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20

**JAMES JOYCE
THE JOYS OF EXILE**

*Edited by
Franca Ruggieri*

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BEING EXPATS TOGETHER:
JOYCE IN EXPATRIATE LITTLE MAGAZINES
AND AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

As the indications of time and place of composition given at the end of his major works clearly demonstrate, Joyce conceived both his life and his literary career as an uninterrupted trajectory on the European continent, characterised by perpetual absence from his native country, by change and dislocation. Although much has been said on the theme of Joyce's ambivalent attitude towards Ireland, as well as on his self-imposed exilic condition, it seems obvious to remark that between his first departure in 1904 and the publication of *Finnegans Wake* in 1939 Joyce wrote incessantly about his native country, but always while living elsewhere. Indeed, absence seems to have made Joyce's writing possible: if being away from Ireland ensures that the writer keeps Ireland vividly present in his own mind, the paradox appears to rest on a dialectical notion of presence in absence, which became even stronger in later life. In an interview with Philippe Soupault quoted by Ellmann, Joyce famously declared that going back to Dublin while living in Paris "would prevent [him] from writing about Dublin" (*JJII*: 643). Not only was the fact of being a voluntary exile from his native city an essential condition for making such city the eternal subject of his own works; Dublin also embodied, in Joyce's view, the whole universe: "I always write about Dublin", he told Arthur Power, "because if I can get to the heart of Dublin I can get to the heart of all the cities of the world" (in *JJII*: 505). However, it is equally noteworthy that, according to Ellmann, acquaintance with the work of an Irish expatriate living and writing in Paris was

also a basic requirement for taking part in a cosmopolitan cultural community, or even being *tout court* an expatriate in the stimulating intellectual milieu of 1920s Paris. As the biographer puts it, “to have read *Ulysses*, or parts of it, became the mark of the knowledgeable expatriate” (*JIII*: 527). But how did expats in Paris read (about) *Ulysses* and *Work in Progress*, or even become familiar with the mastermind that conceived such revered masterpieces? This essay attempts to show that the public image of Joyce as a self-exiled genius and expatriate writer in a cosmopolitan intellectual milieu was mainly shaped by the numerous instalments, reviews and critical articles which appeared in both French literary journals and international little magazines based in 1920s Paris, ranging from the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, which published the text of Valery Larbaud’s seminal lecture on *Ulysses* (where Joyce is contextualised as a European), to Ford Madox Ford’s *transatlantic review* and Eugene Jolas’s *transition*. While serial publication of Joyce’s masterpieces, along with translations¹, reviews and essays, contributed to the creation of the myth of Joyce as an exiled mastermind in cosmopolitan Paris, the numerous references to him within the tradition of the expatriate autobiography – Ford’s *It Was the Nightingale*, Robert McAlmon’s *Being Geniuses Together* and Jolas’s *Man from Babel*, to name but a few – mainly focused attention on the private side of his essentially public image. Several scholars – Monk (2001) and Rosenquist (2016), for instance – have pointed out that these literary memoirs often seek to draw the aura of high art and the exceptional

¹ By the end of 1922, five stories from *Dubliners*, translated into French by various hands, had been published in several periodicals, but the complete *Gens de Dublin* did not appear until 1926, the joint effort of Yva Fernandez, Hélène du Pasquier and Jacques-Paul Reynaud. *A Portrait* was translated by Ludmila Savitzky as *Dedalus: Portrait de l'artiste jeune par lui-même* in 1924, while the complete French *Ulysse* finally saw the light of day in 1929 after many years of toiling and squabbles between the translators Auguste Morel, Stuart Gilbert and Valery Larbaud, assisted by Joyce himself. The book-format publication under the imprint of Adrienne Monnier’s Maison des Amis des Livres was preceded by the appearance of some “fragments”, mainly translated by Larbaud and Morel, in such prestigious periodicals as *Commerce* (1924) and *La Nouvelle Revue Française* (1928). An analogous pre-book publication history characterised *Work in Progress*, with “Anna Livie Plurabelle”, for instance, published in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* in 1931.

artist into an area on the border between the public and the private, between mass circulation/public consumption of ordinary life and elitism or celebrity culture. As regards Joyce, the figure of the celebrated but also controversial author is mainly depicted in his private, everyday-life dimension, particularly through anecdotes and personal episodes, thus enacting a dialectical tension between the public and the private sphere.

