WHEN HEMINGWAY HATED PARIS: DIVORCE PROCEEDINGS, CONTEMPLATIONS OF SUICIDE, AND THE DELETED CHAPTERS OF THE SUN ALSO RISES

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I do not know what I thought Paris would be like but it was not that way.

–The Ernest Hemingway Collection, JFK Library item 186

Literary expatriation had an important role in the development of twentieth-century modernist writing, particularly for Americans in Paris during the interwar years. The critics who study this group tend to focus on similar themes—rejection of conservative mores in America, sexual liberation and alcohol consumption, creative cross-fertilization, and so on—such that the cultural migration to France itself is generally treated as a positive experience. Susan Beegel, editor of The Hemingway Review, notes that “Hemingway criticism has tended to celebrate expatriation” (“Report” 1), and due to this inclination, literary scholarship (and work from popular spheres, certainly) has constructed an idealistic image of “Ernest Hemingway in Paris.” Upon close review of the journalism, letters, and fiction he wrote during his residence in France, however, we find an expatriate scene that is sometimes wrought with strain, irritability, even contempt. “[I’ve] been in hell now since Christmas” (Selected Letters 217), he wrote to F. Scott Fitzgerald in September 1926 before enduring several months of despondency, during which he contemplated suicide and drafted a last will. The critical locus of this essay interprets the outcomes of long-term cultural immersion, the consequences of cultural
shocks and readjustments, and the implications of social distance—to analyze an important but often neglected dimension of Hemingway’s life in Paris.

Expatriate Criticism: A Celebratory Register

The critical inclinations concerning Ernest Hemingway in France likely derive from the tendency to use *A Moveable Feast* as a definitive resource on the period. The memoir is unreliable on many levels, however, because it was written in Cuba and Idaho thirty years after Hemingway left the city. The nostalgic tones therein imply that Hemingway was enduringly captivated by and happy in the city, but that portrayal is contradicted by many nonfiction texts and letters he wrote while in Paris (which I will soon discuss). These negative aspects of foreign life, nonetheless, tend to be overlooked by Hemingway critics, nearly all of whom read Paris as a positive experience: Robert Gajdusek asserted that “Paris always remained his favorite city” (10); David Donnell proclaimed without qualification that “Hemingway loved Paris” (56); and Richard Bennet Hovey’s opinion is that “We know that Hemingway preferred being an expatriate” and “that he loved Paris” (69). Hemingway’s relationship with Paris was a succession of high and also very low points, but this is clouded by the glowing nature of much of the critical work on the topic.

The demographic of the scholars who study this theme is also an important factor in the discussion. Very few American critics who have written about Hemingway in Paris live and work in France (Katy Masuga and Adam Gopnik are notable exceptions). Many visit Paris—possibly for up to a year or two as a student or visiting lecturer—before commencing their work, but the realities of scholarship in non-US cultural studies command circumstances local to those subjects. The studies of expatriation (carried out from the US) tend to overlook many critical circumstances about long-term cultural displacement—many of which are negative. Brook Lindy Blower, for example, spent a year in Paris and returned to the US to write *Becoming Americans in Paris: Transatlantic Politics and Culture between the Wars*. While she noted that “It is hard to resist such romanticizing” (1) about expatriate life in Paris (see also Benstock 4, Kennedy xi, and Pizer 20, 26), her critical perspectives are dominated by a somewhat unreal positivity of the temporary visitor: “Through American eyes,” she commented, “Paris glimmered, shimmied” (19). She believes the place has “a seductive atmosphere” and “87,775 trees for lovers to embrace under” (4). While Blower arrived at these judgments through analyses of primary texts and other materials from 1918 to 1939, some of the speculative assumptions on expatriation itself—in particular, her perceptions of the rhythms of everyday life—are at least indirectly interpreted through her personal experience (see Blower viii). As a year or two in Paris is significantly different than a decade or half century, the US-based demography of these critics is at times a limiting factor in the body of scholarship.
Moreover, there is also a tendency for the analyses of expatriate writing and life to be carried out from an “American” register, a bent that insinuates those who live abroad have a static sense of collective identity. When a person is immersed in another social context for decades at a time, his or her cultural registers—which is to say, a sense of identity, community, and social kinship—are significantly nuanced, but the common critical myth, one that Blower repeats, is that: “Expatriates never stopped thinking about the United States while outside of it” (39; also see Baker 60, Baskett 210, Martin 66, McMahon 158, and Young 254.) In Hemingway’s case, certainly, the years of separation (a distance that was at once geographic, linguistic, cultural, and social) from the norms of his native society color both his work and his personal expressions of collective identity (see Herlihy). This process of reorientation (whether it be adoptions, rejections, or hybridizations of other cultural spheres) has significant outcomes, many of which are harmful to one’s physical and emotional state (see Maddux and Galinsky 1047-61 and Greenstone and Loney 11), and in order to approach some of the overlooked components of Hemingway’s Paris, these harmful consequences of life abroad should be of central importance.

