little-known documents

Lament for the Left Bank

DJUNA BARNES

INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY AARON YALE HEISLER

Introduction

IN 1940 DJUNA BARNES, AUTHOR OF THE NOTORIOUS BUT WEAK-SELLING *NIGHTWOOD* (1936), RECEIVED A COMMISSION FROM HARRY A. Bull, editor of the New York–based society magazine *Town & Country*, to write a short reminiscence of Paris in the 1920s. The Nazi occupation of the erstwhile world capital of the avant-garde gave *Town & Country*'s well-heeled readership reason to be nostalgic for Paris's glamorous recent past. As for Barnes, despite her dwindling book sales, she still had some celebrity—especially among those American readers who remembered her risqué one-time best seller *Ryder* (1928)—as an artist, journalist, and character of the Paris scene. Struggling with alcoholism and illness, and fiercely private, but desperate for money, she accepted the commission (Herring 242–50). Drawing on material in a notebook she had carried while working as a journalist in the 1920s (Caselli 116), as well as an unpublished 1939 essay, "Farewell Paris," Barnes took her miniature memoir through several drafts over the course of 1940 and 1941.

The result was "Lament for the Left Bank," the first new work by this once prolific author in five years. Published in December 1941, as the principal feature of a "gala holiday issue" marking the magazine's ninety-fifth year—and accompanied by a note declaring Barnes "the most brilliant woman writing English prose today"—the article would, in a sense, represent her farewell to the literary mainstream and to the general reading public. After eventually producing an extraordinary closet tragedy in impenetrable, Jacobean-style blank verse (*The Antiphon*, 1958), she published little, writing an enormous quantity of unpublished poetry in the last twenty-five years of her life, only some of which has begun to emerge in editions by Rebecca Loncraine (Book) and Phillip Herring and Osías Stutman (*Collected Poems*). Barnes died in 1982, soon after the publication of her final authorized work, the poem "Rite of Spring"—an enigmatic three-line "work-in-progress," apparently about the pain of "purg[ing]" and "re-consider[ing]" the past ("Work").

AARON YALE HEISLER is an assistant professor of English literature at Trent University. His essays have appeared or are forthcoming in *Modernism/Modernity*, *African American Review*, and *Philological Quarterly*.

Introduction and notes © 2015 AARON YALE HEISLER. "Lament for the Left Bank" © Copyright, THE AUTHORS LEAGUE FUND AND ST. BRIDE'S CHURCH, as joint literary executors of the Estate of Djuna Barnes.

PMLA 130.1 (2015), published by the Modern Language Association of America

https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2015.130.1.110 Published online by Cambridge University Press

"Lament for the Left Bank" is a valuable document of the burgeoning nostalgia industry surrounding the culture of Paris modernism, and especially of the surviving artists' involvement in that industry. At once it reflects and contributes to the consolidation of key modernist myths: the literary Lost Generation, the salons of Natalie Clifford Barney and Gertrude Stein, the cult of Jean Cocteau ("he was a malady as deadly as the cholera"), the shattering impact of *The Rite of Spring*, the scandal and revelation of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. The editor's note plays up Barnes's expatriate bona fides and literary connections, situating her among the modernist "advance guard" alongside T. S. Eliot, whose name is pointedly dropped. But Barnes's technique in the article is more impersonal than such a résumé might lead one to expect. She cultivates a degree of ironic and even defensive detachment in her depiction of modernist Paris that is evocative of, and yet distinct from, some of the more extended efforts in the genre, such as Stein's *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1933) and Ernest Hemingway's *A Moveable Feast* (1964).

At the same time, Barnes also trades on her privileged perspective to intervene in the emerging mythology. Her portrayal of Ezra Pound, for example, is affectionate and earthy, against the grain of public opinion toward the poet, whose political ideas and reputation for obscure writing were making him increasingly isolated. And the intimate, awestruck portrait of Joyce, in contrast to the more aloof and irreverent treatment of Stein and Cocteau, testifies not just to the deep respect Barnes had for him as an artist but also to her personal feeling for him and his family. The result is a fascinating balance, by turns opaque and hilarious, between the unfamiliar and the familiar—between Barnes's distinctive style and perspective and what we would now recognize as clichés about the interwar Paris arts scene. As cultural products such as Woody Allen's *Midnight in Paris* (2011) continue to invoke and market the enduring mystique of modernist Paris, Barnes's idiosyncratic early formulation of a now familiar brand of nostalgic retrospection—looking back on a time, not exactly innocent, when art and everyday life alike seemed charged with revolutionary promise—is, curiously enough, more timely than ever.

