

HEMINGWAY'S *A MOVEABLE FEAST*: MASKED THEMES

IN THE CONTEXT OF HIS LIFE

by

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the English Department Faculty at the United States Air Force Academy for introducing me to the world of literature and encouraging me to pursue a subject that I love.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Ernest Hemingway traveled to Paris for the last time in 1956. During this visit, Hemingway claimed that he found an old trunk in the basement of the Ritz Hotel, containing a collection of sketches of his time in Paris during the 1920s, which he showed to his close friend, A.E. Hotchner. Hotchner wrote, “[H]e asked me what I thought of a book of sketches like the one I had just read. I was strongly enthusiastic. He said Mary was too” (Hotchner, *Papa* 192). Aside from this short description of how the Paris sketches came to light, not much is known about the inception of *A Moveable Feast*. In an interview by Seán Hemingway, the grandson of Ernest Hemingway who published the second version of *A Moveable Feast*, Seán responds to skeptics who doubt the story of how *A Moveable Feast* was discovered: “Did those trunks at the Ritz even exist, as one scholar who spent a lot of time studying these manuscripts didn’t even believe? I think they did” (Putnam 14). Further into the interview, Seán Hemingway continues:

[T]he discovery of the trunk in the Ritz, that has a sort of legendary quality to it. I was with my uncle in Montana a few weeks ago...and I was surprised to hear him say, “Well I don’t think that that ever happened. I don’t think that ever really happened.” But it’s hard to know. Again, there’s no definite documentation, I think. (Putnam 33)

It is difficult to believe the story of the trunk. It seems unusual that Hemingway did not remember ever writing or storing the manuscripts until a Ritz employee told him about the trunk decades later. It is an entertaining story to share, but not completely believable.

Ernest Hemingway was an enigmatic man, especially towards the end of his life.

Though he demonstrated great skill with writing and was famous throughout his writing life, Hemingway did not always feel comfortable and confident in his ability to write. This self-doubt drove him into an obsession over completing his memoir, which he was never able to accomplish.

According to letters and comments from earlier in his career, Hemingway never intended on writing a memoir. He had doubts about the value of autobiographies and memoirs in general. In a 1924 letter in the *transatlantic review* he said, “It is only when you can no longer believe in your own exploits that you write your memoirs” (Stephens 38). Hemingway also claimed that he never wanted a biography of himself during his lifetime, but only one century after his death (Waldhorn 3). Hemingway was invigorated by life and wanted to experience as much excitement as possible. He worked hard on his public image so when he was at the high point of his career, the last thing he considered was writing a memoir. He was a man who fought, hunted, and drank, and he loved to make a spectacle. He easily and happily, for a while, fell into the life of stardom and celebrity through his writing, hobbies, and personal life. “Hemingway always tended to exaggerate and embroider the events of his life. He wrote about his personal experience and could not invent without it” (Meyers 134). Hemingway is known to write about himself in most of his novels, so his reality and fiction mixed regularly. “The need to recreate himself in his novels complemented the creation of his public persona” (Meyers 135). Some event in his life made him change his feelings against memoirs and autobiographies and he did write *A Moveable Feast*. Hemingway and those closest to him would explain that the discovery of the trunk at the Ritz made him nostalgic and thus he began to put the sketches together into a memoir, but that reason alone seems unlikely. It

is more likely that because Ernest Hemingway struggled with self-doubt and the inability to write late in his career, Hemingway wrote *A Moveable Feast* in order to increase his confidence as a writer.

Most reviewers and critics focus on the factual truth behind the writing and whether Hemingway can accurately claim that *A Moveable Feast* is an autobiographical work. In contrast to those reviewers, I argue that the truthfulness should not be regarded as the most important matter, especially because it is impossible to establish how truthful Hemingway's writing is in *A Moveable Feast*. I would suggest that the focus on the factual accuracy of *A Moveable Feast* is the wrong concentration and instead will focus on a much more important issue—the meaning of the book in the context of Hemingway's life. By providing background information on the two versions of the memoir and a close reading of the first version of *A Moveable Feast*, this thesis strives to provide a fuller understanding of how Hemingway's memoir makes an important statement about his writing and the legacy he left.

This introduction presents an overview of my argument and thesis about Hemingway and how the main themes of his memoir reflect on his need to undermine the other writers of his time with the purpose of increasing his own self-esteem and convincing himself of his ability to write. The second chapter will discuss memoir as a form and how it is meant to be interpreted as a genre. This explanation is needed to understand *A Moveable Feast* because I want to emphasize that the memoir is from Ernest Hemingway and regardless of the truth within the chapters, what he writes on paper is telling of Hemingway as a person and his mental state at the time of his writing. Memoirs are not just about the story being presented; they can also share important

information about the author. The third chapter will provide an overview on the critical reviews of both versions of *A Moveable Feast* and the background on Ernest Hemingway during the final years of his life while he was writing *A Moveable Feast*. This chapter will include examples of support for each version from various friends, scholars, and critics, and is intended to discover what Hemingway's true intentions were for the memoir and how his reputation played an important role in his writing.

Finally, the fourth chapter will examine the implications of Hemingway's memoir for all readers. Through a close reading of the first version of *A Moveable Feast*, this chapter will discuss how the memoir provides readers with a look into Hemingway's last years and the hopelessness that enveloped him. Despite the editors' questionable ways of organizing and changing Hemingway's memoir and the fact that the author was not able to publish before his death, the text still relays much information about Hemingway's life from his own perspective. I will treat *A Moveable Feast* as one of Hemingway's pieces of fiction by identifying the main themes throughout the work, and then explain how those themes are telling of Hemingway as an individual.

II. THE MEMOIR

“Autobiography” and “memoir” will be used interchangeably throughout this chapter, for they are closely related. An autobiography is considered a recollection of one’s life written by that individual so the perspective is entirely from the self. In memoir, rather, “there is typically an extensive concern with actions and experiences other than those of the writer...[memoir] is distinguished as the narrative mode in which the individual uses the incidents of an active public life as a guide to understanding the cultural or political tenor of the times” (Goodwin 6). Not only does the memoirist write in order to understand culture or politics, but also the piece may be written in order to understand something foundational about the memoirist himself or an incident that happened during his life.

Although the popularity of memoir is soaring, its lack of acceptance as a serious form is ever present. Critical reviews of memoir exist, but they are limited and often based on personal views of whether the critic believed the story as truth and whether he or she personally liked the author as presented through the writing. “It shouldn’t be surprising that we’ve developed such a limited critical capacity to evaluate memoirs because—to put it briefly—memoirs depend on memory and, despite being the subject of philosophical investigation going back as far as Plato and of plentiful scientific research since the mid-nineteenth century, memory remains an elusive topic” (Atwan 11). An important question for a reader when it comes to a memoir is whether the presented information is entirely true. One of the reasons for this is that most memoirs share something that is very personal and leaves the author vulnerable and the reader wants to know if such confessions are accurate or whether they are embellished or even

completely fabricated. Learning later that the memoir is exaggerated or not true disillusioned readers simply because people do not like being lied to. If a memoir is presented as a true-life story, the last thing a reader wants is to find out that key details are fabricated. However, one issue with memoir and authenticity is the fallibility of memory. Authors commonly write memoirs about incidents that are years or decades in the past. Even with the sincere intention of reporting the absolute truth, it is impossible to recapture with complete accuracy the events of life from years ago. “Memory reconstructs and recreates, often more with an eye toward the present moment of remembering than toward the past experience remembered” (Goodwin 12). Although the genre of memoir is not new, its popularity is, and with that may be needed a more serious way to look at the form. In contrast, one can argue that a strength of the memoir is that it is not rooted in science or mandated form. Instead, authors have the freedom to express themselves as they desire.

The question of truthfulness within a memoir may be ever present, but that does not take away from the power of a self-realization text, which is writing that an author uses to comment on and understand his own life or experiences. Perception of reality is different for every individual and regardless of whether reported facts from one person are identical to another who experienced the same situation, the way people recall their experiences is telling about who they are and what they are feeling. A well-written memoir is powerful because the text creates an intimate relationship between the writer and the reader, and if the reader discovers that the memoir is entirely fabricated or embellished, that bond between writer and reader is broken. The writer sets out to share a story about his life that is meaningful to him. Whether the story is about a triumphant or

tragic time in the author's life, he picked that occasion to share in detail with the reader. If *A Moveable Feast* was not a book, but instead Hemingway sat down in a Parisian café with a near stranger and shared his recollection of his early days in Paris, a connection would inevitably form. Those were the happiest days of his life, and he divulged what happened from a first-hand account. He did not give his life events from beginning to end for the sake of sharing information about himself, but he specifically picked a range of years that were most memorable to him with a group of individuals who made a tremendous impact. Because of this desire to share a memorable experience, Hemingway intimately connects with his readers:

Autobiography can wholly immerse the reader in the experience and thought of another person. It can activate the reader to self-reflection and create a deep recognition of shared humanity. Autobiography is able to affect the reader in this manner because the experience it recounts can be at once unique and universal. The genre contributes directly to the wealth of shared experience that comprises human existence. (Goodwin 23)

While reading *A Moveable Feast*, the reader is immersed into Hemingway's world and develops a better understanding of Hemingway with a human experience. Hemingway is a prominent figure of society so his name on a memoir is recognized, but the most universal aspect about the genre is that celebrity is not needed to interest a reader. Memoirs connect humans and allow experiences to be shared so that others may relate or understand.

