



# My Two Loves are My Country and Paris: Queer and African American Women in Interwar Paris

## Citation

Herr, Tracy-Lynn Irene. 2023. My Two Loves are My Country and Paris: Queer and African American Women in Interwar Paris. Master's thesis, Harvard University Division of Continuing Education.

## Permanent link

<https://nrs.harvard.edu/URN-3:HUL.INSTREPOS:37374904>

## Terms of Use

This article was downloaded from Harvard University's DASH repository, and is made available under the terms and conditions applicable to Other Posted Material, as set forth at <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:dash.current.terms-of-use#LAA>

## Share Your Story

The Harvard community has made this article openly available.  
Please share how this access benefits you. [Submit a story](#).

[Accessibility](#)

My Two Loves are My Country and Paris:  
Queer and African American Women in Interwar Paris

Tracy-Lynn Herr

A Thesis in the Field of History  
for the Degree of Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies

Harvard University

May 2023



## Abstract

Interwar Paris became known as a haven to many marginalized groups within the United States. African American women and queer women moved to the city in search of a sense of community and opportunities for success that were otherwise unavailable to them in the United States. By examining the experiences of Josephine Baker, Ada “Bricktop” Smith, and Sylvia Beach, I examine how Paris lives up to those expectations. Josephine Baker provides insight into live as a performer of color, and how prejudices impacted her successes in Paris. Ada “Bricktop” Smith represents the experiences of Black business owners in the growing Parisian jazz scene, and how African Americans sought community with one another in Paris. Finally, Sylvia Beach embodies the experiences of queer white women in Paris, and how the experiences of queer women abroad were in some way like Baker and Bricktop.

By examining personal correspondences, art pieces, fashion, and media surrounding these women, I discover how race and sexuality changed the experiences of Americans who moved to Paris during the 1920s and 30s. By analyzing seemingly disparate subjects, I aim to discover the intersectional experiences of marginalized émigrés in Paris. Though Paris was depicted as a city which was welcoming to all races, genders, and sexualities, this was not necessarily the reality of live within the City of Lights.

## Acknowledgments

To begin, I must express my deepest thanks to Dr. Mary Lewis, who guided me through this entire process with patience, kindness, and encouragement. Without her help, I can honestly say this thesis would have been a jumbled mess of random ideas and frilly language. I would also like to thank the wonderful staff at the Biblioteque Nationale in Paris, who helped me find many wonderful resources that were imperative to my research.

This thesis would also not have been possible without my husband Timothy Herr, whose undying love and support got me through the thesis process. He is an absolute saint for putting up with my sleep talking about my research and Tina Belcher-esque groaning. You are my soulmate, and I am so lucky to have someone in my corner who always encourages me to go after my dreams. I am also thankful to my mom Diana Hogan, who I dragged through the streets of Paris in record breaking heat to watch me translate and try not to sweat onto primary sources. I also appreciate my Dad, Russell Hogan, who gave me my passion for history and who I can always count on to fly across the country with me when I need a travel buddy. You two are the best parents I could ask for, and I am the nerd I am today because of you. Finally, I have to thank my brother, Eric Hogan, for getting his master's degree first. By igniting my sibling rivalry, you gave me the extra motivation to get my graduate degree, too. You can't be the most educated person in the family, dang it!

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgments .....	iv
List of Figures.....	vii
Preface. A Note on Terminology.....	1
Chapter I. Introduction .....	3
Research Methods .....	8
Historiography .....	11
African Americans.....	12
Queer Women.....	15
Chapter II. Marginalization in Interwar Paris.....	19
Women .....	23
Race in Interwar France.....	27
Chapter III. Josephine Baker: Superstar .....	36
Prejudice in Paris .....	42
Baker as an Immigrant.....	44
Black Americans vs. Black French Colonials .....	48
Chapter III. Ada “Bricktop” Smith and life behind the scenes .....	57
Creating Color-Blind Paris .....	58
Bricktop in the Papers .....	60
Bricktop in French Media.....	62
Paris at Home and Abroad.....	64
Chapter IV. Sylvia Beach’s World of Literature.....	66

Sylvia Beach in Paris.....	68
Similarities between Marginalized Women .....	69
Sylvia Beach in the Media.....	74
Chapter V. Conclusion .....	82
Bibliography .....	86

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Josephine Baker Banana Dance .....	41
Figure 2. Colonial Woman and Josephine Baker .....	45
Figure 3. Mistinguett being waited on by her Black Servant, Vouge. ....	47
Figure 4. Contrasts within <i>Le Tumulte Noir</i> . ....	50
Figure 5. White and Black Dancers in <i>Le Tumulte Noir</i> .....	51
Figure 6. Race swapping in <i>Le Tumulte Noir</i> . ....	53
Figure 7. Reality versus Art in <i>Le Tumulte Noir</i> .....	54



## Preface

### A Note on Terminology

There are certain terms which will be used throughout this thesis that are important to recognize. First, I will be referring to members of the LGBTQIA community as queer individuals. The term LGBTQ+, though appropriate to use in modern discourse, would not have been used in the interwar period. Many people we may now refer to as gay, lesbian, transgender, etc. would have not used this acronym to describe themselves. People who were not cisgendered heterosexual individuals would have simply fallen under the term queer. In fact, some of the actors discussed may not have viewed themselves as anything beyond heterosexual, since they were not in long term same-sex relationships. Since this is a topic which has become increasingly nuanced in the years since the 1920s and 30s, and the details of the gender and sexuality spectrum would have been relatively unknown to the subjects of my analysis. As a result, I will refer to LGBTQIA individuals as queer since this would be a more accurate identifier for the actors whom I discuss. Though the term queer also was not used often in the interwar period, it is less anachronistic than LGBTQIA.

Similarly, I will be adjusting the terminology I use to discuss the African American community. The men and women examined would most likely have referred to themselves as “colored” or “negro.” However, this language would not be appropriate terminology to use today, due to the racist connotation this language conjures. While these words may have been appropriate for the Black community during interwar period,

I do not feel as though it is appropriate to use myself. As a result, I will be referring to Americans of color as black or African Americans.

Finally, it is worth noting the difference between an immigrant, an émigré, and an expatriate or expat. An immigrant refers to a person who leaves their home country with the intent to permanently move. As none of the women whom I focus my analysis on originally set out with this goal in mind, I will not refer to them as such. They would not be considered immigrants, regardless of if they remained in Paris for the rest of their lives. Instead, I will refer to these women and their peers as émigrés or as expats. The term émigré refers to someone who moves abroad due to political or social reasons. As the subjects of my analysis relocated to Paris to escape discrimination based on their race or sexuality, this term is most appropriate. I will also occasionally refer to them as expats, as they are also people who are living outside of their home countries. Each woman maintained relationships within the United States, returned home to visit, and cultivated relationships in their homeland. This is especially true once they garnered significant success in their various fields, which made it easier to travel between Europe and America. Due to their social status, these women would eventually fit into the expat designation and may be referred to as such.

## Chapter I.

### Introduction

As a warm August day began to bloom in 1919 Paris, a young American woman roamed the streets with a plan to completely uproot her life and begin anew. The war had just ended, and Sylvia Beach had three thousand dollars in her pocket to start an American bookstore in the heart of the city. She had dreamed of owning a bookshop and lending library and had decided to make this dream a reality in Paris. Her family begged her to consider opening her shop in Greenwich Village, or even in London if she must be abroad.<sup>1</sup> Yet, Beach could not be persuaded. She believed that only Paris gave her the opportunity to achieve her dreams, and it should be her new home. This experience was not unique to Beach, as she was one of many American women who would eventually find her home in the City of Lights.

Though France was still reeling from one of the most devastating wars in human history, Paris presented new opportunities for many people looking for a fresh start in a changed world. Artists, musicians, and entrepreneurs emigrated to Paris to create modern cultural contributions in a changed world.<sup>2</sup> Among these migrants were many marginalized people hoping for a chance to gain success. African American men and women, as well as queer Americans travelled to Paris to escape persecution for the color of their skin or sexual preferences. Women of color and queer women were able to find success in Paris without hiding their identities. Through the examination of their social

---

<sup>1</sup> Sylvia Beach to Eleanor Orbison Beach, 27 Aug 1919, Box 5 Folder 1, Sylvia Beach Papers, Princeton University Library.

<sup>2</sup> Jeffrey H. Jackson, *Making Jazz French: Music and Modern Life in Interwar Paris* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 53.

networks, media coverage, and personal correspondence, it may be possible to gain a stronger understanding of what it meant to be an American woman in Paris.

While queer and African American women each made significant contributions, most discussions surrounding these groups are focused on their individual impact. However, it is important to acknowledge that these two minority communities in Paris share a common homeland: the United States. Many queer American women migrated to Paris along with their African American countrymen. Each group came with similar goals and were attempting to escape persecution and humiliation in the United States. Each managed to carve out their own communities within Paris, and experienced different forms of marginalization in their new home. While each group faced their own unique challenges and opportunities, they are also members of a larger group of expatriates in Paris. The status of an expat from the United States was one which wielded significant influence and carried more weight in French culture than is often acknowledged. Therefore, it must be asked: how did their status as American expats shape their experiences in France? In addition, how did these experiences change based on their status as members not only as expatriates or émigrés, but also as members of a minority community? Finally, how did the greater Parisian community view each group and interact with them as they forged permanent or semi-permanent homes within the city?

To examine these questions, I focus my research on three women: Josephine Baker, Ada “Bricktop” Smith, and Sylvia Beach. Each woman will serve as an example of various cultural movements within Paris at the time. Josephine Baker was an iconic performer who brought American jazz, dance, and comedy to the international stage. Baker serves as a rich source of study to discover what it meant to be a woman of color

performing in interwar Paris. Bricktop Smith was an influential figure in the jazz world and ran an incredibly successful nightclub in Montmartre. Bricktop worked behind the scenes and will provide a clearer view of what it meant to bring jazz to Paris. Finally, Sylvia Beach provides insight into the literary world. She opened one of the first English only bookstores in Paris, which would soon become a hub of literary activity. All three women are Americans who moved to Paris because of its reputation for cultural acceptance, experimentation, and overall unconventionality.

Although Paris will be my focus of discussion, it was by no means the only destination for marginalized people during the interwar period. Other metropolitan areas such as Berlin, Amsterdam, London and Vienna were also home to those escaping the confines of society. Each city offered space for social transformation and the chance to redefine norms and identities following the war. Americans were also drawn to many places within Europe to form a sense community and belonging that was denied to them at home. Paris offered space for unconventional people from around the world to participate in widespread cultural experimentation and Avant Gard attitudes within the city. While I will not be examining these other cities here, it is important to be aware that the migration within Europe was not occurring within Paris alone. It was, however, was home to influential Americans within the literary and music scenes who created a lasting impact. Their successes drew more émigrés to France in hopes of achieving the same success.

Included in these émigrés were many of African Americans who chose to leave their homelands behind for a new start abroad. While these men and women moved to France for many reasons, many of these decisions were based on the idea that France

offered more opportunities than the United States. France may not have been a perfect racial utopia, but at least racist ideology was not codified into law within the French metropole in the same way as it was in America. Paris itself gained a positive reputation within the African American community particularly within the interwar period. This was thanks in part to the experiences some African American G.I.s described following the end of the Great War. While in France, soldiers spoke of the kindness they experienced from the white French soldiers.<sup>3</sup> One soldier wrote in a letter home that “these French people don’t bother with no color line business. They treat us so good that the only time I ever know I’m colored is when I look in the glass.”<sup>4</sup> Following the end of the war, stories like this began to inspire some to return to Paris and start anew.

Though the French metropole was far from a perfect racial utopia, it was certainly an improvement upon race relations in comparison with interwar United States. Paris, after all, did not have Jim Crow laws or lynch mobs roaming the streets. However, this does not mean that there were no racial stereotypes prevalent in Paris. These stereotypes were just less likely to lead to violence, death, and debilitating restrictions to everyday life. Instead, behaviors were more deeply rooted in paternalism and the hypersexualization of black bodies.<sup>5</sup> Yet for African Americans used to living under the threat of white supremacists, this seemed like a refreshing change that brought with it more possibilities than limitations.

---

<sup>3</sup> Here, it is important to note that this positive treatment was only reflective of the African American experience and was not true for all black soldiers during WWI. Many colonial subjects from France came to fight in the First World War and received a less than congenial welcome. This is more thoroughly discussed in Chapter II.

<sup>4</sup> Stovall, *Paris Noir*, 18.

<sup>5</sup> T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, *Bricktop's Paris: African American Women in Paris Between the Two World Wars* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015), 6.

African Americans were not the only marginalized peoples moving to Paris between the wars; many queer<sup>6</sup> people began to move to Paris as well. While queerness was not overtly accepted, there were large queer networks in Paris.<sup>7</sup> Using these social connections, women were able to create their own subculture throughout Paris. Much like African Americans in France, these queer women made significant cultural contributions. Queer women created great works of literature, art, and fashion which contained subtle cues to fellow queer women about their lives, relationships, and experiences in Paris.<sup>8</sup> While these women were able to establish some community relationships in France, there were still many stigmas surrounding their sexual identity. Yet, their personal contributions to Parisian society often contradicted this often-negative perception of queer life. Queer women were able to carve out their own opportunities and community within Paris, despite the challenges they faced.

While both African Americans and queer women were drawn to Paris, there was not always clear connections between the groups. However, there is some overlap as demonstrated by the subjects of my analysis, Josephine Baker, Bricktop Smith, and Sylvia Beach, who all have been categorized as queer women at some point in their lives. Baker and Smith were said to have been fluid in terms of their sexual preferences, expressing occasional romantic interests in other women as well as men. In fact, following her death, Josephine Baker's son would claim Baker and Smith maintained a long-term relationship with one another early in Baker's career.<sup>9</sup> Yet there is significant

---

<sup>6</sup> See notes on terminology.

<sup>7</sup> Tirza True Latimer, *Women Together/women Apart: Portraits of Lesbian Paris* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 20-25, [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD\\_ALMA512223024720003941](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD_ALMA512223024720003941).

<sup>8</sup> Latimer, *Women Together/Women Apart*, 100.

<sup>9</sup> Jean-Claude Baker, *Josephine: The Hungry Heart* (New York: Random House 1993), 120.

contrast between these rumors and the overt lesbian activity of my third subject, Sylvia Beach. Beach was a white woman in the modernist literary world, and she maintained a long-term lesbian relationship with her business partner. In addition, they also regularly socialized with other well-known lesbians like Gertrude Stein and Alice Toklas. Though all the subjects of my analysis seem to have enjoyed same-sex relationships at some point in their lives, only the wealthy white woman chose to be outwardly queer. Therefore, it must be acknowledged that there is a certain amount disparity between the experiences women of color and white women. Though many of the queer women I discuss are white, it is important to recognize the presence of queer individuals of color Paris despite their lack of visibility.

By examining the experiences of influential figures in both the queer and African American communities, I argue that the foreign status of these women was a key factor in their experiences in Paris. Rather than simply being a footnote to their story, the status of an expatriate was significant. It allowed these minority groups to wield influence that would be unattainable in different circumstances, due to the perception of American culture and the connections they were able to form. Relationships within American communities abroad carried incredible weight, especially in an era where American culture was rapidly spreading throughout Europe.

### Research Methods

There has been considerable historical research surrounding African Americans in France and the lives of the queer community in Paris. Yet there has been very little focus on where the experiences between these two groups may overlap as common members of an expat community. In my research, I intend to discover relationships between social



groups which are seemingly unrelated. I have drawn considerable inspiration from the intersectional approach to history, which argues that people may experience multiple forms of marginalization based on their identity.<sup>10</sup> In 1989, Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term “intersectionality.”<sup>11</sup> Her research was the first time the term intersectional was used to describe the intertwining of race, class, and gender and how it shaped the experiences of those who fell into multiple minority categories. Often, historians seem to focus solely upon one aspect of the minority experience: race or gender or immigration status or sexual orientation, rarely blending all of these together. I hope to use this lens of historical analysis to drive my research, though not in the exact ways discussed by Crenshaw.

I utilize this methodology in a similar way to Danielle Phillips-Cunningham as she discusses the similarities and differences of Irish immigrants and African Americans in domestic service.<sup>12</sup> She provides in depth analysis of how anti-immigrant and white supremacist ideologies manifested in similar ways.<sup>13</sup> I hope to conduct my research into my subjects of analysis in a similar way. African Americans in Paris were not only émigrés to France, but also faced unique challenges as people of color. Queer women faced marginalization due to their gender as well as their sexuality. I aim to discover

---

<sup>10</sup> This approach to history has been discussed in depth by Ellen Shaffner, Albert Mills and Jean Helm Mills in their work "Intersectional History: Exploring Intersectionality over Time," *Journal of Management History* 25, no. 4 (2019). Here, the authors discuss how relationships between feminist history and postcolonial history have been neglected, despite the wealth of sources available for analysis.

<sup>11</sup> Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics” *Feminist Legal Theory* 1 (1989): 57-80,

[https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN\\_cdi\\_proquest\\_ebookcentralchapters\\_1397287\\_8\\_36](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN_cdi_proquest_ebookcentralchapters_1397287_8_36).

<sup>12</sup> Danielle Phillips-Cunningham, *Putting Their Hands on Race: Irish Immigrant and Southern Black Domestic Workers, 1850-1940* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2020), <https://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/99153867988703941/catalog>.

<sup>13</sup> Phillips-Cunningham, *Putting Their Hands on Race*, 16.

where these groups share common limitations, as well as where they differ. By examining these topics, I hope to contribute to our understanding of each group in a novel way.

To organize my research and narrow my focus, I focus on three specific women who contributed to the arts in interwar Paris. I examine the lives of Josephine Baker, Ada Smith, and Sylvia Beach. From these individuals, I gain deeper insight through an examination of their broad social circles within Paris. Each woman was influential in their own sphere, whether it be as an artist, a business owner, or a publisher. In addition, these three women have left a significant number of primary sources, which may not be true for many in their broader circle. In addition, they had the opportunity to speak about issues that were impacting their community on a broader basis, as they were protected by their elite status in society. Their decisions, interactions, and language choice within their correspondence can illuminate more about the realities of life in Paris. Published books and personal letters, costumes used in performances, and attendees at an elegant soiree may provide deeper insight into the lives of queer women and African Americans. This diversity in lived experiences provides an opportunity for more varied interpretations of Parisian society and culture and can paint a fuller picture of life in the city as an expat.

Primary source materials for this research come in many forms. In my research surrounding African Americans in Paris, I study surviving jazz and dance performances from the interwar period. There are still many recordings of Josephine Baker readily available through the National Archives and online platforms. Since I intend to examine the larger social networks of my focus subjects, I also use correspondence published in various Black newspapers across the United States, such as the *Baltimore Afro-American*,

*La Race Negre*, *The New York Amsterdam News*, *The Chicago Defender*, and *The Boston Guardian*. Some African Americans living in Paris published letters home for relatives, detailing their lives abroad. This makes African American newspapers even more critical pieces of evidence. Another key source are various images of African Americans abroad during this period, many of which are available through the Library of Congress and the National Archives. These archives also include data related to migration of African Americans abroad in the decades I am researching.

### Historiography

The study of African Americans and queer women in France is a relatively recent one in terms of historical analysis. There has been research conducted surrounding Black communities in France, such as those who migrated from France's African and Caribbean colonies. The same can be said of queer women and their intersectional experiences within France. I have yet to find sources which examine these communities together in terms of race, sexuality, gender, heteronormativity, or anti-immigration sentiment. In addition, these two groups are not as clearly connected on the surface. Instead, there are a web of connections that I explore. Each group is connected in various ways, whether through immigration status, art, gender, sexuality, or race. Yet, each one moved to Paris in pursuit of acceptance and the opportunity to develop as an artist free from the stigmatization and marginalization they faced at home. By attempting to leave behind discrimination they faced in the United States, they could gain social, economic, or artistic independence unavailable to them in the United States.

