

# **The Myth of the Ritz Hotel trunks**

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AS WE all know, *A Moveable Feast* is a series of reminiscences written by Hemingway during the last years of his life about the years he spent in Paris with his first wife, Hadley, between 1922 and 1926. Much has been made of the fact that, in November 1956, Hemingway supposedly retrieved from the basement of the Ritz Hotel in Paris two trunks which he had left there in 1927. Mary Hemingway, the writer's last wife, and apparently Hemingway himself claimed that it was the discovery of the old papers and manuscripts contained in those trunks that gave him the idea of writing his memoirs of the old days in Paris, and that he used that material of thirty years past in the composition of the book.

This is a very nice story, very much in the same vein as that of the discovery of James Boswell's journals, and there seems to be little reason to doubt it. However, the various accounts of the discovery are often conflicting, and, so far, I have not found a direct statement by Hemingway himself concerning the discovery of the trunks. Moreover, he is reported to have claimed that he found in these trunks manuscripts which could not, in fact, have been there. It is, therefore, important to attempt to determine three things:

- 1) whether these trunks really existed and, if so, at what time they were left at the Ritz;
- 2) what papers were in them; and
- 3) what use Hemingway made of these papers in the writing of *A Moveable Feast*,

There were various reports concerning the discovery of the trunks even before Mary Hemingway's description of them in the *New York Times Book Review* of May 10, 1964. In fact, the story seems to have originated with Leonard Lyons who, in his column "The Lyons Den" of December 11, 1957, mentions the discovery and reports that Hemingway told him that the manuscript of *A Farewell to Arms* was in the trunks, which could hardly have been the case since Hemingway had given that manuscript to Gus Pfeiffer in 1930. Lyons mentions again the discovery of the trunks in his column of December 9, 1963, after Mary Hemingway's press-conference. However, it seems that Mary Hemingway had not talked about that discovery in her press-conference since none of the other responses to it refer to the trunks. The story came out in force in April 1964 with the review of George P. Hunt in *Life* and, on May 10, with both Mary Hemingway's and Lewis Galantieri's in *The New York*

Times Book Review, Mildred Carr's in the Greensboro Daily News and Reece Stuart's in The Des Moines Register. Mary Hemingway describes the trunks as follows:

*They were two small, fabric-covered, rectangular boxes, both opening at the seams .... The baggage men easily pried open the rusted locks, and Ernest was confronted with the blue-and-yellow-covered pencilled notebooks and sheaves of typed papers, ancient newspaper cuttings, bad water colors done by old friends, a few cracked and faded books, some musty sweat shirts and withered sandals. Ernest had not seen the stuff since 1927, when he packed it and left it at the hotel before going to Key West.*

Mildred Carr is very cautious and, although she gives various details concerning the composition of the book, which she probably obtained from Mary Hemingway or from Hadley — such as the fact that Hemingway telephoned Hadley to ask her to refresh his memory about certain people — she begins her mention of the trunks with ‘It is said that.’ Other less careful reviewers used their imagination to fill in the details and even transformed the notebooks contained in the trunks into diaries.

At this point, I should like to make two comments on Mary Hemingway's description of the event. First, she mentions that Ernest had left these trunks at the Ritz in 1927 before going to Key West, which is clearly an error since he did not go to Key West until late March 1928. Similarly, elsewhere in her article, she indicates that the baggage men at the Ritz had asked Hemingway to remove his trunks since 1936, when he had been on his way home from Spain. Again, it is not until May 9 to 13, 1937, that Hemingway was in Paris on his way home from Spain. Mary Hemingway's own report, therefore, contains some inaccuracies.