Criticism has often underlined the importance of modernist literary reviews as part of a dynamic public culture both before the First World War and during the interwar years, as well as the significant role they played in spreading ideas across the continent, promoting movements and publishing avant-garde writers even before they were established as modernist icons². In this period, a number of expatriate Anglo-American little magazines were published in European cities, especially in the stimulating *milieu* of Paris, in order to favour contacts between Europe and America. To name but a few, there was *Secession* (1922-24), *transition* (1927-38), *Broom* (1921-24), *The Exile* (1927-28), the *transatlantic review* (1924) and *This Quarter* (1925-32), as well as the bilingual (Anglo-French) *Tambour* (1928-30) and *Échanges* (1929-32). The *Little Review* (1914-29), not truly an expatriate periodical, was edited by Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap in Chicago and New York, but also printed in Paris, where the two women spent much of their time in the 1920s and where the final issue was also edited. This magazine – mainly pertinent to our discussion for its serialization of *Ulysses* in twenty-three instalments between March 1918 and December 1920³ –

² Among the many publications devoted to the subject, see Brooker and Thacker 2009, 2012, 2013; Churchill and McKible 2007; Morrisson 2001; Monk 1999; Aijmer Rysjö and Jonsson 2013.

³ As is well known, readers of the novel serialised in the *Little Review* – which ended abruptly with the first instalment of the “Oxen of the Sun” chapter in the September-December 1920 issue – never saw the last four episodes essentially for two reasons. First of all, in early 1921 the editors were prosecuted and fined by the New York Society for the Prevention of Vice for publishing the allegedly obscene “Nausicaa” episode. Secondly, the publication of *Ulysses* in book form was announced by Shakespeare and Company in autumn 1921, though it actually did not come out until February 1922 (on this point see Gaipa,

was aimed at establishing some intellectual communication between England, France and America by presenting the best of the post-war avant-gardism produced in those countries. In the Parisian literary scene of the 1920s, both the *Nouvelle Revue Française* (widely recognised as the greatest cultural organ in France during the interwar years) and Ford's *transatlantic review* (published simultaneously in Paris, London and New York from January to December 1924) played a significant role in spreading an ideal of literary modernism as a cosmopolitan movement caught between tradition and modernity. Later in the same decade, *transition* emphasised the international aspect of little magazines and actively campaigned for daring formal experimentalism. Edited in Paris by Jolas together with Elliot Paul (another American expatriate), the review featured contributors from many parts of Europe, including exponents of German expressionism, dadaism and French surrealism, and aimed to serve as a transatlantic link for the avant-garde.

As a considerable body of criticism began to grow around Joyce's work, largely in the form of interpretation, defence or attack, these periodicals all played a significant role in the creation of the public image of Joyce as a modernist icon. The editor of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, Jacques Rivière, agreed to print the text of Valery Larbaud's seminal lecture on *Ulysses* – held at Adrienne Monnier's Maison des Amis des Livres on 7 December 1921 – in the issue for April 1922. Larbaud's essay – the fourth section of which was later translated as “The *Ulysses* of James Joyce” for the inaugural number of Eliot's *Criterion* (October 1922) – was followed by another article, entitled “À propos de James Joyce et de *Ulysses*: Réponse à M. Ernest Boyd”, in January 1925. The latter was essentially an answer to an attack by a fellow literary critic, who had disagreed with Larbaud's characterisation of Joyce as a European writer. Larbaud's propaganda was of particular importance in placing the work of the expatriate genius in a transnational *milieu*, more

