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An American's Paris: tourism and the American consumer, 1947-1961

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AN AMERICAN'S PARIS
TOURISM AND THE AMERICAN CONSUMER, 1947-1961

An Abstract of a Thesis
Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

Margaret Nervig
University of Northern Iowa
May 2015

ABSTRACT

In 1947, a group of twenty-two Iowa farmers traveled to Europe for a month-long trip around the continent's top destinations. Their primary mission, as outlined in *Life Magazine*, was to investigate European farming practices, particularly agricultural methods and food needs in the postwar period. The article included photos of the Iowans visiting French farms and speaking with farmers, but it also included a full-page photo of the group at a Parisian nightclub, complete with scantily clad women. Despite their agriculturally-based intentions, these Midwestern farmers could not resist a taste of Parisian culture.

This type of imagery is only one example showcasing the disparity between the hardworking, conservative culture of the United States and the sophisticated, creative culture of Paris in the period after World War II. Previous historical literature has provided a solid background for the development of tourism in the United States and has established a strong connection between tourism and consumer culture. In my project, I examine this connection within the context of American tourists in postwar Paris.

In addition, I look at how American perceptions of Frenchness and authenticity fit into this relationship between tourism and consumerism. As Paris began to modernize and adopt large parts of American culture, American tourists in Paris expressed dissatisfaction with this Americanized Paris, rejecting American ideals and culture during a time when America was supposedly the greatest nation in the world. My project suggests that these American tourists in Paris developed a sort of un-American identity in their emulation and admiration for French culture

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has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the
Degree of Master of Arts

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INTRODUCTION

“If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you, for Paris is a moveable feast.”

-Ernest Hemingway, A Moveable Feast

In 2011, American movie director Woody Allen released the film *Midnight in Paris*.¹ The protagonist, a Hollywood screen writer and aspiring writer of literature, found himself in Paris with his fiancé, tagging along on her parents’ business trip. Though the protagonist quickly fell in love with Paris, his fiancé did not share his romanticized notions of the city, and they began spending more of their vacation apart. It is at this point in the film that the writer found himself traveling in time to 1920s Paris at midnight each night. He was astounded to encounter Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Gertrude Stein, and several other literary and artistic notables as he went along to parties and bars into the early morning hours. The protagonist gradually became disillusioned with his present day situation, surrounded by people who did not understand or support his artistic ambitions. In the end, the writer chose to stay in Paris, sans fiancé and sans time travel, to live and write in a city which has always valued its artists. *Midnight in Paris* captured a romanticized ideal of Paris that Americans have held dear for decades, since Hemingway and Fitzgerald first made it popular.

These famous writers and artists, living and working on the left bank of the Seine River, are still considered the quintessential Americans in Paris, evidenced by *Midnight*

¹ *Midnight in Paris*, DVD, directed by Woody Allen (New York, NY: Sony Pictures Classics, 2011).

in Paris. However, these Americans of the Left Bank were not the first American tourists to Paris and certainly not the last. Paris has been a place of American consumption since far before the 1920s and has remained so even to the present time. With such famous tourist sites as the Eiffel Tower and the Louvre Museum, Paris has long been believed to be a place of culture to be emulated and admired. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, aristocrats always included a stop in Paris on their grand European tour. Before and after World War I, Paris gradually became more popular for those in the middle class. But it was after the Allied victory in World War II that American travel to Paris truly escalated. Americans were consuming more leisure activities than before, including tourism to war-torn Europe. In this thesis project, I discuss this American postwar tourism in Paris, noting especially the culture of consumption and American identity within the historical context of the Fifties and the Cold War.

This post WWII era was a time of great fear in the United States. With tensions between the U.S. and the Soviet Union running high, the House of Un-American Activities Committee began its investigations into communists along with any murmurings of dissatisfaction with the United States. It was especially feared that those who were members of the Communist Party were spies for the Soviet Union. This sparked a new wave of nationalism across the U.S., starting in WWII and continuing throughout the 1950s. With this 'America First' attitude, it seems surprising that so many Americans were venturing over to Europe, especially France with its large percentage of communist sympathizers. Although these Americans often admired and emulated

Parisian culture, they brought American cultural expectations with them when they traveled, irrevocably changing the Parisian landscape.

The history of tourism as an academic field is a fairly recent development, with most of the literature having been published in the 1980s or later. In its several years as a topic of study, however, historians have covered a wide variety of subtopics, exploring tourism around the world and in the United States. For my purposes, I have selected a variety of works which help to provide a historiographic background for examining the history of American tourists in postwar Paris. While these historians cover a variety of different topics, their works generally fit into three broad themes: tourism as it affects the production and consumption of an American identity, American perceptions of Paris and vice versa, and expectations of authenticity.

The production and consumption of American identity is noted especially by authors focusing on nineteenth and early twentieth century tourism. Cindy Aron's *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* outlines the development of a middle class identity through American tourism around the United States in the nineteenth century, centering on resorts, and hotels.² She spends one chapter on camping vacations, explaining the appeal of wilderness as important to Americans. This idea is the center of John Sears' book *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century*. Sears notes that "tourism played a powerful role in America's invention of itself

² Cindy S. Aron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1999), 4-5.

as a culture,” focusing especially on the relationship between landscape and culture.³ Sears covers the development of tourist sites like Niagara Falls, Yosemite, Yellowstone, and city parks, suggesting that these sites were similar to sites of religious pilgrimage. This equation of American identity with natural sites was important primarily because it allowed citizens of the United States to distance themselves from European culture. Writers, artists, and photographers helped ensure that these natural sites became important national scenery.

These ideas are echoed by Marguerite Shaffer in *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940*. Shaffer suggests that tourism in the United States helped to form a strong national identity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The “See America First” campaign was originally initiated by regional corporate leaders hoping to bring more tourism to the western United States. Though the campaign was on the surface an effort to increase tourism and consumption, it also became an effort to strengthen patriotism and pride in the natural features of the United States. Shaffer focuses heavily on ideas of consumerism, indicating that tourism became a form of “virtuous consumption”; visiting the National Parks became a duty and a right of American citizens.⁴ This relationship between American identity and consumption is the subject of Lizabeth Cohen’s *A Consumers’ Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption*

³ John Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989), 4.

⁴ Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 5.

in *Postwar America*. She explains that “mass consumption in postwar America would not be a personal indulgence, but rather a civic responsibility.”⁵ Though Cohen herself does not delve into the relationship of consumption and tourism, her ideas provide background for Susan Rugh’s *Are We There Yet?: The Golden Age of American Family Vacations*, which specifically looks at the history of the American road trip. Though centering on a different time period, Rugh brings in Sears’ and Shaffer’s ideas in suggesting that American road trips were a way to exercise one’s citizenship.⁶

Richard Popp adds to this narrative by establishing the firm connection between travel and consumerism. Popp’s book, *The Holiday Makers: Magazines, Advertising, and Mass Tourism in Postwar America*, follows the production and consumption of advertising and magazines, especially the American travel magazine, *Holiday*. His interpretation suggests that in the fifties magazines provided a look into American culture and consumer ideals.⁷ These historians all focus on the assertion of American identity through travel around the United States, but the examination of American identity through travel abroad has also been a frequent topic of study.

A number of other historians focus on the development and affirmation of American identity in Europe. Brooke Blower and Nancy Green both turn to the American

⁵ Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers’ Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 113.

⁶ Susan Rugh, *Are We There Yet?: The Golden Age of American Family Vacations* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 13.

⁷ Richard Popp, *The Holiday Makers: Magazines, Advertising, and Mass Tourism in Postwar America* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2012).

presence in Paris prior to World War II. In *Becoming Americans in Paris: Transatlantic Politics and Culture Between the World Wars*, Blower suggests that Americans in Paris strongly identified with the United States despite living outside of the country. She believes that one reason for this might have been the distance from social issues that were dividing the United States at the time; most Americans in Paris were fairly liberal-minded.⁸ Blower also expresses the idea that heavy involvement in clubs and organizations helped Paris-based Americans retain their identity as U.S. citizens. Nancy Green's work *The Other Americans in Paris: Businessmen, Countesses, Wayward Youth, 1880-1941* further explicates these ideas. Like Blower, Green focuses on the American presence in Paris, primarily to point out Americans expatriates beyond the oft-explored writers, artists, and composers of the Left Bank. Though Blower focuses on the interwar years, Green's analysis begins in the later nineteenth century. In addition to discussing American clubs and organizations, Green demonstrates how these Yankee expatriates and tourists used the American consulate in Paris to assert their citizenship: requesting help in avoiding Parisian tax laws, sending and receiving mail to and from the United States, and recovering lost items.⁹ Green suggests that these Americans in Paris prior to World War II established the setting for Americanization after the war.

⁸ Brooke Blower, *Becoming Americans in Paris: Transatlantic Politics and Culture Between the World Wars* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 38.

⁹ Nancy Green, *The Other Americans in Paris: Businessmen, Countesses, Wayward Youth, 1880-1941* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), 47.

This is where Christopher Endy's *Cold War Holidays: American Tourists in France* picks up the narrative. Using French and American foreign policies—and reactions to these policies—Endy argues for the importance of tourism for Franco-American relations during the Cold War. Much like the conclusions of Blower and Green, Endy determines that both Americans and the French retained strong national identities, despite their frequent interaction. He explains that American foreign policy encouraged Americans to travel to France as a duty of citizenship, a less formal and official way of providing aid.¹⁰ The formation of American identity and ideals of citizenship clearly have a strong relationship to tourism.

Another common thread within the historical literature is that of American perceptions of Paris. The different ways in which Americans defined Frenchness was an important part of the how and why Americans traveled to and around Paris. Harvey Levenstein spends the majority of his book, *We'll Always Have Paris: American Tourists in France since 1930*, on American perceptions of the people of Paris. Parisians were generally considered unfriendly towards American tourists, and one common recurring complaint was that the French overcharged Americans, adding on random taxes and fees to hotel bills, taxi fares, and restaurant tabs.¹¹ Additionally, Americans were confused and sometimes disgusted by the difference in Parisian hygiene practices. Specifically, their

¹⁰ Christopher Endy, *Cold War Holidays: American Tourists in France* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 33.

¹¹ Harvey Levenstein, *We'll Always Have Paris: American Tourists in France since 1930* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 8.

plumbing was not as modern as in the United States. However, these negative perceptions balanced with popular portrayals of Paris in film and music as well as general consensus that Paris was the place to go for fashion and for sex.¹² These positive and negative perceptions are echoed in the works of Blower and Green, both of whom describe the reasons that Americans loved Paris, despite their loyalty to the United States. Much of Americans' preconceived notions about Paris came from the tales of soldiers based there in both World War I and II. Advertising also played a role in the formation of American understanding of Paris. Popp mentions the use of stereotypes in advertising to establish a French culture that was distinct from the United States, thus attracting more visitors.¹³ These American perceptions of Paris are important to consider in regards to American tourists, but also important was the French perception of Americans.

The French conception of Americans—particularly American tourists—is essential to this greater narrative of Franco-American understanding. Levenstein devotes some of his book to the other side of perception, demonstrating how American tourists were often seen as rude and culturally insensitive. Endy mentions this topic as well, providing the U.S. government issued manners while abroad guide to support the point. This image of the rude American tourist helped fuel French anti-American sentiment.

In his book, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization*, Richard Kuisel uses these French perceptions of Americans to highlight anti-American attitudes.

¹² Levenstein, *We'll Always Have Paris*, 162.

¹³ Popp, *The Holiday Makers*, 121.

Kuisel explores the primarily Leftist-induced anti-American feelings that were popular in France in the 1950s though he notes that many French held favorable opinions of the United States. These French critics mocked American ideas of freedom as hypocritical, citing Americans' issues with racism and communism.¹⁴ Though many in France appreciated American culture, there was also a belief that Americans were becoming homogenous. Many French were concerned about American power for fear of losing their own individualistic culture. This fear of Americanization fueled a lot of the anti-American feeling.

Americanization in France is another piece of the historical literature. Kuisel spends most of his book discussing how American culture gained popularity in France, using French resistance to Coca-Cola as a symbol for French resistance of Americanization.¹⁵ Victoria de Grazia wrote the quintessential book on the Americanization of Europe, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe*, in which she explains how American businesses and culture made their way overseas. Americans were encouraged to spread "values as well as commodities" to the world.¹⁶ While Kuisel focuses primarily on the years directly leading up to and following World War II, de Grazia's approach begins at the very beginning of the

¹⁴ Richard Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 28.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 63.

¹⁶ Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 3.

twentieth century with less focus on the later era. Her research provides the background for the Americanization explored by Kuisel. Green also delves into this pre-World War II period, investigating the Americanization of the French and what she refers to as the “Frenchification” of the Americans who lived in France. Part of my thesis is that these concepts of Americanization had an effect on the perceived authenticity of Paris.

Authenticity is such an important aspect of the study of tourism that it is mentioned at least briefly by almost every author in the literature. Several essays in the edited anthology *Being Elsewhere: Tourism, Consumer Culture, and Identity in Modern Europe and North America* discuss ideas of authenticity and the inauthentic in tourism. In their introduction, Shelly Baranowski and Ellen Furlough discuss the “quest for ‘authentic’ and personally meaningful touristic experiences” as critically important in any new tourism literature.¹⁷ In the chapter “Corporate Dominion,” Marguerite Shaffer expands upon authenticity in her book, describing the tourist search for the ‘real’ America.¹⁸ Shaffer explains that oftentimes the authentic experience was fabricated; the production of the tourist experience was intended to feel authentic despite being produced.

This concept is reiterated by Michael Dawson in his exploration of tourism in British Columbia, *Selling British Columbia: Tourism and Consumer Culture, 1890-1970*.

¹⁷ Shelley Baranowski and Ellen Furlough, ed., *Being Elsewhere: Tourism, Consumer Culture, and Identity in Modern Europe and North America* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 5.

¹⁸ Shaffer, *See America First*, 89.

He describes how tourism promoters in British Columbia “commodified history in their attempt to differentiate British Columbia from competing tourist destinations.”¹⁹ Tourism was as much about consumerism as it was about authenticity. Shaffer goes so far as to suggest that “tourists, in buying, embracing, and, one might even say, collaborating with the staged authenticity of tourism, shared in the production of the tourist experience.”²⁰ These ideas about authenticity suggest that tourists have more agency in the production and consumption of tourism than previously expected.

