

Les Années Folles:
The American Portrayal of
Interwar-Period Paris—
The Lost Generation

Nicole I. Schindel

After World War I as the United States became the leading hegemonic power, American culture began to turn their focus away from the arts and towards industrialization and modernization. Because of this, American artists felt lost within their home country as they sensed their art forms were no longer prevalent and appreciated within society. To help combat this, American writers began to travel to Paris and created an American society of writers abroad known as the “lost generation.” Throughout the 1920s, Parisian cafés were filled with some of the greatest American writers of the decade. Such writers as Gertrude Stein, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ezra Pound, and Ernest Hemingway spent their mornings writing articles for newspapers, their afternoons proofreading each other’s personal work, and their nights drinking heavily together. These writers came to Paris not only for the inspiration to produce enduring American literature, such as Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* and Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea*, but also for the camaraderie amongst the Americans living in Paris during the decade. Although many of these writers came with the intention of writing novels, many became distracted by the social scene in the city and found themselves unable to produce substantial work. Yet, despite the lack of progress, American writers continued to write home to their colleagues in the United States

to encourage them to join the vibrant community of writers in Paris.

This group of idealistic young American writers who ventured to Paris during the interwar period is often referred to today as “the lost generation.” The term *lost generation* was first coined by Gertrude Stein who exclaimed to Ernest Hemingway, “You are all a *génération perdue*...All of you young people who served in the war. You are a lost generation.”¹ Prior to American writers coming to Paris during the interwar period, many of them served in France or Italy during World War I. During the time, it was the popular conception that men became civilized between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five; because these men were serving abroad during this time in their lives, it was thought that they never had time to mature and were subsequently “lost.”² After Hemingway wrote about the term *lost generation* and his interactions with Stein in his memoir, *A Moveable Feast*, the term stuck and became widely popular.

Throughout this article, I will explore how Paris played the ideal backdrop to the American writers of the Lost Generation throughout the decade and lent itself to creating an exciting community abroad for them. By using *New York Times* articles as well as memoirs from Lost Generation members such as Gertrude Stein, Ernst Hemingway, and Malcolm Cowley, I will closely analyze the writers’ views of the city and how the city of Paris itself was able to help the Lost Generation prosper throughout the decade.

Throughout the interwar period, many American writers felt that while the United States had grown into a leading world power, the country was losing its cultural awareness, and American art was becoming increasingly monotonous. Many of

¹ Ernest Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), 169.

² Tony Allen, *Americans in Paris* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, Inc., 1977), 85.

the American writers in the Lost Generation served in either Italy or France during World War I and learned of Europe's admiration of the arts and culture.³ Because of the diminishing respect for American art, the first American writers began to travel to Europe to find respect for their work. Malcolm Cowley was one of the first writers who traveled abroad to Paris during the decade and spent three years there before returning to the United States. In his memoir *Exile's Return: A Literary Odyssey of the 1920s*, he described the nature of the United States prior to his departure: "Life in this country is joyless and colorless, universally standardized, tawdry, uncreative, given over to the worship of wealth and machinery."⁴

As the United States pushed towards their view of modernization by encouraging industrialization throughout the country and the world, the importance of art diminished throughout the decade. In *The New York Times*, O. C. Auringer commented upon the lack of respect towards writers: "My own belief is that the prime cause of our National deficiency in this respect lies most largely in the constitution of our society. The realm of poetry is an aristocracy; and we are in the midst of the reign of the milieu, and the milieu has no soul. Poets, artists, composers, scientists—save of the utilitarian order—are in its sense but so many light-brained individuals, precocious children whose amusing capers are rewarded by a tolerating smile, but whose value to life and civilization is stubbornly denied."⁵ As authors continued to be denied respect in the United States, they began to travel to Europe to find the inspiration and respect

³ Malcolm Cowley, *A Second Flowering: Works and Days of the Lost Generation* (New York: Viking Press, 1973), 53.