"Lament for the Left Bank" appeared in a spread alongside "Lament for the Right Bank," a brief epitaph by Erskine Gwynne for the caricaturist Sem and some of his socialite subjects, under the joint heading "Vantage Ground." The phrase reappears in the first section of Barnes's piece. The heading was likely editorial: Barnes seems to have been unsure of it, and on one page of a draft typescript she reverts to the more familiar phrase "Vantage Point" (*Collected Poems* 238). Again, the heading suggests *Town & Country*'s playing up of the privileged individual perspectives of Barnes and Gwynne, underscored by an authentic Sem caricature of the latter included with "Right Bank." The phrase "Vantage Ground" also hints at the ground war under way on the Continent, the struggle between Axis and Allies for geographic advantage that was menacing the landmarks memorialized by both articles. But Barnes's use of the term resists those associations: to Barnes, Paris in the 1920s was "Vantage Ground" because of the artists' community that happened to be in place there, not because of anything especially romantic or historic about the city itself. The advantage it presented was in helping American expatriate artists like herself develop their aesthetics and, above all, reach an audience. Like Pound, they—and she—"would never have been so articulate at home."

Despite efforts to promote the "gala holiday issue" of *Town & Country*—highlighting Barnes's contribution—in other Hearst magazines, such as *Harper's Bazaar*, "Lament for the Left Bank" seems not to have attracted much notice in its day. Since the initial publication, it has never been reprinted in its entirety. In 1995 Andrea Weiss reproduced some of the first page of the published version in her book *Paris Was a Woman* (173). Later a fragmentary draft version, missing its first half, with elements transposed from different typescripts, was published by Herring and Stutman as "Vantage Ground" (*Collected Poems* 235–39), under the

https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2015.130.1.110 Published online by Cambridge University Press

editorial heading "Notes toward the Memoirs." But the editors seem unaware that "Vantage Ground" is actually a draft for "Lament for the Left Bank." They also reprint two other incomplete pieces, "Farewell Paris" and "A Way of Life," from which Barnes drew material for "Lament."

"Lament for the Left Bank" is accompanied here by notes, some of which provide information about fixtures and figures of Paris life that Barnes might have expected her readers to be familiar with. (*Town & Country* in those days was full of ads for leisure travel destinations.) Barnes's frame of reference was never quite that of her contemporaries, and the passage of time has made her perspective even harder for outsiders to approach without help—while also making it that much more seductive.

Works Cited

Barnes, Djuna. The Book of Repulsive Women *a Poems*. Ed. Rebecca Loncraine. Manchester: Fyfield, 2003. Print.

———. *Collected Poems, with Notes toward the Memoirs*. Ed. Phillip Herring and Osías Stutman. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 2005. Print.

———. "Lament for the Left Bank." *Town & Country* Dec. 1941: 92+. Print.

———. "Work-in-Progress: Rite of Spring," *Grand Street* 1.3 (1982): 66. Print.

Caselli, Daniela. "Geographies of Loss in Djuna Barnes's Bewildering Corpus." *Transits: The Nomadic Geographies of Anglo-American Modernism*. Ed. Giovanni Cianci, Caroline Patey, and Sara Sullam. Bern: Lang, 2010. 103–23. Print.

Gwynne, Erskine. "Lament for the Right Bank." *Town & Country* Dec. 1941: 93+. Print.

Herring, Phillip. *Djuna: The Life and Work of Djuna Barnes*. New York: Viking, 1995. Print.

Weiss, Andrea. *Paris Was a Woman: Portraits from the Left Bank*. San Francisco: Harper, 1995. Print.

