

The sensation of longing in Ernest Hemingway's *A Moveable Feast*

Profession, Writer



His writings and his life was widely known because of the pain that he had experienced through his experiences in the World War, his alcoholism, three divorces, mental illness, self-destructive nature and finally his suicide (Tyler 2).

However, more than all of these pains that were present in his life, his legacy would still be known for the quality of his writing. He was a great artist. He painted in the readers' imaginations as if they were blank canvasses with vivid pictures through the beauty and clarity of his words.

The novel was published in 1964, three years after he took his own life. It gave a unique account of the life of Hemingway from his perspective. He was a young writer in Paris. The novel was set at a time wherein he was still married to his first wife, Hadley. They were happy and contented despite the fact that they were poor.

The text revealed how Hemingway at that time still wrote for the Toronto newspaper to support his career. The account included how he took Hadley and his money to the horse races wherein he frequently placed bets.

Hemingway was addicted to gambling as it earned him some huge amounts of money. While he quit gambling later on in his life, he still enjoyed going to motorcycle races.

He decided to give up journalism to be able to write full time. He and his wife were in a level of poverty wherein they often went hungry. There were parts in the novel wherein he described walking along the Seine to watch men fish and going to the Louvre just to curb his hunger. There was even a time wherein

the couple could not afford to hire a babysitter for their child that they had left him in his crib with only the cat to look after him.

Hemingway also described how the lending library saved his life. Since he had difficulty finding books that were written in English during that time, he found himself often frustrated when he could not find any decent English materials. During the time he was working on his first collection of short stories, he was reading the Russian greats.

In *An Immoveable Feast*, Hemingway had let the readers see his writing process in distinct detail. The readers saw him as he first wrote in a hotel room, by which he had rented for the purpose for writing. He also started writing in cafés when his finances started to pick up. Readers could visualize him as a writer in the cafés of Paris because of the quality by which he had written his account.

He had the habit of finishing his writing even when ideas were still freely flowing. He probably did it to avoid writer's block the next day. He also had this stripped down approach to his writing wherein he would meticulously spend the day revising a paragraph he had wrote to make it as bare as possible.

There was a time wherein his wife had placed all of his manuscripts in a suitcase to bring it to him in Switzerland. The suitcase was stole on the train but Hemingway dealt with it despite having to write from scratch.

He also wrote about the other expatriate writers who were living in Paris. He described them in great details. One particular character in this novel was

Gertrude Stein wherein Hemingway described to be known for her painting collection as well as her hunger for fame.

He mentioned how she would dismiss in a childish manner anyone who did not praise her for her work. During her parties, Stein's partner would socialize with the females and she would talk to the men. Despite this Hemingway was friends with Stein until the time she started driving her close friends away for some reason.

He had numerous encounters with the great writers and famous people of that time. Hemingway noted how it was special for him to eat at Michaud's in his first year in Paris. It was the times wherein he would get to speak in Italian with his wife and James Joyce as they ate there.

There was an instance at the Closerie des Lilas, a café often visited by professors, wherein Hemingway did not like how Ford Madox Ford frequently interrupted him. He even went on to describe Ford as someone with an unpleasant appearance and with an inability to hold a sane conversation.

Hemingway also featured Ezra Pound whom he characterized as a saintly man. He was someone who supported the arts. He showed this in the way he bought his friends' paintings even if they had little to no resale value. He also helped other writers. He was the one who founded Bel Espirit to raise funds in order to support T. S. Eliot even as he quit his bank job.

The end of the book had a sense that everything was downhill for Hemingway from there. They moved to an Austrian ski resort wherein he revised *The Sun Also Rises*. It was during this time wherein he was gaining

money and fame wherein he took on his first extramarital affair. Hemingway had created this personal memoir and captured the essence of the time and place by which he had experienced and lived. This was done in a nostalgic manner without having an hint of false sentimentality in it.

Ernest Hemingway and his Memoir

The Lost Paris Manuscripts

Hemingway had often used his personal painful and traumatic experiences even in his works of fiction. Hemingway viewed writing and trauma to be “inextricably linked; trauma provided material for his writing and writing provided a therapeutic outlet for trauma” (Seal 62). He had always referred to a traumatic experience repeatedly, the one wherein his life had lost most of his Paris manuscripts in 1922. It was mentioned in the works published works after his death that included *A Moveable Feast*, *Islands in the Stream*, *The Garden of Eden*, and *True at First Light*.

The posthumously published writing that was published had revealed enormous aspects of Hemingway's psyche that he was not able to share publicly. In his account, the way he had often mentioned the loss of Paris manuscripts showed the readers how he was struggling to deal with the trauma of loss.