## African Americans

For many decades, French history focused on the experiences of white, native-born French citizens, and their interpretation of events in their country. However, in 1988 French Historian Gerard Noiriel argued that the history of France up to that point left the discussion of immigrants to France on the sidelines.<sup>14</sup> Following this critique, historical discussion surrounding race in Paris began to examine residents from France's imperial holdings, as seen in the work of Mary Lewis, Clifford Rosenberg, and Sue Peabody.<sup>15</sup> But much of this scholarship speaks of imperial tensions and restrictions placed upon those who identified as both French and members of France's colonies. Yet these sources often do not discuss African Americans in France and their impact on Parisian society, as they would not have fallen into the same social category as French Blacks and other colonial subjects. While they all belonged to the Black community, African Americans maintained the status of American, first and foremost. As a result, their experiences in France contrasted with the experiences of the French African community.

During the 1970s and 80s, historians in the United States who were interested in the American influence abroad began to examine contributions made by non-white American citizens in Europe. This search for a new face of cultural exchange can be embodied in Michel Fabre's 1985 work which describes the experiences of African

---

<sup>14</sup> Gérard Noiriel, *Qu'est-ce Qu'une Nation?: Le Vivre Ensemble à la Française : Réflexions d'un Historien* (Montrouge: Bayard, 1988), [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/HVD\\_RECAPSCSB-8326400](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/HVD_RECAPSCSB-8326400).

<sup>15</sup> Mary Dewhurst Lewis, *The Boundaries of the Republic: Migrant Rights and the Limits of Universalism in France, 1918-1940* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), <https://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/990106430260203941/catalog>; Mary Lewis, *Divided Rule: Sovereignty and Empire in French Tunisia, 1881-1938* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD\\_ALMA512500174170003941](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD_ALMA512500174170003941); Sue Peabody et al., *The Color of Liberty: Histories of Race in France* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD\\_ALMA512226287860003941](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD_ALMA512226287860003941); Clifford Rosenberg, *Policing Paris: The Origins of Modern Immigration Control Between the Wars* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).

American writers in Paris, looking to capture the same inspiration in Paris as Hemingway and Stein. This history gathered over two decades examines personal narratives of the African American experience in Paris from a literary perspective. Fabre's history encapsulates the experiences not only of famous writers like W.E.B. DuBois, Langston Hughes, as well as less famous African Americans abroad.<sup>16</sup> Though Fabre's work is thorough, it remains solely focused on the literary contributions of African Americans. His argument does little to discuss Black performers, singers, dancers and others involved in the performing arts throughout Paris.

Another area of research focuses on impacts of the interwar Jazz Migration. During the 1920s and 30s, Paris became a home for jazz musicians abroad. In his book *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light*, Tyler Stovall discusses the power of jazz musicians in the French music world. Stovall touches on the First World War, the influence of women like Josephine Baker, and the relationship between the white French community and the complex class dynamics present in African American communities abroad.<sup>17</sup> While this is a comprehensive work, its depth is limited simply because Stovall is covering so many subjects. He does a masterful job of creating a snapshot of the time, but only minimally discusses intersectional challenges of racism, anti-immigration, and sexism. In my own work, I focus on these experiences by providing insight into the lives of specific artistic contributors. African Americans' lives as émigrés facing racism and sexism can become lost in Stovall's wide focus. A decade later, Jeffrey H. Jackson's in-depth work *Making Jazz French* provides an in depth look at jazz itself, and how the

---

<sup>16</sup> Michel Fabre, *From Harlem to Paris: Black American Writers in France, 1840-1980* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), <https://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/990021273360203941/catalog>.

<sup>17</sup> Tyler Stovall, *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996).

music and musicians lived in Paris. He also provides insight into the Jazz Migration and its reception in France, highlighting the ways this new and exotic music spawned night clubs, dances, and new French Jazz bands. Jackson discusses how music encouraged African Americans to move to Paris and create a home there, and how these musicians blended, or failed to blend, into society.<sup>18</sup>

Both *Paris Noir* and *Making Jazz French* are critical works in the study of interwar Parisian Jazz, and they have spawned countless other scholarly works. Brooke Blower touches upon the impact of African American Jazz musicians in the spread of American culture.<sup>19</sup> Rebecca Scales touches on the influence of jazz in the development of the radio in *Radio and the Politics of Sound in Interwar France, 1921–1939*.<sup>20</sup> However, there are still few studies on how African American women like Josephine Baker and Ada “Bricktop” Smith contributed to the growth of the jazz scene. Like the world of literature, the focus of study seems to be dedicated to the experiences of well-known contributors to Parisian culture. There is little discussion around struggles faced by African Americans through the combined lenses of gender, sexuality, and race.

Since the development of Crenshaw’s intersectional historical approach, more historians analyzed intersectional experiences throughout history. Rachel Anne Gillett focuses her work on the intersectionality between people of color and women, examining in detail how women of color moved through Parisian society.<sup>21</sup> Jennifer Boittin discuss

---

<sup>18</sup> Jeffrey H. Jackson, *Making Jazz French: Music and Modern Life in Interwar Paris* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

<sup>19</sup> Brooke Lindy Blower, *Becoming Americans in Paris: Transatlantic Politics and Culture Between the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), <https://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/990126895160203941/catalog>.

<sup>20</sup> Rebecca P Scales. *Radio and the Politics of Sound in Interwar France, 1921–1939*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316258156>.

<sup>21</sup> Rachel Anne Gillett, *Crossing the Pond: Jazz, Race, and Gender in Interwar Paris* (Boston: Northeastern University, 2010). [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN\\_cdi\\_proquest\\_journals\\_746479451](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_746479451).

African American émigrés and class in interwar Paris. Her work delves deeper into the impact of social stratification as it melded with racial and gender stereotypes in the 1920s and 30s.<sup>22</sup> While this area of study is expanding, there are relatively few sources that reflect a truly intersectional approach. By only examining each issue individually, key aspects of the African American experience are being neglected. The images Gillett and Boittin create through their intersectional analysis provide rich snapshots of interwar Paris and the experience of minorities. However, this area of historical analysis requires more scholarship gain an accurate reflection of what it meant to be an African American in interwar Paris.

### Queer Women

Like African Americans in Paris, historical analysis of the queer experience in Paris is a growing field of historical research. However, literature surrounding queer women during this time is relatively scarce in comparison to the breadth of work dedicated to the lives of queer men in the early 20th century. Scholarship is also lacking in a regional sense. In terms of interwar Europe, focus has generally shifted to German regions. Nicholas Edsall's work argues that Berlin, Vienna, and Hamburg were centers of gay culture, while France was considered more feminine.<sup>23</sup> As a result, little attention has been paid to France in comparison to Germany, Austria, and England.

---

<sup>22</sup> Jennifer Anne Boittin, "Black in France: The Language and Politics of Race in the Late Third Republic," *French Politics, Culture & Society* 27, no. 2 (January 1, 2009), [https://hollis.harvard.edu/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=TN\\_cdi\\_crossref\\_primary\\_10\\_3167\\_fpcs\\_2009\\_270202&context=PC&vid=HVD2&search\\_scope=everything&tab=everything&lang=en\\_US](https://hollis.harvard.edu/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_3167_fpcs_2009_270202&context=PC&vid=HVD2&search_scope=everything&tab=everything&lang=en_US).

<sup>23</sup> Nicholas C. Edsall, *Toward Stonewall: Homosexuality and Society in the Modern Western World* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003), [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN\\_cdi\\_usf\\_digitalcommons\\_oai\\_digitalcommons\\_usf\\_edu\\_hy\\_facpub\\_1233](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN_cdi_usf_digitalcommons_oai_digitalcommons_usf_edu_hy_facpub_1233).

An area of growth in the scholarship of queer women's history is that which discusses their contributions to the arts. Tirza True Latimer's book examines social and cultural contributions made by lesbian women during the interwar period. She provides insight into the various ways women used to communicate with one another through cultural pieces such as literature and art. In addition, Latimer's analysis describes challenges faced by queer women in a world that stigmatized their existence and shunned them. Other historians have also focused on queer women, particularly within literature. Joanne Winning describes lesbian life in Paris and argues that queer women played a significant role in shaping the modernist movement in the interwar period.<sup>24</sup> In a similar vein, Jane Garrity describes how queer female authors influenced the perception of lesbian, bisexual and transgender people through their literature. Like Winning, Garrity also argues for the significance of lesbian literature in terms of the development of modern literature.<sup>25</sup> These works particularly focus on the social networks of queer women throughout Paris, but do not often highlight the specific opportunities and challenges faced by queer expat American women.

To further the discussion of social networks within the queer community, other scholars discuss the isolation felt by these women in France. Claudia Lesselier explores this idea as she describes how lesbian women were disregarded and silenced, and the difficulty they faced in forming a community outside the literary or artistic worlds. To support her claims, Lesser provides several oral histories in conjunction with literary

---

<sup>24</sup> Jane Garrity, "Modernist Women's Writing: Beyond the Threshold of Obsolescence." *Literature Compass* 10, no. 1 (2013): 15–29, <https://doi.org/10.1111/lic3.12043>.

<sup>25</sup> Garrity, "Modernist Women's Writing," 15–29.



analysis.<sup>26</sup> This source is critical to note, as it highlights the difficulty of studying Parisian lesbians who were not famed artists, designers, or authors. There were many other lesbians and queer women in the shadows who were unable to gain the sense of community famous queer women had access to. This is also true in terms of women of color who may have identified as queer such as Bricktop and Baker but were unable to due to racial or social constraints. However, by examining their social networks beyond famous writers, artists, and socialites, I aim to gain more knowledge surrounding the queer experience in Paris for those outside of the spotlight.

While there are many key interpretations in how queer women may or may not have influenced French culture, it is undeniable that this area of study is relatively small. Lack of evidence is a factor, as many women were forced to keep their true identities a secret. Women who were openly queer suffered socially, so only certain classes of women were able to be overt in their sexual preferences. Most often, queer women who were not hiding their sexuality were exclusively white women of an elite social class. Due to this limitation, my research is also confined to those who were able to openly discuss their queerness. This also will limit my understanding of queer women of color, as their social networks only overlap with white queer women in limited environments. In addition, queer history seems to be fairly skewed toward the male experience as opposed to queer women. This does not necessarily mean sources are unavailable, but it does mean more of my own research will be conducted without the guidance of secondary

---

<sup>26</sup> Claudia Lesselier, "Silenced Resistances and Conflictual Identities: Lesbians in France, 1930-1968," *Journal of Homosexuality* 25, no. 1-2 (November 17, 1993): 105-25. [https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v25n01\\_08](https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v25n01_08).

sources. While some of the experiences between gay men and queer women may be the same, intersectional interpretations of interwar Paris are critical to developing a fuller understanding of queer history in the interwar period.

Though there are certainly many limitations to studying these groups, it does not mean their histories are impossible to define. By examining the lives of well-known individuals such as Sylvia Beach, Josephine Baker, and Bricktop Smith, I hope to gain insight into a part of interwar Paris that is relatively unknown. To gain more insight, I examine how issues of race, sexuality, immigration, and heteronormativity have impacted the lives of these women. As can be seen, historians have typically looked at each subject individually, and only in terms of queer women or African American women alone. However, both groups came from the same homeland, and found a community in Paris. Both groups faced discrimination or accessed opportunities because of who they were and what they represented. By comparing three seemingly unrelated women from various backgrounds and interests, I am to discover how the status of expatriate shaped opportunities marginalized people had to contribute to French society.

## Chapter II.

### Marginalization in Interwar Paris

The end of the First World War left many with the desire to start anew and create new opportunities. As the interwar period began in earnest, stories about Paris generated a reputation as a haven for all, regardless of race, gender, or sexuality. Its culture of creativity, freedom of expression, and challenges to cultural norms caught the attention of American creative people. Stories of fair treatment, “courtesy, kindness, respect” toward American émigrés began to spread across the United States.<sup>27</sup> This reputation is what encouraged women such as Sylvia Beach, Josephine Baker, Ada “Bricktop” Smith to move to France in search of a life free of discrimination. Baker and Smith sought to rid themselves of limitations placed upon them by a segregated society, and Beach was able to form lasting relationships with other queer women without hiding. This culture of acceptance was the result of an arduous fight by French minority groups for rights and widespread cultural change. French Blacks and women had worked throughout the war and the years following to create the acceptance that Beach, Baker and Bricktop would later enjoy. To understand what called marginalized Americans to Paris, it is important to first understand societal shifts that took place during and immediately following the war.

Throughout First World War, colonial migrants and women filled roles left empty by the men and boys fighting on the front. For the first time, these marginalized groups

---

<sup>27</sup> "Moulin Rouge Dancers Deny they were III-Treated while in Paris, France: Up in Arms about Statement Appearing in Last Issue of an Out of Town Paper Seeking Entry in New York City," *The New York Amsterdam News (1922-1938)*, Apr 01, 1925, <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/moulin-rouge-dancers-deny-they-were-iii-treated/docview/226267693/se-2>.

earned decent wages and gained some independence within their communities. However, this would not last. Once the war ended, returning soldiers expected temporary workers to return to their previous station in society. But women and people of color did not want to leave their careers behind. While it was true that they worked long hours within factories and mines, to many the benefits outweighed the costs. Grueling conditions were the price they must pay in exchange for the freedom and opportunities these jobs could afford. Instead of returning to their old lives, women and people of color fought to maintain the new roles they had carved out for themselves.<sup>28</sup> Their efforts changed the face of Paris and provided new opportunities for minorities who travelled to the city for a new life.

This change in Paris is due to many uniquely French factors. As France was a colonial empire, it experienced an influx of African migrants during the war years. Some of these migrants came to fight during the war and remained there once their time on the front had ended. Yet, these French colonial subjects faced many challenges when relocating to Paris. This was due in part to the perception that, though they were members of the nation's empire, France's colonial subjects were not seen as truly French.<sup>29</sup> This led to many invasive restrictions placed upon French colonials. Limitations influenced where they could work and even whom they could marry. In addition, many white Parisians viewed African migrants through a negative stereotypical lens.<sup>30</sup> These stereotypes perpetuated the image of wild, uncivilized Africans who were incapable

---

<sup>28</sup> Geoff Read, *The Republic of Men* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2014). 25-28, [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD\\_ALMA512228876750003941](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD_ALMA512228876750003941).

<sup>29</sup> Jennifer Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis: The Urban Grounds of Anti-Imperialism and Feminism in Interwar Paris* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), xviii, [muse.jhu.edu/book/291](https://muse.jhu.edu/book/291).

<sup>30</sup> Félix Germain, Silyane Larcher, and T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, *Black French Women and the Struggle for Equality, 1848-2016* (Lincoln: UNP – Nebraska, 2018), [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD\\_ALMA512279006910003941](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD_ALMA512279006910003941).

living in a modern community. This idea further restricted migrant's ability to integrate into Parisian society. Yet these men and women were not content with living as second class citizens when living in the empire's capital. Many colonial subjects from around the world advocated for civil rights in Paris. They protested and wrote impassioned articles appealing for equal treatment. Social clubs such as The League for the Defense of the Negro Race and the Fraternité Africaine used political influence to encourage change.<sup>31</sup> While they were unable to become completely accepted in French society, conditions for African migrants became better across the city.

Women were also chafing at limited social mobility following the war. They, too, had taken on roles that once belonged to French men. However, following the war there was a significant change among women in terms of how they viewed their role in society. Some women were more than willing to return to traditional gender roles and expecting their peers to do the same. But there were those who felt some reluctance to return to the rigid expectations and limitations which were standard before the war. As a result, many of these women became politically motivated and pushed the boundaries of traditional femininity. While they were not as aggressive in their aims as their counterparts in Britain, the United States, or even in Japan, they did fight for the right to education, women's labor, and other subjects important to women.<sup>32</sup> Those who chose this path

---

<sup>31</sup> Jennifer Boittin, "Black in France," *French Politics, Culture and Society* 27, no. 2 (2009): 23-46, [https://hollis.harvard.edu/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=TN\\_cdi\\_crossref\\_primary\\_10\\_3167\\_fpcs\\_2009\\_270202&context=PC&vid=HVD2&search\\_scope=everything&tab=everything&lang=en\\_US](https://hollis.harvard.edu/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_3167_fpcs_2009_270202&context=PC&vid=HVD2&search_scope=everything&tab=everything&lang=en_US)

<sup>32</sup> Paul Smith, *Feminism and the Third Republic: Women's Political and Civil Rights in France, 1918-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 19. [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD\\_ALMA512228210240003941](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD_ALMA512228210240003941); Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization Without Sexes reconstructing Gender in Postwar France, 1917-1927* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), <https://hdl-handle-net.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/2027/heb00495.0001.001>; Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 160-164.

suffered for their independence and were lambasted by men and women alike for their supposed lack of morals and civic-mindedness.<sup>33</sup>

While women were fighting for independence, immigrants came to France in search of a form of independence of their own. By 1920, France had one of the largest immigrant populations in the world. In one suburb of Paris, the population grew from 10,000 before the war to 50,000 people resulting from industrial growth following the Armistice.<sup>34</sup> Later, as will be seen, these numbers would be augmented by African Americans searching to contribute to French culture. Yet many hopeful migrants learned that some foreigners were more welcome than others. The less fortunate faced discrimination, as authorities abused laws meant to protect the community in ways that harmed migrants.<sup>35</sup> Though the city would gain a reputation as a welcoming place, not all immigrants experienced this side of Paris.

Before examining the experiences of Americans in Paris, it is necessary to discuss the lives of marginalized groups in France. French colonials, international immigrants, and Parisian women had a profound impact on how marginalized communities were viewed. They influenced the social norms and expectations placed upon all women in the city. French colonial residents of color shaped the reception of African Americans in Paris. Finally, immigrants from other nations affected the reception of American émigrés. Understanding these three subgroups' places in French society will provide context for

---

<sup>33</sup> Geoff Read, *The Republic of Men* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2014), 27-28, [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD\\_ALMA512228876750003941](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD_ALMA512228876750003941).

<sup>34</sup> Tyler Stovall, *Transnational France: The Modern History of a Universal Nation* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2015), 290.

<sup>35</sup> Mary Dewhurst Lewis, "The Strangeness of Foreigners." *French Politics, Culture and Society* 20, no. 3 (2002): 65–96, <https://doi.org/10.3167/153763702782369632>.

the world in which figures like Josephine Baker, Ada "Bricktop" Smith, and Sylvia Beach inhabited.

## Women

During the First World War, many western women filled roles once held by the men now serving on the front. French women ran shops, worked in factories, and managed household finances. While some of these jobs were always tasks to working class women, wartime introduced middle class women to the world of manual labor.<sup>36</sup> Of course, these new burdens combined with existing, traditionally feminine tasks. Children still needed tending, their meals cooked, and clothes washed, as well as a myriad of other domestic duties women had to complete. Despite these challenges, some women experienced lives with fewer confinements placed on them from patriarchal expectations.<sup>37</sup> They earned their own wages, began to play sports, and took part in new hobbies and activities.<sup>38</sup> For some women, life without their husbands meant more opportunities to experience the world around them, whether that be in work or in leisure.

With the Armistice, this world with fewer men came to an end. The returning men expected their wives, sisters, and mothers to return to their “natural role” in the home.<sup>39</sup> However, women were not willing to resume their prewar lifestyles. Within Paris, women began to take a more active role in financial and political spheres of society.

---

<sup>36</sup> Laura Lee Downs, *Manufacturing Inequality: Gender Division in the French and British Metalworking Industries, 1914-1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 236-245, <https://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/990053543500203941/catalog>

<sup>37</sup> Tirza True Latimer, *Women Together/women Apart: Portraits of Lesbian Paris* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 20, [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD\\_ALMA512223024720003941](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD_ALMA512223024720003941)

<sup>38</sup> Latimer, *Women Together/Women Apart*, 24.

<sup>39</sup> Geoff Read, *The Republic of Men* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2014): 35, [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD\\_ALMA512228876750003941](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD_ALMA512228876750003941).

Though tame in comparison with rights movements in other western nations, French women worked towards a more equal role in French society. In 1920, many women joined the communist party in their search for equal rights, though this would later become a more complicated relationship than anticipated.<sup>40</sup> In 1924, some women also began lobbying the Radical political party as well.<sup>41</sup> Their political activism is impressive, considering these women would not be granted the right to vote in France until 1944.