Part of the reason why Hemingway's memoir is so appealing is that his life was made short by his suicide. Because memoir itself is such a powerful self-reflecting tool, A

Moveable Feast becomes an interesting writing piece since Hemingway was not available to finish or discuss it. Being able to read his final piece of work about his own life, the reader hopes to learn something about the writer that is no longer available or was never explained. “We like to try on new identities because our own crave the confirmation of like experience, or the enlargement or transformation which can come from viewing a similar experience from a different perspective” (Conway 6). Although not a finished product at the time of his death, *A Moveable Feast* is Hemingway’s legacy. Readers want to feel connected to the author and a good way seems to be in reading the book that he wrote about his own life. The memoir can make a powerful statement about a writer, and *A Moveable Feast* gives an inside look on both Hemingway’s time in Paris in the 1920s and the time at the end of his life leading up to his premature death. If one is familiar with Hemingway’s life, and especially his later years, *A Moveable Feast* gives insight into his life at the time of his writing the memoir. The text itself is about Paris, but the reflection comes from an older Hemingway who was nostalgic, sentimental, and yearning. Regardless of comments from family, friends, and academics, interpreting the text itself in *A Moveable Feast* is the best way to learn about Hemingway and his mindset during the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin comments on Hemingway’s reasons for writing *A Moveable Feast*:

Among the reasons that motivated this portrayal of self and others were clearly the need to justify himself, for he felt that he had been unfairly portrayed by some of his contemporaries, the desire to present his own version of personal relationships as well as the desire to get back at people

against whom he held a grudge, the need to relive his youth and his first marriage in an idealized fashion and thus recapture the past at a time when his life was going to pieces, the need to impose a form of artistic order on his life and at the same time trace his own literary development, and finally, the wish to leave the world a flattering self-portrait.

Of all her reasons listed for Hemingway's writing of his memoir, the most believable is his desire to relive his youth and return to his more pleasant days when his writing came more easily. Nostalgia is a powerful feeling and it captivated Hemingway, particularly during his time of self-doubt in his later years. The wish to leave a flattering self-portrait is possible. Hemingway is not portrayed as a kind individual in either version of the memoir, but he does write negatively on several other writers possibly to make himself appear better than them. The wish to leave a final statement is plausible, but several of the vignettes throughout *A Moveable Feast* are not the most flattering of Hemingway, though he may not have realized that. For example, the chapter "A Matter of Measurements" about the anatomy of F. Scott Fitzgerald is humiliating for Fitzgerald and somewhat amusing, but it certainly does not make Hemingway appear as a better man to the reader. The reader may even question why Hemingway would embarrass the family members of another great author in such a manner. While reading the memoir, it is most evident that Hemingway wrote the memoir to address his own feelings. He certainly cared about how some would perceive the text, but he wrote about a happy time in his life when fascinating people in a beautiful city surrounded him. His times with Hadley and Bumby, for example, were fun and loving.

A Moveable Feast reads similarly to Hemingway's novels. After decades of perfecting his skill and style and being applauded and awarded for his writing around the world, it does not seem surprising that his writing style stayed consistent. Verna Kale remarks, "Line by line and stroke by stroke, [*Feast*] is in subject and tone indistinguishable from much of Hemingway's fiction" (131). Although *A Moveable Feast* is labeled as a memoir and many readers, therefore, take it to be an accurate account, the book is still a story that Hemingway is remembering and to some extent imagining. For example, some question the truthfulness of dialogue between Hemingway and Hadley within the memoir. The dialogue between Hemingway and Hadley is there to demonstrate the relationship between the young lovers, and particular events should not be the key concern. The reader should doubt that those exact words were exchanged but if that is the focus, the meaning of the story is missed completely. Late in his life, as Hemingway faced depression and fear of losing his ability to write, he wrote *A Moveable Feast* to reflect on his early years in Paris when his career was just taking off. The purpose of the dialogue is to represent the relationship between Hemingway and Hadley and to show the reader how they interacted with one another. Hemingway adored Hadley at the time and that feeling is demonstrated through the written dialogue, "Despite the inevitability of distorted and imperfect memories, [Hemingway's memoir] evokes the impression of authenticity—getting at an emotional truth" (Kale 132). The authentic part of the story does not come from the particular conversations that took place, but from the emotions that Hemingway felt at the time.

He used his own experiences and knowledge from his friends and those he interacted with in his writing. Because he wrote in the first person, it is often assumed

that all those events happened to him and critics question the authenticity of the stories.

Hemingway comments:

What is, if not easy, almost always possible to do is for members of the private detective school of literary criticism to prove that the writer of fiction written in the first person could not possibly have done everything that the narrator did or, perhaps, not even any of it. What importance this has or what it proves except that the writer is not devoid of imagination or the power of invention I have never understood. (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast: The Restored* 181)

Writers document their memoirs to share their perceptions of the events of their lives.

The accuracy of the small details of one's memory or recollection is not all that important. Hemingway's memoir is realistic but some details and conversations are reconstructed from memory.

The two versions of *A Moveable Feast* were released in 1964 and 2009 by individuals separated by two generations. The 1964 version offers a completed, unified memoir on Hemingway's early years in Paris, but it must be understood that Hemingway never completed the memoir and his fourth wife performed much of the editing and final touches. The 2009 version is believed by most to be more true to Hemingway's original manuscripts, but it does not offer a unified story. The first edition presents a unified narrative while the latter presents the manuscripts of *A Moveable Feast* in the unfinished state that it was when the author died, though both versions offer valuable insight on Hemingway as a person.

III. CRITICAL REVIEWS AND BACKGROUND ON

A MOVEABLE FEAST

Because of the critics' focus on accuracy and since *A Moveable Feast* was left unfinished, there is an intense debate over which of Hemingway's posthumous memoirs is more accurate: the original release in 1964 by his fourth wife, Mary, or the 2009 release by his grandson, Seán Hemingway:

Gerry Brenner was among the first Hemingway scholars to raise the public alarm about the original edition of *A Moveable Feast*. He told me recently that he had been tipped off...that the *Feast* files might reveal a different story than that shaped by Mary Hemingway and Harry Brague. Hills sent Brenner an inventory of the manuscripts and notes in the collection. "From just the inventory," he said, "anybody could readily conclude that this was not a book that he did a final draft or rewrite of in orderly succession."

(Paul 18)

Brenner strongly supported a new edition of the original *A Moveable Feast*. He believed that Mary felt threatened at the time when Hemingway was writing his memoir because he was planning to leave her, but there is no real evidence of that or clear explanation as to why that would affect the editing after Hemingway's death. According to Brenner, Mary made the edits to make Hemingway look more vindictive (Paul 19). "Brenner said he thought part of Hemingway's difficulty in finishing the book had to do with his awareness of legacy" (Paul 19). Brenner's assessment of Mary is questionable, but Hemingway's legacy was a huge concern. Hemingway was very sick at the time of his death and feared that he could no longer write. He did not want his last book to be a

failed one. Hemingway may not have finished *A Moveable Feast* because he felt that it was not ready for publication.

In regards to Seán Hemingway's second edition, Steve Paul comments:

Neither edition of *A Moveable Feast* can lay claim to being complete and that his version was, ironically, somewhat less finished than the original book. "In many ways the first edition was respectful to the text," he told a Michigan audience in October 2009, "but it was presented as having been complete when it wasn't." (20)

Although the Hemingway grandson does admit that neither version of the memoir can be labeled as complete, he still presents the argument of which version of the text is better. By commenting that the first edition falsely advertises completeness, he implies that his version is more complete, or at least more honest by saying that it is not complete.

Another individual to pick a side is Charles Scribner III, the son of Hemingway's publisher. He supports the original edition, and explains his choice with a comparison to Mozart:

I think I'll use Mozart as an analogy, specifically his posthumous published "Requiem." Musicologists love to re-edit it, or have it performed as a fragment (i.e., only those sections he wrote out in his own hand), but the proof is in the listening, and Sussmayr's completion of his master's masterpiece has a ring of truth...for he worked closely with Mozart up to his death, and knew how Mozart wanted the piece finished. In the case of this *Feast*, the proof is in the reading, and that is why the original edition will endure. (Paul 21)

Scribner wrote this in reference to A.E. Hotchner, who adamantly supports that the first edition is exactly what Hemingway wanted. It is a reasonable argument, but what he fails to consider is the mental and physical decline of Ernest Hemingway in the years leading up to his death. It is difficult to accept that Hotchner knew what Hemingway wanted published, when Hemingway himself doubted his own work.

