he not only buys and sells goods in various countries throughout the world, but he also seems to have an in with their prostitution rings. Upon arrival in Palermo he tells Yossarian "I radioed ahead and made arrangements with a four-year-old pimp to supply you and Orr with two eight-year-old virgins who are half Spanish" (268). Satiric age differences aside (the prostitutes turn out to be thirty-two-year-old Estonians) Milo's view of women, and his desire to control them with money is strictly American. So too is his lack of compassion.

Before long, Milo begins dealing directly with the Germans. He "had transformed his syndicate into an international cartel" (291). He goes so far as to have four German bombers land at his base in order to deliver food to his mess halls. This unforgivable act grows from Milo's loss of Jewish identity. This scene shows a disturbing connection between the Nazi's elimination of Jewish American authorship, and that of the United States military. The U.S military and American capitalism turn Milo into an American man who lacks compassion. This emotional emptiness allows him to attack his friends. Much like the Nazis, the American army crushes Jewish American authorship with disastrous results. Eventually Milo ends up controlling the majority of planes for both armies. He "contracted with the American military authorities to bomb the German-held highway bridge at Orvieto and with the German military authorities to defend the highway bridge at Orvieto with anti-aircraft fire against his own attack" (292). Because everyone has a share in the syndicate, both armies decide to use their men in the attack rather than Milo's. He charges the American army six percent more than the total cost of the

operation and makes the same deal with the Germans with the additional proviso that he gets a one thousand dollar bonus for each American plane that is shot out of the sky. Heller writes “It was an ideal arrangement for everyone but the dead man in Yossarian’s tent, who was killed over the target the day he arrived” (293). Joseph Heller had William Shakespeare’s The Merchant of Venice on his mind when he wrote Catch-22. On the subject of the chaplain he writes “If they pricked him, didn’t he bleed?” (311). In Catch-22, even the gentile Americans are Jews. Milo has all the greed of the shylock, but no Jewish compassion. He sees nothing wrong with subjecting his own troops to certain death in order to make a profit. Unlike Yossarian, he has no conscience. He is a cold-killer swept up in the thrill of American capitalism. He is the dark side of American authorship which, in a way, can only come to fruition when a Jewish figure separates from his Judaism and gives himself to the seductive powers of America. He later uses his planes to bomb his own base. After Milo’s attack, the “wounded soon lay screaming everywhere” (296). While Jewish American male authorship is characterized by self-criticism, Milo’s warped American male authorship is marked by self-destruction. He has no problem killing his brothers-in-arms for a profit. In search of more money, Milo sacrifices his Jewish American authorship. This sacrifice is represented by the death of Mudd, a potential Jewish American author who never gets to grow because of the nefarious power of American authorship.

Heller uses Milo as a warning; with a loss of Jewish American authorship comes pain and destruction. Mel Brooks’ 1968 film, The Producers, also uses satire to show the importance of Jewish American authorship, and the dangers of American authorship. The Producers is similar to Catch-22 in that both are cultural milestones ripe with satire which continue to play an important role in shaping Jewish American identity. As far as subject matter goes, the two could not be more different. The protagonists of The Producers are Max Bialystock and Leo Bloom,

two Jewish men in the theatre industry. Bialystock, a bombastic Jewish figure who uses his seemingly powerful voice to cover his lack of Jewish American authorship, is a Broadway producer intent on producing a flop so that he will not have to repay investors who have fronted more money than the play cost to put on. Bloom is his neurotic and nebbish counterpart, an accountant who aids Bialystock with his scheme. The Producers is a film about two Jewish men who are never able to convince the film's audience of their masculinity, and willingly give up their authorship in an attempt to make a profit. Both figures are very similar to Milo in that they abandon their Jewish authorship to pursue the 'American Dream.' There is a difference between the old world shylock, intent on adding even the most meager sum to his personal wealth, and the Jewish American who not only wants wealth, but the perks that come with the fulfillment of the American lifestyle: the women, cars, boats, cigars, etc. While looking out on New York City, Bialystock says "There it is Bloom, the most exciting city in the world. Thrills, adventure, romance, everything you ever dreamed of is down there: big black limousines, gold cigarette cases, elegant ladies with long legs, all you need is money, Bloom." The message is clear: Jewish authorship is not necessary in order to enjoy the fruits of the new world. Mel Brooks uses The Producers to show the danger of a world where Jewish American men willingly sacrifice their authorship. Bialystock and Bloom are similar to Marx in the beginning of *Defender of the Faith* in that they seem to value American masculinity more than Jewishness. However, the two are far from the image of the American men. They are not killers; they are vulnerable men who have lost their sense of selves.

