
Modernist Excision and Its Consequences

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IN an interview for the *Paris Review* in 1958, Hemingway described his principles of composition by analogy to an iceberg: "If it is any use to know it, 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."¹ The metaphor suggests that excised material, presumably of a factual or discursive sort ("anything you know"), never simply disappears: instead, it remains underwater, supporting the visible text. "The omitted part would strengthen the story," Hemingway reiterated, "and make people feel something more than they understood."

Critics have, by and large, written approvingly of Hemingway's "iceberg principle." For Linda Wagner-Martin, it explains how the meager surfaces of Hemingway's "crisp and unpretentious" prose can produce complex affective responses.² Dana Dragunoiu argues that the iceberg principle allows more rapid conduit between writer and reader, promoting feeling over intellectual mastery, and aiming to signal "something inexpressible but ultimately more 'real' than the linguistic system of signification can accommodate."³ When one starts to consider the principle

1. Quoted in *Ernest Hemingway's "The Sun Also Rises": A Casebook*, ed. Linda Wagner Martin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 29.

2. Linda Wagner-Martin ed., *A Historical Guide to Ernest Hemingway* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3.

3. Dana Dragunoiu, "Hemingway's Debt to Stendahl's Armance in *The Sun Also Rises*," *Modern Fiction Studies* 46, no. 4 (2000): 889.

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more carefully, however, it becomes apparent that there will be difficulties in following it. Even if one did *know* an entire story before beginning to write it, how would one select the one eighth that should be left poking out above the water? What principles of selectivity would be required?

In this article, I explore the bibliographical consequences of Hemingway's principle, with particular attention to the genesis of *The Sun Also Rises*. I pursue the possibility that excursive revision on a grand scale may have unexpected, and unwanted, consequences for the stability of the text as a whole. What if the excised material does not strengthen the remaining story, but is simply lost? The question is one of particular urgency, because revision through omission and deletion is not a compositional strategy unique to Hemingway. It is, in fact, the basic compositional method of a certain brand of literary modernism, exercised — for part, if not the entirety, of their careers — by writers as different as Ezra Pound, Marianne Moore, T. S. Eliot, and James Joyce.

Marianne Moore's claim that "Anything is improved by omissions," is a succinct and final version of the belief behind the practice. The genetic history of "Poetry," which began life in five eight-line stanzas in the July 1919 issue of *Others* and ended as a mere three lines in the 1967 *Complete Poems*, provides an almost absurd practical illustration of the point: according to Andrew Kappel, the final revision was a "bold stroke," and also "a faithful modernist's last excursive gesture, made in the enduring belief that art was a process of paring away the chaotic essentials of experience to the passionate heart of the matter."⁴ The case of "Poetry" is notorious, in part because of the self-reflexive nature of the poem, and in part because it is a post-publication revision: before the 1967 *Complete Poems* was published, Moore had already published different, and longer, versions of it in a series of other volumes, including *Observations* (1924), *Selected Poems* (edited by T. S. Eliot in 1935), and *Collected Poems* (1951). It proved more usual, however, for twentieth-century writers to pare down their texts *before* initial publication. The first version of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* was a thousand-page, incomplete novel, titled *Stephen Hero*, and structured in 63 chapters. The 1921 version of *The Waste Land*, now widely available in Valerie Eliot's facsimile edition, is more than twice the length of the poem published in 1922. Pound's haiku "In a Station of the Metro" is two lines in

4. Andrew J. Kappel, "Complete with Omissions," in George Bornstein, ed., *Representing Modernist Texts* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991), 154.

its final version but was, he explained, winnowed out of a thirty-line poem of second intensity.⁵

This minimalist aesthetic, and its corresponding compositional method, can be understood as the most lasting legacy of Imagism. According to a possibly apocryphal story, the movement was inaugurated in 1912, as Ezra Pound and H. D. took tea in the British Museum. H. D. related that she and Pound were discussing her poem "Hermes of the Ways"; suddenly Pound took out his "creative pencil," crossed out most of the poem, and "scratched 'H. D. Imagiste'" at the bottom of the typed sheet.⁶ Shortly afterwards, he sent it off to Harriet Monroe at *Poetry* magazine with a note that explained, "It is in the laconic speech of the Imagistes... Objective — no slither — direct — no excess of adjectives. etc."⁷ However seriously we take Imagism as an aesthetic program — it has been called the first *avant-garde* in English writing, the first "anti avant-garde," and a "red herring" — this story illustrates that, from the very beginning, it united three disparate things.⁸ A preference for short texts over long ones was married to an observational insistence on exactitude and directness. In turn, a particular writing method was prescribed for achieving these aims — deletion. "Excess of adjectives" may be allowed in the first draft, but surplus material must be winnowed before the final version. H. D.'s poem appeared in the January 1913 issue of *Poetry*. The March issue of the magazine was almost entirely devoted to the new movement, containing Pound's own poem "In a Station of the Metro," widely regarded as Imagism's "enabling text," as well as his article "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," and a definitional piece by F. S. Flint, "Imagisme," which was produced after conversation with Pound. Flint's article argued that the Imagist poet should attempt "Direct treatment of the 'thing,' whether subjective or objective," and that to do so he must keep his work as spare as possible, using "absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation."⁹