**On Depression in Hemingway’s Paris**

Cultural migration has recently become a vanguard topic in psychology. While life in the cosmopolitan French capital (in the 1920s or today) may be a stimulating concept for many authors and artists, once abroad the expatriate will eventually have a change of sentiment and endure the strains of displacement. The empirical studies on the transition from visitor to (semi) permanent resident demonstrate that living abroad has profound consequences on one’s behavior and mental health. Those who live abroad have higher rates of alcoholism, domestic abuse, admission to psychiatric hospitals, and suicide compared to their cohort, who remained in the place of origin (see Bochner, Furnham, and Ward; Chun, Organista, and Marin; and Castles and Miller). These data have profound corollaries for social and cultural studies, and they should nuance our approach to Lost Generation Paris.¹

Hemingway’s moods in Paris had several distinct phases—and the emotional transitions relate to the stages of his cultural immersion. Upon arrival in a new social context, the mover tends to experience a “honeymoon period” when cultural and social barriers are invigorating rather than problematic. This period has been described as one of “euphoria, enchantment, fascination and enthusiasm” (Eckerman et. al 124). At first the movers are unaware of the negativity related to the realities of life in the new place, and, as Yvett Reisinger has pointed out, “Visitors are open and curious, ready to accept whatever comes. They do not judge anything and suppress minor irritations. They concentrate on nice things…such as the food, landscape, people, and country” (217).
In 1918 an eighteen-year-old Hemingway saw Paris for the first time during a two-day stopover on his way to Milan, where he would volunteer with the Red Cross as an ambulance driver. He spent nearly a year in Italy; not long after arrival, he was severely wounded by a mortar on the Austrian front, an event that was followed by several months in convalescence. Following the armistice Hemingway returned to North America where he remained from 1919 to 1921. In December 1921, three months after his marriage to Hadley Richardson, the newlyweds moved to the French capital; Hemingway would reside semi-permanently in the city until 1928. In 1918 and again in 1921 Hemingway went through honeymoon periods, and his first textual impressions are colored by the positivity of a temporary visitor. On his second day there in 1918, he would write to his parents: “Ted and Jenks and I are having Le Grand Time. Tonight we went to the Follies Bergert” (qtd. in Kennedy 79). Hemingway’s 1921 return to the city triggered similar sentiments—and his first letters were full of enthusiasm about the low cost of living, the liberal presence of alcohol, and the other enchantments of foreign life. We find verbose and exaggerated anecdotes on consuming wine and rum, eating baguettes, and fishing within the city limits. “Well here we are. And we sit outside the Dome Café, opposite the Rotunde that’s being redecorated, warmed up against one of those charcoal braziers [sic] and it’s so damned cold outside and the brazier makes it so warm and we drink rum punch, hot, and the rhum enters us like the Holy Spirit” (Selected Letters 59). The newly expatriated Hemingway would begin comparing France to his homeland, America being (at first) the inferior place: “What’s the use of trying to live in such a goddam place as America when there is Paris and Switzerland and Italy. My gawd the fun a man has. When people lie to you and say America is as beautiful, or as much fun to live in, give them the razz” (qtd. in Lynn 157). The superficial delights still outweighed the bad weather and small troubles that would later cause Hemingway serious grief. He noted, “Paris is cold and damp but crowded, jolly and beautiful” (Selected Letters 60).