This broad range of historical literature covers many important aspects of tourism and Franco-American relationships. Their ideas and concepts interact and build off each other, creating comprehensive viewpoints from which I can build my own argument. I argue that Americans both respected and imitated a self-constructed version of Parisian culture. The work of these historians provides the background for my examination of the American tourist experience in postwar Paris. The formation of a strong national identity in the nineteenth and early twentieth century seems clear, but I challenge the notion that Americans in postwar Paris fully retained their American identity. To do this I use American perceptions of Paris to explain the American admiration of French culture. I build on the perceptions structured by these historians by including further primary sources and interpreting existing sources as Francophilic. I further explore the effects of

¹⁹ Michael Dawson, *Selling British Columbia: Tourism and Consumer Culture, 1890-1970* (Vancouver: UCB Press, 2004), 156.

²⁰ Shaffer, *See America First*, 301-302.

Americanization on Paris, suggesting that American tourist expectations and perceptions simultaneously salvaged and disrupted Parisian culture.

This thesis is divided into three chapters which work together to craft my argument. Chapter 1 covers the development of American tourism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, using the work of previous historians to provide contextual background for my work on postwar tourism. Chapter 2 outlines American and Parisian culture in the 1950s, comparing their similarities and differences. This comparison is followed by a discussion of American perceptions of Paris and of Frenchness, considering how these perceptions affected tourism. Chapter 3 focuses directly on American tourists in postwar Paris, examining the impact of American consumerism on Paris and tourism. Through their consumption, these tourists salvaged an American construction of Parisian culture, creating an American's Paris.

CHAPTER 1
VACATION EXPECTATIONS
THE TRANSFORMATION OF AMERICAN TOURISM PRIOR TO WORLD WAR II

In 1920 the American Library of Paris opened its doors on the rue de l’Elysée. Established by the American Library Association, the library was founded using books that had been sent to soldiers during World War I. The library was popular among American expatriates in the twenties, including Ernest Hemingway and Gertrude Stein, both of whom wrote for the library’s periodical *Ex Libres*. Edith Wharton, another successful American writer, was one its founding trustees.¹ The library was used by more people than just these literary greats, however. The collection of books and programming worked to serve both American expatriates and tourists as well as Parisians hoping to learn English or about American culture. The establishment of a library dedicated to American literature and culture suggests the magnitude of Americans who were living in or traveling to Paris. These American expatriates and travelers of the 1920s play an important role in the narrative of American vacations.

The American vacation is a relatively recent phenomenon; the word ‘vacation’ only having become popular in the mid-nineteenth century. Closely held values of work above leisure prevented Americans from getting into the tourism game for several decades. Even then, only the extremely wealthy had the time and money available to take

¹ “History of the American Library in Paris,” The American Library of Paris, last modified on Sunday, January 27, 2013, <http://www.americanlibraryinparis.org/about-the-library/history-of-the-library.html>.

a trip for recreation. This was a distinctly different set of tourists than those traveling in the period after World War II as the explosion of tourism affected all but the poorest of Americans. Tracking the shape of vacations from the nineteenth century to the 1950s reveals dramatic changes in the American traveler and the American tourist industry. From a pastime reserved for the wealthy elite to a necessary break from work built into the contracts of the middle class and growing numbers of the working class, vacation trends in the United States reflect changing cultural values and national identity. Looking at both domestic and international travel, this chapter examines the American vacation leading up to the post war era, providing the necessary background to understand the 1950s tourist.

Simply by virtue of convenience and cost, a majority of American travelers in the nineteenth and early twentieth century were limited to places within the United States. Most did not find this to be much of a limitation at all, traveling further each year as domestic transportation became more accommodating. Historian Cindy Aron writes about this period at length, explaining how vacations began to form as an invention of the middle class.² One of the most difficult hurdles to the rise of vacation culture was not money but an aversion to leisure ingrained in the culture of the middle and lower classes. The religious argument against leisure, that work was a way to demonstrate devotion to

² Cindy S. Aron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1999), 4-5.

God, kept many people from recreational activities.³ The argument was bolstered when the many resorts that appeared seemed to be breeding grounds for supposedly immoral activities like drinking and dancing. Beyond religion, there was an association of leisure with monarchy, an association which helped make hard work one of Americans' core values. With these barriers, it is not surprising that it took into the 1850s for vacations to become a more common part of the American experience. However, the wealthy members of society had been traveling for many years before travel began to reach the lower classes.⁴

As travel itself was expensive and inconvenient in the early nineteenth century, only the wealthy elite members of society could afford it. Beyond the cost of the actual transportation on limited railways and unfinished roads, only the wealthy were able to spend long periods of time without physically working and being paid. Working and middle class people sometimes traveled for their livelihood (e.g. traders and gold rush prospectors) or as soldiers in war, many of them producing travel accounts which may have helped to popularize tourism; but generally, these people would not have been classified as tourists as their travel was unlikely to be associated with recreation or leisure. For the most part, the wealthy travelers in the first half of the nineteenth century were spending time at health spas and resorts.⁵ While these resorts did involve modern

³ Aron, *Working at Play*, 5.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

health treatments like fresh air and bathing, they also involved amusement such as balls, dancing, and sports. It was here that medical professionals first began equating health and recreation, encouraging people of all classes to spend time outdoors, particularly for athletic activities. Some of these early travelers went beyond resorts, however, taking trips to early tourist destinations such as Niagara Falls.⁶ Though these types of travelers were few and far between, the trips they took helped shape the tourist industry by demonstrating a desire for history and culture.

These types of tourist sites served almost as sites of religious pilgrimage, despite being secular in nature rather than being connected to a particular religion. Historian John Sears describes these sites as the “sacred places of a nation or people.”⁷ Sears focuses on these sites rather than on the resorts described by Aron. These tourist sites were important in helping to distinguish American tourism from European tourism. Though the United States could not hope to have the cathedrals, art, and historical sites that Europe had, Americans were very proud of their natural sites. Sites like Niagara Falls and Mammoth Cave inspired intense emotions and experiences. Niagara Falls was hyped to the extreme that some visitors felt disappointed when they failed to have a meaningful connection.⁸ Mammoth Cave, though very different than Niagara Falls, inspired a similar emotional

⁶ Aron, *Working at Play*, 127.

⁷ John Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989), 7.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

reaction. Here, visitors were guided in small, intimate tours through the caves, where even the air was different.⁹ Visits to Yosemite Park were also considered a near religious experience; writers often compared the park to the cathedrals of Europe.¹⁰ Yosemite and Yellowstone Park both became important features of the American landscape.¹¹ Writers and artists both were responsible for establishing the scenery of the parks, creating living versions of the panoramas which were popular at the time. This scenery had no equivalent in Europe; thus, Americans could craft an identity separate from their ancestors with basis in these natural wonders.

Americans were interested in visiting man-made American sites as well. For a period in the mid-nineteenth century Americans made tourists sites out of prisons, asylums, and cemeteries. Institutions housing inmates were fascinating in part because of new reforms and innovations in the system and in part because of their orderliness.¹² In particular, it was hoped that those with disabilities would find a connection to the Christian God through these institutions. Many Americans thought those with disabilities were outside of their God's favor and that these institutions would remedy this, making

⁹ Sears, *Sacred Places*, 36.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 138.

¹¹ For more on Yellowstone and Yosemite see Langdon Smith, "The Contested Landscape of Early Yellowstone," *Journal of Cultural Geography* 22, no. 1 (2004): 3-26; Mark David Spence, "Crown of the Continent, Backbone of the World: The American Wilderness Ideal and the Backfeet Exclusion from Glacier National Park," *Environmental History* 1, no. 3 (1996): 29-49; Donald Worster, *A Passion for Nature: The Life of John Muir* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008).

¹² Sears, *Sacred Places*, 91-93.

worthwhile the lives of the disabled. Rural cemeteries also became popular as tourists sites. As quiet areas located outside of the city, the cemeteries became places for retreat from city life. These cemeteries served as models for the nation's first parks, eventually leading to the creation of urban parks to avoid associating cemeteries with pleasure.¹³ By the 1860s, institutions and cemeteries no longer served as tourist sites, but they played an important role of the continual development of the tourism and recreation industries. The primary audience for these types of attractions were, of course, the upper classes. However, even before the Civil War, travel was slowly becoming more available to the middle class.

Though vacations were not part of mainstream American cultural expectation until the early twentieth century, many members of the middle class were able to travel by the second half of the nineteenth century. In part, this could be contributed to soldier writings from the Civil War; their writings on other places inspired a taste for travel literature. Additionally, the early resorts populated by the wealthy became more approachable for the middle class. More resorts were built that catered specifically to the middle or lower classes. These resort alternatives were often more conservative than those frequented by the wealthy; most banned alcohol, some even banned dancing.¹⁴ These alternative resorts championed recreation as a separate and more appropriate venture than amusement, highly influenced by religious values. Though resorts tended to

¹³ Sears, *Sacred Places*, 100, 116.

¹⁴ Aron, *Working at Play*, 102.

be segregated—African Americans and Jews were often unwelcome at popular white resorts— there were generally vacation places open to anyone who could afford it, an increasing number of the population. As vacations and recreation became an important rite of the American middle class, cheaper alternatives to resorts and hotel stays became available, namely, camping. American fascination with the wilderness and pride in the natural beauty of the United States led more and more people to pursue camping vacations, particularly in National Parks.

After the Civil War, American tourism transformed into a patriotic venture with campaigns aiming towards inspiring pride in the natural beauty of American landscapes. *See America First* by Marguerite Shaffer outlines the various ways in which tourists and the tourism industry worked to create a national culture based on seeing America.¹⁵ In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, tourism became an important part of being an American citizen. Tourism was a type of “virtuous consumption” which stressed “seeing over speaking, purchasing over voting, and traveling over participating.”¹⁶ As American tourism was struggling to find success in the shadow of the Grand European Tour, the first efforts to increase tourism around the United States was focused on the idea of a Grand Tour across America. The railroad in particular was a huge proponent of the United States Grand Tour. The railroad companies helped to launch a campaign

¹⁵ Marguerite Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

which intended to increase visits to America's natural wonders, primarily future National Parks. The packaging of Northwest and Southwest culture portrayed a certain image of wilderness, discovery, and exploration, all traditional characteristics of American frontiersmen.¹⁷ The advertising aimed for a particular aesthetic, turning *sights* into *scenery* using art and photography. Modern life could never hope to fulfill the realness of the wilderness; only the wilderness embodied the sturdy individualism, self-reliance, and masculinity that characterized the true American.¹⁸

The National Parks in particular served as instigators of patriotism. As more and more parks were established in the early twentieth century—the National Parks Service was founded in 1916—they became an important representation of “America's Greatness.”¹⁹ National Parks served as an outdoor classroom, educating children and adults on the natural wonders of the United States. Though the parks were being developed with lodges and trails, there was an expectation that most of the park would remain an untouched wilderness. National Parks continued to grow in popularity with the new availability of the automobile. As the automobile transitioned from luxury to necessity, more people were able to make their own way and forge their own tourist

¹⁷ Shaffer, *See America First*, 69.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 90.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 106

paths.²⁰ Much like the major railroad projects completed in the previous decades, there was a national push to improve and increase road infrastructure. The “Good Roads” movement was often connected to the “See America First” movement, pushing touring the country as reminiscent of America’s past, a connection to history.²¹ The automobile made possible new types of tourism, those whose journeys brought self-discovery and newfound independence. These generally upper class white tourists felt that through touring they would discover the real America. In the 1920s through the 1940s, however, these experiences were no longer limited to members of the upper class.

Though the United States government has never required that citizens have a certain amount of paid vacation days, vacation days became an expected part of the job in the 1920s and 1930s. Members of the middle and lower classes were not always able to travel during their time off, but these paid vacation days dramatically expanded the tourism industry in the United States. After World War I, “advocates of paid vacation and tourism promoters...helped fashion the view that the mass consumption of leisure, especially in the form of vacations and tourism, was a necessity for the social, cultural, and economic health of the nation,” according to one historian.²² As this concept of

²⁰ For more on auto-touring, consumerism, and nature see James J. Flink, “Three Stages of American Automobile Consciousness,” *American Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (October 1972): 451-473; Gabrielle Barnett, “Drive-By Viewing: Visual Consciousness and Forest Preservation in the Automobile Age,” *Technology and Culture* (2004): 30-54.

²¹ Shaffer, *See America First*, 157-167.

²² Shelley Baranowski and Ellen Furlough, ed., *Being Elsewhere: Tourism, Consumer Culture, and Identity in Modern Europe and North America* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 187.

vacations as important for worker health and productivity became the prevailing notion, paid leave became an important part of every employer contract. As many people would not have been able to afford a long car trip out West, resorts and other tourist centers on the East Coast became more popular, sometimes to the point of overcrowding. Even the Great Depression in the 1930s could not stop the tourist expansion in the United States.²³ By the time the United States entered into World War II, tourism around the country was a firmly entrenched tradition of the American citizen.

Though European travel was largely limited to wealthy Americans and soldiers until well into the twentieth century, these Americans abroad in the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are an important part of the tourism narrative. Europe had a rich cultural history that most Americans felt that the United States could not hope to match. As the countless travel campaigns encouraging Americans to see their own country first would suggest, these early tourists went to Europe to satisfy a “desire for high culture and distinguished society.”²⁴ In the late eighteenth century, Americans in Europe were primarily there for business or to participate in foreign diplomacy. This category would include such famous Americans as Benjamin Franklin and Thomas

²³ Shelley Baranowski, *Being Elsewhere*, 185.

²⁴ William W. Stowe, *Going Abroad: European Travel in Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 5.

Jefferson, both of whom served in the position of American Minister to France.²⁵ As this was only shortly after America's independence from Britain, many Americans wrote of being "repelled by monarchical rule."²⁶ However, the Old World still attracted Americans; artists in the late eighteenth century were particularly enamored of London. John Adams and his wife were part of the London crowd in the 1780s, for all that they both expressed preference for their less decadent life at home in the United States.²⁷ Though American presence in Europe was fairly consistent since the late eighteenth century, this early set could hardly be called *tourists*. However, their journeys to Europe helped set up more touristic travel in later years.