There is no necessary reason why an aesthetic emphasis on brevity should be tied to a particular writing protocol. Callimachus is known for

5. Ezra Pound, "Vorticism," in *The Fortnightly Review* (1 September, 1914).

6. H. D., *End to Torment* (New York: New Directions, 1979), 40.

7. Hugh Kenner, *The Pound Era* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), 174.

8. Hugh Kenner, *The Poetry of Ezra Pound* (New York: Millwood, 1947), 58.

9. F. S. Flint, "Imagisme," in *Poetry*, March 1913, 198–200.

emphasizing metrical facility and craftsmanship, but he did not, as far as we know, make any other suggestions about how to achieve “slenderness” (*leptotes*) in verse. It is important to realize that for Pound, however, Imagism was *always* tied to a particular compositional method, and that this method was premised on revision. In an ideal world, there seems to be no reason why the poet should not produce an Imagistic poem at once; in practice, Pound suggests, the condensed art work will always be produced by writing at more conventional length and then deleting matter.

One of the principal attractions of excision is that it works equally well as a method of editing and of self-editing, or revision. Consequently, it was well suited to the collaborative environment in which many modernist works were produced. Pound began by finding the slack in H. D.’s poem and then turned the same economical eye on his own drafts. The practice is also readily amenable to pedagogic and performative display, as F. S. Flint’s article admits. He explains that master Imagists “might persuade an approaching poetaster to attend their instruction” by re-writing “his verses before his eyes, using about ten words to his fifty.”¹⁰ After having her own poem stripped down by Pound in imagism’s primal scene, H. D. went on to perform the same operation on other poets’ work. As assistant editor of the *Egoist*, she wrote to William Carlos Williams in 1916 about one of his submissions, “I trust you will not hate me for wanting to delete from your poem all the flippancies. The reason I want to do so is that the beautiful lines are so very beautiful....”¹¹ In the case of *The Sun Also Rises*, as I will detail at more length, Hemingway and Fitzgerald worked together on pruning back the long first draft into a more condensed final form.

Imagism itself was short-lived as a poetic movement; by 1914, Pound had already abandoned the use of the term, merging some of his original concepts with the new language of the “vortex,” “the point of maximum energy.”¹² The practice of excision that it spawned was, however, to play a longer and more substantial role within literary modernism. Graphically, the practice can be represented as a series of lines striking out words and phrases, rather than the *caret* of extension, or the verbal equivalence of substitution. Rhetorically, excision functions as a form of

10. F. S. Flint, “Imagisme,” 198–200.

11. Quoted by Vincent Quinn, *Hilda Doolittle (H. D.)* (New York: Twayne, 1967), 26.

12. Hugh Kenner, *The Pound Era*, 191.

ellipsis, omitting bits of syntactic “glue” and background information that would be necessary in more conventional narrative. Part of the practice’s attraction, in fact, must have been that it tends inevitably to produce syntactic and semantic fracture — effects in concert with the central aesthetic tenets of modernism itself. If modernist form can be summed up as a “cluster of stylistic practices” including “simultaneity, juxtaposition, montage and ‘fragmentation...paradox, ambiguity and uncertainty,” then what better way to achieve a modernist “effect” than by following a writing protocol that *inevitably* leads to simultaneity, parataxis, and fragmentation?¹³ Like Imagism itself, excision emphasizes the visual or “phanoe-poeic” snapshot above discursive argument and conventional narrative.

Like all forms of revision, excision results in the production of multiple versions of the same text. Henry James was not primarily an excise reviser, but when he reissued his earlier novels and tales for the *New York Edition*, he created a dilemma for future readers. Should we read a novel such as *The American* (first published in 1877) in its original form or in its verbally altered but similar-length final version? The traditional doctrine of final intention would incline us to using only the last version of James’s texts, but there are both aesthetic and historical reasons for preferring the earlier versions.¹⁴ In the case of excise revisers, the problem is more acute, because the first and last versions are, by definition, different in length. Marianne Moore’s final version of “Poetry” omits so much of the material in the earlier poem that it is difficult, in some respects, to think of the two poems under a grouping heading, as different stages of the same text. In recent years, modernist scholars such as George Bornstein have suggested that the best way of approaching texts published in alternate forms (either because they have been verbally revised, or because the bibliographic code has shifted) is to embrace their multiplicity. This “recent version theory” he argues “offers a richer account of them as processes rather than mere products of inscription.”¹⁵ By reading a

13. Marianne DeKoven, *Rich and Strange: Gender, History, Modernism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 6. This definition is quoted by Susan Stanford Friedman as “parataxis” in “Definitional Excursions: The Meanings of Modern/ Modernity/ Modernism,” *Modernism/Modernity* 8, no. 3 (2001): 496.

