

Paris was the Twentieth Century

The turn-of-the-century exodus of American artists and writers to Paris and other European cities is mythic. Many, finding American art and culture to be both unsophisticated and outmoded, sought the radical and revolutionary experimentation of European artistic and literary movements such as Dadaism, Cubism, Fauvism, Surrealism, and Futurism. They were drawn to Europe by a commitment to an evolving aesthetic sensibility that was evident in the innovation of young artists and painters in European cities. Often Americans who intended to visit Europe for just weeks remained for months or years; some made permanent homes there. Though the arts communities were vital in many cities, Paris held a particular appeal for expatriate Americans. “Paris,” Gertrude Stein said, “was the twentieth century. It was the place to be.”

In the years following the turn of the century, American writers living in Paris and London, including Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, and Gertrude Stein, forged new and distinctly modern identities that were evident in their work. Not two decades later, in the wake of World War I, a new group of expatriates joined the Modernists who had already made their homes in Europe for years. This group, which Gertrude Stein dubbed the “Lost Generation,” was defined by its disillusionment and psychic displacement. In Paris in the 1920s, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and others participated in what has often been described as a kind of reckless, drunken, decade-long carnival. In spite of their often extended stays in Europe, these writers and artists never abandoned their examination of American history, culture, and societal structures. During this period, some believed that looking at America from the distance of a foreign city was the only way for an American to see and understand his or her native country.

Many American women who traveled abroad during this period chose an expatriate lifestyle for reasons that differed from those of their male counterparts, and their lives in exile did not always share the quality of abandon so often described in the experiences of the American men of the same era. Women left the United States to escape the social conventions that restricted their careers or limited them to lives as wives and mothers, without access to other creative outlets. Though the European communities in which they lived were not always more accepting of the alternative lifestyles they chose as artists or businesswomen, lesbians or single mothers, Europeans were not inclined to interfere in the lives of Americans living in their cities; “it was not that Paris was culturally more ‘liberated’ than . . . America in its attitudes toward women,” Andrea Weiss wrote in *Paris was a Woman*, “but simply that it left its foreigners alone.”¹ Thus, American women in Paris and other European cities found a freedom there that was unavailable to them in their own country. “We were the Americans who for one reason or another chose to dwell in Paris,” Janet Flanner wrote, “for writing, for work, for career, for the amenities of French living, which was cheaper and more agreeable than life in the United States.”²

Women were at the center of the American expatriate community, playing profound roles in its artistic and intellectual life. Legendary even in her own time, writer, art collector, and salon hostess Gertrude Stein and her partner, editor, and publisher Alice B. Toklas, hosted the most important salon of the period. They welcomed American and European writers and artists, from Picasso to Hemingway, into their rue de Fleurus home, the walls of which were lined with one of the most impressive collections of modern art anywhere in the world. Writer Natalie Barney hosted another well-known Paris salon; she dedicated her meetings to showcasing the work of new and emerging women artists and writers. Unlike those hosted by Stein and Toklas, Barney's events often included readings of lesbian love poetry and pagan celebrations. Love affairs with Barney, a notorious seductress, were considered "a rite of passage not uncommon among attractive female arrivals in Paris at that time."³ Barney's gatherings were sometimes co-hosted by her partner of some fifty years, artist Romaine Brooks. Brooks, who painted portraits of several women in her circle, was well known for her ability to capture the spiritual essence of her subjects. Her portraits were so haunting, in fact, that she was sometimes referred to as the Thief of Souls.

Women writers and their work, including Gertrude Stein and her experimental writings, were essential to the literary movements of the period. Hilda Doolittle, better known as the poet H. D., was the most celebrated of the Imagist poets, a group that included William Carlos Williams, D. H. Lawrence, and Amy Lowell; H. D.'s were, in fact, the first poems to be described as "Imagist." Artist, designer, and poet Mina Loy wrote free verse poems that were considered shocking in their frank treatment of female sexuality and their feminist stance. Kathryn Hulme, a writer of prizewinning and bestselling novels based on real-life stories, and of celebrated books of nonfiction, recorded the lives of exceptional women.

American women were also influential on the literary scene as editors and publishers. Maria Jolas, a translator and James Joyce scholar, and her husband Eugene, published the groundbreaking international art and literature journal, *transition*, which published work by every major voice of the period. Barbara Harrison Wescott collaborated with Monroe Wheeler to found a fine press, Harrison of Paris, which produced beautifully made books of new and classic texts. With her small press, Plain Edition, Alice B. Toklas published more than half a dozen books written by Gertrude Stein.

Some performing artists found greater creative opportunities in Europe. Because of her interest in working with modern composers, violinist Olga Rudge forged a successful career in Europe, where experimental composers found audiences they were unable to develop in the United States. After performing in choruses in New York clubs, dancer and singer Josephine Baker achieved phenomenal

fame in Paris and across Europe. Like many African Americans of the period, Baker sought escape from the intense racism she suffered in the United States. In Paris, African Americans found a society without the rigid color barrier that existed in their home country.

The unprecedented success of Josephine Baker's first Paris show, *La Revue nègre*, made her perhaps the most widely recognized American expatriate in Paris. Her immense popularity among Parisian audiences was the result of her unique range of talents—she was a skilled comedic performer, a gifted singer, and an elegant and notoriously provocative dancer—combined with her graceful figure, her sexy and scant costumes, and her savvy development of an “exotic” persona onstage and offstage. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Baker caused a sensation across Europe. Even as some criticized her shows as offensive, “Josephine” dolls sold in shops and women used “Bakerfix” to copy Baker's slick hairdo. Today, Baker is also remembered as an important social activist. Her contributions to the Free French Movement as a spy during World War II, her vocal criticisms of the treatment of African Americans in the United States, and her experimental multiracial community of children known as the Rainbow Tribe, are evidence of her commitment to social and political action and her willingness to fight for humanitarian causes.

Baker was an unlikely candidate for European superstardom. Born and raised in oppressive poverty in St. Louis, Missouri, she was working as a domestic servant in the home of a white family by the time she was eight. She was ten years old in 1917 when a white woman's accusation of rape by a black man led to rioting in St. Louis that resulted in the deaths of nearly fifty African Americans and forced more than 1,500 others from their homes. The memory of this terrifying event remained with Baker and she spoke of the experience often when she lectured in support of racial equality in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s.

Baker left home at thirteen, supporting herself waiting tables until she married her first husband, Willie Wells. The marriage broke up within the year and Baker began earning a meager living in vaudeville with a group of street performers called the Jones Family Band. She soon found a job as a sometime performer and costumer with Clara Smith's troupe, the Dixie Steppers. The group was a standard on the African-American vaudeville circuit known as the Theatre Owners Booking Association, a tour that was notorious for its horrible treatment of performers. Though conditions on tour were difficult and unpleasant, touring with Smith's troupe allowed Baker to improve her dancing and singing and develop her comedic skill. It was also while touring that Baker met her second husband, William Baker, in Philadelphia. She wasn't yet sixteen.

Her second marriage lasted no longer than her first. Baker soon left her husband to join the touring production of Sissle and Blake's *Shuffle Along* (1921). Though she was considered for the Broadway production of the show, she wasn't old enough to work legally in the New York theater. After touring for a few years, Baker found work as a chorus girl in Harlem clubs, including the Plantation Club where Ethel Waters was the featured singer. When a producer invited Waters to join an African-American cabaret show traveling to Paris, she declined but suggested Baker go in her place.

From her first performance in the "Danse Sauvage," wearing little more than a skirt of feathers, Josephine Baker was a phenomenon. *New Yorker* columnist Janet Flanner wrote, "Josephine Baker has arrived at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in *La Revue nègre* and the result has been unanimous. . . . The end of the show is dull, but never Miss Baker's part. It was even less dull the first night, when she did what used to be, what indeed still should be called, a stomach dance."⁴ Baker's costumes and performance were a constant topic of conversation. Though she was supposed to tour with *La Revue nègre*, she was soon invited to perform in Paris's premier club, the Folies-Bergère. Before her next engagement began, Baker traveled with the *Revue* to Berlin, where she again won critical praise and audience affection.

