

SYLVIA BEACH:  
ONLY GENIUSES HERE

THESIS

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by

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By

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May 2010

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**INTRODUCTION:**  
**THE TRANSFORMATION INTO**  
**SYLVIA BEACH**

Who is Silvia? What is she,  
That all our swains commend her?  
Holy, fair, and wise is she;  
The Heaven such grace did lend her,  
That she might admirèd be.

Is she kind as she is fair?  
For beauty lives with kindness.  
Love doth to her eyes repair  
To help him of his blindness,  
And, being helped, inhabits there.

Then to Silvia let us sing,  
That Silvia is excelling;  
She excels each mortal thing  
Upon the dull earth dwelling.  
To her let us garlands bring. (Shakespeare, *The Two Gentleman of Verona*,  
386)

Bookstore owners are often avid readers but lack the talent or desire to pen their own works. It is rare that they leave their mark on the world of literature in a remarkable way, short of providing literature to the general public. Sylvia Beach, an American living in Paris, opened a bookstore which any business person would be proud to own, though her claim to fame is the mark she left regarding literature, instead of running a profitable business. Her bookstore would never become a chain, or do much more than break even during the span of its years. The great accomplishment which Beach has come to be known for today was publishing and distributing James Joyce's acclaimed *Ulysses*. This

is all that most people know of Beach's influence on literature. Besides telling the story of her life in her memoir *Shakespeare and Company*, Beach's attempts at writing for the general public were few. Along with fellow bookstore owner, Adrienne Monnier, Beach translated English literature into French, and vice versa. She did not, however, create poetry or fiction. Perhaps she can be better described as muse rather than author, for her attempt to create a place for those who were enthusiastic about English literature. She provided a place for them to hang their hats and discuss modern literature while in Paris with the bookstore owner as well as other patrons.

Beach was an American who would always consider Princeton home. While she was a child her family moved to New Jersey, where she would live the next decade of her young life. When Beach was around twelve years old she and her family moved to Paris, where her father, a Presbyterian minister, was called for work (Beach, *Shakespeare* 4). Beach's education, both in France as well as the United States, was minimal due to lack of interest as well as illness; she suffered from migraines her entire life. While in France Beach and her sister Holly were sent to school in Lausanne. This gave Beach the chance to be away from her strict family, but the adventure did not last long. She was often ill and unable to attend classes. She chose to return to Paris from school, leaving Holly behind. Instead of going to class regularly and progressing in her education as other children her age were doing, Beach stayed home and read voraciously.

After the family left Paris, Sylvester Beach took a position with the church in Princeton, moving the family back to the United States (Beach, *Shakespeare* 6). In her memoir, Beach recalled the move back to New Jersey:

From Paris we went to Princeton. Father was delighted to be called to Princeton, for he had spent his student years there, and looked on it as home. Mother, too, was happy. Princeton was the town she would have chosen to live in if she had been asked. We settled down in the Colonial parsonage on Library Place. Did the name influence my choice of a career in the book business? (*Shakespeare 7*)

Though she would always consider Princeton home, it was in Paris where Beach would finish out her life and make a huge impact on the literary world. Despite the fact that she was not one of the well-known Left Bank authors, she was a muse to most who passed through and the inspiration for many letters, poems, characters, and novels, as well as the main attraction for many who came to this part of the City of Light. One can hardly tell the story of Paris in the twenties and thirties, or of the Left Bank and its many authors, without telling the story of Sylvia Beach.

Nancy Woodbridge Beach was born in Baltimore, Maryland, March 14, 1887. She changed her name to Sylvia, though the reason for the name change is unclear (Fitch 21). The name is oddly similar to her father's, Sylvester's, though her archived letters to her mother prove that they had a much closer relationship. She had two sisters<sup>1</sup>, Holly and Cyprian, who both also altered their names. Holly's full name was Mary Hollingsworth Morris Beach; she went by Holly. Cyprian was born Eleanor Elliot Beach. She changed her name while pursuing an acting career. It was their mother, Eleanor Orbison, who offered Sylvia Beach her savings to open a bookstore (Beach, *Shakespeare 15*). After Shakespeare and Company's doors were open, Beach's mother would often



visit all three of her daughters, who lived in Europe, for extended stays, leaving Sylvester home.

While growing up in New Jersey, Beach's family was not wealthy, but knew many who were. The Beach family was close to the Stetson family, the famous hat manufacturer. Beach witnessed philanthropy at an early age, as Mr. Stetson took the Beach sisters to tour the factory, and then the hospital, where his workers and their families could receive free medical care as needed (Fitch 24). It was through the Stetson family that young Sylvia Beach was first made aware of the philanthropy her family's friends provided and how truly generous they could be. Before Beach was surrounded by famous writers, and her own fame grew, her father was surrounded by many people who were among the wealthy and elite in America. In *Shakespeare and Company*, Beach recalls her father's parishioners:

[T]he Grover Clevelands, the James Garfields, and the Woodrow Wilsons. . . . Even after the Wilsons moved to Washington, they always considered Father their pastor. They sent for him to perform the ceremony in the White House when both Jessie and Eleanor were married; and, at Wilson's request, Father was one of those who officiated at the President's funeral. (7-8)

Though Beach did not come from wealthy stock, nor would she become wealthy in her own right, she grew up surrounded by philanthropy, wealth, fame, and stature. This upbringing would pave the way for her future. Her tireless efforts to publish one of the world's most famous books, and running what would become one of the world's most famous bookstores, grew out of her appreciation for literature as well as people. Although

Beach was not a creative writer, her mark on the world of literature is astonishing.

Beach's name, as well as her bookstore's, can be seen in multiple works, based on fact as well as fiction, proving she was a remarkable woman and that her name should not be forgotten.

For this thesis I intend to look at the remarkable life of Sylvia Beach, and the contributions she made to the literary world. She was much more than the proprietress of a bookstore and lending library. She ran a business that allowed her friends a sanctuary for those in need of an ear, a book, or a friend. She became close friends with dozens of artists who passed through the streets of the Left Bank. She knew their families and brought them into her life and her home. Her relationship with the patrons of her bookstore will be reviewed, as well as her influence on them and the friendships she developed.

I intend to prove that James Joyce's *Ulysses* as we know it came into existence because of Beach's tireless efforts, her passion, and her love of literature. I will review the progress of *Ulysses* before and after James Joyce came to know Sylvia Beach. Joyce's family, his wife Nora, son Giorgio, and daughter Lucia became very fond of the bookstore owner during the many years Beach worked with their beloved head of household.

Sylvia Beach ran an English-language bookstore and lending library in Paris called Shakespeare and Company. Not long after her doors were open her business turned into a bank and a post office as well as publishing house, due to her clientele's needs and her desire to please them. She played hostess to many of her friends' special requests, and was extremely tolerant of some of their requirements. This paper will reveal her strong

will as well as the reason why so many artists of the Left Bank came to know and to love Sylvia Beach and why many of them dedicated portions of their work to her.

Many of Sylvia Beach's papers are archived at the Harry Ransom Center in Austin, Texas, as part of the Maurice Sallet collection, as well as the Jackson Mathews collection housed at the Princeton University Library's Department of Rare Books and Special Collections. The number of keepsakes held at both institutions proves that Beach did not throw anything away; it also proves that she made a huge impact on her friends in the writing community, as well as the reading public. A small portion of these files will be reviewed for this paper, including letters written to her from authors and their family members as well as works she translated.

#### Note

1. Beach's memoir claims her sisters are younger (4), but according to Fitch, Beach is the middle child (21).

**CHAPTER I**  
**THE PATH IS PAVED:**  
**THE SALON, THE BOOKSTORE, THE LENDING LIBRARY**

The Paris Salon

Sylvia Beach's bookstore and lending library opened when there were few salons still operating in Paris. They were slowly dying out, but the momentum still remained among many literature and art enthusiasts who appreciated the intellectual atmosphere. Salons were not as popular as they had been in the decades before Beach arrived in Paris, but there were a few patrons who were not yet ready to let the custom become endangered. Beach had many bridges to cross in order for her bookstore to become a success. She was a sole-proprietor with a lump sum of money to get started. Her goal was to provide English-language literature to the reading public in France. She may not have set off to create her own salon, but because the salon atmosphere still had a slight presence in France, her store transformed into more than just a retail store.

The concept of the salon as a meeting place has existed for centuries. It gave those of the elite societies a forum in which to gather and mingle with their friends and neighbors. It gave the guests the opportunity to discuss their thoughts and ideas regarding society, art, literature and poetry. They often revolved around philosophic or philanthropic ideals. During certain periods many salons kept their membership to a specific type of people, often limiting artists or writers or other groups from attending.

Other times, those same artists or writers were the elite in attendance. Some salons had the tendency to frown upon certain types of conversation, depending on the type of salon and its general purpose. Many focused on a specific function. There were salons which operated strictly to bring people together as a response to the overwhelming outcry against government, as a political forum for the general public. There were those created for the wives of the society to have a place to gossip with their friends. There were also salons which centered on discussions of literature or art. Some focused on entertaining strictly the elite, and yet others were open in order to bring people together in hopes of offering an assembly for stimulating conversation among friends.

Over the span of the centuries during which salons were run, their favor would increase and decrease dramatically. Though the idea of the salon was not developed in France, the French refined the concept and made it their own longer than any other society. When one thinks of a salon, literary or otherwise, the French salon is more often than not the first to come to mind. In the early days of the French salon, Catherine de Vivonne, who would become the Marquise de Rambouillet, became the proprietress of the Hôtel de Rambouillet and of one of the first popular French salons.

During the late 1600s, Mme. Rambouillet designed the layout specifically to meet the needs of her gatherings. Rearranging the typical structure, “She alone arranged a suitable place with suitable surroundings.” Her husband gave her full rein to plan the layout, trusting his wife completely with the task. “She arranged for the erection of the stairway at the side of the house, and at the end of the courtyard, instead of in the center of the building” (Hamel 6). Mme. Rambouillet stood out because she ran a popular salon, but also because she was one of the first women to do more than organize the meetings

and host a tea party, she masterminded the layout of the salon to accommodate her friends as they mingled. She laid the groundwork in creating a culture that thrived on getting together in a social setting in order to discuss important and often not so important events.