As the feminist movement became more outspoken, so too did their opponents. Some gains were made by women's rights activists such as improved access to education, worker protections, and wage increases.<sup>42</sup> Yet these gains prompted many negative responses, and attacks against women's rights became more pronounced. Opponents claimed feminists took on an inappropriately masculine role in society. They were depicted as shirking their responsibilities as mothers, which allegedly undermined the entire nation.<sup>43</sup> Girls were murdered for getting bobbed haircuts, and the modern woman

---

<sup>40</sup> It is important to note that the relationship between French communist party (PCF) and feminists began on a more positive note but began to change in the 1930s. Christine Bard and Jean-Louis Robert highlight this change in their article "The French Communist Party and Women 1920-1939: From 'Feminism' to Familialism" in *Women and Socialism, Socialism and Women: Europe Between Two Wars*. This article describes how, in the years immediately following the war, the communist party was more radical in terms of women's rights. Many French women were drawn to the party due to its commitment to the education of girls and fighting against the exploitation of female workers. In addition, the PCF fought against the 1920 law that harshly punished any woman who sought abortions or contraceptives. However, as the party moved into the 1930s, it began to become more conservative in response to national opinions. It no longer supported access to contraceptives and wanted women to be more feminine. It began to praise larger families in response to the pro-natalist movement. By 1935, the PCF began to fight more for wage increases for fathers and providing additional support to families as opposed to supporting women themselves. So, while these women were joining seemingly radical political organizations, the actual politics of the day were relatively tame in comparison to movements abroad.

<sup>41</sup> Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis*, 203.

<sup>42</sup> Helmut Gruber, "French Women in the Crossfire of Class, Sex, Maternity, and Citizenship" in *Women and Socialism, Socialism and Women: Europe between the two World Wars* (New York: Berghahn Books, 1998), 265-270.

<sup>43</sup> Read, *The Republic of Men*, 31.



was compared to a war profiteer, a draft dodger, and was creating a world without God.<sup>44</sup> Lawmakers and business owners argued that allowing women economic freedom was unnatural. If women worked, they argued, it removed them from their "natural sphere" and went against their "natural instincts."<sup>45</sup> Though some women were making gains for themselves, they were also being demonized in the press and in politics.

As the French economy began to suffer, even the communist and radical parties began to turn against their female members. Communist party propaganda posters reaffirmed that men were the center of the household and should be the breadwinner.<sup>46</sup> Conservative French Senator Alexandre Lefas went so far as to publish an article titled "Duties Trump Rights," which argued that women who devoted their lives to the duties of tending to their household should be congratulated, and women who pursued rights were simply selfish.<sup>47</sup> Lefas' argument was reflective of conservative opinions of the day, which believed women who worked were only doing so out of childishness and not legitimate need for financial stability. They were not viewed as patriotic women, but as women who were attempting to steal roles traditionally meant for men.

Pronatalist groups depicted women who were not taking care of their families as though they were trying to fulfill a traditionally masculine role in society. This claim was a reflection of conservative opinions toward modern women's masculine clothing styles.

---

<sup>44</sup> Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization Without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France, 1917-1927* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 20, 32, 63, <https://hdl-handle-net.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/2027/heb00495.0001.001>.

<sup>45</sup> Laura Levine Frader, *Breadwinners and Citizens: Gender in the Making of the French Social Model* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 214. [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD\\_ALMA512226281880003941](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD_ALMA512226281880003941)

<sup>46</sup> Parti Communiste Francais - Propaganda poster of man with family, circa 1923. <https://bibliotheques-specialisees.paris.fr/ark:/73873/pf0000937964>

<sup>47</sup> A. Lefas, "Le devoir Prime le droit: Devoir d'abord!" *Le Devoir des femmes* (1935), <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k97133779?rk=21459;2>.

Women who hid their feminine features in loose clothing and short hair were deemed to be genderless – not women, but also not men.<sup>48</sup> This perception was not entirely accidental. Sailor and military style outfits struck a chord with women who were not interested in appealing to gender norms. Like the Flapper dresses of New York, women in Paris chose to wear these outfits to express sexual freedom and nonconformity.<sup>49</sup> They no longer accentuated feminine features with tight dresses and corsets, and instead minimized their hips, waists, and breasts in loose fitting clothing. They were compared to drill sergeants following the end of the war and were no longer the meek frail women of the prewar era.<sup>50</sup> These women no longer fit into gender norms of the early 1900s and appreciated the blurred gender line outfits like these presented. To go along with these clothing choices, women were also cutting their long hair into simple bobs. This act served to embody feminine liberation, as women compared themselves to Joan of Arc.<sup>51</sup> The combination of military style fashion and short haircuts led to a new term for these women: La Garçonne, a feminized version of the French word for boy. Shop owners, authors, and single socialites who refused to settle into motherhood used La Garçonne style as a visual signifier of their refusal to adhere to patriarchal standards.<sup>52</sup>

During the interwar period, women faced many changes and challenges to gender roles and how they fit into society upon the return of men from the front. They were fighting for independence, careers, and a place in politics through a weak feminist movement that was more likely to abandon its goals. While they faced backlash from

---

<sup>48</sup> Roberts, *Civilization without Sexes*, 20.

<sup>49</sup> Andrew Stephenson, “‘Our Jolly Marin Wear’: The Queer Fashionability of the Sailor Uniform in Interwar France and Britain,” *Fashion, Style & Popular Culture* 3, no. 2 (2016): 159-160, [https://doi.org/10.1386/fspc.3.2.157\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/fspc.3.2.157_1).

<sup>50</sup> Roberts, *Civilization without Sexes*, 30-46.

<sup>51</sup> Roberts, 80-82.

<sup>52</sup> Stephenson, “‘Our Jolly Marin Wear,’” 160.

members of the broader public, their visibility and outspokenness appealed to women both within Paris and beyond. Their fashion, Avant Garde attitudes toward sexuality and gender identity, and the sexual freedom promoted by Modern Women changed Parisian society, despite the protests of their opponents. The society created by these women drew other outspoken women like Sylvia Beach, Ada Bricktop Smith, and Josephine Baker to Paris and established their own careers.

### Race in Interwar France

To place race relations within France in clearer context, I will first discuss race in the United States during the interwar period. Like in France, interwar period was a time of great change in the United States, especially for the Black community. The Great Migration saw millions of African Americans move from rural southern towns to major northern cities like Chicago and New York City. Black families from across the American South began to disperse across the nation starting in 1915.<sup>53</sup> They took with them their families, belongings, and their culture. This migration contributed to the Harlem Renaissance, and the burst of jazz music across the northern United States. However, white residents of these northern cities were not thrilled with this sudden influx of black families. As a result, social and systematic racism confined African American communities to the poorest neighborhoods and were segregated in specific sections of the cities.<sup>54</sup> Though they left the south to escape Jim Crow, African Americans were still limited in where they could live.

---

<sup>53</sup> Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (New York: Random House, 2010), <https://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/99155754421403941/catalog>.

<sup>54</sup> John R Logan, et al., "Creating the Black Ghetto: Black Residential Patterns before and During the Great Migration," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 660, no. 1 (2015): 18–35,

Although they did not want African Americans to live in their neighborhoods, white New Yorkers were willing to patronize black owned businesses. This led to further segregation within Harlem itself, as popular jazz clubs like the Ebony Room and the Cotton Club only allowed white patrons as guests, though all performers were people of color.<sup>55</sup> Occasionally, black performers were asked to perform outside of Harlem, but this was incredibly rare. Famous dancer Florence Mills was one of the few black women to perform on Broadway in the 1920s. She danced for dignitaries, socialites, and wealthy white entrepreneurs. Yet despite her fame, she still lived in the same small Harlem apartment, and her shows would end with white guests shouting for her and her fellow performers to go back home.<sup>56</sup> Mills was celebrated for her talent, but this was not enough to earn a place in the larger New York Community. The same was true for the visual arts. Artist Louis Mailou Jones illustrates how an African American can be celebrated while also segregated. Jones soon came to acknowledge that "I could not make it as a Black American artist. Artists would ask me how come we never noticed you. It was my color. Museums would show my work but they did not buy them."<sup>57</sup> This sentiment reflected the reality for many African American creatives in interwar America. No matter their skill or talent, they would always be seen by the color of their skin before all else.

---

[https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN\\_cdi\\_pubmedcentral\\_primary\\_oai\\_pubmedcentral\\_nih\\_gov\\_4654963](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN_cdi_pubmedcentral_primary_oai_pubmedcentral_nih_gov_4654963).

<sup>55</sup> Stephen Robertson, "Harlem in Black and White," *Journal of Urban History* 39, no. 5 (2013): 864–80, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0096144213479309>.

<sup>56</sup> Bill Egan, *Florence Mills: Harlem Jazz Queen*, (Lanham, MD.: Scarecrow Press, 2004): 89, <https://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/990095241540203941/catalog>.

<sup>57</sup> Laura Andrews, "Lois Mailou Jones: Invisible, Black and very Successful Against all Odds," *New York Amsterdam News*, Nov. 09, 1996, [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN\\_cdi\\_proquest\\_newspapers\\_390168829](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN_cdi_proquest_newspapers_390168829).

In France, there was also a substantial Black community. While this community may not have been as large as those in the United States, black neighborhoods and communities still existed within major metropolitan areas like Paris. Many individuals of color relocated to Paris to escape race-based law and limitations within French colonial holdings. In colonies such as Martinique, murders of black citizens went uninvestigated, and anti-black police violence veiled as anti-Bolshevik crackdowns were common.<sup>58</sup> French Blacks were not welcomed by white Parisians with open arms, either. Like African Americans, French Blacks faced different forms of discrimination when moving to a new land. Black people in France were viewed differently due to their race as well their birthplace. Though these black immigrants usually spoke French and grew up learning French culture, it was not enough to be seen as truly French. This can be seen by the incredibly negative stereotypes which took hold in Parisian society. African immigrants were largely seen as uneducated, primitive, and savage.<sup>59</sup> At best, white French society treated these immigrants as though they were children. At worst, they actively segregated themselves from Black communities to maintain separation between races. Though there was no legal segregation between races in metropolitan France in the interwar period, that does not mean that the Black community was able to seamlessly blend with whites.

Meanwhile, the relationship between African Americans and Paris solidified with the advent of the First World War, when more Black Americans were exposed to life

---

<sup>58</sup> Meredith Terretta, "'In the Colonies, Black Lives Don't Matter.' Legalism and Rights Claims across the French Empire," *Journal of Contemporary History* 53, no. 1 (2017): 12-37, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022009416688258>.

<sup>59</sup> Iris Wigger, "'Black Shame' — the Campaign Against 'racial Degeneration' and Female Degradation in Interwar Europe," *Race & Class* 51, no. 3 (2010): 35, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306396809354444>.

outside of the United States.<sup>60</sup> When the United States officially joined the conflict in 1917, thousands of African Americans joined the fight on the Western Front. Armed and trained to fight, black G.I.'s joined with the hope that military experience would prove their worth to their white countrymen and increase their access to basic rights upon their return.<sup>61</sup> After all, black and white soldiers were travelling to Europe to face the horrors of war together. Although they were in different regiments, all were headed to the front. However, the structure of the military maintained the race line, and only the most dangerous and difficult jobs were delegated to the African American soldiers. They received the poorest quality uniforms, were housed in run-down barracks, and worked long shifts completing physically exhausting tasks. On top of this, white soldiers discriminated against them in social interactions.<sup>62</sup> However, stories of the kindness French people had showed African American soldiers soon spread. Newspapers began reporting that the French attitudes toward Black Americans were dramatically different, and that it was a colorblind country. Black soldiers were viewed as Americans above all else, and it was rumored that soldiers of color were treated as equals by the French combatants. While French Blacks faced considerable challenges in the French Military, African Americans reported the kindness and encouragement they received from the French public.<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> Some African Americans chose to relocate to Paris in the aftermath of the American Civil War. While this migration is not the topic of discussion here, more can be discovered about previously existing African American communities in Paris in Julian Rothenstein, *Black Lives 1900: W.E.B. Du Bois at the Paris Exposition* (London: Redstone Press, 2019).

<sup>61</sup> Tyler Stovall, *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996), 9.

<sup>62</sup> Stovall, *Paris Noir*, 8.

<sup>63</sup> Chad Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy: African American Soldiers in World War I Era*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 145-183, [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1s5nto6/01HVD\\_ALMA512444143920003941](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1s5nto6/01HVD_ALMA512444143920003941).

Life in America was an incredible contrast to what African Americans experienced abroad. Following the war, many found themselves faced with increased restrictions on where they could live or work and faced more violence instead of acceptance. Lynchings, race riots, and overall violence broke out around the country, especially in urban areas such as Chicago, New York, and East St. Louis.<sup>64</sup> The violence was so widespread that the summer of 1919 became known as “Red Summer,” in reference to the blood spilled in Black communities throughout the United States.<sup>65</sup> Young Josephine Baker saw this first hand, as race riots occurred on the other side of the river from her St. Louis home.<sup>66</sup> This only compounded the already existing hardships of living as a person of color in early 20<sup>th</sup> century America. Political movements based on limiting the rights of the black population gained popularity as the Ku Klux Klan became a driving political force. Klan members were elected to the senate and gained influence not only in the south, but also in states such as Oregon, Oklahoma, Illinois, and New York.<sup>67</sup> The color line was enforced with greater enthusiasm from white Americans, and African Americans in uniform were attacked for wanting equal status with white veterans.<sup>68</sup> This was a dramatic contrast to what they had experienced abroad during the war.

As the 1920s dawned, Paris' positive reputation continued to grow as Black newspapers disseminated idea that Paris was a welcoming city. Upon visiting the French

---

<sup>64</sup> Cameron McWhirter, *Red Summer: The Summer of 1919 and the Awakening of Black America* (New York, NY: Henry Holt & Co, 2011), 27.

<sup>65</sup> McWhirter, *Red Summer*.

<sup>66</sup> Stovall, *Paris Noir*, 21.

<sup>67</sup> Rory McVeigh, *The Rise of the Ku Klux Klan: Right-Wing Movements and National Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 25-26, [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD\\_ALMA512228113650003941](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD_ALMA512228113650003941).

<sup>68</sup> Stovall, *Paris Noir*, 27.

city, black American businessman C.C. Spaulding reported that a “very striking and impressive thing about the entire trip was the absence of racial discrimination. I was never made to feel that I was any different from any other first-class gentleman.”<sup>69</sup> Spaulding marveled at the ease in which he moved throughout Paris and did not feel excluded by the white citizenry. Spaulding's experience struck a chord with black readers looking for opportunity. His article, and those like it, stood out against those written about life at home. Typical articles discuss churches being set fire, children being tortured by white mobs, or that lynching was occurring once every three days.<sup>70</sup> By contrast, African American newspapers like *The Chicago Defender*, *Baltimore Afro American*, and *New Amsterdam Press* became full of black success stories abroad. The idea of a place where a black man was treated as an equal would have been incredible. In a country divided along race lines, the appeal of a city free from discrimination spread far and wide.

In response to positive news articles like these, African Americans began moving to France in hopes of escaping the familiar violence and hatred in the United States. During the 1920s and 30s, hopeful Black Americans migrated to Paris to join jazz bands, start businesses or dance in Parisian nightclubs. Soon, the neighborhood of Montmartre

---

<sup>69</sup> C.C. Spaulding, C, "Spaulding Finds no Dogs Around Paris Garbage Cans." *Afro-American (1893-)*, Jul 04, 1931, <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/spaulding-finds-no-dogs-around-paris-garbage-cans/docview/530897408/se-2>.

<sup>70</sup> "AUGUST BIGGEST LYNCHING MONTH, SURVEY REVEALS," *The Pittsburgh Courier (1911-1950)*, Feb 16, 1935, City Edition, <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/august-biggest-lynching-month-survey-reveals/docview/201994202/se-2>; "FORBIDDEN ROMANCE IS GIVEN AS CAUSE OF FLORIDA'S LAST LYNCHING ATROCITY" *Atlanta Daily World (1932-)*, Nov 21, 1934. <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/forbidden-romance-is-given-as-cause-floridas-last/docview/490438275/se-2>; "Ala. Victims of Klan found: Arthur Hitt and Family Living in Squalor -- Forced to Sell Farm," *The New York Amsterdam News (1922-1938)*, Aug 10, 1927, <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/ala-victims-klan-found/docview/226249235/se-2>.



became home to a significant African American population. As Joel Augustus Rogers stated in his 1927 article, “what would not the Negro in America have accomplished if he had been treated like the man he is here and did not have to use up so much of his energy fighting the despicable color question.”<sup>71</sup> Paris seemed to become the answer this question. Finally, it seemed as though African Americans had a place where they could better their circumstances without fear of horrific repercussions.

The famed relationship between Paris and jazz began with the success of James Reese Europe. The famous military bandmaster has been credited with starting the jazz craze abroad, when his band played for the French during the war.<sup>72</sup> Europe’s success was often spoken of within the jazz world as not only a momentous achievement for the Black community, but also to encourage other musicians to follow in his footsteps. As more jazz musicians moved to Paris, some saw similar success. James Reese Europe’s reputation was so strong that other famous musicians were linked to him. Noble Sissle, who became a famed musician in his own right after playing in Europe’s band, thanked Jim Europe for his success nearly ten years following Europe’s murder.<sup>73</sup> Once more musicians became established in Paris, however, Europe was no longer held up as the miraculous talent who gained success abroad. Soon, even more famous names were the poster children for immigrating to France.

---

<sup>71</sup> J.A. Rogers, "The American Negro in Paris: Tuskegee Teacher Led Class in French," *The New York Amsterdam News (1922-1938)*, Sep 21, 1927, <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/american-negro-paris/docview/226407610/se-2>.

<sup>72</sup> "Preacher's Son Now Jazziest of Band Leaders in Paris: Son of Methodist Minister Got Early Music Training in Church. Today He is on Top of the World in Paris," *Afro-American (1893-)*, Sep 01, 1928, <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/preachers-son-now-jazziest-band-leaders-paris/docview/530696848/se-2>.

<sup>73</sup> "Preacher's Son Now Jazziest of Band Leaders in Paris: Son of Methodist Minister Got Early Music Training in Church. Today He is on Top of the World in Paris," *Afro-American (1893-)*, Sep 01, 1928, <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/preachers-son-now-jazziest-band-leaders-paris/docview/530696848/se-2>.

Black women reading about Paris from their American homes would have seen articles about a city that was supposedly free of racism and full of opportunity. However, the rosy images painted in the newspapers were not typically based in reality. Life in Montmartre was rife with addiction to cocaine and heroin, as many people died of overdoses in the streets. Some believed African Americans were importing drugs from New York, creating tension between Parisians and expats.<sup>74</sup> The neighborhood also became home to the Italian Mafia, as they were often the most willing to give loans to poor Black Americans looking for a new start.<sup>75</sup> This led to violence and crime throughout Montmartre, a fact that was seldom reported back at home. This lack of reporting led many to believe they were heading to paradise, only to face the harsher reality upon arrival.

While Paris gained a reputation as somewhere that was welcoming to marginalized people, this was not the entire story. Black communities in France were not always welcomed or treated with respect from the local white Parisians. Although Paris was not as restrictive as the United States in terms of racial treatment, it was not the utopia described in the newspapers. The same can be said for queer women in interwar France. They were inhabiting a conflicted role in society and were attempting to determine what womanhood truly meant. While women were able to dress in more Avant Garde styles, maintain jobs, and gain education, these opportunities came with a cost. As we have seen, independence could lead to ostracization, isolation, and even occasionally

---

<sup>74</sup> Ligue internationale des femmes pour la paix et la liberté, *Pax International: bulletin mensuel de la Ligue internationale des femmes pour la paix et la liberté* (May 1929), <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb32834361n>.

<sup>75</sup> Stovall, *Paris Noir*, 43.

death. Yet, these conflicts and challenges were often unknown to American women who read the reports about Paris published at home.

The difference between American and Parisian reporting can be clearly illustrated through the examination of two famous figures at the time: Josephine Baker and Ada “Bricktop” Smith. Both women immigrated to France in the mid 1920s with the hopes of benefitting from the freedoms Paris had to offer. They were able to achieve fame and fortune during the interwar period, capitalizing on Paris’ love of jazz. African Americans were able to read the amazing tales of Baker and Bricktop and dream of achieving equal success. Had Black Americans read the French newspapers, however, they would have seen a different story.