After several months, these impressions would fade, and Hemingway’s journalistic reports document his changing sentiments on life in Paris with remarkable frankness. Hemingway would endure recurring epochs of serious despair around the holidays, and he dedicated an article, “Christmas on the Roof of the World” from the Star Weekly, to this topic. The negativity of the piece is palpable. One year he and Hadley were joined by their friend Charles Dorman-Smith for the holiday season and, because of his presence, “[f]or the first time in years it seemed like Christmas” (Dateline 421, my emphasis). But even then, after midday on December 25, “there [was] no place to go except down” (By-Line 127). The final interlude of the article recounts one of Ernest and Hadley’s Christmas dinners in Paris; musing their distance from home and isolation immersed in a culture that is not their own, Hadley begins to cry, saying: “I didn’t know Paris was [going to be] like this” (By-Line 131). The
article ends with the insightful words: “You do not know what Christmas is until you lose it in some foreign land” (By-Line 131).

An ill-fated event at Gare de Lyon would forever scar Hemingway’s relationship with Paris. To surprise her husband, Hadley put his box of working papers (including all the carbon copies of the same material) into a suitcase to bring on vacation to Switzerland. The valise was stolen from the luggage compartment on the train when she got off for a drink of water. All the manuscripts he had composed since boyhood were gone, save two short stories, or about thirteen pages of text. “You, naturally, would say ‘Good,’” he would write to Ezra Pound about the incident. “Don’t say it to me. I ain’t yet reached that mood. 3 years on the damned stuff” (Selected Letters 77). That damned stuff included “what was going to be my first novel” and the work that was saved (due to being in the mail at the time) included “My Old Man” and “Up in Michigan,” two stories that are among his most famous. James Mellow noted, “Neither Hemingway nor Hadley would ever forget the episode” (211).

After just over a year in Paris, Hemingway’s day-to-day life had become a source of stress, a reality that surfaces repeatedly in his letters. In contrast to the inspirational changes in weather we read about in A Moveable Feast, the letters he wrote from Paris from the 1920s describe the climate as “rotten,” “damned cold,” “rainy,” and “awful” (Selected Letters 66, 59, 66, 72). Moreover, living without heat for the first time, on several occasions Hemingway fell to incapacitating illnesses, one of which prohibited him from writing during a significant period of 1923 (Lynn 177). Additionally, several newspaper articles Hemingway wrote during this period articulate a melancholic attitude about daily life in France, expressing annoyance with other expatriates, Parisians, and the nuisances of public transportation. It seems some other Americans were enjoying artistic success while he was not, and this fact seriously embittered the young writer. He writes, “An American girl was recently billed at the Paris music halls as ‘America’s best known and best loved dancer,’” however, “[n]one of the recent arrivals in Paris from the States had ever heard of her” (Dateline 119). Hemingway, whose fiction was as yet unpublished, criticizes “how easy it is to become a ‘champion’ abroad. The only rule seems to be that you must choose to be a champion of some very distant country and then stay away from that country” (Dateline 120). Hemingway blames “the extreme provinciality of the French people” for the poor judgment of talent (Dateline 119). Moreover, an article titled “Parisian Boorishness” in Star Weekly describes the irritation that is everyday life in Paris: if you offer a seat to a woman on a bus, “a walrus-mustached Frenchman [will] plop into it, leaving you and the lady standing,” and if you object, “he will roar” (Dateline 136). Hemingway goes on to complain about cabdrivers; interactions with Frenchmen on the subway, in parks, and in museums; and gives particular attention to bureaucrats, who he feels offer “the worst offense
to courtesy” (Dateline 137). Hemingway concludes this article saying, “Those are samples of the type of thing one encounters daily in Paris” (Dateline 137).

These impressions are diametric oppositions to the glazed Parisian environment we read about in A Moveable Feast. These complications associated with daily life abroad, coupled with other looming personal issues that I will soon discuss, drove Hemingway into periods of desolation and possibly the seeds of his lifelong alcoholism. According to an acquaintance, “even the beauties of Paris in the spring failed to lift him out of his depression,” and it was not until he was headed to Spain for the bullfights that he was “able to smile again” (qtd. in Lynn 203). Disappointment with life in Paris also resonates through much of his personal correspondence with people back in the United States. As James Watson points out, letters home from abroad can serve as a pacifying mechanism that attempt to “reconstitut[e] the temporarily forfeited home as an element in a seamless history and, by reconnecting the letter writer’s future to his past, heals the present rupture in his life. Personal letters are generated by such absences, which they attempt to overcome” (12).

