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Small Presses and Little Magazines: A Print Culture Perspective on Modernism

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The map of early twentieth-century modernism has always included a corner marked ‘small presses and little magazines’. Established accounts of the modernist movement usually make the point that literary modernism’s challenge to conventional traditions and values could not be articulated through mainstream means of cultural production, so new, small-scale publishing ventures provided alternative routes into print for avant-garde writers. Where magazines are concerned, this corner of the map acquired focus and detail quite early on: most surveys of literary modernism include some reference to Wyndham Lewis’s *Blast* (1914–15), and to magazines in which significant modernist texts were first serialized, such as *The Little Review*, where sections of Joyce’s *Ulysses* appeared between 1918 and 1920. The book publishers who helped to ‘make it new’ in the early decades of the twentieth century have been less visible, except, perhaps, for Leonard and Virginia Woolf who established their Hogarth Press in 1917. But recent scholarship in book history and print culture studies has offered new perspectives on both little magazines and small presses, raising fresh questions about the assumptions underlying much critical writing on literature of the period.

The emergence of book history as a distinct and expanding field of literary study in the last quarter of the twentieth century promoted a way of looking at the life-cycle of books and other print forms within what Robert Darnton has described as ‘a communications circuit’. This circuit runs ‘from the author to the publisher (if the bookseller does not assume that role), the printer, the shipper, the bookseller, and the reader. The reader completes the

circuit, because he influences the author both before and after the act of composition'.¹

Approaching literary texts from these multiple perspectives requires a convergence of methodologies from a number of disciplines; these include history (principally cultural history), bibliography, and social sciences such as sociology. The fact that book history as described by Darnton straddles so many disciplinary boundaries has given rise to the now widespread use of 'print culture studies' as a more capacious term for this interdisciplinary field. 'Print culture' is therefore the term that will be used in the present essay, not least because of the focus on magazines as well as books.

Literary scholars and historians interested in print culture studies have already done a great deal to re-draw the 'little magazines' corner of early twentieth-century modernism's map. Initial foundations for this kind of work were laid by scholarly activity on Victorian periodicals,² much of which is notable for being set within the broader context of nineteenth-century print media rather than within the narrower category of 'literature'. In recent decades, study of periodicals from the *fin de siècle* and early twentieth century has been catching up with scholarship from earlier periods. By 2006, when Sean Latham and Robert Scholes were describing 'The Rise of Periodical Studies', it was clear that this cross-disciplinary field not only spanned a long historical continuum but also presented 'a pressing challenge to existing paradigms for the investigation of Enlightenment, nineteenth-century, and modern cultures'.³

¹ Robert Darnton, 'What Is the History of Books?' *Daedalus*, 111.3 (1982), 65–83 (p. 67).

² As an indicator of timescales, the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals was founded in 1968, and its official journal, the *Victorian Periodicals Review* (published by Johns Hopkins University Press), has been appearing quarterly since 1979.

³ Sean Latham and Robert Scholes, 'The Rise of Periodical Studies', *PMLA*, 121.2 (2006), 517–531 (p. 517).

The emergence of periodical studies has been underpinned by developments in digital media, and for the modernist period a major digital archive is Scholes and Latham's *Modernist Journals Project*, initiated in 1999, following an earlier project on the *New Age* at Brown University in the mid-90s. The primary mission of this open-access resource is 'to produce digital editions of culturally significant magazines from around the early 20th century and make them freely available to the public'.⁴ Further scholarly landmarks in modernist print culture studies include publication of the three-volume *Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines* (2009–13),⁵ whose editors also directed the development of another digital archive, the *Modernist Magazines Project*, based at De Montfort University.⁶ In 2010 the US-based *Journal of Modern Periodical Studies* was launched, with an inclusive brief covering 'modernist or anti-modernist, popular or elite, mass circulation or specialized' publications in the period 1880–1950.⁷ Reviewing the first five years of this journal's promise to uncover new ways in which periodical publishing 'shaped modernity', Patrick Collier advocates critical approaches that 'make periodicals the primary object of study in

⁴ *The Modernist Journals Project* (searchable database). Brown and Tulsa Universities, ongoing. <<http://www.modjourn.org>> [accessed 18 July 2019].

⁵ Subsequent references are to *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines, Volume I, Britain and Ireland 1880–1955*, ed. by Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁶ *The Modernist Magazines Project* <<http://modmags.dmu.ac.uk>> [accessed 1 August 2019].

Other digital archives covering the modernist period, though not necessarily confined to it, include Princeton University's international *Blue Mountain Project*.