A.E. Hotchner wrote an article, published in *The New York Times* in July of 2009, about his opposition to the new release of *A Moveable Feast*. He claims that Seán Hemingway only worked on the second edition because he did not like what was said about his grandmother, Pauline Pfeiffer, in the original edition. Hotchner also provides details as to how the trunks were found at the Paris Ritz with sketches from his time there in the 1920s. “When I was leaving for New York to give [“The Dangerous Summer”] to the editor of *Life*, Ernest also gave me the completed manuscript of the Paris book to give to Scribner’s president, Charles Scribner Jr” (Hotchner, “Don’t”). Hotchner explains that the details he includes in the article about dates, locations, and projects that Hemingway worked on are proof that he was very involved with Hemingway and his desire to publish his memoir. “These details are evidence that the book was a serious work that Ernest finished with his usual intensity, and that he certainly intended it for publication” (Hotchner, “Don’t”). There is no doubt that Hotchner and Hemingway were very good friends and that Hemingway consulted Hotchner for many of his professional decisions. It is possible that Hotchner’s story is accurate, but there are plenty of critics who disagree with his account and find his recollection improbable. After Hemingway’s death, A.E. Hotchner published his own book about his relationship with Ernest Hemingway, *Papa Hemingway*. The two met when Hotchner was sent on a writing assignment to interview

Hemingway about the future of literature. The two men bonded and remained in close contact for the rest of Hemingway's life, constantly visiting one another and exchanging articles and stories for comments. Toward the end of Hemingway's life, Hotchner was very involved with Hemingway during the author's decline and was well aware of his difficulty writing and finishing *A Moveable Feast*. Although several critics, and even family members of Hemingway, support the newer release of *A Moveable Feast* and question the editing originally done by Mary and Hotchner, one must acknowledge that Hotchner might have been aware of what Hemingway wanted, or at least what Hemingway verbally expressed as his intentions. "Basically, Ernest's ability to work had deteriorated to a point where he spent endless hours with the manuscript of *A Moveable Feast* but he was unable to really work on it. Besides his inability to write, Ernest was terribly depressed" (Hotchner, *Papa* 274). Hotchner and Mary may have performed a questionable editing job on Hemingway's last manuscript, but it is quite possible that they edited in a way that they felt protected a man they loved and a legacy they wanted to preserve. The fact that Hemingway and Hotchner discussed writing gives Hotchner some credence on Hemingway's intentions, but it is also self-serving. Hotchner cherished his relationship with Hemingway and even went on to publish his own book with Hemingway as the main subject. Although the two men were close, Hotchner cannot take Hemingway's place in making the final decisions on what was wanted by Hemingway in his own memoir.

Robert Trogdon is one of those scholars who dislikes the original editing of *A Moveable Feast*. "The restored edition of *A Moveable Feast* is not ideal, but it is the best handled of the posthumous Hemingway books that Scribner has published. The editor

Seán Hemingway has actually made use of manuscript scholarship showing what a poor job Mary Hemingway, A.E. Hotchner, and Harry Brague did in 1964” (Trogon 25).

Trogon makes the argument based on the pages from the original manuscripts. His belief is that the great majority of what is published should come from a source document that can be traced. “I can only say that the new edition seems closer to the manuscript version” (Trogon 26). His argument makes sense from a very objective viewpoint. It is understandable that he believes the only text that should be published were the words we absolutely know came from Hemingway’s pen. Mary Hemingway’s editing is rather extensive and includes the reordering of chapters, removal and rearrangement of sentences, and changing of words. However, it must be considered that at the time of writing these manuscripts, Mary and Hotchner witnessed the deterioration of Hemingway’s mind and ability to write. Being the two closest individuals to Hemingway, they may have tried to fill the gaps in the writing without having any true documentation of where those changes, deletions, or additions came from. It absolutely can be seen as a fault, but there is a big difference between an outsider looking at Hemingway’s manuscripts and deciding what to publish and being a confidante of Hemingway’s, deciding what needs to be published. Although Seán Hemingway is related to the author, he was not an intimate friend. Trogon concludes, “Seán Hemingway’s edition may not be the ideal way to present a posthumous work, but it is, I think, an improvement over what we have had before” (Trogon 28). The new edition may be closer to the manuscripts that Hemingway left, but it is known that Hemingway was not completely satisfied with his writing so perhaps the pages he left behind were not ready for publication and he still believed they needed work. The manuscripts were clearly

unfinished and although Mary may have taken too much freedom with the text, it resulted in a unified narrative.

Gerry Brenner, mentioned earlier in this chapter as being one of the first to be concerned about the original edition of *A Movable Feast*, wrote his own article about the inaccuracies of Mary Hemingway's edits. The biggest question he asks of readers and scholars is if she did the responsible thing by adding to Hemingway's work in order to offer a more complete product or was it an injustice because she did not present *A Moveable Feast* in the way it was left? Brenner, unlike many of the other critics, does acknowledge that Mary had an intimate relationship with Hemingway and it is possible that she had more information about the work than what is documented. Although he acknowledges the possibility, Brenner does not believe it to be true:

It may seem, for example, that I rely too heavily upon documents and so overlook the likelihood that Hemingway discussed his plans for *Feast* with his wife. It is appealing to think that Mary Hemingway's private knowledge of her husband's intentions gave her access to the kinds of changes he would have made before he would publish these memoirs...And as Mary Hemingway herself has acknowledged, she was not privy to his private world of authorship, having declared that never did her husband discuss his writing with her in the seventeen years they were together. (Brenner 544)

The source of Mary's statement is from a personal letter she wrote in 1975, though Brenner does not say who the letter was addressed to. That was thirteen years after Hemingway's suicide. The argument is not that Hemingway did or did not tell his wife

anything about his writing, but it is fair to leave it as a possibility. All of these strong statements from critics are opinions. The few individuals who were closest to Hemingway and experienced his decline in the last few years of his life were under a crushing amount of stress, presumably, with trying to care for the author and prevent him from harming himself. Many conversations and moments could have been lost due to the extreme pressure that Mary was under in trying to care for and save her husband. The time following his death had to be very difficult for Mary Hemingway and while deciding to publish the memoir, she did what she thought was best at the time.

The most concentrated work on Ernest Hemingway's *A Moveable Feast* comes from Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin, author of *Ernest Hemingway's A Moveable Feast: The Making of a Myth*. Her book was published in 1991, eighteen years before the second edition was released. Although the book does not evaluate the newer edition, Tavernier-Courbin's last chapter does comment on the questionable editing by Mary Hemingway. "Hemingway had no hand in the final editing of his own autobiography, and the extent to which his editors changed his original text, therefore, becomes an important concern" (171). Mary Hemingway made statements that the editing she performed made changes for spelling, punctuation, repetition of words or phrases, and moved chapters for the sake of continuity. Comparing Mary's work to Hemingway's manuscripts and the changes he made by hand, Tavernier-Courbin observes that Mary performed more drastic changes than what she claimed:

An examination of the manuscripts, however, reveals that the editing done by Mary Hemingway and Harry Brague was far more extensive than acknowledged by Mary in either her review of the book or in *How It Was*.

Much was changed, deleted, and added, but the additions were generally culled from passages that Hemingway had decided against using.

(Tavernier-Courbin 171)

Tavernier-Courbin's main point is that "one might well say that the book published is not really the book Hemingway had written or wanted published" (172). There is no argument that the final 1964 release is different from the manuscripts that were discovered. Several academics and critics find issue with that. However, it would have been impossible to deliver a product that Hemingway had written or wanted published in regards to his memoir. It is heavily documented that he wrote and re-wrote drafts of chapters constantly and never became happy with what he had on paper. To publish only the documents he left behind would not do him any more justice, since he was obviously not satisfied with his writing. Perhaps *A Moveable Feast* could have been presented in a different way that highlighted the changes more or Mary could have published the documents as she had them and left out missing parts. Either way, she would receive criticism. Further, what readers fail to understand is that without Mary and the editing team, we never would have experienced *A Moveable Feast* at all.

One example of poor editing identified by Tavernier-Courbin is a change in adjective from "beautiful" to "sculpture" in the chapter "Miss Stein Instructs." She reasons: "It may be a matter of taste, but 'beautiful' seems much more satisfactory than 'sculpture.' But what is more important is that Hemingway had chosen 'beautiful,' and that the editors really had no valid justification for making the change" (173). She makes a valid point, and it is doubtful that years later, Mary Hemingway would be able to say why she or the editing team made that change. Drastically deviating from the original is

considered poor editing, but whether the changes are a significant problem is unknown, for no one knows if Hemingway would have agreed with the changes or not. Mary made the decision to offer a complete text to readers and what was left from Hemingway was not complete. The problem with her changes is that she did not fully take responsibility for them. If she had acknowledged the changes she made with the release of the original, the outcry may have been less.

The majority of Ernest Hemingway's original manuscripts and personal letters are housed at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library in Boston, Massachusetts. Posted on the library's information page is the history of how Hemingway's manuscripts came to Boston. The late President Kennedy made it known how he admired Hemingway's work and even invited him to his inauguration in 1961. After Hemingway's death, Mary collected all of the papers, letters, and manuscripts she could from his houses and collections and thought about where the works could best be displayed and available to the public. In 1972, Mary deeded the collection to the Presidential Library and donated the archives (History of the Collection).

The writings of an author can tell a lot about the individual, and personal letters especially provide insight on thoughts and feelings. Hemingway is well known for his personal letters, and he made it a priority to frequently contact his family and friends through correspondence. Scholars and academics studying the words and manuscripts of Hemingway are able to travel to Boston and look at the manuscripts of his work.

The manuscripts and letters offer a great amount of information about Hemingway, his writing, and his life, but some things about Hemingway can be better understood coming from sources close to Hemingway rather than him. Hemingway's

perception of himself could have been skewed and especially when he was facing depression, friends and family had clearer minds to describe the events that took place. Friends of Hemingway express that his writing meant more to him than anything else in his life; it is what he cared about most. Friends and family are also able to better explain the deterioration of Hemingway's mental state experienced towards the end of his life. Hemingway's love of writing and his fear of the inability to write caused depression to take over his life.