At the Folies-Bergère, Baker's performance of *La Folie du jour* was another astounding success. It was for this show that she wore the costume that has perhaps become her most famous—a band of rhinestone-encrusted bananas around her waist. Through the run of her performance with the Folies Bergère, Baker continued to generate excitement and gain new fans, especially among French men: "of the many thousands of fan letters Josephine received during her two years at the Folies-Bergère, over half were proposals of marriage."⁵ After this success, Baker embarked on a world tour. No matter where she performed, she met with a mixed response; though many loved her performances, she continued to shock some members of her audiences. When she appeared in Vienna, for instance, the Catholic Church did not appreciate her show:

The *Vienna Roman Catholic Church Gazette* has announced that services for three days "in atonement for outrages on morality" allegedly committed by Josephine Baker and other performers in recent reviews, have been ordered at St. Paul's church, which adjoins the Johann Strauss Theatre, where the American Negro dancer has been appearing.⁶

Baker spent the next ten years performing in Paris, across Europe, and in the United States. Her personal life was complicated by numerous tumultuous love affairs, but she continued to thrive professionally. Her eventual marriage to Jean Lion in 1937 made Baker a French citizen. When the

French declared war on Germany, Baker was recruited as a spy for the French Resistance. As an entertainer, she was able to travel more freely around Europe than others and her fame protected her from suspicion. She transported exit visas and passports, and carried secret information written in invisible ink on sheet music. After the war, Baker was awarded the French Legion of Honor and she was the only woman to receive the Rosette of the Resistance.

When the war ended, Baker returned to Paris and resumed her performance schedule. In 1951, she made a triumphant return to the United States, where she was greeted in New York by the NAACP's celebration of "Josephine Baker Day." During this visit, Baker spoke forcefully in favor of integration and refused to perform at segregated halls. In the midst of the stir she created by voicing her views, Baker was accused of being a Communist sympathizer and there was some speculation that her visa might be revoked. In spite of this controversy, her shows during this visit were tremendously successful and Baker expertly entertained audiences with her grace and comicality. "Her brown-skinned elegance made bobby-soxers gasp and their boyfriends whistle," one reviewer wrote:

Anybody who thought a quarter century in Paris might have made [Josephine] languidly European soon realized his mistake. For all her high-styled gowns, Josephine was still mugging, swaggering, and strutting with the free and easy abandon of a pig-tailed kid on a St. Louis street corner.⁷

In the mid 1950s, Baker decided to begin a family. Because she was committed to her belief that all the world's races could live peacefully together, she adopted twelve children of different racial backgrounds, forming what she called her "Rainbow Tribe." She hoped her family would serve as an example to the world of the possibility of racial harmony and she planned to open her estate to tourists. The early years of her ideal community were successful, but the tremendous expense of running the vast estate eventually led to the experiment's failure. Though she continued to tour, Baker was unable to maintain the property and the family was finally forced to leave the estate. They took up residence in a small villa, provided by Princess Grace of Monaco.

In her later years, Baker suffered constant ill health; nevertheless, she performed whenever possible until the end of her life. She continued to advocate racial equality in the United States and peaceful relationships between different racial groups throughout the world. When she died in 1975, she became the first American woman to receive a state funeral in France. More than twenty thousand people attended the services and the funeral procession was broadcast on French television.

By the time Josephine Baker arrived in Paris in 1925, the city was already home to a great many American expatriates, including a thriving circle of women writers and artists. Of the Americans in Paris during this period, Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas are among the most famous; well known in their time, their celebrity has only increased in the years since their deaths. Both women are icons of Modernist art, literature, and thought and of the American expatriate lifestyle in the first half of the twentieth century. Stein's work—which includes novels, poetry, criticism, and plays—is famous for its resistance of linear thought and conventional syntax, and for its linguistic playfulness; her writing is often compared to the Cubist techniques of painters, such as that of her long-time friend Pablo Picasso. Toklas achieved fame as Stein's primary inspiration, her editor, typist, promoter, partner, and publisher. Together, the couple hosted Paris's foremost salon, bringing together American and European writers and artists; the conversations, exchanges, and meetings at the couple's apartment at 27 rue de Fleurus helped to define the art and literature of the Modernist period and to shape many intellectual and aesthetic movements and trends throughout the twentieth century.

Stein and Toklas were both raised in California, and both became interested in the arts at an early age. As a young woman in San Francisco, Toklas trained as a concert pianist and hoped to make a career as a musician. When her mother died, however, Toklas was forced to give up this ambition and become the primary housekeeper and caretaker for her father, brothers, grandparents, and uncles. Toklas managed her family's home for several years before taking a vacation to Europe where she met Stein and decided to settle in Paris.

Though it was in Paris that Stein determined to make writing her life's work, many of her ideas about literature and art had begun to develop during her student days in Cambridge. Studying at Radcliffe, Stein was profoundly affected by her studies with William James, the prominent psychologist, philosopher, and scholar. Stein shared James's interest in the relationship between the conscious and subconscious mind, and was influenced and inspired by his ideas for the rest of her life. Recounting one exchange with her professor in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, Stein wrote:

It was a very lovely spring day, Gertrude Stein had been going to the opera every night and going to the opera in the afternoon and had been otherwise engrossed and it was the period of examinations, and there was the examination in William James's course. She sat down with the examination paper before her and she just could not. Dear Professor James, she wrote at the top of her paper. I am so sorry but I really do not feel a bit like an examination paper in philosophy to-day, and left.

The next day she had a postal card from William James saying, Dear Gertrude Stein, I understand perfectly how you feel I often feel like that myself. And underneath it he gave her work the highest mark in his course.⁸

Teacher and student maintained contact for years after Stein left Cambridge, and James visited her in Paris.

At James's suggestion, Stein enrolled in Johns Hopkins University medical school after her graduation from Radcliffe. In spite of the harassment and poor treatment she and other female students received from their male classmates and professors, Stein continued her courses for several years. Before taking her degree, however, Stein lost interest in medicine and left school. She decided to move to Paris with her brother Leo.

The Steins soon became well known among the city's young artists, and they began to amass what would become remarkable private collections of modern art including works by Picasso, Matisse, Gris, and many others. Of Stein's art collection, Janet Flanner wrote, "Miss Gertrude Stein's collection of pictures practically ranks as one of Paris's private modern museums."⁹ During her lifetime, Stein would become the subject of works of art by many of the artists she collected, including Francis Picabia and, most famously, Pablo Picasso. During her early years in Paris, Stein also pursued her own art, writing her important early book, *Three Lives* (1905), among other works.

Toklas arrived in Paris in 1907 and met Gertrude Stein almost immediately. The women shared an intense connection from the beginning: "I may say that only three times in my life have I met a genius," the narrator of *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* tells us, counting her meeting with Stein among these, "and each time a bell within me rang."¹⁰ After knowing one another for only a few months, the women agreed to live as husband and wife, beginning one of the most vital creative alliances of the Modernist period. Though it seems clear that Toklas was an important editor, sounding board, and inspiration for Stein, even during their lifetimes she was sometimes dismissed as nothing more than Stein's housekeeper and secretary. That she was willing to let Stein take center stage only encouraged this impression. After the couple visited her Florentine villa, Mabel Dodge wrote:

Gertrude was hearty. She used to roar with laughter, out loud. She had a laugh like a beefsteak. She loved beef, and I used to like to see her sit down in front of five pounds of rare meat three inches thick and, with strong wrists wielding knife and fork, finish it with gusto, while Alice ate a little slice daintily, like a cat. . . . Alice Toklas entered the Stein ménage and became a handmaiden. She was always serving someone,

and especially Gertrude. . . . Pensive, pale, and black-haired Alice . . . began by being so self-obliterating that no one considered her very much beyond thinking her a silent, picturesque object in the background.¹¹

When the couple arrived in the United States for Stein's 1934 lecture tour, one newspaper report called Toklas Stein's "secretary and companion," and described her as a woman who "sat, dark and small, on the periphery of the attentive circle . . . [gazing] raptly at Miss Stein."¹²

Together, Stein and Toklas hosted the most talked-about of Paris salons, entertaining Picasso, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Sinclair Lewis, and Henri Matisse, to name only a few of their regular guests. Stein engaged her friends in lengthy conversations about writing: "The technical aspect of [her writing] she would debate for hours," Muriel Draper wrote, "but her motive for developing it she would protect to the last drop of her mind's blood. She would say abruptly: 'I don't know anything about it. I take things in and they come out that way, independent of conscious process. I don't know anything about it.'"¹³ Scholars debate Stein's influence on these and other writers and artists; regardless of direct correlations between her work and that of her contemporaries, Stein's writing and her explorations of human perception and linguistic structure undoubtedly affected Modernist writing and thought. Of Stein's sway with the writers and artists around her, Janet Flanner wrote, "No writer is taken more seriously than Miss Stein by the Paris modernists."¹⁴