⁷ *Journal of Modern Periodical Studies*, <http://www.psupress.org/Journals/jnls_jmps.html> [accessed 18 July 2019].

ways that are not beholden to pre-existing critical categories'.⁸ So whereas conventional literary history has tended to mine little magazines for neglected works by established writers, modern periodical studies examines periodical and print culture 'in ways not determined by the long shadow of the literary canon'.⁹

Print culture studies, then, is already casting new light on the significance of modernism's little magazines. But as Lise Jaillant notes in the introduction to *Publishing Modernist Fiction and Poetry*, 'this focus on periodicals has come at a price: the neglect of book publishers associated with modernism'.¹⁰ Addressing this issue, Jaillant's collection of essays brings together a number of case studies of British and American book publishers to broaden our understanding of modernist print culture. This new breadth is partly a matter of recovering the history of neglected publishers and imprints, just as periodical studies is expanding access to a larger number of primary texts. However, scholarly work on modernism's 'small presses' also involves working with different kinds of sources. Jonathan Rose makes the striking claim that historians of the book 'often write literary history as business history'. This leads him to the question:

What, then, was the business of modernism? Rather than simply examine the texts themselves, book historians have investigated publishers' ledgers, authors' contracts, literary agents' correspondence, and advertising campaigns. And they have found that

⁸ Patrick Collier, 'What is Modern Periodical Studies?' *Journal of Modern Periodical Studies*, 6.2 (2015), 92–111 (p. 92).

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.99.

¹⁰ *Publishing Modernist Fiction and Poetry* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), p. 2.

while modernists professed their dedication to pure art and their disdain for commercial success, they were intensely concerned with profit maximisation and the effective marketing of their work.¹¹

As we shall see, questions about advertising, marketing, and profit are equally relevant to magazine publishing, and the histories of little magazines and small presses are often interwoven through the literary and commercial networks that characterized the culture of the period.

The history of little magazines is in some ways more compact than the history of modernist book publishing, and the significance of modernist magazines was recognized even during the era of high modernism itself. An insider's version of the story began to be told as early as 1930, when Ezra Pound's article 'Small Magazines' appeared in the *English Journal*, a long-running publication of the American National Council of Teachers of English (now *College English*).¹² Pound's credentials for surveying this particular field rested not just on his prominence as a modernist poet and polemicist but also on his direct and widespread connections with a range of magazines. He was a prolific contributor, especially during the years he was living in London, publishing criticism as well as poetry. Robert Scholes and Clifford Wulfman calculate that between 1912 and 1920 Pound averaged one publication a week in magazines. Equally important were his editorial connections with several magazines (sometimes in official roles, sometimes unofficial): Scholes and Wulfman identify ten magazines in England and America that Pound was directly involved with between 1909 and

¹¹ Jonathan Rose, 'Lady Chatterley's Broker: Banking on Modernism', in *Disciplining Modernism*, ed. by Pamela L. Caughie (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 182–196 (p. 182).

¹² Ezra Pound, 'Small Magazines', *English Journal*, 19.9 (November 1930), 689–704.

1923, from *The English Review* under the editorship of Ford Madox Hueffer (later Ford) to *The Dial*, re-established in New York in 1920.¹³ Most of these titles are discussed in Pound's 1930 article, along with Ford's later, influential *Transatlantic Review*. This monthly, subsequently styled *transatlantic review*, was based in Paris, though published in London by Duckworth & Co., in association with the Russian-American publisher Thomas Seltzer in New York. So, like Pound himself, and the modernist movement in general, the *transatlantic review* was markedly cosmopolitan. It was also short-lived, with just twelve issues published through 1924, and in this respect, too, it mirrored the fortunes of many little magazines of the period.

Looking back at the recent history of 'small magazines' throughout the 1910s and 1920s, Pound's *English Journal* article acknowledges that magazines often come and go quite rapidly, but, he claims, this volatility is no impediment to literary importance: '[t]he value of fugitive periodicals "of small circulation" is ultimately measured by the work they have brought to press. The names of certain authors over a space of years, or over, let us say, the past score years, have been associated with impractical publication.'¹⁴ Pound's choice of adjectives is striking: besides being 'fugitive' and 'impractical', he also describes small magazines as 'free', 'allegedly eccentric' and 'non-commercial'.¹⁵ The categories 'commercial' and 'non-commercial' imply a convenient separation between modernist and mainstream magazines that was reinforced by Frederick J. Hoffman in a 1943 article, 'The Little Magazines: Portrait of an Age':

¹³ Robert Scholes and Clifford Wulfman, *Modernism in the Magazines* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), pp. 6–7.

¹⁴ Pound, p. 701

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 702, 704, 693.