14. In his outstanding study of James’s revisions, Philip Horne calls the criteria for choosing between versions “challengingly relative” (Philip Horne, *Henry James and Revision* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990], 46).

15. George Bornstein, *Material Modernism: The Politics of the Page* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 3, 4.

text such as “Poetry” in each of its individual instantiations, one can develop more richly textured historical readings, which allow us to distinguish “current material texts from earlier existent or future possible ones.”¹⁶ This is an argument that works well for texts which were published and circulated in each variant form, but its application to draft materials is much more problematic. Most modernist writers completed the process of excision before first publication, which means that *all* published versions of the text are significantly shorter than the first draft. Should we read these long early versions as “earlier existent” material texts, or, by virtue of not being published, do they have a different, “immaterial” status?

Hemingway is not often considered in relation to Imagism, but his spare style can be understood as a transposition of Imagist aesthetics into prose writing; it was also achieved through a convoluted process of revision by excision. In fact, the compositional history of *The Sun Also Rises* provides a peculiarly neat parallel to that of *The Waste Land*. Two major American poets had worked in 1921 and 1922 to produce the definitive postwar *European* poem, tallying London, Vienna, Jerusalem, Athens, and Alexandria in its catalogue of “unreal cities.” Four years later, two major American novelists — Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald — performed a similar act of textual condensation on the long first draft of Hemingway’s novel of expatriate life in Paris and Spain.

In *A Moveable Feast*, Hemingway claimed that he wrote the first draft of *The Sun Also Rises* very fast in late 1925, before retiring to an Austrian ski resort to edit it.

Schrunk was a good place to work. I know because I did the most difficult job of rewriting I have ever done there in the winter of 1925 and 1926, when I had to take the first draft of *The Sun Also Rises* which I had written in one sprint of six weeks, and make it into a novel.¹⁷

Rather than revising “as he went along,” Hemingway allowed “the momentum of writing to push him to completion in two months with little current revising.”¹⁸ His description of the process confirms the disjunction between a fast, even automatic, initial flow of creation and a subse-

16. George Bornstein, *Material Modernism: The Politics of the Page*, 4.

17. Ernest Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* (New York: Scribner’s 1964), 202.

18. Matthew J. Bruccoli, ed., *Ernest Hemingway, “The Sun Also Rises”: A Facsimile Edition*, vol. 1 (Detroit: Omnigraphics, 1990), vi.

quent and more painful process of critical revision. The staggering of the two activities is typical of Imagistic excision.

The bluntest proof that Hemingway's revisions were predominantly excisions is provided by comparing the length of the first draft with the published novel. The original manuscript of *The Sun Also Rises*, preserved at the Kennedy Library in Boston (JFK 193 and 194), runs to just over 83,000 words, on 32 loose sheets, and in 7 draft notebooks. The final text, which was first published in 1926, is about fifteen percent shorter. Although there are, inevitably, differences of punctuation and orthography between the first draft and final edition, as well as some more substantive changes to individual scenes, and to the book's epigraph, the *primary* editorial decisions have been ones not of substitution, but deletion. Frederic Svoboda's detailed study of Hemingway's work at Schruns, which aims to track "the steps he followed in reshaping the form," lists several of the major shifts of emphasis. As he revised, Svoboda claims, Hemingway moved towards "delicacy and restraint" and away from "literal transcription of reality," ruminations on "narrative method and reliability," travelogue, and "overly sentimental dialogue."¹⁹ However we weigh the merits of the early drafts against the final text, it is clear that Hemingway removed factual and descriptive information as he revised. Three of the informational losses that I find most significant would include: direct information about characters' pasts, reflections on methodology and narratorial reliability, and social satire.

At the end of the published novel, for example, Jake receives two telegrams from Brett containing the same message:

COULD YOU COME HOME HOTEL MONTANA MADRID AM
RATHER IN TROUBLE BRETT.²⁰

His response is dispassionate; he inquires about train times, takes out his fountain pen, promises "ARRIVING SUD EXPRESS" and signs off "LOVE JAKE." After writing the telegram, he allows himself a brief and faintly bitter reflection, "That seemed to handle it. That was it," before heading off for lunch. The original version offered more explicit insight into Jake's thought processes, illustrating the emotional load behind his conventional sign-off, "Love Jake." In tune with the Imagist imperative

19. Frederic Svoboda, *Hemingway and "The Sun Also Rises": The Crafting of a Style* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas: 1983), 4, 9, 31, and 44–5.

20. Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises* (London: Arrow, 1994), 211.