Lament for the Left Bank

Personally I would give all I have, except what I got from it, to be back in Paris again as it was, sitting at a bistro table with its iron legs in the sawdust from the escargot baskets, the cheap, badly-pressed cotton napkin coming off all over my best cloak—that napkin with its hems always half turned and heavy with the blood-red of yesterday's burgundy—a carafe of vin ordinaire before me, an oval dish of salade de tomate, a bowl of cress soup, a blanquette de veau, green almonds—anything—only to hear again the sad, angry popping of the taxi horns, the gracious flowing language chattered by clerks off for two hours of food and argument. To see the patchwork theatrical placards on the kiosks, the pink-paper lampoons on the plaster wall of the house across the way (these were to Paris what the *p* was to Rome).[1] To hear the light rustling of the small trees in their iron corsets as they leaned to the damp air, to smell the garlic and the bad *g* — the worst of tobaccos—or just to look through the glass front of the restaurant inward where, behind the bar, the patron danced about his capable wife, before the organ-pipe regiment of bottles—red, yellow, green, brown—reiterated in the gigantic mirror, and way down in front the sea-anemone stomachs of the French citizens, napery at neck, talking to their alert women with low brows, tasseled with clipped bangs, dressed in abominable, enduring black, fluted and as dusty as a pauper's funeral, and over it all the curling vowels and consonants, lacelike and yet indomitable, veering yet stable, a plant in running water which is the French tongue tethered to the French mind.

Yes, this, and to see the fiacre passing, with its lovers, black glove pressed on black

https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2015.130.1.110 Published online by Cambridge University Press

glove (the French lived the gayest life in the fullest mourning): about her neck the sudden crimson of a wanton ribbon, in his buttonhole a drop of scarlet approval, and in front of them the dark blue of the driver's cape, shaped by the body, drowsy, heavy, solid, yet filled with blasphemy which, at a tilt, could come out at the whip's and the tongue's end.

Then to cross over to a nearby café for a brandy, a tilleul, a Cointreau, dodging as you went the peculiarly charming traffic—automobiles, street busses, the guards with horse tails floating from the rumps of their helmets, the blue-bloused workingman, the hurrying chambermaid, the screaming market wench with her yard of bread—over to that island of contemplation, the terrace café, the outdoor parlor of France.

And that is the real secret, the secret of that great and fallen country: the open hospitality of the street. Four walls make an argument, a tragedy; the street makes it only a momentary trouble. Here you can come and go. If you meet friends and disagree, you pay your bill and leave; if you "get on," you go from there to any harmony. At a café you can knit up the raveled sleave of time, or be as bitter as you like and owe it only to yourself. No house can claim so much. The house holds bitterness, the street does not.

Few American writers took Paris for a literary background,[2] though Paris was the magnet that drew them toward their own minds, as the Genoa Breughel of Saint Anthony dedicated Flaubert not to Genoa but to himself. Barbusse's *Le Feu* had been devoured.[3] Ford Madox Ford chalked up *No More Parades*. There was the German *All Quiet on the Western Front*. E. E. Cummings struck off *The Enormous Room*. From Italy came Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*.

Well?

Those who would not have "amounted to much" (the family always wrote in this vein) would not have amounted to much anywhere. It was simply more enjoyable amounting to nothing in Paris. Those who did seemed as if they would have "amounted" had they stayed back home. Sinclair Lewis' doorbell will always ring in Main Street. Sherwood Anderson might have ranged from Peking to Puerto Rico, but his heroines would still prefer rising in the western corn. Carl Sandburg (had he been in time) might have crossed wits at the restaurant Magny with Taine and the Goncourt brothers—but Lincoln would have paid the bill.[4] Can you fancy Steinbeck forgetting the wrath of his particular grapes for any Tokay or Bollinger? Bromfield being Bromfield with a difference?

No. But there were others who, though apparently "terribly American," could not have been so without Vantage Ground. Ezra Pound cried aloud against America's lack of esthetic. From Rapallo, from the Loire to Orléans, from the Vaucluse to the Drôme, he raised his red beard chanting his Provençal cantos, roaring his discovery of Joyce to *The Little Review* back in the deplorable States, proclaiming his belief in T. S. Eliot to England, his predictions for the musician George Antheil.[5] Pound was a ferociously kindly man who, marching to "Yankee Doodle," sang the praises of all good things in other worlds. He would never have been so articulate at home.

Some authors wrote from nostalgia (it was good for them); some from *Sehnsucht*. Little Thornton Wilder, sipping his *formidable* at Lipp's with his great friend, the towering Tunney, thought of Madame de Sévigné and distant Peru, listening to Gene intoning Shakespeare.[6] William Seabrook was burning with the devil in savage lands, or kicking iron maidens about under his breakfast table in Paris;[7] Edna St. Vincent Millay ate her écrevisse, rognons de veau, or grenouilles (I hope) and drank her vin rosé or downed the snail gathered from suburban tombs, as her husband plunged into the Seine to save a citizen bent on suicide.[8] France changed their

https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2015.130.1.110 Published online by Cambridge University Press

stomachs if[9] nothing else. The rescued damsel became their cook.

