CHAPTER THREE

Modernists Explain Things to Me

COLLECTING AS QUEER FEMINIST RESPONSE

WHEN MARGARET ANDERSON and Jane Heap decided to close the *Little Review*, the profoundly influential modernist little magazine they coedited from 1914 to 1929, they made plans to publish an unconventional final issue.[1] Something different; something unexpected. But for a magazine that had published some of the most daringly experimental literature ever written, what could possibly qualify as unconventional? In the course of its fifteen-year run, the *Little Review* had published an astonishing number of the writers now associated with high modernism: Sherwood Anderson, Djuna Barnes, H.D., T. S. Eliot, Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, James Joyce, Ernest Hemingway, Amy Lowell, Mina Loy, Gertrude Stein, and William Carlos Williams, among others. Given such visionary editorship, it is perhaps surprising that what they decided to pursue for the magazine's final issue was not really literature at all. Instead, in Anderson's words, they solicited a collection of life writing from "the artists of the world."[2] As advertised in the cover's top right corner, the issue promised "confessions and letters": "more than fifty of the foremost men in the arts tell the truth about themselves in this number."[3] To set this truth-telling in motion, Anderson and Heap designed a questionnaire. The issue itself was comprised of responses to the following:

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What should you most like to do, to know, to be? (In case you are not satisfied.)
2. Why wouldn't you change places with any other human being?

3. What do you look forward to?
4. What do you fear most from the future?
5. What has been the happiest moment of your life? (If you care to tell.)
6. What do you consider your weakest characteristics? Your strongest? What do you like most about yourself? Dislike most?
7. What things do you really like? Dislike? (Nature, people, ideas, objects, etc. Answer in a phrase or a page, as you will.)
8. What is your attitude toward art to-day?
9. What is your world view? (Are you a reasonable being in a reasonable scheme?)
10. Why do you go on living?[4]

Rather than solicit new voices for a conversation about future literary and artistic production, they asked established artists to assess the recent past by answering these ten questions. Most of the questions assume a retrospective position, an understanding of oneself as having passed one's prime and entered a more mature, or even late, period. The phrasing of the second question—"Why wouldn't you change places with any other human being?"—makes the arguably outrageous assumption that none of the polled artists *would* consider trading places with anyone else. And the eighth question—"What is your attitude toward art to-day?"—practically invites a kids-these-days response of condescending dismissal. Yet despite a few questions so bland one would not be surprised to encounter them in Anderson's midwestern high school yearbook, the questionnaire ends with a characteristically caustic bang: "Why do you go on living?" Responses varied widely in content and form. Some, like Djuna Barnes, declined to address the questions at all except to disparage them. Others, like Dorothy Richardson, answered at length. In a pair of farewell editorials, Anderson and Heap addressed their own questions indirectly. Heap described the decision to end the *Little Review* as an inevitable consequence of answering some of the questions herself: "It is a matter for speculation whether anyone who has tried to get at real answers would dash into print with the results. I at least am keeping my answers for my own use and enlightenment."[5] And Anderson, too, noted her weariness of sanctimonious assertions about the artist's ability to transform the world: "I am not interested at the moment in transformation. I want a little illumination."[6] Their long-standing faith in the transformative social power of aesthetic experimentation and provocation had dimmed. To seek "illumination" is a fundamentally different mission—a more humble, if no less necessary, task. At the end of their editorial run, their questions for their long-standing

contributors were largely retrospective in nature. The last issue of a journal devoted to experimental fiction was filled with writing about people's actual lives: what they had done, what they were doing now, what they wanted to do eventually.

For Anderson, the closing of the *Little Review* marked an important transition in her intellectual trajectory. Although she had already turned over the editorship of the magazine to Heap in 1923, it was only after this last issue was published in 1929 that she fully made the biographical turn that would characterize the rest of her literary production. As it turned out, after putting together that final number, she would spend the rest of her life preoccupied by various forms of life writing—not only about her life but about the lives of her closest friends and companions. But her *Little Review* days would reverberate throughout the years to come. She had spent the first portion of her life as an editor who, in Jessa Crispin's appropriately illuminating description, "hung the transatlantic wire that allowed electricity to flow between worlds, allowed French literature to influence American, British to influence Russian."[7] She had been convicted of obscenity after publishing portions of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, and she was directly responsible for the initial publication of much of what we now consider canonical modernist literature. Her significance to the history and development of transatlantic modernism is hard to overstate, yet it is often devalued. We have no biography of Margaret Anderson. A collection of her letters has not been published. She is present only tangentially in the biographical, cultural, and literary histories of the early twentieth century. And while this is equally true of someone like the poet and novelist Hope Mirrlees, who most often appears in contemporary scholarship through a series of footnotes and brief references in work primarily focused on other modernist writers, the ongoing devaluation of Anderson's work—editorial and otherwise—is still shocking.

Or perhaps it is not shocking at all. As Sarah Blackwood has argued, editing remains a form of undertheorized and underappreciated intellectual "carework."[8] While she acknowledges that literary history is rife with examples of editing as a masculine expression of mastery, connoisseurship, curation, or power struggle, Blackwood ultimately suggests that the "often invisible" editorial process should more often be considered a form of service work, and that, especially when that work is performed by women (as service work so often is), it is routinely devalued in favor of narratives of individual productivity and irrepressible genius. Editorial labor is carework precisely because, when done well, it is "often erased *in the very moment* of its acknowledgment: think here of the author of a

monograph thanking those who have made this 'great work' possible. The more aligned editing becomes with feminized worlds of teaching, service, and care, the less cultural capital such work accrues."[9] In Blackwood's account, editorial labor and other forms of collaborative intellectual work are routinely devalued, to the ongoing detriment of women in particular, by the dominant "strictures of liberal individualist understandings of authorship."[10] These observations about the gendered misrecognition of contemporary editorial practices have a long history. As Jayne E. Marek details in *Women Editing Modernism: "Little" Magazines & Literary History*, the contributions of women editors and publishers to modernist literary history are routinely minimized: "discussions of women's work are usually predicated upon the work of associated men, or upon the assumption that women's accomplishments occurred in spite of their personalities rather than because of them."[11] And even when women's editorial, archival, and other paraliterary work is recognized as constituting a significant contribution to modernist literary history, the literary and artistic projects of women—unlike those of T. S. Eliot or Ezra Pound, for example, who were also important editors—are often relegated to the minor and considered less worthy of sustained attention. In this light, it is unsurprising that even Crispin, founding editor of the online literary magazines Bookslut .com and Spoilamag.com and author of a literary memoir purportedly devoted to modernism's "dead ladies," tempers her praise of Anderson's inspired editorial work by prefacing it with the disclaimer that Anderson "produced no important writing of her own."[12]

This chapter is about three women who are commonly understood to have produced no important writing of their own: Margaret Anderson, Sylvia Beach, and Alice B. Toklas. An editor, a bookseller-turned-publisher, and a secretary-companion. They are minor figures, in the sense that most people learn about these women through their relationships with other, more major modernist writers: Anderson as the editor of the *Little Review*, Beach as the self-proclaimed "midwife" of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, and Toklas as the "wife" of Gertrude Stein. But without denigrating the significance of these relationships, what happens if we recenter these women? Not just in terms of their significance to the history of Anglo-American modernist cultural production in interwar Paris but because of their midcentury contributions to what Kate Zambreno has recently referred to as the "modernist memory project."[13] What can we learn from what they themselves produced?

With this recentering in mind, the structure of this chapter acknowledges and continues a model of life writing that has been particularly

influential within the history of queer feminist cultural production: the compilation and juxtaposition of three women's lives. To take just a few examples: Gertrude Stein's first published book, *Three Lives* (1909), contains the stories "The Good Anna," "Melanctha," and "The Gentle Lena." Feminist writer and activist Kate Millet's only documentary feature film, *Three Lives* (1971), which was produced by an all-woman crew, focuses on the reminiscences of three women: Millet's sister, Mallory Millet-Jones; chemist Lillian Shreve; and artist Robin Mide. And Lisa Cohen's *All We Know: Three Lives* (2012) performs the dramatic recovery of Esther Murphy, Mercedes de Acosta, and Madge Garland, three women who, in very different ways, were adjacent to modernist cultural production but are frequently forgotten by contemporary modernist studies. While the first two chapters of this book were each devoted to a pair of passion projects—the intimate archives of Una Troubridge and Sylvia Townsend Warner; the failed biographies attempted by Djuna Barnes and Hope Mirrlees—this chapter takes the shape of a triangle. In calling attention to this shape, I do not mean to suggest the dramatic messiness we might expect from the "love triangles" of Radclyffe Hall, Valentine Ackland, and others. Instead, taking my cue from Geometry 101, I read this triangle as a strong formation, one that is difficult to break and, with any luck, impossible to ignore.