Of course, after the so-called description of the Ritz-Hotel papers by Mary Hemingway and other early reviewers, many scholars and critics described these papers with some assurance and assumed their importance for the composition of *A Moveable Feast*. What is important is not only the fact that everyone took the existence of the trunks and the papers for granted but also the fact that it has been widely held that Hemingway had written the better parts of *A Moveable Feast* in the early Twenties and the rest — the inferior parts — before his death. Some have even believed that the whole book was written in the Twenties. In fact, the purported use of the old manuscripts discovered in the trunks in the writing of the book has often been seen as evidence that Hemingway had lost his talent and was reduced to plagiarising his past. That Hemingway found it very hard to write in 1960 and 1961 has been well documented. But as we shall see, although Hemingway did indeed use some of his earlier writings in the book, he used far less than one might imagine.

A. E. Hotchner's account of his last visit to Hemingway in 1961 enhanced the theory that Hemingway had written the book earlier. Hotchner quotes Hemingway as saying, ‘The best of that (*A Moveable Feast*) I wrote before. And now I can't finish it.’ What Hemingway

probably meant is that he had written the book in 1956-1957. Indeed, he had considered it as finished in 1960 when he sent it to Scribner's. He withdrew the manuscript, however, for at least two reasons: officially, because he wanted to improve it (as evidenced by his letter to Charles Scribner of March 31, 1960), but also, probably, because he was afraid of libel suits, as shown by the many drafts he wrote of the preface to the book.

It is interesting to notice that what probably started out as inaccurate reporting on Lyon's part, or even as a distortion of the truth on Hemingway's part, became an accepted fact after Mary Hemingway's review of the book and was generally seen as Hemingway's major motivation for writing his memoirs. Interestingly, Mary Hemingway contradicts herself somewhat in her later description of the event in *How It Was*. It is not necessary to quote at length, but the details that she gives concerning the discovery of the trunks are quite different from the details of her earlier account. The progression in her accounts from a rather casual incident to a much more formal occurrence reflects the increasing importance given with time to those trunks and their manuscript contents for the composition of *A Moveable Feast*.

The evidence supporting the fact that Hemingway had left trunks of old manuscripts in Paris — if not necessarily at the Ritz — in the last 1920s, apart from Mary Hemingway's claim, and the evidence which suggests that the discovery of the Ritz-Hotel papers was part of Hemingway's myth-making are almost evenly balanced.

Apart from Hemingway's reported claim, and Mary's direct claim, that he found two trunks of old manuscripts in the basement of the Ritz, there are in Hemingway's correspondence various references to old papers, manuscripts and letters stored in Paris. Probably the most reliable piece of evidence to that effect is to be found in a letter from Hemingway to Gus Pfeiffer dated March 16, 1928. Gus had asked Hemingway for the manuscripts of 'Fifty Grand' and 'The Undeclared,' and Hemingway wrote back to him:

*I have hunted through all my old trunks here at the apartment to find the manuscripts of Fifty Grand and The Undeclared so I could send them to you. But have found 8 or 10 other mss. but not those. Evidently they are in storage with 4 [of] my trunks of old letters and mss. So I am enclosing the manuscript of The Killers, the first typescript of The Undeclared and the only part I have found of Fifty Grand. The part I eliminated in publishing it.*

Hemingway was by that time already very fond of Gus Pfeiffer, who had been very good to him and Pauline, and there seems to be no reason why he should lie to him. 'When we return in the fall' has to mean 'when we return to Paris' for Hemingway had not yet settled in Key West, and the apartment he refers to is the Rue Ferou apartment. However, he mentions four trunks and not two, and certainly makes no mention of the Ritz Hotel.

Although the date of this letter coincides closely with the time at which Hemingway is supposed to have left his trunks at the Ritz, it does not seem, by the contents of it, that he was doing any such thing.

In a letter to Julien Cornell concerning the release from prison of Ezra Pound, Hemingway writes on December 11, 1945:

*I do not have any of Ezra Pound's letters here, since I do not believe he has written me since 1935 or 1936. It is very probable that I have some of his old letters stored in Paris.*

However, in a handwritten draft of that same letter, he had added: 'or, possibly in Key West.' Again this suggests the possibility of papers stored in Paris, although there is no certainty that Pound's letters were among them. However, it may also be merely an excuse on Hemingway's part for not taking the trouble to search for Pound's letters in order to send them to Cornell. Pound's letter would, in fact, have added little fuel to Hemingway's claim that he was crazy.