Latham and Scholes 2015). In the meantime, extracts from chapters 2, 3, 6 and 10 were also serialised in Harriet Shaw Weaver's *The Egoist*, from January-February 1919 to December 1919. As McAlmon put it in his memoirs, “the *Little Review*, Sylvia Beach, and Harriet Weaver brought Joyce into print” (McAlmon and Boyle 1968: 82-83).

precisely in the context of Irish/English writers such as Swift, Sterne and Fielding or, in terms of the censorship that *Ulysses* had suffered, along with French authors like Flaubert and Baudelaire. From a stylistic point of view, moreover, Joyce – “the greatest currently living writer of the English language” (Larbaud, in Deming 2002: 252) – was further compared to the symbolists Lautréamont and Rimbaud, or to the naturalists Maupassant and Flaubert, an analogy also adumbrated in another significant piece of criticism by Ezra Pound for the *Mercure de France*, entitled “James Joyce et Pécuchet” (June 1922). In an interesting passage of his public talk later turned into an essay, Larbaud praised Joyce by calling him “a pure ‘Milesian’: Irish and Catholic of old stock, from the Ireland that benefits from some affinities with Spain, France and Italy, but for whom England is a strange land which cannot be made closer even by the commonality of language” (Larbaud 1922: 387, my translation). He finally concluded that “with the work of James Joyce and in particular with this *Ulysses* which is soon going to appear in Paris, Ireland is making a sensational re-entrance into high European literature” (Larbaud in Deming 2002: 253). Significantly enough, however, original excerpts from the novel or from *Work in Progress* never found a place in the respectable French periodical, which Joyce called “the Little Review of France (though it is now more conservative)” (*Letters I*: 161). During the 1920s and 1930s, Joyce frequently appeared in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* as a foreign writer in translation: “Protée”, by Stuart Gilbert, Valery Larbaud and Auguste Morel, was published in August 1928; “Anna Livie Plurabelle”, by Samuel Beckett, Eugène Jolas, Philippe Soupault, Adrienne Monnier and others, in May 1931. Moreover, he was often the subject of critical essays/reviews/notes, for instance by Julien Green (“*Dedalus*, par James Joyce”, August 1924), Ernest Boyd (“À propos de James Joyce et de *Ulysses*”, March 1925), Stuart Gilbert (“Le troisième des dix-huit épisodes qui composent l’*Ulysses* de James Joyce...”, August 1928; “*Ulysse*, par James Joyce”, April 1929), Philippe Soupault (“À propos de la traduction d’Anna Livia Plurabelle”, May 1931) and Louis Gillet (“James Joyce”, November 1931).

As critics have frequently underlined, Ford conceived the *transatlantic review* as the materialisation of his ideal “International Republic of Letters”⁴. Aimed at three different readerships (British, American and French) but based in Paris, the review was meant to encourage intellectual communication between writers and artists across national boundaries and their equally diverse reading public in order to unite them in some sort of imaginary community and defend transcultural ideals. Accordingly, the *transatlantic review* published such a wide range of material such as the experimental works of Pound, Stein, Cummings, Hemingway, Dos Passos, Valéry, Cocteau, Soupault and – most relevant to our purpose – Joyce, whose yet unnamed *Finnegans Wake* famously began to appear serially under the provisional title *Work in Progress* that had been proposed by Ford himself. Ford the critic and editor – who, in a 1922 article for the *English Review* on “*Ulysses* and the Handling of Indecencies”, had already hailed Joyce’s novel as one of “the incredible labours of this incredible genius”, “a European work written in English” (in Deming 2002: 276, 278) – regarded the Irish author as “the greatest of all virtuosos of the word” (Ford 1929: 125-126), and praised his work mainly for its purely literary qualities. He valued it like the discovery of “a new continent with new traditions” (Saunders and Stang 2002: 217), arguing that its complexity made it “a bridge between Anglo-Saxondom and the continent of Europe” (*ibid.*: 220)⁵. Therefore, the major editorial success for Ford’s review was undoubtedly obtaining the “Mamalujo” episode of *Work in Progress*, the first pre-book publication of Joyce’s *magnum opus* which appeared in the literary supplement of the April issue.