“show don’t tell,” Hemingway removes Jake’s attempt at rationalization and replaces it with crisp action:

There was nothing else to say. ~~I put the~~ What else was there to say? I printed LOVE JAKE and handed the concierge the wine. There I was, doing it again. Why not let it alone. I knew there was not any use trying to let it alone. I felt perfectly bad about it. I had certainly acted like anything but a man... ~~I was not a man anyway. Oh stop that stuff. There was not going to be any of that stuff.~~²¹

Not only is Jake more self-analytic in this version, he is also more explicit about the emasculating nature of his war wound than at any point in the published version of *The Sun Also Rises*. In the first draft, Hemingway seems to have been trying to emphasize the tension between Jake’s febrile emotional state and his desire for repression through the see-saw of internal monologue: as soon as he pronounces “I was not a man anyway,” he silences himself, “Oh stop that stuff.” In the final version, hesitant and self-reflective monologue is replaced with inconsistent behavior from which we must draw our own conclusions: “That was it. Send a girl off with one man. Introduce her to another to go off with him. Now go and bring her back. And sign the wire with love.”

Even in the first draft manuscript, the last three sentences of this passage are lightly crossed out, as are the three cahier pages that follow.²² This is one of the longest deleted passages in the notebook drafts, one of the few moments (unlike the now entirely deleted opening, for example) where Hemingway seems to have had immediate second thoughts. It is also one of the few explicit passages of social criticism in the manuscript, a meditation on class, the “good people,” and the aristocracy. After reading the novel at a late stage in its composition, once it had already been set in proofs, F. Scott Fitzgerald was to complain that Hemingway’s writing was at times “Snobbish (not in itself but because the history of English Aristocrats in the war, set down so verbosely so uncritically, so exteriorly and yet so obviously inspired from within, is *shopworn*).”²³ As a critique of the original introduction, with its casual and distanced recording of Brett’s husbands, her title, and her dissolution of those things in drink, Fitzgerald’s criticisms are exactly on the mark. This deleted passage on aristocracy is, however, not at all uncritical or “exterior”: it continues with the same breath pauses and hesitancy

21. Manuscript of *The Sun Also Rises*, Hemingway Library, 6:41.

22. Deleted scene. Brucoli, *Ernest Hemingway*, “*The Sun Also Rises*,” 590–3.

23. Quoted in Brucoli, *Ernest Hemingway*, “*The Sun Also Rises*,” 11.

that has marked the passage just quoted and is, in fact, savagely critical of those, like Braddocks who have “this aristocratic obsession.”

All the Jews and Americans and Welshmen and ex clerks and ex school teachers all wrote about the aristocracy. The aristocracy when they wrote wrote about the wallabies ~~natives of distant countries~~ or about horses or salmon or other things. Of course the best ones did not either write or read...²⁴

Braddocks is a much more significant character in the original draft of the novel than our final text, an alter ego to the emerging “Hem”/Jake narrator, and very often an example of how to get the writing business wrong. Here he is “translating his own works into French”; talking, in the process, about the difficulty of finding “a French equivalent for good people,” and the fact that “an American could not understand it because we have no good people.” This generates, initially, “a favourite joke” between Jake and Duff, who call each other – with a rather ambiguous appropriation – “good people,” partly, we are led to believe, to puncture Braddocks’ pomposity; more significantly, perhaps, because the aristocratic phrase slides between moral and aesthetic meanings of the word “good.” Jake references the joke (implicitly, his own superiority to Braddocks) with a translation of his own: “It was a sort of double acting noblesse oblige.”

In a book about expatriation, and more particularly the condition of American expatriation in Europe after the War, this passage strikes a keynote. On the surface, it is critical of those who write about the aristocracy at all: Hemingway seems to prefer their own, earthier, types of natural history writing, or their forays into action, standing “as Labor candidates.” On another level, it might be taken as a critique merely of those writers like Braddocks, who have a too simple idea of what “good people” or “aristocracy” might mean: their vein of snobbery leads them to believe that an American cannot understand the notion of “good people,” and that the phrase cannot be rendered into French. By this reading, the narrator would be arguing — at the end of a book very obviously about the lives of the titled and moneyed — that he understands the phrase perfectly, can slip between English and French, and knows, unlike Braddocks, that the defining fact about the aristocracy is their easy immorality. So, he would be saying, “good” is to be taken in a rather qualified way: “In actual life it seems there was a great deal of sleeping about among good people, much more sleeping about than

24. *TSAR MS*, 6:42–3.

passion and when there was any actual passion nobody believed in it.” Finally, we might suggest that the passage functions more as interior monologue, where the phrase “good people” unlocks queasy stirrings of guilt. The transitions, after all, are not terribly logical. Jake begins with the reference to his emasculation, and then admonishes himself for grumbling, “That was not how the ‘good people’ acted.” Subsequently, though, the good people seem to be defined less by their quality of stoicism, than by passionless free love. Perhaps, in the end, the passage does — despite the narrator’s original snigger — emphasize only the impossibility of translation between cultures that hold up different standards of virtue. In this case, would Jake be attacking the Duffs and Mikes, those English or Americans who are living by the vanishing code of an alien culture? The idea that old Europe is vanishing is picked up in the passage that follows, where Jake complains of the Sud Express rushing across the landscape too fast: “There was ~~no reason to~~ nothing to be gained by compressing and destroying country to save a little time and get some sleep.”²⁵