A third and final, although least reliable, reference to papers stored in Paris can be found in a letter from Hemingway to Arnold Gingrich dated November 16, 1934, in which he writes:

*Like Seldes [Gilbert], I've had him worried about that letter for a very long time now and I'm going to keep him worried. Don't say I mentioned it anymore. I've got it locked up with my papers in Paris and no matter how his critical career comes out this makes a bum of him in the end. I've written all the facts about Gertrude so they'll be on tap if anything happens to me but I don't like to slam the old bitch around when she's here having a wonderful time.*

This is probably mostly bluster, for I have not yet been able to locate any such letter from Gilbert Seldes, and Seldes himself strongly denies it. Although there are several rather cruel references to Gertrude Stein among Hemingway's papers, there does not seem to be any manuscript such as the one he refers to here. The papers supposedly stored in Paris were a rather handy weapon for Hemingway, who seems to have had an obsession for claiming that he had concrete evidence to damn his contemporaries.

Thus, at various times in his life, Hemingway claimed that he had papers stored in Paris. However, not all of his old papers were stored there, as evidenced by the draft of his letter to Julien Cornell, as well as by a letter to Mizener, dated July 6, 1949, in which he claims that he had Fitzgerald's old letters in Key West for a time:

*I am very sorry that I do not have any of Scott's letters here. Most of them were stored in Key West and were probably eaten by mice and roaches .... I*

*had everything filed in a cabinet and in pretty good order, but while I was away at one of the wars someone decided to use the cabinet to keep their files while setting up a small antique business and as a consequence, much of my early manuscripts, Scott's letters and more or less valuable documents became rat and roach food.*

One might have some doubts as to the accuracy of this statement (since Hemingway is once more apologizing for not sending something of a personal nature to an outsider) were it not for the fact that fourteen years earlier, on December 16, 1935, he had written to Fitzgerald from Key West that he had just found Fitzgerald's long letter to him in which he advised him about the ending of *A Farewell to Arms*. This clearly corroborates the fact that Hemingway had some of his early manuscripts and letters in Key West.

The evidence in favor of Hemingway's having left trunks of old manuscripts in Paris for some thirty years outweighs slightly the evidence against it — the most powerful piece of evidence remaining Mary's and Ernest's claims to that effect. However, there is valid evidence — if basically negative evidence — that suggests that the discovery of these trunks may have been a myth added to Hemingway's already legendary life.

The most tangible evidence against the discovery of the trunks as Mary described it is the fact that the old employees at the Ritz Hotel who remember Hemingway clearly, and who remember that he often left things at the Ritz from one year to the next, do not remember that he ever left anything for thirty years. Another factor which militates against the story as told by Hemingway and Mary is the fact that Ernest apparently never mentioned the discovery of these papers in his private correspondence, even in his letters to close friends like General Lanham and Harvey Breit.

For instance, Hemingway wrote to Harvey Breit from Paris, while staying at the Ritz, in December 1956, shortly after the papers had supposedly been discovered, and he does not mention that discovery at all; neither does he mention it in any subsequent letter to him. Nor does he mention it to General Lanham, to whom he wrote very long letters full of details about his personal life. In his letter to Lanham of April 8, 1957, he talks about the past summer and fall in Spain and Paris, gives many details about his health but does not mention the trunks or the papers. Mary Hemingway herself, who wrote to Patrick and his wife on December 27, 1956, from the Ritz, makes no mention of the trunks in her long and chatty letters; neither does Hemingway mention the trunks to 'Mouse' in any of his letters of that period. As a matter of fact, I have not found one single mention of the trunks in the Hemingway correspondence which is at the Kennedy Library, Princeton University Library, the Beinecke Library, and the Houghton Library.