In some of Hemingway’s letters home from France, the strain is seldom veiled. He wrote to Sherwood Anderson, who had recently returned from Paris, “I envy you the fall. It must be awfully grand. I am so homesick for America evry [sic] fall that I get into awful shape” (Selected Letters 218). The separation was dissolving the relationship he had with his parents, sisters, and brother, and nostalgia for family ceremonies echoes through correspondence: “I felt terribly not to get back this fall and to miss hunting with Dad” (Selected Letters 233).

Some letters Hemingway wrote from Paris plead for his friends in the US to visit him in Europe. Between 1923 and 1925 he corresponded regularly with Howell Jenkins, an old friend with whom he had fished in Michigan as a young man. One of the first begins, “Look, Carper. The play is for you to come over here next summer. Start saving your seeds now, you can come over for next to nothing, put up with us here in Paris” (Selected Letters 130). Hemingway goes on to describe in superlatives the idea of spending an imaginary spring in Paris and summer in Spain with Jenkins. He repeats, “What we want is for you to come over here,” and further, “We are going to get a Ford for 1,000 francs a month with Insurance and drive down [to Spain] from here. You are going to drive….We’ll camp in at the headwaters of the Irati for a week and then go back to Burguete, get in the car and drive through the pass down to Pamplona and the bull fights” (Selected Letters 130). While allusions to American themes, such as renting a Ford car and fly-fishing, may appear innocuous, the culture Hemingway left behind is an uneasy undercurrent. Coupled with hyperbolic requests for Jenkins to visit—“For Christ sake come on” (Selected Letters 131)—the content of the letters is a testament of his loneliness and isolation (see also Capellán 11). One particular correspondence is replete with American cultural references and has five pleas for Jenkins to visit; he writes: “You’ve got to come” and “I wish the hell you were here right now. It’s fall, gray smoky
days, good and cold, regular foot ball weather. That’s the only thing I miss” (Selected Letters 132).

Jenkins did not visit. The letter Hemingway wrote him the following year has a significantly different tone and does not include a single invitation; it also has fewer colloquial references and playful nicknaming, marking the disappearing familiarity between Hemingway and this friend (Selected Letters 148-50). One person from the US who did visit the Hemingways in Paris was Bill Smith—and some argue that he became a model for Bill Gorton in The Sun Also Rises (Sarason 151). Smith’s decision to go to Europe, though, is rather astonishing, as he and Hemingway had had a severe falling out before Hemingway left the US. In a letter to Hemingway a few years earlier, Smith remarked that their friendship had “undergone profound and very unwelcome changes” and that Hemingway had changed so much that “I can only hope time will show equal changes in a reverse direction” (qtd. in Selected Letters 66). Once he returned to the US, Smith would explain that the reason he went to Paris in the first place was not because he had reconciled with Hemingway (which he had not; they remained on bad terms) but because he was broke, desperate, and Hemingway had arranged a job for him. The job, not the friendship, he would explain, was “why I was with them” (qtd. in Sarason 156).

Due to these problems with Parisian life, Hemingway left the city whenever possible—he spent just five months per year there during the span of his residence—and by the mid 1920s Paris was a place Hemingway wanted to avoid. He planned to return to the US permanently in September 1926, a move “I had hoped and counted on tremendously” (Selected Letters 211-12). But likely due to tax and financial complications, he could not abandon France as a primary residence. Moving back to the US, he wrote from Paris, “was what I wanted to do more than anything” (qtd. in Reynolds 73). A crucial literary dialogue that has been all but unnoticed, then, concerns the period when Hemingway suffered in Paris, when he intended to quit the city but could not, and when his spiritual axis dropped into contemplations of suicide.