They are ‘little’ because they enjoyed a limited circulation, were constantly handicapped by financial crises and varying forms of indebtedness, relieved only occasionally by the beneficence of a sympathizer who had money in his pockets. This characteristic — the chronic indebtedness of the little magazine — is no accident in its history. Editors encouraged the publication in it of materials which were not given a hearing by established, commercial, or ‘quality’ journals.¹⁶

In an earlier series of weekly articles for *The New Age* entitled ‘Studies in Contemporary Mentality’ (August 1917 to January 1918), Pound had in fact attempted an anecdotal taxonomy of magazine genres more complex than a simple division between commercial and non-commercial,¹⁷ but this particular binary has persisted in the sub-set of features often used to distinguish modernist works from non-modernist. In both ‘Studies in Contemporary Mentality’ and ‘Small Magazines’, Pound turns his sights on advertising as a key feature in the changes affecting established magazines from the early years of the twentieth century: ‘The advertising men had to collect such ads as the contents could attract. In the new system the contents were selected rigorously on the basis of how much expensive advertising they would carry.’ Pound argues that this leads to sameness, which ultimately leaves a vacuum, a need for ‘intellectual communication unconditioned by considerations as to whether a given idea or a given trend in art will “git ads” from the leading corset companies’.¹⁸

¹⁶ Frederick J. Hoffman, ‘The Little Magazines: Portrait of an Age’, *Saturday Review of Literature*, 52 (December 1943), 3–5 (p. 3).

¹⁷ See Scholes and Wulfman, pp. 16–18 and 247–52.

¹⁸ Pound, p. 690.

In Pound's view, then, advertising is inimical to little 'free' magazines, but what this type of publication *should* have is 'a program': 'I have, personally, a very strong belief in the clear announcement of a program — any program. A review that can't announce a program probably doesn't know what it thinks or where it is going'; rather, its editors 'should succeed in expressing and giving clear definition to a policy or set of ideas'.¹⁹ The most decisive expression of 'a program' for new artistic movements or avant-garde groups is often a manifesto, and in their discussion of modernist magazines Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker point to the 'close ties between the defiance of the manifesto form and the vehicle for that defiance, the magazine'. For Pound, they suggest, 'a magazine does not only publicize the manifestos of a movement, the magazine itself functions as a form of manifesto'.²⁰

The most famous example of this dual function must be *Blast: the Review of the Great English Vortex*, edited by Wyndham Lewis, who was later joined by Pound. Despite only surviving for two issues (the magazine and indeed some of its contributors became casualties of the First World War), *Blast* has long been identified as one of the most significant of modernist magazines, challenging, puzzling and/or disturbing its readers and the wider public. This was certainly a magazine with a program, promoting a new movement, Vorticism — a term freshly minted by Lewis and Pound to conjure up a sense of the dynamism of modernity, with the artist a concentrated source of energy at the centre of the vortex. The first number of *Blast* in July 1914 included not one but several manifestos, expressing iconoclastic ideas in strident typography. These features are noted in most descriptions of *Blast*, along with mention of key literary contents, including poems by Pound,

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 702–03 and p. 697.

²⁰ Brooker and Thacker, p. 2.

an experimental prose-play by Lewis and fiction by Hueffer (Ford) and Rebecca West. Just as importantly, *Blast* showcased a new visual aesthetic, too, with illustrations of work by Lewis, Jacob Epstein, Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, Edward Wadsworth and other artists mustered under the Vorticist flag. From a print culture perspective, the magazine's physical format, with its large pages (twelve inches by nine), is worth noting not only because it favoured full-page illustrations, but also because the striking combination of text, image and space created a very different effect from that of earlier closely-printed magazines, and thus reinforced *Blast*'s aggressive avant-gardism. But beyond this, Mark Morrisson suggests that *Blast*'s typography, particularly on its 'manifesto' pages, mimics the effect of advertising posters, and its emphatic, often alliterative phrasing (including the lists of 'blasts' and 'blesses') borrows from the shock-tactics 'that had become staples of the commercial advertising world'.²¹ Thus, despite Pound's later strictures against advertising, the magazine 'embraced commercial advertising and characterized the modernist artist as a figure of self-promotion'.²² Like most magazines of the period, however, *Blast* also carried direct advertisements, of a literary kind, and although these receive scant attention in conventional descriptions of modernist magazines, a print culture approach to periodicals views advertisements as integral parts of a periodical's whole. So what can be learned from looking at the advertisements in *Blast*?

The first issue included advertisements for two other prominent modernist magazines. One was the Chicago-based *Poetry*, and the other a British magazine, *The Egoist*, a successor

²¹ Mark S. Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism: Little Magazines, Audiences, and Reception 1905–1920* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), p. 118.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 85.

to *The Freewoman* and *The New Freewoman*.²³ (Pound, needless to say, was involved with both *The Egoist* and *Poetry*.) Inter-journal advertising was not unusual, and the examples from *Blast* illustrate the international nature of the networking that supported modernist enterprises. *Blast*'s other advertisements were for books published by the Bodley Head, the imprint owned by the magazine's publisher, John Lane. The Bodley Head had published *fin de siècle* works such as the plays of Oscar Wilde and another controversial magazine, Aubrey Beardsley's *The Yellow Book* (1894–97). But the advertisements occupying the final pages of *Blast* in 1914–15 also cover various Bodley Head memoirs and biographies along with poetry by a declining late Victorian, Stephen Phillips, and the decidedly non-modernist Lord Curzon of Kedleston. In terms of Darnton's 'communications circuit', foregrounding the publisher reminds us that modernist authors such as Lewis and Pound, and modernist texts such as *Blast*, jostled for commercial space in what was becoming an increasingly crowded literary marketplace.