Finally, it seems somewhat unlikely that Hemingway would have left two trunks in the Ritz basement before moving to Key West in 1928 instead of shipping them with the rest of

his baggage, especially if he considered them important enough to instruct the baggage men at the Ritz to take good care of them, as they contained important papers. Although Hemingway admittedly had a tendency to leave manuscripts in various places, such as a barn which burned down in Piggott or at Sloppy Joe's Bar in Key West, it just does not seem quite logical that he would have left these trunks in a hotel where he and Pauline did not even stay after they had given up the apartment in the Rue Ferou. Of course, Hemingway was probably a good customer of the Ritz Bar and friendship with bartenders can perhaps lead to trunks stored in a basement.

Other evidence of trunks stored in Paris can be found in the correspondence between Hemingway and Gerald Murphy and between Mary Hemingway and Mr. Mourelet, concierge at the Ritz. On September 20, 1937, Gerald Murphy wrote to Hemingway that he had left at the Elysee Park Hotel, where he was staying, three pieces of luggage belonging to Hemingway to be kept in storage. Attached to the letter was a receipt for the luggage from the concierge of the hotel. What these pieces of luggage were is difficult to determine. There is, of course, a slim chance that they might have been pieces of luggage left by Hemingway in the Murphy's studio, Rue Froidevaux, ten years earlier. Correspondence between the Hemingways and Mr. Mourelet dates back to 1950, and involves a trunk of old clothes and manuscripts, two boxes of books and one box of china, which were to be shipped to Cuba. When these had been left at the Ritz is unclear and it seems that the trunk belonged to Mary: 'I think we should insure the books for \$200.00 and the China for \$100.00. If my trunk has also been held up, would you insure that and its contents (which are simply personal belongings, old clothes, letters, and manuscripts) for \$200.00. One can hardly imagine that, if the trunk had contained Hemingway's early manuscripts, it would only have been insured for \$200.00. However, the description of the contents of that trunk comes disturbingly close to the description of Hemingway's forgotten trunks at the Ritz.

Should there have been no trunks full of old manuscripts stored in the Ritz basement for some thirty years, Hemingway's self-dramatization and myth-making, if such it is, would have served several practical purposes. It would have served as a justification for his writing the same sort of thing, and, much worse, that he had only recently violently attacked Arthur Mizener for writing; for destroying in print people whom he had never liked and some he had professed to like; and finally for writing a book he had always claimed that he would write only when he could not write about anything else.

Hemingway had been extremely angered by Mizener's article on Fitzgerald published on January 15, 1951, as evidenced by the letters he wrote to Harvey Breit, Malcolm Cowley and Mizener himself. For instance, on January 17, 1951, he wrote to Breit:

*Just read the piece in Life. I wrote him that he was an undertaker; but that piece is straight grave robbing and he sells the body. I will have to see him some time to see who can do such things . . . Maybe he's a nice guy. But the*

*Life piece is not nice and it has his name on it. I'd kill a guy for money if times were bad enough, I guess. But I don't think I could do that.*

Hemingway kept harping on Mizener's article for a long time in his correspondence with various people. To Mizener himself he wrote, on January 18, 1951: 'For your information I would gladly clean sewers for a living, every day, or bounce in a bad whorehouse or pimp for a living than to sign such an article.'

