Hemingway’s A Moveable Feast

“THERE CAN BE NO FINAL TEXT BECAUSE THERE IS NOT ONE.”

SEAN HEMINGWAY
In 1957, Hemingway started to work on “The Paris Sketches,” as he called the book. He worked on it in Cuba and Ketchum, Idaho, brought it to Spain in 1959, and to Paris in the same year.

In 1959, he presented a draft to his publisher. This draft did not have an introduction and a final chapter.

When *A Moveable Feast* was published, Mary Hemingway claimed that the book was finished in 1960.

However, according to Hemingway, the book wasn’t finished: he had not written an introduction or final chapter and had not decided on a title. He continued to work on the book until at least April 1961 (he died in Ketchum, Idaho on July 2, 1961).
Hemingway was married to Hadley (1921-1927), Pauline (1927-1940), Martha (journalist, foreign correspondent 1940-1945), and then Mary (journalist 1946-1961).

Ernest Hemingway and his fourth wife, Mary, who edited the first edition of “A Moveable Feast.”

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1. Re-Arrangement of Chapters:

- Chapter changes: “Une Generation Perdue” was Chapter 7 in Hemingway’s final version. Mary moved it to Chapter 3. “Birth of a New School” was deleted in Hemingway’s version.

- If Mary had kept the original order, Gertrude Stein would have recurred in five-chapter intervals.
Juxtaposition of Stein and Beach in Restored Edition: “Miss Stein Instructs” is followed by “Shakespeare and Company.”

Stein’s salon. Hemingway mentions Picasso’s nude of the girl with the basket of flowers in A Moveable Feast.

Beach with Monnier and Joyce at Shakespeare & Company.
Stein’s Influence on Hemingway

➢ When Hemingway brought Stein some poems and the beginning of a novel, she said bluntly: “There is a great deal of description in this, she said, and not particularly good description. Begin over again and concentrate.”

➢ She also told him, “remarks are not literature.” After she said this, Hemingway cut 9 pages from his short story “Big Two-Hearted River.”

➢ Hemingway praises Stein’s use of rhythm.

➢ Stein also encouraged Hemingway to give up his job as a reporter for the sake of his art.
Hemingway’s Falling Out with Stein:

- Hemingway claimed that he surpassed Stein’s teaching and claimed that she learned to write dialogue from him.
- Stein’s “A rose is a rose is a rose” > Hemingway’s “A bitch is a bitch is a bitch” (*For Whom the Bell Tolls*, 1940)
Joyce sold out the publishing rights of *Ulysses* to Random House for a $45,000 advance. Beach did not receive a penny after ten years of unremitting hard work— even organizing the smuggling of copies of *Ulysses* into the US and the UK.

The obscenity laws that banned the novel in America and England were supposedly meant to “protect the delicate sensibilities of female readers.”

Judge Woolsey legalized the book in the US but admitted that “the novel was transcendent, that it turned filth into art.”
Dinner at Sylvia Beach and Adrienne Monnier

Fitzgerald to James Joyce: 
"""How does it feel to be a great genius, sir? I am so excited at seeing you, sir, that I could weep."""
2. Mary creates the final break-up chapter from Hemingway’s fragments

- The early, published version provides a more negative portrayal of Pauline.

- In later versions, Hemingway takes the blame and describes his destructiveness for loving two women at once.

3. Mary uses the unrevised epigraph to Fitzgerald chapter

- On the right, Hemingway’s epigraph to the Fitzgerald chapter.

Note the lines he crossed out and the final sentence added.

Is Mary’s re-arrangement of chapters counter to the modernist project?
Modernist authors sought to break away from traditions and conventions through experimentation with new literary forms, devices, and styles. They incorporated the new psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung into their works and paid particular attention to language—both how it is used and how they believed it could or ought to be used. Their works reflected the pervasive sense of loss, disillusionment, and even despair in the wake of the Great War, hence their emphasis on historical discontinuity and the alienation of humanity.
The Title: A Moveable Feast

- Hemingway’s original idea for a title was *The Early Eye and the Ear (How Paris was in the Early Days)*. The Globe and Mail calls this “an awkward title and most certainly a publisher’s marketing nightmare.”

- Mary Hemingway derived the title from a remark made by her husband to Aaron Hotchner: “If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you, for Paris is a moveable feast.”
Ezra Pound’s influence on Hemingway

- Both are searching for the precise word. Write with precision and do away with unnecessary elaboration.
- “All you have to do is write one true sentence. Write the truest sentence that you know.”
- Distrust adjectives
Henri Gaudier-Brzeska and Ezra Pound's head

- Henri Gaudier-Brzeska carving *Hieratic Head of Ezra Pound*, photographed by Walter Benington, c.1914
- "Pound’s only instruction to the sculptor had been to make the portrait ‘virile.’"
- Hemingway writes, "I also liked the head of Ezra by Gadier-Brzeska" (The Restored Edition 87)
- Modernism and masculinity – Vorticism

Hemingway’s Iceberg Theory/Theory of Omission:

“If a writer of prose knows enough of what he is writing about he may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them. The dignity of a movement of an iceberg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water. A writer who omits things because he does not know them only makes hollow places in his writing.”