The explosion in print media at the end of the nineteenth century was closely linked to the arrival of the machine age celebrated in *Blast*'s 'Manifesto – II'. New technologies for printing words and pictures had expanded literary publishing of all kinds, non-experimental as well as experimental, and most notably served a fast-growing mass market for newspapers and magazines. At the start of the twentieth century some five thousand periodicals were being published in Britain, but by 1922 (a key year in chronologies of modernism) that figure

²³ The *Freewoman* titles had been edited by the militant feminist Dora Marsden, who continued as contributing editor to *The Egoist*, while her friend Harriet Shaw Weaver took over as the magazine's editor as well as being its chief financial backer.

had risen to more than fifty thousand,²⁴ of which ‘little modernist magazines’ formed a tiny proportion. Print culture studies, being concerned with the total print ecology of a period, therefore aims to provide a context for the study of little magazines that extends beyond the corner allowed in most maps of literary modernism. This broader context includes not just low-priced popular magazines of the period such as *Tit-Bits* and *Home Chat*, but more expensive and often long-established titles described by Pound in his ‘Small Magazines’ article as the ‘elder’ magazines. For example, in the US, *Scribner’s*, with circulation figures hovering around the 100,000 mark in the early 1920s,²⁵ published the work of writers such as Amy Lowell and F. Scott Fitzgerald, while *Vogue* (launched in Britain in 1916) reviewed the work of Pound, Joyce, T. S. Eliot and Gertrude Stein.²⁶ But there were sometimes paradoxes as well as tensions in the relationship between mainstream ‘quality’ magazines and the modernist project. Mark Gaipa suggests that *Scribner’s*, like other US ‘elder’ journals, saw itself aligned with the modernist little magazines in resisting the ‘downward pressure of the slick mass-circulation magazines that sold for 10 cents an issue’, but at the same time it was seeking ‘to protect mainstream quality culture against the avant-garde experimentation and

²⁴ *Transatlantic Print Culture, 1880–1940*, ed. by Ann Ardis and Patrick Collier (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 1.

²⁵ Mark Gaipa, Introduction to *Scribner’s Magazine*, Appendix I, <http://www.modjournal.org> [accessed 17 August 2019].

²⁶ Circulation figures for British titles before the 1950s are less well recorded, but British *Vogue* had a circulation in 1930 of around 134, 000, according to Jane Garrity, ‘Virginia Woolf, Intellectual Harlotry and 1920s British Vogue’, in *Virginia Woolf in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, ed. by Pamela L. Caughie (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 185–218 (p. 215).

questioning of standards that was increasingly promoted by the little magazines'.²⁷ *Vogue*, described by Jane Garrity as 'a mass cultural product even though the magazine overtly resisted the tactics of mass appeal',²⁸ published five of Virginia Woolf's articles during the 1920s, each of which earned her as much as £50. In 1924, Woolf was also featured in a *Vogue* photo shoot, posing in a Victorian dress that had belonged to her mother. In private, though, Woolf deplored the magazine's 'vulgar' commercial character and its preoccupation with 'ladies' clothes and aristocrats playing golf'.²⁹ Author-centred approaches to literary modernism may well encompass tensions of this kind, but the focus in print culture studies on the communications circuit as a whole expands the context for apparent paradoxes and discrepancies, allowing us to see that the boundaries between different types of magazine in the 1920s were less fixed than conventional accounts of modernism usually suggest. This in turn can lead to a more nuanced understanding of little magazines themselves, which were, as Scholes and Wulfman put it, 'products of a complex interaction between traditional and new, elite and mass, purity and impurity — an interaction of elements which was, in fact, modernism'.³⁰

There was, however, one area where the boundary between little magazines and the rest of the periodical marketplace was quite marked, and that was in the area of censorship. Even without the restrictions imposed by Britain's Obscene Publications Act of 1857, and the US Comstock Act of 1873 (designed to suppress 'Trade in and Circulation of Obscene Literature') the 'quality' mass-circulation magazines with their hefty revenues from

²⁷ Gaipa.

²⁸ Garrity, p. 191.

²⁹ Rose, p. 188.