### Chapter III.

#### Josephine Baker: Superstar

Born in Missouri in 1906, Josephine Baker moved to Paris in 1925 and took the city by storm. Baker began her career by performing in various jazz clubs across Montmartre, after being recruited to perform in Paris by Caroline Reagan to star in the *Revue Nègre*, an all-black performance which would be showcased in the heart of Paris.<sup>76</sup> She showcased her own elegant yet seemingly exotic choreography, which would become a hallmark of “negro dancing” in Paris.<sup>77</sup> Drawing upon her experience as a vaudeville performer, Baker infused her shows with comedy routines and her signature cross-eyed smiles that had gotten laughs since she started at 13 years old.<sup>78</sup> It was not long after her arrival that this unique blend of exoticism, eroticism, and vaudevillian performing would make her one of the most famous dancers in the world.<sup>79</sup> She was one of the first black women to dance topless in Parisian dance halls, including the illustrious Casino de Pari. Her famed banana skirt dance which continued a source of conversation decades after she first donned the costume, has since become one of the most iconic images of modern Paris.<sup>80</sup> Her distinctive act took Baker to new heights of fame in Paris and allowed her to become friends with elite members of society from all throughout the city. She had come a long way from her humble East St. Louis roots.

---

<sup>76</sup> Jean-Claude Baker, *Josephine: The Hungry Heart* (New York: Cooper Press, 1993), 89-99.

<sup>77</sup> Joanna Dee Das, “Dance That “Suggested Nothing but Itself”: Josephine Baker and Abstraction,” *Arts* 9 no. 1 (2020): 23, <https://doi.org/10.3390/arts9010023>.

<sup>78</sup> KCC Dalton, “Josephine Baker and Paul Colin: African American Dance Seen through Parisian Eyes,” *Critical Inquiry* 24 no. 4 (1998): 903–34, <https://doi.org/10.1086/448901>.

<sup>79</sup> “From the archive, 26 August 1974: An interview with Josephine Baker,” *The Guardian*, August 26, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2015/aug/26/josephine-baker-interview-1974>.

<sup>80</sup> Matthew Pratt Guterl, “Josephine Baker’s Banana Skirt,” In *The Familiar Made Strange*, 59–69 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.7591/9780801455469-007>.

In newspapers at home, Josephine Baker was spoken of with reverence. Hers was a modern Cinderella story which inspired others to try and capture some of the same success.<sup>81</sup> Numerous articles were published about Baker throughout her career abroad, especially in African American newspapers. They discussed her talent and the famous relationships she held, as well as the opportunities she was able to take advantage of while in France. No aspect of Baker's life was too minute to be dissected by the masses. Journalists wrote entire pages about her travels around Europe, what she wore, the cars she drove, and the adoring crowds who greeted her.<sup>82</sup> Articles also highlighted her perceived fluency in French, Spanish, and Italian, which she used in her performances on stage and in films.<sup>83</sup> Most often, journalists discussed her experiences dancing throughout Paris and the sensation she caused by spreading black American culture around the world.<sup>84</sup> Once a young girl who played on the dirt roads of Missouri, she had become a sophisticated, rich, and beautiful star. She achieved the American dream but had to leave America to do it.

---

<sup>81</sup> Tim Bergfelder, Sue Harris, and Sarah Street, "French Cinema in the 1930s." In *Film Architecture and the Transnational Imagination*, 169 (Amsterdam University Press, 2007), 191-197, [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN\\_cdi\\_jstor\\_books\\_j\\_ctt46mscn\\_7](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN_cdi_jstor_books_j_ctt46mscn_7).

<sup>82</sup> For example, see Ivan Browning, "JOSEPHINE BAKER ON WORLD PREMIERE TOUR: ACTRESS IS STILL EUROPE'S TOAST," *The Chicago Defender*, Feb 19, 1938), 19, <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/josephine-baker-on-world-premiere-tour/docview/492524426/se-2>.

<sup>83</sup> Ted Haviland, "Ten Years Made a Lot of Difference in Josephine Baker," *Afro-American*, Dec 7, 1935, 9. <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/ten-years-made-lot-difference-josephine-baker/docview/531147499/se-2>.

<sup>84</sup> "Little Josephine baker lauded for banana dance in Paris journal: NICE FESTIVAL OFFICIALS NAME FAVORITE QUEEN josie creates riot in dance of 'the two lovers,'" *Atlanta World*, Feb 21, 1932, <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/little-josephine-baker-lauded-banana-dance-paris/docview/490381598/se-2>; "Josephine Baker Signs \$10,000 Dance Contract," *The Chicago Defender*, Feb 18, 1928. <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/josephine-baker-signs-10-000-dance-contract/docview/492161527/se-2>.

There is no shortage of contemporary articles about Josephine Baker in French and American newspapers. However, her exploits were particularly inspirational to African Americans at home, and they could not read enough about her. Newspaper articles in Black papers focused more on Baker as a person, or on her successes while sometimes remarking her race. When the color of her skin was discussed, African American journalists focus upon Baker's successes despite her race. They pointed out that many of the opportunities presented to Baker would be unavailable to a black woman in the United States. In an article in the *Baltimore Afro American* from 1927, for instance, the author contends that Parisian audiences adored Baker, and would choose to watch her dance over attending an orchestra or opera performance.<sup>85</sup> When she returned to the United States to perform or visit, the Black press would inevitably mention the lack of prejudice in Paris allowing Baker to thrive.<sup>86</sup> She did not have to face the limitations of Black-only clubs, nor did she need to stay on one specific side of town. For many reading about Baker from their homes in the United States, it would have seemed as though there were no color lines in France, legally or culturally. Indeed, while interracial marriage remained illegal in many states in the United States, it seemed as though Baker did not even have limitations on whom she could marry in France. This perception seemed to be confirmed when, in 1927, Baker became a "countess" through her marriage to the Italian Count Pepito di Albertini. It did not matter that the relationship itself was questioned, nor

---

<sup>85</sup> "Paris Music Hall Girls Dance Nude," *Baltimore Afro American*, July 23, 1927, <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/paris-music-hall-girls-dance-nude/docview/530643377/se-2>.

<sup>86</sup> Ted Haviland, "Ten Years made a Lot of Difference in Josephine Baker: The Exotic Dancer of Yesterday is Dead. Today Josephine is Grand Lady," *Afro-American (1893-)*, Dec 07, 1935, <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/ten-years-made-lot-difference-josephine-baker/docview/531147499/se-2>.

that Italian authorities denied that di Albertini was in fact a count.<sup>87</sup> The union was still widely celebrated, and a *Chicago Defender* article made note that “the only dissenting rumble came from the American colony in Paris... where it is though that European nobility is reserved exclusively for rich American girls of the white race.”<sup>88</sup> Baker was breaking through barriers which were historically placed upon Black American women, and she experienced adoration from African Americans as well as white Parisians. While these newspaper articles do not focus on Baker’s race, they did not need to. Every reader would know that Baker was achieving heights that would be nearly impossible in a place where being an African American deeply mattered.

Reporting around Baker provides insight not only to her successes, but also how Paris was perceived within the African American community. In the United States, Josephine Baker’s life appeared like a fairytale. A poor young girl who witnessed the East St. Louis race riots left home to become a world-renowned star. She drew white and black crowds to clubs where both races were allowed to mix. In addition, she emphasized her identity as an African American woman while she was abroad. Baker was not trying to fit into a more stereotypically French perception of what it meant to be a dancer, by performing ballet dances to classical music in grand opera houses. Baker brought quintessentially American choreography to French music halls - the Charleston, the Black Bottom, and more – and it was her Americanness, specifically her African Americanness, that was the secret to her success in Paris. She showcased her talents by headlining shows

---

<sup>87</sup> “Charleston Negress Declares Herself First Negro Countess,” *Thomasville Times Enterprise Newspaper*, June 22, 1927, 3, Proquest historical newspapers database.

<sup>88</sup> "JOSEPHINE BAKER, STAGE STAR, BECOMES COUNTESS: JOSEPHINE BAKER WEDDED TO COUNT DI ALBERTINI SHE'S A COUNTESS NOW!" *The Chicago Defender (National Edition) (1921-1967)*, Jun 25, 1927, <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/josephine-baker-stage-star-becomes-countess/docview/492140490/se-2>.

in jazz clubs owned by African Americans. She was accompanied by black musicians, and her performances were often rooted in experiences unique to African American communities.

While it is true that her dances were often playing up to a stereotypical view of Black Americans, she was able to take agency in a unique way. Some of Baker's most famous performances had a basis in negative imagery of the Black community within France. She leaned in to the wild, uncivilized, and untamed imagery that being Black in France often conjured for those within the white community. Baker's sets looked like wild jungles, her backup dancers wore loincloths, and they kept time to the music by beating on drums. As mentioned previously, French Blacks experienced distinct hardships and experienced the effects of these negative racial stereotypes. However, Baker was able to take the expectations of what it meant to be Black in France and exploited it to benefit herself and those who worked with her. One clear example of this is Baker's famed Banana Dance, seen in Figure \_\_. <sup>89</sup> This act featured a stage transformed into a rainforest jungle, where it looked as though Baker and her backup dancers performed in the middle of a clearing. Male dancers gather around the edges banging on drums, while Baker danced topless in the center stage, wearing only a skirt made of bejeweled bananas. While the dance itself would now be considered incredibly problematic, Baker choreographed it herself, which suggests she was knowingly playing into these stereotypes. In addition to choreographing her own dances, she wrote her own jokes, and chose the musicians who would accompany her. This was unlike other performances centered around Black characters in the United States. In fact, vaudeville



performances at home sometimes did not have any African American actors, and instead featured white performers in blackface. Yet in Paris, Baker was able to take a style of performance that was inherently racist in the United States and made it her own. She shared the stage with other Black dancers and became incredibly successful through the exploitation of stereotypes often attributed to her community. In doing this, she was able to cause a cultural sensation, and launch her highly profitable career.



Figure 1. Josephine Baker Banana Dance.

*Still image taken from Roman LdC, "Josephine Baker Banana Dance," September 12, 2013, Youtube Video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9jNCm6CVV0> .*

Through her fame and success Baker became the representative of what it meant to be Black abroad to those still at home in the United States. In local Black newspapers like the *Afro-American* and the *Chicago Defender*, a rosy image of Baker's life was painted for those who were suffering under Jim Crow. She was the girl who grew up to marry European royalty and travelled through the streets of Paris in her Rolls Royce with her pet leopard on her lap.<sup>90</sup> Josephine Baker, and by extension the city of Paris, came to represent beacons of hope for Black Americans.

### Prejudice in Paris

While she did benefit from wealth and fame while living abroad, Baker did not always have the charmed life that Black communities in America believed. Despite her international popularity, Baker faced discrimination and humiliation at the hands of her French hosts. Sometimes these challenges were rooted in her race, while other times it was rooted in her status as an American. In a 1925 interview, Baker describes being removed from a Parisian hotel:

And the prejudices, everywhere they are the same. You know that in Paris, I was thrown out of a hotel because Americans did not want to sleep under the same roof as a woman of color. In Paris. Isn't that incredible? [I was thrown out by] French people, in Paris!<sup>91</sup>

Clearly, Baker was not left untouched by racism in Paris. Her celebrity status could not protect her from removal from her hotel at the request of a white American patron. Yet it

---

<sup>90</sup> "Does Valadai have More "it" than Josephine Baker?: Star's Pet Monkey Rivals Leopard of Countess VALAIDA AND JOSEPHINE," *Afro-American* (1893-), Mar 12, 1932, <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/does-valadai-have-more-than-josephine-baker/docview/530939705/se-2>.

<sup>91</sup> Marcel Sauvage, *Voyages et aventures de Josephine Baker* (Paris: M. Seheur, 1931); "Et les préjugés, partout les mêmes. Vous savez qu'à Paris on m'a mise à la porte d'un hôtel parce que de Américains ne voulaient pas coucher sous le mêmes toit qu'une femme de couleur. À Paris. N'est-ce pas incroyable? Des Français, des Parisiens."

was not the Americans that removed her from the room, but the French employees who were more willing to appease the prejudices of white Americans than respect the rights of a black American woman. At this point, Josephine had lived in Paris for six years, spoke French, and only rarely returned to the United States to perform. Paris' reputation as a free and welcoming city had clearly influenced Baker's view of the city where she had made a name for herself. However, she was still forcefully removed from her lodgings within the so-called color-blind city.

It is noteworthy that this negative experience was not reported upon in African American newspapers at home. There were no mentions of the prejudices Baker experiences when discussing Paris, unless it was to call attention to how white Americans stood out among the welcoming Parisians. It is surprising that, when the most famous African American woman in the world faced discrimination, it went unremarked upon by Black press. Perhaps the reason for this is because it was hardly news to African Americans that white citizens would not want to share a hotel with a black woman. After all, this was during a time when segregation was still alive and well throughout America. To Black journalists in the United States, it was perhaps more remarkable that Baker could stay in a high-end hotel at all. Whatever the reason for the lack of reporting, the absence of stories like this helped perpetuate the mythos that Paris was a utopia of equality among races. Had stories of discrimination against Baker been published, perhaps Black émigrés to Paris would have entered the city with a more realistic image in their minds.

## Baker as an Immigrant

Another factor often undiscussed in American articles is how Baker's immigrant status affected her experiences in Paris. Despite her long-term residency and ultimately her citizenship in France, the French public still viewed Baker as a foreigner. Articles critiquing her famous cabarets and dance hall performances rarely failed to mention her immigrant status.<sup>92</sup> They critique her accent, and often referred to her as something exotic and foreign. Her voice was described as evocative of unknown foreign skies, ukuleles, and American spirituals.<sup>93</sup> She was always described as quintessentially American, from her accent to her friendly demeanor. When Marcel Sauvage photographed her with French colonial women, Baker was the glamorous African American in fashionable garb. Meanwhile colonial African women stood in juxtaposition, clad in simple peasant dresses and aprons.<sup>94</sup> When Paul Colin depicted her with Parisian women, Baker's fur coats and New York style flapper dresses remained out of place in contrast with French women in Chanel dresses.<sup>95</sup> She was always the outsider, no matter what group she was with. She was praised, but always through the lens of her differences to French women.

---

<sup>92</sup> Beau Danube Bleu, "Revenue Josephine Est" (1925); M. Louis Lemarchand, "'Le Folie du Jour': Hyper-Revue a grand spectacle, en deux actes et 45 tableaux." *Aux Folie-Bergere*, 30 April 1925.; Henry Bidou, "Au Jour le Jour, Les adieux de Josephine Baker," 1932.

<sup>93</sup> Robert Brisacq, *Josephine Baker Casino de Paris*, Dec. 15, 1930, 14.

<sup>94</sup> Marcel Sauvage, *Voyages et aventures de Josephine Baker* (Paris: M. Seheur, 1931).

<sup>95</sup> Paul Colin, *Tumulte Noir*, 1927; Le foile d'jour image 1925.



Figure 2. Colonial Woman and Josephine Baker.

*Both images pictured above appear in the same French newspaper article by Marcel Sauvage, which clearly contrasts Baker to Black Africans in Europe. Marcel Sauvage, Voyages et aventures de Josephine Baker (Paris: M. Seheur, 1931).*

Baker was also compared to famous white women in the French press. The clearest example of this was between Baker and famed French music hall star, Mistinguett. This iconic French woman was once the most highly paid female performer in the world and was a household name in France.<sup>96</sup> Both women performed in Casinos and Dance Halls around the same time, though Mistinguett was already well established when Baker arrived in Paris.<sup>97</sup> As soon as Josephine Baker began to gain more popularity, she began to be compared to Mistinguett.

---

<sup>96</sup> Elizabeth Coquart, *Mistinguett : la reine des Années folles* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1996), 160, [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN\\_cdi\\_bnf\\_primary\\_oai\\_bnf\\_fr\\_gallica\\_ark\\_12148\\_bpt6\\_k3361314b](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN_cdi_bnf_primary_oai_bnf_fr_gallica_ark_12148_bpt6_k3361314b).

<sup>97</sup> Coquart, *Mistinguett*, 279.

As Baker's fame began to challenge Mistinguett, newspapers began pitting them against one another.<sup>98</sup> This occurred in various ways. Articles of one woman often appear alongside advertisements for the other. When they performed together, journalists highlighted the mix of French and American culture, even when they were revealing wax figures of the women.<sup>99</sup> When an article discussing Baker appeared in *Vogue*, so too did an image of Mistinguett being waited on by her black "servant."<sup>100</sup> This serves to highlight racial differences between the two women, as the racial composition of the photo invites the comparison between the status of white Mistinguett and women of color. The two most famous women in France were vying for the attention of the public, and the media drew plenty of attention to this perceived competition.

As time wore on, it was clear that Baker's celebrity was increasing as Mistinguett's diminished. Baker was a sensual and exotic foreigner, poised to overtake "le sceptre de Mistinguett."<sup>101</sup> Perhaps due to her fame overshadowing renown French women, her Americanness was further emphasized. In Mistinguett's own account, Baker was always made to sound like an outsider, and she described Baker's background in the "black ghettos in St. Louis."<sup>102</sup> Once again, Mistinguett highlights not only Baker's ethnicity in a negative light, but also her American roots. Not only was Baker a woman of color, but she was a poor foreigner as well. This attempt to undermine Baker's success is

---

<sup>98</sup> *Le Vie a Paris*, Dec 4, 1937, 2. Gallica Newspaper Database, BnF Digital Library.

<sup>99</sup> "Mistinguett, Josephine Baker, Chevalier, St-Granier, La Goulue seront reunis por toujours...dans l'une des scenes du nouveau Musee de Cire don't Paris va etre dote," *Paris Noir*, Oct 25, 1930, Gallica Newspaper Database, BnF Digital Library.

<sup>100</sup> "Mistinguett Attended by Her Servant," *Vogue*, October 1926, <http://id.lib.harvard.edu/via/olvwork156042/catalog>.

<sup>101</sup> Brisacq, *Josephine Baker*, 14.

<sup>102</sup> Coquart, *Mistinguett*, 286.

a clear indication of how the combination of her race and nationality were targets for her detractors and could serve as limitations to her success.



Figure 3. Mistinguett being waited on by her Black Servant, *Vouge*.

*“Mistinguett Attended by Her Servant,” Vogue, October 1926, <http://id.lib.harvard.edu/via/olvwork156042/catalog>.*

The comparisons between Baker and Mistinguett serve to emphasize how different Baker was from the rest of Parisian culture. Though both women were from humble beginnings and worked incredibly hard in the same industry, they could never be



friends.<sup>103</sup> Mistinguett was the local girl who represented the national spirit and captured the heart of the public. Baker was the exotic foreigner who inspired the public's imagination. The ultimate marker of her success was the idea that she was taking Mistinguett's crown, but this also suggests that American culture was taking over. As her popularity grew, critics and supporters alike mention Baker's status as an American almost as often as the color of her skin. While her race was certainly significant aspect of her allure and fame, her status as an outsider also played a critical role in Baker's status in interwar Paris.

#### Black Americans vs. Black French Colonials

Baker's most famous performance in Paris was undeniably her banana skirt dance. In this performance, she danced several popular choreographed shows, showcasing the Black Bottom, the Charleston, and other famous dance moves of the time. She danced on stages designed to look like unkempt jungles and her background performers banged on drums, clad in loincloths. Eventually, the banana skirt became encrusted with silver and gemstones, but the set remained the same. She always danced in front of a set that looked more like West Africa than St. Louis or Paris. In this, she was taking advantage of existing stereotypes to earn more success in her own career. Her race was destined to evoke certain imagery in the minds of Parisians, no matter her nationality.

However, she was able to use her status as an American to differentiate herself from actual French Blacks. Her American accent was charming, and her association with

---

<sup>103</sup> Jean-Claude Baker, *Josephine: The Hungry Heart* (New York: Random House 1993), 168.



the jazz scene made her fit into modern cultural movements in Paris. She could use jungle imagery to make more money and to grow her name recognition without suffering from the negative stereotype herself. Mistinguett certainly could not have performed on Baker's set and evoked the same response. Only Josephine Baker could have made a bejeweled banana skirt an iconic image throughout Paris. Baker was exploiting these stereotypes to make her Blackness into a cultural moment in Parisian history.

Baker is not doing this by accident. She came from a vaudeville background, after all; she was no stranger to playing up racist ideology. However, it was much more lucrative to lean into these stereotypes in Paris than in the United States. In Paris, she did not have to face restrictive Jim Crow laws limiting when and where she could perform. She could dance in front of white audiences without fear of racially motivated violence afterward. In France, Baker had the opportunity to be the leading lady, not just a woman in the background. Baker was dancing in a banana skirt in front of jungle set pieces, but her performance was talked about in newspapers around the world. Baker was ingenious enough to use the existing racial stereotypes and turn them into an iconic cultural moment which moved beyond simple prejudice. Paris was not the racial utopia newspapers claimed it to be, so Baker needed to turn the tides in her favor.