In 1933, with the publication and tremendous success of Stein's *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, the women became literary celebrities well beyond Modernist art and literature circles. They returned to the United States for an extended lecture tour; everywhere they went they were treated like royalty and Stein often spoke to standing room only crowds. This is not to say, however, that Americans wholeheartedly embraced Stein's difficult writing style; reporting on her first lecture in America in an article titled, "Miss Stein Speaks to Bewildered 500," one *New York Times* critic noted that her audience, "listened intently for nearly an hour to the frequently puzzling involutions and repetitions of [Stein's] diction and went away afterward to argue."¹⁵

The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, a compelling and gossipy book reporting stories of the couple's life in Paris, enjoyed a larger audience than any of Stein's previous books. Some of their acquaintances in Europe, however, felt Stein misrepresented them and were quite angry about the book and its popularity. Maria and Eugene Jolas, editors of *transition*, an important art and literature magazine published in Paris, even issued a special supplemental number of the journal titled *Testimony Against Gertrude Stein*. With *The Autobiography*, Maria Jolas claimed, "the moment came [for Stein] to play the mad queen."¹⁶ Responding to what she claimed was Stein's distorted representation of *transition's*

emergence, Jolas wrote, “it might be well to inform Miss Stein that *transition* was not conceived by Eugene Jolas as a vehicle for the rehabilitation of her own reputation, although it undoubtedly did this.”¹⁷ Contributors to the *Testimony* included Henri Matisse and Georges Braque. In spite or because of the stir it caused, *The Autobiography* helped to establish Stein’s and Toklas’s reputations in their day and for the future.

Even in light of her enduring celebrity, Toklas’s most significant contributions to the arts are often overlooked. This is especially true of her development of The Plain Edition, a small press dedicated to publishing Stein’s work; despite Toklas’s major role in the press, it has often been thought of as Stein’s venture. Though Stein funded the project by selling one of her Picasso paintings, Toklas was responsible for all aspects of production and distribution of the more than a half-dozen books the press published in the early 1930s. When it came to the books she published, Toklas was something of a perfectionist; when the printing and binding of the press’s first books did not satisfy her, she worked closely with printers to improve the quality of the books. Her practicality and business sense insured that Stein’s Plain Edition books received greater distribution than any of her previous books.

The salon Stein and Toklas hosted was perhaps the most famous, but it was not the only Paris salon hosted by American expatriates; poet Natalie Clifford Barney entertained European and American artists and writers in her home, and adjoining garden, nearly every Friday night for some sixty years. Her weekly meetings differed from other Paris and New York salons of the period because of their decidedly female character. Barney, a devotee of Sappho and an outspoken lesbian, hoped to revive the spirit of Lesbos in her garden. As at other salons, Barney’s evenings included musical performances, poetry readings, and intellectual conversation; one was not likely, however, to encounter the performance of Sapphic rituals and celebrations of Greek goddesses at any but Barney’s gatherings.

Barney and Stein arrived in Paris just one year apart—Barney in 1902, Stein in 1903—and in their many decades as neighbors, they became fond friends, in spite of their radically different personalities and temperaments. Their aesthetic interest and ideas, too, diverged dramatically, but this did not prevent them from acting as advocates on behalf of one another’s work. Though there has been speculation that the two hostesses were rivals, their mutual friends deny this, suggesting instead that they traded guests and visitors regularly, hosting a particular person one night, and, as invitations to both salons were coveted by American visitors, sending her to the other’s salon the next. Remembering the evening walks she often took with Stein, Barney wrote:

Our walks and talks led us far from warpaths. For generally having no axe to grind nor anyone to execute it with, we felt detached and free to wander in our quiet quarter where, while exercising her poodle, “Basket,” we naturally fell in to thought and step.¹⁸

Barney’s admiration of Stein and Toklas is evident in her description of a chance meeting with them: “they descended from the loft seat of their old Ford car—Alice bejeweled as an idol and Gertrude with the air of Indian divinity.”¹⁹

Barney’s fascinating personality and her compelling lifestyle have often eclipsed her literary accomplishments as a poet, memoirist, and publisher. She was both a notorious seductress and a celebrated lover; she had affairs with many of Paris’s most renowned beauties, including the writers Colette, Renée Vivien, Dolly Wilde, and the famous courtesan Liane de Pougy. Throughout her life in Paris, “Natalie surrounded herself with a coterie of beautiful women, virtually all of whom were former, present, or future lovers.”²⁰ Barney earned the enduring soubriquet, *l’Amazone*.

Natalie Clifford Barney was born in Dayton, Ohio, in 1876, the daughter of a whiskey heiress and the owner of a railroad car company. When she was ten, her family moved from Ohio to Washington where they immediately entered the capital’s high society. As a young woman, Barney both resented and resisted the restrictions her community enforced on women; she found her father’s authoritarian control of the family and his adherence to Victorian ideals of women in society to be intensely repressive. She enjoyed a reprieve from his control when, with her mother and sister, she traveled extensively in Europe and when she enrolled in an esteemed boarding school in France. During this period, Barney improved her already outstanding French language skills. Her near-native command of the language allowed her to write poetry in French throughout her life. That her works went untranslated for many years is, in large part, the reason her writing has not been well known to English language readers.

Back in the United States, she finished her education at Miss Ely’s School in New York City. There, she was introduced to Sappho’s poetry and she had her first romantic relationship with another woman. Though her parents wanted Barney to marry one of her many male suitors, she insisted on traveling before settling down. During one Paris trip, she fell in love with and seduced Liane de Pougy. When de Pougy wrote a novel about the affair, her thinly veiled portrayal of Barney resulted in her father’s discovery of her lesbianism. Around the same time, Barney published her first book, a collection of love poems written for women titled *Quelques Portraits—Sonnets de Femmes* (1900). The book included illustrations by Barney’s mother, who contributed work to the book without knowing its

exact nature. The book's publication caused a sensation in Washington society; Barney's father was so enraged by the book that he destroyed all the copies he could find.

After her father's death in 1902, Barney inherited a tremendous fortune; she returned to Paris and settled there permanently. She was among the first of the American expatriates to arrive in the city and, unlike many others, she was to remain in her adopted home city until her death in 1972. For some sixty years, beginning in 1909, Barney hosted the Friday evening salon that made her famous. As interest in salons waned in the late 1920s, famous hostesses such as Mabel Dodge and Grace Johnson closed their doors; Barney's meetings, however, continued for decades after the others, ceasing only for the years of World War II. In her home at 20 rue Jacob, and in her garden complete with a small Greek temple, women read Sapphic poetry and celebrated lesbian love and female sensuality; they also studied and discussed classic literature and cultures, and honored Greek goddesses.

Though she entertained men as well as women (including André Gide, Marcel Proust, Hemingway, Pound, Thornton Wilder, and James Joyce among many others) she was dedicated to promoting other women; she featured the work of Djuna Barnes, Isadora Duncan, Gertrude Stein, and Edna St. Vincent Millay to name only a very few. Barney's legendary salon is immortalized in Radclyffe Hall's famous novel, *The Well of Loneliness* (1928), and satirized in Djuna Barnes's *Ladies Almanack* (1928). Of Barney and the women around her, Mabel Dodge Luhan wrote, "[they] lived, certainly, a more poetic life, and published books of verses. Their life was different in its habits from the life of these other devout girls, for they were said to turn night into day, burning fires to strange gods, with art to account for all."²¹

In 1915, Natalie Barney met Romaine Brooks, a painter and fellow expatriate, who would become her lover and partner for more than fifty years. Shy and quiet, Brooks's personality stood in contrast to Barney's. While Barney craved a full social life and the company of many people, Brooks preferred to be alone painting or spending time with Barney away from the distractions of friends. She didn't like most of Barney's acquaintances and had few of her own. In spite of this, Brooks painted severe if muted portraits of many of the women who visited the salon, including Una Troubridge, Elisabeth de Gramont, Muriel Draper, and the dancer Ida Rubenstein as a Red Cross nurse during World War I. She hoped to paint portraits of other women as well, including one of Gertrude Stein, to whom she wrote, "Since my last portrait painted several years ago no one has occupied so important a place in my mind as yourself. I have always wanted to paint you as you know."²²

Though her family was quite wealthy, Brooks's childhood was terrible. Her father abandoned the family when she was still an infant, and her unstable mother abused her physically and emotionally, while doting obsessively on her mentally ill brother. Stories of her childhood were so horrific that, "those who read her unpublished memoirs refused to believe them."²³ After escaping her mother's control, Brooks lived in extreme poverty for several years. Though she was the first woman student at the Art Academy in Rome, her training as an artist was defined by the scorn and degradation she suffered at the hands of teachers and fellow students and by the crushing poverty that often left her hungry and homeless. When her mother and brother both died in 1902, Brooks inherited the family's fortune.