Svoboda does not consider this passage directly, but he does focus attention on the final chapter of the book, which contains “some of Hemingway’s most extensive efforts at revision of *The Sun Also Rises*.”²⁶ For his developmental reading, this chapter provides an exemplary case; it shows Hemingway moving from a state of confusion between “the ideas of the real and fictional narrators” to one of clarity, and it makes Jake “less a conscious commentator and more a man who is recording immediate experience.”²⁷ By this line of reasoning, Hemingway’s erasure of the three and a half manuscript pages and his move between telegram and Sud Express are masterly. In the manuscript, the guilty interior monologue on the aristocracy and travelling is followed by a gentle uplift in mood, a return to some of the self-quietude of the swimming passage.

But I took the Sud Express and slept well in a compartment by myself and had breakfast in the morning and ^ looked out of the window and ^ saw the Escorial, grand and gray and cold in the sun with ~~and forty~~ the ~~five~~ cheerfulness of the little town below it and forty five minutes later Madrid ~~while~~ a compact

25. *TSAR MS*, 6:43.

26. Svoboda, *Hemingway and “The Sun Also Rises,”* 79.

27. Svoboda, *Hemingway and “The Sun Also Rises,”* 85.

scattered white skyline on the top of a ^little^ cliff away across sun hardened country.²⁸

In the final draft, the whole monologue disappears, and the elaborate description of different aspects of the Spanish landscape passed at speed is abandoned. A typically laconic sentence replaces it. "I did not sleep much that night on the Sud Express"²⁹ is suggestive of all the painful, insomniac material that has been erased.

A more substantial, and perhaps better known, example of textual erasure is the problem of the novel's opening. Originally Hemingway began *in medias res* during the fiesta, with the introduction of the novel's other hero: "I saw him for the first time in his room at the Hotel Guin-tana in Pamplona."³⁰ Unlike the opening that began the galley proofs, and which Fitzgerald suggested should be removed, this passage was recycled — with substantial changes — in chapter 15 of the final novel. Many of the images — of the bull-fight itself, Romero's appearance, and his "suave, slow, perfectly timed and artistic cape work" — remain the same, but the initial draft presents a much less intricate relationship between Jake's party of spectators and the fiesta they are observing.³¹ Brett's immediate sexual interest ("And those green trousers") is gone; inevitably, the relationships between the main characters are vague, still being defined, without the half-exploded tensions of the finished product. In the manuscript draft, there is a much greater interest in behaviour and reception of Americans abroad. The decadent "three hangers-on" of the final version are replaced by "a Spanish newspaper man," who introduces, on the second page of the manuscript, the problem of translation between cultures: "Would you like me to interpret for you?" Shortly afterwards, the difficulty is complicated by the arrival of an American Ambassador, whose visit is described in terms of dislocation, an embarrassing cultural imperialism that begins with a Rolls Royce stopping "and nobody came out to greet him and there wasn't any sort of a reception."³² In the final version, this scene is used to emphasise Jake's *aficion*, and the closeness of his relationship with Montoya, whom Jake

28. TSAR MS, 194:6, 43.

29. Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*, 212.

30. TSAR MS, 193:1.

31. TSAR MS, 193:3–4.

32. TSAR MS, 193:6.

makes “very pleased” by telling him to ignore the ambassadorial summons. (“Don’t give Romero the message”). Initially, by contrast, the arrival of the Ambassador pinpoints the foreignness of the entire party: “everybody in the café had taken a good look at them and was back to drinking again. All except us that is.” His two female companions also provide the opportunity for a satirical look at American provinciality. The narrator is watching himself watching other Americans watch Spain. One is “Irish looking, sort of White House hostess,” the other “had been to thirty four bull fights and this was her first time in Spain.”

By the end of January, Hemingway had finished at Schruns. On April 24, after returning to Paris and having his novel professionally typed, he sent the “completely rewritten and cut manuscript” to Scribner’s for publication.³³ By this point, the novel had been pruned and intensified after the approved Imagist model, and the original opening (set *in medias res* at the fiesta) had been cut. Following his own (deleted) instruction in the manuscript, “To understand this situation in Pamplo-na you have to understand Paris,” Hemingway reincorporated the long description of Mike and Brett into a Parisian context.³⁴ Before publication, however, the novel underwent another round of excisions. While he was still writing, Hemingway was reluctant to pass his manuscript around, but after finishing the revisions he finally showed it to F. Scott Fitzgerald, who had been hoping for a glimpse since the previous Fall. In June, he received a brutal ten page letter. Fitzgerald’s critique reads like an augmentation of Hemingway’s own revisionary principles, advocating further cuts of discursive and argumentative material. By comparing Hemingway’s problems to his own, Fitzgerald’s letter also makes clear that the desire for brevity (“direct treatment of the thing”) is a *shared* literary aesthetic:

I find in you the same tendency to envelope or (and as it usually turns out) to *embalm* in mere wordiness an anecdote or joke that casually appealed to you that I find in myself in trying to preserve a piece of “fine writing.”³⁵

Besides finding the tone “snobbish,” Fitzgerald objected to the “feeling of condescending casualness,” to “sneers, superiorities and nose-thumb-ings-at-nothing,” to elements of narrative self-consciousness, to travel-

33. Ernest Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* (New York: Scribner, 1964), 184.

34. *TSAR* MS, 194:1.9.