Of those writers who seem to have been almost entirely deracinated, three stood out. The first was Natalie Barney, whose salon in the rue Jacob is perhaps the most famous for its lack of Americans.[10] Miss Barney entertained French statesmen, aging philosophers, poets, and haggard ladies of the faubourg St. Germain and the Proust tradition.[11] Here titles and courtesans swayed among the callas, balancing sea urchins or sherbets, as the case might be, as fair blond ladies in flowing robes plucked at harps. Another was Kay Boyle. She has written almost exclusively of foreign peoples, but she has written as feminine Americans write, with great felicity, but tuned a little high. Then there was Julian Green. It is difficult to say much about him: he was very odd indeed; he *wrote in French*.

Unforgettable, fallen Paris! Who has not loved it for something no other city could offer! What was it? The Luxembourg gardens with granite queens whose outstretched arms were perches for pigeons, children playing under regimented trees, Punch and Judy, hoops and balls rolling silently and, seemingly, alone on a personal promenade?[12] Was it the forgotten bistros remembered by chauffeurs and sparrows? Was it the Tomb of Napoleon, housing the little body in a great casket like a silent piano? The *cirque* and the fairs, the book stalls and the *antiquaires*? The crazy and haunting streets, the incomparable cathedrals, and little churches? Auteuil and Longchamp; grand names watching great horses?[13] The museums, Cluny, and the Carnavalet, the Guimet where Thaïs (though she is not Thaïs) lies faceless in her crown of rusty hair?[14] Or the Champs-Élysées, the couturiers and perfumers, the flower market and the bird market? All this, deep in time, a time that came to the nose as tobacco, chocolate, and wine.

Strangely enough the greatest influence in the writers' lives of that period were an American, a Frenchman, and a Dubliner: Gertrude Stein, Jean Cocteau, and James Joyce.

Gertrude Stein had resided in Paris long before the war. She had seen the contortions of Cubism, the birth of Futurism, the rise of Vorticism and Dadaism. Back in the days of Johns Hopkins, Gertrude Stein had wielded the scalpel over the human body.[15] She now waved it over the English dictionary. She delighted in amazing the public; to *épater la bourgeoisie* was her amusement. She had written *Three Lives* in intelligible English; on that she turned her back with *Tender Buttons*. She sat beneath Picasso's portrait of herself in the rue de Fleurus and told about it all, her stockings rolling about her ankles, a great grave cameo on her great grave bosom, solid and as certain as a rock, with a face that was *almost* imperishable. She had been a pioneer in appreciation of Picasso and the music of Schönberg and Mahler. She now admitted to a "weakness for Hemingway" and, in a lesser degree, the gentle malleability of Sherwood Anderson. She surrounded herself with unknown boys who aspired to letters. Chiefly she patronized herself. She would speak of "Myself and Henry James—"

Some of the Quarter thought her mad, others merely tiresome. Nevertheless, on some few she had a profound influence—on Hemingway certainly. If his past works do not cry it aloud, *For Whom The Bell Tolls* does. The hero Jordan of that book says, "A rose is a rose is an onion." Later: "A stone is a Stein is a rock is a boulder is a pebble." If this is not appreciation and a portrait, what is it? Criticism? That word "pebble"—

Had France made Gertrude Stein? Well, her brother Leo, who had been a foremost critic of painting in the United States, as well as a noted vegetarian, turned up in Paris, that city of chefs, a vegetarian still. It was well that the[16] Steins were people of means. Both vegetables and Picasso come high in Paris.

Back in 1921 or 1922 Crommelynck's *Le Cocu Magnifique* was the rage of the boule-

https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2015.130.1.110 Published online by Cambridge University Press

vards,[17] and Jean Cocteau was beginning to be the talk of the town. Everyone was soon copying what he said, ate, did, and wore. Tough little girls from Poland had the vapors when they knew he was lying, pallid and quiet, in his apartment. Frail, small boys from Virginia were trying out opium. Cocteau was as fashionable as a new "creation." With the opening of Le Boeuf sur le Toit (the name taken from his ballet)[18] the Cocteau fever reached its height. He was the *bête noire* of the Dadaists—Tristan Tzara, Philippe Soupault, Paul Elouard, Jacques Baron, Robert Desnos, and Louis Aragon—but he was the most positive delight of the young and impressionable, and, as a matter of fact, of a few octogenarians.