A.E. Hotchner documents his relationship with Hemingway in *Papa Hemingway*. Frequently throughout the book, Hotchner mentions Hemingway's emphasis on writing and how it was the center of his life. "If I took a drink every time I hurt or felt bad I could never write, and writing is the only thing that makes me feel I'm not wasting my time sticking around" (Hotchner, *Papa* 144). Hemingway loved to drink and attend parties, but it is clear that his writing came first. Writing gave Hemingway a purpose in life and a way to connect with the world. In 1958, Hemingway conducted a question and answer session with forty high school teenagers. The students asked questions about his work schedule, his famous novels, failure, discouragement, and writing in general. When asked if he ever had a failure, Hemingway responded:

You fail every day if you're not doing good. When you first start writing you never fail. You think it's wonderful and you have a fine time. You think it's easy to write and you enjoy it very much, but you are thinking of yourself, not the reader. He does not enjoy it very much. Later, when you have learned to write for the reader, it is no longer easy to write. In fact,

what you ultimately remember about anything you've written is how difficult it was to write it. (Hotchner, *Papa* 198)

In a very brief response, Hemingway summarizes his journey and struggle through writing. During his years in Paris when he was new to the writing profession, Hemingway loved what he was doing and enjoyed writing very much, and that is evident in *A Moveable Feast*. Further into his career, Hemingway became aware of what critics and readers wanted, and it tainted the way he thought about writing. He felt constant pressure to write better and to write more.

As Hemingway's popularity grew, his writing became more difficult for him because of the pressure he felt from critics and readers. His articles, journalism, novels, and letters never became any less important to him with time, but the difficulty of keeping up with expectations was challenging. "The public wants to believe in the existence of a phenomenal human being who fights, hunts, loves, and *writes* so perfectly. This heroic image satisfies the needs of the public but is irrelevant to the real Hemingway; it tempted, corrupted, and finally helped to destroy him" (Meyer 133). The development of Hemingway's public image was the first step towards his decline. He was able to maintain it for nearly three decades, but it eventually wore on him and killed him:

Hemingway not only helped to create myths about himself but also seemed to believe them. In the last decades of his life, the Papa legend undermined the literary reputation and exposed the underlying fissure between the two Hemingways: the private artist and the public spectacle. When his writing slacked off and he attempted to live up to and feed on

the legend, his exploits seemed increasingly empty. His shotgun blast shattered the heroic myth—and led to a different persona. (Meyers 134)

Critics who argue over which version of *A Moveable Feast* is the most accurate are still focused on Hemingway as the legend. They fail to see the broken man underneath the stories.

Every aspect of Hemingway's life was published in magazines and newspapers for all to see. Hemingway was always under scrutiny, and the demand on him from the outside world caused his writing and confidence to suffer dramatically. "Failure always infuriated him, clearly because it frightened him" (Waldhorn 219). Perhaps the reason for Hemingway's death is that he felt that he failed at writing and that caused him to develop insecurity about himself. Critics, friends, and family have all documented the decline of Hemingway's mental and physical health and his continual struggle to produce literature up until his suicide (Hotchner, *Papa* 273).

Carlos Baker, one of Ernest Hemingway's biographers, first notes a decline in Hemingway's health in 1947. Hemingway was disturbed by a constant buzzing noise, and he experienced high blood pressure and weight gain (462). Hemingway only told Mary about his health problems and convinced himself that he could easily improve his health. Only three years later, in 1950, Hemingway published his first novel in ten years, *Across the River and Into the Trees*, which received dismal reviews (Baker 486). Although Hemingway soon recovered and won a Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1953 for *The Old Man and the Sea*, Hemingway still felt hurt from his failed performance in writing *Across the River and Into the Trees*. "The American reviews bristled with such adjectives as disappointing, embarrassing, distressing, trivial, tawdry, garrulous, and tired" (Baker

486). Although appearing to be a confident, robust man, Hemingway had a fragile ego and felt that he was losing his capacity to write.

In 1954, Ernest Hemingway was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. He believed that as soon as Faulkner won that same prize, Faulkner no longer wrote anything worthwhile (Baker 526). Hemingway was fearful that because of this recognition by the Nobel Prize Committee, his writing career was over. He was not able to attend the ceremony in person to accept the award, but he did record an acceptance speech. A portion of it discusses the need to continually improve his writing:

For a true writer each book should be a new beginning where he tries again for something that is beyond attainment. He should always try for something that has never been done or that others have tried and failed. Then sometimes, with great luck, he will succeed...It is because we have had such writers in the past that a writer is driven far out past where he can go, out to where no one can help him. (Baker 529)

Hemingway foreshadows here the problems with the rest of his writing career: he tried so hard to construct a creative work unlike any other, but he reached a point beyond medical help. His health continually declined, as did his mental state. His obsession over writing pushed him to a point where he was unable to recover (Baker 529).

Tavernier-Courbin traveled to Boston to study the original manuscripts of *A Moveable Feast* and came to the conclusion that most of the book is not from the 1920s, but rather that Hemingway wrote the great majority of it in the years leading up to his suicide. "A study of the manuscript reveals, with little chance of error, that the book was written late in Hemingway's life, and that no major or even minor portion of the book

was written in the 1920s” (18). This statement further suggests that Hemingway’s intention for his memoir may have been to write one final book. He made up a story that appealed to the general audience, which gave him an excuse to reflect on his happier days from earlier in his life, but he really used the book as a way to deal with his believed inability to write. Placing himself back in the mindset of Paris in the 1920s may have helped to encourage him to write like he did in the beginning. Others did not believe that Hemingway was losing his touch, but Hemingway did and that is what matters.

Hemingway worked on *A Moveable Feast* in 1957 and it is believed that he nearly finished it in 1958 (Tavernier-Courbin xix). However, he made changes and re-arranged chapters constantly which prevented the book from formally being published. The release of this memoir became a race against the clock, “for his sixtieth birthday had been marked by some early signs of the paranoia and nervous imbalance” (Tavernier-Courbin 28). He turned sixty in July of 1959, and delivered the typescript to Scribner’s in New York in November of that year. By July of 1960, “he has reread *A Moveable Feast* and arranged the chapters in the proper order and felt they read well. He had tried to write some more, but felt ‘stale from over-work’ and wanted to ‘get some juice back in before writing any others’” (Tavernier-Courbin 31). The last two years of his life, 1961 to 1962, completely ruined Hemingway the writer. He wanted to finish *A Moveable Feast*, but his insecurity and mental feebleness prevented him from ever progressing further with the book (Hotchner, *Papa* 297-298).

Gregory Hemingway, one of Ernest Hemingway’s three sons, comments on his father’s growing frustration with writing:

Now I know he simply meant that the material wasn't flowing out naturally anymore—the well was no longer artesian but needed pumping. He always had a marvelous ear for words and he was certainly more experienced and wiser, but the old effortless elemental naturalness was no longer there. The world no longer flowed through him as through a purifying filter, with the distillate seeming more true and beautiful than the world itself. He was no longer a poet, one of God's spies, but a querulous counterespionage agent whose operatives seemed to deceive him. (G. Hemingway 4)

The problem that Ernest Hemingway faced is that with the build-up of his legendary reputation, he placed an immense amount of pressure on himself to constantly write memorable novels and stories. With age, most people expect one to slow down and not produce work at the same speed as in one's younger years, but it seems that Hemingway did not believe in getting older or slowing down. His consistent demand on himself drove him to obsession and madness.

In 1960 and 1961, Hemingway's mental and physical health deteriorated, and he made frequent trips to the hospital. Family and friends were scared and concerned because Hemingway was completely unable to function as his normal self. "Basically, Ernest's ability to work had deteriorated to a point where he spent endless hours with the manuscript of *A Moveable Feast* but he was unable to work...His talk about destroying himself had become more frequent, and he would sometimes stand at the gun rack, holding one of the guns, staring out the window at the distant mountains" (Hotchner, *Papa* 274). Hotchner was a constant part of Hemingway's life and throughout his memoir

of their relationship, he frequently notes the growing depression and Hemingway's numerous comments on no longer being able to write. According to Hotchner, the only aspect of life that really mattered to Hemingway was his writing. Failure to complete *A Moveable Feast* stopped his career and Hemingway was not able to handle his inability to write. Without making progress on the book, Hemingway grew more and more convinced that he was unable to finish the memoir and that his life was over. One of the last conversations Hotchner documents with Hemingway is one in which Hemingway seems to give up on his life. Hemingway states "[L]ook, it doesn't matter that I don't write for a day or a year or ten years as long as the knowledge that I *can* write is solid inside me. But a day without that knowledge, or not being sure of it, is eternity" (Hotchner, *Papa* 298). Hotchner's memoir is another example of a story based on memory and perception so the accuracy of the dialogue is questionable, but the intention feels genuine.

Without a doubt, psychological and physical ailments may have contributed to Hemingway's despair and eventual suicide; it is likely that his defeated spirit accelerated physical ailments. By believing that the one talent he had to share with the world was escaping him, his entire image of himself shattered. The legend that he so carefully built over decades started to overcome his real person and it was not a reality he could face. Although many friends, family members, and critics argue over what Hemingway wanted with the unfinished *A Moveable Feast*, I would suggest that he wanted nothing to do with it any longer. The book became his enemy, and he was never happy with the memoir. Hemingway made the choice to kill himself without ever publishing *A Moveable Feast*. By that point in his life, he may not have cared about the book ever being published.