Barney and Brooks lived as an openly lesbian couple, even sharing bank accounts and arranging for adjoining burial plots, at a time when few others did so. Throughout their life together, however, Barney continued to engage in brief and prolonged affairs with other women. As they aged, Brooks became increasingly jealous. After nearly sixty years together, when both women were in their nineties, the couple finally split over another of Barney's infidelities. Brooks died soon after their final separation, and Barney, who tried in vain to reconcile with Brooks after their last break, died shortly thereafter.

Among the women who frequented Natalie Barney's salon, novelist Djuna Barnes was one of the hostess's favorites. Barnes, a New York native, was a compelling and much talked about figure of 1920s Paris. She had early success in New York as a journalist and playwright; the Provincetown Players produced her early one-act plays in Greenwich Village. She left New York in favor of Paris in 1919, where she soon became well known among other expatriate writers who thought she was both beautiful and mysterious. Barnes became even better known when Robert McAlmon's Contact Editions published her openly lesbian *Ladies Almanack*, in 1928. The major work of her career, however, was her autobiographical novel, *Nightwood* (1936), in which Barnes recounts the painful dissolution of her love affair with artist Thelma Wood, using their Paris circle as a backdrop.

Djuna Barnes counted among her closest friends the poet, designer, and painter Mina Loy. Born Mina Lowy in London in 1882, when she was seventeen she left home to study painting and to escape the rule of her oppressive parents. She studied in Munich and Paris, where she changed her surname to Loy on the occasion of the first exhibition of her paintings. Her paintings were well received and several were included in the 1905 *Salon d'Automne* show. In Paris, she became acquainted with Gertrude Stein and her brother Leo in the years before Stein met Alice B. Toklas, and Loy and Stein became lifelong friends; years later, Loy would lecture on Stein's work at Natalie Clifford Barney's salon.

Loy was still in her early twenties when she married her first husband, Stephen Haweis, in 1903. Their first daughter was born a year later, but she died when she was just a year old. After the child's death, Loy and her husband left Paris and moved to Florence. Though their relationship was unraveling, the couple hastily had two more children. The children did little to alleviate the strain on the couple and they began to pursue independent lives. For Loy, this meant continuing to paint and pursuing an interest in writing. During her years in Florence, Loy became acquainted with Filippo Marinetti and other members of the Italian Futurist movement and she became a frequent guest at Mabel Dodge's Villa Curonia. There she met other American expatriates, including Muriel Draper, as well as Neith Boyce, Hutchins Hapgood, and Carl Van Vechten. These new friends encouraged Loy to continue writing and to submit her free verse poetry to American literary magazines. They also suggested that she move to New York, where she might be able to support herself and her artistic endeavors by selling fashion designs to magazines and shops. By 1914, Mabel Dodge and Carl Van Vechten had ushered some of Loy's writing into print in American magazines, including *Trend* and Alfred Stieglitz's *Camera Work*.

Encouraged by these successes, Loy traveled to New York. She was immediately welcomed into literary circles in the city; she became acquainted with New York writers, including Marianne Moore, and she reunited with friends from Florence, many of whom were involved in the experimental theater company, the Provincetown Players. Loy joined the group, working on the company's productions as a set and costume designer and as an actress. In 1916, she starred with poet William Carlos Williams in Alfred Kreymbourg's *Lima Beans*. Marianne Moore was impressed with Loy's flawless delivery of her lines and her costume, which Loy designed and made herself: "[She] wore gold slippers, a green taffeta dress, a black Florentine mosaic brooch, long gold earrings, and some beautiful English rings."²⁴ Loy's success with the Provincetown Players shows led to opportunities to design costumes for other theaters, including the 1918 Broadway play *Karen*, for which she designed a dress and hat for Fania Marinoff. In addition to fashion and theatrical designs, Loy worked designing lampshades, many of which exhibited a Modernist or Futurist influence.

As a writer, Loy earned the respect of many in the city's literary elite. She was very often considered the near opposite, in personality and aesthetics, to Marianne Moore, one of the most influential poets in the city; William Carlos Williams claimed the two women marked the North (Moore) and South (Loy) poles of literature of the period. "Of all those writing poetry in America at the time she was here," Williams wrote, "Marianne Moore was the only one Mina Loy feared. By divergent virtues these two women have achieved freshness of presentation, novelty, freedom, break with banality."²⁵ Though the rivalry between the two poets was largely in the minds of their friends, the women were well aware of each other's work. In her poem "Those Various Scalpels," Moore describes Loy's appearance and

character in great detail, noting her “hair, the tails of two / fighting-cock,” her “eyes, flowers of ice and snow,” and her “hand, / a bundle of lances all alike, partly hid by emeralds from Persia / and the fractional magnificence of Florentine / goldwork”; she goes on to question the value of these aspects of Loy’s poetic persona, asking,

Are they weapons or scalpels? Whetted to brilliance
by the hard majesty of that sophistication which is superior to opportunity,
these things are rich instruments with which to experiment.
But why dissect destiny with instruments
more highly specialized than components of destiny itself?²⁶

In New York, Loy divorced her first husband and fell in love with a writer and prizefighter, Arthur Craven. They were married in Mexico City in 1918 and Loy soon became pregnant. Before their child was born, however, Craven was lost at sea while boating. Devastated by his loss, Loy wandered in search of him, returning briefly to Europe and New York. Finally, she settled in Paris, where she opened a lampshade design firm. She continued to paint and write, and she renewed her friendship with Gertrude Stein; Loy was an early supporter of Stein’s work and the women exchanged manuscripts as well as gossip about their many mutual acquaintances. “Mina Loy. . . was able to understand without the commas,” Stein wrote, “she has always been able to understand.”²⁷

Mina Loy also developed a close relationship with Natalie Barney, who thought of her as “a fugitive spirit on the verge of quitting the world of appearances.”²⁸ Djuna Barnes included a character based on Loy in *Ladies Almanack*, her literary version of Barney’s salon. Loy appears as Patience Scalpel, the only heterosexual woman in a community of lesbians (Barnes may have chosen this name in reference to Moore’s poem). Loy was a frequent and well-liked visitor to the salons of Stein and Barney, and a respected writer whose poetry often explored feminist themes while pursuing modernist experiments with language and typography. In 1923, Robert McAlmon’s Contact Publishing Company published her first collection of poetry, *Lunar Baedeker*. Yvor Winters, who was otherwise no fan of her work, noted that, “she has written seven or eight of the most brilliant and unshakably solid satirical poems of our time.”²⁹

Those who weren’t interested in her writing were often captivated by Loy’s beauty, charm, and reputation as a mysterious and mystical figure. Of a party at which she met Loy, *Poetry* editor Harriet Monroe wrote:

There was talk and laughter, and a few songs . . . and much gaiety of spirit. Perhaps a great deal of this gayety and color aforesaid was due to the presence of Mina Loy. I may never have fallen hard for this lady's poetry, but her personality is quite irresistible. Beauty ever-young which has survived four babies, and charm which will survive a century if she lives that long are sustained by a gayety that seems the worldly-wise conquest of many despairs. . . . Yes, poetry is in this lady whether she writes it or not.³⁰

In the 1930s, Loy left Paris and returned to New York. She continued to write and paint; a 1933 exhibition of her paintings at the gallery of her son-in-law, Julien Levy, was said by one critic to include "highly individual and mystical paintings."³¹ Loy also made detailed designs for several clever inventions, including a bracelet-blotter for office workers, and a musical Valentine's Day greeting card. She experimented with collage and, like her close friend from this period, artist Joseph Cornell, she used a wide variety of found objects in her art. In 1951, a New York gallery exhibited this later work. Though Loy didn't attend the exhibition's opening, some of her old friends, including Djuna Barnes, were in attendance.

Like Mina Loy, the Imagist poet Hilda Doolittle, who was better known by the initials H. D., was a literary innovator and a central figure of the Modernist period. Hilda Doolittle was involved with the beginnings of Modernist writing when she was still a teenager. At fifteen, she met Ezra Pound, then a student at the University of Pennsylvania where Doolittle's father was a member of the faculty; a few years later, she met William Carlos Williams on campus as well. When she went to college, attending Bryn Mawr for several semesters, she was the classmate of Marianne Moore. "My first impression of Hilda is very clear," Moore wrote years after their first meeting:

There is a large forsythia bush on the campus at Bryn Mawr near Taylor Hall. . . . I remember Hilda passing this bush in a great hurry. . . . She struck me as being extremely humanitarian and detached, as if she would not insult you by coldness in the necessary and at longest, brief moment of mutual inspection. . . . I remember her eyes which glittered and gave an impression of great acuteness and were, as I say, sunny and genial at the same time.³²

These youthful friendships would not only influence H. D.'s poetry; they helped to determine the course of twentieth-century literature.