Cocteau seemed made of something more ancient than flesh; a plan in bones as excellent as a Gothic perpendicular. His hands were fabulous, long, slender, and aware, moving about him as if detached and curious. Later they lay in white plaster on a black velvet cushion in an exhibition of his designs.

Suave, charming, impeccable, dressed by Chanel, perfumed by *Numéro Cinq*,[19] shod in antelope; sharp and perfect, even to his sharp and perfect eyes, he spoke only to the chosen few. He said, "I rehabilitate the commonplace." His teeth were very near the skin, the skin very near the skeleton. He said, *"Le café-concert est souvent pur; le théâtre toujours corrompu!"*[20]

He set his Tragic Muse on the circus horse. Fratellini and Hamlet met.[21] Greek legend, Christian morality, and the street fair were brought together. In his *Orphée*, death comes for Eurydice in the black rubber gloves of the surgeon. Horses tapped; glaziers were also angels; and Madame Pitoëff walked backward into mirrors with less trepidation than Alice did in getting into Wonderland.[22] "His conjuring tricks," James Lover said, "so far from making death ridiculous, make conjuring terrible."[23]

His experience under opium was printed, and a goodly number of people who had never set eyes on him took to the pipe and pellet. He was said to be indirectly responsible for the suicide of a girl who had read *Les Enfants Terribles*. This shocking event gave Cocteau an idea. He let it "get about" that he was on the point of taking Holy Orders. His following, almost to a man, smelling deliciously of *Numéro Cinq*, dressed by Chanel, tiptoeing on antelope, entered the Church. Carefully dusting two puce gloves together, Cocteau tiptoed out.[24] It did little good, a new group formed, they ran to his piping like the rats to the Piper of Hamelin. He was not just a rage, he was a malady as deadly as the cholera. He was loved and he was hated, he was never ignored.

Then one day in February, 1922, something else happened. A copy of a book, bound in blue and named *Ulysses*, appeared in the window of Sylvia Beach's bookshop, Shakespeare & Co. Expatriate pens stood still. Wasn't this that book that had been, in its serial form in *The Little Review*, hailed into court before it had reached many pages? It was. Pernod, Byrrh, Dubonnet, Cognac stood motionless in their glasses. This time writers were floored. They wept in joy and copied in despair. Some even returned home deflated and yet proud. Under the last shirt in the last suitcase lay a copy of that blue book, banned both in England and America. James Augustine Joyce (he was baptized Augusta, due to some confusion in the mind of the parish clerk of Rathgar) was ushering out an age.

Joyce, born in the troubled times of Parnell, educated at Clongowes and Belvedere (at one time he had serious thoughts of the priesthood), had, overnight, changed the perspective of all who embraced the hope of a literary career. He was living, though seldom seen, in great poverty in the rue de l'Université. Seen or not seen, he was pounced upon in the body of this new, astounding work.

Little magazines, *This Quarter*, *transition*, *The Transatlantic Review*, tore him apart in discussion. Portions of the book now

https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2015.130.1.110 Published online by Cambridge University Press

entitled *Finnegans Wake* were first seen in *transition* under its temporary title, *Work in Progress*.[25] Everyone re-read *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*; his early poems were put to music by impassioned minor composers in unknown garrets. Once in a blue moon someone was in demand for cocktails because he had seen Joyce either at the Deux Magots[26] or, less often, at the Gypsy Bar, sipping his then favorite drink, a concoction of anise-pernod-susse et fine—the strongest drink known to man.

Stein's star, Cocteau's moon, had set.

Joyce was as poor as Job; he lived and had his being in a single room with his wife Nora and his daughter Lucia. His son Giorgio slept under the roof. When Joyce's birthday came around Nora could not, much to her distress,[27] procure him the two worldly things his soul desired, a finger ring of iron and a perfume called Apopanax.[28] When Nora wasn't worried, she was as gay and witty as any daughter of Erin.