⁴ Malcolm Cowley, *Exile's Return: A Literary Odyssey of the 1920s* (New York: Viking Press, 1951), 77.

⁵ O. C. Auringer, "Lack of Appreciation of Poetry Declared to be Due to Absence of a Leisure Class—Can a Democracy Produce or Recognize Art?—'Set in the Silver Sea'—Another Novelist's Alleged Error," *The New York Times*, September 26, 1908, 530.

they were not receiving for their writing within the United States. In *The New York Times*, Merle Schuster wrote about this first large exodus of writers to Paris: “Customs inspectors at the Gare Saint Lazare have been puzzled by the troupe of little black boxes that seems to arrive with every boatload of Americans....The fact is, the little black cases are portable typewriters, brought to Paris by the literary insurgents of America. Each one represents, potentially, the great American novel. Chicago must surrender its leadership as the literary capital of America to Paris.”⁶

Because writers in the United States felt as though they had little value in American society, they looked to the “older culture” of France to help rejuvenate them. The members of the Lost Generation felt as though by traveling to Europe they would not only find respect for their work but also have the inspiration to write due to being in one of the largest cultural centers of the world. In Malcolm Cowley’s second memoir of his time in Paris, *A Second Flowering: Works and Days of the Lost Generation*, he wrote, “Whoever had won the war, young American writers came to regard themselves as a defeated nation. So they went to Paris, not as if they were being driven into exile, but as if they were seeking a spiritual home.”⁷ Due to the lack of appreciation of the arts in the United States, the American writers began to utilize Paris not only for the Parisians’ cultural appreciation towards the arts but also as a refuge for American artists to create a vibrant community abroad.

Because of this perceived “utopian” city for the arts, throughout the decade many of the most prominent writers in American history, such as E. E. Cummings and F. Scott Fitzgerald, packed up their homes in Greenwich Village in New

⁶ Merle Schuster, “Paris, the Literary Capital of the United States: French Atmosphere for American Writing,” *The New York Times*, December 23, 1923, 13.

⁷ Cowley, *A Second Flowering*, 53.

York City (where most of the Lost Generation resided prior to World War I) and moved to Paris for inspiration.⁸ This mass exodus of writers was so great that in 1921, Benjamin de Casseres wrote the article “Paris Captured by Greenwich Village” in which he quoted the poet Barney Gallant who exclaimed, “Give us liberty or give us Paris!”⁹

The writers felt as though in addition to being able to find creativeness abroad, it would be easier to write about the United States and their lives since they were removed from American culture and could view it from an outsider’s standpoint. Gertrude Stein explained in her memoir *Paris France*, “That is why writers have to have two countries, the one where they belong and the one in which they live really. The second one is romantic, it is separate from themselves, it is not real but it is really there.”¹⁰ Merle Schuster also echoed Gertrude Stein’s stance in his *New York Times* article: “In Paris the American author seems to get the right perspective of his native land. Three thousand miles away he finds himself better able to interpret or criticize the land of the free. Permeated by the French atmosphere, he suddenly develops a huge interest in America, and this interest, in turn, expresses itself usually in the form of a full-sized novel. More important novels by American authors have been written in Europe during the last twelve months than in any city in the United States.”¹¹ The Americans used Paris as this romantic second home in which they would be able to find themselves and create a new perspective on their home country.

⁸ Noel Riley Fitch, *Sylvia Beach and the Lost Generation: A History of Literary Paris in the Twenties and Thirties* (New York: Norton, 1983), 172.

⁹ Benjamin de Casseres, “Paris Captured by Greenwich Village,” *New York Times*, October 16, 1921, 40.

¹⁰ Gertrude Stein, *Paris France* (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1940), 2.

¹¹ Schuster, “Paris, the Literary Capital,” 13.