1926: Love Affairs, Distance, and Downfall

In 1925 Hemingway met Pauline Pfeiffer, a woman from Arkansas—and their friendship would lead to an affair and Hemingway’s separation from Hadley. Hemingway would request divorce, and for that, Richardson required Hemingway and Pauline to be apart for one hundred days. The compulsory separation was to begin in September 1926. Hemingway suddenly had no income (the pending divorce disconnected him from Hadley’s family funds, which had financed his residence there) and he was forced to live alone for the first time. He stayed in a small studio that was lent to him by Gerald Murphy, a trust-fund socialite; Murphy also gave Hemingway $400 for living expenses. The studio was tiny, and the starkness of this change in affairs, as Peter Griffin
remarked, “made Ernest feel like a monk” (150). Once Hemingway was installed in the apartment, Pauline returned to the US and he did not see Hadley with any regularity. On one occasion, they happened into one another at a café; the meeting ended with her slapping him twice in the face. “Each day that Ernest lived alone,” Griffin noted, “he felt he lost his defenses” (151). He took to excessive physical exercise, sleeping as long as he could, abnormally long writing sessions, and drinking excessively to balance the ordeal.3

There was no positive news coming from home that fall. Hemingway’s father had been planning to move the family to Florida, but in September the Great Miami Hurricane struck. The storm caused over 2,500 fatalities and twice the monetary damage of Hurricane Katrina in 2005; it also ruined his father’s real estate investments. Three weeks later Hemingway’s grandfather died suddenly. In one of the only letters he wrote home that season, he expressed regret for missing the funeral and made no mention of what was occurring in his personal life. The stress the man was under is visible through his handwriting in this text, which was almost illegible (Griffin 154). Separation from his native culture and language would have compounded this distress, which is an unseen and often overlooked component of this depression. Dealing with these events alone in a foreign country without money or familial support eventually overwhelmed the stability he had constructed, and so too went his mental state.

In the empirical fields foreignness is increasingly being treated as a condition that characterizes our psychological, cultural, and emotional states (see Saunders; Berry et al; and Adler and Gielen), and its implications influence the writer’s craft in thematic and therapeutic senses. Regular contact with family and financial stability have both been shown to alleviate the frequency of mental illness in people living abroad (see Berry), and it was precisely during these months when Hemingway was isolated in Paris without daily contact from his wife, family, or lover, and had access to very little money, that his behavior became self-destructive. What is more, Hemingway was also likely burdened by survivor guilt from the Great War and related post-traumatic stress, and it is generally understood that he suffered from bipolar and major depression disorder throughout his life, conditions to which he had a genetic predisposition (four family members also committed suicide). For Hemingway in 1926, the pending divorce from Richardson was the charge that set off a cocktail of circumstances that pushed him to the brink of the act he would ultimately commit in 1961.

Some critics have denied that Hemingway was suicidal during this period. Griffin, for one, wrote of this period that “Ernest would not think about suicide for himself, at least not directly” (152), and similarly, Michael Reynolds asserted that his intention was not “to commit suicide; only think about it” (6). Some of Hemingway’s letters from the period, however, contradict these claims. The National Institute of Health notes that when people are suicidal, “they often mistakenly believe that they are doing their friends and relatives a favor by
taking themselves out of the world. These irrational beliefs often drive their behavior” (“Suicide and Suicidal Behavior” 1). “I can’t stand it.” Hemingway writes in a letter to Pauline during that fall, “evidently all I can do is remove the sin out of your life and avoid Hadley the necessity of divorce—and compliment Hadley—by killing myself” (Selected Letters 222). The several weeks’ delay in written correspondence with Pauline in the US must have intensified this stress, and he thought that life itself was “all out of control” (Selected Letters 222) as he began to draft a will (228). The man had little recourse to confront what he understood as great problems. As he explained to F. Scott Fitzgerald, it was a struggle to refrain from “turnings on of the gas or slitting of the wrists” (Selected Letters 232). Hemingway’s suicidal tendencies later in his life are often attributed to a downfall from the concussions he incurred in Africa, but the circumstances surrounding the divorce from Hadley, his displacement in Europe, and isolation from his relatives brought him to a similar point in 1926: “Last fall I said perfectly calmly and not bluffingly…I would kill myself” (Selected Letters 222).