35. Fitzgerald’s letter is quoted by Brucoli, *Ernest Hemingway*, “*The Sun Also Rises*,” x–xii.

ogue (“this is in all guide books”), and to things that he found trite, old-fashioned, or already done.

Fitzgerald’s main suggestion was that Hemingway discard his (already reworked) opening, cutting wholesale:

From here Or rather from p. 30 I began to like the novel but Ernest I can’t tell you the sense of disappointment that beginning with its elephantine facetiousness gave me. Please do what you can about it in proof. Its 7500 words — you could reduce it to 5000. And my advice is not to do it by mere pareing but to take out the worst of the *scenes*.

A few days later, Hemingway wrote to his editor, Maxwell Perkins, to authorize the cut:

I believe that, in the proofs, I will start the book at what is now page 16 in the Mss. There is nothing in those first sixteen pages that does not come out, or is explained, or re-stated in the rest of the book — or is unnecessary to state. I think it will move much faster from the start that way. Scott agrees with me.³⁶

The mild duplicity of “Scott agrees with me” shows Hemingway attempting to regain editorial control, turning editorial criticism *back* into self-directed revision. As if playing a game of one-upmanship, Hemingway also went further than Fitzgerald had suggested, not “pareing” merely, nor “taking out the worst of the scenes” but removing sixteen pages in their entirety. The next fourteen pages he left alone. For William Balassi this is an indication that he was trying “to save face or to retain his sense of authorial control over the text.”³⁷ And yet the choice to delete and then retain may also point to excision’s essential logic. In the end, cutting (or keeping) something in its entirety is always easier than attempting to “pare” a text down, and then retroactively to cover for gaps and losses.

After the loss of fourteen pages, the novel began not only *in medias res* but also, as Balassi argues, “in the middle of the text,” with the words “Robert Cohn was once middleweight boxing champion of Princeton.” He remains optimistic, nevertheless, about readers’ ability to infer what has been removed, “Without the opening scene in Pamplona, readers have to sense the importance of lines that have lost their context, to sense more than they know, which is often possible because the text still resonates with the significance of the opening material even though the

36. Letter quoted by William Balassi, “The Trail to *The Sun Also Rises*: The First Week of Writing,” in Frank Scafella ed., *Hemingway: Essays of Reassessment* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 34.

37. Balassi, “The Trail to *The Sun Also Rises*,” 34.

story itself is no longer there.”³⁸ This is a deeply appealing aesthetic possibility, akin to the argument that a partially destroyed or aged painting “still resonates with the significance” of the lost original, suggesting outlines and shapes that are no longer clearly discernable. It is also a restatement of Hemingway’s own “iceberg principle,” which assumes that authorial knowledge (“anything you know”) can be translated into readerly affect (“it only strengthens your iceberg”). But how exactly does a text “resonate with the significance” of an absence? What type of thing is that resonance? Is it a fact that can be known (“Jake Barnes is Catholic”), or an imprecise feeling (a sense of “the Quarter state of mind”), or is it a self-producing sense of aesthetic fracture (there is more to be known than we can know)?

In the first draft of *The Sun Also Rises*, we were told that Robert Cohn was “the hero” of the tale, that he had written “a skilfully and neatly done” novel, and that he had lived for two years with a woman “who lived on gossip and so he had lived in an atmosphere of abortions, doubts, and incidents confirming these doubts.” These descriptions are not only omitted from the final text but are also, more problematically, inconsistent with it: the Cohn of the final version is not the hero, his novel is not such a success, and his relationship with Frances is presented more conventionally. If texts are corrected as well as revised, should we assume that final texts only “resonate with the significance” of certain, correct, parts of the earlier version? That would deal with the problem of self-contradiction, but it would require that different parts of abandoned drafts have different ontologies: some would be merely refuse; others would be resonant ghosts.