Doolittle was heavily influenced by her adolescent romance with Ezra Pound, to whom she was informally engaged before he traveled to Europe in 1908. Pound was one of the most important poets of the twentieth century and arguably the most influential critic and editor of the Modernist period.

The work and careers of writers as diverse as T. S. Eliot, Robert Frost, H. D., and E. E. Cummings were profoundly influenced by Pound's personality, advice, and ideas about literature and art. As a European editor of *Poetry*, *A Magazine of Verse* and the *Little Review*, Pound was a powerful tastemaker, exerting an unparalleled authority on the literary marketplace of the period. H. D. took his advice when he suggested what she ought to read and when he edited her writing. In 1912, it was Pound who "created" the poet "H. D." when, without her knowledge, he signed her poems "H. D., Imagiste," before sending them to Harriet Monroe, at *Poetry*. From that point forward, H. D. would be associated with Imagism, a poetic movement that emphasized economy of language, a complete focus on the subject, and the discovery of music in everyday language rather than traditional verse forms. Doolittle, however, resisted the label, finding it too limiting to include the range of her poetic ambition.

Doolittle followed Pound to England in 1911, where she quickly became a member of his group of friends, many of whom were writers. In 1913, she married Richard Aldington, a young poet in Pound's circle. World War I began just a year after they were married; their relationship was in trouble when, after they had a stillborn child in 1915, Aldington enlisted in the military and was sent to the western front. The same year, H. D.'s first collection of poems, *Sea Garden*, was published. This well-received volume helped to develop her reputation as the best of the Imagist poets; her work was featured in the movement-defining anthologies *Des Imagistes* (1914) and *Some Imagist Poets* (1915).

In 1917, her husband returned from the front for an extended training program, and the couple attempted to reconcile. Their resolve to save their marriage was brief; Aldington soon became involved with another woman. H. D. also began a new relationship, traveling to Cornwall with a musician named Cecil Grey. H. D. became pregnant with Grey's child, and their daughter, Perdita, was born in 1919. While she was living in Cornwall, H. D. met Winnifred Ellerman, a young heiress to a shipping fortune and a devoted fan of H. D.'s writing. Throughout her adult life, Ellerman was known as Bryher, a name she took in honor of the island she traveled to as a child. The two women's friendship, romance, and creative collaboration was to last for decades. Their complicated and often-tumultuous love affair was by turns supportive of H. D.'s work and traumatic and emotionally painful for both women. Of their annual celebration of their anniversary, H. D. wrote their friend George Plank, "Just 32 years ago, almost to the hour, that I met Bryher! We try to 'keep' the day, and I am off now to [Montreux] to have tea with her and express the inexpressible gratitude."³³

Bryher supported H. D. and her daughter financially, and the women traveled extensively together, including journeying to Greece, a landscape and culture that was extremely influential on H. D. and her work. In part because of her parents' increasing concern about her relationship with H. D., Bryher

married Robert McAlmon in 1921. Their marriage liberated Bryher from parental control and did not interfere with Bryher and H.D.'s relationship; all three were close friends. The threesome traveled together to Paris, where McAlmon, with Bryher's help and support, started Contact Editions, a small press that published some of the most important books of the period, including works by Ernest Hemingway, Djuna Barnes, Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein, and Mina Loy. McAlmon quickly made his way to the center of Paris's expatriate literary community. H.D., however, was uncomfortable there; "contemporary Paris with its new expatriates, busy cafés, and nightlife puzzled her and made her uneasy," H.D. biographer Barbara Guest wrote of this time in the poet's life. "She thought of herself as shabby and awkward, even old among the younger shining bobbed heads."³⁴

The 1920s were a very productive period for H.D., seeing the publication of many successful collections of poems, a novel, and a play. Among these was her *Collected Poems* (1925), a significant publication that brought together her previously published work in one volume. Other books from this period included *Hymen* (1921), *Heliadora and Other Poems* (1924), *Hippolytus Temporizes: A Play in Three Acts* (1927), *Hedylus* (1928), and *Red Roses for Bronze* (1929). Reviewing this collection, *New York Times* critic Percy Hutchison praised H.D., calling her "a rare lyric genius," and noting, "her work is sculpted with all the care of the worker in marble."³⁵

Bryher's marriage to McAlmon lasted only a few years. In 1927, she married a filmmaker named Kenneth Macpherson. H.D. and Macpherson were lovers and the relationship he shared with his wife was more a social arrangement that benefited both and an artistic collaboration than it was a romantic union. Through their relationships with Macpherson, H.D. and Bryher became interested in film. Macpherson and Bryher began publishing *Close-up*, a magazine devoted to the study of film. They also started a film production company. Macpherson directed H.D. in two film appearances, *Foothills* (1927) and *Borderline* (1930). *Borderline*, which starred Paul and Eslanda Robeson along with H.D., was an experimental film that investigated racial tensions and relationships. In addition to acting in *Borderline*, H.D., along with Bryher, also edited the film.

In the 1930s, H.D. became increasingly interested in psychoanalysis and worked with several famous analysts, including Sigmund Freud. In much of her prose work, H.D. wrote fictionalized accounts of her relationships and experiences. Her posthumously published novel *HER* (1980) described her first love affair with a woman, her adolescent relationship with her friend Frances Gregg; *Palimpsest* (1928) a collection of stories, and *Bid Me to Live* (1960), a novel, were inspired by her experiences in Cornwall with Cecil Grey and Bryher. She fictionalized her relationships with Kenneth Macpherson and Bryher in "Narthex" (1928), *Kora and Ka* (1934), and *The Usual Star* (1934). Her continued interest in Greek

culture and Hellenic studies remained central to her poetry. Her last major poetic work, *Helen in Egypt* (1961), is a retelling of the myth of Helen and Achilles.

Though her popularity with readers declined after the 1920s, H.D. continued to write and publish until her death in 1961. After the flourish of attention she gained as an Imagist poet in her youth, critics generally neglected H.D.'s work. Because she moved quickly past the enterprise Pound outlined in his Imagist project and spent most of her writing life committed to experimental and challenging poetry and prose, much of her early audience lost interest in her writing. H.D. returned to prominence during the 1970s and 1980s, as women writers claimed her as an influence and feminist scholars began to investigate and uncover her significant contributions to the literature of her time.

Another woman to be heavily influenced by her relationship with Ezra Pound was midwestern violinist Olga Rudge. Though she was both talented and successful as a musician and music historian, today Rudge is known primarily as Pound's longtime mistress. Her relationship with the poet put Olga Rudge at the center of the most significant artistic and literary movement of the twentieth century. The nearly fifty-year-long creative and romantic partnership between Rudge and Pound began when the two met in 1923 at the Paris salon of Natalie Clifford Barney.

Born in Youngstown, Ohio, but raised in Europe from the time she was ten, Olga Rudge was a renowned violinist in Europe during the 1920s and 1930s. She was praised for her performances of contemporary compositions, especially those of Italian composers. Her mother, a singer who moved to Europe to pursue her career, encouraged her daughter's study of music from a young age. Rudge studied in London and Paris with leading violinists and her natural talent with her instrument was immediately evident. As a young woman, she already enjoyed the support of several wealthy patrons and she regularly performed for distinguished guests at their private parties and at benefits for World War I soldiers. "She is undoubtedly one of the most gifted and best prepared violinists who have come out of London this season"³⁶ one critic wrote. In a 1915 recital, Rudge "displayed great talent which has been developed and handles her instrument in a masterly style. Her breadth of treatment, fine tone, and skillful interpretations of the various works auger well for her future musical career."³⁷

Rudge soon began appearing in concerts in France and Italy; she developed both considerable expertise with her instrument and an endearing stage presence. "Miss Olga Rudge is a very charming violinist," one critic wrote, "it is not so much her attainments—though these are considerable—as her musical personality that impresses this fact upon the listener, whatever she may happen to be playing."³⁸

During the next several years, Rudge worked variously with many leading musicians and composers, including Percy Kahn and Renata Borgatti, Ernesto Consolo, and George Antheil.