This chapter's triangle contains the lives—and life writing—of Anderson, Beach, and Toklas. While the relative "importance" of their prose may be the subject of ongoing debate or casual dismissal, each of these three women published and otherwise prepared substantial biographical acts in the middle decades of the twentieth century. These memoirs of the so-called Lost Generation—Anderson's *My Thirty Years' War* (1930), Beach's *Shakespeare and Company* (1959), and Toklas's *What Is Remembered* (1963)—garnered generally positive reviews in most major publications, though their reviewers tended to assert their historical rather than literary value. Largely anecdotal in nature, these books are frequently considered to have been compiled rather than written, edited rather than created. In each case, the extensive labor of their editorial "carework" is elided and rendered invisible.

Beyond their published books, these women were also each actively, if differently, arranging for the preservation of their collections of modernist literature, artwork, and ephemera. As Sean Latham and Gayle Rogers have detailed, part of modernism's midcentury consolidation relied upon the "aggressive campaign [of institutions such as the Harry Ransom Center, the Yale Collection of American Literature, the University of Buffalo, and the University of Tulsa] to collect the archives of modernist

writers."[14] And in *Collecting as Modernist Practice*, Jeremy Braddock has argued that, especially during this period, collecting was a "mode of public engagement modeling future . . . relationships between audience and artwork."[15] Braddock is most interested in thinking about art collections (that were privately collected but publicly exhibited) and what he calls "interventionist" literary anthologies, but his theory of collecting as public engagement provides a useful frame for understanding the modernist collections of Beach, Anderson, and Toklas. Furthermore, taking into account Braddock's convincing description of a "collecting aesthetic" as "one of the paradigmatic forms of modernist art," I suggest that this is what we see in the midcentury memoirs compiled by the women in this chapter.[16] Each of these books is, essentially, a textual collection: an edited group of fragmented anecdotes, a gathering together of pieces of our literary past in an effort to shape our future reception of it.

This chapter considers these projects—life writing and collecting—together, in inextricable relation to one another, as the consuming passion projects of each woman's late period. In this triangulated reading, the life writing and collecting of Anderson, Beach, and Toklas are late genres that preserve a counterhistory of modernism grounded in women's lives. During the same midcentury moment that the first histories of modernism were published—histories that established the overwhelmingly masculine modernist canon that, despite our best efforts, still persists today—these biographical acts demonstrate queer women's resistance to their own impending marginalization and even exclusion from the dominant narratives of late twentieth-century literary history.

Modernism's Midwife: Sylvia Beach's Unfinished Jobs

Before returning to an extended discussion of the passion projects that dominated Margaret Anderson's late period, I first turn to the more well-known figure of Sylvia Beach. Famous both for founding Shakespeare and Company, her bohemian bookstore in interwar Paris, and for publishing James Joyce's *Ulysses* when no one else would, Beach had by 1925 become, in literary critic Eugene Jolas's estimation, "probably the best known woman in Paris" and "certainly one of the most important figures in contemporary letters."[17] From that height of literary celebrity, Beach's profile slowly faded over the years. Her Shakespeare and Company never reopened after World War II, and she never published anyone other than Joyce. But she had published modernism's most scandalous novel, hung out with Hemingway, met "the ladies with high collars and monocles" at

Natalie Barney's salon, and refused to sell her last copy of *Finnegans Wake* to a Nazi.[18] By the middle of the century, she had stories to tell.

And tell them she did. In 1959, four years after the suicide of her partner, Adrienne Monnier, Beach—then seventy-two years old—published *Shakespeare and Company*, a collection of remembrances and vignettes about the years she spent at the helm of the Left Bank bookstore and lending library of the same name. She had begun the work many years earlier, at least in part because she hoped she might make some money out of it (remember that publishing Joyce almost destroyed her, financially), but it was slow going, especially as Monnier's health grew worse and she required constant care. The project took many years. In Princeton University's collection of Sylvia Beach Papers, a nearly blank notebook labeled "Notes for Memoirs" contains the following set of questions and answers:

Questions	*Answers*
What about your memoirs? . . .	Working on 'em —
When do you think they'll be finished? . . .	Dunno—
When are they coming out? . . .	When they're finished—
Do you think they'll ever be finished? . . .	I wonder—
Aren't they just about finished? . . .	I guesso—[19]

The possibility that she would never finish the book certainly seems to have crossed her mind. The tone of this miniature self-interview is playful, even mocking, a literary version of Abbott and Costello's "Who's on first?" routine. But its circularity is also darkly Beckettian, its structure resonant with the now infamous last lines of *The Unnamable*: "I can't go on. I'll go on."[20] What's more, her questions betray an anxious uncertainty about the status of a properly finished work. She avows that they will come out "when they're finished," but when asked about when that will be, she replies in three different ways that each refuse the idea that the question has a stable premise: "Dunno—," "I wonder—," "I guesso—," all followed by dashes that extend her ongoing difficulties in finishing the project down to the granular, grammatical level of the sentence itself. What does it mean to call something finished? How does one know when to stop finishing it? Her reluctance to answer such questions once helped to produce the final form of *Ulysses*, as Beach famously allowed Joyce to continue making changes to the novel throughout several sets of proofs. Why should she

hold herself to a different philosophical standard regarding the hairline difference between finished and unfinished work?

Still, after Monnier's death, she seemed to feel an increased responsibility to complete the book, even going so far as to suggest, in an unpublished, undated manuscript page, that finishing it had become her primary reason for living:

> Can see no remedy at all for the swooping down of death on someone you love. What preceeds [*sic*] it for a long or short time and the ridiculous ceremonies however simplified accompanying the internment of "deceased", the regrets rightly termed "eternal", the realization that the person is gone for good, without giving you another chance to do things better and not be so inattentive to what's really important—yet you were given plenty of time—years to improve!
>
> Maybe—surely she had something more to disclose if you had listened closer.
>
> This feeling of incompleteness is one of death's worst cruelties. Sometimes you wish you had left with her as she suggested—she knew what living without her was going to be like. She knew everything—Adrienne.
>
> But leaving my jobs unfinished, I seemed to feel it important to tidy up before going—why were years not enough to clear away rubbish—why and how and when and where did it accumulate? Been playing around all my life—butterflying and skimming—"vierges folles."[21]

Though filed in with other undated drafts of *Shakespeare and Company*, this heartbreaking page never made it into the published text. Like Toklas's *What Is Remembered*, which ends with Stein's death in 1946, Beach's book ends with Hemingway's "liberation" of Shakespeare and Company (and then "the cellar at the Ritz") at the end of World War II.[22] Though *Shakespeare and Company* does begin with an autobiographical sketch of Beach's childhood and adolescence before she moved to Paris, it abruptly stops without a similarly autobiographical conclusion covering the years between the end of the war and the book's eventual publication. The story stops, but Beach's life went on, and the absence of this continued narrative imparts a "feeling of incompleteness" entirely separate from "the swooping down of death." Instead of writing about those years, Beach chose to formalize that feeling, to stay behind after Adrienne's death and publish the book after tidying up, after clearing up, but before actually finishing it. That "feeling of incompleteness" haunts even the "finished," published version of *Shakespeare and Company*.

Yet though initial reviews were positive, and the book remains in print, Beach's formal and stylistic choices have been all but ignored. Just as Beach is most commonly remembered as merely the "midwife" of *Ulysses*, her memoir is usually valued for its content—for what it can tell us about the lives of canonical modernist figures like Joyce, Hemingway, Pound, and Stein—rather than as a deliberate formal experiment in its own right. So what do we see if we shift our focus onto the form of *Shakespeare and Company*?