Interwar Paris was home to two different groups of black residents: African Americans, and French Blacks. African American expats experienced a different side of Paris in comparison to their French counterparts. They had the distinction of being American above all else and saw tolerant attitudes more often than their colonial counterparts. Parisians associated French Blacks with backward, uncivilized colonies in remote lands. It did not matter that they spoke French and grew up under French rule.

Evidence of these attitudes appear in drawings of Josephine Baker in *Le Tumulte Noir* by Paul Colin.<sup>104</sup> Colin depicts Baker as a lithe dancer in her elaborate costumes, dancing with white men and women. By contrast, he draws several of her black backup dancers in a less flattering light. Colin's drawings sometimes are reminiscent of vaudevillian blackface, with oversized red lips and pitch-black skin. These figures hunch over and swing their arms, in contrast to white dancers whom he depicts are more elegantly. In other images, Colin depicts backup dancers as dancing monkeys behind Baker's dancing form.



Figure 4. Contrasts within *Le Tumulte Noir*.

*Josephine Baker, left as compared to Mistinguett as a Black woman, right, in Paul Colin's work. Paul Colin, Tumulte Noir, 1927.*

---

<sup>104</sup> Paul Colin, *Tumulte Noir*, 1927.

Why has Colin portrayed some dancers in *Le Tumulte Noir* as sophisticated men and women of color, while others are stereotypical caricatures? Quite plausibly, those dancers are the French colonials hired to work with Baker while she performed. The men and women drawn in a more flattering light were her black American dance partners, with their svelte suits and flowing dresses. They wear Parisian fashions and match the styles of their white partners. The colonial back-up performers, however, are wild and covered in hair. This is also true when his artwork depicts white French celebrities as though they, too are Black. Mistinguett makes an appearance as a Black woman, but she is depicted in a much less flattering light when compared to Baker. This illustrates a more pervasive theme in French society, which divides the Black community between Black Americans and Black Africans.



Figure 5. White and Black Dancers in *Le Tumulte Noir*.  
*African American dancers with French women match their sophisticated fashion. Paul Colin, Tumulte Noir, 1927.*

While African Americans and French Blacks easily intertwined, the greater Parisian community certainly distinguished between the two groups.<sup>105</sup> African Americans enjoyed their association with the United States and its modern image. They invented jazz music and the dance numbers sweeping the French capital. Parisians believed they contributed to the greater French culture in a meaningful way. By contrast, white Parisians considered French African backwards and wild; they were residents of French holdings but were considered to have none of the nation's culture. They were surveilled by police and many colonial migrants struggled to escape poverty and institutional discrimination.<sup>106</sup> Even when French Blacks formed their own jazz groups, as Senegalese musician Jazz Williams did, it was difficult to compete with their African American peers. In fact, newspapers would refer to Jazz Williams as an American, completely erasing his colonial status.<sup>107</sup> French Blacks simply did not have the same glamorous reputation as their American peers. This can once again be seen in Colin's work. Although there was a level of irony in the images, he did draw upon negative racial perceptions as he illustrated race-swapped French and colonial dancers as animals and caricatures.

---

<sup>105</sup> Gary Wilder, *The French Imperial Nation-State: Negritude & Colonial Humanism Between the Two World Wars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 154.

<sup>106</sup> Rachel Gillett, "Jazz and the Evolution of Black American Cosmopolitanism in Interwar Paris," *Journal of World History* 21, no. 3 (2010): 486,

[https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN\\_cdi\\_proquest\\_journals\\_746479451](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_746479451).

<sup>107</sup> *L'Oued-Sahel : journal politique, littéraire, commercial et Agricole*, Aug 22, 1929.

<http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb32830508>.



Figure 6. Race swapping in *Le Tumulte Noir*.

*The image above depicts famous French Tennis player Susanne Lenglen as a Black woman in Colin's work. Paul Colin, Tumulte Noir, 1927.*

Colin's work still a reflection of race relations within Paris in the interwar period, regardless of his own intentions behind the images. The tone of this piece was set immediately with the title, which translates to Black Tumult. The artwork depicted the performances of African American artists and dancers like Baker, referring to it as a "tumult." This phrasing immediately separates it from more elegant shows like ballet or even cabaret. It was wild, erratic, messy, and foreign. Colin romanticized African American culture while also making it exotic and erotic. The clearest example of this is the hyper-sexualization of black women in the book. Few pictures feature Baker fully clothed. Even when she was in a fashionable two-piece pink dress, her breasts were visible as she dances. She was always portrayed in a sensual manner, no matter the context surrounding her. Baker's image appealed to the hyper sexualization of black

women. While she herself played into this stereotype with her performances, images of her off the stage often depicted a woman dressed in typical Parisian fashions of the day. The white women were not shown like this, even when Colin's drawings could plausibly call for more sexual themes. Hyper-sexualization returns when depicting race swapped celebrities, however. When a white woman has been redrawn as a woman of color, she became scantily clad or had her breast bared. This includes his images of dancing white cabaret dancers famed for dancing in risqué clothing. Even though Baker was a key feature in this work, she was still drawn through the lens of her race.



Figure 7. Reality versus Art in *Le Tumulte Noir*.

*The left image depicts Baker dancing with her breast bared in a tight outfit which resembles the ensemble in the right photograph. In reality, Baker's appearance was more in keeping with the fashions of the time, as opposed to the sexualized styles within Colin's work. Paul Colin, Tumulte Noir, 1927.*

Although Baker's life in Paris was not as color blind as the media advertised, she was able to leverage her social standing to further her success. She was able to use her status as a performer to launch her career in film. Baker was soon cast in leading roles, unlike many black women in the United States who often had to settle for a part as a butler or maid. Most often, Baker played the role of a French colonial girl rescued by a white Frenchman. This theme appears in films such as *Zou Zou*, *Princess Tam Tam*, and *Siren of the Tropics*. Each of these roles featured Baker as a silly, uneducated French African. Baker's naïveté and ignorance drives many of the jokes, which ultimately hinge on her inability to assimilate into European society. The same humor could have been derived from an American émigré to France, as they could have also been ignorant of French language and customs just like colonial residents. Yet Baker's characters were consistently from France's imperial holdings.

As previously discussed, French colonials were often excluded from French culture. French colonial citizens were even excluded from films about their own lives and homelands. Clear evidence of this was that French filmmakers hired an African American woman to play a French colonial character. Baker is not from the colonies, but she is black, speaks French, and is a recognizable face. Her fame made her appealing as a box office draw, and her Americanness made her separate from colonial stereotypes. Much of her celebrity was based in her association with American performance and culture, yet she was not playing American women in her films. French filmmakers wanted to make comedies about French Blacks, but there were no French women of color with the star power of Josephine Baker. Her fame, which was based in her American identity, is what allowed her to gain leading roles as colonial heroines.

While Baker was treated differently because of the color of her skin, she still recommended others to come to Paris. She wrote letters to her friends, encouraging them to visit and stay in Paris, and to leave Missouri behind.<sup>108</sup> While her life in Paris was not perfect, it still afforded her tremendous success. The fairytale of her life was more interesting to Baker's fans back in the United States, anyway. Her negative experiences were not discussed in American newspapers, who preferred to focus on her triumphs abroad. Yet, Baker's experiences in Paris were more nuanced than a fairytale, and more positive than America could have provided. Perhaps this is best summed up in a quote from Josephine Baker herself: "the prejudices, everywhere they are the same."<sup>109</sup> To her, it felt as though everywhere in the world, Black folks will face racism to some degree; hatred does not change. Whether in St. Louis or Paris, she would still be removed from hotels at the behest of white guests or depicted in racially driven ways. Yet in interwar Paris, those prejudices could be exploited and used to shape perceptions of African Americans abroad. While Baker faced hardships, she was also one of the most famed dancers of the interwar era. Images of her banana dance still adorn Parisian streets, and she was cast as the leading star in French films. There were opportunities in Paris that could not be found in the United States. While Baker's life was not the fairytale it was perceived to be at home, it was undeniably better than the life she may have had as a Black woman in the Jim Crow south.

---

<sup>108</sup> Josephine Baker, *Letter to unknown friend, 1935*, Biblioteque Nationale, Opera.

<sup>109</sup> "et les préjudice, partout c'est meme" Sauvage.



### Chapter III.

#### Ada “Bricktop” Smith and life behind the scenes

As Josephine Baker was reaching new heights of fame and fortune, many other African American women were creating the platform that supported her success. Many shops, restaurants, and jazz clubs in Montmartre were owned and operated by African American women who moved to Paris for more opportunities. One of the most well respected and influential of these entrepreneurs was Ada Louise Smith. Known as “Bricktop” for her bright red hair, her club launched the careers of many other American transplants, including Baker herself. Bricktop’s reputation encouraged more hopeful African Americans to travel abroad, in the hopes of achieving a slice of what she had gained. But like Baker, the image of Bricktop’s life painted at home was not always reflective of her true experiences abroad.

Bricktop’s influence within the entertainment industry began long before she moved to France. The Chicago native worked extensively in the jazz world prior to her move to Paris. At the age of sixteen, she had already worked and performed in vaudeville shows around the Midwest.<sup>110</sup> Once she reached adulthood, she traveled to New York, where the Harlem Renaissance was in full swing. Bricktop had hoped to become a jazz musician and to leave vaudeville behind. However, word had begun to spread about the so-called color-blind city of Paris and opportunities available there. So, in 1924, Bricktop moved abroad.<sup>111</sup> Like many before her, Bricktop had been lured by the promise that

---

<sup>110</sup> James Haskins, *Bricktop* (New York: Atheneum, 1983), 24, <https://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/990011358130203941/catalog>.

<sup>111</sup> *Bricktop*, 85.

Paris was a new land of opportunity for African Americans. Bricktop's experience within the music world helped her gain success in Paris.

### Creating Color-Blind Paris

Bricktop and Baker had incredibly different trajectories in terms of their lives in Paris. Baker assimilated into French culture; she became fluent in French, married a European man, and eventually gave up her American citizenship. By embracing black stereotypes and cultural expectations, Baker had achieved unimaginable success. Seemingly, the only connection to her homeland she retained was her outlandish vaudevillian humor. Bricktop, on the other hand, brought America to Paris. She hosted notable Americans in her club and in her home. While she spoke French, she primarily interacted with fellow English speakers in her home and private life. When she hosted parties at her home, she served barbeque pork and lamb together with French wines.<sup>112</sup> Her life revolved around Montmartre, and her influence was one of the reasons many viewed the arrondissement as an extension of Harlem. Baker was a beneficiary of what many had seen as the colorblind city; Bricktop, on the other hand, was creating it.

Not long after her move to France, Bricktop became integral to the African American community in Paris. She opened her own nightclub in Montmartre which soon became an unofficial headquarters for jazz musicians hoping to establish themselves in the Parisian nightclub scene. This fact soon pointed out in newspapers and correspondence back home. Bricktop's achievements, influence, and social events were

---

<sup>112</sup> "Hostess Entertains In Paree--and How!: Ada Smith (Bricktop to Friends) Feeds Them Barbecue at Home," *The New York Amsterdam News*, Jul 22, 1931, 10, <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/hostess-entertains-paree-how/docview/226292816/se-2>.

discussed with reverence. The *New Amsterdam News* reported on Bricktop's Christmas parties, highlighting that not only was the club incredibly famous but it was owned and operated by a black woman.<sup>113</sup> The article lists the illustrious attendees at the party, both white and black, who attended Bricktop's annual soiree. Articles such as these served not only as a compliment toward Bricktop, but also as a contribution to Paris' reputation as the land of opportunity for people of color.

Bricktop's nightclub became well known as a place where jazz lovers of any race could appreciate music. While this reputation was hard earned in Paris, it would be something almost unheard of in the United States. Bricktop was someone who would have everything working against her in her home country. There, she was simply a small, mixed-race woman from Chicago with a single mother performing in traveling vaudeville acts. Yet in Paris, she hosted blended parties that included attendees like the Duke of York, boxer Sunny Jim Williams, and American politician Herbert Walker, among many other black and white socialites and celebrities.<sup>114</sup> Bricktop had reached a level of popularity that would have been difficult to achieve as a jazz club owner elsewhere.

Bricktop used her influence to give not only build a successful business for herself, but also to improve the lives of other African Americans in Paris. She helped new musicians, giving them a place to stay as well as perform, and helped them form relationships with her famous guests. She invited hundreds to the barbeques she hosted in Chez Bricktop, where "she always welcomes her negro friends and entertains them

---

<sup>113</sup> "Bricktop" Gave Party to Friends: Colored American Operates One of Paris' most popular clubs," *The New York Amsterdam News*, Jan 23, 1929, 9, <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/bricktop-gave-party-friends/docview/226184490/se-2>.

<sup>114</sup> "Bricktop" Gave Party to Friends: Colored American Operates One of Paris' most popular clubs," 9.

among the rest.”<sup>115</sup> These parties mixed new musicians together with some of her most well-known European guests to create an environment that was both friendly meal and a networking event. So many African Americans visited Bricktop upon arriving in France that journalists claimed her club “provides a social wedge for many Americans in Paris.”<sup>116</sup> Chez Bricktop’s had become a haven for new black American émigrés where they could transition to their new life abroad.

### Bricktop in the Papers

Bricktop was often reported on in African American newspapers as a person who was successfully bringing a taste of American community to Paris. She served American food, played American music, and welcomed American visitors with open arms. Bricktop always remained the same kind, unpretentious American woman who moved to Paris in 1925, no matter how successful she became. This is dramatically different from the kind of reports published about Josephine Baker. Baker had achieved the unattainable. She had become a global superstar, starred in films, and she was even featured in an article in *Vogue*.<sup>117</sup> By contrast, Bricktop remained working in her club, held barbeque cookouts for the neighborhood, and gave work to Chinese immigrants turned away by the United States government. Yes, she performed for royalty, literary giants, and infamous gangsters, but Bricktop remained true to her roots. This was consistently remarked upon

---

<sup>115</sup> “Hostess Entertains In Paree--and How!: Ada Smith (Bricktop to Friends) Feeds Them Barbecue at Home,” *The New York Amsterdam News (1922-1938)*; Jul 22, 1931, 10, <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/hostess-entertains-paree-how/docview/226292816/se-2>.

<sup>116</sup> “BRICKTOP’S IS RENDEZVOUS IN PARIS: AMERICANS FLOCK TO “THE PERGOLA” IN SUBURBS OF PAREE,” *Afro-American (1893-)*; Jul 25, 1931, 7. <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/bricktops-is-rendezvous-paris/docview/530899188/se-2>.

<sup>117</sup> John McMullin, “Features: A Night in Paris.” *Vogue*, Jun 01, 1927, 49-49, 50, 51, 52, 150, <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/magazines/features-night-paris/docview/879186571/se-2>.

in discourse surrounding the club owner; she had not changed who she was, despite the life she lived. When asked about Bricktop, Cole Porter once said “you can’t take anybody else and throw them in the middle of all this royalty and all these famous people and have her not turn a hair, like Bricky. She has not changed one iota.”<sup>118</sup>

Bricktop’s fame was well known throughout the African American community in the United States. When she returned to Chicago in the late 1930s for a visit, she was treated like royalty. Parties were thrown for her every night, as Black Americans clamored for the opportunity to celebrate their native daughter.<sup>119</sup> She was friends with other beloved figures of African American success like Langston Hughes, Duke Ellington, and of course Josephine Baker. White musicians worked with her as well, such as Cole Porter, Django Reinhardt and Stephane Grappelli, who both wrote songs for and about her.<sup>120</sup> Adding to her mystique was her proximity to powerful white families as well, as the Vanderbilts, the Goulds, and even the king and queen of England visited Chez Bricktop.<sup>121</sup>

Like Josephine Baker, articles written about Bricktop at home were overwhelmingly positive. Authors highlighted her successful business, her glamorous lifestyle, and her high-class guests. Numerous stories about her interactions between white and black American celebrities in Paris were discussed with clear awe. Zelda

---

<sup>118</sup> Cole porter, cited in Ada “Bricktop” Smith, *Bricktop* (New York: Atheneum, 1983), 122.

<sup>119</sup> “'Bricktop,' Paris Toast, Guest of Editor Abbott: 'BRICKTOP,' TOAST OF PARIS FETED HERE,” *The Chicago Defender (National Edition) (1921-1967)*, Dec 02, 1939, <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/bricktop-paris-toast-guest-editor-abbott/docview/492566601/se-2>.

<sup>120</sup> Ada “Bricktop” Smith, *Bricktop* (New York: Atheneum, 1983), 96; Django Reinhardt and Stephane Grappelli, “Bricktop” June 20, 2019, Youtube Video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cxe1CvIfidU>.

<sup>121</sup> Dan Burley, “Bricktop: The Name on a Thousand Lips: Sorrel-Topped Entertainer Back in States with Story of “Inside Europe’s” International Set could have Started a War Long Ago: ---Closeups of Amazing Bricktop,” *New York Amsterdam News*, Nov 25, 1939, City edition, <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/bricktop-name-on-thousand-lips/docview/226219669/se-2>.

Fitzgerald is said to have saved her husband from being arrested by claiming she was friends with Mademoiselle Bricktop.<sup>122</sup> She once threw John Steinbeck out onto the street for being ungentlemanly.<sup>123</sup> Cole Porter wrote *Miss Otis Regrets* for Bricktop, but she turned down the chance to sing it.<sup>124</sup> The stories go on and on. The Chicago native was one of the most successful entrepreneurs in Paris, and Black Americans at home were hungry for more stories of her amazing life.

### Bricktop in French Media

For such a notable member of Parisian society, Bricktop was curiously underreported in French media. Her music was credited, and her voice was present on the radio for all to enjoy.<sup>125</sup> However, beyond this, discussion surrounding Bricktop outside of American circles is difficult to discover. Sources that do mention her name are most often found in English language newspapers such as *The Paris Times* and the *New York Herald, European Edition*. This is particularly curious, as her nightclubs are referenced with regularity. Many articles discuss nights out at Le Gran Duc when Bricktop was running the club or finishing their night at Bricktop's in Montmartre.<sup>126</sup> It is surprising to see that there is such minimal reporting on a figure who was so central to the jazz scene in Paris.

---

<sup>122</sup> *Bricktop*, 96.

<sup>123</sup> Albin Krebs, "BRICKTOP, CABARET QUEEN IN PARIS AND ROME, DEAD," *New York Times*, Feb 1, 1984, <https://www.nytimes.com/1984/02/01/obituaries/bricktop-cabaret-queen-in-paris-and-rome-dead.html?smid=url-share>.

<sup>124</sup> Patrick Monahan, "To Bricktop, On Her Belated Birthday," *The Paris Review*, Aug. 15, 2011, <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2011/08/15/to-bricktop-on-her-belated-birthday>.

<sup>125</sup> French social party, *The Little Journal*, Sept. 1, 1929, 5.

<sup>126</sup> *The Paris Times*, May 5, 1925), Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Philosophie, histoire, sciences de l'homme, <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb32833013q>: 5.

This once again highlights the dissimilarity between the perception of Paris abroad, and the reality of life for African Americans in the city. Multitudes of press surrounded Bricktop in Black newspapers in the United States. Like Josephine Baker, African Americans at home could follow along with her every success. She inspired many to move abroad as well, and she became a central figure in Montmartre. While she focused her interactions with the African American immigrant and expat community in Paris, this was not the only part of French society with whom she mixed. As already suggested, members of European royalty and aristocracy around the world made sure Bricktop's club was on their itinerary. Had her business solely catered to Americans, the lack of press coverage would be more understandable. Yet, Bricktop's place was a club for all, so why was it not discussed?