As American writers began thinking about relocating to Paris after World War I, they were often encouraged by their colleagues who were already in France to make the trip overseas to join them. Ernst Hemingway was first encouraged in 1921 to make the trip overseas. His biggest influence to travel to Paris came through letters from Sherwood Anderson, who turned into Hemingway's mentor during his early years in Paris. When Hemingway met Anderson in Chicago in 1919, Anderson told him that if he traveled to Paris he would be able to introduce him to some of the most influential literary people of the century to help expedite his writing career. After debating Anderson's offer, Hemingway eventually traveled to Paris and, as promised, was soon introduced to one of the largest literary icons of the decade: Gertrude Stein.

Gertrude Stein was one of the most prominent people abroad during the decade. As Anderson introduced Hemingway to Stein, not only did he gain access to the community of writers in Europe, but by knowing Stein, he gained networking connections to every major publisher and editor in the city. One of the members of the Lost Generation, Janet Flanner, once recalled, "No American Writer is taken more seriously than Miss Stein by the Paris modernists."¹² It is believed that Gertrude Stein's support was essential for Hemingway's success in Paris during the decade. Stein not only helped introduce him to the most prominent writers and publishers in Paris but also proofread his work and helped him publish his first piece, "Indian Camp," in *The Transatlantic Review*. In exchange for Stein's help, Hemingway typed Stein's manuscripts for her.¹³ Stein and Hemingway became so close throughout the decade that when Hemingway wrote a letter to Sherwood Anderson

¹² Janet Flanner, *Paris was Yesterday, 1925–1939* (New York: Viking Press, 1972), 9.

¹³ Cowley, *A Second Flowering*, 50.

about Hemingway and Stein's relationship, Hemingway proclaimed, "Gertrude Stein and me are like brothers."¹⁴

As Hemingway became more comfortable in Paris, he in turn helped persuade more Americans to travel to France to join the expatriate community. In his memoir, *A Moveable Feast*, Hemingway exclaimed that Paris was "the town best organized for a writer to write in that there is."¹⁵ The city was filled with the top writers, and publishers and editors of the decade created an elaborate community to help foster their work. By the constant flow of writers arriving to Paris and in turn encouraging more writers to make the trip overseas, the expatriate community of writers grew exponentially throughout the decade.

For many of the authors, one of the places they first ventured when they arrived in France was Sylvia Beach's bookshop, Shakespeare and Company, on Paris's Left Bank. Beach's bookstore, which opened in 1919, was the first American library in Paris and gave the authors a way to read English language books while in France. In Janet Flanner's famous column, "Letters from Paris" in *The New Yorker* about the social scene in Paris, she mentioned in 1926 that "Miss Sylvia Beach...is Shakespeare and Company, the most famous American bookshop and young author's fireside in Europe."¹⁶ When the shop was first opened, Gertrude Stein became the first frequent customer to Shakespeare and Company. Stein often raved to her colleagues about the library, subsequently bringing in some of the most prominent authors, including F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ezra Pound, Ernst Hemingway, T. S. Eliot, and

¹⁴ Ernst Hemingway, *The Letters of Ernst Hemingway*, ed. Sandra Whipple Spainer, vol. 1, 1907–1922 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 330.

¹⁵ Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast*, 182.

¹⁶ Flanner, *Paris was Yesterday*, 128.

Sherwood Anderson, into the store.¹⁷ As prominent members of the Lost Generation frequented the shop, Shakespeare and Company continued to become a staple in the city. In *The New York Times* Marjorie Reid wrote,

If, as Cicero said, the library is the soul of the house, Shakespeare & Co. may be described as the soul of the American literary circle of Paris. To it come, sooner or later, all lovers of the printed word, from Podunk, Me., to Pasadena, Cal. Appearing in the Latin Quarter about three years ago, the much-discussed bookshop was at once a curiosity, soon a success....The somewhat spectacular career of the shop is probably a logical expression of the personality of Sylvia Beach, the slight young woman in mannish attire, with bobbed hair, keen, level eyes, lips both firm and sensitive, was is ready to welcome visitors on almost any morning or afternoon.¹⁸