In the nineteenth century, the configuration of Americans in Europe began to change. In addition to those in Europe for foreign relation purposes, there was an influx of American writers and professional scholars. Almost every famous writer in nineteenth century America traveled to Europe at some point; most of them later wrote about the experience.²⁸ Travel writing became extremely popular in this period and not just among those who made writing their profession. Amateur accounts of European travels were frequent, and newspapers and magazines often published the better written submissions.

²⁵ Foster Rhea Dulles, *Americans Abroad: Two Centuries of European Travel* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1964), 9.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 24.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Stowe, *Going Abroad*, 4.

Thus, despite the limited number of people who could afford to travel, accounts of European vacations reached a wide range of people in the United States.²⁹ Especially popular were ‘letters from Europe’ in which an American would write in the style of a letter for publication. Amateurs were also involved in the publication of guidebooks, another popular form of travel writing. People were encouraged to travel to Europe, not just for pleasure but for education and general cultural improvement. It was in the early nineteenth century that the first students began traveling abroad to study, a tradition that exists still today.³⁰ An article in *Collier’s Weekly* described how these students would “supplement their studies in foreign trade, international studies, literature, art,” purchasing a student fare and traveling over the summers.³¹ Many Americans felt the United States had no equivalent to Europe’s many theatres or art and history museums, important aspects of a cultural education. Though travel to Europe would remain out of reach for members of the lower classes, technological improvements made it more approachable in the mid and late nineteenth century.

The Atlantic passage was continually improved upon in the years prior to and after the American Civil War. Ships increasingly had more space, could travel faster, and improved on-board entertainment, expanding the number of people going.³² Americans

²⁹ Stowe, *Going Abroad*, 3.

³⁰ Dulles, *Americans Abroad*, 34.

³¹ James H. Collins, “You Can do Europe on \$7.35 a Day!” *Collier’s Weekly* 76 (Aug. 8, 1925): 8.

³² Dulles, *Americans Abroad*, 44.

overwhelmingly preferred England, likely due to the language as well as generally better travel conditions than continental European countries. Many social reformers traveled to England in the 1840s and 1850s to attend conferences and understand how social issues were being handled in European countries. Those in this group would include reformers such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott who were known to have been refused entrance to a London abolition conference due to their gender. Both women returned to the United States heavily involved in abolition as well as the women's rights movement. American champions for temperance and hospital reform made journeys to Europe as well, including social reformer Dorothea Dix.³³ In the second half of the nineteenth century, Europe was also visited by a rather different group of Americans: entertainers. Theater troupes as well as performers in shows such as those put on by P.T. Barnum began traveling around Europe to perform. Likewise, individual actors traveled to Europe to be cast in European productions.³⁴ After the American Civil War, the tourism industry experienced a huge change with the first appearance of package tours.

The introduction of the package tour meant that “American travelers were more than ever going to the same places, seeing the same sights, and crowding the same resorts.”³⁵ All-inclusive package tours made it easier than ever to go to Europe as one no longer had to individually arrange sights to visit and places to stay. Though travel to

³³ Dulles, *Americans Abroad*, 86-91.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 93.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 106.

Europe was halted during World War I, after the war Americans were excited to return. For many Americans, their journey to Europe simply reinforced pride in their own country. For example, a 1920 article in *The Outlook* discussed the poor conditions in France suggesting that “one will admire the work of the American Committee for Devastated France in trying to make good...to the farmers and their families. It makes one proud of being an American!”³⁶ Unsurprisingly, this superior attitude inspired a wave of dislike from residents of these countries. Many Europeans expressed resentment for what they saw as extravagant behaviors by the American tourists. In particular, as this was the age of American prohibition, Americans were perhaps overly excited to drink alcohol while they were overseas.³⁷ This image was made especially popular by the writers, artists, and composers who made Paris their home in the 1920s.

The golden age of Paris in the 1920s was so named because of figures such as Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald. The novels and writings of Hemingway and Fitzgerald popularized a vision of Paris, though Paris was not always the setting. The characters and situations in their novels were frequently inspired by life in 1920s France—Fitzgerald wrote *The Great Gatsby* while vacationing in Southern France.³⁸ Other stories were more blatantly related to their experiences: Hemingway’s *A Moveable*

³⁶ Elbert Francis Baldwin, “A European Tour This Year,” *The Outlook* 129 (June 9, 1920): 225.

³⁷ Dulles, *Americans Abroad*, 156.

³⁸ J. Gerald Kennedy and Jackson R. Bryer, Ed., *French Connections: Hemingway and Fitzgerald Abroad* (New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 10.

Feast and Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night*. Though these two may be the most remembered figures, they were certainly not the only ones to make the lifestyle famous. There was, of course, Gertrude Stein who is known to have said, "America is my country, but Paris is my home town."³⁹ A writer of poetry, plays, and novels, Stein was also an avid art collector, friend and patron to artists including Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse. The Left Bank in particular was a haven to American writers and artists, home of the Shakespeare and Company Bookstore which sold primarily English books. The area of Montparnasse on the Left Bank was home to many Americans: primarily English was spoken here. Famous American composers George Gershwin and Cole Porter and poet Langston Hughes were also part of the 1920s American crowd. It was while walking the streets of Paris that Gershwin wrote his famous piece *An American in Paris* in 1928. Paris was the temporary home to some of the best artistic minds the United States had to offer. As Fitzgerald said, "the American in Paris is the best American."⁴⁰

Canadian author Morley Callaghan wrote extensively of his time in Paris in the 1920s in his book *That Summer in Paris*. Callaghan was an up and coming writer in Paris with his wife at the same time as Fitzgerald and Hemingway, among others. His narrative offers an interesting look at Parisian life in the 1920s, particularly in his interactions with the United States group. Callaghan explained that Paris "was the one grand display window for international talent, and if you were at all interested in the way the

³⁹ J. Gerald Kennedy, *French Connections*, 4.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 191.

intellectual cloth of the time was being cut you had to be there, even if you couldn't do more than press your nose to the window."⁴¹

Fortunately, Callaghan was able to do much more than "press his nose to the window." Famously known for his boxing matches with Hemingway, Callaghan and his wife frequently met up with fellow famous writers Fitzgerald and Hemingway but also James Joyce and Robert McAlmon. His wife expressed her thoughts on these writers, saying that she "like[d] them all" and that they "were all so attractive. All so wonderfully upsetting."⁴² The couple often stayed out late, enjoying the more relaxed lifestyle Paris provided. Callaghan explained that "by ten in the evening the whole corner would take on the fullness of its own life with the terraces crowded and the well-known drunken poets or painters...wandering across the road."⁴³ This version of Paris became the narrative Americans associated with the city, despite the presence of a whole different set of Americans in Paris.

The strength of the dollar compared the French Franc aided in making Paris a popular destination for those Americans outside the bohemian set. These Americans of the Right Bank made place de l'Opéra their central hub, far from the artist crowd in

⁴¹ Morley Callaghan, *That Summer in Paris: Memories of Tangled Friendships with Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Some Others* (New York, NY: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1963) 114.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 155.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 116.

Montparnasse.⁴⁴ They created their own civic society away from home, forming their own communities, organizations, and neighborhoods. Despite sharing many characteristics with the typical immigrant, these much wealthier Americans never referred to themselves as such. Rather, they considered themselves part of the “American colony,” before the term “colony” had more negative connotations.⁴⁵ At its peak the American colony in Paris was a group of about 40,000 Americans, more Americans than anywhere else abroad.⁴⁶

The Right Bank group—entrepreneurs, bankers, foreign diplomats, journalists, etc.—enjoyed Paris’s cultural charm and relaxed lifestyle as well as its business opportunities. The Americans of the Right Bank started churches, business organizations, university alumni organizations, English newspapers, and the American Library of Paris. These clubs and organizations allowed Americans to identify with the United States despite being out of the country. An article in the *Ladies’ Home Journal* described the importance of women’s clubs in London and Paris, saying that the club “perpetuates [ladies’] love of their own land, and ties that home patriotism up with the needs of other lands” and “gives them an American home.”⁴⁷ These clubs not only served to provide an

⁴⁴ Brooke Blower, *Becoming Americans in Paris: Transatlantic Politics and Culture Between the World Wars* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 21.

⁴⁵ Nancy Green, *The Other Americans in Paris: Businessmen, Countesses, Wayward Youth, 1880-1941* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2014) 7.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴⁷ Alice Ames Winter, “American Women’s Clubs of Paris and London,” *The Ladies’ Home Journal* 42 (Sept. 1925): 55.

American home for these expatriates but also to help facilitate understanding between French and American people. The latter goal was perhaps not as widely achieved; the French first expressed fear of Americanization in the period between the world wars. Parisians were concerned that Americans were turning Paris into a new American frontier.⁴⁸ Many Parisians were outraged over the growing popularity of English language signage, referring to it as the “uglification of Paris.”⁴⁹ Americans at home struggled with concern over the supposed French dislike of Americans, prompting such articles as “Are Americans Hated in Paris?” published in *The Outlook* by a French scholar.⁵⁰ French and American relations were complex—some French people liked Americans and some did not while Americans were equally mixed on their opinions of the French.

The relationship between Parisians and Americans living in Paris was strained in part because of the complex identities of those Americans in Paris. While there seemed to be a clear distinction between Americans living in Paris and American tourists in Paris, the line was sometimes difficult to define. Most of these so-called expatriates still considered themselves American citizens and many of them never learned French.⁵¹ Though some Americans certainly engaged with local French people, many remained isolated in their American communities. Americans rarely got a full picture of Paris,

⁴⁸ Blower, *Becoming Americans in Paris*, 55.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁵⁰ Ernest Dimnet, “Are Americans Hated in Paris?” *The Outlook* 142 (March 3, 1926): 331.

⁵¹ Green, *The Other Americans in Paris*, 16, 44.

never seeing areas where the poorest Parisians resided.⁵² Additionally, there was some fear that Parisian culture would corrupt young Americans, particularly when it came to French ideas about sex. Young, unmarried women especially were warned of becoming too close to French men for fear of destroying sexual purity.⁵³ Despite these fears, many women did end up marrying French men though it was more frequent that American men married French women, generally as a result of relationships during World War I.⁵⁴ Intermarriage of French and Americans made it difficult to decide who had the rights of American citizenship.

The American consulate in Paris was one method by which Americans were able to assert their citizenship abroad. The consulate served many functions; it could receive or send mail, find lost items, and sometimes even look after wayward American youths.⁵⁵ One of the most common ways the United States government helped out its French expatriates was through tax protections. As American businesses gained popularity, there were several issues with how many and which kinds of taxes these businesses would be required to pay to the French government.⁵⁶ The American consulate was also in charge of helping Americans prove their citizenship through way of identification. This was

⁵² Blower, *Becoming Americans in Paris*, 42.

⁵³ Green, *The Other Americans in Paris*, 80.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 89, 94.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 152.

often a tricky business as this was before the days when passports were absolutely required. However, the consulate was unwilling to help people who were unable to prove they were American citizens entitled to the assistance of the American government. This was especially an issue during World War I and at the beginning of World War II. By the 1930s, Americans were being encouraged to return home—and most of them listened.⁵⁷ As World War II descended upon Europe and France, it became more imperative that Americans return to the United States. Though most of the people were able to leave with help of the consulate, many American businesses remained abroad during wartime, allowing for an easier return to Paris post war. Almost right after these expatriate Americans in Paris returned home, a new group of Americans headed to France--soldiers.

Very soon after the start of World War II, Paris was invaded and conquered by Germans. The summer of 1940 saw an absence of Americans in Paris for the first time in decades as Paris came under the control of German occupation leaders. Living with curfews and restrictions on goods and services was difficult for the French, but the resistance movements were never strong enough to take back the city. Fortunately, in serving as the German headquarters, Paris remained essentially untouched by bombing and other destruction. Germans were actually encouraged to be tourists in Paris, especially German troops who were taken to Paris for recreation. Hitler himself took a

⁵⁷ Green, *The Other Americans in Paris*, 240.

brief tour of the city's sites in 1940, the first and only time he was in Paris.⁵⁸ By the time the American troops invaded Normandy in June of 1944, the French were wary of further destruction to their country. Though generally happy to be free from German occupation, the French were distraught by the destruction caused by the Allied invasion. In particular, bombings were not very precise and tended to kill more French civilians than German soldiers.⁵⁹ French-American relations were complicated by the new roles these countries took on in World War II as well as by the relationships between American soldiers and the French people they helped to liberate.

American soldiers had varied interactions with the French: from little to constant contact and from positive to negative impressions. Historian Mary Louise Roberts covers these interactions at length in her study *What Soldiers Do: Sex and the American GI in World War II France* which focuses on the impact and importance of sex to the American soldier. Deposited in a foreign land with little to no knowledge of the French language or culture, American soldiers were similar to tourists though with a less receptive welcome.⁶⁰ This ignorance often led to American overgeneralization of French culture, judgment based on stereotypes or singular encounters. In World War I American soldiers had promoted the stereotype that the "French were primitive in their work and bodily

⁵⁸ Richard Vinen. *The Unfree French: Life under the Occupation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 110.

⁵⁹ Mary Louise Roberts, *What Soldiers Do: Sex and the American GI in World War II France* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 23.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

habits,” a conception that was “reinforced in 1944” as GIs “assumed that war expediency measures were the norm.”⁶¹ Many Americans perceived of French culture as being primitive and far behind the modern technologies of the United States though much of this was due to war rations and rural neighborhoods. The French were surprised to find that their country was no longer considered a world political power, difficult as it was for them to find uncensored news under German command.⁶² This caused an interesting tension between French civilians and American GIs, as the French were torn between gratitude and embarrassment. Complicating the situation even more was the GIs perception of France as a culture of sex, particularly Paris.