"I omitted the real end [of "Out of Season"] which was that the old man hanged himself. This was omitted on my new theory that you could omit anything ... and the omitted part would strengthen the story."
Despite these influences, Hemingway’s description are often cruel:

- **Hemingway on Wyndham Lewis:** "He had a face that reminded me of a frog, not a bullfrog but just any frog, and Paris was too big a puddle for him." (108)

- **Hemingway on Gertrude Stein:** “Then Miss Stein’s voice came pleading and begging, saying, ‘Don’t pussy. Don’t. Don’t, please don’t. I’ll do anything, pussy, but please don’t do it.'” (118)

- “She got to look like a Roman emperor and that was fine if you liked your women to look like Roman emperors.” (119)

- However, Hemingway’s most cruel depiction is probably that of Scott Fitzgerald.
Fitzgerald’s Influence on Hemingway

- Fitzgerald brought Hemingway’s work to the attention of Maxwell Perkins, Fitzgerald’s own editor at Scribner’s.
- Fitzgerald also wrote a favourable review of Hemingway.
- He counseled Hemingway to cut the first two chapters of *The Sun Also Rises*. The ways in which Hemingway revised his work was mostly through cutting. After Fitzgerald’s recommendation for *The Sun Also Rises*, Hemingway cut 15 pages (more than a chapter) of his first novel.
Yet Hemingway focuses on Fitzgerald’s feminine appearance, his hypochondria, his inability to satisfy Zelda sexually, and the lack of impression he leaves behind:

Many years later at the Ritz bar, long after the end of World War II, Georges, who is the bar man now and who was the chasseur when Scott lived in Paris, asked me, “Papa, who was this Monsieur Fitzgerald that everyone asks me about”

“Didn’t you know him?”

“No. I remember all of the people of that time. But now they ask me only about him” (The Restored Edition 63).
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<th>Published version:</th>
<th>Hemingway’s finished version (after several revisions):</th>
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<td>His talent was as natural as the pattern that was made by the dust on a butterfly’s wings. At one time he understood it no more than the butterfly did and he did not know when it was brushed or marred. Later he became conscious of his damaged wings and of their construction and he learned to think and could not fly any more because the love of flight was gone and he could only remember when it had been effortless.</td>
<td>Later he became conscious of his damaged wings and of their construction and he learned to think. He was flying again and I was lucky to meet him just after a good time in his writing if not in his life.</td>
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Zelda and Scott Fitzgerald

Watching her face you could see her mind leave the table and go to the night's party and return with her eyes blank as a cat's and then pleased, and the pleasure would show along the thin line of her lips and then be gone. Scott was being the good cheerful host and Zelda looked at him and she smiled happily with her eyes and her mouth too as he drank the wine. I learned to know that smile very well. It meant she knew Scott would not be able to write.

Scott in a 1930 letter to Zelda

“We ruined ourselves, I have never honestly thought that we ruined each other.”
Recurring images of emptiness and hunger

“When we had finished and there was no question of hunger any more the feeling that had been like hunger when we were on the bridge was still there when we caught the bus home. It was there when we came in the room and after we had gone to bed and made love in the dark, it was there. When I woke with the windows open and the moonlight on the roofs of the tall houses, it was there.” (Restored Edition 49)

“You could always go into the Luxembourg museum and all the paintings were heightened and clearer and more beautiful if you were belly-empty, hollow-hungry … Later I thought Cezanne was probably hungry in a different way” (Restored Edition 65).
Memory Loss and Electric Shock Therapy

- Yet Hemingway suffered from memory loss as a result of electric shock therapy: “electric shock therapy can destroy memory like dementia or death does, but, unlike dementia or death, you are left aware that it has been destroyed” (Patrick Hemingway, “Foreword,” A Moveable Feast: The Restored Edition).
Hemingway’s Final Years

- His marriage to Mary was marked by violent drinking and arguments.
- Hemingway’s drinking became worse and had a toll on his mental and physical health.
- Loss of important people: Fitzgerald (1940), Pauline (1951), Maxwell Perkins (1947) and Charles Scribner (head of publishing house, 1952).
- Hemingway suffered from “hemochromatosis, the iron-overloading disorder that causes internal damage of joints and organs, cirrhosis of the liver, heart disease, and depression.”
- He had diabetes and high blood pressure.
- Suffering from depression, Hemingway received electric shock therapy at the Mayo Clinic in 1961. He seemed to lose his ability to write.