³⁰ Scholes and Wulfman, p. 41.

advertising could not risk publishing material that might, in the view of advertisers, offend readers. Some little magazines, however, were prepared to defend experimentation and artistic freedom of expression even if this meant courting controversy. A prime example was the US-based *The Little Review*, which ran from 1914 to 1929. Other than its comparative longevity, *The Little Review* ‘had all the characteristics of the classic little magazine; [...] it was programmatically non-commercial, lived constantly on the edge of bankruptcy, could not pay its contributors, and had a small circulation of never more than two thousand and probably closer to one’³¹ (though, in fact, many more little magazines counted their circulation in hundreds). The ubiquitous Pound was a contributor from 1916 and in April 1917 became the magazine’s foreign editor. Two months later, and this was probably no coincidence, the magazine’s masthead began to carry the declaration, ‘Making No Compromise with the Public Taste’. The most marked example of Pound’s influence on *The Little Review* was its serialization of Joyce’s *Ulysses* between 1918 and 1920. Despite Pound’s occasional editing of the text’s language, three issues of the magazine containing instalments of *Ulysses* were confiscated by the US Post Office, then in 1920 the secretary of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice brought a charge of obscenity against the magazine’s editors, Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap, and the serialization of Joyce’s novel abruptly ceased. The case came to trial in October 1920, and in February the following year Anderson and Heap were found guilty, and fined.

The colourful history of the publication of *Ulysses*, in serial and book form, is a familiar one in conventional accounts of literary modernism. Written with hindsight and coloured by changes to obscenity laws in the liberal second half of the twentieth century,

³¹ Alan Golding, ‘*The Dial, The Little Review, and the Dialogics of Modernism*’, in *Little Magazines & Modernism*, ed. by Suzanne W. Churchill and Adam McKible (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 67–81 (p. 69).

such accounts foreground the success of *Ulysses* — and other experimental texts of the modernist period — in eventually breaking the shackles of censorship. However, print culture studies adopts a more synchronic approach to the topic and notes how contemporary magazines were affected by the cautionary tale of *The Little Review*. Following through Joyce's struggles to have his work published, the background to the *Transatlantic Review*'s publication of a fragment of *Finnegan's Wake* in 1924 provides an interesting example. In a short article about Ford's Paris-based magazine, Frank MacShane (an early biographer of Ford) recounts an unusual editorial meeting that preceded the appearance of 'Work in Progress' — as Ford entitled the section of Joyce's latest work — in the April 1924 issue of the *Transatlantic*. Although Ford was a genuine admirer of Joyce's writing, he was, says MacShane, 'afraid of jeopardising the magazine as a whole by having an issue of it seized by the British customs officials on the grounds that it contained pornography. The trouble *The Little Review* had undergone when it published *Ulysses* was still fresh in his mind and Ford knew that the *Transatlantic* could not afford a legal battle.' Ford's solution to the dilemma was to convene a meeting at which Joyce would read his manuscript to 'the most official Englishman' Ford could find, in this case the Paris correspondent of *The Times*, Sisley Huddleston. MacShane quotes Huddleston's report of the meeting from his 1928 memoir, *Bohemian, Literary and Social Life in Paris*:

Joyce read as only he can read: and I waited in vain for the obscenity and blasphemy which I was warned would be present. They were not apparent to me. If they were they were carefully concealed. I reported to Ford that whatever impropriety there might be would not be visible to the naked eye of a British or American policeman.

So, in due course, the pages appeared, and helped to make the *transatlantic review* a success.³²

The *Transatlantic Review*'s enduring reputation as one of the most vibrant and best-edited magazines of the 1920s confirms Huddleston's verdict on its success. Despite the almost inevitable financial difficulties that led to its closure at the end of 1924, it had fulfilled its declared literary purpose of 'widening the field in which the younger writers of the day can find publication'.³³ These included Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein (by this date, though, hardly a 'younger writer') and Djuna Barnes; in many cases, as with *Finnegan's Wake*, the *Transatlantic* provided writers with the necessary stepping-stone to more lucrative book publication.

Although it would be another fifteen years before *Finnegan's Wake* appeared in its entirety, by 1924 *Ulysses* had already been published in book format. The first edition, brought out by Sylvia Beach of the Shakespeare and Company bookshop in Paris in 1922, was a deluxe limited edition whose 1,000 copies were sold to subscribers. Harriet Shaw Weaver then bought the plates from which Beach's edition had been printed and, turning *The Egoist* magazine into the Egoist Press for the purpose, published a second edition of 2,000 copies in Paris. When 500 copies were seized by English customs officials at Folkestone they were promptly burnt, as were several hundred more copies that found their way to post offices in America. John Xiros Cooper argues that 'the suppression of the novel for general consumption changed its commodity status and, as a result, enhanced its reputation and

³² Frank MacShane, 'The Transatlantic Review', *Dalhousie Review*, 41.3 (1961), 303–313 (p. 309).