Mme. de Rambouillet was one of the first women in France to run a salon, and was a foremother in creating the culture of a salon as a place for people to discuss current events. She not only understood the importance of gathering in the salon atmosphere, but also understood that the layout was important in terms of offering the most desirable space in order for a group of people to be entertained and to socialize.

Many years after Mme. de Rambouillet, the French salon included the elite alongside the average person. According to Raymond Rudorff, in his book about Paris during the 1890s, *The Belle Epoque*, “There was a movement in Paris towards greater freedom and social mobility” (41). Rudorff describes the shift from the older salons that strictly entertained aristocracy and higher social classes. The movement was making a shift to include less wealthy citizens mixed with the elite. Rudorff goes on to say, “At a slightly lower level of society, it was possible for the adventurer, the literary or artistic bohemian of a certain education to make his way. What most Parisians seemed to want more than anything else was to be amused and there was a future for anyone who could be amusing.” Society no longer required everyone to fit in the same mold. Creativity was encouraged. The French salon was changing as well as the French salon patron. Rudorff describes a Paris that was sought after because of the freedom that its visitors experienced, where people were allowed to be themselves in their thoughts, their

expressions and their dress, in every aspect of their lives. This type of freedom is what brought Sylvia Beach and many of the Left Bank writers to Paris years later.

One of the most well-known French salons was owned by another American expatriate, Natalie Clifford Barney. During Barney's reign, the salon was generally social, and not a place centered on showing off one's stature or position. Barney's guests would dress for the occasion, but the salon costumes of the previous decades were no longer required. Stimulating conversation took precedence over the clothing; the inner being was promoted more than the outer. The guests enjoyed themselves, were offered tea or the occasional snack or hors d'oeuvre (Orenstein 488). Participants were not there strictly because of reputation, although rarely was the evening lacking in celebrity authors. They were there just as any other guest, to discuss works of others, in addition to their own. This was a period when the people of France were aware of modern literature and were receptive to reading and discussing it with friends in a social atmosphere.

Though Sylvia Beach's bookstore and lending library did not take the actual title of a salon, it ran like one in many ways. Many salons ran out of a proprietor's home or out of a structure on their property. Beach lived above her bookstore for those years in which she did not reside with her friend and mentor Adrienne Monnier (Beach, *Shakespeare* 216). Many of the visitors of the bookshop stopped by Shakespeare and Company to chat with the proprietor just as often as they came for the books. Beach brought the people into the store; they valued her friendship and were loyal customers because of this strong relationship. She ran a business that revolved around the English language, whereas Barney ran her salon parties mainly in French, occasionally changing languages to suit the conversation or the audience.

During the early part of the twentieth century Paris offered few amenities in hotels or apartments. Electricity and running water were luxuries (Fitch 382). Very few homes or apartments had working telephones. The Paris residents who did not spend their days at their specific jobs tended to spend very little time in their homes, preferring cafés and salons as their daytime haunts. Beach's bookshop offered one such place for her friends and clients to drop by, sit and chat about literature, or pick up the newest publication. She did not offer the same luxuries as a café; she was not set up to provide tea or coffee. What she did have was a place to sit and discuss literature or to read quietly. The bookstore was open during the typical Parisian business hours, closing for a long lunch in the afternoons and reopening for early evening hours, and was closed on Sundays (Fitch 47). Though she did not keep regular hours set aside strictly for visiting in a salon manner, such as the seasonal Friday afternoon salon events that Natalie Clifford Barney provided, she offered the same experience, on a smaller scale. One could walk into the bookshop on any afternoon and run into Ernest Hemingway or James Joyce working with Beach, getting her opinions about their latest works. On occasion she would host gatherings after hours. Years after Beach's famous bookstore was closed, Katherine Anne Porter recalled the shop in an article she wrote for *Ladies' Home Journal*, "the flat above, where she brought together for sociable evenings the most miscellaneous lot of people I ever saw: persons you were surprised to find on the same planet together, much less under the same roof" (54).

Barney and Beach would often hold receptions honoring their friends' accomplishments outside of their normal schedules. Beach would hold readings in her store and Barney would hold parties in honor of recently published writers. Both honored



their author friends by celebrating their works. On certain occasions Beach would have to limit the number of invitations sent to potential guests. Her bookshop would only hold a limited number of people, which was often a disappointment to those who did not make the list. Barney's salon would often entertain hundreds of guests in one evening, and other evenings would simply provide tea for a small gathering. In an interview with Gloria Feman Orenstein, Berthe Cleyrergue, the woman who served Barney for more than forty years, discussed the days of Barney's gatherings:

Miss Barney was in the habit of receiving guests every Friday for two months in the spring starting from May and continuing into the first days of July, when she would pack up and leave for summer. The salons were always on Friday. Each month we held a great reception of 100-150 persons. Otherwise we would have receptions ranging from fifty to seventy-five at the maximum. (486)

According to the Cleyrergue interview (488) and Beach's book, *Shakespeare and Company* (114), Barney stood out in her trademark white attire. In the same interview Cleyrergue mentioned being asked by Barney to pick up books from Adrienne Monnier's French-language bookstore (492). Monnier and Beach were often invited guests at Barney's salon, though they did not often attend (Fitch 73). Barney was also member of Beach's lending library (Beach, *Shakespeare* 114).

Barney held her salons regularly each Friday, whereas Beach ran a bookstore six days a week. Though Barney and Beach's intentions differed, they operated their salons in a similar fashion and entertained many of the same people. Both were receptive to new visitors and welcomed openheartedly the regulars. Though the salons of the previous

decades were run in an elaborate fashion, Barney and Beach first and foremost loved people and they loved books more than the pomp and circumstance of the salons before their time. The pair also loved to entertain and to bring their friends together. Though Beach's bookshop was only open several hours a day, she often stayed open late when her clients and friends were around. If they were not, she spent many extra hours writing letters and running the back-office duties required of any bookstore owner. If she was open for seven hours for business, she would often stay as many hours working or writing letters to those of her lending library to whom she would refer as members or friends.

Beach offered her customers a place to meet and enjoy the company of others who wrote and a place to discuss modern literature. She also provided her services as a part-time editor to some of these writers, especially Joyce, more often than not working with them out of charity, not receiving financial compensation. Beach's store operated as a business but ran as a social forum for the writers passing through Paris at a time when the salon as a meeting place was no longer set around specific agendas or social stature, but as a meeting place to discuss ideas and feelings regarding what was modern in the arts at the time. As technology changed and advanced, priorities shifted. The salon was slowly dying; Barney's salon was one of the last great salons of the era. During Barney's and Beach's time, the custom was still practiced as the era came to a close. This was a time when people were still willing to gather socially and often to discuss the arts as a group of intellectuals.

Beach and Barney offered their friends a social and intellectual stomping ground which hardly exists today. Many bookstores today are so large that two friends can spend hours in the same location and not run into each other at any point. The smaller, quainter

literary forums have all but died out. The salon has become an object of nostalgia to the degree that people still dream of opening and running such treasures but rarely put this dream into action. Diane von Furstenburg, a popular clothing designer on hiatus from her career, revealed in a recent interview that she lived in Paris in the 1980s with a writer, “And I really didn’t do very much, except I read a lot, and I had this fantasy of having a literary salon” (220). The salons of the last few centuries have left their mark, even if they have not lasted. The idea of running a salon still exists in people’s minds as something exotic and intellectual.

#### The Paris Bookstore and Lending Library

The salon atmosphere gave Parisians a place to gather in a social setting and discuss modern ideas and modern literature. Bookstores and lending libraries gave them a place to gather their material. Before Sylvia Beach opened her English-language bookstore and lending library, Adrienne Monnier’s *La Maison des Amis des Livres* ran in the same fashion. Monnier’s dream, much like Beach’s, was allowed to unfold thanks to a generous gift from a parent. Monnier’s father was badly injured while working and was given settlement money because of his injuries. She remarked, “My parents committed the wise folly of entrusting to me the little money that they had, that they had ever had” (Monnier, *Rich Hours* 11). Unlike Beach, Monnier opened her bookstore with a partner, Suzanne Bonnierre, though the pair did not continue to run the business together for long (Monnier, *Rich Hours* 10).

In her memoir, *The Very Rich Hours of Adrienne Monnier*, Monnier states of her little shop which she opened in November 1915, “we sought only to start off a bookshop and a reading room devoted above all to modern works. We had very little money, and it

was that detail that drove us to specialize in modern literature” (71). Monnier goes on to reveal that if she had had more money when the store opened, she would have had a much larger store with a greater variety of books. Her business and bookkeeping skills would prove to be very similar to Sylvia Beach’s years later: almost none. Despite this fact she managed to open a successful business and a place for French speakers to purchase or check out books. Not long after Monnier’s bookstore, *La Maison des Amis des Livres*, opened, French writers started to patronize the shop: Paul Valéry, André Breton, Léon-Paul Fargue, and André Gide, to name a few. Monnier’s bookstore became one of the most important in Paris almost immediately.

Monnier held readings in her bookstore and attended them at other venues as often as she could. In her memoir, Monnier recalls an avant-garde poetry session she attended at the Rosenberg gallery:

[T]here were many personalities, among them Gide. . . . As Gide said to me, not without slight irony, “But there are only geniuses here!” I answered him with a deftness that still astonishes me . . . “But, dear master, you are looking no farther than the end of your nose!” (91-92)

Adrienne Monnier’s bookstore and lending library was the first of its kind. The concept of a lending library, in addition to selling new and used books, was new to Paris. Monnier paved the way for Beach’s store and offered Parisians a place to purchase books or to simply check them out if they were not ready to commit buy them. According to Shari Benstock’s *Women of the Left Bank: Paris, 1900-1940*, Monnier’s shop, “encouraged people to browse, to sit near the potbellied stove and read, to take tea with her and discuss the novels, volumes of poetry, and reviews she stocked” (195). Prior to

Monnier's shop, bookstores in Paris did not encourage loitering to the same degree. Monnier became friends with many of the Left Bank's French poets and authors, though she often preferred to be surrounded by books rather than people, "I live with books more than with people. . . . Which is to say that I can easily do without people (there are days when I could easily do without myself)" (vii). While she admitted to enjoying solitude, Monnier encouraged company to sit and be comfortable in her bookshop. She loved literature enough to open her bookstore and lending library, but she felt her opinion regarding literature was worthy of being published as well. Unlike Beach, she wrote reviews, poetry, and essays. Beach's contribution to this task was to translate Monnier's poetry and short stories from French into English.