However, when he himself got around to writing on Fitzgerald, barely five or six years after this exhibition of outrage, what he wrote about him was probably more destructive than anything Mizener had written, for he made a fool of Scott and presented him as a total failure as a man, and close to one as a writer. He was clearly aware of it, too, for, in 1957, when *The Atlantic* asked him for an article for their 100th Anniversary number, he wrote a piece on how he had met Scott, but had qualms about sending it once it was done:

*He started to write about Scott and how I first met him and how he was; writing it all true and it was tough to write and easy to remember and I thought it was very interesting. But when I read it over I remembered that character writing about his friend Mr. Dylan Thomas and thought people would think I was doing that to Scott and him dead. So I had worked a month on it and finished it good and then put it away and wrote them a story.*

There seems to be little doubt that this is what became, with few revisions, the first chapter on Scott in *A Moveable Feast*, for there seems to be no other manuscript of his meeting with Scott. It is interesting to notice that he was still hesitant about these chapters in the fall of 1958, for he contradicts himself in two letters written within three days of each other — of course, it could also be that, depending on his audience, he was assuming a different attitude. On September 18, 1958, he wrote to Buck Lanham that he had done 'a book, very good, about early earliest days in Paris, Austria, etc. — the true gen on what everyone has written about and no one knows but me.' Three days later, he wrote to Harvey Breit that the book was 'unreadable' and that he would probably throw it in the waste basket. Hemingway, thus, clearly knew the impact of what he had written, and claiming that he had written it after he had unexpectedly discovered notes taken during his early years in Paris could have been, consciously or not, a way of shirking full responsibility for his merciless portrait of Fitzgerald.

In any case, the discovery of the Ritz Hotel papers gave Hemingway an ideal excuse for writing about his former friends — writing things which he had often said in his private correspondence but that he had never made public property until that day. The discovery of the papers and the claim that they gave him the idea of writing the book lent authenticity to what he wrote and established the purity of his motives. It thus appeared that it was not

Hemingway, the bitter and somewhat paranoid writer who was stabbing at Gertrude Stein, Ford Madox Ford, Fitzgerald, Ernest Walsh, Cheever Dunning and others, but the older Hemingway reporting accurately on what the young Hemingway had seen and felt. It had the strength of documentary evidence; thus no one could question the accuracy of the anecdotes he related, and no one could say that he was revenging himself for what Gertrude Stein had written about him in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*. His phone call to Hadley, though, certainly establishes the fact that his intentions were not entirely pure. Clearly forgetting his own earlier baiting of Gertrude Stein, he had often claimed, in private correspondence, that he had never attacked her or retaliated after *The Autobiography*. For instance, he wrote to Gingrich on November 16, 1934:

*... it goes against my digestion to take shots at anyone who's ever been a friend no matter how lousey they get to be finally. Besides, I've got the gun and it's loaded and I know where the vital spots are and friendship aside there's a certain damned fine feeling of superiority in knowing you can finish anybody off whenever you want to and still not doing it.*

Finally, the discovery of the papers gave him the perfect opportunity for writing the book he had often said he would write when he had nothing else to write about, that is, when his genius had dwindled. Without such an excuse, the mere writing of the book would have been an admission to himself and his friends that he had indeed reached the end of his rope as a writer. Angry as ever about critics who wanted to write his biography, he wrote to Malcolm Cowley on May 13, 1951:

*Did it ever occur to any of these premature grave robbers that when I was through writing books I might wish to write the story of my life myself if the people concerned were dead so that they would be hurt no more than I would? Writing it with the evidence to back it up and telling the part few people know about it.*

Much earlier, just after the publication of Gertrude Stein's memoirs, he had written to Janet Flanner on April 8, 1933: 'By Jeesees will write my own memoirs sometimes when I can't write anything else. And they will be funny and accurate and not out to prove a bloody thing'. On July 22, 1933, he also wrote to Ezra Pound:

*Well gents it will be a big day when write my own bloody memoirs because Papa isn't jealous of anyone (yet) and have a damned rat trap memory and nothing to prove. Also the documents — Il faut toujours garder les paperasses.*

And to Max Perkins, on July 26



*I'm going to write damned good memoirs when I write them because I'm jealous of no one, have a rat trap memory and the documents. Have plenty to write first though.'*

It is interesting to note that even before Gertrude Stein had attacked him Hemingway had intended to use his memoirs as a weapon against those he did not like. For instance, he wrote to Pound on February 2, 1932:

*Listen — did Walsh ever promise you that \$2500 prize in writing or only verbally — I saved the letter in which he promised it to me and will use it when I write my own fuckin memoirs which will strive for accuracy. . . . Am not going to write these memoirs until commenced over a period of years that unable to write anything else. Hope will be some time yet.*

That he still meant his memoirs, in 1961, to be an attack on some people is made clear by his phone call to Hadley shortly before his death.