³³ From the *Transatlantic Review*'s pre-publication prospectus, quoted in MacShane, p. 305.

affected its value'.³⁴ It was another ten years before the US publisher Random House challenged the ban on *Ulysses*, and in a ground-breaking legal case in 1933 obtained a judgement that the novel was not obscene. Random House promptly brought out an authorized American edition in 1934, followed in Britain by the Bodley Head's 1936 edition. From a print culture perspective, Cooper raises questions about how the text's transition from a marginalized cultural position to a mainstream 'great novel' plays into discussions about how modernism is defined:

The much-anticipated publication of the novel was the avant-garde sensation of 1922 (even more so than the publication of Eliot's *The Waste Land* in the same year).

However, Joyce's *Ulysses* is not any less modernist after Random House publishes it in 1934. It may no longer function as an avant-garde icon (although its avant-gardist aura as a useful marketing tool clung to it well into the 1960s), but its position as a modernist work is not compromised by the change in its material means of production and distribution. Modernism may go through an avant-garde period, but its avant-gardist position is not intrinsic to it.³⁵

The crux of this argument is that conventional accounts of literary modernism have tended to privilege a text's first publication, however atypical that might be. So literary history has devoted more space to Sylvia Beach's deluxe subscription edition of *Ulysses* than to the later trade editions from Random House and the Bodley Head that brought Joyce's novel within reach of a much wider readership. The perspective from print culture studies, however, looks

³⁴ John Xiros Cooper, 'Bringing the Modern to Market: the Case of Faber & Faber', in *Publishing Modernist Fiction and Poetry*, pp. 88–108 (p. 90).

³⁵ *Ibid.*

rather different, taking in a longer time-scale that points towards the changes in book-buying culture emerging in the later modernist period.

The story of the first appearance of *Ulysses* in book form, involving the re-invention of Shakespeare and Company's Paris bookshop as a small press, is an intriguing reminder of just how many English-language 'fine' publishing enterprises were based in France in the 1920s. A print culture studies approach to this phenomenon might foreground the 'printing' element in the communications circuit, and variations in the way that books as physical objects were conceived. Around the turn of the century, just as mechanized book production was bringing down the cost of books for a mass market, at the other end of the scale the printing of 'fine books' had received a fresh impetus from the private press movement. This offshoot of the Arts and Crafts movement began in Britain, influenced by William Morris and his friend, the printer Emery Walker, who shared a belief that books should be works of art, carefully designed, produced with high quality materials, typically on hand-operated presses. While owners of private presses often sought to create beautiful and expensive editions of classic literary texts, the potential for publishing new works in high quality editions was not lost on writers and publishers in what by the 1920s was an international marketplace for literary modernism spanning Britain, America and France. For example, the young American poet Harry Crosby, son of a wealthy New England banking family who had settled with his wife Caresse in Paris, set up a publishing company to produce his and Caresse's own poetry in finely-made editions. The Black Sun Press, as it was renamed in 1928, expanded to publish the work of other writers, many of them members of the expatriate community living in Paris. These included Archibald MacLeish, Pound (of course), Hemingway, Joyce and Lawrence. After Harry Crosby's suicide in 1929, Caresse continued to run the Black Sun Press into the 1940s. Another influential and wealthy woman publisher of this period was Nancy Cunard, who established the Hours Press first in Normandy then in Paris. During its three years of

operation from 1928 to 1931, the Hours Press produced twenty-four beautifully designed volumes; it focused on contemporary poetry, with a list including Samuel Beckett's long poem, *Whoroscope*, and work by Laura Riding, Norman Douglas, Richard Aldington and, yet again, Pound.

Although the Black Sun Press and the Hours Press might merit a mention in some accounts of literary modernism, by far the best known of the 'small presses' is Leonard and Virginia Woolf's Hogarth Press. This began in 1917, in the best traditions of the private press movement, with a small hand-printing press set up on the dining-room table of the Woolfs' house, 34 Paradise Road, Richmond, known as Hogarth House. For the Woolfs, printing was intended to be a hobby, encouraged by Leonard as therapy for Virginia after a series of breakdowns. They envisaged printing 'their own works and the works of their friends without the meddling interventions of editors and without the pressures of commercial expectations'³⁶ and distributing them on a subscription basis. The friends whose work they published included Katherine Mansfield, E. M. Forster, Eliot, and other members of the Bloomsbury group. As material objects, books from the Hogarth Press were notable for their illustrations and cover designs, with yet more members of the Bloomsbury group, such as Vanessa Bell, Roger Fry and Dora Carrington, providing the talent. This much is familiar from the story of 'small presses' in conventional literary history, along with the importance of the Hogarth imprint for Virginia Woolf's own writing. Her reputation as a critic and essayist is as much a part of the story as is her fiction, especially with the Hogarth Press 1925 publication of the first series of her essays, *The Common Reader* (a second series was to appear in 1932). As the title of the collection makes clear, Woolf looks at literature not just from the vantage point of the writer or critic, but through the eyes of a reader. One example from the 1925 volume is

³⁶ Claire Battershill, 'The Hogarth Press', in *Publishing Modernist Fiction and Poetry*, pp. 70–87 (p. 70).