Monnier's articles and reviews were printed in the *Gazette des Amis des Livres*, which she published and personally financed. Her reviews helped Monnier become known to Parisian readers as both a local writer and bookstore owner. They were able to shop in her bookstore and also able to identify with her by reading her reviews and her opinions. Although Monnier and Beach shared their love for reading, for books and for authors, Monnier was not inclined to leave her infatuation with literature simply to reading and selling. She chose to voice her opinion in print. Beach might have been successful if she had chosen to do the same, considering her wit and her love for the medium. Monnier wrote two articles in French about James Joyce after *Ulysses* was published, "The Humanism of Joyce" and "Joyce's Ulysses [sic] and the French Public." Both were translated into English by Beach.

The Left Bank, home to Monnier's La Maison des Amis des Livres and Beach's Shakespeare and Company, called both business owners to its streets. In Monnier's

memoir, she notes, “The Left Bank called me and even now it does not cease to call me and to keep me. I cannot imagine that I could ever leave it, any more than an organ can leave the place that is assigned to it in the body” (11). It is no doubt that Sylvia Beach felt the same way, as this is where she made her home for the duration of her life in France.

When Sylvia Beach decided to open an English-language bookstore in Paris, the timing could not have been better, even though she was approaching this endeavor shortly after the First World War. The cost of living in France was much lower than in the United States at the time. The salon atmosphere in Paris was declining though their favor was not altogether gone. Natalie Barney ran her salon successfully and people in Paris were open to spending time in the company of others discussing literature, whether in a proper salon, or the newly opened lending libraries.

Beach opened her business with many obstacles in front of her: she had a limited amount of money to get started with, she had very little education and no business or accounting knowledge, she was opening her shop as a single woman, and it was an English-language bookstore in a country whose language was predominately French. Despite these hurdles she was able to keep her doors open for twenty-two years and run a business that would become acknowledged worldwide, not for its profits or growth, but for the accomplishments of its owner and her work as a publisher. She did not open her business with the help of a true business partner, though she had the guidance of her good friend Adrienne Monnier, whose experience would truly prove invaluable. Once her doors were open, English speakers would flock to Beach’s little store with the same magnetism that brought Beach and Monnier to the Left Bank.

## CHAPTER II

### SYLVIA BEACH IN PARIS

In 1916 Sylvia Beach left the United States and then went to Spain for a brief visit, followed by a trip to Paris in 1917, where she went to visit her sister Cyprian (Beach, *Shakespeare* 9). While in Paris she was enticed to the bookshop of the woman who would become her companion for many years, Adrienne Monnier. Before making Paris and the Left Bank her permanent home, Beach left to pursue a variety of positions. According to Monnier, interviewed in the film *Paris was a Woman*, Beach saw a play by Picasso and was inspired to do agricultural work. She worked in the fields, which were previously harvested by men who were on the front lines fighting in the war. She spent time harvesting wheat, picking grapes, and then she worked for the American Red Cross. Beach did not have an education, but she did gain a résumé filled by hard work.

In 1919 Beach was back in Paris. Her interest in contemporary French writing drew her to France, the place she would live the remainder of her life. She states in her memoir that she wanted to read contemporary French literature firsthand, directly from the source (9). Though she went to Paris to read, her love for the French people, Adrienne Monnier, and the many writers and artists of the Left Bank would keep her there.

While reading at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Beach ran across a review she was interested in purchasing, which could be found, according to her memoir, at “A. Monnier’s bookshop, 7 rue de l’Odéon, Paris VI” (12). She goes on to state, “I had not

heard the name before, nor was the Odéon quarter familiar to me, but suddenly something drew me irresistibly to the spot where such important things in my life were to happen.”

Beach’s bookstore, Shakespeare and Company, would not originally open its doors on the rue de l’Odéon, but it was surely at Monnier’s bookstore located on this street where Beach discussed her plans of opening her own bookstore. According to Beach’s memoir, it was Monnier who talked her into staying in Paris to fulfill the dreams of opening her own shop (15).

Beach opened her bookstore, Shakespeare and Company, on November 19, 1919, with the collected help from friends and family. Because of her poor education, Beach’s bookkeeping and business skills were lacking, but this did not stop her from her dream: to own a bookstore of her own. She originally had planned to open a shop in New York, which would be a division of Monnier’s bookstore, in order to bring her beloved French writers to the States. This plan would not come to fruition for Beach; she could not afford this endeavor financially. She chose, instead, to stay in Paris, with the encouragement and blessing of Monnier. She planned to use the money her mother offered her to open an English-language bookstore down the street from Monnier’s French bookstore, La Maison des Amis des Livres. Shakespeare and Company would eventually move across the street from Monnier’s shop, as Beach’s business grew.

For the most part, Beach ran the bookstore by herself. She did not go into business with a partner but knew she needed help with the activities required of the business. When she offered to publish *Ulysses*, she no longer was able to handle all aspects of the store on her own. She hired an assistant, Myrsine Moschos, who stayed on for several years. Myrsine helped with the front end of the business, but the management



and bookkeeping aspects were Beach's chores. Though she had someone to help her with a few of the activities of the store, Beach handled most of the daily operations on her own. In her autobiography, Beach admits:

I was a combination of apprentice, boss, and personnel—until Myrsine came to help me. Imagine, too, the bookkeeping, besides the bookselling and lending! I had to run three bank accounts in three different currencies, American, French, and English, and calculating in tuppences and centimes and pennies was one of my most puzzling occupations. My peculiar arithmetic made it rather hard for someone in business. I lost a good deal of time and wasted large sheets of paper that way. Once, I happened to mention my difficulties to my old Princeton friend Jessie Sayre, Woodrow Wilson's beautiful second daughter, who was stopping in Paris and took a great deal of interest in my bookshop. Jessie suggested that I come to her hotel one evening and she would soon teach me arithmetic by a system that had been very successful with a class of backward children she taught. . . . Jessie went away convinced that I had immediately caught on, thanks to her system. I didn't want to disillusion such a good friend, and, besides, I was too much ashamed of myself, so I never told her that I went right back to my large-page calculation. (104-05)

Despite the somewhat simplistic method, Beach was not able to use the new system and went back to her old ways. Her system might have been impossible to follow, but it worked for her and she was able to run a successful business without the more efficient

methods available. Once again she proves that she was not much for education, but was stubborn enough to plow through with her own techniques and methods.

Once Beach made the decision to open her bookstore in Paris she wrote to her mother immediately asking for assistance to get the shop opened. Adrienne Monnier happened upon a vacant storefront just around the corner from her own bookstore and took Beach to inspect the premises that at one point had been a laundry. The word “gros” was on one side of the door and “fin” on the other, indicating that the laundry specialized in sheets and fine linen. Adrienne stood under the side which was painted “gros” and moved Beach below the “fin” side, explaining that this was the two of them. This little joke, a pun on both Monnier’s and Beach’s stature, was the first sign that this was going to be the place. The walk-through was successful and the little shop was exactly what Beach had envisioned (Beach, *Shakespeare* 16). Once she and the landlord agreed on the terms, Beach proceeded with her new plans of an English-language bookstore in Paris. Beach received the money her mother promised her and worked on getting the little shop ready for business. She spent the next three months ordering books, hiring help to install bookshelves, and working towards getting a new sign in the front of her new bookstore and lending library.

Though Beach’s dream of opening a French-language bookstore, an extension of Adrienne’s store in the United States, was not able to happen, she was able to stay in her beloved Paris and was offered guidance from Monnier, who mentored her in several aspects of bookstore ownership. With Adrienne’s guidance and Beach’s desire to succeed, the bookstore was a success from the second the shop opened its doors.

Shakespeare and Company was located in an isolated area in Paris when it first opened and was somewhat hard to find. Ezra Pound's wife insisted on drawing a map in order for patrons to be able to locate the new bookstore, in hopes of bringing as many people as possible into the little shop and aiding travelers against getting lost. The map was printed on the back of the bookstore's new flyer with Dorothy Pound's maiden name printed: D. Shakespear. This coincidence added to the store's good luck and charm, something James Joyce would no doubt be proud of, considering his superstitions. Dorothy Pound's mother, Mrs. Shakespear, also owned a successful salon, which added to Beach's good omens.

In addition to Mrs. Pound's helpful map, Gertrude Stein wrote a poem about the little bookshop, in order to steer people to its doors. She presented Beach with the poem, "Rich and Poor in English" in 1920 (Beach, *Shakespeare* 28). According to Noel Riley Fitch, Beach's biographer, in *Sylvia Beach and the Lost Generation*, the poem was written "to encourage Left Bank residents to join the bookshop. Alice [B. Toklas] typed the manuscript, and they mailed it to their friends" (55). Stein's act of charity for her friend was to encourage others to drop by Shakespeare and Company. Her act of charity would end here. She did not care for most of the books in the store. Beach admitted in her memoir, "Gertrude's subscription was merely a friendly gesture," as she did not often borrow books from the lending library (28).

It was almost magnetic, the way in which the authors and their spouses or significant others showed up at Shakespeare and Company. Adrienne Monnier knew many French writers who became members of Beach's lending library, and they told their friends. The news spread and a large number of English-speaking writers who came

through the Left Bank during the 1920s and 1930s stopped in the store. Once her doors were opened, Beach ran a bookstore, lending library, makeshift salon, occasional post office and finally a publishing house. She had many odds against her: she was a single woman, a foreigner, had only one small lump sum of money to get started and run with, and was opening a bookstore in Paris specializing in a foreign language: English. Though Beach would not become wealthy, she was honored to know and work with many artists of the Left Bank.

Once Beach's bookstore was open, she would spend the rest of her life living and working in Paris. She would return home to Princeton, New Jersey, to visit her family, and would travel quite often, spending holidays abroad, or getting away to the country for the weekends, but Paris was the home where she resided. She would publish James Joyce's *Ulysses* and write her memoirs, recounting the time she spent with the revered author, among many others. She left her mark on dozens of authors during this time and still manages to inspire, as her story is now being told by many new authors. She lived in the center of a large group of writers and gave them a home away from home. Her bookstore became famous for its many patrons as well as its influential owner.