Joyce himself was another matter. Tall, silent, and thin, with an ancient dignity, a flat-backed head that ran scrupulously into the line of his neck, a patch over one eye, a fine nose, a small, martyred, satyric, and stubborn mouth—you have Joyce—the Grand Inquisitor come to judge himself. To ask him a question was to receive a cold, terrible gaze. Joyce alone could question Joyce. Proust was called his "father," but Proust was still "unknown."

All this, and Paris too! What do we, who have known Paris, not owe her? You could take away what you could keep. If it was everything, you could have that also. There were gayer days then than were ever known anywhere else, and sadder. There was the excitement of the short-lived theatre, the Cigale, backed by the Count de Beaumont.[29] There was the Ballet Russe and its Picasso woman curtain, a great pink, hard creature running across the sand. There was "Sacre du Printemps" and the young English girl (going under an old Russian name) who nearly danced herself to death in it and was picked up unconscious and famous.[30]

You could get wisdom at the Sorbonne, talk to scholars, argue with great metaphysicians, rub shoulders with plush ladies of the theatre.

You could meet almost anyone if you wanted to enough. This you cannot and could not do in the United States—nor, of course, in Paris either if you were a complete idiot. But you could if you were intelligent and interested. This point has not been brought out often enough.

Then too you could go to the Devil if you wanted, if that was your ultimate destination. You could either become something at the Beaux-Arts or nothing at all at the Quatz 'Arts.[31] You might enrich yourself with visits to the places were Balzac worked, or you could go to Zelli's or Ciro's and go berserk as a bronco, and wake in the morning groaning aloud that you had not taken in the opera, or at least dined in the Bois at the Pré-Catelan or the Château de Madrid, or at worst taken in the Grand Guignol and in a grisly mood ended up at the Halles on "Black Velvet" (that one thing *had* to be done no matter *who* or what you were).[32]

As I write, it now seems utterly enviable to be in either state or condition. What did it matter as long as Paris was there?

The dreadful thing is not that all these things were done, but that they are over.

The author: **Djuna Barnes** *is considered by the "advance guard" to be the most brilliant woman writing English prose today. Born in Croton-on-Hudson,*[33] *she worked on newspapers in New York, and after the appearance of her first book, "A Night Among the Horses," a collection of short stories, went to Paris, where she wrote the anonymous "Ladies' Almanack." Her novel "Ryder" was followed by "Nightwood," published simultaneously in England*

https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2015.130.1.110 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and America, the U. S. edition with an introduction by T. S. Eliot.

Editor's Notes

1. Or *pasquinade*, an anonymous lampoon posted in a public place, from *Pasquino*, the name of a famous "talking statue" in Rome dating from antiquity on which satirical epigrams have been posted since the seventeenth century. Some of Barnes's unpublished late draft poems are spoken by a sardonic "Dan Pasquin."

2. Barnes must have imagined herself, with *Nightwood*, to be a notable exception.

3. Henri Barbusse's *Le feu* (1916), known in English as *Under Fire*, was an early novel depicting soldiers' experiences of the First World War. Erich Maria Remarque's *Im Westen nichts Neues* (1929; *All Quiet on the Western Front*), which Barnes also mentions, may have been influenced by it.

4. The Flaubert circle, including the Goncourts and the critic Hippolyte Taine, met twice a month in the Latin Quarter during the 1860s and 1870s for *les dîners Magny*. Sandburg had recently won the Pulitzer Prize for *The War Years* (1939), the second of his biographies of Abraham Lincoln (the first being *The Prairie Years*, published in 1926).

5. Antheil, the self-proclaimed "Bad Boy" of modern music, helped Pound compose *Le testament* (1924), a setting of poetry by François Villon. In the draft pages for "Lament," Barnes offers conflicting accounts of an outlandish story involving a performance of Antheil's "opera for eight pianos and a fog horn," which, before the pianists can even arrive, brings down "a rain of hisses, ripe tomatoes, and opened umbrellas in the audience where Picasso sat, and Joyce and Pound, and everyone that mattered from the countesses and kings to the concierge and cooks" (*Collected Poems* 8, 237). The composition and performance resist identification, but Herring in his notes to *Collected Poems* speculates that Barnes had the premiere of Antheil's *Ballet mécanique* (1926) in mind (237n14).