Bricktop's lack of publicity could be due many factors, and it is difficult to explain the lack of evidence for Bricktop's media coverage. It is unusual that such an influential and unique figure received such little publicity in France, though. Bricktop was half Irish and half African American, with flaming red hair that gave her the moniker "Bricktop" and helped her stand out in a crowd. She was an integral part to African American culture, which was spreading throughout Paris. Her club was very well known, and she hosted white and black performers. Her establishment welcomed many French acts as well as French patrons. Jazz was gaining popularity during the interwar period, and Bricktop played no small role in that fact. Yet, despite these significant contributions, precious few know of Bricktop today. A possible explanation for this is that she did not have the African American features that Parisian reporters loved to describe. While Baker sang in French as she danced in banana skirts and took roles like Princess Tam Tam,

Bricktop dressed in sensible dresses and sang American jazz songs in English. Her distinctive red hair and freckles did not fit into the image Parisians expected when looking for an African American stereotype. She could not pass as a white woman, and she did not look sufficiently African American for the French media to exoticize her. In addition to her appearance, she did not seem to try to assimilate into French culture. While she remarked often in her autobiography that Paris felt like home to her and she lived most of her life in the city, she did not seem to embody black America in a way that was expected by French public like Baker did. Bricktop did not become an iconic symbol of the jazz era because she did not fit any stereotype or trope attributed to her race.

It is unclear if Bricktop's lack of media exposure this was because of her race, gender, or her nationality. However, it would be naïve to believe that these were not a factor. Her minimal notoriety among the French press could be due to the behind-the-scenes nature of her successes, but other club owners were discussed at length. As the same time that Bricktop was going unreported, white, male nightclub owner Louis Leplée became a fixture within French media. His club was regularly reported on, especially after he established a relationship with Edith Piaf. This continued even after Leplée's death in the late 1930s. Bricktop never achieved his level of notoriety. Bricktop's lack of publicity could be due in part to the fact that she was a foreign woman of color, as opposed to the nature of her career.

#### Paris at Home and Abroad

By looking through the lenses of Josephine Baker and Ada "Bricktop" Smith, the disparities between what African Americans at home perceived Paris to be and the reality of the city become clear. In newspapers like the *Chicago Defender* and the *New York*



*Amsterdam News*, Paris was a free and welcoming place where anyone could make a name for themselves. Bricktop and Baker were perfect examples of this. Both were black women from modest upbringings who became very successful abroad. They were able to take advantage of opportunities that would have been likely unthinkable in interwar America. They had many factors that would have been working against them in the United States: they were women, Baker was black and Bricktop was mixed race, and as would come to light later, both were queer. Their successes were wildly publicized in the United States, but the tone and volume of publicity abroad was very different.

Unlike in the United States, Baker and Bricktop had different experiences with the Parisian media. Baker could not have an article written about her that did not describe her race, her exoticism, or even her animalistic traits. She herself described racial conflict in Paris, a topic that was not discussed in American articles about her experiences. Bricktop barely is mentioned at all, even though white male club owners at the time were well known in Paris. Bricktop also had momentous achievements in Paris, and hosted illustrious clientele, which went largely unremarked upon. Though she was able to build a jazz empire within her club, she did not benefit from the same notoriety as Baker. She never achieved the same platform to discuss racial inequalities in Paris like Baker did, so her challenges can only be assumed by the absence of noise around her. Though Bricktop was able to seize many opportunities in Paris, it was not the utopia it was described to be. Despite the storybook tales that were told in the American papers, their lives as black foreign women were not as perfect as they may have seemed.

## Chapter IV.

### Sylvia Beach's World of Literature

While African Americans traveled to Montmartre for the chance at succeeding in the jazz scene, another group of marginalized women slowly began to occupy more space in the city. Queer women also arrived in Paris for its sexual freedom and what would later be known as LGBTQ enclaves throughout the city. In the United States as well as in France, queer women were often subjects of disdain and ridicule to the greater community. Beginning in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, lesbianism entered the public eye. Though they were not detested on the same level as gay men, lesbian women were seen as sexual deviants.<sup>127</sup> These women were portrayed as hypersexual and a threat to heterosexual relationships. They were also perceived as a dangerous challenge to existing cultural standards of femininity and womanhood.<sup>128</sup> Lesbian women often hid their identities within the United States, and some decided to look elsewhere for a community. Though queer women were not widely accepted in France as a whole, the same was not necessarily true within Paris itself.

While these attitudes were also present in France, American media described Paris as a place where same-sex relationships were normalized. Films depicted same-sex relationships like *The Captive*, which was said to have been translated from a French

---

<sup>127</sup> Laura Horak, *Girls Will Be Boys: Cross-Dressed Women, Lesbians, and American Cinema, 1908-1934* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2016), 96.

[https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD\\_ALMA512241750110003941](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD_ALMA512241750110003941)

<sup>128</sup> Laura Doan, and Jane Garrity, *Sapphic Modernities: Sexuality, Women, and National Culture*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 4, <http://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/990100076820203941/catalog>.

screenplay.<sup>129</sup> And the novel *The Well of Loneliness* describe a queer woman's discovery of acceptance once she moves to Paris.<sup>130</sup> The city was even sometimes used in a derogatory way to imply one's sexual orientation. This can be seen in such famous cases as Greta Garbo's relationship with Fifi d'Orsay. These two women were rumored to be engaged in a lesbian relationship, and this was discussed using coded language of the time. For example, newspapers often claimed d'Orsay was originally from in Paris, when she was actually French- Canadian.<sup>131</sup> Yet by associating d'Orsay with Paris, contemporary journalists were implying a certain level of sexual fluidity existed within Garbo and d'Orsay's relationship without outright claiming that they were lesbians. References such as these may have made heterosexual readers leery of Paris, and inspired many young, queer, American women to travel to France in search of acceptance, like the protagonist in *The Well of Loneliness*.

Another factor driving the growth of the lesbian network in Paris is the expanding feminist movement. Though this movement was rather limited in its scope, as discussed in chapter two, it still became closely linked with the queer community.<sup>132</sup> Feminists and lesbians alike searched for greater economic freedom, access to education, and the ability to support themselves without requiring the assistance of a male family member. While women were not completely freed from patriarchal restrictions as previously discussed, they were able to exercise more freedoms in Paris than they were in

---

<sup>129</sup> Daniel Hurewitz, "Banned on Broadway but Coming to a Theater Near You: The Captive and Rethinking the Breadth of American Anti-Lesbian Hostility in the 1920s and '30s.," *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 17, no. 1 (2013): 46, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10894160.2012.683382>.

<sup>130</sup> Laura Horak, *Girls Will Be Boys : Cross-Dressed Women, Lesbians, and American Cinema, 1908-1934* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2016), 163, [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD\\_ALMA512241750110003941](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD_ALMA512241750110003941).

<sup>131</sup> Horak, *Girls Will Be Boys*, 170-173.

<sup>132</sup> Laura Doan and Jane Garrity, *Sapphic Modernities: Sexuality, Women, and National Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 6, <http://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/990100076820203941/catalog>.

the United States. Here, queer women established respectable businesses and drove the modernist literary and artistic movement. Lesbian night clubs and parties became popular, and the city soon became a haven for women who differed from the traditional image of femininity. Once in Paris, members of these minority groups quickly found their niche, and created grand cultural contributions that are still known worldwide today.

### Sylvia Beach in Paris

One of these lesbian émigrées was Sylvia Beach, née Nancy Beach, the daughter of a Presbyterian minister and Baltimore native. She had spent her childhood travelling to Paris with her father, an associate pastor of the American Church of Paris.<sup>133</sup> This time in France solidified young Sylvia's love of Europe, and she traveled back to the continent frequently after she reached adulthood. She began her life in Paris in 1916 as a student of French Poetry, and in 1919 she opened her bookshop, Shakespeare and Company.<sup>134</sup> Though her original goal in leaving may not have been due to the lack of acceptance as a queer woman, she chose to stay in part due to her relationship with Adrienne Monnier, the shop owner next door.

It was not long until the small bookshop would become as influential in the literary world as Chez Bricktop's became to jazz. Beach's relationship with James Joyce served as the catalyst to the bookstore's eventual influence, as she was the first to publish one of Joyce's most infamous pieces of writing. His book, *Ulysses*, was commanding great attention as an obscene piece of literature. Pieces of the book's chapters had been

---

<sup>133</sup> Keri Walsh, *The Letters of Sylvia Beach* (New York: Columbia Press: 2010), XXIV.

<sup>134</sup> Noel Riley Fitch, *Sylvia Beach and the Lost Generation: A History of Literary Paris in the Twenties and Thirties* (New York: Norton & Co, 1985), 29.

published in several small magazines and newspapers, but the entire book itself struggled to be released. It contained explicit sexual content, and even included a homosexual relationship. Even the small pieces which had already been released garnered backlash, and many refused to keep it in print following public outcry.<sup>135</sup> Perhaps this is why Sylvia Beach was the only publisher in Paris who would print his book. In fact, she was the only publisher willing to print his book at all. In 1922, the first copies of *Ulysses* were on the shelves of Shakespeare and Company. It almost immediately received vicious attacks from literary critics, which only served to increase sales of the book.<sup>136</sup> In addition to her connection with Joyce, Beach was also becoming closely connected to other literary greats such as F. Scott Fitzgerald, Gertrude Stein, and Ernest Hemingway. Both the reputation of her shop as well as her famous connections served to make Shakespeare and Company an integral part of the Parisian literary scene not only as a bookseller but also as a publisher.

#### Similarities between Marginalized Women

While there is no evidence that the two women interacted during the interwar period as of yet, there are many parallels between Sylvia Beach and Bricktop Smith. Both women were Americans who moved to Paris to achieve entrepreneurial freedom, though each needed help to get started. Beach received \$3,000 in seed money from her sister, and Bricktop used her connections from the club where she initially worked as hostess to

---

<sup>135</sup> Fitch, *Sylvia Beach and the Lost Generation*, 65-75.

<sup>136</sup> Sylvia Beach, Harriet Shaw Weaver Papers: Correspondence, literary and business papers. Vol. V (ff. 233) (Shakespeare and Company, 12 rue de l'Odéon, Paris) 14 November 1927.

open her own establishment.<sup>137</sup> They wanted to take advantage of the potential opportunities that Paris had to offer, but not necessarily with the goal to achieve fame. Beach originally moved to the city to study and live independent from her family.<sup>138</sup> It was only later that she would use this passion to open her own bookstore and publish books. Through this, she became integral to the modernist literary movement, though many outside of the literary world did not know her name. Bricktop, too, came to Paris to open her business to cater to new artistic developments in Paris. Bricktop arrived to be a performer in the Parisian jazz scene, and later opened her own influential night club. The two women also interacted with many of the same people during the interwar period. Bricktop and Beach followed very similar paths, just in different artistic spheres.

Though both Beach and Bricktop made Paris their homes for the rest of their lives, they did not abandon their American identities. Each woman focused their business aspirations on Americans in Paris and encouraged others to embrace American culture. Though her family wanted her to open her shop in New York, Beach would argue that she would be more successful opening a bookshop that would be an “unheard-of...English & American book club in the very book center of Paris.”<sup>139</sup> Beach also focused on bringing American authors to the forefront of her shop. Her most famous exhibition at Shakespeare & Company featured the various works of Walt Whitman, which directly influenced the author’s popularity in France.<sup>140</sup> Beach was often described

---

<sup>137</sup> Sylvia Beach, August 27, 1919, *Sylvia Beach Papers, Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections*, Princeton Library; T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, *Bricktop's Paris: African American Women in Paris Between the Two World Wars* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015), 30.

<sup>138</sup> Letter to Marion Peter, October 5, 1916, *Sylvia Beach Papers, Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections*, Princeton Library.

<sup>139</sup> Sylvia Beach, August 27, 1919.

<sup>140</sup> Noel Riley Fitch, *Sylvia Beach and the Lost Generation: A History of Literary Paris in the Twenties and Thirties* (Norton & Co Inc: New York City, 1985), 234.

as an authentic American in Paris and remained true to her identity even after decades of living in abroad.<sup>141</sup> Both women were on the forefront of novel contributions to both French and American culture. As Bricktop helped bring new American music to Montmartre, Beach helped bring unique American literature to the Left Bank.

In addition, both women used their positions to challenge limitations that existed in the United States. As previously discussed, Bricktop opened an incredibly successful jazz club which was open to all patrons, no matter the color of their skin. She circumvented the limitations to her success that would have existed in the United States and became a pillar of the Parisian jazz community. Similarly, Beach challenged limitations placed upon the literary world. She did so through her publication of *Ulysses* by James Joyce as well as through her exhibition on Walt Whitman's poetry. While Walt Whitman had already established a presence in Paris, most in the French literary scene were only familiar with *Leaves of Grass*. With Beach's exposition on Whitman, more were exposed to his modernist poetry. Following her exposition, Whitman's poems gained popularity only rivaled by fellow Americans Ezra Pound and Ernest Hemingway.<sup>142</sup> Thanks to Beach, Whitman's exposure in Paris increased beyond one publication.

Her impact upon James Joyce's career was far more considerable, and she is directly responsible for a significant contribution to modernist literature. When American publishers refused to publish Joyce's work, Beach published the controversial novel

---

<sup>141</sup> Ruth Bellheimer, "After 21 years in Paris, Booklover Still American," *The Pasadena Post*, Aug 23, 1936, 13, [https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/622349327/?terms=Be%22After%2021%20years%20in%20Paris%20Booklover%20Still%20American%22&pqid=JjkhT-wCbtwL88w\\_CIsiKw%3A36397%3A311276302&match=1](https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/622349327/?terms=Be%22After%2021%20years%20in%20Paris%20Booklover%20Still%20American%22&pqid=JjkhT-wCbtwL88w_CIsiKw%3A36397%3A311276302&match=1).

<sup>142</sup> Fitch, *Sylvia Beach and the Lost Generation*, 232-234.

instead. Had she remained in the United States, she may not have had the opportunity to meet and work with Joyce, much less publish *Ulysses*. Their decades long friendship began while at a party with Beach's partner, Adrienne Monnier, and it was here that Joyce found out that Beach owned the famous shop that sold books in English.<sup>143</sup> Through the connections afforded to her in Paris, Beach was able to publish a book that went on to be considered one of the most important pieces of modern literature of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Similarly, Bricktop's place grew thanks to her connections to other famous African Americans who travelled to Paris for jazz. Both women used their time and place to promote the artistic pieces they felt were important and delivered that work to their respective audiences.

Finally, it is important to consider that both women were queer. Sylvia Beach and fellow bookstore owner, Adrienne Monnier, maintained a long-term same-sex relationship. Bricktop was also a queer woman, as there is some evidence that she was bisexual. While she did end up marrying a man, she was rumored to have had many same-sex affairs. It is important to consider, though, she never confirmed this publicly herself.<sup>144</sup> Perhaps most famously, in his 1993 biography on his mother, Josephine Baker's son claimed that she and Bricktop carried on a lesbian relationship which only ended with Baker's marriage.<sup>145</sup> Neither woman confirmed this while they were living, but this could be due to several factors. While lesbians like Beach were out in public, there were very few lesbian women of color. It is possible that neither Baker nor Bricktop wanted to add additional challenges to their lives when they already worked hard to break

---

<sup>143</sup> Fitch, 62.

<sup>144</sup> T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, *Bricktop's Paris: African American Women in Paris Between the Two World Wars* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015), 43.

<sup>145</sup> Jean-Claude Baker, *Josephine: The Hungry Heart* (New York: Random House, 1993), 120.



through racial barriers. However, it is undeniable that Baker and Bricktop's relationship was incredibly significant in terms of their success. Bricktop helped Baker in her early years in France and promoted her act when few knew who she was. As Baker became more well-known, her association with Bricktop's club helped grow the network of African American jazz musicians Bricktop had been cultivating. If they were in fact in a romantic relationship, they would have been considered a true power couple in Montmartre.

On the other side of the city, Beach and Monnier were openly queer. The women lived together for nearly ten years. Beach published books with homosexual themes and dressed in masculine fashions. Beach also fraternized with other well-known lesbian women, such as Natalie Clifford Barney, Gertrude Stein, and Alice Toklas. Her connections with these lesbian women allowed her to expand her network of authors who worked with her at her shop. It was through Barney that Beach met F. Scott Fitzgerald, and her partner Monnier introduced her to James Joyce and Ezra Pound. She utilized her connections to other lesbian women in a way that was unavailable to Bricktop due to the more secretive nature of her queerness. While it is possible that Bricktop could have used her same-sex relationships to advance her entrepreneurial endeavors, there is not evidence available suggesting such business dealings. With Beach, her connections with lesbian women in Paris was obvious. She often visited Barney and Stein's salons, which appealed to queer women specifically. In addition, all of these women were wealthy and white, which perhaps contributed to their ability to be open with their sexuality. Though both women were queer, they utilized these connections in different ways.

There are many unlikely similarities between Beach and Bricktop. Both women came to Paris and found themselves a part of communities which was unavailable to them in the United States. Beach found acceptance of her sexuality, and Bricktop acceptance of her race. Each of them contributed significantly to French culture in the interwar period through literature and jazz. They brought American culture to Paris and maintained their American identities over their long years of residence. Finally, both women were queer, and maintained long term relationships with other sexually fluid women in their fields. Though they seem incredibly different, Bricktop and Beach made lasting contributions to their fields from behind the scenes, often with little fanfare.

#### Sylvia Beach in the Media

Although Sylvia Beach has achieved modern recognition for her contributions to the literary world, this was not always the case. In her own time, Beach was only very rarely mentioned in the media both in Paris and in the United States. When she was mentioned, it was typically in the context of those surrounding her. Her name was inevitably paired with James Joyce, or her sister Cyprian Beach, who became a moderately famous actress. When articles discussed her in the United States, they often discussed Beach's father, the reverend, and how different she was from her respectable background. She is almost never the sole focus of discussion, despite her own incredible achievements.

The most common theme within articles surrounding Sylvia Beach is how often they transform into articles about the men around her. When she received the French Legion of Honor in 1937, a significant amount of time was spent discussing Jules Romaines, who bestowed the honor upon Beach. Readers learn about Romaines' position

in French culture, and how he met T.S. Eliot during a reading at Shakespeare and Co.<sup>146</sup> Very little information is given about Beach herself, beyond the establishment of her shops and her relationship to the publication of *Ulysses*. She even must share the title of the article dedicated to herself with Romaines. This was not a unique occurrence when it came to articles about Beach. In a short, three paragraph article published in various newspapers around the United States, very little information is provided about Beach herself. The author instead discusses James Joyce, whom he met at Shakespeare and Company, and how starstruck he was by the Irish author. The most personal detail about Sylvia Beach in this short blurb is that she wore sandals, but this fact was even immediately called into question by the author.<sup>147</sup> Focus on her clothing choices were the most common glimpses into Beach's personality in newspaper articles. In addition to her choice in footwear, articles mention her boyishness, and that she was "mannishly dressed" when interviewed for the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*.<sup>148</sup> This piece, like those mentioned before it, focused more on James Joyce and *Ulysses*, and neglects Beach herself. Even in articles meant to specifically celebrate Beach and her achievements, she must share the spotlight with the men surrounding her.

---

<sup>146</sup> "Sylvia Beach awarded French Legion of Honor by Romaines," *The Pasadena Post*, Mar 14, 1937, 10, <https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/622337725/?terms=%22Sylvia%20Beach%22%20&pqid=ZwvZbCwwgsSCpS-aJdJKFQ%3A134604%3A942849031&match=1>.

<sup>147</sup> James Aswell, "My New York," *The Times Leader*, Oct 20, 1936, 16, <https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/392456195/?terms=James%20Aswell%20%22My%20New%20York%22%20%22Sylvia%20Beach%22&pqid=ZwvZbCwwgsSCpS-aJdJKFQ%3A340111%3A1033238127&match=1>. While this article appears in many different publications, this source has the most complete version of the piece available.

<sup>148</sup> "Book *Ulysses* was too strong for 9 typists: All quit, husband of one burned copy – Sylvia Beach Tells Story," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Dec 24, 1933, <https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/57563496/?terms=%22Book%20Ulysses%20was%20too%20strong%20for%209%20typists%3A%20All%20quit%2C%20husband%20of%20one%20burned%20copy%20%E2%80%93%20Sylvia%20Beach%20Tells%20Story%22&pqid=a-PxnHJZF7aY8w77Wq59PA%3A35989%3A178135485&match=1>.