An early critic called it "a charming, gay astringent scrapbook," and this description of *Shakespeare and Company* as a "scrapbook" rather than a more conventional autobiography is sound.[23] As Ellen Gruber Garvey argues in another context, scrapbooks could serve as "adjuncts to professional careers," contribute to the material culture of fandom, or, in a more political vein, allow "people in positions of relative powerlessness" to make "a place for themselves and their communities by finding, sifting, analyzing, and recirculating writing that mattered to them."[24] If we look closely at *Shakespeare and Company*, we see a book in which the artistic work of the disenfranchised modernist author may be reimagined as curation rather than creation. It is full of personal anecdotes, quotations from letters, annotated photographs, hand-drawn cartoons and other images, and reproductions of significant manuscript pages and publications.

In his introduction to the most recent edition, James Laughlin describes Beach's compositional strategy like this: she "put the name of a person or a topic at the head of the page and then type[d] in what was remembered about him or it. No need to worry about structure or chronology."[25] This is somewhat of a caricature. Beach's volume moves in a roughly chronological order from her childhood adoration of Paris to her settlement there after World War I all the way through to Hemingway's return to the Left Bank. But Laughlin is correct that Beach didn't worry all that much about a strict structure: in a letter to a friend, the infamous modernist patron, editor, and political activist Harriet Shaw Weaver, she explained (too hard on herself, as usual) that she was "given to dwell endlessly on something of no importance, then rattle along in an airy way when [she] should be paying attention."[26] Like Alice B. Toklas and Margaret Anderson, as we shall see, Beach was drawn toward the anecdotal mode as that which falls somewhere between the literary and the historical, between the pliable whimsy of fantasy and the uncontroversial hardness of fact.

The anecdote thus opens up the possibility of composition as curation rather than creation. I am suggesting, here, that Beach—like Anderson,

Toklas, and so many of the other women in this book—was working in a late archival mode of artistic production. She was trying to get it right, trying to tell the story of her life as an American expat in literary Paris. It was the story of modernism's "Lost Generation," most obviously, but it was also *her* story, *her* bookshop, *her* partnership with Monnier (to whom the fragmented memoir was eventually dedicated) that would be preserved in its pages. She was sometimes frustrated by the corrections several well-meaning friends made to her drafts, especially after her publishers decided to put out a small portion of her work-in-progress as a "Christmas gift book" in 1956. Titled *Ulysses in Paris*, it, like the eventually completed memoir, would be considered a book about Joyce, not about Beach. In a letter to Weaver, who had written to correct an "erroneous account" published in this excerpted text, Beach responded, in what I can only imagine is an exasperated tone, that she "should never have written memoirs without a memory" and that she should probably have Joseph Prescott, the Joyce scholar who was then working through her private collection, finish them for her. "He," she went on, "is a walking file cabinet, everything neatly in its place."[27]

Beach understood that she herself wasn't exactly a "walking file cabinet," but at the same time, she was rapidly transforming her home into something remarkably akin to a file cabinet. During the years in which she worked on her memoir, she was actually working on two other major archival and curatorial projects. First, aware of her advancing age, she was busy "making a minute catalogue" of her library in order to arrange for its sale and preservation: "I have been hurrying myself a bit these last weeks," she wrote, "slicking up my memoirs and cataloguing or at least trying to, some of my library which might have to be moved across the Atlantic one of these days. This is a job I would have preferred to do after, not during, the one on my book, but owing to circumstances I had no choice."[28] This "cataloguing" work makes her not only the publisher of *Ulysses* but also one of the first and most crucial Joyceans, as much of the Joyce material available at SUNY Buffalo today has survived because of Beach's dedicated preservation efforts.[29] Second, she assisted the U.S. Embassy in Paris with the preparation of a monumental 1959 exhibit about the expat writers of the 1920s called "The Twenties: American Writers and Their Friends in Paris." By all accounts, this exhibit could not have taken place without Beach's willingness to loan out her personal collection: nearly all of the six hundred items displayed belonged to her.[30]

In Beach's late career, we thus recognize the cultivation and demonstration of an archival consciousness. In the last few years of her

life—what she called her "official period"[31]—she was (a) writing a memoir, (b) "cataloguing" her massive archive of literary material, and (c) curating a major cultural exhibit filled with artifacts from her personal collection. In this chapter, and in this book as a whole, I suggest that we must understand these activities as interrelated modes of turning years of personal witness into public testimony and commentary. This is the act of collection, of curation—rather than creation and innovation—as modernist artistic work.

So, Sylvia Beach: collector, curator, chronicler of modernism. Given this frame, it is no wonder that her name has come to stand for not only Shakespeare and Company but Shakespeare, Joyce, Hemingway, Stein, and Company. Although Beach's memoirs, letters, and surviving archive are mined more for evidence about Joyce and other major writers than for information about Beach's own life, the story of Beach and Monnier's relationship is legible to us today in large part because their story was preserved in the larger narrative of the artistically renowned bohemian community in which they lived and worked. Her stories about Joyce dominate the pages of her published memoir, but her long companionship with Monnier is quietly and casually evident on nearly every page—and on so many of the pages edited out of the initial publication, like that mournful description of how she remained alive after Monnier's death only to "tidy up." In the published book, Monnier is everywhere: in the index, the only list of entries longer than the list of entries about Joyce is the list about Monnier. The first bookstore described in its pages is not her own but "the little gray bookshop of A. Monnier."[32] And her description of their first interaction demands more (though not much more!) than surface reading:

> I was disguised in a Spanish cloak and hat, but Adrienne knew at once that I was American. "I like America very much," she said. I replied that I liked France very much. And, as our future collaboration proved, we meant it.[33]

Throughout the rest of the book, Beach moves casually between a singular and plural first-person perspective. In a section titled "The Thirties," for example, a single paragraph contains the following lines: "Many of my friends had gone home. . . . But we still had a few of our best friends around the Quarter, at least for a time."[34] Monnier's name does not appear anywhere on this page. But she is still unmistakably present, the inextricable other part of the "we" Beach uses throughout the book.

Furthermore, it is not just their relationship that she preserved in her book's pages. Reading *Shakespeare and Company* today, even in its

condensed, edited form, reveals the many ways in which Beach collected the names of so many modernist women writers who were being slowly forgotten as male scholars left them out of their accounts of the period. For example, marking the death of Mary Butts, she notes that "all of her books that had appeared disappeared, too; they seemed to go out of print after she died."[35] And in writing about the singular literary genius of Djuna Barnes, she reminds her readers that "she doesn't seem to have been given her due in books on writers of the period. Certainly she was one of the most talented and, I think, one of the most fascinating literary figures in the Paris of the twenties."[36] I could go on: years before feminist literary critics began the important work of recovery and reclamation that continues today, there was, speckled throughout Beach's memoir, a collection of small but insistent notes about Natalie Barney, Bryher, Radclyffe Hall, Mina Loy, Katherine Anne Porter, Gertrude Stein, Alice B. Toklas, "Saint Harriet" Weaver, and other modernist women writers and artists. This is collection as modernist practice, yes, but it is also collection as a specifically queer feminist modernist practice.

If, as Ann Cvetkovich cautions, the queer "archive of feelings" is comprised of ephemeral, unpublished, even unfinished "objects that might not normally be considered archival," then we must learn to think about the queer modernist archive differently.[37] What have we inherited, and from whom? Who has been disinherited in the process of preserving the archive of literary modernism? The question of what is in any given collection of archival evidence is only ever the first question. Who did the collecting, and why? Who collected this as evidence of what, exactly, and whose stories are rendered invisible? Part of our work now, in relation to the fragmented archival present of modernism's queer feminist history, is to learn to recognize—and thus, in a way, inherit—the collections undertaken, if not fully published or wholly preserved, by the women we might think of (with reference to Sara Ahmed's powerful formulation) as the aging killjoys of our past.