### CHAPTER III

#### FAMOUS BOOKSTORE, FAMOUS PATRONS

Sylvia Beach's patrons during the reign of her bookshop were from far and wide. They ranged from would-be writers to those who were already well-known to artists who chose different media altogether such as music and art. They were bibliophiles who followed their favorite writers to the Left Bank and stopped by Beach's store in hopes of glimpsing their muses. The different genres of art intermingled for many of Beach's friends and patrons, though literature was the first and most important love in Beach's life. In her bookshop that portion of the walls not covered by bookshelves were covered with portraits of the books' authors. These were the only things she collected besides her large group of diverse friends.

Her friend and bookstore patron Gertrude Stein covered the walls of her home with dozens of paintings, most of which are now quite valuable (Beach, *Shakespeare* 28). Stein's portrait painted by Picasso is now housed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It hung proudly in her atelier, along with Cézannes, Renoirs, Matisses, Gauguins, Manguins, and at one point a Manet and a Toulouse-Lautrec. According to Stein, in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, "there was even a little Delacroix and a moderate sized Greco" (12). Stein chose to cover her walls with paintings and artwork from dear friends. On the other hand, Beach chose to cover her walls with photographs of the writers whose books adorned the shelves of her shop. Authors such as John Dos Passos would slip

their photos under her door upon Beach's request. Katherine Anne Porter wrote on her portrait, photographed and copywrited by Gisèle Freund, "Sylvia Beach, with my admiration" (Collected, Sallet Box 262). Though Beach did not write creatively, she was admired and respected by a vast number of authors. They enjoyed her friendship and her knowledge of literature and the bookstore that enabled them to have a meeting-ground for like minds.

Gertrude Stein was said to be the first of Beach's annual members of the lending library, according to James R. Mellow in his book about the poet (*Charmed Circle* 299). Beach did not make the same claim, however. Stein and Alice B. Toklas would visit Sylvia Beach at her bookshop, though they were not often customers. Stein teased Beach about her bookselling practices, but was still a supporter of Beach and her bookstore. She gave several of her books to Beach for her store, including one with a piece Stein wrote on Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse (Beach, *Shakespeare* 28). In her memoir, though, Beach makes no reference to Stein being the lending library's first member, she does mention that Stein cared little for works other than her own (28).

Among her many patrons, one of Beach's biggest supporters was Sherwood Anderson. Upon Anderson's arrival in Paris, Ernest Hemingway received letters of introduction from Anderson to meet many of his friends in town, including Beach, Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound and Lewis Galantière. After receiving the letters of introduction from Anderson, Hemingway wrote, in a letter dated 23 December 1921, "In a couple of days we'll be settled and then I'll send out the letters of introduction like launching a flock of ships" (Hemingway, *Selected Letters* 59). The following March 9<sup>th</sup>, Hemingway wrote to Anderson once again, "Lots of things happen here. Gertrude Stein

and me are just like brothers and we see a lot of her. Read the preface you wrote for her new book and like it very much. It made a big hit with Gertrude.” The same letter goes on to reference two more of Hemingway’s friends, Joyce and Pound, still using his unorthodox spelling:

Joyce has a most god-damn wonderful book. It’ll probably reach you in time. . . . Pound took six of my poems and sent them wit a letter to Thayer, Scofield, that is, you’ve heard of him maybe. Pound thinks I’m a swell poet. . . . I’ve been teaching Pound to box wit little success. He habitually leads with his chin and has the general grace of the crayfish or crawfish.

(62)

This humorous letter references Joyce’s *Ulysses*, as well as the hobby which Hemingway and Pound occasionally enjoyed. Hemingway was so enthralled with boxing that he coerced his pals Sylvia Beach and Adrienne Monnier to attend a local match in Paris with him and his wife Hadley. The pair was not as impressed as Hemingway but obliged their friend and went along. Beach wrote about one of the matches they witnessed in *Shakespeare and Company*, “What with the socking, the kicking, the yelling, and the surging back and forth, I was afraid we would be ‘Hemmed’ in, and that Hadley would be injured in the melee” (80). Though Beach was not a fan of violent sports, she went because her very good friend asked her. She was more interested in books and their writers than in contact sports and was more grateful when Hemingway asked her and Monnier if they wanted to hear him read from something he was working on. He read a story from *In Our Time*. His works were not yet famous, and Beach and Monnier were excited to hear something by the promising young author. “Imagine our

joy over this first bout of Ernest Hemingway's!" Beach exclaims humorously, punning the violent sport with the reading (81).

Despite the letter of introduction, Hemingway met Beach on his own, while wandering the streets of Paris (Beach, *Shakespeare* 78). He stumbled into her little shop, just as many of her patrons did, strolling down the rue de l'Odéon. The two became fast friends. Beach's relationship with Joyce was based on her assisting him in the publication of *Ulysses*, whereas her relationship with Hemingway was much more personal. The two were true friends and did not base their friendship on the needs of the other. Though he did try to urge her to publish again, he did not push her in her endeavors and was a constant friend. He even joked that he would have named his first child after Beach if it had been a girl. Hemingway wrote, in a letter dated 6 November 1923, in his unusual yet creative use of spelling, "Thank Gawd we will get back to Paris. If the baby had been a girl we would have named her Sylvia. Being a boy we could not call him Shakespeare. John Hadley Nicanor is the name. Nicanor Villalta the bull fighter" (Hemingway, *Selected Letters* 97).

Beach, along with Alice B. Toklas, would attend the wedding of Hemingway's first son, Bumby, years later. The great American author of *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, Julia Child, would also be in attendance, though Beach and Toklas more than likely did not know her at the time (Child, *My Life* 54). Beach and Toklas were world-renowned in the literary field (Toklas's notoriety came from Gertrude Stein's *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*), but Child was still working on her own fame and learning to cook French cuisine. At this point Beach's bookstore was no longer operating.



Child would have known Beach by reputation only; she would not have been able to visit the bookshop upon her arrival in Paris, as she came after the bookstore's closing.

While Beach considered Hemingway one of her best patrons, her relationship with James Joyce is the most well-known. Beach first met Joyce at a party hosted by the French poet André Spire (Beach, *Shakespeare* 34). She went as the guest of Adrienne Monnier, who insisted the American bookstore owner tag along. Beach was already a fan of Joyce's having read *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, but was apprehensive about meeting him when she learned that James and Nora Joyce were there as the guests of Ezra and Dorothy Pound, Beach was somewhat relieved as she already knew the Pounds and was grateful to know someone else there.

Though Beach did not often write, in her memoir she reflects on a piece she wrote for the *Mercure de France*: "According to an article of mine . . . Pound was wearing a becoming blue shirt matching his eyes, but he wrote to me immediately to say that he had never had blue eyes at all. So I take back the blue eyes" (34-35). Beach's humorous reflection of Ezra Pound precedes her telling of the slightly nervous meeting with James Joyce this same night. After dinner she "strolled into a little room lined to the ceiling with books. There, drooping in a corner between two bookcases, was Joyce" (35). "Is this the great James Joyce?" she asked. "James Joyce," was his response. In her memoir this is the one somewhat nervous introduction which Beach reflects on. She met many authors who strolled into her little bookshop. She met James Joyce officially by introducing herself, very shy but determined to meet the great man. This introduction would be the start of what would become a monumental association. The next day after their first

meeting, Joyce would visit Beach's bookshop and would for the rest of his days become a tremendous part of her life and vice versa.

Among the hundreds of members of Beach's lending library, it would seem that a large number of them would eventually make a name for themselves, if they had not already done so. They were not just writers, but painters and musicians, and they came to her bookstore from across the globe. Among some of the legendary authors besides Hemingway and Joyce were Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams and William Butler Yeats. Beach had a knack for bringing potential customers into her shop by placing little magazines in her windows. In an interview in the film *Paris Was a Woman*, Beach claimed she considered herself the "mother" of many of those reviews, though she did not publish any of them herself. On many occasions a person could walk into the bookshop and not far from one of the magazines would be standing an author whose work was published in one of the reviews or possibly the author of one of the books on the shelf. She carried works from her friends James Joyce, Gertrude Stein, Katherine Anne Porter and Ford Madox Ford, all frequent guests of her shop.

Beach, much like Adrienne Monnier, was at the center of the Left Bank during the important time in its literary history. Beach had the advantage of speaking both English and French, which attracted many of the writers coming to the Left Bank, especially those who were not fluent in French and preferred English literature.

**CHAPTER IV**  
**SYLVIA BEACH'S CONTRIBUTION:**  
**THE PUBLISHER, THE MUSE, THE AUTHOR, THE MATCHMAKER**

The Publisher

Jayne E. Marek, in her essay on women editors of small publications, notes, “Many young writers, charged with the excitement of ideas and artistic perspectives that had been developing in Europe, could find neither a sympathetic audience nor a market among the generally conservative publishers of the day” (n. pag.). It was because of this that the smaller publications were not only necessary, but integral for writers during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Without these publications many of the authors of the time might to this day be obscure or virtually unknown due to the widespread censorship in many countries. Books written by authors such as Joyce and Stein entering the United States, if they were found by customs, were confiscated and destroyed. The United States as well as England held strong views on censorship; both banned books which they considered obscene, no matter how mild or minute the “obscene” content seemed to be.

The meeting between Sylvia Beach and James Joyce was one that might not have been, had their friends not pushed them to attend the dinner party. Neither Beach nor the Joyces were directly invited by the party’s host, which made the event rather unexpected, especially for Beach, a great admirer of Joyce’s work. In her memoir she recalled Joyce visiting her bookstore the next day, with his ashplant in tow, ““Stephen Dedalus,’ I

thought, ‘still has his ashplant’” (37). The two got along charmingly, as Joyce explained his move to Paris, and his need for work. He was looking for work as a language teacher and asked that Beach would send him any pupils if she knew of any. Always one to use humor and her biting wit, Beach recalled:

Languages apparently were Joyce’s favorite sport. I asked him how many he knew. There were at least nine; we counted them. Besides his own, he spoke Italian, French, German, Greek, Spanish, Dutch, and the three Scandinavian tongues. He had learned Norwegian in order to read Ibsen, and had followed it with Swedish and Danish. He also spoke Yiddish, knew Hebrew. He didn’t mention Chinese and Japanese. He probably left them to Pound. (38)

When Beach met Joyce she was already a fan of his work and was honored to meet the author. At the time, *Ulysses* was being published serially, though Joyce was unable to find anyone willing to publish the novel in its entirety. Herbert Gorman, in his book *James Joyce*, remarks on the relationship between Beach and Joyce: “In short, it was that of publisher and author. Miss Beach had learned of the difficulties attending the publication of *Ulysses*, how, for instance, the publishers in two great countries were crying off in fear and consternation from the manuscript as though it were a time bomb about to explode” (286). Gorman’s book, first published in 1939 while Beach was still alive, goes on, “To think with her was to act, for she was and is an extremely vital personality with great courage and definite convictions.”