Many members of the Lost Generation frequented the bookstore and quickly befriended Beach, making her one of the most prominent literary leaders in Paris. *The New York Times* article continued to stress her importance to the members of the Lost Generation in Paris: "I have known her called upon to produce not only the latest books and periodicals and lend or sell them to her customers, but also jobs, places to live, introductions and reliable information on a diversity of subjects."¹⁹ As her successes as a bookkeeper grew, Beach also became a prominent publisher during the decade. One of her most famous publications was James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1921) in which she received international accolades.²⁰ Although Beach is most

¹⁷ Gertrude Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Tolkas* (Toronto: Random House, 1961), 195.

¹⁸ Marjorie Reid, "Shopkeeper of Shakespeare and Company," *The New York Times*, December 3, 1922, 69.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Flanner, *Paris was Yesterday*, 17.

famous for being the shopkeeper of Shakespeare and Company, her willingness to help the American writers abroad helped strengthen the writers' community and contributed greatly to their successes abroad.

Through her successes, she became an inspiration to many of the members of the Lost Generation. Hemingway and Beach's relationship was so close that while he was in North America for the birth of his first child, he continuously wrote to Beach and expressed to her how much their friendship meant to him. In one of these letters, he stated that he wished he could name his first-born child after her. Hemingway wrote to Beach on November 6, 1923, "If the baby had been a girl we would have named her Sylvia. Being a boy we could not call him Shakespeare. John Hadley Nicanor is the name."²¹ This interaction between two of the most prominent members of the Lost Generation showed the intimacy amongst the community and the importance of Shakespeare and Company to the writers. Through the establishment of Shakespeare and Company, the authors that ventured to Paris were able to read popular English books to help inspire them for their own writings while continuing the strong sense of an American community within the city.

While the authors had access to the English books available at Shakespeare and Company, authors struggled to find textbooks on writing in the city. The writers sought out these textbooks to help improve their writing styles and perfect their grammar. With the lack of written material, the Lost Generation turned to each other for support, subsequently influencing each other's writings.²² Hemingway described his working relationship with Gertrude Stein in *A Moveable Feast*: "We had become very good friends and I had done a number of

²¹ Ernst Hemingway, *The Letters of Ernst Hemingway*, ed. Sandra Whipple Spainer, vol. 2, 1923–1925 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 68.

²² Cowley, *A Second Flowering*, 50.

practical things for her such as getting her long book started as a serial with Ford and helping type the manuscript and reading her proof and we were getting to be better friends than I could ever wish to be.” Authors met with their mentors and other writers at cafés, such as Closerie des Lilas in Montparnasse, to discuss their writings, proofread each other’s work, and give constructive criticism, which helped them find success abroad.²³

There were many writing groups throughout the city for help with specific types of writing, such as poetry, novels, and journalism. One of these was the Anglo-American Newspaper Men’s Association, a group of journalists that were employed by English and American newspapers. The journalists had weekly lunch meetings to speak of the struggles of working in France for their respective international newspapers and to work on their articles for publication.²⁴ In addition, there were many smaller writing groups, such as one including Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and Dean Guass. These writers met once a week to help each other with their writing and proofread their work. In this particular group, one of the most notable novels of the century, *The Great Gatsby*, was proofread and discussed.²⁵ Hemingway was often at the forefront of many of the writing groups in Paris since, as Malcolm Cowley recounted, many writers considered him one of the hardest workers during the decade.²⁶

As the writing groups flourished, the Lost Generation worked together to help each other get their writing published. When writers first arrived in Paris, many of them made it a priority to seek out William A. Bradley and Jenny Bradley. This husband and wife team opened a literary salon in their home and became the top literary agent for American authors during the decade. Through them, countless notable American authors

²³ Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast*, 91.