Anyone who reads *A Moveable Feast* and has any idea on the background of the story should understand that the published product is not entirely Ernest Hemingway's. One last criticism from Tavernier-Courbin includes, "*A Moveable Feast* is not entirely Hemingway's. Sections of it, especially the Preface and the last chapter, are Mary Hemingway's as much as Hemingway's. The tone of both has been drastically affected by Mary's editing, which was perhaps misguided rather than ill intentioned" (182). Although he suffered depression, paranoia, and other mental ailments, he knew that *A Moveable Feast* was not finished and he ended his life. No one trying to salvage that final manuscript and making edits would have produced something that Hemingway wanted published. It can even be argued that because of his suicide and leaving the book unfinished, he might not have wanted it published at all. The varying opinions on whether *A Moveable Feast* should have been edited and which version is more accurate creates an intense discussion, but the real concern is that writing, or more accurately the inability to do so, killed Ernest Hemingway. This unfinished memoir, which he convinced himself that he could not get just right, may have forced him to take his own life. If one wants to read *A Moveable Feast*, it is best not to become caught up in the controversy over the accuracy of the facts of which version tells Hemingway's story best. Enjoy the memoir as one of the final pieces we have of him, even if he did not approve either of the two versions of his memories. Both versions are imperfect, but both present narratives that are largely Hemingway's.

The new version of *A Moveable Feast* is convincingly the version that most resembles what Ernest Hemingway left at the time of his death, but Mary's original version is a better read because it is a unified story. For over forty years, readers read and

enjoyed the version of *A Moveable Feast* that she edited and released. Although she should have been upfront and honest with the editing that she performed, she produced a great piece of work. The purpose of her version was to offer one last complete book from her husband, and she achieved that.

IV. CLOSE READING

In order to better understand Hemingway's *A Moveable Feast*, I will perform a close reading on the original version of the memoir. I chose the first version over the second because I view the first version as a unified, complete story. Mary Hemingway exercised vast freedom with her editing, but the final result reads quite well and is an enjoyable story. The second version lacks unity and is not a complete piece of work. The original version of *A Moveable Feast* is unified because it moves smoothly through the first years that Hemingway experienced Paris. He made the trip initially with his first wife, Hadley, and they slowly grew familiar with the surrounding area and the people who occupied the city. The memoir ultimately concludes with Hemingway meeting a new group of friends, who dissolve his first marriage, and the book ends with a feeling of remorse. The book has a very clear beginning and end and it progresses chronologically in between. The main themes in the first version of *A Moveable Feast* are Hemingway's struggle with self-confidence, his struggle with writing, and his yearning for the early days in Paris as he reflects on his time in the 1920s.

The first chapter of *A Moveable Feast* is titled "A Good Café on the Place St-Michel," which lays the groundwork and setting for Hemingway's time in Paris. He begins with the bad weather, describing the rain and the wind and the cold. He describes the area of the city that he occupies, a poor section with crowds and drunkards, and he contemplates whether buying the wood to warm his room on the top floor is worth the trouble and the money. Instead, he makes his way to a café in order to write. This opening description allows the reader to understand Hemingway's current situation. He does not refer to Paris in any sort of negative way, but the feeling is that Hemingway is

currently a struggling writer, trying to earn enough to keep his room warm and the alcohol available. His writing comes easily to him and he enjoys it. He writes, “But in the story the boys were drinking and this made me thirsty and I ordered a rum St. James. This tasted wonderful on the cold day and I kept writing, feeling very well and feeling the good Martinique rum warm me all through my body and my spirit” (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 13). By the end of the chapter, Hemingway finishes his story and feels good about the piece. He is expecting money soon for his journalism pieces and he asks his wife, Hadley, if she wants to take a trip away from the wet and the cold since he can continue writing anywhere. The most important part of this first chapter is how Hemingway sets the tone for the entire memoir. He reflects on a past that is simple. Paris can be dismal, but Hemingway is happy to spend his time writing and traveling with his wife. They do not earn a lot of money, but it is enough to allow them to live the way they want to. Hemingway wrote this chapter much later in his life, and it is telling to compare the life he writes about to the life he was living while writing. While writing, he had multiple homes, plenty of money, and traveled all over the world whenever he wanted. His reflection on a happier, simpler time is significant because even though he developed fame and recognition for his work, he writes with such fondness about his days in Paris, when no one knew his name.

The second chapter, “Miss Stein Instructs,” begins in a similar way to the first chapter with details on the living conditions. Upon their return from the trip, Hemingway is able to purchase food and fire and the Paris winter is beautiful. He provides more details on his writing, how he works on a daily basis, and what he does when he struggles to write:

I would stand and look out over the roofs of Paris and think, “Do not worry. You have always written before and you will write now. All you have to do is write one true sentence. Write the truest sentence you know.” So finally I would write one true sentence, and then go on from there. It was easy then because there was always one true sentence that I knew or had seen or had heard someone say. (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 20)

Even when Hemingway struggled momentarily to write something, he still exuded a confidence that he would come up with something. He was very disciplined and had a system that allowed him to produce every day. Regardless of small setbacks, he had the self-assurance that an idea would come to him, a confidence he lacked when writing in the 1950s and 1960s. He writes that it was easy then because there was always one true sentence, yet at his time of writing he implies that he no longer had true sentences to write. One interpretation can be that Hemingway finally let go of the reputation he always tried to preserve and exude. He faced his truth that he felt defeated and no longer had anything to say or share through his literature, except what had happened in the past.

For the majority of the chapter, Hemingway writes about his relationship with Gertrude Stein. At their first meeting, Hemingway and his wife visit the apartment of Stein and her partner. Stein provides feedback for Hemingway on his writing, “‘It’s good,’ she said. ‘That’s not the question at all. But it is *inacproachable*. That means it is like a picture that a painter paints and then he cannot hang it when he has a show and nobody will buy it because they cannot hang it either’” (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 22). Stein refers to the short story, “Up in Michigan,” about rape, which was published in 1923. Although Stein provided comments and what can be published of Hemingway’s

work, it is clear that they did not always agree and Hemingway published the piece anyway. Regardless, Stein and Hemingway developed a strong friendship and helped one another numerous times throughout their careers. Hemingway thought of her and her writing fondly: “She had such a personality that when she wished to win anyone over to her side she would not be resisted, and critics who met her and saw her pictures took on trust writing of hers that they could not understand because of their enthusiasm for her as a person, and because of their confidence in her judgment” (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 24). Not only did Stein and Hemingway discuss writing, they also had conversations on what to spend money on, sex, and homosexuality. Hemingway uses the terms *accroachable* and *inaccroachable* several times throughout the chapter, giving a light feel to his relationship with Stein and emphasis on how much he admired her. This chapter serves as an opportunity to demonstrate Hemingway’s rise in the literary realm and spotlights the connections he begins to make with prominent figures, which later becomes important in the discussion of his waning confidence.

The next chapter, “Une Génération Perdue,” is also about Gertrude Stein. On the first page, Hemingway speaks on writing and how one must take a break from thinking about the writing once it was finished. “If you kept thinking about it, you would lose the thing that you were writing before you could go on with it the next day” (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 31). This is the second time that this habit is mentioned; the first is in the previous chapter and for three chapters in a row, Hemingway writes about writing. It is clear that his profession is very important to him and that he takes his writing and going about it very seriously. Perhaps Hemingway focuses on this because at the time of his writing *A Moveable Feast*, writing did not come effortlessly to him at all. He may have

envied his earlier days when writing was an easy, daily occurrence. The chapter continues to describe the friendship between Stein and Hemingway and which authors they read and admire. Stein makes a comment that Hemingway is a part of the lost generation and Hemingway does not like that title. “I thought of Miss Stein and Sherwood Anderson and egotism and mental laziness versus discipline and I thought who is calling who a lost generation?...I thought that all generations were lost by something and always had been and always would be” (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 35).

Hemingway made this term, the lost generation, popular through his novel *The Sun Also Rises*, but he seems to have never really believed that the soldiers who survived World War I were ever lost. From his conversation with Stein, he almost takes offense at being called lost because he was so sure of himself as an individual. Instead of accepting or ignoring the label, Hemingway repurposes it and makes the term his own. His tone throughout this chapter is confident and because he does not like a label given to him, he changes it and uses it to his advantage. Even with a prominent figure such as Stein, Hemingway is sure of himself and takes control of a situation. At the beginning of the memoir, Hemingway is a self-assured author, aware of his own talent for writing.

“Shakespeare and Company” is a short chapter about Sylvia Beach and the bookstore she owned in Paris. The bookstore was an amazing find for Hemingway and Beach was very kind in letting him borrow whatever he wanted and allowed him to pay when the money became available. However, this chapter is more about Hemingway and his wife than it is about Sylvia Beach. Hemingway tells Hadley about the bookstore and Hadley is thrilled. They make plans to read and walk and eat and drink and make love. The conversation between them is light and the reader gets the feeling that the couple

plans to spend a perfect, carefree day together. Hemingway ends the chapter with, “‘We’re always lucky,’ I said and like a fool I did not knock on wood. There was wood everywhere in that apartment to knock on too” (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 42). This last sentence offers both a sense of foreshadowing for the story and also a feeling of regret when looking at Hemingway’s situation as a whole. In the story, Hemingway and Hadley are very happy and in love, and Hemingway’s comment that he should have knocked on wood to not jinx his situation has the reader begin to think that something bad is coming soon. Taking a step back from the story and thinking about the passage as Hemingway writing his memoir, he may be regretful that he never knocked on wood, metaphorically, to preserve his relationship with Hadley. It very much comes across as remorse and he may have wished to preserve his first marriage. He alludes to missing the simpler times of his early years, and Hadley may have been a big part of that. The relationship between Hadley and Hemingway is often romanticized, as in the fictional novel *The Paris Wife* by Paula McLain. Hemingway feeds into this story ahead of time by emphasizing his regret towards the dissolution of the marriage.