James Joyce’s *Ulysses* was being published serially by Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap in the United States, until they were shut down due to censorship (Fitch 75).

The pair was eventually arrested for publishing the work on the grounds of obscenity, for publishing the “Nausicaa” episode. At the time of Joyce and Beach’s meeting, Joyce had not yet completed *Ulysses* and was worried that Margaret Anderson would not be able to publish his novel. The conversation between Joyce and Beach on the first day he entered the little shop spanned many topics besides *Ulysses* and the visit seemed to be a leisurely one. Beach felt honored that Joyce stopped by her little bookstore and that he was willing to share intimate details of his life and of his work with her (Beach, *Shakespeare* 40).

After the arrest of Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap, it was obvious that *Ulysses* was not going to be published by an American or an English publisher. Not on American or English soil, anyway. In the film interview of *Paris was a Woman*, Beach admits she felt Joyce was humiliated by the suppression of his book. Because of the overwhelming censorship of literature, Joyce was running out of options regarding his novel, and Sylvia Beach made him an offer he could not refuse. Beach offered to publish *Ulysses*, though she did not have publishing experience. Lack of experience never stopped her from a mission, and Joyce promptly accepted Beach’s offer. The French did not hold the same views as the Americans or English regarding censorship. They did not have prohibition or a Society for the Suppression of Vice. Beach did not have the same struggles as other publishers, as she was not breaking any laws in her host country. Her struggles were altogether different.

Before *Ulysses* had its troubles with the suppression of the *Little Review*, Harriet Weaver, a Joyce supporter and benefactor, ran into trouble publishing his work. In her memoir, Beach describes Weaver’s involvement with Joyce:

In England, Miss Harriet Weaver had already fought and lost her battle of *Ulysses*. It was Miss Weaver, pioneer Joycean, who had published in her review, the *Egoist*, *A Portrait of the Artist [as a Young Man]*, which first gained recognition for the new Irish writer James Joyce. He had been discovered by Ezra Pound, a great showman and the leader of a gang that hung out around the *Egoist* and included such suspicious characters as Richard Aldington, H. D., T. S. Eliot, Wyndham Lewis, and others almost as bad. . . . Miss Weaver intended to give her subscribers “Mr. Joyce’s” second novel, *Ulysses*. Five installments did appear in the *Egoist* in 1919. (45)

Weaver received condemnation for publishing *Ulysses* and had printing troubles, which caused the delay in continuing to publish Joyce’s latest work. She decided to change the scope and the name of her review in order to finish out the episodes in *Ulysses*, but was ultimately unable to do so. She had also intended on publishing *A Portrait of the Artist* in book form, but ran into the same troubles she had with *Ulysses*. After the first few episodes of *Ulysses*, finding printers was difficult, to say the least. People were afraid to be caught up in possible legal action.

After Beach and Joyce agreed to work together to have *Ulysses* published in book form, there was plenty of work to be done. Joyce had not completed the book, and would spend countless hours revising paragraphs, sentences, and sometimes words. His handwriting was extremely hard to follow as a result of his poor eyesight, which made it difficult for the typists Beach was encumbered with finding. She was tasked with finding a printer, a task that would prove to be one of the less difficult feats. She asked Maurice

Darantière, Adrienne Monnier's printer, if he was up for the task. Beach explained the *Ulysses* situation to Darantière, of the troubles it had in English-speaking countries.

Darantière agreed to do the printing, though at the time he was not aware of the headache he would eventually endure (Beach, *Shakespeare* 48). He was aware of Beach's financial situation, that he would not be compensated until the money came in from the book's subscribers. Once typed copies were sent to the printer, Darantière was continually forced to reset proofs, as Joyce continued to make changes. Beach claims in her memoir that at least one third of *Ulysses* was written on the page proofs as the author continued to make changes and edit his drafts (58). The printer would plead with Beach to dissuade Joyce from making the multiple changes, but the publisher would refuse. She held Joyce in such high regard that she dared not ask him to do anything other than what he thought necessary:

M. Darantiere [sic] warned me that I was going to have a lot of extra expense with these proofs. He suggested that I call Joyce's attention to the danger of going beyond my depth; perhaps his appetite for proofs might be curbed. But no, I wouldn't hear of such a thing. *Ulysses* was to be as Joyce wished, in every respect.

I wouldn't advise "real" publishers to follow my example, nor authors to follow Joyce's. It would be the death of publishing. My case was different. It seemed natural to me that the efforts and sacrifices on my part should be proportionate to the greatness of the work I was publishing. (*Shakespeare*, 58, 60)

Beach took great pride in her publishing efforts and was more than willing to sacrifice her time, what little money she earned through her store, her sleep and often her work in order to make *Ulysses* the best it could be, as well as to accommodate its author. She would go to Darantière countless times to ask him to reset type. Though it frustrated the printer, she was always successful in her pursuit.

Finding a printer was the first hurdle regarding publishing *Ulysses*. The next great task was to find buyers. Despite Joyce's suggestion of printing a dozen copies, Beach informed the printer that one thousand copies would be needed (Beach, *Shakespeare* 48). This was more than likely the only time Beach stood up to Joyce and did not adhere to his suggestion. She felt he was admired by too many people to print so few copies. Joyce was sure there would be copies left over out of the dozen printings, Beach felt they would need a substantial amount more, and she was correct. Every subscription for the book would be sold. Once the announcement was made that *Ulysses* would be published, subscriptions poured in. Beach would write countless letters looking for anyone interested in subscribing. Many of her Left Bank friends also joined in the search. In her memoir she recalls Robert McAlmon searching for potential buyers, "He combed the nightclubs for subscribers, and every morning, early, on his way home, left another 'Hasty Bunch' of the signed forms, the signatures slightly zigzag, some of them" (51).

After the grueling process of finding friends to type manuscripts, of working with the printer to reset type, of and finding enough people to buy the first printings of *Ulysses*, the next hurdle would be to carry out the transfer of the books. Distributing it to those in France was not an issue, but many of her subscribers were from the English-speaking countries that banned the book during its infancy. Once it hit customs it would



be confiscated if uncovered. It would take months to slowly get *Ulysses* distributed to its owners abroad. It would be smuggled into the United States among art crates (Fitch 134) as well as on ferry boat from Canada (there was no ban on *Ulysses* in Canada) (Beach, *Shakespeare* 87).

The undertaking of working as Joyce's publisher was not an easy task. Joyce would rely on Beach for so much more. He would ask her for countless loans, rely on her for his postal concerns, and would continue to check out books from her lending library, sometimes keeping them for years. In *Paris Was a Woman* (the book), Andrea Weiss claims, "Beach served as the 'midwife' to Joyce's career, devoting herself to publishing and promoting his work and ensuring that Joyce and his family of four had adequate funds. This twelve-year involvement was not only an immense emotional and financial drain on her, it led to the threat of imprisonment and to eventual bankruptcy" (47).

Despite the fact that Joyce had a contract drawn up between his publisher and himself (a facsimile is published in Beach's memoir on page 204), he sold *Ulysses* to Random House. Beach recalls the event:

Joyce himself informed me, when *Ulysses* came out—the fine Random House edition . . . that he had already received \$45,000 from the publishers. I know how desperately he needed the money. The expenses of his daughter's illness were increasing, and there was his failing eyesight. I felt an immense joy over his good fortune. (*Shakespeare* 205)

Beach had the publishing rights virtually yanked out from under her by Joyce and his new partnership. Though she was burned by the author and received no monetary compensation for her contribution to the author and his magnum opus, she managed to

hide her contempt. She goes on to reflect on the transference of publishing houses, “And, after all, the books were Joyce’s. A baby belongs to its mother, not the midwife, doesn’t it?” After this act of deceit Joyce still encouraged Beach to work with him. She would publish two more books before she finally was able to decline the wishes of the author. “[I]t would also have meant continuing my services to him—which was impossible because my bookshop needed me very much and besides I was tired.” One can hardly blame her for her decision to decline, considering the twelve years and countless hours she gave to Joyce, with very little in return.

Though she did not make her living by, nor did she become famous for, writing, Beach was a vastly important contributor to the world of literature as we know it. She took on the challenge of publishing James Joyce’s *Ulysses* when no one else dared. She was familiar with his work but barely knew the author and was inexperienced in the realm of book publishing prior to this endeavor. She dedicated every waking moment to juggling the bookstore and getting *Ulysses* published. She had little time for anything else and it is a wonder that she had time to visit and socialize with her clientele, or to write to her friends and family when they were abroad. Though publishing one book does not seem such a great feat for such an enormous claim to fame, considering the author as well as the hurdles involved in the process, it is much earned fame indeed.

When James Joyce took Sylvia Beach’s offer to publish *Ulysses*, he was taking advantage of a monumental offer. Beach took risks in the undertaking of such an impressive task. She drained her time, energy, and the small profits from her store to accomplish this feat. Ultimately the literary world has her to thank for what sounds like a simple offer but in fact was one of the most grandiose gestures ever offered from one

human being to another regarding a business venture. It took a lot out of the bookshop owner. In return she gained very little financially, though she cherished the opportunity.

In return for her kindness, Joyce paid a small homage to his benefactress, her sisters and their mother. In *Ulysses*, Mrs. Beach makes her appearance as the fashionable wedding attendee Mrs. Sylvester Elmshade, and her daughters are Mrs. Holly Hazeleyes, Mrs. Liana Forrest [Cyprian] and Mrs. Gladys [Sylvia] Beech (Fitch 88; Joyce, *Ulysses* 268). He did the same in his last great feat, *Finnegans Wake*. A version of Sylvia Beach's name appears in the text, "for Who-is-silvier—Where-is-he?" (211). Beach returned the small favor; she used this same passage as the title to the first chapter in her memoir (3). Joyce honored Beach, if only for a moment, in his two lengthy novels. This would be one of the largest gestures he pays his publisher. The only compensation he awarded her for her efforts would be to pay back his borrowed sums over the years, leaving her with nothing more than the honor of being his publisher.