Hadley’s lingering presence in Paris also troubled Hemingway—and he was openly encouraging her to go back to the US: “[W]hat you could do is go to America and have a look around,” he remarks. “[I]t would be a very good way to see how things were over there—both on the coast and in N.Y. You might take one of the very comfortable dollar line boats” (Selected Letters 227). Hadley did not go, however, and even before their divorce was finalized, she had taken up the company of Paul Mowrer, the man who would become her second husband. The tension amongst the social circle Hemingway had shared with Hadley was also problematic because, as Michael Reynolds noted in Homecoming, “a good many of [their] old friends were siding with Hadley” (75). Paris had become a toxic place in Hemingway’s life—and he attempted to flee the city for the south of France, but he had no money for the train and rideshares repeatedly fell through (Selected Letters 225, 231). Finally, after receiving a publishing advance, he wrote to Max Perkins: “I am leaving Paris on Christmas night [1926]—perhaps for several months” (Selected Letters 240). Spending Christmas night alone on a train, alcohol most likely saturated the festivity.

**Writing Parisian Gloom**

In addition to the gloomy portrayals of Parisian life that we have seen in his journalism and letters, Hemingway’s fiction and poetry from 1925 to 1926 in particular depict the French capital with a pointedly negative slant. In a notebook, he wrote, “Now that I know I am going to die none of it seems to make much difference” (qtd. in Reynolds 67). And this level of desperation surfaces in his poetry:
The first chapters of *The Sun Also Rises*, which were removed before the book went to press, are perhaps the most communicative accounts about the negative contexts of expatriate Paris. Hemingway had lived six years in Paris when he began the novel, and the text is a unique reflection on the transitions of his novelistic opinions of the place itself. In this early version, Hemingway used first names. Jake Barnes was “Hemingway” or “Hem” or “Wemedge”; Brett Ashley was “Duff”; and Robert Cohn was “Gerald” (JFK MS 194). “Hem” explains to the reader that to understand the rest of the novel, “you have to understand Paris,” a phrase that announces the relevance of this prologue, situating the novel itself through the importance of setting. “[This is] not the Paris of Victor Hugo, or Munger or of 1914-1919 or the Paris of France” (JFK MS 194, 9), the narrator remarks, using “the Quarter” as point of reference rather than “Paris” or “France,” emphasizing that the expatriates—not the native residents—are the subject of focus. Hem begins, precisely, with the transformation of Paris in his imagination since he arrived there: “I am a newspaperman living in Paris. I used to think Paris was the most wonderful place in the world. I have lived in it now for six years, or however long it is since 1920” (qtd. in Kennedy 100). The chapters go on to reframe life in Paris from a disapproving register, one that is not an idealistic locale of intellectual exchange but a place where “Everybody in the quarter loathes almost everybody else and the quarter itself” (qtd. in Kennedy 101). The negativity Hem feels taints even the visual aesthetics of the neighborhood, as he notes, “there is nothing romantic about the Quarter and very little that is beautiful” (JFK MS 194, 10).

Expatriate depression is the fundamental message in this unpublished text. Hem repeats contemptuous feelings toward the city of Paris and the expatriate community four times in three notebook pages of the manuscript (JFK MS 194 10, 11a, 11b, 11-12). It is the narrator’s scorn that dominates his descriptions of the Latin Quarter itself, which he claims is “really more a state of mind than a geographical area. The state of mind is contempt,” and the text continues:

The principal expatriate feeling in Paris is not romance but contempt.
The only jolly people are the drunks and they eventually get depressed. The Germans too seem happy, but that is perhaps because they can only get two week visas to visit.
The most regular residents perhaps are the Scandinavians: they are not gay either.
The quarter characters are not happy. (JFK MS 194, 10-12)
When we muse on the causes of this imagined community’s depression, or its perceived depression, the general critical response concerns the modern emptiness of spirit, the loss of meaning and virtue, and a sense of existential disorientation. Modernism as exile, and exile as a modern state, is a thesis with significant critical currency—and we should also note here that as he composed the text Hemingway was considering ending his own life amid the modern emptiness. Expatriate writers explore foreign cities in their minds as they compose a textual consciousness; they mine their physical and social experiences of the city—their arrested or energetic acculturation—and their relational “I” is transposed through newness, otherness, distance, and experience. To extract Hemingway’s relationship with Paris, his divorce proceedings, and his status as a cultural other from this discussion of *The Sun Also Rises*—as the New Critics might desire—disengages a rich interpretation of expatriate Paris. The darker sides of the French capital, so seldom treated by critics, were the seeds of Hemingway’s first full-length text, and though what we read in the published version has the aforesaid passages excised, the chapters are a creative interaction with the man’s past and present senses of his cultural reality, interpreted through “Hem” and, later, Jake Barnes. The negativity itself seems to have been a creative boon for the man, as he allowed it to drive his energies and to direct his creative rudder.