The Queer Disinheritance of Alice B. Toklas

In this section, I address the life and late work of someone we might think of as having been rendered invisible in plain sight: Alice B. Toklas. If you've read any Gertrude Stein, the odds are good that you've picked up *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, the 1933 best seller written "as if by her secretary-companion."[38] Surely, you might think, someone immortalized in Stein's most well-read book does not require recovery? Her infamous recipe

for "Haschich Fudge" notwithstanding, however, the odds are substantially less good that you've read any of Toklas's own writing.[39] We know that Toklas wrote many, many letters during and after her long relationship with Stein. Despite repeated suggestions from her friends, however, she refused to write anything like a memoir for some time after Stein's death in 1946, reasoning that she didn't need to do it because "Gertrude did my autobiography and it's done."[40] Eventually, in 1954, she published *The Alice B. Toklas Cookbook*, which was followed four years later by *Aromas and Flavors of Past and Present* (another cookbook, though she later distanced herself from this one due to editorial squabbles), and finally, in 1963, she published *What Is Remembered*.[41] This last title is, in fact, a memoir—during the process of composition, it had several titles, including *Conversations with Miss Toklas* and *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas by Alice B. Toklas*.[42] Yet despite the fact that Toklas had outlived Stein by many years, *What Is Remembered* ends abruptly with Stein's death. The last sentence? "Then the whole afternoon was troubled, confused and very uncertain, and later in the afternoon they took her away on a wheeled stretcher to the operating room and I never saw her again."[43] Like Beach's *Shakespeare and Company*, the end of Toklas's book feels like an abrupt interruption, an incomplete ending. It is as though Toklas's life—her real life, her reportable life—ended at the moment of Stein's death, and that is so often how we continue to think of Toklas: either with Stein or not at all. But of course Toklas's life did not end with Stein's, and, in this section, I want to call attention to the way our literary inheritance of Stein depends upon the material disinheritance of Toklas. Given this queer disinheritance, I suggest that Toklas's midcentury life writing signals not only an unsuccessful attempt to salvage her dwindling finances but an extralegal, affective claim on Stein's estate and legacy. If we tend to only remember Toklas now as Stein's partner, this writing insists that we remember their relationship as an actual, if not necessarily equal, partnership.

After a lifetime as Stein's "secretary-companion," Toklas became her secretary-archivist in the years after her death. Continuing the work they had begun during the last years of their life together, she meticulously catalogued and collated Stein's unpublished manuscripts so that they could be both published and preserved according to the terms of Stein's will. Stein wanted everything published, and she wanted everything archived at Yale. Even before Stein's death, they had already sent enough material to Yale that there had been a serious exhibition on Stein held at the Beinecke in 1941. According to Donald Gallup, curator of the Yale Collection of American Literature, Stein had been "very much interested"

in the tremendous success of the exhibition and promised to send them even more material after the war.[44] Yet Carl Van Vechten, who served as Stein's official literary executor, was "staggered" by the amount of work this entailed: in a 1947 letter to Toklas, he admitted that he "had no idea there was so much, and I am practically convinced if you want to carry out Baby's wishes in toto it will be necessary to sell a picture (or two)."[45] Eventually, as we know, everything made it to Yale, and almost everything made it into print. But the last part of his sentence—"it will be necessary to sell a picture (or two)"—is particularly telling. Stein's literary archive was donated, not sold, to Yale, and the posthumous publication of Stein's unpublished work was financed in large part by Stein's estate. Stein and Toklas had shared a life together for decades. They were partners, companions, wives. Yet, after Stein's death, Toklas's life was thrown into turmoil.

Although Stein's will ostensibly provided for Toklas, it provided detailed instructions for her own legacy first. The second paragraph bequeaths Picasso's portrait of Stein to the Metropolitan Museum of Art; the third paragraph bequeaths "all my manuscripts, and all my correspondence and photographs which may have any artistic or literary value, to the Library of Yale University"; and the fourth paragraph bequeaths to Carl Van Vechten "such sum of money" as he would, "in his absolute discretion, deem necessary for the publication of my unpublished manuscripts."[46] Toklas—then sixty-nine years old—was almost an afterthought:

> All the rest and residue of my Estate, of whatsoever kind and wheresoever situated, I give and bequeath to my friend, ALICE B. TOKLAS, of 5 rue Christine, Paris 5°, to her use for life and, insofar as it may become necessary for her proper maintenance and support, I authorize my Executors to make payments to her from the principal of my Estate and, for that purpose, to reduce to cash any paintings or other personal property belonging to my estate.[47]

Upon first glance, this appears as though it should have been sufficient to ensure Toklas would be comfortable throughout her remaining years. However, Stein seems not to have accounted for the ease with which a person of such a legally ambiguous (that is, queer) relationship to Stein could be bullied out of the support that was rightfully hers. While greed is more than enough to explain Toklas's effective disinheritance, it is surely not too much of a stretch to affirm that sexism and homophobia were its catalysts. It is difficult to imagine, in other words, that Stein's husband—had she had

one—would have been so effectively marginalized after the tragic death of his beloved wife. And, in any case, Stein certainly failed to adequately estimate the cost of such voluminous posthumous publication. In a letter to Toklas, Van Vechten worried—rightly, as it turned out—about "the cost to your comfort of the expense [of publication]," but Toklas urged him to follow Stein's wishes, no matter the impact on her own quality of life.[48] Van Vechten describes the "endless amount of work" it will take to publish all of Stein's work, but he specifically notes that he was "not afraid of that." Instead, what made him nervous was "the cost to your comfort of the expense, UNLESS YOU ARE WILLING TO SELL SOME PICTURES."[49] After publication costs, the principal of the estate was left to nearly nothing—in the vocabulary of Stein's will, it was far more "residue" than "rest." Even after substantially cutting down her living expenses, the increasingly unhealthy and elderly Toklas was left with a choice: either sell some of the modernist paintings they had collected together or descend into poverty. For a long time, she desperately tried to avoid selling that "picture (or two)" even though, as their value increased (she had twenty-eight Picassos!), she couldn't raise the funds necessary to insure them properly. She finally agreed to write her memoirs; alas, they did not do well enough to guarantee her financial security. Eventually, feeling as though she had exhausted all other options, she agreed to sell some paintings, but as the court-appointed estate lawyer informed her, "the Stein children [that is, Gertrude's brother's children], as remaindermen, have objected to the sale of any pictures without their prior consent."[50]

Stein's relatives contested Toklas's right not only to sell paintings included in the estate but to make further donations to Yale on her own behalf. In a letter to Toklas written when the "residual Steins" attempted to reclaim Toklas's gift of "two little chairs," Gallup asked, "Aren't they going to admit that you had the right to own anything at all yourself?"[51] The answer, unfortunately, was a resounding no. Toklas died nearly penniless, her right to inherit the Stein estate—even the paintings they had collected together, even the items she had purchased or created on her own—hotly contested by several of Stein's relatives (the widow of her nephew, Allan Stein, in particular), to whom the estate would pass after Toklas's death. Yet our inheritance of Stein's queer modernism—the many volumes of Stein's work and the Stein collections at the Beinecke and the Ransom Center—exists in large part because of Toklas's self-sacrificing preservation work. (Unlike the arguably similar work of Hope Mirrlees, the skill and faithfulness of this archival work are evident in the degree to which—and ease with which—Toklas can be made to

disappear from it.) As Gallup detailed in the Yale *Gazette*, the Beinecke's Stein collection is "a monument as lasting as marble," and much of it was made available "through the kindness of Miss Toklas."[52] Even as Toklas was finishing work on this "monument," she was being materially disinherited and denied the provisions explicitly made in Stein's will to assure her lasting comfort.

This is queer disinheritance. Despite the forthright publicity of the long relationship between Stein and Toklas, and despite the explicit legal protections Stein extended to Toklas in her will, the estate came under intense familial pressure from Stein's blood relatives. As the value of the remaining Picassos and other paintings continued to rise throughout the century, Toklas was both an obstacle and a threat to their eventual inheritance. They attempted to remove the artwork from Toklas's care in several ways: for example, since she could not keep up with the rising insurance premiums on the artwork without selling some of it in order to insure the rest of it (and they objected to such sales after discovering that Toklas had sold several paintings below market price), they asked the court to take the art away from Toklas for safekeeping.[53] This claim, made on behalf of the future inheritance of their children, works on the logic of what Lee Edelman has called "reproductive futurity,"[54] and it effectively disinherited Stein's chosen partner. In 1960, while Toklas was spending time in Rome for her increasingly fragile health, the Steins sued for removal of the paintings from her Paris apartment; they won, and the paintings were moved into a vault at the Chase Manhattan Bank. Finally, in 1963, at the age of eighty-six, Alice B. Toklas was kicked out of her Paris apartment. The building was being sold, and while she was given the option to buy the apartment she had shared with Stein, she could not afford to do so. The "residual Steins" were naturally not among the friends who banded together to try to stop the eviction and, when that failed, find her a new home.[55] She died in poverty in 1967.