²⁴ Hemingway, *The Letters of Ernst Hemingway*, vol. 1, 328.

²⁵ Cowley, *A Second Flowering*, 55.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 61.

were published in some of the top Parisian publications. The Bradleys had a very good connection with the French publishing house Gillard and subsequently helped publish American works in France.²⁷ Although American writers found success with French publishers with the help of the Bradleys, the expatriates felt it was difficult to publish work with American publishers while they were abroad. This created a negative overtone amongst the Lost Generation because they were frustrated about their lack of published works and recognition in the United States while they were abroad in Paris. In *The Autobiography of Alice B. Tolkas*, Tolkas recalled Gertrude Stein's frustration and the support of the Lost Generation: "Gertrude Stein was in those days a little bitter, all her unpublished manuscripts and no hope of publication or serious recognition. Sherwood Anderson came and quite simply and directly as is his way told her what he thought of her work and what it meant to him in his development. He told it to her then and what was even rarer he told it in print immediately after. Gertrude Stein and Sherwood Anderson have always been the best of friends but I do not believe he realizes how much his visit meant to her."²⁸ The writing that was published in the United States was different than the current writing trend in Paris that the Lost Generation was currently writing and finding success publishing in the city. Hemingway explained to Morley Callaghan in a letter in 1925 that the book he was writing was "all right for over here, but a little short for the U.S.A."²⁹ Despite the determination of some writers to publish work and stay in Paris throughout the decade to write, some of the writers became exasperated by the lack of success and only stayed in Paris for a few weeks or months before ultimately returning to the United States.³⁰

²⁷ Edwin McDowell, "Jenny Bradley is Dead at 97; Literary Agent Helped Joyce," *The New York Times*, June 11, 1983, 21.

²⁸ Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Tolkas*, 197.

²⁹ Hemingway, *The Letters of Ernst Hemingway*, vol. 2, 373.

³⁰ Fitch, *Sylvia Beach and the Lost Generation*, 162.

Although the Lost Generation's supportive writing community was one of the primary reasons writers traveled abroad, for many members of the Lost Generation, the community ended up causing more harm to their writing careers in the 1920s than good. In 1920 within the United States, alcohol was banned due to the Eighteenth Amendment. Because of this, many writers utilized their ability to drink legally in Paris, resulting in lavish parties and a heavy drinking atmosphere amongst the community.

Alcohol was so distracting that many of the writers gave up producing the novels that they had come to Paris to write in exchange for heavily participating in the never-ending parties of the 1920s. F. Scott Fitzgerald was one of the heaviest drinkers during the decade and often blamed Paris's parties for his writer's block, resulting in him jokingly naming the summer of 1925 "the summer of 1,000 parties and no work."³¹ He often spent his days planning where he was going to drink that night. Malcolm Cowley recalled Fitzgerald's skewed priorities and wild drinking habits in his memoir *A Second Flowering*: "One summer [Fitzgerald] had a literary luncheon each week with Hemingway and Dean Gauss of Princeton, but his function also involved making rounds of the nightclubs from midnight until dawn....At the end of [one] night Fitzgerald took a train for Brussels, though he doesn't remember how or why, and woke in an utterly strange hotel."³² Even if the American writers were actually trying to write, they were often bombarded by their friends and family and forced to abandon their work for a night out. In Hemingway's memoir, he recounted that one night Fitzgerald choose to skip a party to stay in and write. This resulted in his wife, Zelda Fitzgerald, and him getting in a large argument that although F. Scott Fitzgerald was trying to write a

³¹ Fitch, *Sylvia Beach and the Lost Generation*, 183.