Attention to Beach is not always combined with her relationship to prominent male authors and French socialites, however. Beach was also grouped together with her sister and father in articles in the United States. The most blatant example of this was the full-page article in *The Philadelphia Enquirer* titled “Paris No Place for a Minister’s Daughter?”<sup>149</sup> This article is meant to highlight the accomplishments of the wholesome and successful, despite the controversial reputation Paris had with regards to young women. The title harkens back to the implications associated with Paris already seen with Greta Garbo and Fifi d’Orsay. Throughout the article itself, content about the Beach sisters was once again diluted by her relationship to more famous subjects. The article begins by calling attention to the fact that Sylvia Beach’s father was a reverend in the Presbyterian church. with several paragraphs describing Sylvia’s father, his life within the church, and the family lineage full of ministers. When the author finally talks about Sylvia, it leaves much to be desired. The article takes care to mention the name of the man who made the sign for her shop, the male printer who helped publish books with Sylvia, and several chapters about *Ulysses* and its reputation. The longest discussion surrounding Beach is that she did not have much money and took a chance on *Ulysses*. Much more detail is given to Cyprian Sylvia’s sister who was a well-known actress. Cyprian’s life is described in much greater detail, as readers learn more about her personality and career. The article ends with yet another two paragraphs about James Joyce. Once again, Sylvia remains in the background, even when articles are supposed to

---

<sup>149</sup> “Paris No Place for a Minister’s Daughter? Nonsense! Just See What Great Things the Pretty Beach Sisters Have Accomplished Since They Left Their Parson Papa for the Boulevards,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 11, 1923 (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, US), 97.2, <https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/27051109/?terms=No%20place%20for%20a%20minister%27s%20daughter&pqid=a-PxnHJZF7aY8w77Wq59PA%3A216404%3A696961500&match=1>.

be explicitly about her. In the full-page article, a scant five sentences discuss Sylvia herself, and they are repetitive in their details. Even the images presented of Sylvia leave here in the shadows. They are much smaller than the glamour shots of Cyprian, and one is a blurry image of Sylvia and Joyce. The only image of Sylvia alone features her at a bookshelf, turned away from the camera so only a slight profile is visible. In the images as well as the article itself, Sylvia blends into the background, and is overshadowed by other figures in her life.

A possible explanation for Sylvia's lack of coverage could be her sexual identity. She was an open lesbian in a relationship with another woman. She did not adhere to many rules of traditional femininity, like her sister. Adjectives that describe her are often masculine or boyish.<sup>150</sup> Many of Sylvia's friends were also lesbians, and her network of queer women helped Beach form the connections that bolstered her business. For all its controversy, *Ulysses* could be viewed as one of the least contentious aspects of Beach's life. The real details of Beach's life may not have endeared her to many American readers in 1923. Instead, the author chose to focus on her connections to religion, culture, and her beautiful sister. The key theme in the article is that women could survive in Paris without falling into a den of sexual deviance. The title then reads as somewhat incredulous, as these women prove that Paris is in fact a place for a minister's daughter. Proof of this could be found in the two women who went abroad and became successful. It wouldn't do to mention that one of those daughters was in a long-term relationship with another woman.

---

<sup>150</sup> "The Talk of New York," *The Oakland Tribune*, Nov 2, 1923, 23, <https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/96389103/?terms=%22The%20Talk%20of%20New%20York%22%20&pqid=a-PxnHJZF7aY8w77Wq59PA%3A402472%3A658761603&match=1>.

Another interesting fact is that Beach's partner Adrienne Monnier was not mentioned in the article. While she was in a relationship with Beach, the women also worked closely together in business. Their bookshops were next door to one another, and it was Monnier who convinced Beach to open the shop in Paris instead of London.<sup>151</sup> She was even involved in the oft discussed publication of *Ulysses*. Monnier was the one who taught Beach how to publish books and write publishing contracts and helped her distribute the first copies of *Ulysses* in print.<sup>152</sup> Yet despite her influential role in Beach's success, nary a word is spoken about her. This, once again, is most likely related to the romantic nature of their relationship. The two women did not hide their involvement with one another, and should a journalist choose to discuss the business aspect of their relationship, the romantic side may also be revealed. This could have damaged the reputation of Beach's family back home and was most likely something to be considered when discussing Beach in the context of the rest of her family.

Another notable fact is that Beach's family is discussed along with her own success, as this is not something that happened with Josephine Baker or Bricktop Smith. This could be due to class or race dynamics. Beach was a young white woman from a well to do family on the east coast. Her father was a Princeton graduate with prestigious revolutionary ancestry and maintained connections to wealthy benefactors.<sup>153</sup> Her mother ensured that Sylvia and her sisters were well read and traveled to Europe often during Beach's childhood. She grew up in a world that white Americans could idealize and

---

<sup>151</sup> Sylvia Beach Letter to Eleanor Orbison Beach, August 27, 1919, *Sylvia Beach Papers, Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections*, Princeton Library.

<sup>152</sup> Sylvia Beach letter to Holly Beach, 23 April 1921, *Sylvia Beach Papers, Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections*, Princeton Library.

<sup>153</sup> Fitch, *Sylvia Beach and the Lost Generation*, 21-24.

empathize with. It would be easy to make Beach more sympathetic by highlighting her white, middle-class roots and pious family. If an author could skim the details of Beach herself, and turn instead to her relations, she could easily be turned into a modern yet respectable American in Paris.

Beach's life story was dramatically different from the southern and midwestern roots that Baker and Bricktop came from. Baker witnessed racially motivated violence and death during the Red Summer in St. Louis. Bricktop was raised by a single mother who needed to work long hours to support her family. Bricktop and Baker were much more interesting to African American readers because they were able to achieve success regardless their humble beginnings. They were able to break out of a cycle of poverty and racial subjugation within the United States and became synonymous with the jazz movement in Paris. Instead of reinforcing existing cultural norms as was done with reference to the Beach family, they were described as women who moved beyond cultural expectations of poor black women in America.

It is also important to consider the way black and white women were viewed by society in the interwar period. Where Baker and Bricktop were seen as glamorous risk takers who were achieving great things for the Black community, Beach was not portrayed in the same way. Beach was still very much tied to the men around her, and her accomplishments were minimized. She was a middle-class white woman, and as such she was expected to be humble, and make space for the men around her. By contrast, Baker and Bricktop were independent entrepreneurs and performers. African American papers such as *The Chicago Defender* and *Baltimore Afro American* wanted to showcase black achievements, and they had plenty of source material when it came to Baker and Bricktop.

They became the ideal and represented what could be available to the Black community if they were not shackled by racism in America. Bricktop and Baker became associated with a larger movement for Black freedom from institutional racism, while Beach did not have her story told from this frame of reference. Her identity as a queer woman was not openly acknowledged in the United States, so she was unable to be a source of inspiration like Baker and Bricktop.

Beach was not so clearly associated with her own marginalized group: queer women. She could have been a source of inspiration for other lesbian Americans, but there were not newspapers specifically catering to this subgroup in America in the interwar period. White communities were not interested in another woman who was gaining success without marriage or a family. The women who were looking for stories like Beach's were not creating media outlets to inspire other young lesbians. Had this been the case, perhaps stories focusing on Sylvia Beach herself would have been more prominent. Instead, she was permanently tied to those around her to change her public perception in the United States into something she was not

Sylvia's experiences are reminiscent of Bricktop's exposure, or lack thereof, in the press. Though both women were incredibly successful behind the scenes, they rarely received recognition. However, this may once again be due to the roles they have chosen to fill. They used their talents to promote others, whether they were authors or musicians. They were providing the businesses which launched careers and provided the space for cultural change to occur. Beach was able to publish books that were banned in the United States and formulate lasting relationships with fellow lesbians. She was able to use those connections to advance the modernist literary movement and did not need the approval of



her reverend father or a husband to manage her affairs. She had the freedoms she searched for in Paris, and Sylvia Beach was able to become an incredibly influential figure in literature thanks to her move to the French capital.

## Chapter V.

### Conclusion

By looking through the lenses of Josephine Baker and Ada “Bricktop” Smith, the disparities between what African Americans at home perceived Paris to be and the reality of the city become clear. In newspapers like the *Chicago Defender* and the *New York Amsterdam News*, Paris was a free and welcoming place where anyone with talent could make a name for themselves. Bricktop and Baker were perfect examples of this. Both were black women from modest upbringings who became incredibly successful abroad. They were able to take advantage of opportunities that would be unthinkable in interwar America. They had many factors that would have been working against them in the United States: they were women, Baker was black and Bricktop was mixed race, and as would come to light later, both were queer. Their successes were widely publicized here in the United States, but the tone and volume of publicity abroad was very different.

In Paris, the language surrounding these women was very different. Baker could not have an article written about her that did not describe her race, her exoticism, or even her allegedly “animalistic” traits. She herself described racial conflict in Paris, a topic that was not discussed in American articles about her experiences. Bricktop barely is mentioned at all, even though white male club owners at the time were well known in Paris. Issues that intersected in these women’s lives prove that their success was the exception, not the rule, despite the reports circulated at home. Their lives as black foreign women were not as perfect as they may have seemed, and perhaps Paris was not quite as welcoming as it had appeared.

Though life in Paris may not have been as it was initially perceived, these women were able to thrive there. Stories about them served as inspiration for others to follow in their footsteps and travel to France in search of similar success. Their lives were glamorous, full of high society connections, travel, and wealth. Baker was the international chameleon, who channeled her Americanness into her performances, while assimilating to French culture. She spoke French, she purchased a chateau, and married a would-be nobleman. When she no longer wanted to be married, she got a divorce and tried again, several times. She took advantage of existing stereotypes surrounding black women and turned them into lucrative film and stage performances. Though racism still existed in Paris, Baker was able to exploit it herself and turn into one of the world's most famous dancers.

Bricktop also turned Paris into a successful home, while also embracing her American identity. She hosted cookouts for other African American expats and served as a meeting hub for new jazz musicians looking for their start. She spoke English and formed lasting connections with other American artists abroad. Though she was not reported on as often as Baker, she was also an example of what success could look like outside of the United States. Not everyone could become the most famous dancer in the world, but anyone was welcome at Bricktop's.

Another American woman in Paris would establish networks that were built upon in her American identity. Sylvia Beach moved to Paris to study literature but ended up forming lasting connections within the lesbian community in Paris. She maintained a lasting relationship with her partner, French bookseller Adrienne Monnier, and cultivated a business network through her connections with other prominent queer women. She

became friends with Gertrude Stein and Alice Toklas, and attended parties hosted by famous poet and lesbian salon leader Natalie Clifford Barney. Beach published *Ulysses* when all other booksellers refused to due to its homoerotic content, and as a result contributed to the 20<sup>th</sup> century literary landscape in a meaningful way. This only happened because she opened her bookshop, Shakespeare and Company, which was the first English Only bookseller and publisher in Paris at the time.

Sylvia was able make these achievements thanks in part to her life in interwar Paris. Here, she was able to develop social connections with other lesbians such as Barney and Stein that had a profound impact on her success as a businesswoman. She did not need to be married to a man, nor have any prominent male relation to help her open her business. She did not have to adhere to American cultural expectations when publishing the scandalous *Ulysses*. She was able to dress in the masculine styles which she was comfortable in and live together with the woman she loved. In Paris, Beach was able to establish herself as an integral member of the modernist literature movement, and as a prominent member of the queer community in Paris.

These details of her life were often hidden when the media discussed Beach in the United States, however. Perhaps because she was queer, or simply because she was a white woman, Beach was rarely discussed on her own. Stories about her were always tied to a male relative, business connection, or friend. If she was not discussed in terms of her relationship to a man, she was grouped together with her more beautiful and glamorous sister. Details of Beach's life are scant in the media, which may have been an effort to hide her queer identity. It may also be related to her status as a middle-class white woman. There were many cultural expectations placed on white women to be subservient

to their husbands or male relatives, and to take up as little space as possible. Sylvia, however, was a business owner in a pantsuit with a girlfriend who worked next door. She defied these expectations and made no effort to hide her identity from the world. As a result, journalists needed to turn to other, more respectable figures in Beach's life to make her image more digestible for the American public.

Regardless of their differences, each of these women each of these women profoundly contributed to modernist culture in Paris. They all made remarkable contributions to musical and literary culture, whether they were in the forefront or behind the scenes. Baker and Bricktop were able to inspire the African American community at home with their success, while living with the prejudices that still existed within Paris. They became associated with some of the most iconic imagery of interwar Paris. Beach was able to inspire modernist authors and develop deep connections within the queer community that shaped literature in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Though she was not able to inspire queer women at home directly, she was able to promote literature with queer imagery, and make queer stories accessible to the world. She combated the very censorship which sanitized her own identity in American newspapers and helped bring American literature to Paris. Each of these women were able to achieve remarkable things, even in the face of prejudice and cultural expectations that might have limited their ability to do so. Josephine Baker, Bricktop Smith, and Sylvia Beach were able to achieve the American Dream in Paris.

## Bibliography

- "Ala. Victims of Klan found: Arthur Hitt and Family Living in Squalor -- Forced to Sell Farm." *The New York Amsterdam News (1922-1938)*, Aug 10, 1927.  
<http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/ala-victims-klan-found/docview/226249235/se-2>.
- Andrews, Laura. "Lois Mailou Jones: Invisible, Black and Very Successful Against All Odds." *New York Amsterdam News* (1962), 1996.  
[https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN\\_cdi\\_proquest\\_newspapers\\_390168829](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN_cdi_proquest_newspapers_390168829).
- Aswell, James. "My New York," *The Times Leader*. Oct 20, 1936: 16.  
<https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/392456195/?terms=James%20Aswell%20%22My%20New%20York%22%20%22Sylvia%20Beach%22&pqid=ZwvZbCwwgsSCpS-aJdJKFQ%3A340111%3A1033238127&match=1>.
- "AUGUST BIGGEST LYNCHING MONTH, SURVEY REVEALS: WINTER ALWAYS AN OFF SEASON--A LYNCHING EVERY 9 1-3 DAYS IN LAST TWENTY YEARS MONTH OF AUGUST LEADS LYNCHING PARADE." *The Pittsburgh Courier (1911-1950)*, Feb 16, 1935, City Edition.  
<http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/august-biggest-lynching-month-survey-reveals/docview/201994202/se-2>.
- Baker, Jean-Claude, and Chris. Chase. *Josephine: The Hungry Heart*. 1st ed. New York: Random House. 1993.
- Baker, Josephine. *Letter to unknown friend, 1935*. Biblioteque Nationale, Opera.
- Beach, Sylvia. *Harriet Shaw Weaver Papers: Correspondence, literary and business papers. Vol. V (ff. 233)*. Shakespeare and Company, 12 rue de l'Odéon, Paris. 14 November 1927.
- Beach, Sylvia. *Sylvia Beach Papers, Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections*. Princeton Library.
- Bellheimer, Ruth. "After 21 years in Paris, Booklover Still American," *The Pasadena Post*: 23, Aug 1936.  
[https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/622349327/?terms=Be%22After%2021%20years%20in%20Paris%20Booklover%20Still%20American%22&pqid=JjkhT-wCbtwL88w\\_CIsiKw%3A36397%3A311276302&match=1](https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/622349327/?terms=Be%22After%2021%20years%20in%20Paris%20Booklover%20Still%20American%22&pqid=JjkhT-wCbtwL88w_CIsiKw%3A36397%3A311276302&match=1).

- Bergfelder, Tim, Sue Harris, and Sarah Street. "French Cinema in the 1930s." In *Film Architecture and the Transnational Imagination*, 169-224. Amsterdam University Press, 2007.  
[https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN\\_cdi\\_jstor\\_books\\_j\\_ctt46mscn\\_7](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN_cdi_jstor_books_j_ctt46mscn_7).
- Blanc, Maurice, Gérard Noiriel, and Gerard Noiriel. "Le Creuset Français. Histoire De L'immigration, XIXe-XXe Siècles." *Revue Française De Sociologie* 31, no. 3 (1990): 501.  
[https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN\\_cdi\\_crossref\\_primary\\_10\\_2307\\_3322296](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_2307_3322296).
- Beau Danube Bleu, "Revue Josephine Est" (1925); M. Louis Lemarchand, "'Le Folie du Jour': Hyper-Revue a grand spectacle, en deux actes et 45 tableaux," *Aux Folie-Bergere*, 30 April 1925.
- Bidou, Henry. "Au Jour le Jour, Les adieux de Josephine Baker," 1932.
- Blower, Brooke Lindy. 2011. *Becoming Americans in Paris: Transatlantic Politics and Culture Between the World Wars*. New York: Oxford University Press.  
<https://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/990126895160203941/catalog>.
- Boittin, Jennifer Anne. "Black in France." *French Politics, Culture and Society* 27, no. 2 (2009): 23-46. [https://hollis.harvard.edu/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=TN\\_cdi\\_crossref\\_primary\\_10\\_3167\\_fpcs\\_2009\\_270202&context=PC&vid=HVD2&search\\_scope=everything&tab=everything&lang=en\\_US](https://hollis.harvard.edu/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_3167_fpcs_2009_270202&context=PC&vid=HVD2&search_scope=everything&tab=everything&lang=en_US)
- Boittin, Jennifer Anne. *Colonial Metropolis: The Urban Grounds of Anti-Imperialism and Feminism in Interwar Paris*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010. [muse.jhu.edu/book/291](http://muse.jhu.edu/book/291).
- "Book Ulysses was too strong for 9 typists: All quit, husband of one burned copy – Sylvia Beach Tells Story," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Dec 24, 1933.  
<https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/57563496/?terms=%22Book%20Ulysses%20was%20too%20strong%20for%209%20typists%3A%20All%20quit%2C%20husband%20of%20one%20burned%20copy%20%E2%80%93%20Sylvia%20Beach%20Tells%20Story%22&pqid=a-PxnHJZF7aY8w77Wq59PA%3A35989%3A178135485&match=1>.
- Brisacq, Robert *Josephine Baker Casino de Paris*, Dec. 15, 1930, 14.
- "'Bricktop' Gave Party to Friends: Colored American Operates One of Paris' most Popular Clubs." *The New York Amsterdam News (1922-1938)*, Jan 23, 1929.  
<http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/bricktop-gave-party-friends/docview/226184490/se-2>.

- "'Bricktop,' Paris Toast, Guest of Editor Abbott: 'BRICKTOP,' TOAST OF PARIS FETED HERE." *The Chicago Defender (National Edition) (1921-1967)*, Dec 02, 1939. <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/bricktop-paris-toast-guest-editor-abbott/docview/492566601/se-2>.
- "BRICKTOP'S IS RENDEZVOUS IN PARIS: AMERICANS FLOCK TO "THE, PERGOLA" IN SUBURBS OF PAREE." *Afro-American (1893-)*, Jul 25, 1931. <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/bricktops-is-rendezvous-paris/docview/530899188/se-2>.
- Browning, Ivan H. "JOSEPHINE BAKER ON WORLD PREMIERE TOUR: ACTRESS IS STILL EUROPE'S TOAST." *The Chicago Defender (National Edition) (1921-1967)*, Feb 19, 1938. <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/josephine-baker-on-world-premiere-tour/docview/492524426/se-2>.
- Burley, Dan. "Bricktop: The Name on a Thousand Lips: Sorrel-Topped Entertainer Back in States with Story of "Inside Europe's" International Set could have Started a War Long Ago: ---Closeups of Amazing Bricktop." *New York Amsterdam News (1938-1941)*, Nov 25, 1939, City edition. <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/bricktop-name-on-thousand-lips/docview/226219669/se-2>.
- Castan-Vicente, Florys, and Anaïs Bohuon. "Emancipation through Sport? Feminism and Medical Control of the Body in Interwar France." *Sport in History* 40 (2): 235–56. 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17460263.2019.1652845>.
- Chadwick, Whitney, and Tirza True Latimer. *The Modern Woman Revisited: Paris between the Wars*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2003.
- Chapman, Herrick., and Laura Levine Frader. *Race in France : Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Politics of Difference*. New York: Berghahn Books. . 2004.
- "Charleston Negress Declares Herself First Negro Countess," *Thomasville Times Enterprise Newspaper*, June 22, 1927, 3. Proquest historical newspapers database.
- Cooper, Frederick. "Decolonizing Situations." *French Politics, Culture and Society* 20 (2): 47–76. 2002. <https://doi.org/10.3167/153763702782369722>.
- Colin, Paul. *Tumulte Noir*. 1927.
- Collecott, Diana. *H.D. and Sapphic Modernism, 1910-1950*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press. 1999.
- Coquart, Elizabeth. Auteur du texte, and Philippe . Auteur du texte Huet. 1996. *Mistinguett : la reine des années folles / Elizabeth Coquart, Philippe Huet*. Paris. [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN\\_cdi\\_bnf\\_primary\\_oai\\_bnf\\_fr\\_gallica\\_ark\\_12148\\_bpt6k3361314b](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN_cdi_bnf_primary_oai_bnf_fr_gallica_ark_12148_bpt6k3361314b).



