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Modernist Essayisms

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Poetry and Essayism in the Work of Gertrude Stein and Ernest Hemingway

Creative minds of the twentieth-century sought out new methods for representing changes in modern society. Art movements such as cubism and dada grapple with the strange, new, and conflicting social conditions of the time, piecing together fragments of past, present, and future into subversive works which create disorienting experiences for viewers; often, writing from the period does the same. Modernist writers, similarly to artists, pursued new methods for presenting reality authentically, which resulted in experimentation in genre and form. Therefore, the essay, a genre which resists convention and definition, proved to be an effective form for such representations. Modernist writers experimented with the form of the essay as well as the concept of essayism by subverting conventions and blending genres in order to represent, weigh, and test the disorienting experience of reality. This essay will examine the work of Gertrude Stein and Ernest Hemingway in relation to these ideas. By addressing the question of poetry in the essay, these writers construct a new understanding of the essay as a form and the concept of essayism. Their exploration of genre, through the incorporation of poetry and experimentation with words, in new attempts to represent modern society, exemplifies the art of essayism.

ESSAYISM AND GENRE

Brion Dillon's 'Essayism' provides a theoretical framework through which to view the work of Stein and Hemingway. Dillon notes the ambiguity historically surrounding the

genre of the essay, quoting G. W. F. Hegel: ‘what is familiarly known is not properly known at all’ (16). Dillon explains one perspective of the essay as ‘a weighing of something outside of itself’ rather than ‘a test of itself, of its own powers, or its author’s powers’ (16). While the essays of Stein and Hemingway test ideas outside themselves, they also serve as tests of themselves and their authors’ abilities.

Hemingway’s essays indicate a test of themselves and of his abilities as an author through his application of the iceberg theory, for instance. Oldsey describes the iceberg theory as ‘Hemingway’s ability to compress—to say much in a few words, to suggest emotion through clusters of images, to signal depths of life through the sensuous surface of things’, and he quotes Hemingway from an interview: ‘I always try to write on the principle of the iceberg. There is seven-eighths of it under water for every part that shows. Anything you know you can eliminate and it only strengthens your iceberg. It is the part that doesn’t show’ (273). From this perspective, Hemingway’s essays serve as a test of themselves and his abilities as an author, as he tests, or ‘assays’ (Dillon 16) writing with the ‘principle of the iceberg’.

Hemingway’s ‘Pamplona in July’ exemplifies Oldsey’s description—Hemingway presents Pamplona through ‘clusters of images,’ using strands of direct lines such as ‘We landed in Pamplona at night. The streets were solid with people dancing. Music was pounding and throbbing’ (98). It is not until the end of the essay that Hemingway seems to more explicitly reference what is beneath the surface of his Spanish setting. The final paragraph, which will be explored in depth later in this essay, is when Hemingway jolts readers away from Pamplona, which symbolises ways of the past (or of masculinity lost in modern society), and into the modern setting of the office, prompting readers to reflect on the deeper meaning of his essay and its subtle manifestations throughout the essay. His sentences of omission work to place readers into vivid scenes, letting them explore Hemingway’s settings for themselves to discover what is beneath the ‘iceberg.’

Stein's essays also serve as a test of themselves, as Stein tests out the guidelines (for writing) which she sets forth (through her writing). For instance, Stein overrules particular writing conventions and tests out her own rules in essays such as 'Poetry and Grammar.' In the first line, 'What is poetry and if you know what poetry is what is prose' (209), Stein immediately begins to represent her views on poetry and grammar; as she explains later in the essay, she does not like commas or question marks. She claims to omit question marks when it is clear that the sentence is a question. Her lack of a question mark in this sentence prompts for various interpretations; she urges readers to consider if this sentence is a question and also allows for the interpretation that her essay is about to lay out what poetry and prose are. Stein structures this sentence in a way which encourages re-reading, causing readers to pause and consider these questions. This sentence, as well as many others in her essay(s), experiment with and test the exclusion of a punctuation mark (particularly the question mark), which makes the essay a test of itself.