French women, especially prostitutes, were considered an easily available commodity for American GIs. Though French women were not necessarily more promiscuous than American women, the availability and acceptance of prostitution conflated to general French promiscuity and immorality in American perception.⁶³ The United States media created the French girl stereotype in part due to photographs which enforced a myth of liberation. Publishing photos of American GIs surrounded by adoring French girls invoked an image of a knight rescuing a damsel in distress, a much different angle than that of the French papers which primarily focused on the uniting of families.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Roberts, *What Soldiers Do*, 50.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 90.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 58, 67.

The sex industry caused resentment both ways for Americans GIs and French civilians; GIs were often charged with rape and sexual assault while those who had consensual relations with prostitutes often ended up with diseases. Venereal disease was common in GIs during World War II and an “estimated 40 percent of GIs who contracted venereal disease did so in Paris.”⁶⁵

While relatively few rape charges actually led to convictions, African American soldiers were disproportionately punished for rape and assault crimes. Though generally the French were assumed to be against the racial laws that governed society in the United States, their fears of Africans from former French colonies often turned into a fear of African Americans.⁶⁶ These interactions between the French people and American soldiers are especially important because they provided the basis for postwar relationships. In addition to the thousands of Americans who first came to France after World War II, many of these American ex-GIs remained in Paris after their service. It is necessary to understand what perceptions and impressions held over from Americans during the war to the new set of Americans visiting Paris in the aftermath.

The history of Americans on vacation in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries is relatively short; tourism was a popular phenomenon only for the wealthy until the later nineteenth century. The increasing expectation of paid vacation

⁶⁵ Roberts, *What Soldiers Do*, 135.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 243.

time from employers in the early twentieth century contributed to a rise in vacations leading up to World War II and a boom in vacations after the war. However, despite the exclusion of the middle and lower classes, tourism played an important role in American identity in the nineteenth century. Campaigns to see America first led to a national pride in the American landscape, encouraging the creation of National Parks and the rise of the automobile vacation. By matter of convenience and cost, Americans primarily stayed in the United States for their recreational needs into the twentieth century. In addition to the popularity of summer resort vacations, Americans turned to natural wonders as vacation destinations, taking journeys comparable to religious pilgrimages to visit Niagara Falls or Mammoth Cave. Railroad companies and the U.S. government alike were responsible for advertising these American national landscapes, encouraging a national culture different from those of the European nations. While Americans did not consider themselves to have the history of arts and culture of Europe, they did have these natural features which were often compared to the beauty and sacredness of European cathedrals and historic landmarks. Even in traveling to Europe Americans seemed to maintain a pride in their connection to the United States.

Although their numbers were limited, Americans maintained a steady stream of travel to Europe and France in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, interrupted only by World War I and II. The Grand European Tour was an important rite of the wealthy, establishing their social connections and proving their high culture. Travel writing was in vogue and many Americans wrote about their experiences abroad for

publishing in magazines, newspapers, or guidebooks. Though many Americans preferred traveling to England, primarily for the ease of language, Paris was always part of the Grand Tour and became part of the package tour when these were first introduced after the American Civil War. Paris is most remembered as the home of the bohemian writers and artists of the Left Bank, an oft romanticized vision of the city. However, Paris was also home to the American Colony, a group of entrepreneurs, journalists, and other businessmen throughout the 1920s and 1930s. It was these Americans in Paris as well as the American GIs during World War II who had the most lasting effect on American perceptions of Paris and American relationships to the French. Knowledge of these pre-World War II interactions and tourist expectations is crucial in understanding the development of American tourism in Paris in the postwar period.

CHAPTER 2

NO PLACE FOR AN IOWAN
CONFLICTS OF CULTURE IN POSTWAR PARIS

In 1947, a group of twenty-two farmers from the state of Iowa traveled to Europe for a month-long trip around the continent's top destinations. Their journey, as outlined in *Life Magazine*, included stops in England, Luxembourg, Belgium, and France. Their primary mission was to investigate European farming practices, particularly agricultural methods and food needs in the postwar period. The article included photos of the Iowans examining outdated farming equipment, speaking with French farmers, and observing livestock. Also included was a full-page photo of the Iowans at a Parisian nightclub, complete with scantily clad women. Despite their agriculturally-based intentions, these Midwestern farmers could not resist a taste of Parisian culture.¹

This type of imagery showcased a disparity between the hardworking, conservative culture of the American Midwest and the sophisticated, creative culture of Paris. The American in Paris would become an increasingly suspicious and subversive character in America during the Cold War. With tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union running high in the aftermath of World War II, any murmurings of dissatisfaction with the United States were held suspect. A strong wave of nationalism spread across America starting in World War II and continuing throughout the 1950s.

¹ "Iowa Mission: Twenty-Two Tough-Minded Farmers Visit Europe to Investigate Problems, Needs, and Night Life," *Life Magazine* 23, no. 16 (October 20, 1947): 34-35.

With this ‘America First’ attitude, it seems surprising that so many Americans were venturing over to Europe.

Particularly fascinating was the American tourist’s relationship with Paris, a popular American destination since before the world wars. In many ways postwar Parisian culture developed in stark opposition to postwar American culture. This resultant imagery created a conflict between a prevailing popular culture of American nationalism and the tourists who admired and emulated French culture. To fully explain the drastic differences between American and French culture in the era after World War II, this chapter will first examine postwar American culture followed by an examination of postwar French culture. With this essential piece established, the chapter will then delve into the relationship between American tourists and Paris with an emphasis on American perceptions of Frenchness.

The aftermath of the Second World War saw a great change in American culture and ideals. This was primarily due to the United States’ new status as a world superpower—and its conflict with other world superpower, the Soviet Union. American politics and culture intertwined as communism became both a national security obsession and a moral issue. In this “Age of Anxiety,” one can see the beginnings of a national turn towards a new set of right-wing politics, along with the rise of a culture based on political

consumption and consumer culture.² Ideas of freedom, always a popular rally cry in the United States, now became tied to ideas of consumption. Understanding these new cultural values is crucial to understanding American tourists' relationship with France.

Examining 1950s United States conservative culture is an exercise in recognizing dichotomies. Followers of this philosophy were extremely patriotic yet expressed a strong distrust of the U.S. government. They prided themselves on moral superiority but were pro-consumerism and tended to measure freedom based on the amount of 'stuff' one owned. This anti-communist conservative movement professed to be founded on concepts of American traditionalism but much of their cultural philosophy consisted of liberating the individual from the moral restrictions of the past. This culture developed in part due to an association of masculinity and toughness and the importance of these virtues in a national security crisis and in part due to a fear of homosexuality and the perception that it was growing in the post-war years.³ This turn towards masculinity and moral righteousness was accompanied by a strong fear of intellectuals.

Anti-communism and the rise of conservative culture triggered a sweeping movement of anti-intellectualism in the postwar period. Richard Hofstadter wrote extensively on the subject in his 1963 book *Anti-intellectualism in American Life*.⁴

² K.A. Courdileone, "Politics in an Age of Anxiety": Cold War Political Culture and the Crisis in American Masculinity, 1949-1960," *The Journal of American History* 87, No. 2 (Sep., 2000), 515-545.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963).

McCarthyism, along with the investigations of the House of Un-American Activities Committee, generated a cold war chill throughout the nation. These red-scare investigations targeted many academic and intellectual groups and institutions across the United States, including schools, universities, teachers and professors. Though mainstream anti-intellectualism manifested as a general distrust of scientists and professors, this conservative anti-intellectualism went considerably further in its attempts to discredit university academics, particularly those in the Ivy League. Indeed, for much of the fifties, anti-communism seemed to be more important than the advancement of intellectual ideas and research. In 1947 the magazine *School Life*—published by the U.S. Commissioner of Education in collaboration with the Federal Security Administrator—devoted an entire issue on how to keep democracy in schools and keep communism out. This “Zeal for American Democracy” edition pushed for “education to meet the challenge of totalitarianism.”⁵ It was not until the Soviet launch of Sputnik in 1957 that Americans realized the consequences of a culture of anti-intellectualism and sought to remedy education in the United States; unfortunately, solutions were aimed more towards “producing more Sputniks” than “developing more intellect.”⁶

Americans’ deeply held faith in progress meant that economic growth, development, and consumption were seemingly inevitable. This included the belief that

⁵ “Zeal for American Democracy: Education to Meet the Challenge of Totalitarianism,” *School Life* 30, no. 5 (February 1947).

⁶ Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, 5.

the United States of America truly was the greatest nation in the world. Here it was possible for anyone to improve themselves simply through the purchase of consumer goods. These purchases also made it possible for one to become an American, especially important for the immigrant population. Consumer culture was the hallmark of capitalism, especially important because it was *not* communism. Mass consumption was no longer a “personal indulgence, but rather a civic responsibility,” a necessary duty as a citizen of the United States.⁷ Americans took this responsibility to heart, making good use of their economic freedoms in what Lizbeth Cohen aptly named the “Consumer’s Republic.”

Mass consumerism was especially visible in the post-war explosion of suburbs. As more people—particularly white, affluent people--moved to the suburbs, so too, did businesses and shopping centers. Owning a home in the suburbs translated to higher levels of consumption; suburbanites bought cars, top-of-the-line appliances, and a busier lifestyle.⁸ The fifties saw the expansion of the supermarket and shopping malls, places where families could stop to buy everything they needed without heading into the city. This anti-communist, anti-intellectual, and pro-consumer American culture differed dramatically from the movements occurring in Paris at the conclusion of World War II.

⁷ Lizbeth Cohen, *A Consumer’s Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 113.

⁸ Loren Baritz, *The Good Life: The Meaning of Success for the American Middle Class* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1982), 166-224.

Though Paris remained physically unscathed during the war, postwar Parisians still went through a recovery process from economic hardships and German occupation. In part because of this economic crisis, Parisians were particularly open to visitors from the United States. Parisians in the aftermath of World War II dealt with lingering food shortages and the devaluation of the Franc in comparison with the U.S. Dollar. Additionally, France faced a general unsteadiness borne of its changing role in world politics. Though France's war-time leaders were on the Allied side, they were in a lesser position of power than Britain or the United States because of the German occupation and the lack of French involvement in the Pacific Theater. In this tumultuous time, French leaders widely turned towards social programs and government spending.

Two-thirds of the twenty-one Prime Ministers who served France between 1947 and 1959 belonged to left-wing parties: the French Section of the Workers' International (SFIO), the Radical Party, and the Democratic and Socialist Union of the Resistance (UDSR). Policies were intended to boost morale and strengthen French nationalism but took a vastly different direction than the United States to do so. In October 1945 an official social security program was initiated, focusing on protecting all people in France, rather than just those considered vulnerable.⁹ Though he held the office for less than a year's time, Pierre Mendès France was a particularly influential politician who represented the Radical Party. In 1954 he was featured on the cover of the American

⁹ Securite Sociale l'Assurance Maladie, "Getting Informed about Health Insurance," <http://www.ameli.fr/l-assurance-maladie/connaître-l-assurance-maladie/getting-informed-about-health-insurance/social-security/over-the-years.php>.

Time Magazine.¹⁰ Mendès France worked under Charles De Gaulle prior to becoming minister and attempted to retain power in political affairs after leaving office, though he resigned as party leader soon after his term. However, Mendès France retained some influence by writing and publishing his thoughts on political and economic affairs. Perhaps in part due to the liberal policies of these left-wing politicians—and perhaps also the influence of French desire for prewar comforts—France did not remain economically unstable for long.

In postwar France the French experienced more than just a desire to return to old eating habits; there was a new cultural phenomenon centered around hygiene. There have been many reasons suggested as to why this mass craze of cleanliness began: perhaps the French felt the need to be cleansed from the stench of occupation or felt a strong desire to purify society's morals. Literary scholar Kristin Ross suggests that the desire for modern hygiene grew out of a French desire to distance themselves from their former African colonies.¹¹ This hygiene revolution signified a great change in French culture, particularly in the city of Paris. The increasing availability of modern plumbing also signified a shift in personal cleanliness, particularly in regards the mass purchasing of synthetically produced soap and hair products. Perfume and deodorant became necessities rather than luxury items. But the need for cleanliness went beyond personal

¹⁰ *Time Magazine* 64, no. 2 (July 12, 1954).

¹¹ Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 78.

hygiene; it also included the purchasing of new appliances like laundry machines and dishwashers. The move towards high-cleanliness was both a move towards modernization and towards an increasingly consumer culture.

The culture in post WWII France remained a welcome atmosphere for artists and thinkers. In Paris people were giving more time to the arts. The postwar period saw an immense rise in the number of Parisians who studied and made films. The movement, described as French cinephilia, likely resulted due to the lack of leisure time for and access to new films in wartime. Henri Langlois is oft attributed for the start to this movement of cinephilia; he was a Frenchman who hosted film screenings in Paris in the 1950s. Langlois is said to have been the inspiration for those artists and filmmakers who set off the French New Wave cinema movement in the late 1950s and 60s. Recovering the leisure time and finances to participate in artistic pleasures was an important part of the postwar reconstruction process for Parisians.

There were many ways in which American and Parisian culture were similar but several more ways in which they differed. The strongest cultural similarity was that of a growing consumer culture. While Americans were obsessing over freedom and democracy, Parisians were obsessing over cleanliness and hygiene. Both of these preoccupations involved large-scale consumption of mass-produced consumer goods, particularly new appliances intended to make life easier. Increased modern plumbing in Paris and the building of new homes in suburban America led to greater expectations of

modernization. Both cultures began to expect new appliances that would previously have been luxuries. Economic globalization also contributed to consumer culture in both countries, as national economies became inextricably linked further than they had been in the prewar global market. American products in particular were becoming more widely available for consumption.¹² However, these similarities between the American and Parisian cultures did not reach beyond consumerism.

Much more clearly visible were the vast differences between the two cultures. In the postwar years, Americans experienced a mass flooding of suburbanization. People were fleeing cities for the supposedly higher class lifestyle of the suburbs. Though eventually the mania of the suburbs led to housing shortages, in the 1950s it was fairly easy for white people of good financial standing to transition to the suburban lifestyle. On the opposite end, Paris faced a substantial housing crisis after the war, making it difficult for French people to find apartments—let alone the Americans who came to stay. Prices were rising even for those apartments that did not yet have the modern updates that Parisians were craving.¹³

Additionally, the Parisian lifestyle was much different than that of American suburbanites. One American visitor described the ordeal of grocery shopping in Paris, comparing her one trip to the supermarket in the United States to the “individual social

¹² Richard Kuisel, *Coca-Cola and the Cold War: The French Face Americanization* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997).