Many of Beach's friends would write about one another. They tended to characterize their friends and acquaintances in their works, though not always in a good light. Hemingway mentioned Gertrude Stein in *A Moveable Feast*, but he did not refer to Alice B. Toklas by name. He simply referred to her as "the friend who lived with her [Stein]," proving that Hemingway and Toklas did not share the kind of friendship Hemingway had with Stein (13). Though Joyce's gesture might have been out of kindness, it could simply have been an afterthought, since *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* name hundreds of characters that are simply mentioned by name but have no real mark on the novels themselves.

In addition to her untiring efforts working with Joyce to get *Ulysses* published, Beach worked with Adrienne Monnier to translate French works into English, and vice versa. Some of these included Dorothy Richardson's "About Punctuation," (Fitch 349), T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (Fitch 187), and Bryher's *Paris 1900* (Fitch 380). Beach feared that most of the poetry written by Joyce did not make it past his front door, that he destroyed most of it. After publishing *Ulysses*, she published the small pamphlet of Joyce poems called *Pomes Penyeach* in 1927 (Gorman 344; Beach, *Shakespeare* 174). This would be the second publication she would take on for Joyce.

The third publishing effort Beach attempted was *Our Exagmination Round his Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress* (Beach, *Shakespeare* 177-78). In this, her last Joycean publication effort, Joyce's fans and foes published articles on his *Work in Progress*, later to be revealed as *Finnegans Wake*. The book consisted of articles written by Samuel Beckett, Eugene Jolas, Robert McAlmon, William Carlos Williams, among others, including the possibility that Joyce wrote one under a pseudonym (Beach, *Shakespeare* 178). The book includes twelve short commentaries praising *Work in Progress* as well as two in protest of his last triumph. "Writes a Common Reader" is the first of the two protest pieces and one that disturbed Beach. In her memoir she reflects, "she [G. V. L. Slingsby, the pseudonym of the journalist, a Shakespeare and Company patron, and writer of the piece] came down so hard on Joyce that I was quite displeased. . . . It was not even very good as criticism" (178). Beach comes across as protective of Joyce in her comment on the piece, one she clearly did not care to publish. Slingsby's criticism claims:

Miss Gertrude Stein has experimented along this line but up to the present she has contented herself with the quite simple madness that one can produce with already existing words. Mr. Joyce however has gone her one better and invented his own words if you can dignify them by that name. . . . Whether or not a public can ever be trained to absorb this kind of thing seems to me extremely doubtful. (190)

Beach is quite defensive and rejects Slingsby's article, though it seems to be a valid one. Joyce's work and his use of language are quite inventive and can be hard to follow without guidance.

Despite these efforts, it was her work as the publisher of *Ulysses* that would make the largest impression on the literary world during the early 1900s. It is rare, if ever, that one recognizes both publisher and author for any piece of literature. In an article titled "Sylvia Beach (1887-1962)," Janet Flanner recognized the bookstore owner's contributions:

[F]or her service to literature she was thanked in person by literally the thousands of tourists and readers and writers from both sides of the Atlantic who came to her little Shakespeare bookshop in the rue de l'Odéon, which had become an incalculably large radiating center of literary influence and illumination over which she modestly presided, as small in her person as in her premises. (par. 1)

As Flanner notes, Beach was awarded accolades from her peers and the reading public, as well as writers during the early 1900s, but it came at a cost. She was honored by those who were Joyce fans as they flocked from all over the world to shop in her bookstore.

She received an honorary degree from the University of Buffalo some years later, though she was drained emotionally and financially because of her publication efforts. Because of her work outside of running her bookstore, and the pending war, Shakespeare and Company would not become a profitable venture.

### The Muse

In his semi-autobiographical novel, *A Moveable Feast*, Ernest Hemingway refers to Beach throughout, giving her more praise in the novel than any other person he comes into contact with, even his wife. He often refers to her and her bookstore, recollecting his travels world-wide with borrowed books in hand, proving that her shop was a place of great comfort to Hemingway. He does not refer to the bookshop by name, but refers to it by the owner's name, referencing "Sylvia Beach's bookstore" proving that it was the owner as much as the actual bookshop that meant so much to him.

Besides making an appearance in Joyce's and Hemingway's works, Beach inspired others to put pen to paper. Her tireless work with James Joyce would also bring the bookstore owner and new publisher to know the entire Joyce family. Lucia Joyce became fond of her father's sponsor, and was there to help her move her books when Adrienne Monnier found the location across from her on the rue de l'Odéon (Shloss 109). At the Princeton University Library, in the Jackson Mathews Collection, dozens of letters written by Lucia Joyce to Sylvia Beach are archived. The letters span over a decade and run from coherent letters of friendship, to incoherent scribbling with illegible ramblings, possibly due to Lucia's illness. During the 1930s Lucia was institutionalized because of schizophrenia. Some of her letters to Beach were sent from the institutions she was forced to stay in, while others were written while residing with her parents. Despite the

vast differences between some of the letters, they prove that Lucia and Beach had a great friendship and that Lucia admired and cherished Beach.

#### The Author

Though Sylvia Beach was not known as a creative writer, she told her story in her memoir, *Shakespeare and Company*. Luckily for the reading public, this is not just a story about her endeavors publishing an infamous novel, but one about her life and the many authors with whom she was friends. If one were to read this, along with the memoirs of many of her contemporaries, the complete picture and the wealth of literature that came from this time is revealed. The Lost Generation was followed years later by the Beat Generation, but such a huge influx of writers did not exist among a group of friends before or after these two great movements occurred, and both movements gravitated towards the Left Bank.

In an interview with Jackson Mathews, while recounting writing her memoir, Beach acknowledged that her friend Adrienne Monnier was mentioned in *Shakespeare and Company*, but only to a slight degree. Her reason was that it was quite possible that Monnier would “take over the whole show” (138). One suspects that by this claim Beach could have written an entire book dedicated to her dear friend, in addition to the one dedicated to her bookstore and its many patrons. Many of Beach’s friends, Hemingway, Bryher, and H. D., for example, wrote about their experiences during this prolific literary time as well. It was their craft to write and only natural for them to tell the story of their lives. After reading Beach’s memoirs as well as interviews she granted, it is obvious that Beach had much to tell, but not the inclination to do so. If her writing had been more prolific, perhaps we would better understand the great James Joyce from a new side as

well as the mark Adrienne Monnier made on the Paris of the early 1900s. Beach would have, no doubt, written for an audience that would have appreciated her wit and her charm, as well as her experience during those great years.

Beach's story in *Shakespeare and Company* does not do justice to her talent and her humor. She had a wit that would have proven handy had she chosen to write fiction, or even to pen works in the little publications that showed up all over the United States, England and France. To read her own work is to understand her talent and her personality. In her memoir she recalled her friend Bryher coming into her store:

Bryher, Bryher. I wondered if the owner of this interesting name would ever come to my bookshop. . . . I couldn't keep my eyes off Bryher's: they were so blue—bluer than the sea or sky or even the Blue Grotto in Capri. More beautiful still was the expression in Bryher's eyes. I'm afraid to this day I stare at her eyes. Bryher, as far as I can remember, never said a word. . . . the French Call it "letting the others pay the expenses of the conversation." So McAlmon and I did the talking, and Bryher did the looking. She was quietly observing in her Bryhery way. (99)

Beach's writing shows her humor as well as her keen observation regarding her friends and bookstore patrons. She chose to let the writing come from others, but she had a talent for creativity and humor that many writers today lack. Had she chosen to contribute to the small circulations, possibly just to introduce new books or poems or short stories that were up and coming, she would no doubt have been successful. She had her hands full with the projects that she chose, but had she chosen to move back to the



United States to open her bookstore, she would have no doubt been successful no matter which city she chose. As it was, she chose Paris, which seemed to have a magnet on it during this time, as many American and European authors migrated there to live and write.

Beach told the story of her life in her memoir, *Shakespeare and Company*, but mainly told the story of her bookstore and her life in Paris. She gave a glimpse into her background as a child and her upbringing, but the story is centered on the bookstore she so cherished. Many of her dear friends encouraged her to write more. They knew that she had many more stories to tell, and that she was gifted at telling them. She did not oblige them to the extent that they might have wished.

After the publication of *Ulysses*, Beach went on to work with Adrienne Monnier on works that pertained to Joyce. Monnier wrote a piece titled “Joyce’s Ulysses and the French Public” which Beach translated into English, recounting her recollection of first reading the great novel, and the difficulties and surprises that ensued. In addition to her tireless efforts working with Joyce to get his manuscripts corrected, printed and published, she encouraged Joyce to make recordings of his readings of his infamous novel. Thanks to Beach, Joyce fans are able to buy recordings of the famous author reading from *Ulysses* as well as from *Finnegans Wake*. Once again she was forced to pull from her own coffers; the recording studio required that it would be done at her expense, as music was what audiences wanted (Beach, *Shakespeare* 171). Beach accepted the terms and thirty copies of the recordings were made.

## The Matchmaker

Not long after the doors of Shakespeare and Company opened, writers from far and wide invaded Beach's bookstore. She made the acquaintance of many popular writers, and slowly started to introduce them to one another, sometimes at their request, often at her choosing, as she suspected certain personalities would match well. Some of the authors would come to know one another by visiting her bookstore on a regular basis. Beach introduced Joyce to Robert McAlmon, William Bird, Archibald MacLeish, F. Scott Fitzgerald and her good friend Ernest Hemingway, as well as many of the French writers of the Left Bank (Beach, *Shakespeare* 40).

Thanks to Beach, authors from across the globe became acquainted with one another, which in turn helped form the artist colony of the Left Bank. Through her connections the artists became familiar with one another, and in turn were inspired by one another. The composer George Antheil lived upstairs above Shakespeare and Company, where he was introduced to James Joyce. Antheil had a common friend with Joyce besides Sylvia Beach, Ezra Pound. Pound and Antheil had music in common, in addition to their love of Shakespeare and Company. Antheil called the bookstore home because he lived above the shop for some time, but others used the store as their mailing address, despite the fact that they did not make it their home. Joyce received his mail and spent most of his days there during the publication process of *Ulysses*. Robert McAlmon also used the bookstore as his address, and could often be seen dropping by to pick up his mail (Beach, *Shakespeare* 25). Beach's bookstore was unofficially considered a post office for her friends when Bryher sent her a makeshift postal box for letters, with pigeonholes in the front (Beach, *Shakespeare* 102).