Dillon's etymological examination of the essay may serve as a more accurate representation of Stein's and Hemingway's work. Etymologically, Dillon defines the essay in terms of weighing, examining, and trying. He addresses the conflicting nature of the essay—it aims to entirely encompass its subject matter while also acknowledging its own incompleteness, which 'is a value in itself for it better reflects the brave and curious but faltering nature of the writing mind' (18). The work of Stein and Hemingway aligns with these principles, as their experimentations outside of clear genres allow them to more accurately represent their 'writing mind(s)'. The key to essayism, Dillon suggests, is 'Not the practice merely of the form, but an attitude to the form – to its spirit of adventure and its unfinished nature – and towards much else' (20). It is this attitude—complete ideas which may never be completed, certainty within uncertainty, truth which conflicts itself—that Stein and Hemingway address, and it is in their blurring of genres that they are able to achieve this.

Adorno speaks to the unfinished nature surrounding the essay as a form, speaking on the effectiveness of its open-endedness by stating: 'It does not begin with Adam and Eve but with what it wants to discuss; it says what is at issue and stops where it feels itself complete - not where nothing is left to say' (152). Stein and Hemingway use this kind of fragmented thought to create complete works which also leave room for further contemplation. Adorno highlights the strength of the essay's seemingly contradicting attributes:

For the essay perceives that the longing for strict definitions has long offered, through fixating manipulations of the meanings of concepts, to eliminate the irritating and dangerous elements of things that live within concepts. Yet the essay can neither do without general concepts - even language that does not fetishize the concept cannot do without concepts - nor does it treat them arbitrarily. It therefore takes the matter of presentation more seriously than do those procedures that separate out method from material and are indifferent to the way they represent their objectified contents (152).

Stein and Hemingway achieve precisely what Adorno describes. For instance, by recognizing the shortcomings of certain grammatical and syntactic conventions, then using them herself, Stein takes the presentation of grammar not only seriously, but passionately. Hemingway, through his omission, to 'say much in a few words' (Oldsey 273), enlivens the 'things that live within concepts'. These authors experiment with language's possibilities, testing out the type of openness Adorno describes.

Biss writes on the blurring of genres in relation to the essay. In 'It Is What It Is', Biss states: 'I suspect that genre, like gender, with which it shares a root, is mostly a collection of lies we have agreed to believe' (196). Biss writes about the lyric essay, which uses poetic elements, making it subject to questions of categorization. While both Stein and Hemingway incorporate elements of poetry, Hemingway's incorporations, such as alliteration and rhythm, are more traditional than Stein's, such as unconventional sentence structure and experimental

punctuation. At the conclusion of her essay, Biss writes that ‘knowing what a thing is called—how it is classified, how it is packaged, how it is marketed—is inevitably a poor substitute for knowing what it is’ (199). This is precisely what Stein and Hemingway exemplify; by incorporating elements of poetry into their essays, they negate the importance of classifying their work and shift the focus towards how their writing works and what it actually means.

Grossman, Spahr, and Young also speak on the lyric essay, unpacking the often muddled subgenre. They clarify that descriptions of the lyric essay may be applied to other genres, so it may be ‘more situational than a distinct sub-genre’ (216). Grossman, Spahr, and Young quote Montaigne, who extracts from ‘the gait of poetry, all jumps and tumblings’ (215). Both Stein and Hemingway fit Montaigne’s description, but the definition Grossman, Spahr, and Young provide aligns more closely with Hemingway’s work: ‘Like a poem, a lyric essay flashes between ideas or images, leaning on figurative language and musical cadence’ (215). Hemingway’s use of musical cadence and flashes between images is evident; Stein flashes between ideas, but in a less musical way. In fact, Stein’s disorienting sentence structure achieves quite the opposite. Hemingway’s musical sentences pull readers in, while Stein’s puzzling sentence structure urges readers to stop and contemplate her ideas.

Grossman, Spahr, and Young also quote Max Bense, who defines the essayist as a writer who ‘turns his object around, questions it, feels it, tests it, reflects on it, who attacks it from different sides, and assembles what he sees in his mind’s eyes and puts into words what the object allows one to see under the conditions created in the course of writing,’ claiming that ‘he could just as easily be describing the lyric essayist’ (215-16). From the perspective of Dillon’s theoretical framework, he could just as easily be describing the spirit of essayism. Thus, the understanding of the confounding genre remains subversive, muddled, and conflicting, which is actually where it finds its strength. Adorno summarizes this thought

effectively: 'By transgressing the orthodoxy of thought, something becomes visible in the object which it is orthodoxy's secret purpose to keep invisible' (171). By subverting the genre of the essay, Stein and Hemingway offer new perspectives on writing, revealing the power of mixing genres.