Rudge was already well established on the European concert scene as an excellent violinist when she first met Ezra Pound in 1923. Pound was married at the time; his wife Dorothy was an intelligent and well-read woman, though she was also sedate and not inclined to say very much when the couple joined gatherings of other writers and artists. Rudge, on the other hand, was “vigorous and fiercely energetic. . . . The contrast with the silence and remoteness of Dorothy Pound could not have been more marked.”³⁹ “For the first time in his life,” Pound biographer Humphrey Carpenter wrote of the famously determined poet, “Ezra had come into the hands of somebody more obstinate and resourceful than himself. One of Olga’s relatives has observed: ‘I shouldn’t think he stood a chance.’”⁴⁰

Pound soon arranged for Rudge to perform the world premiere of composer George Antheil’s first compositions for violin. A year later, in 1924, Rudge performed a concert that included work by Antheil as well as compositions by Pound himself. During one of several visits to Pound shortly after his relocation to Rapallo, Italy, in 1924, Rudge became pregnant. Their daughter, Mary Rudge, was born in 1925; she was sent to Gais, in rural Italy, to be raised by a foster family.

Though her pregnancy had prevented a proposed concert tour of the United States with Antheil, Rudge resumed her performance schedule after the birth of her daughter. Touring Europe, Rudge performed major concerts in Budapest, Rome, and Florence. She traveled constantly, playing all over the continent and visiting friends and patrons in England. In 1927, she performed for Benito Mussolini, who was himself a violinist. She also met with him after the concert: “Mussolini complimented Miss Rudge on her technique and musical feeling, saying that it was rare to see such depth and precision of tone, ‘especially in a woman.’”⁴¹

In 1928, Rudge bought a house in Venice, known between the lovers as the “hidden nest,” where Pound spent time each fall and where her daughter Mary could visit. Pound often joined these reunions, which were awkward at times and sometimes difficult for all three. During summers, Rudge rented a house near Pound’s in Rapallo. In the 1930s, the depression brought an end to Rudge’s extensive concert schedule and she lost the support of once wealthy patrons whose fortunes had vanished. She took a position working as an administrator with the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena. In the mid 1930s, she worked closely with Pound to organize and support a concert series, the Concerti Tagalliani. The series allowed the couple to promote the music of the then neglected composer Antonio Vivaldi, to whose work the 1936 Concerti were dedicated.

Rudge had become interested in Vivaldi in the early 1930s; at that time, the vast body of the composer's work had received little attention from scholars and musicians. Working in an archive in Turin, Rudge made a thematic catalog of some three hundred of the composer's pieces. She and Pound began an intensive study of Vivaldi's work, examining and transcribing archival materials and compositions. They helped to organize and promote a "Vivaldi Week" at the Accademia Chigiana, where leading Italian musicians performed some of the works they had discovered. Rudge further promoted Vivaldi's work with her founding, with S. A. Luciani and Antonio Bruhens, of the Centro di Studi Vivaldiani at the Accademia Chigiana.

The onset of World War II brought an end to her work with the Accademia Chigiana. When the Americans entered the war, Rudge was forced from her Venice home; she moved to the cottage where she spent summers near Pound's Rapallo home. During this period, Pound began the controversial radio broadcasts for which he was to become notorious. Rudge was supportive of the pro-Axis messages Pound espoused and she sometimes suggested topics and listened to at-home rehearsals of his remarks. When he was forced from his home, he and his wife moved in with Rudge at her small cottage. The difficulty of the situation was intensified by the hardships that resulted from the war; they had little food and money and for a period their only income was the small amount of money Rudge was able to make by giving English lessons.

When Pound was arrested and brought to American army headquarters in Genoa, Rudge was brought along and questioned by the army before being released. Pound faced treason charges in the United States, but after many important writers intervened on his behalf, he was sent not to prison, but to a mental institution. Rudge, who returned to Venice after the war and resumed her work at the Accademia Chigiana, visited him in the United States several times. She also spoke to his friends and fellow writers about possibilities for securing his release and tried to convince people that he had never been a member of the Fascist Party.

Upon his release, he and Dorothy lived with Mary Rudge, who by this time had married and was living in Brunnenberg Castle in the Tyrol. Four years later, after a yearlong bout of illness, Pound moved back in with Olga Rudge, who cared for him for the rest of his life. After his death ten years later, Rudge devoted herself to promoting Pound's work, assisting scholars studying his life and literary contributions, organizing exhibitions, and attempting to establish memorials to him and his work.

Like Rudge, Toklas, and other women whose accomplishments have been eclipsed by their more famous romantic or creative partners, Barbara Harrison Wescott, founder of the publishing house

Harrison of Paris, has been considered a secondary player in the working of her literary press. A Californian living in Paris, Barbara Harrison collaborated with Monroe Wheeler to establish Harrison of Paris. Founded in 1930, the press was dedicated to publishing special editions of original and reprinted works by both American and European writers. Barbara Harrison and Monroe Wheeler, whose partner, Glenway Wescott, would become Harrison's brother-in-law, worked together to produce books of the highest quality.

Harrison of Paris published thirteen books during its four years of activity, all of which were beautiful productions, matching fine writing with expert printing and book design. The press published a diverse group of texts in its first year, including new work by Glenway Wescott, *Venus and Adonis* by William Shakespeare, and Bret Harte's *The Wild West*, adorned with colorful illustrations by Pierre Falke. The literary community in Europe immediately responded to the high quality of Harrison of Paris books. Critics praised all aspects of their production. "There can be no dispute as to the beauty of paper and type,"⁴² one critic wrote; another described the books as "well-printed classics with very modern illustrations and specially good binding."⁴³

In the years that followed, Harrison of Paris continued to publish a diverse group of works by distinguished writers and artists. Their list included Sir Roger L'Estrange's translations of *Fables of Aesop* (1931) illustrated by Alexander Calder, *A Gentle Spirit* (1931) by Fyodor Dostoevsky, translated by Constance Garnett and illustrated by Christian Bérard, Lord Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1932), with illustrations by Sir Francis Rose, and *Hacienda* (1934) by Katherine Anne Porter.

The press dissolved in 1934, in part because Barbara Harrison's poor health required that she return to the United States. When it ceased publication, the press left at least one project unfinished—a memoir by Barbara Harrison Wescott of her unusual childhood experiences as the daughter of Francis Burton Harrison, governor of the Philippines during Woodrow Wilson's administration. Her unpublished manuscript bears the title, "For My Father and His Children," and the dedication, "these pages of my childhood were written for presentation on my thirtieth birthday, October twenty-sixth, 1934."⁴⁴ Recounting a trip to Manila, she writes, "twenty-eight days to cross the Pacific—a life-time, I thought! Everything that had happened before we left San Francisco seemed as remote in days as in miles—and the future hopelessly out of reach. Yet somehow each day aboard was no sooner past than forgotten."⁴⁵ The author describes particular memories, often recounting single striking images—a miniature black horse much smaller than a pony or a piece of cake literally carried off by hundreds of ants—or arresting details: "Father always wore suits of white silk."⁴⁶

That Barbara Harrison Wescott has generally been considered the money behind Monroe Wheeler's publishing house, in spite of her deep involvement with the press and its productions, is evidence of the fact that among expatriate Americans, publishing was often viewed as a man's work, and women were assumed to be "handmaidens" to the real work of writing and editing. "As a rule in our circle," translator and editor Maria Jolas once said, "men did the creative work and women kept house."⁴⁷

Maria Jolas's participation in editing and publishing *transition*, the magazine she ran with her husband Eugene Jolas, points to the irony in her statement. Founded in 1926 with money Maria Jolas inherited from her father, *transition* was celebrated by American and European artistic communities for its promotion of modern art and literature. "*transition* began," Gertrude Stein wrote in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, "and of course it meant a great deal to everybody."⁴⁸ Of the magazine's beginnings, Maria Jolas wrote, "the cost of living being cheap in France for Americans, my husband and I discussed the founding of a magazine together, at our own expense. It would mean a sacrifice—fortunately we little realized how great—but we were keen to do it. . . . *transition* was conceived, and the personal and financial sacrifice gladly accepted, in order to create a meeting place for all those artists on both sides of the Atlantic who were working towards a complete renovation, both spiritual and technical, of the various art forms."⁴⁹ In its more than ten years of publication, the journal printed work by Gertrude Stein, Kay Boyle, André Gide, and James Joyce, including the serial publication of his "Work in Progress," which later became *Finnegans Wake*. The journal was considered "by far the most provocative international magazine to be published during the era. A publication in *transition* was a necessary debut in the life of any literary aspirant."⁵⁰ Maria Jolas has often been relegated to the business end of the publication, and though she was responsible for much of the daily administration of the magazine, she also participated in the editorial processes and contributed work to several issues, including translations of André Breton, Leon-Paul Fargue, and Bernard Fay.

