



Art Matters: Hemingway, Craft, and the Creation of the Modern Short Story

Robert Paul Lamb

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In *Art Matters*, Robert Paul Lamb provides the definitive study of Ernest Hemingway's short story aesthetics. Lamb locates Hemingway's art in literary historical contexts and explains what he learned from earlier artists, including Edgar Allan Poe, Paul Cézanne, Henry James, Guy de Maupassant, Anton Chekhov, Stephen Crane, Gertrude Stein, James Joyce, and Ezra Pound. Examining how Hemingway developed this inheritance, Lamb insightfully charts the evolution of the unique style and innovative techniques that would forever change the nature of short fiction.

Art Matters opens with an analysis of the authorial effacement Hemingway learned from Maupassant and Chekhov, followed by fresh perspectives on the author's famous use of concision and omission. Redefining literary impressionism and expressionism as alternative modes for depicting modern consciousness, Lamb demonstrates how Hemingway and Willa Cather learned these techniques from Crane and made them the foundation of their respective aesthetics. After examining the development of Hemingway's art of focalization, he clarifies what Hemingway really learned from Stein and delineates their different uses of repetition. Turning from techniques to formal elements, *Art Matters* anatomizes Hemingway's story openings and endings, analyzes how he created an entirely unprecedented role for fictional dialogue, explores his methods of characterization, and categorizes his settings in the fifty-three stories that comprise his most important work in the genre.

A major contribution to Hemingway scholarship and to the study of modernist fiction, *Art Matters* shows exactly how Hemingway's craft functions and argues persuasively for the importance of studies of articulated technique to any meaningful understanding of fiction and literary history. The book also develops vital new ways of understanding the short story genre as Lamb constructs a critical apparatus for analyzing the short story, introduces to a larger audience ideas taken from practicing storywriters, theorists, and critics, and coins new terms and concepts that enrich our understanding of the field.

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