¹³ Toni Howard, “So You Want to Live in Paris,” *Saturday Evening Post* (August 8, 1959): 77.

visits to the baker for bread, the pastry shop for cookies, the grocery for staples, separate stands for vegetables and fruit, and the butcher for meat.”¹⁴ The American supermarket replaced this type of individual shopping in the United States in an attempt to save time for busy American mothers. It would have taken a much greater time commitment to shop for daily groceries in Paris, a rather noticeable lifestyle difference.

This cultural difference was also evidenced by the French cinephilia movement in the 1950s. At a time when Parisians were particularly interested in making films and indulging in artistic pursuits, the House of Un-American Activities Committee was targeting members of the Hollywood community as communists. Famously called to testify were Walt Disney, Lucille Ball, and Ronald Reagan, all of whom served as friendly witnesses—publicly naming others as communists.¹⁵ Also famous were the Hollywood Ten, ten screenwriters and directors who were blacklisted for being members of the Communist Party. All ten men denounced court proceedings and refused to admit any party affiliation. Although these are the ten who are cited most often, many other people in the Hollywood community were also blacklisted and put on trial for being suspected communists.¹⁶ While the American film industry became more paranoid about

¹⁴ Deena Clark, “Home Life in Paris Today,” *The National Geographic Magazine* 98, no. 1 (July, 1950): 45.

¹⁵ Victor S. Navasky, *Naming Names* (New York: The Viking Press, 1980); Alan Casty, *Communism in Hollywood: The Moral Paradoxes of Testimony, Silence, and Betrayal* (Plymouth, UK: The Scarecrow Press, 2009).

¹⁶ Gordon Kahn, *Hollywood on Trial: The Story of the 10 Who Were Indicted* (New York: Arno Press, 1948), 1-2; U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Un-American Activities, *Hearings Regarding the Communist Infiltration of the Motion Picture Industry* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1947), 293-

new ideas and purged many of its more creative writers through communist persecution, the French industry experienced a period of renewed appreciation for film and artistic creativity. Paris was privy to an academic and artistic freedom that the United States did not seem to share.

The anti-intellectual movement that swept the United States in the 1950s did not appear in any noticeable capacity in Paris. Much like the Paris that existed prior to WWII, there was a community of intellectuals that thrived in the Parisian environment. *Life Magazine* reported on the Bohemian subset of this intellectual community in 1947: how they shared long conversations about philosophy and were “occasionally brilliant.”¹⁷ These young people fancied themselves the Picassos and Sartres of their generation, and some of them probably were. Though these Bohemians were not exactly part of mainstream French culture, they were able to form a community of intellectuals without fear of being blacklisted as communists as in the United States. The Left-wing politicians that dominated France in the period after WWII produced a very different society from the anti-communist, conservative movement that raced across the U.S. Despite these political and cultural differences, the United States and France worked together frequently through the fifties.

294; Samuel Tower, “19 in Hollywood Found Subversive, Inquiry Head Says,” *New York Times*, October 23, 1947.

¹⁷ “Bohemians,” *Life Magazine* 23, no. 13 (Sept. 29, 1947): 146-148.

The relationship between the United States and Paris was largely influenced by postwar political policies. U.S. Secretary of State George C. Marshall called for a plan of action to provide economic aid to Western European countries who were struggling to recover after WWII. The Marshall Plan, officially titled the Economic Recovery Program, was “intended to rebuild the economies and spirits of Western Europe” primarily through strengthening national economies.¹⁸ United States leaders felt strongly that by offering support to these countries in Western Europe, they could help prevent communism from gaining ground beyond the Soviet bloc. Included in the Marshall Plan were provisions for tourism; there were sections for the arrangement of group tours and for lobbying efforts for cheaper transportation prices.¹⁹ This made it possible for ordinary American citizens to contribute to foreign relations efforts simply by traveling to a European country. The inclusion of personal pleasure seemed to placate those Americans who were unsure about the amount of foreign aid U.S. leaders had planned.²⁰ Though the Marshall Plan ended in the early 1950s, tourism remained a part of U.S. foreign policy.

U.S. and French relations went beyond the Marshall Plan. Both countries made guidelines that dealt with tourism: the U.S. on how to be a good tourist, and the French on how to be a good host. Historian Christopher Endy discusses U.S. and French policies

¹⁸ The George C. Marshall Foundation, “History of the Marshall Plan,” <http://marshallfoundation.org/marshall/the-marshall-plan/history-marshall-plan/>.

¹⁹ Christopher Endy, *Cold War Holidays: American Tourists in France* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 33.

²⁰ Ibid.

at length in his book *Cold War Holidays*, citing tourism as a major influence on each country's political agenda. For example, the French government created the French Committee to Welcome the Allied Armies in 1945 in an effort to ensure that American G.I.s were greeted warmly and enjoyed their visit. The hope was that American soldiers would return to the States, tell their friends and family about how wonderful their trip was, and encourage a whole new group of Americans to visit.²¹ This was merely the first wave of policies directed towards American tourists, however. Next, the French focused on civilian relations.

By 1947 the United States had lifted all of their restrictions on civilian travel to Europe. Though tourist levels did not approach prewar levels right away, the number of visitors increased drastically from 1946 to 1947. Despite protests that the French government should be focusing on increasing leisure time for the French as opposed to Americans, tourism policies did have successes in France. Much of this was due to the desire of the hotel industry who largely catered to foreign guests.²² In the 1950s tourism was first beginning to be considered an industry, heightening its importance in the eyes of the government. The Tourism Commissariat and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs both contributed to the advertisement of French tourism in the United States. Advertisements were often featured in American magazines with taglines such as the one featured in

²¹ Endy, *Cold War Holidays* 23.

²² *Ibid.*, 57.

American Magazine in 1955: “If you love life, you’ll love France!”²³ Pro-tourist forces also stressed the idea that tourism would spread French culture, arguing for the continued “cultivation of Francophilia among Americans.”²⁴ Efforts like these on the part of the French government and tourist industry were aided by similar efforts in the United States.

Expanding American travels to Europe and beyond was a high priority in the fifties. The lowering of prices and expansion of flights made it easier than ever for Americans to go on holiday. The buying power of the American consumer was high, and travel to foreign nations was the perfect way to express that power. The U.S. government lent its support to ocean travel as well as air travel, granting subsidies to improve transportation and lower costs. As in France, it was difficult at first for United States proponents to push forward measures to add tourism policy into government policy. Tourism was first added to the Marshall Plan as a way to reduce the pressure of direct U.S. economic aid to European nations.²⁵ But those making the policies had other motives for promoting tourism. U.S. officials wanted to work towards the democratization of travel, making it possible for Americans of the middle class to travel as widely as those in the upper class always had. Their concern was the “average family,” rather than the “deluxe tourist.”²⁶ Although these tourist efforts certainly did not do much

²³ French Government Tourist Office, Advertisement, *American Magazine* 159, no. 2 (1955): 69.

²⁴ Endy, *Cold War Holidays*, 63.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 44.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 47.

to get the working class to Europe, it did diminish the view of travel as only for the extremely wealthy. And that was something the American people could support.

Paris was a top destination for American tourists prior to World War II, and it became a top destination again quickly afterwards. But what exactly was it about Paris that attracted Americans so much? Perhaps it was because, as one guide book phrased it, Paris “cannot be adequately photographed. It cannot be reduced to statistics or even to words of unambiguous meaning...the appropriate mood is gaiety, fantasy, and a willingness to fall in love.”²⁷ Another author suggested that charm “explains the prestige and attraction of Paris” and “sums up its art of giving pleasure and enjoyment.”²⁸

Americans were undoubtedly attracted to the Parisian way of life, but how did they know what that way of life *was*? It has already been mentioned that the French National Tourist Office advertised frequently for Americans to visit, but there were many other sources of information on French culture for those who sought it—and for those who didn’t.

American fascination with Parisian culture was a broad phenomenon that found its way into everyday life, particularly through the media. American perceptions of “Frenchness” had a substantial effect on how Americans viewed Paris and why they were so interested in traveling there.

²⁷ Vincent Cronin, *The Companion Guide to Paris* (New York City: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1963), 15.

²⁸ Ed. Doré Ogrizek, *The Paris We Love* (Saint-Ouen, France: Gaston Maillet and Co, printers, 1950), 289.

Many American perceptions of Paris came about through films of the period. The most obvious of these is *An American in Paris*. The film follows a former G.I. who decided to remain in Paris after the war to pursue his lifelong dream of becoming a painter. The film opens with various shots of clearly Parisian sites underneath the voiceover of the main character: “This is Paris. And I’m an American who lives here.”²⁹ *An American in Paris* won the Academy Award for Best Picture in 1951. The film created a romanticized version of the Parisian lifestyle in that Gene Kelly’s character was quite well-liked by his neighbors in France. Additionally, the life of the struggling artist seemed much less like struggling and much more like a constant party when put in the form of a musical. Even the intentionally dreary apartments of Jerry Mulligan (Kelly) and his pianist friend seem delightful when Mulligan tap dances around them. Produced in bold Technicolor with the musical scoring of George Gershwin, *An American in Paris* invoked a beautiful and delightful vision of Paris that added to positive American perception.

The 1952 film *Moulin Rouge* also enjoyed some success among the American public.³⁰ In 1952 it was in the top ten highest grossing films. Though produced in Britain, this film provides an excellent example of the American tourist’s love of Paris. This film was less about glorifying the life of the artist, but rather the artist’s struggle and ultimate

²⁹ *An American in Paris*, DVD, directed by Vincente Minnelli (1951; Burbank, CA: Time Warner Entertainment Company, 1999).

³⁰ *Moulin Rouge*, DVD, directed by John Huston (1952; Culver City, CA: MGM Studios, 2004).

success. The struggle to achieve greatness was an aspect of Paris that particularly appealed to American artists. This film also helped to re-energize the Moulin Rouge nightclub, perhaps even adding to the myth of Montmartre. Several other films also demonstrated the American fascination with Paris. In the immediate aftermath of the war, 1948, three films covering French culture and history were released: *The Three Musketeers*, *Joan of Arc*, and *Arch of Triumph*. Although these particular films did not necessarily encourage tourism, they did bring the attention back to France and set up the future of tourism films. In addition to *An American in Paris*, 1951 also saw the release of the film *On the Riviera* and then in 1952, *April in Paris*. These films may not have gained the critical acclaim awarded to *Moulin Rouge* or *An American in Paris*, but they hold relevance as a representation of the consumer's desires. American fascination with Paris led to the production and release of several movies about Paris in a short period of time.

Parisian culture also appeared frequently in popular magazines in the United States. Paris was featured multiple times in *Life Magazine*'s series "Speaking of Pictures." In 1951 the magazine ran a set of photos with the tagline "in Paris young lovers kiss wherever they want and nobody seems to care."³¹ As the description suggests, the photos featured sets of young couples kissing in different Parisian locales. This type of imagery promoted the concept that Paris was romantic as well as friendly towards young people, while also invoking a sense of freedom and openness. This set of photos

³¹ "Speaking of Pictures," *Life Magazine* 28, no. 24 (June 12, 1950): 16-18.

worked perfectly to bolster Americans' romanticized perception of Paris. Another "Speaking of Pictures" scene was subtitled "A photographer in Paris finds chairs everywhere."³² The feature consisted of several sets of empty chairs in various places in Paris. The photographer remarked that "they all seemed to be waiting for something."³³ He was impressed that the chairs remained open for public use in public areas without fear of theft, expressing regret that people in the United States were far too busy to relax so often. These images contributed to a general perception of Parisian life as more relaxed and potentially as romanticized, seeing as Parisians need not to worry about theft. The French appeared to have more time than Americans, as earlier referred to with the time-saving concept of the American supermarket.

In 1953 the popular travel magazine *Holiday* devoted their entire issue to Paris. The editorial staff justified their decision to feature Paris by explaining that Paris "for years, has best represented the essential qualities of civilization in terms of culture and the attendant graces" and "for the logic, discipline and good taste which Paris offers to the writers, artists, photographers and editors who know her and love her passionately."³⁴ This editorial suggests that Paris is constantly a place of focus for all kinds of different periodicals, namely because of its culture. The American consumer would feel cultured

³² "Speaking of Pictures," *Life Magazine* 30, no. 21 (May 21, 1951): 26-28.

³³ *Ibid.*, 26.

³⁴ Editorial Staff, *Holiday* 13, no. 4 (April, 1953): 33

simply knowing that artists and writers called Paris home, the reason for tours featuring the former living and dining places of such artists and writers. The Paris issue of *Holiday* features many different articles about Paris, one of which was entitled “Paris! City of Night Life.”³⁵ This feature by famous travel writer Art Buchwald publicized the illicit Parisian nightlife, including an image of partially unclothed women at a nightclub. If Americans were not intrigued by the relaxed lifestyle and artistic atmosphere, certainly they were interested in Paris’s famous nightlife. Though the Parisian nightlife was a different scene than in the United States, the over dramatized portrayal of these nightclubs was an important part of the American conception of ‘Frenchness.’

One of the most important contributors to American perceptions of Paris were the famous expatriates of the 1920s and 1930s. Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Gertrude Stein, and their cohort were responsible for many of the images of Paris that Americans held dear. These expatriates were remembered as being heavy drinkers but also as artists and intellectuals. This dynamic appealed to many in the United States, particularly those who saw in themselves the potential to create great works of art or literature. Paris seemed to offer an atmosphere that was conducive to inspiration and creativity. This understanding of Paris as a literary and art capital lingered, despite these expatriates having left Paris twenty or more years prior. However, it is important to note that Parisians held up the artistic and literary perceptions without expatriate help. The Louvre Museum’s very existence demanded that Paris be known for art. Add in Paris’s

³⁵ Art Buchwald, “Paris! City of Night Life”, *Holiday* 13, no. 4 (April, 1953): 103-106.

rich architectural features and its vast history of non-American artists and authors, and Paris becomes impossible to ignore. And really, Americans had no desire to ignore Paris.