The organic metaphor of the half-submerged iceberg is seductive but, in the end, it lacks rigor as a way of explaining a *textual* condition. Language does not behave like frozen water, or the marble from which a sculpture is defiantly wrested. Hemingway’s metaphor for the condensed final draft assumes both that earlier versions are tidily tucked away from sight (underwater), and that they continue to inform the final text (as a supporting bedrock). But neither of these claims is exactly true. The problem of factual inconsistency and discontinuity highlighted by Hershel Parker is, I suggest, an *inevitable* result of revision premised on excision. Texts are not made up of minute identical pieces (water droplets or atoms of marble); they are complex and interdepen-

38. Balassi, “The Trail to *The Sun Also Rises*,” 48.

dent syntactic structures. Removing part of a sentence or a narrative will have inevitable consequences for the whole, and, without entertaining a kind of magical thinking, it is unclear how the removed part could be said to have continued existence within a final version. Pound and Hemingway speak as if excision is an act of scaling a text down to a smaller size, while leaving its shape and structure essentially intact. In fact, I would suggest, excision will always function as a form of hermeneutic torsion; at the very least, it will alter a text's points of emphasis and structural shape while, in more extreme cases, it can function as a strong form of misprision and radically alter meaning.

On the other hand — and this is a crucial proviso — it is often not the case that the removed part is *actually* invisible or missing. The iceberg principle implies that material removed from the final text has been, and will remain, “eliminated,” but Hemingway's first drafts have tended to be preserved. He might have been an excisive reviser, but he was also, as Susan Beegel has shown, a compulsive hoarder. He worked in a room crammed full of tourist memorabilia, keepsakes, and books, but was “principally a saver of paper itself,” including papers, manuscripts, pamphlets, and lists.³⁹ After his death, his widow donated more than 19,500 pages of manuscript (over 3,000 of which were unpublished) to the Hemingway library. The same situation has held true in the case of many other modernist texts: in fact, Pound's thirty-line version of “In a Station of the Metro” has the rare distinction of being one of the few works described as “destroyed” which has actually remained so. It has proved more common for early drafts which authors claimed they had abandoned or thrown out to resurface.

Virginia Woolf left a suicide note, “Will you destroy all my papers,” which Leonard ignored. The result was the publication not only of her final novel, *Between the Acts*, which she had intended to destroy, and of the late memoir “Moments of Being,” but also of the draft forms of many earlier works, and volume after volume of diaries and letters. In 1982, Louise DeSalvo edited an early version of *The Voyage Out* (completed in draft form as early as 1912) for publication as *Melymbrosia*. In 1977, Mitchell Leaska brought out *The Pargiters: The Novel-Essay Portion of*

39. Susan F. Beegel, *Hemingway's Craft of Omission: Four Manuscript Examples* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988), 1. Beegel's argument is informed by George Plimpton's observation of Hemingway's workplace in his 1958 interview for the *Paris Review*.

The Years, a transcription of six essays and their accompanying fictional extracts written in 1932. In 1933, Woolf decided to rework this material into purely fictional form, and gradually incorporated it into the draft of the novel *The Years* (1937). In 1911, James Joyce threw either *Stephen Hero* or an early version of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* into the fire: as he told Harriet Shaw Weaver, “the original ‘original’ I tore up and threw into the stove about eight years ago in a fit of rage on account of the trouble over *Dubliners*.”⁴⁰ The manuscript was, however, rescued “by the family fire brigade.” *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* began serial publication in 1914; the surviving portions of *Stephen Hero* were published in 1941 by Theodore Spencer. *The Waste Land* manuscript was also believed lost for the majority of the twentieth-century. Retaining no sentimental attachment to a poem he considered as “a thing of the past,” Eliot freely donated it to John Quinn in 1922. “I should like to present you the MSS of the Waste Land, if you would care to have it — when I say MSS, I mean that it is partly MSS and partly typescript, with Ezra’s and my alterations scrawled all over it.”⁴¹ After Quinn’s death in 1934 the manuscript was thought to be lost. It did not resurface until 1968, three years after Eliot’s own death, when the New York Public Library announced they had purchased it for \$18,000.⁴² Three years later, the long version of the poem emerged into print for the first time, when Valerie Eliot published a facsimile of the original drafts.⁴³ In the introduction to this text, Valerie Eliot suggests that her husband had never been much concerned by the manuscript’s disappearance. Ezra Pound’s “Preface” tells a slightly different story, punning on different

40. Jeri Johnson, “Composition and Publication History,” in James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), xli.

41. Letter 19 July 1922, quoted in Valerie Eliot’s “Introduction” to Valerie Eliot ed. *The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts Including the Annotations of Ezra Pound* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1971), xxiii.

42. This figure represents the sum paid by the library for *both* the manuscript of *The Waste Land* and the material in the 76-page loose leave notebook which was edited by Christopher Ricks for *The Inventions of the March Hare*. Harry Gilroy, “Library Is Holding MS. Of Eliot’s ‘Waste Land,’” *The New York Times*, Friday, October 25, 1968.