HEMINGWAY'S POETICS

Hemingway uses poetic elements such as alliteration, rhythm, and imagery to create song-like sentences and bright scenes. Scholarship on Hemingway stresses his use of omission, which is key to understanding much of his writing; however, at times, he does include supplementary, but not superfluous, words—specifically adjectives—to create scenic images and poetic flow. In 'Pamplona in July', Hemingway describes the matadors: 'Once, twice, three times he made the perfect, floating, slow swing with the cape, perfectly, graceful, debonair, back on his heels, baffling the bull' (105). In 'Tuna Fishing in Spain', Hemingway describes fishing: 'It is a back-sickening, sinew-straining, man-sized job even with a rod that looks like a hoe handle' (16). In 'The Hotels in Switzerland', Hemingway writes: 'Down below there is a snow-softened valley that climbs into white, jagged peaks with more splashes of pine forest on their flanks' (17). In these examples, Hemingway uses lists of adjectives as vessels of alliteration and rhythm in order to create song-like sentences akin to poetry. These types of rhythmic sentences blur the lines between essay and poetry, revealing the power of Hemingway's exploration beyond genre boundaries.

Hemingway's attention to imagery, specifically in his description of colour, contribute to the poetic texture of his essays. In 'Tuna Fishing in Spain,' Hemingway writes: 'Sun-baked brown mountains slump down to the sea like tired old dinosaurs, and the colour of the water is as blue as a chromo of the bay at Naples' (15). This colourful sentence is dense with poetic elements; Hemingway uses alliteration, rhyme, and simile to create vivid imagery and rhythmic flow. The repetition of 'b' sounds, in 'baked', 'brown', 'blue', and 'bay', the rhyme

of ‘brown’ and ‘down’, the repetition of ‘d’ sounds in ‘tired’ and ‘old’, and the repetition of ‘s’ sounds in ‘is’ and ‘as’ create the musical cadence Grossman, Spahr, and Young speak on. His similes—‘like tired old dinosaurs’ and ‘as blue as a chromo of the bay at Naples’—evoke striking images in the imaginations of readers. Hemingway’s use of poetics, which is underscored by his attention to colour, is manifest throughout the essay:

‘A grey pasteboard church with twin towers and a flat, sullen fort that tops the hill where the town is set up look out on the blue bay, where the good fishermen will go when snow drifts along the northern streams and trout lie nose to nose in deep pools under a scum of ice. For the bright, blue, chromo is alive with fish’ (15).

Hemingway’s sentences of this ilk are so similar to poetry or song that it is impossible to ignore. His repeated use of alliteration—in ‘drunkenly and determinedly’, ‘silver splatter in the sea’, ‘bushel full of buckshot’, and ‘school of sardines’, for instance—emphasises his interest in designing essays which pull from ‘the gait of poetry, all jumps and tumblings’, as Montaigne described.

Hemingway’s ‘Pamplona in July’ uses imagery and symbolism to comment on the loss of masculinity in modern society, most explicitly in its concluding paragraph. This essay plunges readers into the ‘white-walled, sun-baked town’ of Pamplona until the final paragraph when Hemingway jolts readers into the stark, cold reality of ‘working in an office’ and offers final hints as to what the deeper meaning of his essay may be. This jolt—a flash between ideas—exemplifies the lyric essay as defined by Grossman, Spahr, and Young (215).

Hemingway begins the final paragraph with a small number—three—which contrasts with the large number—twenty thousand—describing the salary of Pamplona’s matadors in the preceding sentence. Though the ‘three’ is not describing salary, it still underscores the separation between Pamplona and Hemingway’s office. By suddenly including the setting of an office after the vibrant setting of Pamplona, Hemingway simulates the shock of

transitioning from adventure to reality, from sun-baked to stark and cold. Next, he continues in his reminiscence of Pamplona, but in a more detached manner than he had previously in the essay. By separating Pamplona from the present both temporally ('It seems in a different century now') and spatially ('It is a very long way') he further distances himself from the Spanish town. He again calls it the 'sun-baked town,' which recalls the beginning of the essay, but unlike in the essay's opening sentence, Hemingway does not hyphenate 'sun baked'. Consequently, audiences may initially read 'It is a very long way from the sun', alluding to the idea that where Hemingway is now (urbanised modern society) lacks the liveliness he experienced in Pamplona. Through his repetition of referencing Pamplona as the 'sun-baked town' he creates a sort of poetic rhythm, searing a bright image of Pamplona onto the memories of readers. In the same sentence, when Hemingway discusses how 'the men race through the streets in the mornings ahead of the bulls to the morning ride to work', he again illustrates the contrast between where he is now and where he once was.