Jolas's sense of the importance of her role in the production of the magazine is evident in her essay in *Testimony Against Gertrude Stein*, the *transition* supplement published in 1935. In this piece, she takes offense at Stein's suggestion that Elliot Paul, who Jolas states was little more than an editorial assistant, was the driving intellectual force behind the magazine. Stein describes her sense of a kind of shift in editorial sensibility from Paul's editorship to that of Eugene and Maria Jolas, stating that "Elliot Paul slowly disappeared, and Eugene and Maria Jolas appeared."⁵¹ Jolas responds, asserting her presence, along with her husband's, from the magazine's beginning, asking rhetorically: "Who are these people, Eugene and Maria Jolas who fade cinematographically into the picture as Paul fades out? . . . Why were they not there from the beginning?"⁵²

In addition to her work as an editor and translator, Maria Jolas was much involved in supporting and promoting the work of James Joyce, a regular contributor to *transition* and close friend of the Jolases. Maria Jolas was responsible for correcting the proofs of his *Finnegans Wake*, in which some critics claim she is an identifiable character-presence. The work received mixed critical reception when it appeared in *transition* in installments—Janet Flanner, for instance, referred to the work as “the most extreme jabberwocky.”⁵³ A close friend of the writer, Maria Jolas was also trusted with the care of Joyce’s mentally ill daughter. After his death, Maria Jolas continued to promote Joyce by editing *A James Joyce Yearbook* (1949) and by arranging exhibitions of his work. When Joyce’s wife asked her to sort out the papers he had left in their attic when he died, Jolas prevented the destruction of the literary record of his work. After some thirty universities refused the archive, Jolas sold this major group of Joyce’s papers to the University of Buffalo.

Even before the years of *transition*’s publication, she very likely understood much about the work of literary production; as a young woman, she worked at Charles Scribner’s Sons in New York City. A native of Louisville, Kentucky, she was educated at New York private schools. As a young woman, Jolas aspired to be a professional singer. She ended up at Scribner’s only when, with the onset of World War I, she was forced to return to the United States from Berlin where she was studying music. In New York, she continued to train with a voice instructor while working at the publishing house. When her teacher moved to Paris, Jolas followed her. In Paris, in 1925, she met her future husband and collaborator, Eugene Jolas, an American who had spent much of his life in Europe. Maria Jolas gave up her pursuit of a singing career when they married and began their family.

In 1932, when her two children reached school age, Maria Jolas was unsatisfied with the educational opportunities available to them and so she helped to found her own school, the École bilingue de Neuilly. Jolas developed a progressive pedagogy that combined elements of the standard French curriculum with an emphasis on study in languages and the arts, including music and dance as well as fine arts. As the political situation in Europe deteriorated in the mid 1930s, Eugene Jolas found work in New York and left France. Maria Jolas remained at her school, with about a hundred and twenty students and faculty members in her charge. Many of the students were still in her care when the Germans invaded France; she moved them to the countryside in the south of France where James Joyce and his wife, whose grandson was a student at the school, joined them before traveling on to safety in Switzerland. Jolas recounted the early days of the occupation in her war diary, describing the chaos, fear, and grief she and others felt; in the very first entry, she wrote,

Unforgettable week of anguish, fear, humiliation, relief, calm—the calm of complete resignation in a state that could not more nearly resemble death and not be death. . . . Paris fell on Friday, the Joyces came in the morning, their hotel being requisitioned by the Vichy.⁵⁴

She was able to keep the school open for a year during the war but was finally forced to close it and join her husband in New York. Through the course of the war, Jolas worked in the United States as the head of the French language operation of the Office of War Information. She fought from a distance for the Free French Movement, raising funds and starting an organization devoted to assisting French soldiers. The Jolases returned to Paris in 1946.

Maria Jolas continued to work as a translator long after *transition* ceased publication. She became the premier translator of the work of experimental prose writer Nathalie Sarraute. “Translating her is an immense pleasure,” Jolas claimed, “because there are never any sloppy edges. Nothing shows up the weaknesses of a style like translation.”⁵⁵ In 1970, she earned the Scott-Moncrieff prize for translation, but in spite of her successes, Jolas downplayed the importance of her work: “Someone else has done the thinking,” she said of translating, “and you accompany him like a pianist accompanying a singer, self-effacing is essential.”⁵⁶

Like Maria Jolas, writer Kathryn Hulme was actively involved in supporting the allied forces during World War II; after the war, Hulme made significant contributions to the humanitarian efforts in Europe and wrote a number of books exploring life in Europe during and after the war. One such book was Hulme’s 1956 novel *The Nun’s Story*, a tremendous critical and popular success that was adapted into a Hollywood film starring Audrey Hepburn in 1959. Though she was best known during her lifetime for this remarkably successful book, Hulme was more than a one-novel writer; she was the author of nine well-received books of fiction and nonfiction, some of which earned national awards and recognition. She was a member of an important group of American expatriate women writers living in Paris in the 1930s and 1940s, a group that included *New Yorker* columnist Janet Flanner (known to her readers as Genet), and writers and editors Solita Solano, Margaret Anderson, and Jane Heap.

After studying for several years at the University of California at Berkeley, Hulme moved to New York to train as a journalist and pursue a career as a writer. She traveled widely during this period, spending most of her time in Europe. She wrote and published magazine articles, sometimes about her travels; she also completed her first book-length works during this period. In 1928, Hulme’s first book, *How’s the Road?*, was privately printed. Over the next several years, she published two more books, including her first novel, *Desert Night* (1932). Her 1938 novel *We Lived as Children*, based on her childhood in

San Francisco, was her first book to gain critical and popular attention. In the *New York Times*, one reviewer praised the book, calling it “thoroughly charming.” Hulme’s greatest achievement, the *Times* critic claimed, was her careful and thoughtful characterization of the novel’s central characters, her creation of individuals “as real as any people between the covers of a book could hope to be.”⁵⁷

A San Francisco native, Hulme left Europe as World War II approached and returned to California. As the war raged in Europe, Hulme worked as an electric arc welder at the Kaiser Shipyard in Richmond, California, outside San Francisco. Kaiser was one of the most important producers of the Liberty Ships program, and women workers made up a significant percentage of the staff. The shipyard was so closely associated with the important contribution women made to the war effort in the United States that it was chosen as the site of the first national “Rosie the Riveter” monument celebrating American women’s defense work during World War II.

Hulme returned to Europe after the war and worked for the United Nations Relief and Refugee Agency (UNRRA), first as assistant director and later as director of one division of the agency. During the postwar period she also worked for the International Refugee Organization as a deputy director responsible for a number of relocation camps. She was at the center of the “Displaced Persons” crisis in Europe, aiding refugees in D.P. camps in their efforts to carry on with their lives after the war. Critics applauded *The Wild Place* (1953), her book about this period, as “an unforgettable report on the struggle, the plight, the defeat or the eventual redemption of countless victims of the time.”⁵⁸

While she was working with UNRRA in Europe, Hulme met Marie-Louise Habets, a nurse and former nun who was also working to aid those displaced by the war. Habets was to become Hulme’s lifelong friend and companion. She was also the inspiration for *The Nun’s Story*. The novel, a fictionalization of Habets’s life, is the story of Sister Luke, a young woman who joins a convent in Europe, trains as a nurse, and later works at a Catholic hospital in the Congo. When World War II begins, Luke returns to her motherhouse in Europe, where she struggles with the Church’s insistence that she mustn’t chose sides in the war, but have equal compassion for all. Finally, Luke leaves the convent to fight the Nazis with the French Resistance. Critics unanimously praised *The Nun’s Story*, a critic at the *New Yorker* hailed it as “a book of great beauty,” stating, “I have never read a more poignant story.”⁵⁹ The novel was a Book-of-the-Month-Club selection and it was included on the Catholic Book Club’s reading list. Readers found both the story and Hulme’s outstanding writing compelling and memorable. In the *Herald Tribune*, Mary Ellen Chase wrote:

This engrossing narrative, for it is a narrative as well as a portrait of memorable persons and the description of a way of life, will need, will demand, and even compel at least two readings. In the first, readers will become absorbed in carefully wrought incidents, superbly drawn characters, unfamiliar and beautifully described settings; in the second they will be more able to discern, appreciate, and evaluate a manner of life and thought, which, however strange in a world like our own, cannot fail to make a lasting impression upon the reflective mind.⁶⁰

When it was made into a movie in 1959, starring Audrey Hepburn as Sister Luke, *The Nun's Story* won still more fans. Both Hulme and Habets acted as consultants on the film, contributing to its overwhelming success. The film was nominated for the Academy Award for best picture (though it lost to *Ben-Hur*) and Audrey Hepburn was nominated for best actress. Though she didn't win the Oscar, Hepburn earned best actress awards from the British Academy of Film and Television Arts and the New York Film Critics' Circle. Hepburn was particularly pleased with one fan's response and wrote Habets and Hulme to tell them about it:

After seeing *The Nun's Story* when the lights went up in the theater she genuflected and crossed herself at the screen, having been so transported she thought herself in church. We still laugh at this marvelous compliment to our endeavor.⁶¹

Hulme's next novel, *Annie's Captain* (1961), was a fictionalized account of the lives of her grandparents, a New England ship captain and his wife. The book, which focuses largely on the strong and resilient character based on Hulme's grandmother, was praised for its "shrewd observations." Hulme was credited with "paint[ing] a backdrop rich in details of history and geography."⁶² For her next project, Hulme considered writing her own autobiography. In a letter to Beatrice Baumgarten Cozzens, Hulme notes one motivation for considering the project: "a half century of a woman's life in a century when women like me, childless, husbandless, outside the conforming norm, might, just might be news of a sort."⁶³ Though Hulme followed *Annie's Captain* with other books, she never wrote an autobiography.