“People of the Seine” is an illustrative chapter consisting of descriptions of Paris. Hemingway looks for books in English from bookstalls and watches the men fish along the Seine. He writes a beautiful description of the weather along the river:

I could never be lonely along the river. With so many trees in the city, you could see the spring coming each day until a night of warm wind would bring it suddenly in one morning. Sometimes the heavy cold rains would beat it back so that it would seem that it would never come and that you were losing a season out of your life. This was the only truly sad time in

Paris because it was unnatural. You expected to be sad in the fall. Part of you died each year when the leaves fell from the trees and their branches were bare against the wind and the cold, wintry light. But you knew there would always be the spring, as you knew the river would flow again after it was frozen. When the cold rains kept on and killed the spring, it was as though a young person had died for no reason. (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 48)

This is a vivid description of the Parisian seasons and it is clear that Hemingway is very in-tune with the city. He finished the chapter with “In those days, though, the spring always came finally but it was frightening that it had nearly failed.” This can be a metaphor for how Hemingway viewed life. Maybe he expected life to go a certain way regarding his family and his career and it was terrifying to him when it looked like what he expected to happen came in danger. He could even be referring to his writing. Each time he thought he could no longer write or that his talent was failing him, he finally came through with a respectable piece and his career and life continued. While trying to write and finish *A Moveable Feast*, Hemingway experienced days when he did fail at writing and was unable to produce any work. The metaphor can be a statement about how he missed the times when he was able to write, confident that the piece would come together as a comprehensive work. Hemingway’s writing is like the spring; he always expected it to make an appearance eventually. Likewise, Hemingway may be spring, for he never believed in growing old. The ailments he suffered both mentally and physically are the cold rains that killed Hemingway, who was always young at heart.

The next chapter, "A False Spring," introduces a feeling of change within Hemingway. He begins the chapter by writing about how easy it is to be happy in the springtime, "When spring came, even the false spring, there were no problems except where to be happiest. The only thing that could spoil a day was people and if you could keep from making engagements, each day had no limits. People were always the limiters of happiness except for the very few that were as good as spring itself" (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 51). This makes the reader question who is Hemingway referring to? He seems happy, but wants to avoid most people in order to maintain his happiness. Most of the chapter is about Hemingway and his wife placing money on horse racing and they win and are able to use the money for good wine, food, and travel. They reflect on memories and close friends and it seems like a perfect day spent together between Hadley and Hemingway, but something is missing. Both are hungry so they enjoy a nice meal, but the hunger remains: "It was a wonderful meal at Michaud's after we got in; but 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" (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 58). Something is changing in Hemingway's mind and with his feelings. The feeling of hunger represents something that is missing that is crucial to life. Hemingway feels a hunger that has nothing to do with nourishment. For the reader, it is hard to determine what is missing since he has a family, a career, and loves the city he lives in, but there must be more that he desires. "Life has seemed so simple that morning...But Paris was a very old city and we were young and nothing was simple there, not even poverty, nor sudden money, nor the moonlight, nor right and wrong nor the breathing of someone who lay beside you in the moonlight" (Hemingway,

A Moveable Feast 58). This statement is profound and contemplative, but the reader does not know what it refers to. Up until this point, Hemingway gave the perception that he did live a rather simple, happy life. Without knowing what changed his thoughts, he begins to reveal that a significant change is about to take place and his writing begins to darken. This chapter is the first time tension within his relationship with Hadley is mentioned.

“The End of an Avocation” is about Hemingway giving up gambling on horse races. He and Hadley enjoy attending the races a few more times together, but more often Hemingway goes on his own and becomes very involved. He realizes this is not the best habit so he stops. Aside from writing about racing, Hemingway continues with the theme from his previous chapter on emptiness: “When I stopped working on the races I was glad but it left an emptiness. By then I knew that everything good and bad left an emptiness when it stopped. But if it was bad, the emptiness filled up by itself. If it was good you could only fill it by finding something better” (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 62). The chapter is about racing, but the reader wonders what else Hemingway can be referring to. Maybe he is feeling an emptiness with his marriage or friendships or work, but none of that is yet clear. It is at this point in the book that Hemingway transitions from the confident author who misses his early days in Paris to a self-conscious writer who questions what is missing in his life and needs to compare himself to others to assure himself of his talent. The next chapter, “Hunger Was Good Discipline” continues with the hunger and emptiness motif, which pulls away from the yearning theme and begins to explore the collapse of Hemingway’s self-esteem and confidence.

In this chapter, the reader discovers that Hemingway is struggling to sell stories. He had a regular paycheck when he was writing journalism articles, but since switching to short stories he has not been as successful. Because he is not earning a consistent paycheck, he is not eating because he cannot afford it. The hunger can be interpreted as both literal and figurative. In a literal sense, Hemingway does not have enough money to eat a full meal and therefore, he is hungry. In a figurative sense, he may be hungry for a break in his work. His stories are not selling, Hadley lost most of his drafts while traveling, and he knows that he needs to write a longer piece, perhaps a novel, but the task seems daunting to him. He is hungry for success in his writing career and is having difficulty finding a way to achieve it. Knowing Hemingway as such a large literary figure and all the successes he achieved throughout his lifetime, it is unexpected reading an early piece that has him worried about his writing. However, it is also meaningful that Hemingway wrote this chapter late in his life when he again was struggling to write. Perhaps he related to his feelings early in his career and that inspired him to focus on this theme of hunger and emptiness. By reflecting on an earlier time when he struggled with writing, Hemingway could have assured himself as he was writing *A Moveable Feast* that he experienced difficulty with writing before and succeeded. Hemingway shares the story of Hadley losing his stories, but he does not focus on it. Instead, he recognizes his plight, and at the end of the chapter makes the decision to move forward: “All I must do now was stay sound and good in my head until morning when I would start to work again” (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 75). Although Hemingway wrote his memoir about his life in the 1920s, this statement reflects on what he felt at the time of writing. He is convincing himself to keep his mind clear and thoughts together so that he can finish A

Moveable Feast. Hemingway feels the hunger and emptiness in many ways, but he is determined to overcome it and then move forward.

The next chapter, “Ford Madox Ford and the Devil’s Discipline,” is the first time Hemingway speaks poorly about a contemporary. At this point in the book, Hemingway begins to write destructively about other writers in order to make himself seem better. The reader was introduced to Gertrude Stein and Sylvia Beach, but both women earned Hemingway’s respect and admiration in previous chapters. On the other hand, it is very clear in this chapter that Hemingway is not a fan of Ford Madox Ford. “I had always avoided looking at Ford when I could and I always held my breath when I was near him in a closed room, but this was the open air and the fallen leaves blew along the sidewalks from my side of the table past him, so I took a good look at him, repented, and looked across the boulevard” (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 81). In the dialogue between Hemingway and Ford, it is clear that Hemingway does not think highly of the man. Hemingway thinks Ford is a liar, although he does admit that Ford is a good writer. This chapter sheds a different light on Hemingway. There is no particular confrontation between the two men or anything obvious that makes Hemingway not like Ford, but Hemingway felt the need to include an entire chapter on another writer that is all negative. Some believe that Hemingway wrote *A Moveable Feast* to even the score with anyone who ever wrote or said poor things about him, but if so such an intention seems petty and unnecessary. Hemingway wanted to preserve and inflate his own reputation by degrading another author. This chapter does not make Hemingway appear any better than Ford, and the reader may actually feel that Hemingway’s attack on Ford is unprovoked

and unfair. However, at a time when he felt that his writing was failing, Hemingway may have felt the need to point out the flaws in others due to his waning self-confidence.

“Birth of a New School” is another example of Hemingway writing in a negative way about another. Perhaps it is telling of his personality or of his growing fame, but this chapter is about Hemingway becoming upset because another writer comes to “his” café and will not stop bothering him as Hemingway tries to write. Granted, when one is trying to work it is frustrating to be constantly interrupted, but the café does not belong to Hemingway. At one point, Hemingway says to the man, “You shouldn’t write if you can’t write. What do you have to cry about it for? Go home. Get a job. Hang yourself. Only don’t talk about it. You could never write” (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 92). It is possible that Hemingway said anything necessary to have the man leave, but his attacks are brutal. Although this quote is from Hemingway to another individual, it can be seen as a criticism about himself. It is known from his biographies and personal correspondence that writing did not come easily to him in the 1950s and 1960s, and he did eventually kill himself. In the story, Hemingway seems to criticize another in order to build himself up, but in reality he may be criticizing himself. Hemingway did not hang himself, but he made several comments that are documented about not being able to write, and he killed himself in his own home. The character in the book is not sympathetic towards the man, and it is probable that Hemingway was hard on himself for not being able to produce writing. These few sentences are an outpouring of his frustration towards his inability to create stories. His character in the memoir is developing from innocent to haughty, though I doubt the author himself felt successful.

“With Pascin at the Dôme” is another chapter about another artist. Pascin was a painter. Hemingway runs into Pascin and two young women and joins them for a quick drink. Nothing comes out of the conversation except small talk about work, food, drinks, and sex. Hemingway makes his leave rather quickly, but enjoys the company and seems fond of the man. It is significant that in Hemingway’s memoir, he frequently writes chapters about other people. Seemingly, the second half of the book is more about the people he meets and communicates with on a regular basis than it is about just himself. Hemingway may have defined himself by those who surrounded him. His writing was extremely important to him, but it also appears that who he associated with also plays an important role in how he wanted to be remembered. He makes it very clear to the reader who he likes and who he dislikes.