- Crenshaw, Kimberle. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics [1989]." *In Feminist Legal Theory*, 57-80. 1st ed. Routledge, 1991. [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN\\_cdi\\_proquest\\_ebookcentralchapters\\_1397287\\_8\\_36](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN_cdi_proquest_ebookcentralchapters_1397287_8_36).
- Dalton, KCC, and HL Gates. "Josephine Baker and Paul Colin: African American Dance Seen through Parisian Eyes." *Critical Inquiry* 24 (4): 903–34. 1998. <https://doi.org/10.1086/448901>.
- Das, Joanna Dee. "Dance That "Suggested Nothing but Itself": Josephine Baker and Abstraction." *Arts (Basel)* 9 (1): 23. 2020. <https://doi.org/10.3390/arts9010023>.
- Django Reinhardt, "Briccktop," 20 June 2019. Youtube Video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cxe1CvIfidU>.
- Doan, Laura L., and Jane Garrity. *Sapphic Modernities: Sexuality, Women, and National Culture*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. <http://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/990100076820203941/catalog>
- Downs, Laura Lee. *Manufacturing Inequality: Gender Division in the French and British Metalworking Industries, 1914-1939*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995. <https://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/990053543500203941/catalog>
- D'Ora, Madame. *Josephine Baker*, Paris. 1920. <http://id.lib.harvard.edu/via/olvwork212730/catalog>.
- Edsall, Nicholas C. *Toward Stonewall*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003. [https://hollis.harvard.edu/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=TN\\_cdi\\_askewsholts\\_vlebooks\\_9780813923963&context=PC&vid=HVD2&search\\_scope=everything&tab=everything&lang=en\\_US](https://hollis.harvard.edu/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=TN_cdi_askewsholts_vlebooks_9780813923963&context=PC&vid=HVD2&search_scope=everything&tab=everything&lang=en_US).
- Egan, Bill. *Florence Mills : Harlem Jazz Queen*. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2004. <https://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/990095241540203941/catalog>.
- Fabre, Michel. *From Harlem to Paris: Black American Writers in France, 1840-1980*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. 1991. <https://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/990021273360203941/catalog>.
- "FORBIDDEN ROMANCE IS GIVEN AS CAUSE OF FLORIDA'S LAST LYNCHING ATROCITY: NAACP INVESTIGATOR IS NARRATOR OF STORY OF REVOLTING LYNCHING PROBE MADE BY YOUNG SOUTHERN WHITE MAN REVEALS MOST GHASTLY DETAILS IN ALL LYNCHING HISTORY; UNBELIEVABLE! CHILDREN EVEN TORTURE VICTIM!" *Atlanta Daily World (1932-)*, Nov 21, 1934. <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/forbidden-romance-is-given-as-cause-floridas-last/docview/490438275/se-2>.

- Frader, Laura Levine. *Breadwinners and Citizens: Gender in the Making of the French Social Model*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008.  
[https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD\\_ALMA512226281880003941](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD_ALMA512226281880003941)
- Garcia, Claire Oberon. "Black Women Writers, Modernism, and Paris." *International Journal of Francophone Studies* 14, no. 1 & 2 (2011): 27-42.  
[https://hollis.harvard.edu/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=TN\\_cdi\\_crossref\\_primary\\_10\\_1386\\_ijfs\\_14\\_1\\_2\\_27\\_1&context=PC&vid=HVD2&search\\_scope=everything&tab=everything&lang=en\\_US](https://hollis.harvard.edu/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1386_ijfs_14_1_2_27_1&context=PC&vid=HVD2&search_scope=everything&tab=everything&lang=en_US)
- Garrity, Jane. "Modernist Women's Writing: Beyond the Threshold of Obsolescence." *Literature Compass* 10 (1): 15–29. 2013. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lic3.12043>.
- Gillett, Rachel. "Jazz and the Evolution of Black American Cosmopolitanism in Interwar Paris." *Journal of World History* 21, no. 3 (2010): 471-95.  
[https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN\\_cdi\\_proquest\\_journals\\_746479451](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_746479451).
- Gillett, Rachel. *At Home in Our Sounds*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021.  
<http://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/99155717279103941/catalog>.
- Goebel, Michael. "Anti-Imperial Metropolis." *Global and International History*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015. <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/lib/harvard-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4007522>
- Gordon, Andrew. *A Modern History of Japan*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2020.
- Green, Nancy L. "(Neither) Expatriates (n)or Immigrants? The American Colony in Paris, 1880-1940," *Transatlantica* 1 (2014).  
<https://doi.org/10.4000/transatlantica.6893>
- Gruber, Graves, PP.M & Bard, C. *Women and Socialism, Socialism and Women: Europe between the two World Wars*. Berghahn Books, 1998.
- Pratt Guterl, Matthew. "Josephine Baker's Banana Skirt." In *The Familiar Made Strange*, 59–69. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. 2017.  
<https://doi.org/10.7591/9780801455469-007>.
- Horak, Laura. *Girls Will Be Boys: Cross-Dressed Women, Lesbians, and American Cinema, 1908-1934*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press. 2016. [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD\\_ALMA512241750110003941](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD_ALMA512241750110003941).
- Haskins, James. *Bricktop*. 1st ed. New York: Atheneum. 1983.  
<https://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/990011358130203941/catalog>.

- Haviland, Ted. "Ten Years made a Lot of Difference in Josephine Baker: The Exotic Dancer of Yesterday is Dead. Today Josephine is Grand Lady." *Afro-American*, 07 Dec 1935. <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/ten-years-made-lot-difference-josephine-baker/docview/531147499/se-2>.
- "Hostess Entertains in Paree--and how!: Ada Smith (Bricktop to Friends) Feeds them Barbecue at Home." *The New York Amsterdam News (1922-1938)*, Jul 22, 1931. <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/hostess-entertains-paree-how/docview/226292816/se-2>.
- Hurewitz, Daniel. 2013. "Banned on Broadway but Coming to a Theater Near You: The Captive and Rethinking the Breadth of American Anti-Lesbian Hostility in the 1920s and '30s." *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 17 (1): 40–55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10894160.2012.683382>.
- Jackson, Jeffrey H. *Making Jazz French: Music and Modern Life in Interwar Paris. American Encounters/global Interactions*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.
- Josephine Baker Performing La Danse Sauvage with Joe Alex. 1925. <http://id.lib.harvard.edu/via/olvwork86309/catalog>
- "Josephine Baker Signs \$10,000 Dance Contract." *The Chicago Defender (National Edition) (1921-1967)*, Feb 18, 1928. <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/josephine-baker-signs-10-000-dance-contract/docview/492161527/se-2>.
- "JOSEPHINE BAKER, STAGE STAR, BECOMES COUNTESS: JOSEPHINE BAKER WEDDED TO COUNT DI ALBERTINI SHE'S A COUNTESS NOW!" *The Chicago Defender (National Edition) (1921-1967)*, Jun 25, 1927. <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/josephine-baker-stage-star-becomes-countess/docview/492140490/se-2>.
- Krebs, Albin . "BRICKTOP, CABARET QUEEN IN PARIS AND ROME, DEAD," *New York Times* (1 Feb. 1984), <https://www.nytimes.com/1984/02/01/obituaries/bricktop-cabaret-queen-in-paris-and-rome-dead.html?smid=url-share>
- Kwaterko, Józef. "Le Nègre Debout »: L'esprit Du Jazz Et Du Blues Chez Les Poètes De La Harlem Renaissance Américaine Et De La Négritude Franco-Caribéenne." *Romanica Cracoviensia* 17, no. 2 (2017): 125-35. [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN\\_cdi\\_proquest\\_journals\\_2056018257](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_2056018257).
- Latimer, Tirza True. 2005. *Women Together/women Apart :portraits of Lesbian Paris*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.

[https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD\\_ALMA512223024720003941](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD_ALMA512223024720003941).

*Le Vie a Paris*. Dec 4, 1937. Gallica Newspaper Database, BnF Digital Library.

Lefas, A. "Le devoir Prime le droit: Devoir d'abord!" *Le Devoir des femmes*, 1935, 1. <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k97133779?rk=21459;2>.

Ligue internationale des femmes pour la paix et la liberté. 1929. Pax international: bulletin mensuel de la Ligue internationale des femmes pour la paix et la liberté. LIFPL (Genève), <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb32834361n>.

Lesselier, Claudia. 1993. "Silenced Resistances and Conflictual Identities." *Journal of Homosexuality* 25 (1-2): 105–25. [https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v25n01\\_08](https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v25n01_08).

Lewis, Mary Dewhurst. 2002. "The Strangeness of Foreigners." *French Politics, Culture and Society* 20 (3): 65–96. <https://doi.org/10.3167/153763702782369632>.

Lewis, Mary Dewhurst. 2007. *The Boundaries of the Republic: Migrant Rights and the Limits of Universalism in France, 1918-1940*. Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press. <https://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/990106430260203941/catalog>.

Lewis, Mary Dewhurst. 2014. *Divided Rule: Sovereignty and Empire in French Tunisia, 1881-1938*. Berkeley: University of California Press. [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD\\_ALMA512500174170003941](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD_ALMA512500174170003941).

"Little Josephine Baker Lauded for Banana Dance in Paris Journal: NICE FESTIVAL OFFICIALS NAME FAVORITE QUEEN Josie Creates Riot in Dance of "the Two Lovers"." *Atlanta World (1931-1932)*, Feb 21, 1932. <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/little-josephine-baker-lauded-banana-dance-paris/docview/490381598/se-2>.

Logan, John R., Weiwei Zhang, Richard Turner, and Allison Shertzer. 2015. "Creating the Black Ghetto: Black Residential Patterns before and During the Great Migration." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 660 (1): 18–35. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716215572993>.

Mann, Gregory. "Locating Colonial Histories: Between France and West Africa." *The American Historical Review* 110, no. 2 (2005): 409-34. [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN\\_cdi\\_proquest\\_miscellaneous\\_38123839](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1mdq5o5/TN_cdi_proquest_miscellaneous_38123839).

Martin, Lowry. "Seeing Queerly: The Emergence of Lesbian Visual Codes in Interwar Paris." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 14, no. 2-3 (2008): 434-36. [https://hollis.harvard.edu/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=TN\\_cdi\\_crossref\\_primary\\_10\\_1215\\_10642684\\_2007\\_](https://hollis.harvard.edu/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1215_10642684_2007_)

043&context=PC&vid=HVD2&search\_scope=everything&tab=everything&lang=en\_US.

McBrinn, Joseph. 2017. "Queer Hobbies: Ernest Thesiger and Interwar Embroidery." *Textile: The Journal of Cloth and Culture* 15 (3): 292–323. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14759756.2017.1294827>.

McMahan, Matthew. "'Let Me See You Dance': Ada 'Bricktop' Smith, the Charleston, and Racial Commodification in Interwar France." *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 29, no. 2 (2015): 43-61. <https://doi.org/10.1353/dtc.2015.0005>.

McMullin, John. "Features: A Night in Paris." *Vogue*, Jun 01, 1927, 49-49, 50, 51, 52, 150, <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/magazines/features-night-paris/docview/879186571/se-2>.

McVeigh, Rory. 2009. *The Rise of the Ku Klux Klan : Right-Wing Movements and National Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/11qd3jo/01HVD\\_ALMA512228113650003941](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/11qd3jo/01HVD_ALMA512228113650003941).

McWhirter, Cameron. 2011. *Red Summer : the Summer of 1919 and the Awakening of Black America*. 1st ed. New York, N.Y.: Henry Holt & Co.

"Mistinguett, Josephine Baker, Chevalier, St-Granier, La Goulue seront reunis por toujours...dans l'une des scenes du nouveau Musee de Cire don't Paris va etre dote," *Paris Noir*, Oct 25, 1930. Gallica Newspaper Database, BnF Digital Library.

"Mistinguett Attended by Her Servant," *Vogue*. October 1926. <http://id.lib.harvard.edu/via/olvwork156042/catalog>.

"Moulin Rouge Dancers Deny they were III-Treated while in Paris, France: Up in Arms about Statement Appearing in Last Issue of an Out of Town Paper Seeking Entry in New York City." *The New York Amsterdam News (1922-1938)*, Apr 01, 1925. <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/moulin-rouge-dancers-deny-they-were-iii-treated/docview/226267693/se-2>.

Monahan, Patrick. "To Bricktop, On Her Belated Birthday," *The Paris Review* (15 Aug. 2011), <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2011/08/15/to-bricktop-on-her-belated-birthday>.

Noiriel, Gérard. 1988. *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?: le vivre ensemble à la française: réflexions d'un historien*. Montrouge: Bayard. [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/11qd3jo/HVD\\_RECAPSCSB-8326400](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/11qd3jo/HVD_RECAPSCSB-8326400).

"PARIS MUSIC HALL GIRLS DANCE NUDE: JOSEPHINE BAKER'S COSTUME TWO TUFTS OF FEATHERS AT FOLIES WEST INDIAN AND FRENCH

GIRL NEARLY NUDE FEATURE BAL DE L'OPERA." *Afro-American*, Jul 23, 1927. <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/paris-music-hall-girls-dance-nude/docview/530643377/se-2>.

“Paris No Place for a Minister’s Daughter? Nonsense! Just See What Great Things the Pretty Beach Sisters Have Accomplished Since They Left Their Parson Papa for the Boulevards,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 11, 1923 (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, US), 97.2  
<https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/27051109/?terms=No%20place%20for%20a%20minister%27s%20daughter&pqid=a-PxnHJZF7aY8w77Wq59PA%3A216404%3A696961500&match=1>.

Parti Communiste Francais - Propaganda poster of man with family, circa 1923.  
<https://bibliotheques-specialisees.paris.fr/ark:/73873/pf0000937964>.

Peabody, Sue, and Tyler Edward Stovall. *The Color of Liberty: Histories of Race in France*. Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2003.  
[https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/11qd3jo/01HVD\\_ALMA512226287860003941](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/11qd3jo/01HVD_ALMA512226287860003941).

Phillips-Cunningham, Danielle. 2020. *Putting Their Hands on Race : Irish Immigrant and Southern Black Domestic Workers, 1850-1940*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.  
<https://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/99153867988703941/catalog>.

Preacher's Son Now Jazziest of Band Leaders in Paris: Son of Methodist Minister Got Early Music Training in Church. Today He is on Top of the World in Paris." *Afro-American (1893-)*, Sep 01, 1928. <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/preachers-son-now-jazziest-band-leaders-paris/docview/530696848/se-2>.

Rand, Erin J. *Reclaiming Queer: Activist & Academic Rhetorics of Resistance*. Tuscaloosa, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press. 2014.

Read, Geoff. *The Republic of Men*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press. 2014.  
[https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/11qd3jo/01HVD\\_ALMA512228876750003941](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/11qd3jo/01HVD_ALMA512228876750003941).

Roberts, Mary Louise. *Civilization without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender In Postwar France, 1917-1927*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994. <https://hdl-handle-net.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/2027/heb00495.0001.001>.

Robertson, Stephen, Shane White, and Stephen Garton. 2013. “Harlem in Black and White.” *Journal of Urban History* 39 (5): 864–80.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0096144213479309>.

Roman LdC, “Josephine Baker Banana Dance,” Youtube Video. September 12, 2013.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9jNCm6CVV0>.

- Rogers, J. A. "The American Negro in Paris: Tuskegee Teacher Led Class in French." *The New York Amsterdam News (1922-1938)*, Sep 21, 1927. <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/american-negro-paris/docview/226407610/se-2>.
- Rosenberg, Clifford D. *Policing Paris: The Origins of Modern Immigration Control Between the Wars*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press. 2006.
- Sauvage, Marcel. *Voyages et aventures de Josephine Baker*. Paris: M. Seheur. 1931.
- Scales, Rebecca P. *Radio and the Politics of Sound in Interwar France, 1921–1939*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2016. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316258156>.
- Sharpley-Whiting, T. Denean. *Bricktop's Paris : African American Women in Paris Between the Two World Wars*. Albany: State University of New York Press. 2015.
- Sharpley-Whiting, T. Denean, Silyane Larcher, and Felix F. Germain. *Black French Women and the Struggle for Equality, 1848-2016*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. 2018. [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD\\_ALMA512279006910003941](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD_ALMA512279006910003941).
- Smith, Paul. 1996. *Feminism and the Third Republic : Women's Political and Civil Rights in France, 1918-1945*. Oxford: Clarendon. [https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD\\_ALMA512228210240003941](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1lqd3jo/01HVD_ALMA512228210240003941).
- Spaulding, C. "Spaulding Finds no Dogs Around Paris Garbage Cans: Animals Know there is Nothing in Street Waste Receptacles North Carolina Mutual Head in Interview with J. A. Rogers, the AFRO'S Paris Correspondent, Learns that there are 56,000,000 Colored Frenchmen. Wine Costs 8 Cents a Quart. Thirty Thousand White Americans Live in Paris. Stores Open on Sunday. City has 20 Daily Newspapers. MY TRIP TO EUROPE." *Afro-American (1893-)*, Jul 04, 1931. <http://search.proquest.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/historical-newspapers/spaulding-finds-no-dogs-around-paris-garbage-cans/docview/530897408/se-2>.
- Stephenson, Andrew. 2016. "‘Our Jolly Marin Wear’: The Queer Fashionability of the Sailor Uniform in Interwar France and Britain." *Fashion, Style & Popular Culture* 3 (2): 157–72. [https://doi.org/10.1386/fspc.3.2.157\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/fspc.3.2.157_1).
- Stovall, Tyler Edward. *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996.
- Stovall, Tyler. 2015. *Transnational France: The Modern History of a Universal Nation*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

- “Sylvia Beach awarded French Legion of Honor by Romaines,” *The Pasadena Post*, Mar 14, 1937, 10.  
<https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/622337725/?terms=%22Sylvia%20Beach%22%20&pqid=ZwvZbCwwgsSCpS-aJdJKFQ%3A134604%3A942849031&match=1>.
- Terretta, Meredith. 2018. “‘In the Colonies, Black Lives Don’t Matter.’ Legalism and Rights Claims Across the French Empire.” *Journal of Contemporary History* 53 (1): 12–37. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022009416688258>.
- “The Talk of New York,” *The Oakland Tribune*, Nov 2, 1923, 23.  
<https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/96389103/?terms=%22The%20Talk%20of%20New%20York%22%20&pqid=a-PxnHJZF7aY8w77Wq59PA%3A402472%3A658761603&match=1>.
- Underwood, Nick. 2016. “Aron Beckerman's City of Light: Writing French History and Defining Immigrant Jewish Space in Interwar Paris.” *Urban History* 43 (4): 618–34. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S096392681500084X>.
- Waléry. Josephine Baker, *La Folie Du Jour*, Paris, 1926.
- Wigger, Iris. 2010. “‘Black Shame’ — the Campaign Against ‘racial Degeneration’ and Female Degradation in Interwar Europe.” *Race & Class* 51 (3): 33–46.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0306396809354444>.
- Wilder, Gary. *The French Imperial Nation-State: Negritude & Colonial Humanism Between the Two World Wars*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- Wilkerson, Isabel. *The Warmth of Other Suns: the Epic Story of America's Great Migration*. New York: Random House, 2010.  
<https://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/99155754421403941/catalog>
- Williams, Chad Louis. *Torchbearers of Democracy: African American Soldiers in World War I Era*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 2010.  
[https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1s5nto6/01HVD\\_ALMA512444143920003941](https://hollis.harvard.edu/permalink/f/1s5nto6/01HVD_ALMA512444143920003941).
- Winning, Joanne. “‘Ezra through the Open Door’: The Parties of Natalie Barney, Adrienne Monnier and Sylvia Beach as Lesbian Modernist Cultural Production.” In *The Modernist Party*, 127–46. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 2022.  
<https://doi.org/10.1515/9780748647323-010>.
- Winning, Joanne. “Sapphist in the City: Lesbian Modernist Paris and Sapphic Modernism.” In *Sapphic Modernities: Sexuality, Women, and National Culture*, 19-35. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2006.