Hulme and Habets moved to Hawaii in 1960 and lived there for the rest of their lives. In their later years, they continued a lively correspondence with the women in their European circle, writing and exchanging manuscripts with Margaret Anderson and Solita Solano, and sharing memories of their Paris days with Jane Heap and Djuna Barnes.

Hulme, Barnes, and others left Europe and returned to the United States after years abroad, but many American women, including Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas and Natalie Barney and Romaine

Brooks, remained in France for the rest of their lives; “why one decides to return to one’s native land,” Glenway Wescott wrote, “is often as difficult to explain as why one decides to leave it.” World War II and the German occupation of France in 1940 is often said to mark the end of the American expatriate community in Europe, but the relationships and artistic alliances built there continued to influence members of the circle throughout their careers. Indeed, the achievements of women like Josephine Baker, Gertrude Stein, Maria Jolas, and their compatriots influenced American literary and artistic movements throughout the twentieth century.

-
- 1 *Andrea Weiss*, *Paris Was a Woman*, *New York: Pandora*, 1995, p. 21.
 - 2 *Janet Flanner*, *Paris Was Yesterday*, ed. *Irving Drutman*, *New York: Viking*, 1940, p. xvi.
 - 3 *Weiss*, *Paris Was a Woman*, pp. 147-48.
 - 4 *Flanner*, *Paris Was Yesterday*, p. 3.
 - 5 *William Wiser*, *The Great Good Place: American Expatriate Women in Paris*, *New York: Norton*, 1979, p. 287.
 - 6 "To 'Atonè' for *Nude Dancer*," *New York Times*, 12 March 1928.
 - 7 "Long Way from *St. Louis*," *Time* (12 March 1951): 65.
 - 8 *Gertrude Stein*, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, *New York: Harcourt, Brace*, 1933, pp. 97-98.
 - 9 *Flanner*, *Paris Was Yesterday*, p. 187.
 - 10 *Stein*, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, p. 5.
 - 11 *Mabel Dodge Luhan*, *European Experiences*, *New York: Harcourt, Brace*, 1935, pp. 324-26.
 - 12 "Gertrude Stein Arrives and Baffles Reporters by Making Herself Clear," *New York Times*, 25 October 1934.
 - 13 *Muriel Draper*, *Music at Midnight*, *New York: Harper*, 1929, pp. 152-53.
 - 14 *Flanner*, *Paris Was Yesterday*, p. 9.
 - 15 "Miss Stein Speaks to Bewildered 500," *New York Times*, 2 November 1934.
 - 16 *Maria Jolas*, *Testimony Against Gertrude Stein*, transition *Pamphlet #1*, supplement to vol. 23, February 1935, p. 12.
 - 17 *Jolas*, *Testimony Against Gertrude Stein*, p. 11.
 - 18 *Natalie Clifford Barney*, foreword to *As Fine As Melanctha* by *Gertrude Stein*, *New Haven: Yale University Press*, 1954, p. viii.
 - 19 *Barney*, foreword to *As Fine As Melanctha*, p. x.
 - 20 *Weiss*, *Paris Was a Woman*, p. 100.
 - 21 *Luhan*, *European Experiences*, p. 214.
 - 22 *Romaine Brooks* to *Gertrude Stein*, n.d., *Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas Papers*.
 - 23 *Weiss*, *Paris Was a Woman*, p. 108.
 - 24 *Marianne Moore* to H. D., 11 January 1921, *The Selected Letters of Marianne Moore*, ed. *Bonnie Costello*, *New York: Knopf*, 1997, p. 140.
 - 25 *William Carlos Williams*, *Kora in Hell*, *Boston: Four Seas*, 1920, pp. 12-13.
 - 26 *Marianne Moore*, *The Complete Poems of Marianne Moore*, *New York: Macmillan*, 1967, pp. 51-52.
 - 27 *Stein*, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, p. 162.
 - 28 *Carolyn Burke*, *Becoming Modern: The Life of Mina Loy*, *New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux*, 1996, p. 362.
 - 29 *Yvor Winters*, "Mina Loy," *The Dial*, 80.6 (June 1926): 498.
 - 30 [*Harriet Monroe*,] "The Editor in France," *Poetry*, 22.8 (November 1923): 95-96.
 - 31 *Thomas C. Lynn*, "In the Galleries," *New York Times*, 5 February 1933.
 - 32 *Marianne Moore* to *Bryher*, 7 July 1921, *Selected Letters of Marianne Moore*, p. 165
 - 33 H. D. to *George Plank*, 17 July 1950, *George Plank Papers*.
 - 34 *Barbara Guest*, *Herself Defined: The Poet H. D. and Her World*, *Garden City: Doubleday*, 1984, p. 159.
 - 35 *Percy Hutchinson*, "New Books of Poetry," *New York Times*, 31 January 1932.
 - 36 Unidentified clipping, about 1927, *Olga Rudge Papers*.
 - 37 "Violin Recital," *Hampstead and St. John Wood Advertiser*, 1 July 1915.

-
- 38 "Olga Rudge's Recital," *Pall Mall Gazette*, 13 June 1918.
- 39 *Humphrey Carpenter*, *A Serious Character: The Life of Ezra Pound*, Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1988, p. 434.
- 40 *Carpenter*, *A Serious Character*, p. 434.
- 41 "Youngstown Violinist Plays Before Premier Mussolini," *Youngstown Telegram*, undated clipping, *Olga Rudge Papers*.
- 42 "Beauty Adorned: Books for Collectors," *The Observer*, 22 November 1931.
- 43 "Limited Editions and Fine Books," *The Week-end Review*, 7 November 1931.
- 44 *Barbara Harrison Wescott*, unpublished manuscript, [1934,] *Harrison of Paris Records*.
- 45 *Barbara Harrison Wescott*, "To Manila," unpublished manuscript, n.d., *Harrison of Paris Records*.
- 46 *Barbara Harrison Wescott*, "Malacanan," unpublished manuscript, n.d., *Harrison of Paris Records*.
- 47 *Herbert R. Lottman*, "One of the Quiet Ones," *New York Times*, 22 March 1970.
- 48 *Stein*, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, p. 295.
- 49 *Jolas*, *Testimony Against Gertrude Stein*, pp. 9, 11.
- 50 *Guest*, *Herself Defined: The Poet H. D. and Her World*, p. 165.
- 51 *Stein*, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, p. 296.
- 52 *Jolas*, *Testimony Against Gertrude Stein*, p. 9.
- 53 *Flanner*, *Paris Was Yesterday*, p. 20.
- 54 *Maria Jolas*, unpublished war diary, 25 June 1940, p. [1,] *Eugene and Maria Jolas Papers*.
- 55 *Lottman*, "One of the Quiet Ones."
- 56 *Lottman*, "One of the Quiet Ones."
- 57 *Beatrice Sheran*, "These Children Had a Lively Time," *New York Times*, 3 July 1938.
- 58 *George N. Shuster*, "They Never Went Home," *New York Times*, 1 November 1953.
- 59 *Albert Hubbell*, "The Dedicated Life," *New Yorker* (29 September 1956): 138.
- 60 *Mary Ellen Chase*, "An Enthralling Narrative of a Profound Experience," *New York Herald Tribune*, 9 September 1956.
- 61 *Audrey Hepburn to Marie-Louise Habets*, 30 August 1961, *Kathryn Hulme Papers*.
- 62 *Walter Teller*, "The Sea Was Rival," *New York Times*, 19 March 1961.
- 63 *Kathryn Hulme to Beatrice Baumgarten Cozzens*, 24 April 1961, *Kathryn Hulme Papers*.