Thus, the idea of writing his autobiography certainly did not come to Hemingway as an 'epiphany' after the discovery of the Ritz-Hotel papers. It was in fact an idea which he had entertained for a very long time, and, in particular, since the publication of *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*. Moreover, by 1956, many of his contemporaries had also published their memoirs of the early days in Paris, which gave him an added reason for writing his own. Whether or not he truly discovered trunks of old manuscripts in the basement of the Ritz, he could not have found a more convenient reason for writing his memoirs at a time when his creative genius was escaping him. His memories of the old days in Paris, old manuscripts which he had either found in the famed trunks or had always had in his possession, added to his resentments and loyalties, would provide the inspiration he was lacking. Moreover, claiming that these trunks had given him the idea of writing his memoirs would exonerate him from accusations of resentment, or so he probably subconsciously hoped.

If one returns to the assumption that Hemingway left trunks in storage at the Ritz in the late Twenties, it is of course important to attempt to determine at what time he might have done so, as this would influence the possible contents of these trunks. If Hemingway did indeed leave two trunks stored at the Ritz, the most unlikely time for him to have done so, despite Mary's statement, is in 1928 before going to Key West, for he was at that time comfortably settled in an apartment at 6 Rue Ferou. Moreover, according to Ernest's letter to Gus Pfeiffer, he already had four trunks stored somewhere in Paris in 1928. This leaves two periods of time when Hemingway would have been likely to store things: after his break up with Hadley and when he and Pauline had to give up the apartment at the Rue Ferou.

When Ernest and Hadley separated, Ernest moved into Gerald Murphy's studio in the Rue Froidevaux and Hadley found a room at the Hotel Beauvoir and later an apartment at

35 Rue de Fleurus. It is from that apartment that she wrote Ernest on November 19, 1926, that he could 'take over [his] suitcase, etc. They are all piled up in the dining room.' However, Ernest kept the apartment of the Rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs until early June 1927 and left a part of his belongings there until he married Pauline. In a tiny little notebook in which he had made a list of the things he needed to do before his marriage to Pauline, he had indicated:

*Sunday*

*go to church*

*pack letters etc. at 113 ND*

*dinner at 6 rue Ferou*

*tell Marie to arrive with Tonton for 113 packing*

*p.m. move things with Tonton and Marie*

In 1926 and 1927, therefore, Hemingway's belongings were spread out among four apartments, and it would be a little surprising that he should also have stored things at the Ritz. Moreover, at that time, his connection with the Ritz could only have been slight, for it was still his period of poverty.

Ernest and Pauline clearly left the apartment at the Rue Ferou very unwillingly in late December 1929, or probably early January 1930, after the owner had terminated their lease, as evidenced by Hemingway's letter to Maxwell Perkins of September 27, 1929:

*We haven't heard yet if we can stay in this apartment. (Put 3000 dollars into fixing it and improvements on strength of supposedly valid lease). If we are kicked out will store some things and bring others over, probably landing in Cuba and Key West as before sometime in December.*

I have not been able to determine where they stored their furniture and belongings between December 1929 and September 1931, when they probably shipped everything to Key West and returned there to settle in the new house. Therefore, the most probable time for Hemingway to have stored trunks at the Ritz would have been in December 1929 or early January 1930; but why would he have done so instead of putting these trunks in storage with the rest of his belongings, of which he had made a cautious inventory with estimated values, probably for insurance purposes, in another small notebook? Moreover, it appears that Hemingway and Pauline did not stay at the Ritz after they had given up the Rue de Ferou [sic] apartment, or before they settled into it, for that matter.