‘How it Strikes a Contemporary’, originally published in the *Times Literary Supplement* in April 1923, where the reader’s perspective is woven into a much-quoted distillation of the modern condition:

We are sharply cut off from our predecessors. A shift in the scale — the war, the sudden slip of masses held in position for ages — has shaken the fabric from top to bottom, alienated us from the past and made us perhaps too vividly conscious of the present. Every day we find ourselves doing, saying, or thinking things that would have been impossible to our fathers.³⁷

Another of Woolf’s well-known essays from the 1920s was ‘How Should One Read a Book’, first published in the *Yale Review* (October 1926) and collected in the second *Common Reader* volume; Hermione Lee suggests that ‘it is closely linked to her work at the Press: the writer is imagined as a kind of mental compositor, and the reader is invited to think of the book not as a fixed object, but as a process’.³⁸ The focus in many of Woolf’s essays on the two-way dialogue between writers and readers reflects very clearly the importance of readers as described by Darnton in the circuit of print forms.

The Hogarth Press has received a great deal of attention from print culture scholars not just because of Virginia Woolf’s reputation as a writer but because it has a rich and accessible archive. Both the Woolfs wrote extensively about the business of running the

³⁷ Virginia Woolf, *Selected Essays*, ed. by David Bradshaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 27.

³⁸ Hermione Lee, ‘Virginia Woolf’s essays’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Sue Roe and Susan Sellers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 91–108 (p. 98).

press, and its records, including stock ledgers, order books and press-cutting albums as well as detailed correspondence files, have been carefully preserved.³⁹ Through scholarly work on the archive, the operations of the Hogarth Press within the communications circuit have become clearer. One example is Virginia Woolf's short story 'Kew Gardens', published as a pamphlet in 1919 with illustrations by her sister Vanessa Bell. Literary history's usual focus on the first moment of a text's appearance privileges this first edition of 150 hand-printed copies of one of modernism's most famous short stories from a famous small press. However, from a print culture studies perspective the narrative does not end there: after a review of 'Kew Gardens' in the *Times Literary Supplement* that described it as 'a work of art [...] a thing of original and therefore strange beauty', the Woolfs were inundated with orders, so they turned to a commercial printer to produce a larger second edition,⁴⁰ a strategy that then became the norm for many of their publications. By 1923, as the Hogarth Press continued to expand, its distribution methods changed, too, and the Woolfs employed 'a series of Press managers who handled day-to-day correspondence including negotiations with printers, booksellers and customers'.⁴¹ The Press was also flexible about the size of its print runs and its pricing policy: by the end of the 1920s, a considerable amount of its income came from

³⁹ The Hogarth Press Business Archive is housed at the University of Reading, and can be accessed with permission of the owners, Random House Publishers <<https://www.reading.ac.uk/special-collections/collections/sc-hogarth.aspx>> [accessed 24 August 2019].

⁴⁰ Elizabeth Willson Gordon, 'How Should One Sell a Book? Production Methods, Material Objects and Marketing at the Hogarth Press', in *Virginia Woolf's Bloomsbury, vol.2: International Influence and Politics*, ed. by Lisa Shahriari and Gina Potts (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 107–123 (p. 117).

⁴¹ Battershill, p. 81.

sales of a new uniform edition of Virginia Woolf's work, at five shillings per title, though their list also included a wide range of other works, fiction and non-fiction, translations (the Hogarth Press was the first English publisher of Freud) and numerous series.

The Hogarth Press was therefore in a different category from small presses like the Black Sun and Hours presses, being long-lived (it ran for three decades before being sold to Chatto and Windus in 1946) and producing an extensive range of modestly-priced titles. Its transformation from an artisanal small press into a commercial publisher illustrates the way that modernist writing was, by the late 1920s, being assimilated into the mainstream literary marketplace in Britain. On the other side of the Atlantic, a rather different kind of small press was following a similar trajectory, from one-man business promoting the work of radical writers to partnership in a new mainstream publishing venture. The B. W. Huebsch imprint had its origins not in the private press movement but in a commercial New York printing business established by Benjamin Huebsch's uncle and brother at the end of the nineteenth century. In his first few years as a publisher Huebsch focused on self-improvement books and political texts, but his interest in the arts began to be reflected in his imprint's list, and he became a champion of a number of experimental writers whose work focused on social problems. So he was enthusiastic about publishing Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* in 1919, and he was also the first American publisher of Lawrence, and of Joyce (though despite publishing his earlier works, he rejected *Ulysses*). However, Gertrude Stein's brand of literary modernism did not suit Huebsch, and he also admitted that he found Faulkner unreadable.