These perceptions of Paris greatly influenced those Americans who traveled there and, ultimately, Paris itself. American tourists in the post WWII era took on new characteristics as they settled into their role as an economic and political superpower. Historian Emily Rosenberg describes a belief in American goals, a belief that the “world was destined to follow American patterns.”³⁶ Though Rosenberg focuses her research on the period leading up to WWII, it is obvious that this belief still existed as part of American ideology. American desire to spread democracy and stop the spread of communism came from a belief that the American way was the right way, without regard to differences in other nations and cultures. The American system that actually spread drastically through the 1950s was the mass consumer market that dominated American culture. Eventually, Americans would create a commodified version of French culture. Rather than spreading American values to France, tourists in Paris found themselves enamored of French values—or rather, American versions of French values.

The American perception of self-superiority as consumers is particularly interesting when contrasted against American perceptions of ‘Frenchness.’ Though Americans perceived themselves as being the greatest nation in the world, they greatly

³⁶ Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 9.

admired Parisians--or at least, their concept of Parisians. As the popular phrase goes, "Everyone has two countries, his own and France." Many guidebooks, articles, and personal accounts related reasons why Paris was a place worth admiration, often with subtle—or not so subtle—implications that America was lacking. A guidebook with essays collected by Ludwig Bemelmans provided several such personal accounts that contrast American and Parisian life. One woman wrote an essay describing the civility and politeness of French children, the "feats of intellectual discipline which would stagger American educators."³⁷ The woman also notes that the traditional methods of raising French children were just then becoming the popular scientifically supported methods for raising American children. Another essayist described the wonder that is French food, saying that "France is the only country on earth where you can eat well even in small villages and backroad buffets."³⁸ Though perhaps they do not follow the pattern of the typical American tourist, the accounts of expatriates and frequent Paris visitors are also relevant to this theme of Parisian admiration.

Expatriate accounts contributed greatly to the American admiration of Parisian culture. Because these Americans were living in Paris full time, they had a lot of tips and tricks for tourists. Additionally, they often criticized American life in praising Parisian life. Living in Paris gave these Americans a different perspective of Frenchness, and their

³⁷ Ed. Ludwig Bemelmans, *Holiday in France* (Cambridge, MA: The Riverside Press, 1957), 40.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 110.

thoughts and ideas influenced popular opinion in the United States. Though average people would often write about their experiences in Paris, famous Americans likely had a greater influence. These famous Americans in Paris included left-leaning writers Richard Wright and John Steinbeck. Even Republican President Dwight Eisenhower owned a home outside of Paris.³⁹

In 1946 the *New York Times* reported that Wright was the most commonly interviewed American in Paris. Wright is noted to have pleased French journalist by saying “We [Americans] have a civilization, but you [French] have a culture.”⁴⁰ Though Wright did not stay in Paris permanently, he did choose to remain a permanent expatriate after first moving to Paris. This suggests that the lifestyle in Paris was enough different that Wright knew he would not voluntarily return to his lifestyle in the United States. Rampant racism in this decade before the Civil Rights Movement may also have influenced Wright’s decision to leave America. Though a frequent visitor rather than an expatriate, John Steinbeck also appreciated the French culture. Steinbeck wrote that “it would be ridiculous for [him] to try to write anything new or original about Paris. In all the world no city has been so loved and so celebrated.”⁴¹ Steinbeck felt at home in Paris and despaired of the American tourists he often saw there. He spoke of the American desire to travel, articulating his belief that Americans felt uncultured if they had not

³⁹ “The Eisenhowers at Home Abroad,” *Collier’s Weekly* 128, no. 4 (July 28, 1951): 13-15, 54.

⁴⁰ John L. Brown, “A Report from Paris,” *New York Times* (July 28th, 1946), BR3.

⁴¹ Bemelmans, *Holiday in France*, 142.

traveled. He compared this to the French disdain for tourists, even had that Frenchmen never left his village. These famous expatriate accounts had a wide influence on American perception, but so, too, did the accounts of expatriates who had fought in World War II.

An article in *Life Magazine* discussed the expatriate existence in Paris, focusing particularly on ex-G.I.s. These ex-G.I.s would have been “cut to the quick to be mistaken for a tourist.”⁴² Many of them took classes in subjects such as cooking or wine making. They lived cheaply, using public bathhouses and eating in cafeterias when their funds were particularly low. But despite the pressures of a budget, these men loved living in Paris. One expatriate described his feelings on the matter: “In the States an artist in the family is a disaster...here we are all trying, and the very atmosphere of the place helps...you get respectful attention in the States only after you are a success—not before, when you need it.”⁴³ This was a somewhat adverse opinion of the United States, though not uncommon. The artistic atmosphere in Paris was enough to keep many men there after the war. And Paris accepted them.

An article in *Time* also discussed the expatriate G.I existence in Paris, the majority of whom were studying under the G.I. Bill and relishing the intellectual atmosphere of Paris. The article ended by saying, “America is changing and Paris is

⁴² John Stanton, “The New Expatriates”, *Life* 27, no. 8 (August 22, 1949): 75.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 84.

changing, but the American Paris goes on, if not forever, at least until his money runs out or his ship comes in.”⁴⁴ Despite, or perhaps because of, World War II, many Americans found Paris to be a desirable place to live. Paris’s reputation as an artistic capital proved irresistible to some Americans. Although certainly not all Parisians were overjoyed to have Americans living among them, it became standard to see expatriates, especially ex-G.I.s. This slow-paced, artistic lifestyle appealed to many Americans living busy and hectic lives back in the United States.

Though the expatriate experience was important for encouraging Americans to visit Paris and to establish concepts of Frenchness, expatriates cannot—and would prefer not to—be called tourists. So who were these tourists? In his classic work for the study of tourism, *The Tourist*, sociologist Dean MacCannell suggests that tourists were people who wanted to experience a deeper involvement with another society and culture.⁴⁵ Tourists tended to have a strong dislike for other tourists and an embarrassment of being seen as tourists themselves. McCannell also argues that tourists were searching for authenticity in a commercial culture which highly values the authentic. These tourists were not unique but merely a highly visible representation of the desires of the broader population. The postwar Americans in Paris did fit into this pattern, at least partially.

⁴⁴ “Americans in Paris”, *Time Magazine* 54, no. 4 (July 11, 1949): 24.

⁴⁵ Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

They certainly sought authenticity, though due to the newness of the mass consumer market, it was perhaps not their highest priority. They also went to great lengths to give the appearance of fitting into society, rather than standing out as obvious Americans. In this, they were rather unsuccessful, but the fact that they tried suggests that these tourists hoped to appear as Parisians.

Despite the numerous evidence that Paris was becoming Americanized with the introduction of mass consumption, American tourists in Paris held an aversion to the Americanized Paris. This behavior suggests an un-American identity, the rejection of American ideals and culture during a time when America was supposedly the greatest nation in the world. The earlier examination of American and Parisian cultures suggested markedly different societies in the post war world. Because Americans were meant to have faith in the United States above all else, it is surprising that so many Americans were enamored with the Parisian lifestyle.

CHAPTER 3
 “A SPOT OF SIN”
 AMERICAN TOURISTS AND AUTHENTIC PARIS

In 1951 60 million American readers followed along as the cast of the comic strip *Lil' Abner* traveled to Paris.¹ The characters followed the standard itinerary in Paris: visiting Parisian nightclubs, being rude to the hotel concierge, and testing their artistic sides in an art class. *Lil' Abner* creator Al Capp traveled to Paris prior to the writing the comic for inspiration, meeting up with popular travel writer and Paris expert Art Buchwald while he was there. Buchwald told the story of their meeting in his book, *Art Buchwald's Paris*. Buchwald took Capp to Pigalle for background on Lil' Abner's adventure to the Parisian cabaret. Capp explained that he just wanted to see “a spot of sin” to avoid shocking the readers too much—without making Abner “spend ALL his time at the American Express.”² Though Buchwald admitted that by the 1950s the police had “cleaned up most of the shows,” the American perception that French shows were much more risqué held strong in the postwar years.³ Many of the French cabarets and nightclubs catered almost exclusively to American tourists, transforming this traditional

¹ Christopher Endy, *Cold War Holidays, Holidays: American Tourists in France* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 109.

² Art Buchwald, *Art Buchwald's Paris* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1954), 181.

³ *Ibid.*, 199.

part of Parisian culture into a tourist commodity, part of the American expectation of Frenchness.

Those Americans who traveled to Paris were increasingly able to buy into commodified versions of Parisian culture that catered towards these American tourists. The increasing availability of English-speaking restaurants, clubs, and other attractions made French culture more approachable. Though the French people were generally perceived as rude and unfriendly towards American tourists, Paris remained their top travel destination.⁴ The ill-mannered Frenchman himself became a commodity, playing an important role in any American tourist's Parisian adventure story. Despite the clear presence of Americanization—or perhaps because of it—American tourists were demanding authentic French culture. What they considered as French culture, however, was based on American perceptions and clouded by Americanization efforts. This presents an interesting juxtaposition between the American perception of the destruction of French culture through commodification and salvation of French culture through demands of authenticity.

Contrary to the historical argument of tourism as a type of imperialism, this juxtaposition expresses forms of both imperialism and a forced maintenance of cultural

⁴ Harvey Levenstein, *We'll Always Have Paris: American Tourists in France since 1930* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 153.

purity.⁵ Rather than arguing tourism as a force of change, corruption, and pollution, the American tourist presence in Paris brought about a resurgence of Parisian culture through efforts to meet tourist expectation. American tourist demand for authentic French culture—and an avoidance of Americanized Paris—stimulated the salvation of Frenchness despite the adoption of some American ideals. This chapter will consider concepts of Americanization, authenticity, and consumerism, exploring how these affected American tourism's relationship with Paris.

As already observed, American ideas and products had been gaining popularity in France throughout the first half of the twentieth century. However, after World War II Americanization in Paris became unavoidable. With the United States becoming the new world power, heavily involved in the economic affairs of European countries, it is easy to see how American products and economics values made it across the Atlantic. American-inspired mass consumerism found its way into Paris after World War II, challenging cultural values of individualism and pressing the French to buy into new technologies. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the French experienced a wave of hygiene hysteria in the 1950s in part due to the availability of new appliances and plumbing infrastructure. Much of this new interest can be traced directly to the desires of American tourists. One of the most common recurring complaints of American tourists in postwar Paris was the

⁵ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge Publishers, 1992); Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

lack of modern plumbing and hygiene practices. Americans were disgusted by the less than abundant availability of items like soap and toothpaste as well as the infrequent bathing habits of the French.⁶ This perception, rather than speaking to the uncleanliness of the French, was much more likely due to the barrage of hygiene consumer products in the United States. However, the new American standards of grooming manufactured by cosmetic companies were effective in changing consumer behavior, constructing a feeling of disgust in the less rigorous practices of the Parisians.⁷ As hotels began to cater to the hygienic needs of their American guests, so, too, did these new consumer products become more available to the rest of Paris. Though the French initially resisted some of these hygiene products, no American company provides a better example of French resistance of Americanization than Coca-Cola.

Historian Richard Kuisel has spent much of his time researching the French opposition to Coca-Cola. Well after its initial introduction, the French remained the lowest consumer of Coca-Cola per capita in Europe.⁸ Coca-Cola was one of the prime symbols of America in the 1950s; Kuisel explained that “when a magazine wanted three objects for a photograph that were particularly American it selected a baseball, a hot dog,

⁶ Levenstein, *We'll Always Have Paris*, 31.

⁷ Vincent Vinikas, *Soft Soap Hard Sell: American Hygiene in an Age of Advertisement* (Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1992).

⁸ Richard Kuisel, “Coca-Cola and the Cold War: The French Face Americanization,” *French Historical Studies* 17, No. 1 (Spring, 1991): 115.

and a bottle of Coke.”⁹ As Coca-Cola was non-alcoholic and served no medicinal purpose, it was seen as a representation of American products, produced to serve no objective beyond monetary capital. It was the epitome of a mass consumer society. Coca-Cola was particularly contentious in France because it bent French beverage laws and import laws, as well as challenging French wine businesses.¹⁰ A spokesman for the winegrowers proposed a ban on “all nonalcoholic beverages made from vegetable extracts under the guise of protecting public health,” as a cunning way to target Coca-Cola without naming them explicitly.¹¹ This proposed ban was highly supported by the French, and the government passed a similar ruling allowing the ban of unhealthy products. However, the administration was never able to definitively decide that Coca-Cola was unhealthy. Despite this discord between the French government, businesses, and the Coca-Cola Company, eventually the company was allowed to manufacture and advertise in France. The Coca-Cola incident provides a visible manifestation of the French wariness towards Americanization, but it also demonstrates the relentlessness of American business expansion into Europe. Though the French often resisted this type of Americanization, it frequently found a way to thrive.

⁹ Richard Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 52.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 63.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 60.

Americanization as it presented itself in Paris can be difficult to pinpoint. For many French, Americanization was equated directly to industrialization and standardization.¹² For the French, this represented many characteristics they saw as problematic in the United States: consumerism, convenience, and a fixation on speed and productivity. This understanding may have come out of the introduction of the chain store and the department store as well as attempts to imitate and reproduce American business practices—primarily human relations efforts and punctuality enforcement.¹³ As American businesses were generally quite successful after World War II, it was logical for the French to want to adapt their habits and practices for themselves. However, many of the French were largely concerned about the adoption of American culture in France. A common fear seems to have been that French people would lose their individuality, succumbing to the widespread cultural conformity in the United States.¹⁴ The French Academy (Académie française) was—and still is—an institution entirely devoted to keeping this individuality through the protection of the French language. This fear of conformity was not unfounded; with Hollywood movies gaining popularity, Coca-Cola increasing its availability, and the country's economy heavily connected with the United States, it was inevitable that American culture would infiltrate France. Though France

¹² Nancy Green, *The Other Americans in Paris: Businessmen, Countesses, Wayward Youth, 1880-1941* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), 4.