In his descriptions of the matadors throughout this essay, Hemingway comments on the idea of masculinity, symbolising what is lost in modern society. Hemingway depicts the matadors as the pinnacle of masculinity, suggesting that 'modernised' men lack the admirable qualities of the matadors. In the essay he describes them as 'maera, dark, spare, and deadly looking', states that 'if you want to keep any conception of yourself as a brave, hard, perfectly balanced, thoroughly competent man in your wife's mind never take her to a real bull fight', and recounts the way one matador works 'perfectly, graceful, debonair'. He suggests that men working in offices do not compare to the larger-than-life matadors who 'make twenty thousand a year', and by repeating 'morning(s)' in the same sentence, he reminds readers how different the mornings are for the men of different occupations and cultures.

The sense of warmth and welcome Hemingway conveys in his descriptions of Pamplona symbolise nostalgia for the ways of the past. He creates this sense through the repetition of 'sun-baked' and his fond memory of staying in an 'old Spanish house'. In the final sentence, Hemingway states that 'a son, if he is to redeem the family reputation as a bull fighter, must start very early', which deepens the image present throughout the essay of matadors as the perfect example of strength and masculinity. By proposing that they 'must start very early', Hemingway suggests the difficulty of becoming a successful matador and also recalls the image of going to work early in the morning (contrasting the work of urbanised men with that of matadors). The final paragraph of 'Pamplona in July' leaves readers to reflect on ideas of masculinity, work in the modern era, and nostalgia for ways of the past. Perhaps his nostalgia for Pamplona symbolises the modern era's nostalgia for past times. In this essay readers get to experience Hemingway's memories through his words, feeling the warmth of his nostalgia like rays of light from the sun-baked Pamplona.

STEIN'S POETICS

Stein's 'Patriarchal Poetry' subverts a writing system created by a patriarchal society, using it in experimental and deconstructed ways to present words with a new approach. Though it may be placed in the category of 'poetry', not 'essay', it employs the 'attitude of the form' (exploration in the testing of words) which Dillon describes, and the 'transgressing the orthodoxy of thought' in order for something to become 'visible in the object which it is orthodoxy's secret purpose to keep invisible' which Adorno describes. Stein follows Adorno's and Dillon's frameworks by employing repetition and variation in unorthodox ways to represent all perspectives of words. In the spirit of essayism, Stein completes an idea while also leaving incompleteness through its ability to evoke various interpretations. Stein's use of repetition and variation in 'Patriarchal Poetry' reflects a similar approach to cubist paintings, which attempt to represent all perspectives of something (and may appear as repetitions of

fragments). Stein's use of repetition and variation, which 'isolates and decontextualizes words and phrases' (55) can be observed in the lines:

Let her be to be to be to be let her be to be to be let her to be let her to be let her be to be when is it that they are shy.

Very well to try.

Let her be that is to be let her be that is to be let her be let her try.

Let her be let her be let her be to be to be shy let her be to be let her be to be let her try.

Let her try.

Let her be let her be let her be let her be to be to be let her be let her try.

To be shy.

Let her be¹.

Stein's repetition and variation expose readers' raw interpretations of words; by reading the same words over and over, initial associations with words are stripped, and readers begin to find new meaning. By subverting the orthodoxy of thought, which is a patriarchal writing system, Stein brings understanding, which may have been invisible before, to the surface. Readers repeat these words and phrases so many times that they begin to lose meaning, and discover new meaning again. The introduction to 'Patriarchal Poetry' describes the processes evoked by Stein's non-linear construction of sentences as 'disruption and revelation'. These are the moments that allow the invisible to become visible again.

Stein explicitly references the patriarchy by stating:

Patriarchal means suppose patriarchal means and close patriarchal means and chose chose Monday Patriarchal means in close some day patriarchal means and chose

¹ Page number unknown.

chose Sunday patriarchal means and chose chose one day patriarchal means and close
close Tuesday.

