

'Selling Mudpies to the Unwashed': *The Day of the Locust* and Representations of Hollywood in Film and Literature

The 'cheated' of Hollywood are those who have come to California from the dustbowls of the Midwest in response to promises of glamour and fortune, or as Tod puts it several times throughout the novel, who have 'come to California to die'. Among them is Faye Greener, the 17-year-old would-be starlet, and subject of Tod's romantic obsession, who is equally cruel and seductive, a clear embodiment of the soul of Hollywood itself. Her father, Harry, is a former vaudeville clown and current silver polish salesman who uses obsolete comedy routines to little success. Homer Simpson is a chaste, god-fearing, ex-hotel-bookkeeper from the Midwest who decides to become financially responsible for Faye after becoming enamoured with her along with the rest of West's male characters. Earle Shucke is a cartoonish version of a cowboy, complete with conservative displays of masculinity, who can only account for the first half of Faye's criteria for a lover: 'criminally handsome' and 'rich'. Miguel is his friend, who is the only one throughout the novel to have his sexual interest in Faye reciprocated. Finally, Abe Kusich is belligerent and unkind, known for his scathing insults and his misogyny, but mainly for his complete lack of hypocrisy when it comes to his immoral behaviour. West offers Abe as the person underneath everyone else's veneer: ugly, violent, and hateful.