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Literature and Composition/ Periods 1 & 4

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Journal # Example: *The Sun Also Rises*, Chapter IV pages 31 - 34

Despite the early stages of Hemingway's novel, some early conflicts have emerged. Brett wrestles with her affection, do not really think love can be used effectively, toward Jake. He displays the knowledge, and the need to constantly remind those ladies around him that he cannot satisfy their needs, so he keeps his distance. In the early pages of *The Sun Also Rises*, this gets depicted through the cab ride to the "Pare Montsouris." He captures the mood and strain through the character's dialogue as well as through the syntax as they drive down a cobblestone street.

As chapter three ends the reader learns, "the cab started with a jerk." (pg 32). This same literal jerk suggests to the reader the possible discomfort this scene will hold. In a sense this frustrating ride up a meaningless street, comes across much the way heat was used in *The Great Gatsby*. On numerous occasions we are reminded about the oppressive heat. This eventually climaxes when Tom, Daisy, Nick and Gatsby all go into the city. This day we are reminded was the hottest day of the year. Likewise before the car starts with a "jerk," Hemingway lets us know that Lady Ashley has "been so miserable." (pg 32). A statement that will resonate louder as we read further.

Nevertheless, Hemingway expresses the true purpose of the scene through the syntax. First and foremost, Hemingway takes us on a trip down the cobblestone road touring Paris. His curt sentence structure and comma laden lines cause the reading to sputter and bounce as if we were seated in the cab riding alongside Jake and Brett. The opening sentence of the paragraph,

The taxi went up the hill, passed the lighted square, then on into the dark, still climbing, then leveled out onto a dark street behind St. Etienne du Mont, went smoothly down the asphalt, passed the trees and the standing bus at the Place de la Contrescarpe, then turned onto the cobbles of the Rue Mouffetard. (pg 33)

Despite the apparent length, each phrase set off by a comma actually bumps us along riding through the discomfort of the cab on these cobblestone roads. If that was Hemingway's only intention, it would be an admirable writing achievement allowing the syntax to actually create the scene rather than attempting to construct this through description and possibly character dialogue. However, the grander purpose emerges sentences later with the jostling actually pushing Jake and Brett together. As we read further, the light and dark play upon Brett's image, "I saw her face in the light of the open shops, then it was dark." Calmly yet with a strong desire,

Jake gazes waiting for the street light to provide a moment to look upon her. Later this will develop in Brett's running to Jake whenever she needs an "emotional rescue" (thank you Keith Richards).

All of this ride comes to fruition when the "lights of the acetylene flares," (pg 33) marking the repairs to the street, alight her face in an almost angelic white light. Clearly this mirrors the one sense in which Jake can see Brett. Despite all he really knows about her and her past, here is his hope to canonize her so he finds purity. Alas this was not to be, because just as these torches reflect the damaged street, the next few lines will capture the damaged man.

The scene comes together with "Our lips were tight together and then she turned away and pressed against the corner of the seat, as far away as she could get. Her head was down." (pg 33) At last it seems that we, as the reader, are given the happiness we so long to see: Characters finding a means to alleviate the boredom and perhaps shaking the ennui plaguing all of Paris and in doing so kindling romance. Not to be, as Hemingway interrupts this by jarring us on this bumpy ride with a sharp and pointed comment: "'Don't touch me,' she said. 'Please don't touch me'" (pg 33). Suddenly, we watch as everything dissolves and we share the character's disbelief.

From this scene, Hemingway brings us into their conversation watching hints toward Jake's impotence and Brett's struggle with affection and commitment. Not only have both of these characters bounced along these Parisian roads, but they also bumped through an attempt at finding connections and purpose in life. Ultimately, this ends with "Kiss me just once before we get there" (pg 33). And with that kiss, they fall into drinking, and in a sense momentarily forgetting all the pain and emptiness they both share.

Keeping in mind Hemingway compared his writing to an iceberg; these pages give us a good means of delving beneath the surface and finding the meanings as well as establishing relationships and struggles that will continue to grow as the pages turn.