There is, therefore, a good chance that Hemingway did leave trunks stored in Paris for a time, but it seems unlikely that he left them at the Ritz in the late 1920s as he and Mary later claimed. He possibly left them elsewhere, and they might have been transferred to the

Ritz later; whether they stayed at the Ritz until 1956 is also doubtful. Mary's emphasis on the discovery of these trunks in her review of *A Moveable Feast* could well have been intended to exonerate Ernest from accusations of spitefulness in his treatment of fellow authors.

At this juncture, it seems to me that it is virtually impossible to identify specifically the manuscripts which could have been in the trunks. It is well known that Hemingway gave his manuscripts to his friends rather easily. Even if one could track down every early manuscript which he gave away, it would still be impossible to determine which one could have been left in the trunks, for, as we also know, he had taken some of these early manuscripts to Key West. Actually, it is more than likely that he had some of them with him as early as January 1930 when he was working on *Death in the Afternoon* at the Nordquist Ranch in Wyoming. At least one passage of the book — the story of the quarrel between two homosexuals in Chapter Sixteen — is clearly rewritten from an earlier manuscript entitled 'There is one in Every Town' which describes the way young Americans become homosexuals in Paris. Thus, the closest that I can come — and admittedly it is not very close — is to say that any manuscript of stories or novels written prior to 1930 which is now at the Kennedy Library could possibly have been in the trunks. In them there could also have been letters from friends such as Ezra Pound, sketches of his contemporaries, drafts of letters to his landlord, old bull-fight tickets, programs of exhibitions, etc. Of course, one should not forget to mention the 'blue-and-yellow-covered notebooks' described by Mary Hemingway. Twenty-four of the twenty-seven notebooks dating back to the Twenties now at the Kennedy Library could have been in the trunks. Moreover, if there was in the trunks the manuscript of one novel, it had to be the manuscript of *The Sun Also Rises* and not that of *A Farewell to Arms* (however improbable it might seem that Hemingway should have thus left unattended the manuscript of his first and very successful novel). Had this and other manuscripts been at the Ritz as he later claimed, one would expect that rescuing them would have been one of his major preoccupations when he 'freed' the Ritz just before the liberation of Paris in 1944.

Actually, Hemingway made relatively small use of his early manuscripts in the writing of *A Moveable Feast*. So far, I have been able to find only two instances of borrowing from *The Sun Also Rises*, one from 'Big Two-Hearted River' and a few other miscellaneous borrowings from early manuscript fragments.

The passage about Ford Madox Ford cutting Hilaire Belloc was borrowed by Hemingway from the first notebook of *The Sun Also Rises* (p. 13), but it has been very much reworked and integrated with other material. In the notebook Ford was thinly disguised under the name of Braddock [sic]. This passage disappeared when Hemingway decided to follow Fitzgerald's advice and lopped off the first fifteen typewritten pages of the manuscript. The passage about the Lost Generation was borrowed from the brown notebook containing the

foreword to ‘The Lost Generation — A Novel’ in which Hemingway explains why he decided finally not to call his first novel ‘The Lost Generation.’ The original passage, however, was very much reworked for inclusion in *A Moveable Feast* and the overtone of war was a straight addition:

*One day last summer Gertrude Stein stopped in a garage in a small town in the Department of Ain to have a valve fixed in her Ford car. The young mechanic who fixed it was very good and quick and skilful. . . .*

*‘Where do you get boys to work like that?’ Miss Stein asked the owner of the garage. ‘I thought you could not get boys to work any more.’*

*‘Oh, yes,’ the garage owner said. ‘You can get very good boys now. I’ve taken all of these and trained them myself. It is the ones between 22 and 30 that are no good. C’est un generation perdu [sic]. No one wants them. They are no good. They were spoiled. The young ones, the new ones are all right today.’*

*‘But what becomes of the others?’*

*‘Nothing. They know they are no good. C’est un generation perdu.’ A little hard on them, he added.*

The difference between this passage and the version Hemingway published in *A Moveable Feast* is obvious, and there seems to be little need to comment.