³² Cowley, *A Second Flowering*, 55.

novel, he was being a “kill-joy” and not socializing amongst their friends.³³

The drinking atmosphere also contributed to inappropriate public behavior amongst the Lost Generation. This contributed to the Parisians having a negative perception of the Americans abroad; since they drank heavily every night, they did not fit into the French cultural norm of having one or two casual drinks. Because they partied every night until dawn, they often had negative encounters with the Parisian police. One night, the American poet E. E. Cummings was arrested by the French police for public urination while he was drunk on his way to one of the infamous Lost Generation parties. Although Cummings was released during the night, many of his friends showed up at the police station the following day to “free him” by picketing the station with posters that read “Reprieve le pisseur Américain.”³⁴ In *A Moveable Feast*, Hemingway reiterated the importance of drinking abroad when he recalled that Gertrude Stein complained to him that “all of the members of the lost generation were always drunk, many before 11 am!”³⁵ This partying atmosphere amongst the Americans caused many distractions in Paris, which led many of the writers to choose to ignore their work to enjoy their time drinking in the city instead.

Some of the most successful writers who came to Paris found that to complete their work without distractions, they had to leave the city for weeks or even months at a time to separate themselves from the pressures of the heavily alcoholic environment and the other distractions of the city. Yet when they were away from Paris, these writers maintained close ties to the members of the Lost Generation in Paris by either writing constantly to them or bringing their colleagues with them.

³³ Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast*, 179.

³⁴ Allen, *Americans in Paris*, 88.

³⁵ Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast*, 61.

Hemingway's peers considered him one of the most successful members of the Lost Generation. One of his mentors, Lincoln Steffens, wrote in his autobiography that Hemingway "was gay, he was sentimental, but he was always at work."³⁶ Hemingway attributed his success to his ability to leave the city to write so he was free from the constant distractions of Paris while able to continue to be a part of the influential community in Paris through writing letters. Through these extensive vacations, Hemingway had the ability to write countless pieces without the distractions that he had while he was in Paris.

Although Hemingway sometimes traveled alone or with his wife Hadley, he often chose to travel Europe with other members of the Lost Generation so they could inspire and aid each other with their writings. During one of his getaways in 1923, Hemingway traveled to Spain with Robert McAlmon where they were able to escape Paris to write and proofread each other's work. Hemingway found this trip extremely helpful for McAlmon's future as a successful writer. In March 1923, Hemingway wrote to Ezra Pound about McAlmon's successes writing while abroad without any distractions, stating "McAlmon is here. Been here for several days. Staying some time more. I have read of his, 15 short stories, 20 poems, 3 novels. He has written 8 or 10 short stories while he has been here, working only mornings. I am in a position to speak informally in regard to his work. Put a small bet on McAlmon."³⁷ This trip to Spain not only helped McAlmon develop as a writer but also was very beneficial for Hemingway. Through this trip, Hemingway not only relaxed while he explored Spain but also was able to publish his book, *Three Stories and Ten Poems*, with the help of McAlmon. Hemingway wrote to Morley Callaghan about his successes: "Have been in Spain six weeks with the bull fighters. Have 40,000 words done on a novel and staying here to finish it. It ought to be damned good. Have another book of short stories

³⁶ Cowley, *A Second Flowering*, 61.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

finished and my bull-fighting book coming out in Germany. Wrote 4,000 words today and tired as hell tonight.”³⁸ Despite being physically disconnected from most of the members of the Lost Generation in Paris, he still sent copies of his transcripts to the city to be proofread by Gertrude Stein. Throughout the decade, Hemingway offered many members of the Lost Generation the opportunity to travel with him across Europe for inspiration and a break from partying to complete some writing.³⁹ Hemingway’s ability to remove himself from the hectic lifestyle of Paris was key to his success during the decade, as juxtaposed to the lack of writing from many other members of the Lost Generation during their time in Paris.