Unlike Biloxi Blues, The Producers is not interested in character development as portrayed by the film's ending which shows the two protagonists running the same scheme from prison. Rather than undergoing a transition, Bialystock and Bloom run full speed into a dead-

end. From the very beginning they are relegated to producer and accountant, and those titles do not change. In short, Bialystock dedicates his life to funding the authorship of others while Bloom's life consists of counting the money from others' works of authorship, a constant reminder of the lifestyle he can never have. Bialystock and Bloom's characters are unusual because their masculine identities are questionable. Their respective masculinities are best illustrated in their opening encounter in Bialystock's office. The film begins with Bialystock, played by a haggard looking Zero Mostel, seducing older women in order to take their money. His first target calls him a "dirty young man" as she leaves his office. Bialystock's masculinity has past him. He now must resort to sexual encounters with octogenarians in order to earn a living. If anything, he possesses a thin veneer of masculinity. A defining trait of America is the desire for eternal youth, and Bialystock is fading into the dusk. He uses the old ladies to make himself feel young and Bloom to make himself feel powerful. When Bloom introduces himself as an accountant, Bialystock booms "Then account for yourself. Do you believe in God, do you believe in gold?" Bialystock sheds his Judaism for gold, and counters the emptiness caused by his lack of faith by bullying Bloom. This gives him an illusion of power and authorship over Bloom's life. Eventually he comes to terms with his lack of masculinity; he says "You know who I used to be? Max Bialystock, king of Broadway" and "I'm drowning; other men sail through life, Bialystock has struck a reef. I'm being sunk by a society that demands success."

Bloom plays the role of the Nebbish Jew to the point where he is more baby than adult. When Bialystock first finds him lurking outside the office, Bloom stammers "Scared. Can't talk" in an infantile voice. Gene Wilder plays the role of Bloom as a frantic and neurotic man bereft of confidence and happiness. Bloom eases into the role of the submissive Jewish man when confronted with Bialystock's paunch figure. It is as if the only way to make Bialystock look

masculine is to juxtapose him with the timid Bloom. However, neither possesses a bona fide masculine identity. Bloom jumps when Bialystock slams the door and shrieks when he is asked to account for himself. His emasculation is complete when Bialystock takes Bloom's prized possession, his blue blanket. Bloom responds by whimpering "My blanket, my blue blanket, give me my blue blanket...I've had it since I was a baby." As shown by Blotnik in *The Conversion of the Jews*, retaining Jewish identity in America, instead of finding the balance, is sure to result in a lack of voice. Without the accompaniment of American masculinity and authorship, Jewish masculinity in America is easily silenced.

Bialystock and Bloom read through endless scripts searching for a surefire flop. They eventually settle on a production entitled "Springtime for Hitler," written Franz Liebkind, a former member of the Nazi party currently residing in New York. As Bialystock and Bloom approach the crazed German (he spends his time on the roof with pigeons), Bloom spots his Nazi helmet, but Bialystock says "Don't say anything to offend him. We need that play." Rather than establish their authorship, Bialystock and Bloom choose to finance the play of a man who seeks to "clear the Fuhrer's name." Like Milo, the pair of producers are caught up in the American dream; they think only of unbridled capital gains instead of the tragedy of their people. In a sense, to forge American authorship it is necessary to not only abandon all aspects of Jewish identity, but to forget about the trials of the Jewish people altogether. The purpose of Jewish authorship is to ensure that the Holocaust is forever seared on the world's memory. This is further proof that Jews must find a balance, the creation of Jewish American authorship. Jewish authorship will be silenced, swallowed up by new world. An engagement solely with American authorship and masculinity places the Jew in a situation where he purposefully distances himself

from his heritage, and therefore becomes a detriment to his people. The Producers is a warning for Jews who willingly forego their right to authorship in order to become American.

The blatant anti-Semitism of “Springtime for Hitler” baffles the audience at first, but soon they see the play as satire and roar with laughter at every scene. Liebkind attends the play and sits, horrified, as the audience mocks his beloved Fuhrer. He is distraught by Lorenzo St. DuBois’ portrayal of Hitler as a hippie. When one audience member tells him to shut up he stands and screams “You are the audience. I am the author. I outrank you.” It is a humorous line, meant to highlight his downfall, but it holds a central truth. He is the author, and therefore should have more power than the audience or the producers, but in the film he is portrayed as weak. There are no models of American authorship or masculinity in The Producers. Brooks uses his film to portray American authorship as a trap and a dream that never was.

The play is a success, but Bialystock and Bloom will not passively give up their freedom. Back in Bialystock’s office they plot with Liebkind, and Bialystock hands him money and a gun and says “Here, here, buy bullets. Go kill, kill the actors.” An essential part of American authorship is the ability to kill with no remorse. Bialystock sees nothing morally wrong with killing innocent actors who he has befriended as long as he saves himself. Bloom replies “This is insanity. Have you lost your mind...Actors are not animals, they’re human beings.” While he has given up his Jewish American authorship, a small bit of Jewish compassion remains in his body. However, his redeeming moment is short-lived as he agrees to blow up the theater instead of murdering the actors. Had Bloom not sacrificed his Jewish identity, he could have used a mixture of logic and compassion to convince Bialystock to stop the destruction, but his American authorship takes control of his thoughts and demolition of art, a staple of the Nazi party, becomes a viable option. As they plant the dynamite in the theater Bialystock exclaims “Next time I

produce a play, no author.” Even at a dire time, Bialystock will not acknowledge his problem. The downfall of his character is his refusal to even attempt to live a life where he is the author. He does not realize that his life is a play with no author.