Her disorienting, non-linear sentence structure opens up possibilities for meaning as it prompts readers to consider multiple definitions of words, such as ‘means’ and ‘close’. By using similar words ‘close’ and ‘chose’ in proximity to each other, she uncovers a new perspective on these words, decontextualising and disrupting them to produce revelation. Stein’s ‘Patriarchal Poetry’ unravels traditional writing by questioning what a poem actually is in order to construct new understandings of words and writing.

Stein’s *Tender Buttons* works in similar ways as ‘Patriarchal Poetry’ by using experimental methods to urge readers to view words in new ways. Stein presents objects in a style comparable to an abstract painting. For instance, a red stamp:

If lilies are lily white if they exhaust noise and distance and even
dust, if they dusty will dirt a surface that has no extreme grace, if
they do this and it is not necessary it is not at all necessary if they
do this they need a catalogue (6).

Stein’s unorthodox style challenges how sentences should be structured in order to urge readers to view objects in a new way. It is no wonder that she was friends with artists such as Picasso and Bracque (*Tender Buttons* vi), as her descriptions paint abstract, disorienting images. Stein constructs an environment where various perspectives of a word come to life. Her omission of commas forces readers to consider not just the ideas or images evoked by the words, but also how they function as parts of speech and how they interact with other words. The disorientation Stein creates through her unconventional sentence structure forces readers to stop and consider multiple dimensions of words.

In the section titled ‘Rooms’ (43-52) Stein exposes the power of words to function as multiple parts of speech, which subverts grammar rules and creates sentences akin to abstract

paintings. For instance, in ‘Sugar any sugar, anger every anger, lover sermon lover, centre no distractor, all order is in a measure’ (50), Stein plays around with adjectives and verbs, which implicitly reveals her passion for parts of speech (which she explicitly discusses in ‘Poetry and Grammar’). The ambiguous nature of Stein’s sentence structure creates a poetic sense of density; in the same way as poetry, her writing forces readers to devote extensive attention to each word.

In *Tender Buttons*, Stein uses similar techniques as in ‘Patriarchal Poetry’. Her abstract sentence structure throughout *Tender Buttons* subverts traditional writing conventions. She achieves this kind of subversion by using words in completely unexpected ways. For instance, on page 46, she writes: ‘A can containing a curtain is a solid sentimental usage’. The grammatical structure of this sentence is simple (it contains only one independent clause), but its unconventional use of words evokes complex imagery, leading readers to consider the words in new ways. Her use of alliteration demonstrates her interest in what happens when certain words are placed together, (as in ‘close’ and ‘chose’ in ‘Patriarchal Poetry’). By creating conceptually impossible images, Stein forces readers to think beyond the images created by words and consider the words as objects themselves. Her attentiveness to the way words are shaped and how they sound demonstrates a profound connection between her writing and poetry.

Stein’s ‘Poetry and Grammar’ essay is deeply intertwined with poetry, as she attempts to define it, makes claims about its functions in literature, and writes in a poetic style—that is, Stein negates conventions in prose such as grammar and sentence structure, and uses poetic elements such as personification, rhythm, and repetition. In the first line, ‘What is poetry and if you know what poetry is what is prose’, (209) Stein immediately begins to represent her views on poetry and grammar; as she explains later in the essay, Stein does not like commas or question marks. She claims to omit question marks when it is clear the

sentence is a question, but her lack of a question mark in this sentence also allows for the interpretation that her essay is about to lay out what poetry and prose are. Stein structures this sentence in a way which encourages re-reading, prompting readers to pause and consider these questions.

In the third sentence, Stein questions: ‘But do you do you know what prose is and do you know what poetry is’ (209). Her use of repetition both creates a rhythmic sound and urges readers to pause and further consider the question for themselves. The repetition of ‘do you’ breaks associations with this commonly used combination of words and places emphasis on the reader (‘you’). In the following paragraph, Stein comments on poetry’s use in other genres, arguing that ‘words in plays written in poetry are more lively than the same words written by the same poet in other kinds of poetry’ (209). By explicitly stating this claim and using elements of poetry throughout her essay(s), Stein asserts that poetry (or elements of poetry) used in other genres is the most effective use of poetry. By describing other works as ‘other kinds of poetry’, she blurs the lines of genre, suggesting that a play may not only contain elements of poetry, but may also be considered poetry itself. This is clarified through her mention of Shakespeare, who she references throughout her work.