Hemingway introduces another person, Ezra Pound, in the following chapter, “Ezra Pound and His Bel Espirit.” Hemingway is fond of Pound and speaks highly of him, although he disagrees with him about artwork and people:

I kept my mouth shut about things I did not like. If a man liked his friends’ painting or writing, I thought it was probably like those people who like their families, and it was not polite to criticize them. Sometimes you can go quite a long time before you criticize families, your own or those by marriage, but it is easier with bad painters because they do not do terrible things and make intimate harm as families can do. (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 114)

Hemingway writes in a light, comical manner, which is different from the beginning of the book. He takes more risks about what he is saying about people and he incorporates

more wit into each chapter. As the memoir progresses, Hemingway's character develops a stronger sense of identity and his confidence grows, though that may be compensating for how Hemingway the writer really felt. Hemingway pokes fun at Pound as a boxer, but overall he seems generally warm towards the writer: "Ezra was kinder and more Christian about people than I was. His own writing, when he would hit it right, was so perfect, and he was so sincere in his mistakes and so enamored of his errors, and so kind to people that I always thought of him as a sort of saint" (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 114). Hemingway is more open about his opinions of people, and he still expresses some admiration for most of his contemporaries, but he also has a knack for creating feuds as well.

The ending of Hemingway's friendship with Gertrude Stein is documented in his chapter, "A Strange Enough Ending." Hemingway stopped by Stein's apartment unexpectedly, and while waiting for her, he overheard an intimate conversation she was having with her female lover. It made him uncomfortable, so he hastily left. By publishing this detail, and to further describe her look as that of a Roman Emperor, perhaps Hemingway's intention is to embarrass Stein, but it does not come across in an obvious manner. For Stein and Hemingway, it seems their friendship simply falls apart. "In the end everyone, or not quite everyone, made friends again in order not to be stuffy or righteous. I did too. But I could never make friends again truly, neither in my heart nor in my head. When you cannot make friends any more in your head is the worst. But it was more complicated than that" (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 123). Hemingway's ending to the chapter is ambiguous and left unexplained. He is never outright nasty towards Stein, but their friendship absolutely changed. Previously, in the chapter "A

False Spring,” Hemingway alludes to life not being simple, but he never fully explains. By stating that the ending to his friendship with Stein was complicated, he again fails to express details or what he is really feeling. Throughout the text, Hemingway wanes between subtle, intimate self-reflection and a resistance towards sharing personal details. This pattern is very much like his personal life. He wanted everyone to believe that he was a strong, assertive man, but his emotions and who he was underneath the façade needed to be exposed in order for him to maintain his sanity. His continuous battle with that led to his demise, and it can be seen within the book. He continues the trend of commenting on the people he knew in Paris throughout his own memoir, rather than blatantly writing about himself. Stein and Hemingway had a strong friendship, as demonstrated in an early chapter. After Hemingway overhears an argument, the friendship ends. He knew that Stein had a female lover before, but in this chapter he decides to highlight that detail as an unforgiveable flaw. Hemingway looks for flaws in others in order to elevate himself and has no problems sharing intimate details about others with his reader.

“The Man who was Marked for Death” is about prize money that is offered to Hemingway as well as Joyce and other writers and nothing ever comes of it. Hemingway meets Ernest Walsh, a poet, for lunch and they discuss Pound and writing. Walsh offers compliments on Hemingway’s writing, and Hemingway is modest in his response, “He started talking about my writing and I stopped listening. It made me feel sick for people to talk about my writing to my face, and I looked at him and his marked-for-death look and I thought, you con man conning me with your con” (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 131). Although Hemingway is quick to give his opinion on others and their writing, he is

uncomfortable with Walsh praising him and Hemingway even says he is undeserving of the award. The chapter consists of a lot of dialogue that of course Hemingway did not remember perfectly, but it is more telling of his feelings at the time of his writing. He is convincing himself that his writing is not worth any admiration and when another wants to talk about his writing, he feels like he is being deceived. No matter what others said about him and his talent, Hemingway felt that he was losing his ability and he needed to believe in himself more than anyone else.

“Evan Shipman and the Lilas” describes a scene with the poet where they go to a café and drink whiskey. They discuss books and authors and the bartenders. One passage worth noting is about Hemingway’s views on reading:

To have come on all this new world of writing, with time to read in a city like Paris where there was a way of living well and working, no matter how poor you were, was like having a great treasure given to you. You could take your treasure with you when you traveled too, and in the mountains where we lived in Switzerland and Italy...there were always the books, so that you lived in the new world you had found. (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 135-136)

Passages like this, hidden amongst Hemingway’s commentary on other people and places, are the self-reflection pieces that Hemingway typically avoids. If the reader is looking closely, evidence of Hemingway’s love for reading and writing can be found throughout the memoir. He fills the book with comments on other writers and his love for food and drink, which can offer insight on Hemingway, but hidden amongst all those stories is evidence of what he loves most: literature. Hemingway may prefer to preserve

his reputation as a drinker and a fighter, but his relationship with literature cannot be ignored. He comments frequently on writing and having difficulty writing, and that is because more than anything he wanted to produce meaningful literature.

“An Agent of Evil” is a short chapter about an ailing Ralph Cheever Dunning and when Hemingway tries to offer him opium, Dunning is enraged. It is a humorous chapter, and Hemingway portrays more of his admiration towards Pound and he and Evan Shipman find comedy in the altercation between Hemingway and Dunning. The chapter concludes with a quote from Shipman:

“We need more true mystery in our lives, Hem,” he once said to me. “The completely unambitious writer and the really good unpublished poem are the things we lack most at this time. There is, of course, the problem of sustenance.” (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 148)

Shipman refers to keeping the fact of whether Dunning was a fine poet a mystery. He implies that it is not important what anyone else thinks about poems or works of literature, but that there should be more mystery and surprises. A good piece of work must have sustenance; it has to mean something. This can refer to authors writing to please the critics or the readers. Rather than being concerned about a reputation, one must write for the beauty of writing and to tell a good story. This quote ends the chapter and Hemingway never comments on it from the first person, but it may be an idea that he struggled with. He was not able to convince himself that the critics did not matter and what others thought about his work had a deep impact on him and his career. However, he left *A Moveable Feast* unpublished. He was not unambitious, but it is ironic that he did leave an unpublished work that consists of plenty of sustenance for the reader.

Before the concluding chapter of *A Moveable Feast*, three chapters are dedicated to F. Scott Fitzgerald. The chapter titled “Scott Fitzgerald” is the only one in the book with its own introduction:

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. (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 149)

It is clear that Hemingway regards Fitzgerald as a talented writer, but also believes that Fitzgerald began to think too much about his writing and his work suffered. Although in the chapters Hemingway tries to highlight differences between himself and Fitzgerald, the introduction can easily be applied to Hemingway and his struggles with writing. Both men experienced difficulty in producing what they considered great literature, and it deeply bothered Hemingway. The first chapter of the Fitzgerald series begins with Hemingway making odd remarks about Fitzgerald’s appearance, but overall Hemingway admires Fitzgerald for his writing. At the time, although Hemingway had not yet read *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald was receiving positive reviews and Hemingway was still unable to imagine writing anything as long as a novel (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 157). Hemingway and Fitzgerald agree to take a trip to Lyon, and Hemingway is excited for it. However, everything goes wrong including Fitzgerald not showing up at the train station to meet Hemingway, Hemingway not finding Fitzgerald initially in Lyon, spending too

much on meals, experiencing mechanical problems on the ride home, raining, and Fitzgerald falling ill, though Hemingway believes the sickness is fabricated. By the end of the trip, Hemingway is happy to be home with his wife and vows never to take a trip with someone he does not love again (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 174). Overall, the story of the trip is amusing, and it is a tale of what can go wrong. The personalities of Hemingway and Fitzgerald are vastly different, which makes for a comic vignette. In regards to the significance of this chapter, the last page stands out most and is telling of Hemingway's relationship with both Hadley and Fitzgerald. When discussing the trip with Hadley, both Hemingway and Hadley agree that although the trip was horrible, they had several trips together to look forward to and that they were very lucky, regardless of the fact that they were not wealthy like the Fitzgeralds, "We both touched wood on the café table and the waiter came to see what it was we wanted. But what we wanted not he, nor anyone else, nor knocking on wood or on marble, as this café table-top was, could ever bring us. But we did not know it that night and we were happy" (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 174). Failing to knock on wood is mentioned before in the "Shakespeare and Company" chapter, which also refers to Hemingway's relationship with Hadley. In this case, Hemingway changes his stance slightly to allude to both Hemingway and Hadley not being entirely happy in their present situation. They think they are happy that night, but Hemingway's comment that nothing could ever bring them what they wanted foreshadows that their lives are about to dramatically change. Although Hemingway refers to his time in Paris, what he wanted no one could ever bring him in regards to his writing as well. "Scott Fitzgerald" is Hemingway's longest chapter in his memoir, and it appears that for less than a page Hemingway truly writes about himself. Again, his

identity is preserved within those who know and interact with him. This chapter is a mix of remorse for his failed relationship with Hadley and a hint of jealousy or fear towards Fitzgerald. Hemingway may be jealous because he recognizes that Fitzgerald is talented and will be successful with *The Great Gatsby*, but also fearful because Hemingway recognizes that Fitzgerald lost his talent when he thought too much. At the time of his writing, Hemingway may have attempted to highlight the differences between himself and Fitzgerald because he did not want to admit that he faced the same troubles.