## CHAPTER V

### THE CLOSING AND THE DEPARTED

Shakespeare and Company went through a financial crisis and at one point during the 1930s came very close to closing its doors. Beach had exhausted her resources, spending every amount of time and money she had available on the publication of *Ulysses*, which left her drained. In *James Joyce's Letters to Sylvia Beach*, Melissa Banta and Oscar A. Silverman put together many letters between the author and publisher. These letters prove how tiring working with Joyce must have been, as he was persistent in his letter writing, as well as his requests for loans. From Joyce's letters one can see that she always obliged. It was apparent that she would always come to his aid. It was also apparent why she would have so many struggles regarding her finances.

Beach was forced to sell some of her most prized possessions because of her will to publish such a magnificent book. She asked her friend Janet Flanner for help. "Early in 1935 she told me with sadness, with grief, that she was going to have to sell some of her treasures like her Joyce manuscripts and Joyce first editions, and asked if I had any prosperous American friends who were collectors and might be interested" (Flanner par. 5).

To Flanner's horror, despite the fact that she mentioned the items for sale in her article in *The New Yorker*, people did not respond to the ad with interest. Beach held a public sale in her shop, though the attendees were not drawn to the store because of

Flanner's write-up. Despite the fact that Flanner was not able to increase the interest in the sale of the coveted manuscripts, Beach bestowed upon her friend an early copy of *Ulysses* for her efforts. Fifteen years later Flanner sold the copy to a friend for the purpose of donating the book to the Morgan Library. Flanner parted with the book in order to raise funds for Beach; she gave the \$100 profit back to the book's original owner.

Despite the fact that Beach was forced to part with her beloved manuscripts, she still considered closing the doors of her bookshop because of low profits. Many of the expatriates went home and books were no longer a luxury Parisians could afford. Beach had left such a mark in the minds of her well-connected friends that once again she was offered help in order to keep her little shop running. When André Gide heard of the potential closing in 1936, he would not have it. In Beach's memoir, she reflected:

A committee was then formed composed of Georges Duhamel, Luc Durtain, André Gide, Louis Gillet, Jacques de Lacretelle, André Maurois, Paul Morand, Jean Paulhan, Jules Romains, Jean Schlumberger, and Paul Valéry. . . . It was proposed that two hundred friends subscribe two hundred francs a year for two years. By that time, surely, Shakespeare and Company would be on its feet again. (210)

The list of subscribers was limited to two hundred because of space, for this was the maximum number of people the bookshop would hold. As part of the movement to keep the store open, private readings were scheduled by various writers, only open to the two hundred *friends*. The plan worked and Shakespeare and Company was able to keep its doors open for a few more years, but rough times were on the horizon. As a result of

the Nazi occupation of France, ultimately Shakespeare and Company vanished overnight. Americans were considered persona non grata in France once the United States entered the war. According to Beach's book, she was forced to register with the Germans every week and was eventually taken into custody and forced into a detention camp for several months. Before being taken, Beach recalled the day a German soldier, an avid Joyce fan, came into the store wanting to buy the copy of *Finnegans Wake* which was displayed in the window. Beach refused, as it was her last copy, and the soldier left, displeased. As a precaution she removed the book from the display. The soldier came back days later demanding the copy. Once again Beach refused. The high-ranking official, extremely perturbed at this point, threatened to come back and confiscate all of the shop's possessions.

Beach decided that all of the contents of her bookshop must be moved at once. Along with the help of Maurice Saillet,

[S]he quickly moved the contents of the bookshop, including her bookcases, into a vacant upstairs apartment—it was on the fourth floor (the third by French reckoning)—that her landlady put at her disposal without charge. Here the goods of Shakespeare and Company were kept secretly and safely until the liberation of Paris, when Sylvia herself moved into the apartment from the much smaller one on the second floor, where she had lived since 1937. (Monnier, *Rich Hours* 62)

Despite her being detained for several months, Beach's books remained safe and she was able to hold on to them once she was released. She eventually donated more than five thousand books to the American Library in Paris. The final chapter of the closing of her

store was on her terms, and the contents distributed at her request. Though she was forced to close the doors of her coveted bookstore, Beach would remain in Paris in the apartment above the empty shop, which was soon rented out to a new business owner.

### Inturned

Not long after Shakespeare and Company was closed, Beach was picked up and forced to spend several months in a Nazi prison camp. This experience was only briefly mentioned in her memoir, as she felt it was not an event that defined her or her life. She did, however, write about it in an essay appropriately called “Inturned.” Though the story should prove to be a bleak one, she tells it in her usual manner, straightforward and with humor attached. She spent more time in the camp than she did in school as a child and was released for the same reason: her constant illness and suffering from headaches. She was once again released from her prison to the solitude of her books; only this time they were hidden safely away from their would-be captors, instead of at the home of her parents.

In “Inturned” she described the trip to the camp, after being seen off by Adrienne Monnier. Upon her arrival at the camp, she noted in her essay, “We stopped at a place we knew in better days as the Zoo, in the Bois de Boulogne: Jardin d’Acclimation, and mounted the steps to a large hall to the monkey house as we called it: we were the only monkeys” (942). Though she did not create works of fiction, her accounts of her life are written with such color and humor that one cannot help but think that if it were not for her love of other authors, and the great tasks she took upon herself, that she might have become a great author in her own right, had she the time and the inclination to work at this craft. In “Inturned” she goes on to describe others in the camp, “and quite a few

crazy women whose case was not improved by capture.” Again, one cannot help but smile at her writing, despite the bleak picture being portrayed during a terrible time in world history. Though the stay was not a welcome one, she was allowed visitors and often was visited by Adrienne Monnier along with Maurice Saillet, who often brought her provisions, though they were prohibited from doing so. Beach recalls one of their visits:

We were allowed a visitor once a month: Adrienne Monnier came with Maurice Saillet: I heard by chance of their visit, by loudspeaker in the park—if you happened to be there when it was announced. I was escorted by a soldier to a small office where one received ones [sic] visitors—in the presence of a German officer. Adrienne was wearing a wide, long cape, her customary costume, and she stowed under it a lot of the contents of my parcels which had been put aside for her. A can of condensed milk rolled on the floor—right under the table at which the officer was seated: I must say, he showed no sign of having noticed it as I picked it up. (945)

Discipline was lax at the camps where Beach lived so Monnier and Saillet were willing to risk the trouble to bring their beloved friend foods that were not available in the camp. Beach was released after several months with the threat that she could be picked up at any time.

She did not go back to the camps after her release, though life in Paris was no longer filled with books and writers and the atmosphere that once brought the Left Bank alive. Because of the war, many luxuries were no longer available and the threat of returning was made clear by the Germans roaming through Paris. Though Beach did not make claims regarding moving out of Adrienne Monnier’s apartment before Shakespeare

and Company closed, it is quite possible that she chose to move back into the rooms above her store to keep Monnier out of harm's way. Americans were no longer welcome in Paris, which was made obvious by Beach's internment, and the possibility of Monnier being picked up could have worried Beach enough to move. Once she was released from the camp, Beach would sneak over to Monnier's and the two would spend time together, eating dinner and going through town seeking provisions if it was thought to be safe, but the two would not live together again. Before Monnier's death she considered moving in with Beach above the ghost of Shakespeare and Company. Monnier suffered fainting spells and had rheumatism and considered having someone take over the store and moving in with Beach so she could be looked after (Fitch 411).

For many years after the 1946 death of her beloved Gertrude Stein, Alice B. Toklas lived in the home they shared on the rue de Fleurus. When Toklas was eventually forced out of the home she and Stein kept, she moved into a more modern apartment, but was saddened by the lack of memories the place held. It was common for women to lose their residence and even their belongings when their female companion died, as the deceased's heirs claim their property. Toklas suffered the same fate: Stein's relatives slowly depleted Stein's possessions, including her home, leaving Toklas homeless. In *Staying on Alone: Letters of Alice B. Toklas*, in a letter dated March of 1947, Toklas writes of a painting of Stein, "They took the Picasso portrait for the Metropolitan ten days ago. It was another parting and completely undid me. Picasso came over to say good bye to it and said sadly—*ni vous—ni moi le reverra jamais*. It was all there was left of their youth (57)." The portrait of Stein, painted by Picasso, was one of great history. It was a painting that Toklas surely coveted. She had discussed the portrait with Picasso over



dinner. He mentioned that his critics claimed she looked nothing like the portrait. His response was always that she would (Mellow 120). Toklas was slowly losing pieces of what her Left Bank life had been.

In a letter dated November 1961, Toklas wrote of a brief meeting with Beach, “I had a moment’s conversation with Sylvia Beach and when I asked for news of Bryher and H.D. She gave me the very sad news of the death of H.D. a month ago. . . . It is impossible to believe in Bryher without H. D. (Toklas, *Staying* 406).” The same can be said for the companionship of Toklas and Stein, and in many ways Beach and Monnier. During the 1930s when you saw one, you saw the other. They were more than a couple; they were a pair. In Beach’s memoir she states, “Her [Stein’s] remarks and those of Alice, which rounded them out, were inseparable. Obviously they saw things from the same angle, as people do when they are perfectly congenial” (27). After Stein’s passing Toklas published several books including her memoir, *What is Remembered*, the story of her life with Stein, as well as two cookbooks. Toklas did the cooking in the Stein-Toklas home and she offered the world the chance to peek into a small portion of their life together through her cookbooks.

In June 1955 Adrienne Monnier, Sylvia Beach’s longtime companion, took her own life (Fitch 411). Having been plagued with illness and unable to live through the pain, Monnier took an overdose of sleeping pills. She had closed her own bookstore several years before but kept writing when she felt able, though her health was deteriorating. Having suffered from an inner ear infection, she was plagued with bouts of vertigo and also heard loud noises which became unbearable. Beach found her friend shortly after the overdose and felt such pain that she wished she too had gone. Monnier

was still a touchstone for Beach, despite their living apart, and the loss was a great tragedy for Beach. Fourteen years before her death, Monnier wrote a passage which would sum up her life, “Art of living, of knowing how to live—that is what I have tried to make you see in a saint and in a writer. Which you may see as well in so many other people of our country, wherever the waves of these words may take you—*the Nature of France*” (*Rich Hours* 422). Monnier left a note, which was found shortly after her death, announcing the cause, a result of the eight months of torture she had endured. She could no longer take the pain and the voices and was ready to move on. As for Beach, she did not fault Monnier for her choice. Suicide, Beach felt, was a person’s choice and was not to be decided by others.