Readability was crucial to Huebsch because his reputation as a publisher of radical literary works was closely linked to his active involvement in politics. Catherine Turner describes him as 'a lifelong joiner of politically progressive organisations and a creator of new ones. [...] He admitted that he "had more trouble than most" with censors during the

First World War because of his association with pacifist, anti-Imperialist, and Irish political causes and that both the US and British governments monitored his activities.⁴² For Huebsch, publishing modernist works (including a number that had been rejected by other publishers) was part and parcel of his commitment to social reform: he believed that reading promoted open-minded discussion and thus paved the way for cultural and political change. The challenge was to reach as many readers as possible, and so Huebsch was prepared to publish inexpensive pamphlets, especially for political reprints, and low-cost paper-covered books. In an interview with the *Christian Science Monitor* in 1920 he noted the influence of certain European publishers in this kind of experiment geared towards to the democratization of knowledge, referring to the German publisher Tauchnitz, who had launched a collection of paperbound English-language fiction in the mid nineteenth century, along with another German imprint, Reclam, whose paperback editions of literary classics had been widely available in Europe for decades. Huebsch told his interviewer that he intended his own publishing experiment to ‘remake the world in paper covers’.⁴³ However, recognizing the limitations of his own finances and small-scale publishing operation, in 1925 he merged his business with a new company, the Viking Press, of which he became vice president. This move, says Turner, ‘allowed Huebsch to focus on literature which had what he felt would be lasting importance and which would remake the world, at least in small measure’.⁴⁴ The move towards paperback publication gathered pace elsewhere during subsequent decades, but David Earle points out that by the late 1920s there was in fact a history of modernist authors

⁴² Catherine Turner, ‘The B. W. Huebsch Imprint’, in *Publishing Modernist Fiction and Poetry*, pp. 15–33 (p. 21).

⁴³ Quoted in Turner, p. 22.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

— notably Lawrence and Joyce, whose work had been championed by Huebsch — appearing in paperbacks.⁴⁵

Even this brief snapshot of small presses in the 1920s illustrates the point brought out by Hammill and Hussey, that ‘[p]rint was on the move throughout the modernist period; many artists viewed “the book” no longer as merely a vehicle for the printed expression of ideas but as a material object to be manipulated as part of the experimentalism by which modernism was initially defined’.⁴⁶ Although a print culture perspective on modernism has been discussed here as a recent development, there is also a sense in which it has been present all along. Again, as Hammill and Hussey note, many artists, writers and critics of the modernist era were keenly interested in developments in printing, in book design and in journalism. As we have seen, some of the most prominent modernist writers, including Woolf and Pound, ‘were profoundly aware of the media ecology of their time and [...] wrote frequently about print culture’.⁴⁷ So what can twenty-first-century print culture studies add to those contemporary understandings?

The past, by virtue of being the past, always appears to us through a number of filters. In the case of literature from the period of high modernism, some of these filters are used to define the contours of the literary field, while others are concerned with the value of specific literary works. Academic literary studies also use the over-arching and retrospective idea of modernism itself as a conceptual filter through which any literary product must pass. Print culture studies is beginning to hold these filters up to the light, in the first place by making a

⁴⁵ David M. Earle, *Re-Covering Modernism* (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), p. 15.

⁴⁶ Faye Hammill and Mark Hussey, *Modernism’s Print Cultures* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016) p. 2.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

much wider range of printed works accessible to today's scholars. The rapid growth of print media around the turn of the twentieth century created new problems of preservation, and this was particularly evident in the area of periodicals. Print culture scholars have been active in retrieving and digitally preserving magazines that had fallen out of sight, and have also begun mending what Scholes and Wulfman identified as 'the hole in the archive'.⁴⁸ In many cases, preserving physically fragile magazines in bound library copies involved stripping out 'ephemera', that is, advertisements, but, as Pound understood, advertising was important; in a context where writers and editors declared themselves to be rejecting the consumerist values of contemporary society, later scholars need to analyse a fuller range of evidence about the rapprochement between modernism and the marketplace. Much the same goes for the range of documents ('business history', in Jonathan Rose's phrase) used to examine the communications circuit of literary works. This in turn suggests another way that print culture studies refreshes conventional approaches to literary modernism, by developing a broader picture of the context within which printed texts were produced, circulated and consumed. If a cultural studies approach opens possibilities for acknowledging fluidity and crossover between different segments of the print marketplace, rather than sealing off canonical writers and texts, questions of literary value may also be differently addressed. But although the traditional modernist canon has recently been expanded by revisionist approaches, the very notion of a modernist canon continues to exert considerable influence in academic literary studies. As Chris Baldick has argued, 'the revolution that we call modernism' is still presented as the major development in literature during the first decades of the twentieth century, 'commonly to the exclusion of all else'.⁴⁹ However, a literary history that focuses on

⁴⁸ Scholes and Wulfman, pp. 196–222.

⁴⁹ Chris Baldick, *The Modern Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 3.

modernity and the modern movement more broadly will be well served by the inclusiveness of print culture studies.