¹³ Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005, 146, 170; Kuisel, *Seducing the French*, 87, 93.

¹⁴ Kuisel, *Seducing the French*, 50.

retained many aspects of its own culture, it is impossible that it would have developed the same way without American presence. Historian Hal Rothman skillfully summarized this concept, explaining that “we as tourists change all that we encounter.”¹⁵

Some authors wrote explicitly on perceptions of American destruction and salvation. An article cleverly titled “The Sun Also Sets,” playing on Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises*, was published in *Mademoiselle* on the subject of Americanization. The French author suggested that American culture was invading France, saying that “Paris [was] becoming Americanized with a kind of furious passion. Every day witnesses the opening of a cafeteria, a snack bar, a drugstore.”¹⁶ This author suggested that “perhaps the role of the new American expatriates is just that: not to add to the American heritage, but to save ‘the French heritage.’”¹⁷ The author portrayed a distaste in Americanization but acknowledged the curious phenomenon that was the salvation of French culture. He predicted that soon “only Americans will remember with fondness the old stones, the dukes and princes, and the checkered table clothes,” as the French continually adopted new aspects of American culture.¹⁸ Although the French culture that emerged in the fifties was modified by American influences, the American demand for authentic French

¹⁵ Hal Rothman, *Devil’s Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 28.

¹⁶ Pierre Schneider, “The Sun Also Sets,” *Mademoiselle* 52 (December, 1960): 113.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

culture contributed to the salvation of traditional French concepts. American tourists seemed to hold an appreciation for traditional Paris that Parisians were losing in the face of modernization and Americanization.

Americans were bringing consumer culture to Paris, and Paris was responding to this new mass market. In 1949 over 200,000 Americans visited Paris, spending a combined total of about 45 million dollars.¹⁹ The French author of an article in *Commonwealth* described what he thought of as a feeling of annoyance that the Americans have not done enough for the French. He expressed that some of his fellow Frenchmen “honestly thought of the United States as prodigious enough to enforce a definitive *pax Americana* the world over.”²⁰ This suggests that the French had embraced the incoming American culture, provided that American consumerism would help them recover from the war. The American tourist had become important to the Parisian economy, and Paris had become important to the American tourist. This relationship was especially clear in the early years after World War II. Paris, despite having been recently liberated from German occupation, was focused on rebuilding to open itself for tourists. The French government “made great efforts to ease the worries of the visitor,” granting tourists special tickets in order to circumvent certain rations.²¹ Another article in 1946

¹⁹ Robert Barrat, “Americans in Paris” *Commonwealth* 53, (November 17, 1950): 137.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Michael James, “Advice to Americans Touring the Continent,” *New York Times* (May 2, 1948), 305.

warned that although Paris was recovering well physically, inflation was still high for tourists.²² Fortunately, this failed to be a problem a mere two years later when France devalued the Franc. This newly advantageous position for the dollar was expected by French tourist officials to attract more Americans.²³ Several articles published in the *New York Times* in the years immediately following World War II outlined the tourist efforts and hopes of the French government.²⁴ While the French feared losing their individual culture to American consumerism, they grew to appreciate, and in some cases require, American tourist dollars. If maintaining the tourist economy meant modernizing and Americanizing, Parisians were willing to make some sacrifices.

Historians have spent many a page defining and refining the idea of the American tourist. Harvey Levenstein divides tourism into two categories: cultural and leisure. He equates cultural tourism to those who travel for self-improvement and leisure tourism to those who travel for relaxation.²⁵ More common is the distinction between the ‘traveler’

²² Kenneth Campbell, “Europe, Her Wounds Healing, Bids for American Tourists” *New York Times* (Dec. 8, 1946), 246.

²³ Michael James, “Franc and Tourist: Americans will get the Benefit of Lower Prices under French Devaluation” *New York Times* (Feb. 8, 1948), X15.

²⁴ “Travel Curbs Eased by France; Influx of U.S Tourists Likely” *New York Times* (June 9, 1946), 29; Henry Giniger “France Makes Up a Gay Face for Her Visitors” *New York Times* (May 4, 1947), SMA73; Diana Rice, “The Field of Travel: Paris Meeting to Take Up Simplification of Customs Procedure” *New York Times* (Sep. 28, 1947), X15; Michael James, “France” *New York Times* (Sep. 19, 1948), X15; John E. Booth, “France’s Best Year: Tourists Continue Increase Now That American Millionaire Myth is Dying” *New York Times* (Dec. 11, 1949), X25.

²⁵ Levenstein, *We’ll Always Have Paris*, xi.

and the ‘tourist’, explicit or implied.²⁶ This distinction almost always favors the traveler, characterized as being high class, traveling to understand other cultures and improve oneself. Tourists, on the other hand, were unconcerned with authenticity, traveling purely for pleasure, relaxation, and the ability to say ‘I was there’. As the literature looks further into the twentieth century, this distinction fades away, primarily because all travelers were thus referred to as tourists. This merging of the two roles can be attributed predominantly to the work of Dean MacCannell who argued for the worth of the tourist experience. In asserting that tourism culture was a product of society rather than of individuals, MacCannell successfully challenges the groundwork necessary for claiming travelers to be culturally superior to tourists.²⁷

Tourists in the 1950s were looking to learn about and understand Parisian culture but also to relax and enjoy themselves. Additionally, they traveled to Paris to collect memories, turning their experiences into possessions, a process of commodification which will be further explored later in this chapter. American tourists in France included a wide variety of people: university students, newlyweds, middle-aged couples, writers and artists, as well as single working men and women. Though some families may have brought children, that narrative is fairly absent among travel accounts in the 1950s;

²⁶ Shelley Baranowski and Ellen Furlough, ed., *Being Elsewhere: Tourism, Consumer Culture, and Identity in Modern Europe and North America* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 2; Michael Dawson, *Selling British Columbia: Tourism and Consumer Culture, 1890-1970* (Vancouver: UCB Press, 2004), 2; William W. Stowe, *Going Abroad: European Travel in Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 44, 76.

²⁷ Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

advertisements generally catered towards young adults. What these tourists generally had in common was a desire to see authentic Paris, avoiding signs of Americanization and especially avoiding other American tourists.

Authenticity has been a top priority for tourists for as long as tourists have been traveling. It became harder to find as previously untouched sites became popular, attracting more people, and thus, more services for those people. In Paris this manifested most visibly in the rotating popularity of neighborhoods like Montmartre and Montparnasse. Similarly to those tourists traveling in the United States, these tourists in France wanted to be the ones who saw the “real” Paris.²⁸ One guidebook to France recommended coming outside of the tourist season (May to September) if one wanted to “savor the brilliance of Paris,” enabling one to “participate in the life of the Paris of the Parisians.”²⁹ This type of advice assured tourists that they, too, could experience authentic Paris if only they avoided the places other tourists went. In direct contradiction to this advice, guidebooks would also tell Americans exactly where to stay, where to visit, and where to eat, ensuring that most tourists would tread the same paths while they were abroad.

Complicating the situation further, is the varying definitions of authenticity. Many Americans looked for places they had seen in films or read about in magazines as

²⁸ Marguerite Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 4.

²⁹ Eugene Fodor, *France* (New York: David McKay Company Inc., 1955), 2.

authentic portrayals of Paris. Increasingly Americans were expecting to find the authentic in where it no longer existed, and in many instances, Paris responded to this by fabricating authenticity. As Rothman explained, “success creates the seeds of its own destruction as more and more people seek the experience of an authentic place transformed to seem more authentic.”³⁰ Ideas of authenticity became complicated as more tourists searched for their own perceptions of Frenchness within an increasingly commodified Paris.

The commodification of the tourist experience can be evidenced in a number of ways. Souvenirs occupied an important role in every tourist’s narrative. The French word for memory, *souvenir* has come to mean a memory object in English, which could be considered a commodification of the word itself. Historian Suzanne Kaufman explores the creation of souvenirs at the pilgrimage site of Lourdes in Southern France, considering how these objects of “religious commerce” were handled by the Catholic Church and by the public.³¹ Arising out of these pilgrimage keepsakes, the link between souvenirs and consumerism is examined at length by historian Marguerite Shaffer in her chapter titled “Tourist Mementos.” She outlines one woman’s efforts, describing that this traveler placed “captioned snapshots, cutouts from tourist brochures, postcards, and

³⁰ Rothman, *Devil’s Bargains*, 27.

³¹ Suzanne Kaufman, *Consuming Visions: Mass Culture and the Lourdes Shrine* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 74.

purchased photographs” into leather-bound journals.³² Their accumulation of these cultures and memories as objects suggests the elevation of the tourist destination, equating tourist sites to sacred spaces. Souvenirs like these were a way for tourists to collect the transformative moments of their vacation.

Commodification affected specific aspects of Parisian culture as well. Take, for example, the Parisian Bateaux Mouches. Founded in 1949, this ferry company (which still exists today) took tours down the Seine River, viewing several of Paris’s most famous sites in one trip. This reduction of Paris to a set of sights visible from the river provided American consumers with a method of seeing without experiencing. This tool of consumption demonstrates Parisian adaptation to American tourist demand. In a different sense, the French café was widely commodified by Americans as an essential experience for the visitor to Paris. “You start at a café table because everything in Paris starts at a café table,” wrote playwright and novelist Irwin Shaw.³³ Travel writer and expert on Parisian nightlife Art Buchwald devoted a chapter in his travel book to “How to Sit at a Café,” claiming that the “most popular outdoor sport in France is sitting at a sidewalk café.”³⁴ Though eating at cafés was certainly still a habit of actual Parisians, it was also an exaggerated part of the culture which was easily approachable to Americans. American tourists could eat at cafés in which menus were provided in French and English

³² Shaffer, *See America First*, 262.

³³ Ed. Ludwig Bemelmans, *Holiday in France* (Cambridge, MA: The Riverside Press, 1957), 154.

³⁴ Buchwald, *Art Buchwald’s Paris*, 41.

and waiters could speak English; thus, they could enjoy this Americanized version of a very Parisian tradition.

The neighborhood of Montmartre in particular is one area of Paris that was greatly affected by the presence of Americans. *The Companion Guide to Paris* devotes a whole chapter to Montmartre, outlining its development into an art and literary haven. Of especial interest is the opening description of Montmartre which was as follows:

There are three Montmartres: the place itself, the myth and the place trying to live up to the myth. The first is a pleasant, largely self-contained cluster of streets, tumbledown houses, gardens and cafes on a wind-swept hill with sudden surprising views; the second is a Bohemian world of unrecognized geniuses and good-hearted can-can dancer, a village where everyone plays amusing practical jokes and sings half the night...the third is an artificial, self-conscious world where, for a fee, street-‘artists’ sketch the portrait of the passer-by in five minutes and certain cabarets stages ‘brawls’ by ‘apache dancers’.³⁵

This description is noted because of its acknowledgement of the myth, and the idea of the place living up to the myth. Though the myth likely formed out of a very real Montmartre, it was clear that in the postwar years, Montmartre became a tourist center. The perpetuation of this myth could arguably be due to an American desire to experience what they believed to be the real Paris, a Paris which is never romanticized so much by the Frenchman as it is by the foreigner. Even today, Montmartre claims to retain its old world charm; but, as seen in this guidebook from the 1950s, much of the old world charm of Montmartre was simply an attempt to live up to the myth. The small cafes, the Moulin

³⁵ Vincent Cronin, *The Companion Guide to Paris* (New York City: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1963), 239.

Rouge, and the quaint shops existed because American tourists expected them to exist. American influence was enough for the area of Montmartre to attempt to maintain the illusion of the myth, wanting to attract ever more tourists. Americans wanted this myth, and the French provided it, making Montmartre into the most Parisian neighborhood in Paris. This conflict between myth and reality lends to the conflict between American disruption and salvation. Americans were demanding that this aspect of Parisian culture remain available while the French were forced to commodify the culture to live up to American expectation. Another guidebook stated that “without Montmartre...Paris would so disappoint foreigners that it could not afford to let them fall into oblivion.”³⁶ Clearly, Parisians understood the value of maintaining the myths for tourists. Commodification can also be seen in American publications about Paris and France.

Some of the most popular travel guidebooks in the 1950s were those produced by Eugene Fodor. *Fodor's Guides* first appeared in the 1930s, when Fodor decided to make a guidebook which he hoped would be more entertaining and helpful for the reader. These guides were wildly popular in the 1950s, as evidenced by the yearly re-publication of each country's guide. The guides to France always featured extensive sections on Paris. Fodor explained that in the Parisian section they “attempt to capture some of the essence of the soul of this city whose name evokes affection from so many different sorts

³⁶ Ed. Doré Ogrizek, *The Paris We Love* (Saint-Ouen, France: Gaston Maillet and Co, printers, 1950), 503.

of persons.”³⁷ He believed that France evoked a sense of freedom because of the feeling that in France, every person could truly feel like an individual and escape from the restrictions of home life. This freedom from reality was a type of commodity which could be purchased by a tourist. Paris had its own political and economic issues after the war, but these issues were hidden from tourists eager to escape their own problems. As Fodor said, “Isn’t it partly that [France] is the land of escape, the place where you can take a vacation from what is irksome in your own country, without having to pay too much attention to what is irksome in the country visited?”³⁸ Because Paris received very little damage in WWII, it could more easily provide escape than a city like London or Berlin which were going through rebuilding. This was precisely what made Paris such an attractive tourist destination; it created itself as a destination for tourists.