Toklas's story demonstrates the vulnerability of queer estates, literary and otherwise. Despite their "legendary" relationship—which, as art historian Alice T. Friedman contends, survives not only because "they made their private lesbian relationship a matter of public consumption" but because "they created and preserved their own archive of texts and photographs as a way of proving their existence"[56]—Toklas was materially disinherited. But queer literary inheritance has always required other, extralegal forms of world-building. Life writing is one way of ensuring what Kevin Ohi has called, in another context, "queer literary transmission": "the conveying of knowledge in pedagogy, the transmission and

material preservation of texts."[57] As a couple, Stein and Toklas built the archive of their lives together; as a widow attempting to continue on alone, Toklas—once described by Janet Flanner as "the most widowed woman I know"[58]—continued to assert her connection to Stein by writing it, again and again, into history. In some of the uncorrected proofs to *What Is Remembered*, Toklas seems to have considered ending her book with a discussion of Stein's will. Explicitly stating that "Gertrude Stein had left me in the life tenancy of the flat and the pictures," she describes how she went on to live without expectation after Stein's death:

> The portrait by Picasso she left to the Metropolitan Museum, who wrote me that they were making her a benefactor of the museum. Someone told me that was what they did to anyone who left them a picture or pictures to the value of seventy-five thousand dollars, which was the first indication to me of the enormous value of the Picassos. Gertrude Stein had never wanted to know the value of the pictures; she said that it was not her affair.
>
> I picked up my life as I could, not expecting in the least that I should live. It seemed so natural that if Gertrude were not going to be here I wouldn't either.
>
> The years since, one year after the other, have been sad but not unkind. I have been attended to by friends, too numerous and too generous to mention, and I have been blessed with the comfort of the Church.
>
> Until quite recently I had the pleasure of Gertrude's collection of pictures. Now they are gone. When I returned to Paris from Milan last year, after taking the baths at Aqui for arthritis, the pictures had been removed from my apartment because of the risk of theft. As my sight has grown dim and my memory of the pictures is still vivid, I suffered little from their loss.[59]

In this version of *What Is Remembered*, Toklas implicitly acknowledges the loss of her inheritance—"Now they are gone."—but ultimately makes light of it. Her memory, her archive of feelings, remains with her, even if the physical traces of their life together were stripped from her possession, one by one. But this is not how the published version ends. Instead, *What Is Remembered* ends with Stein's death, and Toklas never grows old alone. After assisting Van Vechten in fulfilling Stein's desire for preservation and publication, Toklas' midcentury life writing continued to affirm the importance of their relationship above all else. In her illuminating study of Toklas's three autobiographies, Anna Linzie rightly observes that, "in its content and temporal scope, . . . *What is Remembered* almost entirely stays

within the frame established by *The Autobiography* [*of Alice B. Toklas*]."[60] But rather than read this as a shortcoming, Linzie calls it one of Toklas's "tricks of evasion": "keeping in mind [her] talent for disguise and camouflage, this . . . need not indicate that she is *sadly* missing from her autobiography, or that her autobiography is failed, but rather that her agency in the text resides precisely in the right to remain silent."[61] In a "trick of evasion" that thumbs her nose at the residual Steins—I suffered so little, we might imagine her saying, that I will not even acknowledge their loss in print—Toklas herself removed her impoverished, largely solitary, late period from literary history.

Others—particularly other queer women writers—found such omissions scandalous, however, and they wrote her right back in. In the next section of this chapter, I return once more to Margaret Anderson, whose late "Collection" contains an account of a conversation she had had with journalist Janet Flanner after Stein's death:

> I congratulated her on the article she had written in the *New Yorker* about the fate of Gertrude's famous paintings, regretting that they hadn't been left to Alice Toklas.
>
> "You gave so many interesting details about Gertrude's will that I suppose you were swamped with appreciative letters", I said. "Not at all", Janet said—"not one. No one seemed to care. Over here we all felt it shameful that Alice had the right only to sell one or two in case she badly needed money." "Shocking", I said.[62]

No one else cared. But they did. Flanner wrote not one but two accounts of Toklas's disinheritance in the *New Yorker*, the second of which seethed with a barely controlled rage over Toklas's all-but-forgotten legacy. She noted that it was only through Toklas's "penury and self-denial, plus her driving determination," that the volumes of Stein's unpublished work were printed by Yale University Press.[63] And, after Toklas's eventual death, the collection of paintings and drawings "which Alice had fought so bitterly to keep in tact [*sic*] as a memorial to [Stein], became the property of Allan Stein's children and was dispersed by them without sentiment."[64] Some of this, writes Flanner, became "the nucleus, in December of 1970, of a spectacular exhibition [at the Museum of Modern Art]—'Four Americans in Paris: The Collections of Gertrude Stein and Her Family.'"[65] I have a copy of the catalogue for this exhibition. It is gorgeously bound in red leather with gold lettering. Four black-and-white photographs—the four expat Americans, Stein and "her family"—adorn the cover.

Alice B. Toklas is not among them.

Beyond Biography: Margaret Anderson's "Collection"

Unlike Alice B. Toklas, whose midcentury life writing explicitly attempted to make "what is remembered" about her synonymous with what is remembered about the life she shared with Stein, Margaret Anderson spent the entire second half of her life trying to establish her own independent identity. She was only forty-four years old when the last issue of the *Little Review* was published, and she would spend the next forty-three years attempting to produce what generations of critics have almost uniformly failed to see as "important writing of her own." Only a year later, in 1930, she published *My Thirty Years' War*, the first in a three-volume autobiographical series that would eventually include *The Fiery Fountains* (1951) and *The Strange Necessity* (1962). In addition to this trilogy, she also published *The Unknowable Gurdjieff* (1962), an account of her studies with George Ivanovich Gurdjieff, a mystic philosopher and spiritual teacher.[66] And, in the final years of her life, she wrote a lesbian novel loosely based on her own experiences; although she could not find a publisher in her lifetime, the manuscript would eventually be rediscovered, edited, and posthumously published under the title *Forbidden Fires* (1996). While Anderson did not herself identify any of these books as explicitly biographical projects, they are all varieties of life writing: personal narratives that open into stories about friends, colleagues, and, sometimes, an entire generation of artists and writers.

In one view, it is easy to see Anderson's life as divided into two separate phases: the first, editorial and "important," from roughly 1914 to 1929; the second, retrospective and "unimportant," from 1930 until her death in 1973. But this quick categorization misrecognizes the ways in which her personal memoirs—and, later, her personal "Collection"—were themselves massive editorial projects. The entwined passion projects of life writing and collection pushed back against the rapid consolidation of modernism as a predominantly masculine movement—a history that was beginning to take shape in literary criticism such as Edmund Wilson's *Axel's Castle: A Study of the Imaginative Literature of 1870–1930* (1931) and generational autobiography such as Malcolm Cowley's *Exile's Return: A Literary Odyssey of the 1920s* (first published to little acclaim in 1934 with the subtitle "A Narrative of Ideas" and later republished in 1951 with the subtitle "A Literary Odyssey of the 1920s"). Wilson's book described W. B. Yeats, James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, Gertrude Stein, Marcel Proust, and Paul Valéry as "the culmination of a self-conscious and very important literary movement."[67] And while Cowley's book was

slightly more inclusive, Sherwood Anderson is the only "Anderson" in either index.

By then, however, Margaret Anderson was accustomed to being overlooked and underappreciated. In the opening paragraph of *My Thirty Years' War*, she describes the ongoing "war" of her title: "I have never been able to accept the two great laws of humanity—that you're always being suppressed if you're inspired and always being pushed into the corner if you're exceptional. I won't be cornered and I won't stay suppressed. This book is a record of those refusals."[68] Omitted from the rapidly calcifying histories of modernism, the inspired and exceptional Margaret Anderson compiled her own.