Although many of the writers abroad during the interwar period were unable to complete their personal writing projects due to many distractions within the city, many of them worked for newspapers to help pay for their rent and fund their time abroad. Writing for newspapers was a popular option since the writers were paid for each article the newspaper published, allowing them to decide how many articles they would like to write. Although Ernest Hemingway was one of the few writers who continued writing substantial works abroad, he still wrote for and received an income from the *Toronto Star*, which allowed him to take his time finishing his personal works. In a letter, Hemingway explained the satisfaction of writing for a newspaper in between working on his personal work: “I have wrote for the Toronto paper everyday. Four in total. A thousand to twelve hundred a piece!”⁴⁰ While Hemingway used this income to help fund his time abroad so he could complete fictional pieces, many writers used this flexible schedule so they could attend parties in Paris.

³⁸ Ibid., 373.

³⁹ Ibid., 4.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 248.

These newspaper articles written by the Lost Generation were very popular around the world, as Americans in the United States were captivated by the allure of Paris. Many popular North American newspapers picked up articles from the Lost Generation to fill the curiosity of the readers about Paris. One of these popular columns was published by *The New Yorker*. In it, Janet Flanner, under the pseudonym *Genet*, wrote about the American social life in Paris. In Flanner's weekly column, entitled "Letters From Paris," she was able to inform the world about the important events of Americans in Paris.⁴¹ She covered influential American-Parisian moments of the interwar period from art pieces, such as a review of Josephine Baker in her opening night of *La Revue Nègre*, to economic pieces, including how the stock market crash was influencing Americans in Paris. She also included a heavy dose of gossip in her column. One of these gossip-filled articles featured her trying to figure out which American expatriate represented which character in Hemingway's novel *The Sun Also Rises*. She wrote, "Donald Ogden Stewart is taken to be the stuffed-bird loving Bill. Under the flimsy disguise of Braddocks, certainly Ford Madox Ford is visible as the Briton who gives, as Mr. Ford does, dancing parties in the *bal musette* behind the Pantheon."⁴² This article led Americans both within Paris and abroad to try to figure out which expatriates Hemingway used for inspiration for his characters—a mystery that still perplexes readers today. As Americans at home were able to read about Paris, the articles encouraged many tourists to travel abroad to see the city for themselves.

These newspaper articles not only helped connect Americans readers to Paris but also helped the Lost Generation stay connected to writers in the United States. This was important if writers decided they wanted to return to the United States because they would have the opportunity to find

⁴¹ Hansen, *Expatriate Paris*, 55.

⁴² Flanner, *Yesterday was Paris*, 12.

employment and have connections outside of Paris. The popularity of their Parisian columns led Ernst Hemingway to a full-time job offer if he returned from Paris. He declined the offer, as he did not want to leave Europe, and wrote to his father, “why the bloody hell would ever go back until a male’s offspring are ready to go to college.”⁴³ Through these popular Parisian articles, Americans in the United States were able to read about life in Paris and fanaticize over the romanticized notion of the city, while the writers were able to stay relevant in the United States.

These glamorized articles led many Americans to make a trip to Paris to see the idealized city they had been reading about in their local papers. As American tourists continued to infiltrate Paris throughout the decade, many American newspapers thought it would be ideal to set up Parisian offices to print English versions of their newspapers, which expatriates and tourists were able to read while abroad. These newspapers continued to hire American writers in Paris to write articles for them. Two of the largest American-Parisian papers during the decade, the *New York Tribune* and the *Chicago Tribune*, helped entertain Americans during their visits to Paris and became widely successful.⁴⁴ These papers were popular as Americans abroad were able to stay up to read the news and gossip of both the United States and France.

As the members of the Lost Generation were able to support themselves on only a few newspaper articles a year, the inexpensive price of living in Paris was imperative to the writers. In a letter to his parents during a brief time in the United States during the decade, Ernst Hemingway compared the prices of living in Paris versus New York: “I am working very hard here with very little pleasure. Making no more money than I did in Paris with eight times the expense. For instance an apartment [in Paris] costs 3,000 francs a year. This one [in New

⁴³ Hemingway, *The Letters of Ernst Hemingway*, vol. 1, 334.