Some of the comments which Hemingway makes in *A Moveable Feast* about his learning to write in Paris and the influence of Cezanne on his craft are strongly reminiscent of the deleted passage of ‘Big Two-Hearted River,’ which has now been published as ‘On Writing’ in *The Nick Adams Stories*. Although there seems to be no direct textual borrowing, the ideas are similar and the attitude of the writer analysing his own craft and giving clues to his characterization is already present in ‘On Writing.’

Other minor borrowings are from Item 484 in Jo August’s directory of the papers at the Kennedy Library. Short passages from these manuscript fragments have been used, and mostly reworked, in *A Moveable Feast*. A good instance is the first paragraph of Item 484 which obviously was the model for the first paragraph of chapter 5, ‘People of the Seine,’ in the book. However, it is much more difficult to date these fragments, and there is always a distant possibility that they might have been merely an early draft for *A Moveable Feast*. Another possible borrowing is the headnote for the Fitzgerald section which Philip Young describes as ‘considerably older than the rest of the manuscript.’ It does look older, and it certainly is written on a different type of paper, as it has been torn out of a small notebook. However, I have not been able to find among the early notebooks the one from which this small sheet of paper could have been torn out. None of them has a similar format.

An attempt at determining whether the story told by Hemingway and Mary about the trunks of old manuscripts left at the Ritz Hotel in Paris in the Twenties is accurate and at identifying specifically the manuscripts which were in these trunks is an enterprise which meets with many frustrations. Further information on this matter will probably come mostly from personal testimonies — those, however, are unfortunately more and more difficult to gather since some of the people involved are now dead (i.e. Pauline, Charles Ritz, Leonard Lyons, etc.). At this point, the evidence in favor of the story as told by Hemingway and, especially, Mary is not overwhelmingly convincing, and there is a possibility that the whole thing was a figment of Hemingway's imagination. In any case, whether Hemingway discovered some of his old manuscripts at the Ritz in 1956, or whether he had had them in his possession for a long time before that, he made relatively small use of them in the composition of *A Moveable Feast*. A study of the manuscripts 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 Twenties. Thus its 'stylistic felicities' were not achieved during his youth, but were Hemingway's last achievement. If he actually did discover trunks of old manuscripts, they only served to bring back to memory details he might have forgotten. A study of Hemingway's letters, though, shows that he remembered occurrences rather well, or, at least that he was faithful to his own version of things to the end. A study of the letters is, in fact, more rewarding from the point of view of the composition of *A Moveable Feast* than a study of the old manuscripts, as it is relatively easy to find in them the origin of many of the episodes he relates in the book. At times, his memoirs even appear to be a combination of the gossip and anecdotes he wrote to such friends and acquaintances as Ezra Pound, Charles Scribner, Donald Gallup, Edmund Wilson and others, with the exception, of course, of the beautiful and evocative descriptions of Paris, which are the true strength of the book. But that is another topic.

In any case 'a good story is a good story is a good story . . .' And I should like to close with the following quotation from the Hemingway papers:

*It is not unnatural that the best writers are liars. A major part of their trade is to lie or invent and they will lie when they are drunk, or to themselves, or to strangers. They often lie unconsciously and then remember their lies with deep remorse. If they knew all other writers were liars too it would cheer them up. Sometimes two of them will lie to a stranger and then they enjoy it without remorse. If they would realize that no stranger is entitled to the truth and that no one knows the truth anyway they would be spared much remorse. . . . Not having done penance I will prepare to write again, [handwritten on the back of that same page]. To start new again I will try to write truly about the early days in Paris.*