But despite generally positive critical reviews, her books neither sold well nor made much of an impact. They were valued almost entirely for their anecdotes about more famous figures, and, today, they are out of print. In a review of her collected memoirs in the *New York Times Book Review*, Alfred Kazin paid Anderson the sort of dubious compliment that continues to shadow her legacy: "I believe everything that Margaret Anderson says precisely because she is not a writer but a rhapsodist without guile."[69] This critical consensus that Anderson was "not a writer," that she, in Crispin's later phrasing, "produced no important writing of her own," continues to shape her legacy. As feminist historian Elizabeth Francis has shown, the category of the dilettante editor and that of the expat lesbian constitute the "two distinct frames of reference" that have contributed to Anderson's marginal historical position. For literary historians, Francis suggests, Anderson has been "primarily understood as a dilettante who happened to be in the right place at the right time, surrounded by the right people, especially Ezra Pound, to publish groundbreaking modernist writing."[70] And when not categorized as a dilettante editor, she has been claimed by feminist and queer historians most interested in her membership in the expatriate lesbian community in interwar Paris. The effect of these histories, Francis demonstrates, is that Anderson's "unconventional womanhood has been the basis for her dismissal as a serious modernist figure and a source of celebration."[71]

Anderson chafed against this critical dismissal. Kazin's claim that she "could have become anything except a great writer" clearly irked her, as she had written a novel but, due to its explicitly lesbian themes, could find no one willing to publish it.[72] In an unsent response to Kazin, she admitted that she was "rather grieved by your insistence in regarding me as a non-writer. Of course I've never regarded myself as a real writer, but lately I've begun to think that I was becoming one, and now you strip me

of that excitement. All the letters I receive about my books praise my way of *writing*—'Your phrasings, your style—it is almost as if you had created a new form', and so on."[73] But while she questioned the nearly incessant devaluation of her prose by professional literary critics, she simultaneously admitted her own sense of herself as working in a different "realm." In a letter to publisher Coburn Britton, she remarked, "You see, cher ami, that I'm more *appreciator* than *creator*. I never think of myself as a writer, but as a *discusser*."[74] As someone who had, over half a century earlier, founded the *Little Review* in order to "spend [her] time filling it up with the best conversation the world has to offer," Anderson continued to see herself as primarily a "discusser"—an editor by both calling and trade.[75]

Rather than concede that this constitutionally curatorial nature was somehow inferior, however, Anderson proudly identified herself as an "appreciator," an elevated amateur, even a dilettante. As noted elsewhere in this book, contemporary critics have undertaken a similar reassessment and reclamation of the virtues of amateurism. Carolyn Dinshaw, for example, recognizes the value of "various ways of knowing that are derived not only from positions of detachment but also—remembering the etymology of amateur—from positions of affect and attachment, from desires to build another kind of world."[76] And Marjorie Garber reminds us that the categories of "amateur" and "professional" occupy an ever-shifting but inextricable relationship in which "they produce . . . [and] define each other by mutual affinities and exclusions."[77] Artistic and literary worlds require both amateurs and professionals, appreciators and creators, discussers and writers. As Anderson once explained at length, they work in different, sometimes (though not always) complementary, ways:

> A dilettante is a person who knows all those "small, perfect things" that scholars know nothing about. I, as a dilettante, know everything that intellectuals don't know, and intellectuals know everything that I don't know. Intellectuals and scholars have no interest in the discriminations that I love; they understand nothing about them, don't want to listen to them; aren't even *capable* of hearing them.[78]

Although Anderson had earlier referred to herself as a "discusser," she here highlights her equally profound gifts as a listener. She can hear things that intellectuals do not even notice. An accomplished pianist herself, Anderson's theorizations of artistic discernment often employ musical comparisons. For example, in a further illustration of the dilettante's particular capacities, Anderson recounted a story about Brahms's infamous critical appreciation of a young pianist's recital: "I *hate* what you play," he

is said to have pronounced, "but I *love* the way you play it. You never hurt the sounds." This is an unexpectedly synesthesiac explanation. How can sounds get hurt? To some, this will seem like nonsense. But this is Anderson's point. Not everyone—not even every so-called expert—is capable of recognizing, much less understanding, the difference between sounds that are "hurt" and those that are not. For Anderson, however, this distinction is crucial to the proper recognition of the dilettante as "the kind of person who always knows when the sounds are hurt":

> An intellectual doesn't know, or care, whether the pianist hurts them or not—he doesn't hear the hurt, or care if the pianist hurts the sounds; all he wants to hear is the music, well played or not. All these subtle matters are my obsessions, my manias, my greatest joys and my everlasting rewards. Since scholarly critics are always ready to regard such distinctions as "trivial", they call people like me dilettantes. We are, I suppose, and we're happy to be.[79]

And so, faced with an unrelenting critical chorus that demeaned her work as a series of trivial obsessions undertaken by a flighty woman who could not possibly compare to the geniuses she published in the *Little Review*, she deliberately turned away from the prospect of publishing more books. "My books have never sold," she admitted, and "I can say (almost literally) that I've never made a penny on a book."[80] In her last years, she began to imagine other forms of intellectual work. She knew that memoirs of modernism, especially those featuring the most famous contributors to the *Little Review*, were always likely to make some (much-needed) money, but she refused to do it on principle: "I realize of course that there is a ready-made advance sale for any book of gossip about the 'great names' of our L.R. contributors of the 20's. But I've done all that in 'Thirty Years' and it no longer has any interest for me."[81] Instead, the project she took up in this period—her last obsession, her final passion project—would be "*about something* more important than anecdotes."[82] She had long harbored plans for the "note-books of quotations of 'great prose'" she had collected throughout her life, and, at first, she wanted to "arrange them as a sort of anthology with . . . comments running through."[83] Soon, however, she began to eschew any publication plans at all, and, in a letter to Michael Currer-Briggs, a British manuscripts dealer, she wrote, "I am instinctively opposed to regarding or presenting this . . . as a BOOK."[84] Like Sylvia Townsend Warner, who chose to put together rather than publish the intimate archive of her life with Valentine Ackland, Anderson addressed herself to the tasks of collection, compilation, and annotation.

She called it her "Collection": a meticulously annotated, if chaotically curated, set of letters, transcriptions, photographs, and unpublished writing (by Anderson herself as well as her closest friends). Delighted by the possibility that she might be able to sell it all together as a coherent collection to a university library interested in the preservation of modernist literary history, she worked on it, off and on, for years. The University of Wisconsin had purchased Jane Heap's papers for a substantial sum, she reasoned, so why not cushion her final years with a similar sale? As she soon realized, however, such collections usually consist of original letters and manuscripts, and she herself had (unknowingly, and, as it turned out, tragically) made the mistake of keeping very few such documents over the years, never "imagin[ing] that anyone would want to read them": "I fall short on 'originals'. In L.R. days I never thought of *buying and selling*, I was naive enough not to keep any letter that was badly, obscurely handwritten. I would make typed copies and then throw the original away—even if it came from Joyce."[85] She valued the conversation itself, the art and the ideas, not the objects.

Without these now precious manuscripts, Anderson's "Collection" held little appeal for most libraries and university archives. Yet in a letter to Elizabeth Jenks Clark containing earnest instructions about how to "*edit* your life" toward artistic activity, she describes the discovery of "how to make my COLLECTION papers really interesting: something which I think has never been done before. Very exciting, probably rejectable, but what does that matter? To do it is what matters. I shall be my own master, in my own realm."[86] Anderson here specifies neither the details of this discovery nor the nature of this realm, but the significance of total editorial control is perfectly clear. In her *Little Review* days, she and Heap had been reluctant to accept substantial sponsorships of the *Little Review* for fear it would compromise their editorial independence. Half a century later, Anderson continued to emphasize her desire to do the "really interesting," "exciting" thing, no matter what the cost.

In an arrangement she unfortunately did not live to witness, the Collection is now part of the Elizabeth Jenks Clark Collection of Margaret Anderson at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Yale University. To describe it as "really interesting" and "exciting" is an understatement. The Collection is meticulously arranged; there is a title page, an extensive introduction, a short preface, and then many folders full of annotated material. In the introduction, Anderson notes three primary disadvantages of the Collection.