In addition to country guides, Fodor also produced a *Men’s Guide to Europe* and a *Woman’s Guide to Europe*. These guides both featured various sections on activities tailored to each sex; the women’s guide features fashion, the men’s guide features the great outdoors. In the women’s guide, a guest writer perfectly described the commodity that Paris had become. He described the female American tourist as one who uses her guidebook to “check up on the various places to see whether all the statues, cathedrals, towers, and paintings are really in their proper places as advertised.”³⁹ He reported of the

³⁷ Eugene Fodor, *France* (New York: David McKay Company Inc., 1955), viii.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁹ Eugene Fodor, *Women’s Guide to Europe* (New York: David McKay Company Inc., 1953), 71.

many women in Europe he had seen “carrying their little guide-book and checking up on the inventory.”⁴⁰ For so many Americans, tourist sites were simply places to check off, places to which they went simply to say they had been; destinations had become commodities. This postwar American tourist expected to buy culture as a consumer good. Women were also highly encouraged to buy *actual* consumer goods—that is, *haute couture*, hats, lingerie, jewelry, perfume, and gifts for friends and family back home.⁴¹ The guide included a section by a Parisian designer who explained the difference between Paris and New York fashion. She noted that in Paris “nothing [was] too lavish, too intricate to be attempted, at least once;” whereas, in New York, the delicate work involved was far too costly for American manufacturers.⁴² Parisian fashion was as much a consumer good for Parisians as it was for Americans, but for the American tourist, fashion was an essential piece of Parisian culture, a necessary souvenir.

Alternatively, the Fodor’s Men’s Guide focuses on the pleasures of Europe, “how to have *fun*.”⁴³ While the guide covered many of the same practical things as the Women’s Guide, over half of the book focuses on outdoor activities and sports: hunting and fishing, tennis, mountain climbing, and motor racing for starters. Also differing from

⁴⁰ Fodor, *Women’s Guide to Europe*, 71.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 154-171.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 92.

⁴³ Eugene Fodor, *The Men’s Guide to Europe* (New York: David McKay Company Inc., 1957), v.

the Women's Guide, the Men's Guide featured a section on European women, broken down by country. Of Parisian girls, the guide mentioned the difficulty in meeting a nice girl, warning that "Paris women are alert to the wiles of the male, and they are apt to be averse to any primitive attempts to pick them up."⁴⁴ The best way to meet women, the guide advised, was to broaden your circle of acquaintances, getting introduced to new women through friends of friends. A French woman's good looks, said the guide, were a matter "of character seeping through" as her "beauty comes from within."⁴⁵ In characterizing all French women in this way, Fodor presents the French woman herself as a commodity to be consumed by the American male. Following this all-important section on how to find a Parisian girl, the guide turned to food and drink, also listed by country. When it came to gastronomy in France, it was Paris "which [could] give you the best of everything."⁴⁶ French food was a crucial part of the American understanding of Paris; thus, it was frequently used as an attraction for consumers. An advertisement for the French Line cruise ship put its "accent on cuisine," turning the cruise journey itself into a "joyous Parisian holiday."⁴⁷ Advertisements such as this one provide a clear visual representation of the production of tourism.

⁴⁴ Fodor, *The Men's Guide to Europe*, 27.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁴⁷ French Line, "French Line: Accent on Cuisine" *Holiday* 13, no. 1 (January, 1953): 86.

Airline advertisements were another method through which Paris and other European destinations were visibly commodified. An advertisement for Pan American airlines in *Holiday Magazine* in 1953 promised that it was the world's most experienced flight company. This particular advertisement focused on a trip for two to Paris, and featured the testimony of a woman who had never been to Europe. She and her husband flew to Paris for their wedding anniversary, excited that they "had time enough to really see Paris in 9 days."⁴⁸ The airline promised that "you don't need a lot of time to go abroad these days!"⁴⁹ By cutting down on the travel time, one could spend more of their vacation time at their chosen destination. This American principle of efficiency became the model for tourism. It became easier for the average American to travel abroad, and many Americans took advantage, Paris being one of the top destinations. Another advertisement, also for Pan American airlines, urged Americans to go on a grand European tour.⁵⁰ Prior to WWI, grand European tours were often done by those wealthy enough to afford them. This ad, however, made sure to note that this grand tour could be done on a budget. As in the previous ad from Pan American, this advertisement also made use of customer testimonials, this time following a couple from Connecticut. This full, two-page advertisement featured three anecdotes from Paris, more than from any

⁴⁸ Pan American, "Wedding Anniversary in Paris" *Holiday* 13, no. 4 (April, 1953): 117.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Pan American, "How You Can Make the Grand Tour of Europe", *Holiday* 13, no. 3 (March, 1953): 12-13.

other city on the tour. The concept of the whirlwind tour of Europe demonstrates the interest in efficiently consuming culture. This couple was able to become culturally enlightened in France, Italy, and England in only 21 days. The travel book series *The Blue Guides* stressed the importance of good time management while on vacation. Its Paris guide was “intended for those who have but little time to devote to the most charming of the capitals of Europe, but who wish to be guided quickly and clearly to the chief points of interest, to be enabled to plan their time to the best advantage, and to be assisted to an intelligent appreciation of what they see.”⁵¹ This American tourist experience was based on the commodification of Parisian culture and sites, making it easy for tourists to ‘see’ all of Paris.

Though the tourists may have been able to travel to and around Paris quickly and efficiently, in many instances Parisian cultural traditions demanded a slower pace. One guidebook writer described the Paris Metro, explaining that there was “no subway rush [in Paris]; if too many people are waiting for the next train, a sever-looking attendant rattles a gate down to keep other jamming the platform.”⁵² He also noted that the Metro was often full of lovers, behaving “just as the guidebooks say they do.”⁵³ Hurried as American tourists may have been to get around Paris, the Metro was one place they were

⁵¹ L. Russell Muirhead, ed., *The Blue Guides: Paris* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1960), v.

⁵² Bemelmans, *Holiday in France*, 314.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

unable to rush. Another instance in which Americans were forced into the Parisian-paced lifestyle was while dining out. The lunch hour was a feature of French culture, an hour which lasted “not one hour but two or even three,” providing enough time for a leisurely meal.⁵⁴ Wealthier Parisians may even have made a lazy stroll part of their lunch hour. The author attributed this relaxed lifestyle to the Parisian “theory that life is meant above all to be lived.”⁵⁵

In Parisian fashion, too, must the American maintain some semblance of patience. Far from the mass-produced clothing found in American department stores frequented by housewives, high fashion in Paris was often customized to the individual. A Frenchman described the process of an American woman buying a Parisian hat; the designer coming up with an original creation inspired by the tourist’s foreign face which had to be made specially.⁵⁶ These examples suggest that Americans in their visits to Paris—whether by choice or by force—experienced some aspects of French culture that contrasted widely with American customs and traditions. Thus, in considering the ultra-nationalistic culture of Cold War America, these tourists became subversive, undermining and criticizing American cultural desires for efficiency and convenience.

⁵⁴ Bemelmans, *Holiday in France*, 58.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ogrizek, *The Paris We Love*, 300.

Though we have seen evidence that the French considered Americanization a detriment to their culture (e.g. Coca-Cola), there is reasonable evidence to interpret American tourism as a salvation to traditional Parisian culture. I propose that American expectations of Frenchness and Parisian culture affected which Parisian cultural traditions were maintained in postwar Paris, perhaps keeping alive traditions that may have fallen out of fashion in the postwar world. However, it is impossible to claim that tourists affected Paris only in positive ways, as evidenced by the negative connotations associated with Americanization. In this way, American tourists altered Parisian culture, influencing traditions to change based on consumer wants and needs. Ultimately, the American tourist in Paris changed the definition of authentic Paris, insofar as tourists were concerned at least.

As discussed earlier, Americans were resistant to Americanized France—or what they perceived to be Americanized France. Tourists hoped that they would be able to see authentic France, defined partially as a place that other American tourists were not present. While tourists wanted to go where other tourists did not, they primarily followed the same paths as other tourists. Though American tourists professed to be searching for the ‘real’ and non-touristy Paris, they often followed generally the same itinerary, all in the name of seeing authentic Paris. Authentic Paris, of course, had different meanings for Parisians and Americans. Despite their desire to avoid Americanization, the major tourists attractions that Americans visited had been heavily Americanized and commodified. American tourists in Paris took on a Frenchified American identity in

which they admired, emulated, and consumed a perception of Frenchness that was no longer a representation of France. Parisians, in turn, made superficial their own culture for the attraction of American tourists who were looking for an authentic Paris. Rather than destroying the Parisian culture through Americanization, this American demand for authentic Paris actually encouraged a resurgence of Frenchness in Paris.

CONCLUSION

“There is never any ending to Paris and the memory of each person who has lived in it differs from that of any other. We always returned to it no matter who we were or how it was changed or with what difficulties, or ease, it could be reached. Paris was always worth it”

-Ernest Hemingway, A Moveable Feast

In 2012, while completing a semester abroad in Austria, I took my first and only trip to Paris. I traveled in a group of seven, of which only two had been to Paris previously. We delighted in eating crepes and macaroons, laying in the grass in the shadow of the Eiffel Tower. After spending our first day at the Palace of Versailles, the five newbies spent the afternoon of day two on an English tour around some of the sites in Paris, stopping by the Notre Dame, the Louvre, and ending near the Grand Palais. As a German language learner, I knew next to nothing about Paris, beyond my love for the 1951 musical *An American in Paris* and a rudimentary knowledge of the more famous landmarks (e.g. the Eiffel Tower and the Arch de Triomphe). The tour was full of French history and introduced sites that I would never have expected to be Parisian landmarks—the Luxor Obelisk for example. At the tour’s end, the guide recommended places to eat, other places to see, and suggested where we might get the best view of the city. Most interestingly to me and one of my travel companions, however, was the guide’s recommendation to sign-up for another one of the company’s tours: a tour around the neighborhood of Montmartre. The guide was very persuasive, explaining that Montmartre was becoming more commercialized and would probably be completely different in five years’ time.

In 1961 the French Government Tourist Office published an advertisement that read “Five Years from Now it Won’t be the Same.”¹ Perhaps due the widespread commodification of Paris in the 1950s, there was an expectation that Paris would only continue commercializing, becoming less and less authentic. For this 1961 advertising campaign, the concern that tourist Paris would soon be changing was well-founded, though perhaps not in the way they were expecting. Though commercialization was still occurring, Paris was gradually losing its attraction for American visitors. In the early 1960s, the American rush to Paris of the postwar years was coming to an end. Though Americans still find Paris an attractive vacation destination today, its popularity has never reached that of the 1950s. The “American in Paris is Growing Rarer” claimed a *New York Times* article in 1961.² The article explained that about 11 percent fewer Americans traveled to Paris in May of 1961 as in May of 1960, a decline that Parisians were not expecting.³ Paris was still attracting visitors from other countries, so where were the Americans? Though some Americans had simply moved on to newer travel destinations, particularly in Asia, there were other factors contributing to this sudden avoidance of Paris.

¹ Christopher Endy, *Cold War Holidays: American Tourists in France* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 155.

² Paul Hoffman, “American in Paris is Growing Rarer: French Puzzle over Drop in Visitors from U.S.” *New York Times* (August 6, 1961), 6.

³ Ibid.

Several historians agree that French and American relations in the 1960s were much poorer than in the previous decade.⁴ The American government was turning away from advocating tourism to Europe, instead promoting a focus on spending within the United States. In 1965 a government official worked to create the private company Discover America, Inc. which worked to promote United States tourism, much like the earlier 'See America First' campaigns.⁵ American President Lyndon Johnson asked Americans to consider avoiding overseas travel, attempting to keep the American dollar in the United States.⁶ For similar reasons, in 1961 President John Kennedy's administration had reduced the duty-free exemption, making shopping abroad more expensive.⁷ On the other side, American tourism was hurt by French President Charles De Gaulle's resistance to accepting the dollar. There was a prevailing fear that "Europe would become a satellite of the United States," with the United States leading European countries in economic matters.⁸ De Gaulle wanted to prevent this from occurring by establishing a gold standard to which all currency would be subject, deflating the special

⁴ Endy, *Cold War Holidays*, 183; Harvey Levenstein, *We'll Always Have Paris: American Tourists in France since 1930* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 204; Richard Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 188.

⁵ Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 312.

⁶ Endy, *Cold War Holidays*, 182.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 186.

⁸ Kuisel, *Seducing the French*, 179.

status of the American dollar. Anti-Americanism in France was very popular in the 1960s, gaining greater support than it had in the 1950s. These tensions together led to a decrease in American tourism in the 1960s which carried over to the 1970s and 1980s.

Rising inflation and multiple devaluations of the dollar continued the trend of decreasing tourism in the 1970s and 1980s.⁹ Americans could no longer afford to travel abroad as frequently as they had in the 1950s. Only wealthy Americans were traveling to Europe at the same rate. With these devaluations, European “observers would note that American tourists abroad were more subdued than before,” a benefit to the rude American stereotype.¹⁰ The economic problems facing the United States seemed to make Americans generally more agreeable to Europeans as it placed them on even ground. By the 1980s, concluded one historian, the French had become predominantly pro-American, likely in part because the United States ceased to appear as a threat to Parisian culture and its economy.¹¹ The French were also increasingly fascinated by American popular culture. Though American popular culture had been present in France for many years, it is suggested that as France regained its economic power, the French became less resistant to American cultural influences.¹² Despite the better relationship between France and the

⁹ Levenstein, *We'll Always Have Paris*, 223.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Kuisel, *Seducing the French*, 212-214.

¹² Levenstein, *We'll Always Have Paris*, 242.

United States in these later decades of the twentieth century, no decade can compete with the mass American consumerism in Paris in the fifties.

In this thesis I have presented a view of American tourism in postwar Paris which emphasized consumerism, Americanization, and the American tourist's relationship with Paris. Presenting an outline of American tourism leading up to the postwar era demonstrated tourism's gradual changes and provided a background for American behavior in postwar Paris. I then examined the postwar culture of the United States, comparing it to that of Paris. American perceptions of Paris and of Frenchness were then explored, indicating the differences between perception and reality as well as the importance of this perception to the American tourist. Finally, I turned to the American tourist in postwar Paris and the effect of the tourist on Parisian culture, concluding that Americans simultaneously salvaged and corrupted this culture. I suggest that through their perceptions and expectations, American tourists crafted a version of Paris that was inauthentic, admiring and imitating a culture that no longer existed. American tourists created their own version of Paris, commodified for the benefit of the American tourist.

Though my time in Paris was short—a mere weekend trip—I enjoyed getting to see this oft romanticized city in person. Though prior to going to Paris I predicted that most of its charm was sensationalized, after visiting, I understand why Paris has the reputation it does. Regardless of how much this city has been commodified or Americanized, despite how inauthentic it may be, there's just something about Paris.

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