6. James Joseph "Gene" Tunney was a boxer, the world heavyweight champion in 1926–28. The Brasserie Lipp ("Lipp's") was—and still is—a busy bar and grill, which, according to Barnes, was "famous for its beer and frankfurters" (*Collected Poems* 259).

7. Seabrook was a journalist and "adventurer" (as the jacket copy of his 1933 book *Air Adventure* styles him), specializing in exotic sensation and the occult. He wrote a series of best sellers, starting with *The Magic Island* (1929), an account of voodoo rites in Haiti, which, among other things, can be credited with introducing the zombie to the American popular imagination. Its follow-up, *Jungle Ways* (1930), about sorcery and cannibalism in West Africa, notoriously documented Seabrook's own experiments with cooking and eating human flesh (ostensibly procured for him by a friend at the Sorbonne). Barnes's reference to iron maidens may be an allusion to Seabrook's then-new *Witchcraft: Its Power in the World Today* (1940), a skeptical collection of anecdotes on such subjects as "torture to drive out devils" and Countess Elizabeth Báthory, the "world champion lady vampire of all time."

8. This incident happened in April 1932 (Milford 346–47). Barnes's subsequent claim that the "rescued damsel" (her name was Pauline Venys) became their cook is carried over from "A Way of Life" (*Collected Poems* 244) but has resisted confirmation.

9. End of page 92 in original publication. Article continues on page 136.

10. Barney's lesbian circle was lovingly lampooned by Barnes in her anonymous, privately printed 1928 book *Ladies Almanack* (richly illustrated and ascribed to a "lady of fashion").

11. The Faubourg St. Germain is an aristocratic district of Paris.

12. The Luxembourg Gardens is a public park known for its statues of queens, writers, and artists. There was once a marionette theater on the grounds (hence the reference to Punch and Judy).

13. Horse-racing courses (*hippodromes*). Auteuil was the setting for the equestrian events of the 1924 Summer Olympics.

14. The Guimet collects Asian art; it is not clear which piece Barnes refers to, but, given the Guimet's collection, it would not depict Thaïs, the celebrated Athenian hetaera of the era of Alexander the Great. The Cluny holds an important collection of medieval materials, while the Carnavalet collects materials relating to the history of Paris.

15. Stein, under the mentorship of William James (not Henry, whose fellowship Stein claims later in this paragraph), had spent two years at Johns Hopkins Medical School before leaving for Europe in 1902.

16. End of page 136. Article continues on next page.

17. Farce by Fernand Crommelynck, first performed in 1920.

18. Cabaret founded in 1921, which indeed took its name from a ballet by Cocteau and the composer Darius Milhaud.

19. The fragrance Chanel No. 5, introduced in 1921.

20. Quotation from Cocteau's 1918 tract *Le coq et l'arlequin* (33). Barnes probably took the quotation about rehabilitating the commonplace from James Laver's article about Cocteau, discussed below (207). It originates in Cocteau's preface to the published version of his ballet *Les mariés de la tour Eiffel* (1921).

21. The Fratellinis were a family of circus performers popular in Paris after the First World War. End of page 137. Article continues on next page.

https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2015.130.1.110 Published online by Cambridge University Press

22. Ludmilla Pitoëff, a Russian-born comic actress.

23. I.e., James Laver, an English art critic. Barnes slightly misquotes Laver's 1928 article on Cocteau: "This mixture of trick and symbol, so far from making Death ridiculous, makes conjuring terrible" (206). Thanks to Jennifer O'Kell for clearing up this mystery.

24. Cocteau's ostensible conversion to Catholicism happened in 1925 (Walsh 422–23).

25. Barnes later borrowed this working title for her own "Rite of Spring" (discussed below).

26. Café, popular with literary types. An undated black-and-white photograph of the Café des Deux Magots was included with the published version of the article by way of illustration. Barnes interviewed Joyce in 1922 for a profile published in *Vanity Fair* ("James Joyce"). Shortly afterward he apparently presented her with a manuscript of *Ulysses*, a gift she would eventually have to sell to pay off her creditors (O'Neal 140). Her friendship with him is the likely source for the intimate details in this section.

27. End of page 138. Article continues on page 148.

28. Or opoponax, a perfume made from the gum resins of the myrrh tree. Molly Bloom wears it—her stockings are "redolent of opoponax"—in *Ulysses* (357, 682).