Even though Beach did not begrudge Monnier’s decision, she would miss her dearly. Neither did she judge the decisions of Ernest Hemingway, who after his first suicide attempt took his own life with a rifle. Beach’s mother, who battled depression, also overdosed on pills. Beach lost those closest to her by their own hands, but felt it was their choice and not to be condemned, despite her religious upbringing. This was not to be her fate, however.

At the time of Adrienne Monnier’s passing, she and Sylvia Beach no longer lived together. Beach had moved out of the home they shared and resided in the rooms above her bookshop where the American composer George Antheil had once lived. This did not diminish Beach’s sadness at the parting of Monnier. In a letter to Beach dated 6 February, 1956, offering her condolences, Katherine Anne Porter, saddened by the news, mentioned that she thought of them together. This is similar to what Toklas claimed of Bryher and H. D. as a pair. Porter went on to write, “I did have that pathetic fallacy of thinking of us

all as immortal, or enough so for our purposes,” and states, “we could never hear of each other’s death!” The tone of Porter’s letter was sad, as it reflected on Monnier’s life. At one point it added a twist of humor, mentioning Porter’s encounter with Ernest Hemingway while at Beach’s bookstore. The two did not exchange a single word, as Beach left the room assuming the two would chat. Hemingway turned on his heels and went back out into the rain after a brief stare, amounting to the only time the two would encounter one another and the closest they would come to potential conversation. Though Beach prided herself on bringing together the various authors who passed through the Left Bank, the Hemingway-Porter association would not be a successful meeting. Her matchmaking skills would not stand up to these two stubborn authors, who refused to budge. Hemingway would fall out of favor with Gertrude Stein, but would eventually make up. Despite this, his relationship with Katherine Anne Porter would never be congenial, despite Beach’s best efforts.

Sylvia Beach’s amazing life came to a close on 6 October 1962, the day Adrienne Monnier’s close friend Maurice Saillet found her body (Fitch 414). She had died some time earlier of apparent heart failure. Her funeral services were held in France and her ashes were sent to Princeton, New Jersey, the place she always considered home (Fitch 414). Through her friendships with many of the world’s best writers and her influence on their works Sylvia Beach has left an imprint few could match. Today she is most commonly known as the person who published James Joyce’s *Ulysses* when no other person or company would, but she did much more. She touched the lives of many people and left her mark on their souls, and in their writing.

**CONCLUSION:**  
**ONLY GENIUSES HERE**

Beach's story, along with the stories of Gertrude Stein, Alice B. Toklas, Ernest Hemingway, James Joyce, H. D., Bryher, Djuna Barnes, Ezra Pound, Robert McAlmon and others can be read in the novel by Clancy Carlile, *The Paris Pilgrims*. Though the stories and dialogue are based loosely on events which occurred during these prolific writing years, they are for the most part inventions of the author. The story does, however, bring to life each of the characters and add to what we already know and love about each of these authors. This story brings to life, though it is primarily fiction, the Paris that was once the heart of the literati before the war brought an end to the home away from home for many expatriates.

Sylvia Beach spent her life in Paris running her bookshop and entertaining the writers of the Left Bank. Though her shop was only open for several hours a day and closed on Sundays, she spent most of her time there. When the bookstore was not open she spent her time writing letters to her friends as well as preparing the store for the next day. Her little bookstore served as a platform for Americans, French and people from all over the world to stop in and discuss literature. She worked with her friend Adrienne Monnier translating English works into French and French works into English. She also blessed us with her own memoirs. Though she did not leave us with any other

literary creations, she left her mark in a large way. She influenced writers during the early 1900s and gave them a place to spend their days while living in or just visiting Paris. She brought English literature to France during a time when it was almost impossible to obtain. It was not rare for new writers to stop in after spying their own work in her windows. She made fast friends with most of the authors who patronized her store. She made it a point to introduce them to each other, making connections for people whom she felt should meet. She brought many authors together, and they brought their fellow writers to her shop. News traveled fast once her bookstore brought English literature to the Left Bank. She hosted events celebrating her creative friends' talents and to celebrate their achievements. In return they volunteered their time in hopes of keeping the bookstore's doors open and keeping their dear friend in business.

Beach touched the lives and the literature of many during the early 1900s and it is close to impossible to find a memoir written by any writer who lived in or around the Left Bank from the 1920s to 1930s who has left her out of their thoughts. Maria Jolas, in her memoir *Maria Jolas, Woman of Action: A Memoir and other Writings*, recalls her husband, whom she refers to as Gene, consulting Beach when he envisioned starting a new magazine. She mentions that Beach's response regarding the idea "proved to be most encouraging" (83). Maria and Eugene Jolas published many authors, including Samuel Beckett and James Joyce, in their popular magazine *transition*. They respected Beach and valued her opinion regarding their new endeavor. Their high regard of Beach is an example of the way in which Beach's bookstore, her friendships and her sheer desire to improve and expand the world of literature, made a large mark on the literature we enjoy today.

Beach left an enduring mark on literature through her publishing efforts and the encouragement she gave to the writers that passed through her bookshop doors. Her influence and kindness resounds in many of her friends' memoirs as they reflect on her friendship and the kindness that she showed. In *The Heart to Artemis: A Writer's Memoirs*, Beach's friend Bryher recalls:

There was only one street in Paris for me, the rue de l'Odéon. . . . It meant naturally Sylvia and Adrienne and the happy hours that I spent in their libraries. Has there ever been another bookshop like Shakespeare and Company? It was not just the crowded shelves, the little bust of Shakespeare nor the many informal photographs of her friends, it was Sylvia herself, standing like a passenger from the *Mayflower* with the wind still blowing through her hair and a thorough command of French slang, waiting to help us and be our guide. She found us printers, translators and rooms. (246)

Beach left an impression on her friends as well as on bibliophiles the world over. She was remembered in memoirs written during the early 1900s. She is also mentioned in many biographies about her friends such as Katherine Anne Porter, Ernest Hemingway and James Joyce. She shows up in their stories written by biographers, and shows up in the memoirs written by the authors themselves. It would be hard to read their stories without knowing their relationship with Sylvia Beach, Paris, and the little bookshop that left a big impression. Though she is not mentioned by name, the famous little shop, Shakespeare and Company, is named in the graphic novel *The Left Bank Gang*, which is a spoof on her friends Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ezra Pound. Though

the store is only referred to once, it shows up early in the book, revealing itself as an important place on the second page.

Thanks to Beach, James Joyce was able to see *Ulysses* published during his lifetime, which in turn paved the way for *Finnegans Wake* to make its debut. She also is responsible for the audio recordings of Joyce reading from his famous works for Joyceans who wanted to be able to hear his voice. For those interested in hearing Beach's accounts of her life, there are recordings available for viewing in the film *Paris Was a Woman*. In this film Sylvia Beach recollects many of her friends from the Left Bank during its heyday. She tells stories of Adrienne Monnier, James Joyce, Ernest Hemingway, and many more. An audio recording of Adrienne Monnier speaking about Sylvia Beach, as well as footage of Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas are also included in the documentary.

Andrea Weiss' novel, *Paris Was a Woman*, the follow up to the film, portrays many famous Left Bank women, and opens with a chapter titled "Odéona: The Country of Books" (27). Weiss appreciated Beach and Monnier's importance enough to include them in her book. She also chose to dedicate the first chapter to the pair. Weiss wrote, "The developing relationship between Sylvia and Adrienne was crucial to the flowering of English and American literature in France" (29). She goes on:

Sylvia . . . had no formal education and did not write anything but her highly guarded memoirs late in life, and a translation of *Barbarian in Asia* by Henri Michaux. To Bryher she confessed that, ' . . . I only wish I had exercised with the pen a little all these years, and now knew how to write, as Gertrude would call it, but I didn't and don't.' (31)

Gertrude Stein scholars worth their salt know that Pablo Picasso claimed that his portrait of Stein may not have looked like her at the time, but it would. Joyce scholars are aware that Sylvia Beach played a major role in the life of the infamous book called *Ulysses*. They would also be familiar with Bloomsday, the name coined for the 16<sup>th</sup> of June. The events in *Ulysses* take place on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June in 1904, the day James Joyce and his future wife, Nora Barnacle, had their first date. Bloomsday is celebrated the world over by Joyce fans, but not all are aware of the origin of the name, or that Sylvia Beach coined the term for the day that would take years to unfold (Fitch 144).

Beach sought out Paris hoping to read and study contemporary French literature. She stayed in France and left her mark on the world of literature, barely allowing her time to read anything more than page proofs, despite her original intent. Despite the fact that she was not a creative writer she has in one form or another had her hand in dozens of books written during her lifetime and even more since her passing. She is recognized by bookstore owners and literature enthusiasts across the globe. Janet Flanner fittingly ended her essay on Sylvia Beach, “She always gave more than she received. Publishing *Ulysses* was her greatest act of generosity” (par. 7).

Joyce Honors Beach

In honor of William Shakespeare, upon the publication and release of *Ulysses*, Joyce wrote the following poem (rewriting Shakespeare’s original poem) to Beach inside her copy of the coveted book:

Who is Sylvia, what is she  
That all our scribes commend her?  
Yankee, young and brave is she  
The west this pace<sup>1</sup> did lend her  
That all books might published be.



Is she rich as she is brave  
For wealth oft daring misses?  
Thongs about her rant and rave  
To subscribe for *Ulysses*  
But, having signed, they ponder grave.

Then to Sylvia let us sing  
Her daring lies in selling.  
She can sell each mortal thing  
That's boring beyond telling  
To her let us buyers bring.

J. J.  
after  
W. S.

(Beach, *Shakespeare* 85)

#### Note

1. According to Maynard, “pace” is a typo. The word in the original poem, written inside Beach’s copy of *Ulysses*, was “grace.”

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