First, she acknowledges that there are very few original letters and manuscripts from the most famous contributors to the *Little Review*. This

poses a problem for any potential sale of the Collection to a university archive: "But of course any University wants to buy the originals! Copies can be faked, invented!"[87] Since she had routinely typed copies of incoming handwritten correspondence throughout her life, and the original copies were irrecoverably lost, her hands were tied. She could only insist that her transcriptions were "exact copies, comma by comma," and convey her hope that the "vitality of the material contained in—and copied from—the originals will somewhat compensate for their disappearance."[88]

Next, she describes the impossibility of exact chronology. "Nearly all my correspondents," she notes, "left their letters undated."[89] While her own letters were more precise, she found it virtually impossible to reconstruct a completely accurate order of events. Yet she assures her readers that this hardly matters: "In sorting out these letters and trying to put them into some kind of order, I've not felt that strict chronology is of great importance."[90] The precise timing of events hardly mattered; her perception of their importance, and their interrelatedness, was key.

Finally, Anderson explains that her "chief correspondents" were women because "the men I knew years ago happened not to belong to the type which I classified as great conversationalists."[91] Remember that, for Anderson, who had started the *Little Review* in order to fill it with "the best conversation the world has to offer," the phrase "great conversationalists" indicates far more than a certain adroitness with witty banter. Great conversationalists are great thinkers, great artists, great writers. Conversation equals passionate ideas. This third "disadvantage" of the Collection is thus the result of her general dismissal of men as "great conversationalists." To make this point impossible to ignore, Anderson immediately got specific. She named names. Directly after the description of the Collection's "disadvantages" is a list of men's names—the same names that routinely appeared in both literary histories and the kind of gossip books she refused to write—with corresponding notes about their relative appeal as conversationalists. With this list, she wasn't just privileging her memory of conversations with her female friends; she was tearing down the legends being built all around her in other midcentury memoirs of modernism. I quote only a few particularly telling examples from the twenty-nine names on her list:

> Beginning with Sherwood Anderson, he and I could talk for hours, but we never conversed.
>
> Dreiser? I would have felt that I was talking with a stick.
>
> Hart Crane never said anything I wanted to hear.

> William Carlos Williams seemed to me rather unauthentic, in some way exaggerated, in some way not strong.
>
> Hemingway always impressed me as an immature, though informative and entertaining [*sic*]; but his personal world couldn't have been more remote from mine.
>
> Ditto for Scott Fitzgerald. Once at midnight, in a drunken daze, he tried to break down the door of my hotel room, insisting that I was wrong about him and that we should talk. I knew that we shouldn't.
>
> Joyce, in all our meetings, was the least conversational man I ever met. Once I heard someone suggest a topic which he hoped would fire him, but which received only a blank blind look. "The subject doesn't interest you, Mr. Joyce?" "Not in the slightest", Joyce answered. During such blockages Jane and I would turn our attention to Norah, and then he would become at least partially alive.[92]

This dryly hilarious list spans almost four full pages of the introduction. The sheer volume of it is impressively insistent; in going on and on (and on), Anderson seems to agree with Sara Ahmed's description of collection as a "empowering" feminist act.[93] I think this is right, and I'll go a step further. If the rest of the Collection constitutes Anderson's last great passion project, then this list is a kind of killjoy's preamble—Anderson's modernist burn book. Like the "burn book" popularized in 2004's *Mean Girls*, this list was not designed for publication or circulation, but, at the same time, it was never understood to be entirely private. Anderson showed it to visiting friends, and she clearly imagined that future researchers would eventually read her testimony. She gamely acknowledges her own culpability: "some of these hindrances and stoppages may have been my fault. Perhaps I even sounded like a prig." This may be true. Throughout the list, Anderson's faults are at least as visible as her brilliance. But when I first encountered this list in the reading room of the Beinecke, surrounded by portraits and busts of mostly male writers, I immediately thought about how hard Anderson would have laughed (and perhaps cried) at Rebecca Solnit's *Men Explain Things to Me* (2014). In the titular essay, first published in 2008, Solnit describes the infuriatingly common experience of what has recently become known as "mansplaining," though she herself does not use that term:

> Men explain things to me, and other women, whether or not they know what they're talking about. . . . Every woman knows what I'm talking

> about. It's the presumption that makes it hard, at times, for any woman in any field; that keeps women from speaking up and from being heard when they dare; that crushes young women into silence by indicating, the way harassment on the street does, that this is not their world. It trains us in self-doubt and self-limitation just as it exercises men's unsupported overconfidence.[94]

It is impossible to imagine myself into Anderson's world without thinking seriously about the unceasing aggressions, micro and macro, that she faced for years—and which continue to affect her posthumous reputation. Anderson did not publish this list of bad conversationalists—the men who explained things to her, no doubt—but she left it for us in a place of prominence. It is surely not an accident that the last name on the list is Ezra Pound, the man most frequently given credit for the genius of the *Little Review*'s inspired publication record.[95] Anderson closes this section of her introduction by addressing the former foreign editor of the *Little Review*:

> I can express all I want to say by explaining why I never had an impulse toward real talk with Ezra Pound. "Real," to me, means: what revealing personal-information is going to be divulged? Ezra was a talker of talkers, but not the kind I thrive on. What I sought has been described by Wallace Stevens in a poem:
>
> It would have been like lighting a candle,
> Like leaning on a table, shading one's eyes,
> And hearing a tale one wanted intensely to hear.
>
> For me, Ezra would be the person most unlikely to meet such a test. I can no more imagine him leaning on a table and telling a tale than I can imagine him talking with an American housewife about her domestic problems.[96]

Instead, the figures leaning across Anderson's table, and whom she wanted to commemorate with her Collection, were women: friends who "talked as everyone does about little things, but . . . *conversed* about all those things 'counter, original, spare, strange' that are too unprevailing in ordinary communication."[97] These friends—the luminaries, the ones "always lighting candles"—were Jane Heap, the friend and former lover with whom she had coedited the *Little Review*; Georgette Leblanc, the French soprano with whom she lived from when they met in 1924 until Leblanc's death in 1941; and Dorothy Caruso, with whom she lived from

when they met in 1942 until Caruso's death in 1955. Anderson contends that she had "never heard other people saying or thinking the things these friends thought, and . . . never found their thoughts in books."[98] Indeed, most of the Collection is dedicated to her annotated history of these three lives and supplemented by tales of the group she identified as her "principal characters": Heap, Leblanc, and Caruso but also Janet Flanner, Solita Solano, Monique Serrure, A. R. Orage, Gurdjieff, and, as noted in "A Short Preface," the more recent friendship of Elizabeth Jenks Clark, who would eventually be responsible for placing the Collection, along with the rest of Anderson's personal papers, into the Beinecke.

Though devoted to "conversation," the Collection is less a transcript than a work of queer feminist collage. The layout of one early page contains almost no text at all (figure 3.1). Instead, it resembles a traditional photo album: four portrait photographs, one in each quadrant, with names and dates below each photo. The 1918 photos, taken when they were still in a romantic relationship, seem to gaze across the page at each other. And while we might expect that Anderson would have positioned the 1927 photographs so that they would be looking elsewhere, since, by then, they were no longer a couple, she intentionally reversed the upper order so that, again, they are turned toward each other. What's more, the album-like, four-quadrant layout of this page is never repeated. The kinship between its two subjects, placed in an inescapable orbit around each other, is singular. And though the "principal characters" share space in the Collection, Heap's "conversation" similarly dominates its pages.

Most of the Collection is a more complicated mixture of images, typed text, and handwritten annotation. For example, another page contains a black-and-white photograph of Heap that takes up at least two-thirds of the page (figure 3.2). In contrast to the images discussed above, where the layout twice suggests that she is staring at (or at least toward) Anderson, Heap here looks directly at the camera. She is seated in an armchair; her hair is cut short, and she is wearing a tuxedo. Her gaze is formidable, even challenging. Her brows are furrowed. And she is not smiling. Anderson's purplish-blue ink credits the photograph—which was taken in 1927, the year before the newspaper publication of a similarly styled portrait of Radclyffe Hall would result in a crucial shift in lesbian legibility[99]—to the now legendary photographer Berenice Abbott. Layered on top of the bottom right corner of the photograph is a slip of paper containing a typed quotation by Elspeth Champcommunal, a mutual friend. The names of Heap and Champcommunal are underlined in Anderson's red ink. In

FIGURE 3.1. Manuscript page from Margaret Anderson's unpublished "Collection." *Top*: Anderson in 1918, then Heap in 1918. *Bottom*: Heap in 1927, then Anderson in 1927.