Stein continues by presenting her views on various parts of speech. By treating them as living entities which ‘diagram themselves’ (211) Stein employs the rule she lays out herself that ‘a writer should always have the intensity of emotion about whatever is the object about which he writes²’ (210). Stein expresses an intense passion for words by making strong statements such as ‘I say it again more and more one does not use nouns’ (210), and ‘that has been to me ever since the one thing that has been completely exciting and completely completing’ (when referring to diagramming sentences) (211). By using the adverb ‘completely’ (describing the adjective ‘exciting’ and the adjective ‘completing’), Stein

² It is strange that Stein uses ‘he’ here, as her work shows that she denounced patriarchal writing systems, but she justifies this by suggesting that one must work in the patriarchal framework in order to dismantle it.

underscores her passion towards grammar. She also, again, follows one of the guidelines she sets out for writers; she places more value on adverbs than nouns or adjectives, as she finds them ‘more interesting’ (211). Stein follows this same guideline when describing adjectives, stating that they are not ‘really and truly interesting’ (211). From her own perspective, she is making her own writing more interesting by using the adverbs ‘really and truly’ to describe the adjective ‘interesting’.

Stein often switches between the third, second, and third person throughout her essay, which is one of the ways in which she overrules traditional grammar and stylistic conventions. At the end of her paragraph describing that she does not see adjectives as interesting, she states: ‘You see of yourself how true it is that which I have just said’ (211). By using second person, she subverts the traditional understanding of how essays should be written, which may lead readers to perceive her prose through a poetic lens. She achieves the same feeling by revealing her preference for words which ‘can be so mistaken’ (211). She personifies verbs and adverbs by stating that ‘it is wonderful the number of mistakes a verb can make and that is equally true of its adverb’ (211), and that ‘verbs can change to look like themselves or to look like something else, they are, so to speak on the move and adverbs move with them’ (212). Stein likely refers to words’ ability to become other parts of speech, which she tests out in *Tender Buttons*.

Stein again alludes to Shakespeare ‘when he talked about a rose by any other name’ (213). Her constant reference to Shakespeare reveals her deep interest in poetry’s effect on literature and language. Stein treats poetry as an entity which does not begin or end with its poet, an idea she expresses in ‘What Are Master-pieces and Why Are There So Few of Them’. This essay constructs a non-linear timeline in which literature exists not as an outside entity, but an inner understanding, a concept which relates to Dillon’s idea of the essay’s unfinished nature. Stein uses this idea in her iconic line ‘A rose is a rose is a rose is a rose’,

which she quotes in 'Poetry and Grammar'. In conversation with Shakespeare's language, she addresses poetry's focus on nouns, critiquing their concern with 'using with abusing, with losing and wanting, with denying with avoiding with adoring with replacing the noun' (231). Fleissner explains how Stein's method of subverting traditional poetry evokes the poetry that is 'inside' readers (326). Fleissner quotes Stein:

'Now you all have seen hundreds of poems about roses and you know in your bones that the rose is not there ... Now I don't want to put too much emphasis on that line, because it's just one line in a longer poem. But I notice that you all know it; you make fun of it, but you know it ... I think that in that line the rose is red for the first time in English poetry for a hundred years' (326).

Through her repetition, Stein strips the word of its associations, allowing for a fresh view of the word. Stein decontextualises the word, revealing its use as not simply a concept, but a word itself. This act of decontextualisation and genre subversion encapsulates the attitude of essayism, as Stein's rejection of orthodoxy leads to revelation.

CONCLUSION

According to the Dover Publications' note on *Tender Buttons*, 'it served to inspire a new generation of writers (including Sherwood Anderson, Ernest Hemingway, and F. Scott Fitzgerald), prompting them to rethink the use of narrative, description, and even language itself' (vi). Stein's experimentation in genre and form set the precedent for Hemingway; both authors blurred the boundaries of genre and transcended its orthodoxies through their incorporation of poetic elements. By discovering innovative ways to authentically present reality, they uncovered new perspectives on writing. Through distinctly different styles, both Stein and Hemingway constructed a new understanding of the essay and essayism. Their works serve as tests of genre conventions, proving the power of experimentation and the essayism's spirit of adventure. While Stein's work is comparable to a work of cubism, and

Hemingway's to realism, they both present complete, yet incomplete works urging readers to look at language in new ways. Both writers use fragmentation—Hemingway uses omission and Stein uses abstraction—to reveal new perspectives on writing about modern society. Stein and Hemingway embody the essence of modernism, as their writing expresses the changes which must occur in writing to represent the changes in modern reality.

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