⁴⁴ Fitch, *Sylvia Beach and the Lost Generation*, 173.

York] costs 18,500 francs a year.”⁴⁵ For writers, it felt that it was an easy decision to move to Paris. In addition to having a strong community and the ability to network with the leading literary personnel of the decade, the writers could also live more cheaply than in the United States.

Some authors, such as Malcolm Cowley, utilized grants to help fund their trips abroad. These grants consisted of both federal and private money and encouraged the spreading American ideals abroad. Cowley was the recipient of the American Field Service Fellowship, which awarded him \$1,000 to move to Paris with his family to write. Although the fellowship was awarded to help fund his time writing abroad, Cowley only wrote a few small pieces during his year and spent most of his time drinking and enjoying himself. Thus, on the Cowleys’ return from their year abroad, they only had \$5 and a few completed short stories to their name.⁴⁶ Through the inexpensive living of the 1920s in Paris, many authors felt it was not necessary to complete their personal writings since they were able to live comfortably without publishing anything substantial in France.

After only a decade, the creative and fun lifestyle of the Americans living abroad in Paris quickly came to an end. On October 29, 1929, American society was changed forever with the Wall Street stock market crash. This date, also known as Black Tuesday, gave way to the Great Depression, causing economic turmoil and a large increase in unemployment, resulting in the United States entering one of the most chaotic periods in the twentieth century. And just as the parties in Paris quickly began, they abruptly ended as Americans swiftly returned home to try to help their families and friends. Malcolm Cowley described this moment beautifully in his memoir *Exile’s Return*: “A generation of American writers went out into the world like the children in Grimm’s fairy tales who ran away

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁴⁶ Cowley, *A Second Flowering*, 54.

from a cruel stepmother. They wandered for years in search of treasure and then came back like the grown children to dig for it at home. But the story in life was not so simple and lacked the happy ending of fairy tales.”⁴⁷ Cowley recalled the transition from the parties in Paris to the bleak everyday lives in the United States during the depression: “The adventure had ended and once more they were part of the common life.”⁴⁸

To combat their depression and longing for the time abroad, many members of the Lost Generation began to write memoirs about their experiences in Paris. These memoirs gave the writers a way to remain connected to Paris and their memories of their time there while they were in the United States. Memoirs, such as *A Moveable Feast* by Ernest Hemingway, *Paris France* and *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* by Gertrude Stein, and *Exile's Return* and *A Second Flowering* by Malcolm Cowley, began to be published. Just as the writers of the Lost Generation felt as though they could write about the United States by being removed from it, they conversely felt as though they were able to reflect upon their time in the 1920s in Paris since they were now in the United States. Although some of the writers were distracted within the decade and unable to produce substantial work while they were physically in Paris, their time abroad in the city helped inspire them for years to come.

Throughout the 1920s, the most prominent writers in American history ventured to Paris to create a large artistic expatriate community in the city. After World War I, the United States began to minimize the importance of the arts, leaving the writers lost on where they fit in American society. Soon writers began to travel to Europe and encouraged their peers to make the trip abroad to create a large and vibrant American writing community in Paris. Although some members of this group used their time abroad to spend all of their money and drink, the members of the Lost Generation made

⁴⁷ Cowley, *Exile's Return*, 289.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

connections and strengthened the bonds of American writers. While abroad, the writers helped each other however they could, whether that be proofreading, traveling together, aiding with publications, or simply drinking together. These relationships helped create some of the most famous American novels, such as F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, and memoirs, such as Ernest Hemingway's *A Moveable Feast*. In addition to these novels, the Lost Generation writers penned thousands of newspaper articles, which encouraged American tourists to come to Paris and experience the city for themselves. As the United States began to dismiss writers during the interwar period, the city of Paris took these American writers in and fostered a kinetic energy that helped American writers feel a connection to help each other find success while abroad.