(Photograph by Berenice Abbott)

JANE HEAP. "That Jane [redacted] exists in the way she does fills people with strength and new realizations in those parts of their beings which sometimes shrivel emotionally. She is always staunchly herself, and her humour, always flickering, delights one. Though she is overwhelmed with work, and fatigue and illness, she endures it all with the utmost fortitude. When one is under great strain, for which no words can be found, she always finds the right way to prove that she has [redacted] understood through all one's incoherence. She becomes a kind of benign wizard, warm and with a mysterious kindness and affection. She is like a 'home' in herself, full of a loving security which banishes [redacted] tensions, so that one becomes, momentarily, a new being".
Elspeth Champcommunal.

FIGURE 3.2. Manuscript page from Margaret Anderson's unpublished "Collection."

the selection chosen by Anderson, Champcommunal describes Heap as a "benign wizard": "That Jane exists in the way she does fills people with strength and new realizations in those parts of their beings which sometimes shrivel emotionally. She is always staunchly herself, and her humour, always flickering, delights one."[100] On their surface, these lines are banal, but in Anderson's repositioning of them, they signal a shared vocabulary—not a code, necessarily, but an implicit agreement. Champcommunal's description of Heap's "always flickering" personality recalls, in the context of the larger Collection, Anderson's earlier description of her friends as "always lighting candles"—a phrase that, in its origin in Wallace Stevens's late poem, "Two Letters," signals not only the spark of a vivacious personality but the retrospective, even nostalgic, image of a group of old friends gathered together once more.[101]

But Anderson's was a nostalgia for unruliness, antagonism, and revolution. On another page (figure 3.3)—this one all text and no images—she juxtaposes three distinct memories of Heap's legendary "conversation": first, a description of Heap's response to the abdication speech of King Edward VIII and the "drudgery" of inheritance laws; second, an excerpt from a letter in which Heap bemoans the inability of certain *New Yorker* writers to acknowledge that "everything in the world has changed" during "the war years" (presumably, World War I, though one cannot be sure); and, third, Heap's response to the banning of *Ulysses* for the nominal protection of young women: "If there's anything I really fear it is the mind of the young girl."[102]

Anderson's placement of the three passages on the page does not follow chronological order. Instead, they are juxtaposed together—Down with the monarchy! Down with established cultural institutions! Down with paternalistic law!—in a showcase of both Heap's historic wit and Anderson's contemporary ability to produce a searing feminist argument out of otherwise unrelated archival scraps. Indeed, upon closer inspection, it is this latter feat that provides the animating logic of the page's composition. Anderson's collage makes it impossible not to see this act of curation as itself a kind of creation. The page begins with Edward's abdication, a literal patriarch disavowing his inheritance (and its earthly and ethereal power) in favor of "love and freedom." It continues, after this account of the voluntary decentering of the head of church and state, with Heap noting that the war itself had shifted the "center of gravity" of modern times. And, finally, it contains an acerbic paean to the "minds of young girls." This page is a scrapbook of the masculine Heap's intellectual charm, but it is also a micronarrative—following a jumbled, backward chronology—of feminist

1-b

J A N E H E A P . Paris, December 1 9 3 6 .

MCA. I remember the night when we all listened to the Duke of Windsor making his abdication speech as King Edward VIII. When he had finished someone said said, "What an infantile speech!"

"Not at all", Jane said. "The English should be happy now. They have got back to a boiled beef-and-sprouts king. God! What a lesson in ridding one's self of illusions! I'm sure that the king rid himself of many - especially the illusion of loyalty on the part of his subjects. Of all the horrible earthly jobs, a king is most victim. This little king refused to be a victim - I suppose he couldn't endure the heavy sanctimonious palaver, the obstructions, the smug mechanicality and drudgery of it all if he had to do it alone, after a taste of love and freedom.

space

J a n e . Letter to MCA during the war years.

I've just read an article in the New Yorker. It is almost impossible to believe that any being with invertebrate awareness could go on writing these meaningless words. Millions of men have died in the last years, everything in the world has changed, the center of gravity no longer resided in vellities of automatic existence. I thought that almost anyone would have learned this.

space

J a n e, at the time of the "Ulysses" trial. New York, 1918 ?

We were arrested and finger-printed for having published in the Little Review a [redacted] chapter of "Ulysses" which was considered obscene and "would be a danger to the minds of young girls".

J a n e : "If there's anything I really fear it is the mind of the young girl".

space

J a n e, in the same year.

I suppose Mr. Joyce had some idea in mind when he gave his book the title of "A Portrait of the ARTIST as a Young Man". But

FIGURE 3.3. Manuscript page from Margaret Anderson's unpublished "Collection."

potentiality in the wake of a modernity in which men are no longer the "center of gravity," by way of catastrophe or choice. Certainly, these sorts of juxtapositions might be read as incidental, and this explanation of their significance might be open to what David Kazanjian has called "the charge of overreading."[103] But given Anderson's foundational role in putting forth a modernist aesthetic, perhaps we should at least consider following, and taking seriously, the stream of her archival consciousness.

Anderson found it unconscionable that no one else seemed to be as interested in her friends as she was. She refused to understand why scholars contacted her for information about her *Little Review* days, complaining to her friends about "the boring contributors [Hugh Ford] insists on quoting, with floods of detailed information that no one can want," and explaining "*why I insist on Jane's mind being shown*, (since it always interested me more than Ezra's or Joyce's or Eliot's)—meaning: the [*sic*] she could talk about things of which they knew nothing."[104] She derides the academic insistence on "factual questions, none of which I can answer," and insists that a book without "all the Jane I want" must also contain "a note saying that your refusal threw me into an uncontrollable rage."[105] If their scholarly books erased Heap, then her Collection would represent her, and other neglected figures, in all their glory. But her confidence in the project fluctuated, and her anxiety about whether it would ultimately be refused by universities for being "nothing but 'personality'" resurfaces again and again throughout her letters.[106] Describing her decision to include the manuscript that would become *Forbidden Fires*, for example, she notes the "strangely dizzying" feeling of "holding in one's hands for fifteen years an unpublished manuscript that one *knows* would be a success if published. It is like being pushed into a corner and held there, as if you should be ashamed of yourself."[107] This imagery echoes her refusal, in the opening paragraphs of *My Thirty Years' War*, to be "cornered" or "suppressed," as the "laws of humanity" dictated must be the case for all "exceptional" and "inspired" people.[108] Decades later, she still refused to be ashamed of herself or her talented friends, most of whom she had outlived.

The Collection is thus simultaneously a biographical and editorial act, one in which she understood herself to have "(almost unconsciously) corrected some of the mistakes of arrangement and techniques" she had made in earlier books.[109] It is also a work of historic preservation containing photographs, images, and newspaper clippings; short quotations, longer stretches of commentary, and entire unpublished manuscripts written by her friends; and, through it all, Anderson's own annotations and unpublished manuscripts, both typed and handwritten in several colors of ink.

It was a long "labor of assemblage."[110] Her letters describe the extent to which the project took over her living quarters while she worked on it.[111] Turned down by publishers and refused by universities, she nevertheless persisted in preparing her Collection, however unfinished or unpublished, for posterity. Unlike many of the other collectors and biographers profiled in this book, it is even possible to speculate that Anderson considered this unpublished, unsellable, largely unseen archive to be the ideal form for her recollections and remembrances.

For this reason, any estimation of Anderson's importance for feminist modernist studies is incomplete to the extent that it does not address her unfinished, unpublished work—that which was undertaken behind the scenes, out of the public eye, and which only sometimes becomes available to be inherited by contemporary queer feminist modernist scholars. Like the editorial and preservation work of Beach and Toklas, Anderson's role in publishing "groundbreaking modernist writing" has been systematically demeaned by generations of critics. But while Beach referred to her own late period as her "official period," and Toklas intentionally worked to ensure that she would only be remembered, however dismissively, through her relationship with Gertrude Stein, Anderson's late period was defined by a decline into relative obscurity. And while Beach contributed many original manuscripts to our archives of modernist literary history, and Toklas's determined stewardship delivered not only manuscripts but artwork into our museums, Anderson left us with nothing quite so tangible. Just "personality," as she would put it, to be inherited by "the minds of young girls."