The second chapter about the Fitzgeralds is mostly about Scott's wife, Zelda. Fitzgerald and Zelda have a volatile relationship. They adored one another, but they were also jealous of one another and sometimes strived to make each other suspicious:

But the way things were going, he was lucky to get any work done at all. Zelda did not encourage the people who were chasing her and she had nothing to do with them, she said. But it amused her and it made Scott jealous and he had to go with her to the places. It destroyed his work, and she was more jealous of his work than anything. (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 180)

Hemingway comments on several of the people he interacted with in Paris, but he most closely comments on Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald. This character breakdown is different for Hemingway, though, because he writes about both Scott and Zelda. Hemingway has a lot to say about their relationship and marriage, but says little about his own.

Conversations with Hadley come up throughout the text and the reader knows about her, but there is never any in-depth look at their relationship. Most commentary is succinct and indicates a reserved happiness, but nothing is ever described in detail. For two

chapters, Hemingway writes about Fitzgerald as a lousy traveling partner and hypochondriac and exposes the explosive marriage between Fitzgerald and his wife, but he makes the statement, “This continues for years but, for years too, I had no more loyal friend than Scott when he was sober” (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 181). Fitzgerald was loyal to Hemingway, but it is clear that Hemingway is not loyal to Fitzgerald, because most of the writing about him creates a negative image. At this point in his life in Paris, Hemingway drafted *The Sun Also Rises*. Hemingway portrays others in a negative light perhaps to give off an air of superiority. My suspicion is that he felt threatened by Fitzgerald. Although it did not sell right away, *The Great Gatsby* is a phenomenal novel and received a great deal of attention once noticed. By denigrating Fitzgerald and his wife, Hemingway reveals a nasty side to the reader. At this point in the memoir, he lost sight of what he was trying to share about his life and instead turned the book into an attack on his contemporaries as a way to boost self-esteem and to feel important as a writer.

The last chapter about Fitzgerald solidifies that idea that Hemingway meant to portray Fitzgerald in a negative way and that there is no real purpose in publishing these chapters aside from promoting his own status as a great writer. This chapter, “A Matter of Measurements,” is about Hemingway trying to convince Fitzgerald that there is nothing wrong with the size of his penis. While meeting for lunch one day, Fitzgerald makes the comment, “Zelda said that the way I was built I could never make any woman happy and that was what upset her originally. She said it was a matter of measurements. I have never felt the same since she said that and I have to know truly” (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 188). During an initial read, this chapter is shocking and amusing. It is difficult, yet

comical, to imagine two men spending the day trying to discover the acceptable size for the male anatomy. However, Hemingway wrote this nearly twenty years after Fitzgerald died. It was not an old joke between friends and Fitzgerald was never given the opportunity to see this sketch before publication and counter Hemingway's portrayal of him. The chapter dissects a rather intimate conversation on a sensitive issue. By the end of the chapter, Hemingway seems to defend himself by stating, "I will put him in exactly as I remember him the first time that I met him" (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 191). The lunch about Fitzgerald's anatomy is not the first time Hemingway met him, but Hemingway may be trying to make the point that the stories he shared are exactly what he remembers of the Fitzgeralds. He may not be trying to sound malicious or superior, but in his mind those are the stories that stand out. Regardless of his intention, the stories about Fitzgerald give Hemingway a tainted reputation. No longer is he sharing his life stories, but he is tearing down his contemporaries. The reason for this may be because towards the end of his life, Hemingway doubted himself tremendously and all he had left to write were those memories. The writing itself is good and entertaining, but because it is a memoir about people that truly existed, Hemingway risks his own reputation by being so callous.

The last chapter of *A Moveable Feast*, "There is Never Any End to Paris," is the most telling. Hemingway discusses being poor, but happy, with his family. They vacationed to Schruns in the wintertime and it was beautiful and fun. They loved to ski and eat and drink and read books and enjoyed the company of the others around them. The passages from this chapter are eloquent and the descriptions of the scenery are vibrant. Hemingway writes about what they did and saw and all of the people they

interacted with; it seems like a perfect get-away and a very happy time. Then, suddenly, Hemingway writes a sentence and the entire scene shifts: “During our last year in the mountains new people came deep into our lives and nothing was ever the same again” (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 203). In this chapter alone, Hemingway self-reflects and helps the reader understand his feelings and thoughts as he ended his time in Paris, “When you have two people who love each other, are happy and gay and really good work is being done by one or both of them, people are drawn to them as surely as migrating birds are drawn at night to a powerful beacon. If the two people were as solidly constructed as the beacon there would be little damage except to the birds” (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 205). The winter that their lives changed was the winter that Pauline Pfeiffer came into their lives, who ultimately became Hemingway’s second wife. Hemingway and Hadley believed they were happily married, but their foundation was cracked by new people entering their lives, which happened more with Hemingway’s growing success and popularity. Hemingway describes the situation with Hadley and Pauline:

Then, instead of two of them and their child, there are three of them. First it is stimulating and fun and it goes on that way for a while. All things truly wicked start from an innocence. So you live day by day and enjoy what you have and do not worry. You lie and hate it and it destroys you and every day is more dangerous, but you live day to day as in a war.

(Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 206)

This chapter is Hemingway’s most honest and heartfelt. He acknowledges a difficult time in his life and reflects that it was a situation that began innocently and turned wicked. He

does not comment on the others involved or place blame on anyone, but he simply describes his feelings and what he thinks once he is years removed. The ending to the memoir is rather apologetic towards Hadley and how their relationship ended. He remembers her as beautiful and elegant. The last paragraph of the memoir begins, “There is never any ending to Paris and the memory of each person who has lived in it differs from that of any other” (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* 207). With the statement, the reader can gather that Hemingway is sharing his thoughts and his thoughts alone of his experience of Paris in the 1920s. No one else’s recollection of stories will ever match his, for all Paris stories are unique.

Although the text is set solely in Paris in the 1920s, *A Moveable Feast* as a whole follows the trajectory of Hemingway’s life. Both the book and his life begin innocently as he finds his way around Paris and the world of literature, but he quickly meets significant figures that shape and influence his thoughts and writing. Within the book, Hemingway is reserved in blatantly sharing his feelings with the reader, but his emotional state throughout the different stages are evident if one looks closely and dissects the passages. Hemingway continuously worries about writing within the book and he places a lot of pressure on himself to write well. The final product of *A Moveable Feast*, in this case the first version that was presented by Mary Hemingway, is not just about Hemingway’s early days, but incorporates much of what was happening in his later years as well.

Hemingway did not represent himself in the best way throughout his memoir, but he told an honest story that sheds information on his state of mind and how he felt about his own status as a writer. These chapters and stories are Hemingway’s. They come from his memory or his imagination, and they are what he wanted to share. There are disputes

about what he wrote compared with Mary's additions, but for the most part we can say that these ideas belong to Hemingway. Hemingway does self-reflect in some of the chapters and intentionally allows the reader to see his inner thoughts and feelings on events from the past. He also defines his Paris experience mostly by the people surrounding him and that must be interpreted. Hemingway outlived most of the people mentioned in his memoir so perhaps he felt that his recollection of stories, no matter how personal or humiliating, could do no harm. When Hemingway wrote the majority of *A Moveable Feast*, he was not at the happiest point in his life. Throughout the memoir, Hemingway revolves the subject of each chapter either around his self-confidence, his writing, or his longing for his early Paris days. Without knowing the background on his life and how his life ended, it is easy for the reader to overlook the self-reflection that is threaded throughout the entire book. He wrote an uncensored, unapologetic version of his time in Paris that speaks on the fragile mental state he experienced at the end of his life. With nearly all of his contemporaries dead, Hemingway had nothing preventing him from writing a candid recollection of his experience in Paris, while simultaneously providing the reader with insight on his personal thoughts about himself.

V. CONCLUSION

Critics, scholars, academics, family members, and other interested parties have studied Ernest Hemingway's memoir and manuscripts and present their ideas and concerns in several different ways. Much of the ongoing debate around *A Moveable Feast* is about the differences between the original version edited and released by Mary Hemingway in 1964 and the 2009 version released by Seán Hemingway. The 1964 version is a more unified narrative, but Mary performed questionable editing. Seán Hemingway tried to present his grandfather's manuscripts in their truest form, but the memoir is clearly incomplete and lacks cohesion. Another controversy about the memoir focuses on whether Hemingway wrote the truth or if his memoir is mostly fabricated.

Both versions of *A Moveable Feast* are in no way perfect and neither can be considered a pure product from the hand of Ernest Hemingway, but they allow readers to learn about the author as a person and what was important to him. Although the book is about Ernest Hemingway's time in Paris in the 1920s, the words say a lot about him as a writer and what he was feeling in the years leading up to his death.

It is reasonable for academics of literature to want to choose one version of *A Moveable Feast* over the other for the purpose of teaching and studying the most accurate version, but that argument should not be the center of discussion when working with the memoir. Rather than argue about versions of the text and strive to find further evidence of what Hemingway really wanted, I instead focus on the content of *A Moveable Feast* and show how the first version of the book is a unified work of art that explores the themes of Hemingway's self-doubt, love of writing and literature, and nostalgia for his early, simple days in Paris with Hadley. Hemingway was a broken man by the end of his life. Although

not complete, he left *A Moveable Feast* as his last piece of work. Seemingly, the book is a reflection of his time in Paris in the 1920s, but threaded throughout the chapters are larger statements from Hemingway about his believed failure at writing and his final concerns before his action to take his own life. By learning about Hemingway's life, the reader can better interpret and understand *A Moveable Feast* as Hemingway's last attempt at self-reflection that he shares with the world.

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