43. Dr. Gordan had tried to inform T. S. Eliot of the manuscript’s survival in person on a visit to London in 1958 but was unsuccessful in arranging a meeting with him. Valerie Eliot’s introduction explains that Eliot missed the opportunity to discuss a “business matter” with him in 1958, suggesting that this meeting would have involved a discussion of the extant manuscript.

types of waste — *Waste Land*, waste paper, and waste time — and affectionately alluding to Eliot's own penchant for detective fiction. "The occultation of 'The Waste Land' manuscript (years of waste time, exasperating to its author) is pure Henry James. The 'mystery of the missing manuscript' is now solved."⁴⁴

The survival of these long early versions, sometimes in flagrant contradiction of authorial intention, is, to an extent, serendipitous. But it can also be explained by institutional and cultural factors, including the development of a mature market for rare books, the establishment of English literature as a university discipline, and the fetish-value placed on original manuscripts in an age of mechanical reproduction. Over the course of the twentieth century, the demand for writers' papers — not only drafts, but letters, diaries, rough jottings, and juvenilia — increased dramatically. Writers might have regarded their own waste papers as abject, but their self-valuation was increasingly at odds with the price that the market was willing to pay. Unsurprisingly, it was often their relatives, executors, or friends who saw the wisdom of holding on to, or at least failing to destroy, work that was not destined to reach publication. In recent years, their work has been carried on by archivists and textual scholars, who have both preserved the surviving original drafts and edited them for publication and dissemination. On the library shelves, *Stephen Hero* takes its place besides *Portrait*; *Melymbrosia* and *The Pargiters* shadow *The Voyage Out* and *The Years*; *Paul Morel* sits beside *Sons and Lovers*. Just as the modern textual critic "actually possesses the 'lost originals' which the classical critic is forced to hypothesize," so the genetic critic of modernism possesses manuscript first drafts and authorial papers that pre-twentieth-century scholars can only imagine.⁴⁵

In these unequal pairings, one can observe a tug of war between

44. Ezra Pound, "Preface" to *The Waste Land: A Facsimile*, vii. In the 1959 *Paris Review* interview, when asked "Does the manuscript of the original, uncut *Waste Land* exist?" Eliot replied "Don't ask me. That's one of the things I don't know. It's an unsolved mystery" ("The Art of Poetry I: T. S. Eliot," Interview in *The Paris Review* 21 [1959]: 53).

45. Jerome McGann explains "Because this textual critic actually possesses the 'lost originals' which the classical critic is forced to hypothesize, his concept of an ideal text reveals itself to be — paradoxically — a pure abstraction, whereas the classical critic's ideal text remains, if 'lost,' historically actual." Jerome McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 57.

different textual world views. On the one hand, we have the minimalists — the modernists themselves, and the literary critics who have praised the fragmentary, economical aesthetics of their final products; on the other are the editors, family members, collectors, and archivists who have worked to gather up, reassemble, and preserve the materials cast off during the process of excision. The first group winnowed down both literary texts and the literary canon, but the second group can be understood as reversing their behavior, expanding the modernist canon by reinserting its abject and expurgated “waste” back onto the library shelves. Christopher Ricks’s much admired *Inventions of the March Hare*, which includes multiple versions of Eliot’s earliest work, is thicker than Eliot’s *Collected Poems*. Hemingway’s posthumously published texts, which include *Islands in The Stream* and *The Garden of Eden*, as well as *A Moveable Feast*, take up more pages than everything he published in his lifetime.

The expansion of the — extremely limited — canon of high modernist literature by the republication of excluded, abject, and early draft versions provides a curious parallel to a more general tendency in the new modernist studies. According to one of its practitioners, this revisionist moment “had a number of goals, but canon expansion has been the most central.”⁴⁶ Since the canon wars of the 1980s, scholars have redrawn the boundaries of modernism more democratically: the Harlem Renaissance is now taught alongside courses on Joyce and Faulkner; Langston Hughes has earned his place beside T. S. Eliot. To date, however, this expansive tendency has not extended to drafts and revisions: students may read *To the Lighthouse* alongside work by Rebecca West or Mary Butts, but they are very unlikely to read the drafts of “Time Passes.” I want to end by suggesting that the pleasures and difficulties of an expanded modernist canon apply with particular urgency to the long early versions of our most canonical texts. The arguments for why we should read this material — the illumination it sheds on past cultural practice, as well as its independent interest or beauty — mirror the arguments that are advanced in literary studies in support of an expanded canon. There are more interesting things to say about the 1921 *Waste Land* than that “it is weaker throughout than the final version,” just as there are more interesting things to say about Langston Hughes than “he is a worse poet than T. S. Eliot.” Judgment, as Eliot himself averred,

46. Seth Moglen, “Modernism in the Black Diaspora: Langston Hughes and the Broken Cubes of Picasso,” *Callaloo*, no. 4 (2002): 1190.

is incomplete without elucidation: "The dogmatic critic, who lays down a rule, who affirms a value, has left his labour incomplete. Such statements may often be justifiable as a saving of time; but in matters of great importance the critic must not coerce, and he must not make judgments of worse and better. He must simply elucidate: the reader will form the correct judgment for himself...."⁴⁷

47. T. S. Eliot, "The Perfect Critic," reprinted in *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (London: Methuen, 1920), 10.