29. Count Étienne de Beaumont was part of the circle around Cocteau and produced shows with him, including *Le bœuf sur le toit*, some of them at La Cigale. That theater was not exactly "short-lived"—it had opened in 1887—but Barnes is probably referring to its brief time just before 1927 as a venue for avant-garde performances, including some by the Ballets Russes.

30. The ballet *Le sacre du printemps* (*The Rite of Spring*), scored by Igor Stravinsky, was first produced in 1913 for Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, with choreography by Vaslav Nijinsky. Its first performance, on 29 May 1913, created a famous uproar. Later the ballet was revived, with new choreography by Léonide Massine. This version premiered in 1920 and was performed throughout the 1920s. Barnes is clearly referring to it, not the infamous Nijinsky version; she herself did not arrive in Paris until 1921. The "young English girl (going under an old Russian name)" is Lydia Sokolova, who made a star turn of her role as the Chosen One, a sacrificial virgin who dances herself to death at the ballet's climax. T. S. Eliot singled out "Madame Sokolova" for praise when he reviewed a London performance of the ballet for *The Dial* in 1921 (452). Barnes seems to have had a special interest in *Le sacre du printemps*: as I noted in the introduction, her final authorized publication was a three-line poem called "Rite of Spring," which she claimed to have spent twenty years working on (but nonetheless published under the Joyce-inspired heading "Work-in-Progress"). For a fuller discussion of the ballet's complicated history and Barnes's relation to it, see Heisler.

31. Le Bal des Quat'z'Arts ("4 Arts Ball") was an annual costume party put on by students of painting, sculpture, engraving, and architecture at the École des Beaux-Arts, in Paris, starting in 1892. It was famous for nudity, debauchery, and provocation.

32. Zelli's and Ciro's were nightclubs. "The Bois" is the Bois de Boulogne, a public park containing the Longchamp and Auteuil hippodromes, as well as hotels, restaurants (including the Pré Catelan and the Château de Madrid, named after a palace built on the site in the sixteenth century and demolished during the French Revolution), and other amusements. The Grand Guignol was a theater famous for gory horror shows. Les Halles was an open-air marketplace, known as "le ventre de Paris," or "the belly of Paris" (after an 1873 novel set there by Émile Zola). Apparently, "Black Velvet" is a cocktail of stout beer and champagne.

33. Actually Cornwall-on-Hudson, a village in Orange County, New York—not to be confused with the more literary Croton-on-Hudson, which is in Westchester County.

Works Cited by the Editor

Barnes, Djuna. *Collected Poems, with Notes toward the Memoirs*. Ed. Phillip Herring and Osías Stutman. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 2005. Print.

———. "James Joyce: A Portrait of the Man Who Is, at Present, One of the More Significant Figures in Literature." *Vanity Fair* Apr. 1922: 65+. Print.

———. *Ladies Almanack*. 1928. Facsim. ed. Normal: Dalkey Archive, 1992. Print.

Cocteau, Jean. *Le coq et l'arlequin: Notes autour de la musique*. Paris: Sirène, 1918. Print.

———. *Les mariés de la tour Eiffel*. Paris: Fayard, 1923. Print. Les œuvres libres 21.

Eliot, T. S. "London Letter, September 1921." *Dial* Oct. 1921: 452–55. Print.

Heisler, Aaron Yale. "Literary Memory and the Moment of Modern Music." *Modernism/Modernity* 19.4 (2013): 693–715. Print.

Joyce, James. *Ulysses: The 1922 Text*. Ed. Jeri Johnson. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993. Print.

Laver, James. "The Theatre and Jean Cocteau." *Life and Letters* Aug. 1928: 201–07. Print.

Milford, Nancy. *Savage Beauty: The Life of Edna St. Vincent Millay*. New York: Random, 2002. Print.

O'Neal, Hank. *"Life Is Painful, Nasty and Short . . . in My Case It Has Only Been Painful and Nasty": Djuna Barnes, 1978–1981: An Informal Memoir*. New York: Paragon, 1990. Print.

Seabrook, William B. *Air Adventure: Paris—Sahara—Timbuctoo*. New York: Harcourt, 1933. Print.

———. *Witchcraft: Its Power in the World Today*. New York: Harcourt, 1940. Print.

Walsh, Stephen. *Stravinsky: A Creative Spring—Russia and France, 1882–1934*. London: Cape, 2000. Print.

https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2015.130.1.110 Published online by Cambridge University Press