Hemingway had been in France from age twenty-two to twenty-seven when he wrote these passages for *The Sun Also Rises*; the idealistic notions of expatriation had worn off, and his writing paints not a romantic but an ironic conception of Paris. The writer himself, at least during this period, had similar sentiments about Paris. In a letter to Fitzgerald, he said that he avoided the Latin Quarter altogether in 1926, spending just one night there in the entire year (*Selected Letters* 262). In addition to the complicated situation with his ex-wife, the novelist had created several enemies around the Quarter when *The Sun Also Rises* was published. Moreover, his family back in Oak Park would not (or perhaps could not) recognize the vision of his novel—nor would they even read it; his father returned it in the mail unwrapped and his mother said the book ought to be burned. And two years later, just days before he boarded a ship with all his belongings, leaving Paris as a resident for the last time, he reflected: “I should have gone [back] to America two years ago when I planned. I was through with Europe [then] and needed to go” (*Selected Letters* 274). And indeed, after moving away from Paris, with the exception of *A Moveable Feast*, his nonfiction portrayals of the city are harsh. On a 1934 visit he would write, “we are in Paris and it is a big mistake. If you want a Paris letter full of spice and detail and funny cracks you will have to get someone else to write it. All I do is go out and get depressed and wish I were somewhere else. It is only for three weeks but it is very gloomy” (*By-line* 155). The city “was a fine place to be quite young in and it is a necessary part of a man’s education. We all loved it once and we lie if we say we didn’t...I now love something else”
(By-line 158). And it was in 1928, when Hemingway was on a ship crossing the Atlantic with all his belongings, that he articulated a solution. He wrote to his new wife, Pauline, “I have often wondered what I should do with the rest of my life and now I know—I shall try and reach Cuba….Let’s hurry and get to Havana” (Selected Letters 275).

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NOTES

1 While there are many factors that correspond to depression, alcoholism, and the triggers of suicidal episodes, many artists fell to mental illness or suicide, or both, after moving to Paris. In the last century, we find: Olive Thomas, Ivar Kreuger, Alexandre Stravinsky, Daul Kim, Lucy Gordon, Kat Mckenzie, Hermann Guthmann, Henry Collett, Max Linder, Jane Peters, Sadeq Hedayat, Ernest Hemingway, and Zelda Fitzgerald. There were also several notable Paris suicides among those with local backgrounds; such was the case of André Breton, Jaques Rigaut, and Jeanne Hébuterne. In 1922, Hemingway wrote a poem, “Montparnasse,” on suicide in the City of Light:

There are never any suicides in the quarter among people one knows No successful suicides. A Chinese boy kills himself and is dead. (they continue to place his mail in the letter rack at the Dome) A Norwegian boy kills himself and is dead. (no one knows where the other Norwegian boy has gone) They find a model dead alone in bed and very dead. (Complete Poems 50)

2 Hemingway remarks that “the financial situation [being] so rotten” (Selected Letters 211) was the reason they stayed in Paris that fall. Congress implemented a foreign earned income exclusion in 1926, a loophole that allowed expatriates to protect an unlimited amount of income from US taxes, provided that they remained abroad until the end of the fiscal year in 1927. This was a boon for Hemingway and Hadley, but it also would force them to continue a French residence when the couple—Ernest, at any rate—wanted to move back to the US (“History of Citizenship-Based Taxation” 1).

3 He wrote prodigiously during the fall of 1926, which might have been an endeavor to become financially independent and/or to alleviate the stresses of isolation. He produced “A Canary for One,” “In Another Country,” “Now I Lay Me,” “A Simple Enquiry,” “A Pursuit Race,” “My Own Life”; several poems; the final galleys for The Sun Also Rises; and the first passages of A Farewell to Arms (see Reynolds 66).

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