Bialystock and Bloom are not authors; they are actors. Actors are the farthest from authorship as they simply respond to written and verbal cues. They do not think for themselves and spend their lives acting out the authorship of fictional characters. Is the Jewish American that pretends to be an American not an eternal actor himself? Bialystock is able to succeed for a long time in a very specific part of America: Broadway. On Broadway everyone is an actor and he is able to blend in with the countless others who play a daily role in order to survive. Otherness is not remarkable on Broadway, an “other” is an interchangeable character who cannot thrive, but can survive. It is only when he and Bloom try to climb, to reach the upper echelon of America, or, what the general population considers to be the true America, that they crash and burn.

## **Conclusion**

It wasn't until after I met Nathan Marx and Ozzie Freedman that I learned the word authorship. Wykowski had just stolen Eugene's journal when I realized its importance. With this word in my head Luciana's metaphorical destruction at the hands of Yossarian took on a darker tone. Emotions I believed to be buried beneath an insurmountable amount of trophies, old clothes and photographs of fond memories came flooding back. I could almost hear the attic steps creak under their weight. All of these pages, this whole project, began with a post script at the bottom of an email. “What does authorship mean,” I wrote under some half formed thoughts about Roth's work. At the time I was excited to write about Jewish masculinity. I envisioned chapters

about violence and sexuality and figured maybe this new word, authorship, could bring me a page or two closer to the finish line.

It was one of those late September days where your small liberal arts campus lets you see its beauty before its golden leaves and almost-too-green grass are hidden under its winter coat, and I was sitting in my advisor's office doing my best to look at ease. I was probably wearing my track sweatshirt from high school, you know, the one that tells everyone who sees my back that we were conference champions once upon a time. The one that has my last name on the sleeve, the closest thing to a letterman jacket I've got. There's a good chance I was wearing my Michigan sweat pants even though I've never been to Ann Arbor. I was a Jewish kid from an Irish-Catholic town just trying to be a man in America. Sitting on that couch I remembered one day in high school when a kid named Pat whose last name began with an 'Mc' bounced a quarter down our lunch table. I took a break from my chicken patty and chocolate milk and picked it cleanly on a short hop. For a second, I was proud. I had the hands of a middle infielder. I was an athlete just like them. Then the Jew jokes came flying like math class spitballs. I was ashamed of myself, not necessarily for being Jewish, but for chasing down that quarter.

My advisor's voice snapped me out of it. We talked about Roth, Marx's coldness, and Ozzie's lust for power. At the end of the meeting I got up and slung my bag over my shoulder when he remembered my post script. I sat back down and took a flyswatter to the visions of Xbox and Diet Coke that had snuck into my head the second I zipped my bag. We talked for a few minutes about authorship and what it means to the Jewish man. I was happy to learn a new term I could show off in some seminar if it wasn't one of those days where I didn't feel like talking and thanked my advisor before heading back to my Town House.

I was listening to a song by an eighteen year old artist with a couple of dollar signs in his last name when I started to contemplate Marx's forged leave passes. This held my attention for a minute before it shifted back to that eighteen year old kid from Brooklyn whose last name is a swear word and probably isn't in most senior theses. That kid was Joey Bada\$\$, and that kid is an author. It was on that walk home that my thesis began to take shape.

I'm writing this conclusion in the basement of a library that has been featured in more than one BuzzFeed article with the word 'Beautiful' in the title. I'm wearing my Michigan sweats and my track sweatshirt, but the guy they keep warm has done a little growing since that September day. Even when I started writing my thesis I guessed that I would write ten, maybe fifteen pages about authorship. Forty something pages later and a lot of learning and self-reflection later, here we are. Authorship has changed how I think about myself as a person and how I approach academia as a student. I get a few of those pesky bumps on my arms, those visible signs of being touched by something bigger than me, when I think that, four years into my college career, I have found a fresh way to interact with literature.

In one of my classes this semester we read The Love of the Last Tycoon, by F. Scott Fitzgerald. We discussed Fitzgerald working his way through Judaism and a world, Hollywood, where the author is a drowning man. I listened appreciatively as my peers put on a showcase of knowledge. We analyzed Monroe Stahr's authorship and Cecilia's voice. I waited, heart-pounding, for a chance to bring up Kathleen's authorship, but we took the final twenty minutes of class to discuss Barthes and my chance passed. I was mad at myself for being passive, for not letting my voice be heard, but I emailed my professor, who is also my thesis advisor, and we met and discussed Kathleen's authorship for a few minutes. He told me he had never read Kathleen's character that way, but encouraged me to explore the possibility. I don't think I was right and my

class was wrong or vice versa, but I was proud to have read the novel from a different angle. The thrill of literature is that something so black and white, a motionless text, produces a fluid analysis. The magic is infinite, and best of all, it's real.

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