⁴ His agenda is famously laid out in the much-quoted prospectus for the magazine: “the aim of the Review is to help in bringing about a state of things in which it will be considered that there are no English, no French – for the matter of that, no Russian, Italian, Asiatic or Teutonic – Literatures: there will be only Literature” (Ford qtd. in Judd 1990: 345). On this point, see Poli 1965; Rogers 2010; Lamberti 2010.

⁵ Ford’s words regarding Joyce underline the fundamental importance he attributed to such aesthetic ideals as internationalism and novelty built on tradition. On the relationship between the two writers, see Wiesenfarth 1991 and Cheng 1992.

Dirk Van Hulle (2016) has shown in detail that the printing of *Work in Progress* was initially sporadic, consisting of a few extracts in the *transatlantic review* (April 1924), Robert McAlmon's *Contact Collection of Contemporary Writers* ("Here Comes Everybody", June 1925), *The Criterion* (July 1925), Adrienne Monnier's *Le Navire d'Argent*⁶ ("Anna Livia Plurabelle", October 1925) and *This Quarter* (November 1925). After that, *transition* – the most prestigious expatriate little magazine of the interwar period – regularly began to serialise "Work in Progress", considered by Jolas as the most accomplished expression of the "Revolution of the Word" credo. The work that would become *Finnegans Wake* appeared in almost all numbers (with the exception of 9, 10, 14, 16-17, 19-20, 24, 25) along with a vast array of critical articles in support, promotion and defence of its author, especially when they were meant to be fierce attacks on detractors. As Van Hulle interestingly remarks, at that time "Joyce did not write so much as he was being written about" (2016: 100); as a response to hostile reception of his linguistic inventiveness – which, in any case, he judged better than utter indifference – he chose an interesting strategy: "instead of writing letters to the editors or giving interviews, he made others do the talking for him" (*ibid.*: 98-99). The list is quite long, but it is worth giving in full in order to recognise how Jolas's magazine became the principal propagandist organ for Joyce's *oeuvre* in the late twenties and thirties. Over nearly a decade, the following contributions appeared: William Carlos Williams's "A Note on the Recent Work of James Joyce" (November 1927); Elliot Paul's "Mr. Joyce's Treatment of Plot" (December 1927); Jolas's "The Revolution of Language and James Joyce" (February 1928); Marcel Brion's "The Idea of Time in the Work of James Joyce" (March 1928); Stuart Gilbert's "Prolegomena to *Work*

⁶ Though it cannot in the least be considered as an expatriate magazine, *Le Navire d'Argent* tried to introduce recent Anglo-American literature to a French audience. Four months prior to the publication of Joyce's excerpt (originally due to appear in *The Calendar of Modern Letters*, but eventually rejected by its editors Edgell Rickword and Douglas Garman), Monnier had published Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", translated by herself together with Sylvia Beach.

in Progress” and Frank Budgen’s “The *Work in Progress* of James Joyce and Old Norse Poetry” (Summer 1928); Thomas McGreevy’s “Note on *Work in Progress*” and John Rodker’s “The Word Structure of *Work in Progress*” (Fall 1928); Robert McAlmon’s “Mr. Joyce Directs an Irish Prose Ballet” (February 1929); Stuart Gilbert’s “Thesaurus Minusculus: A Short Commentary on a Paragraph of *Work in Progress*”, Samuel Beckett’s “Dante ... Bruno. Vico .. Joyce” and Ernst Robert Curtius’s “Technique and Thematic Development of James Joyce” (June 1929); Stuart Gilbert’s “The ‘Aeolus’ Episode of *Ulysses*”, “Function of Words” and Michael Stuart’s “The Dubliner and His Dowdili (A Note on the Sublime)” (November 1929); Carola Giedion-Welcker’s “*Work in Progress*: A Linguistic Experiment by James Joyce” (June 1930); four essays entitled “Homage to James Joyce” by Stuart Gilbert, Eugene Jolas, Thomas McGreevy, Philippe Soupault, and Louis Gillet’s “Mr. James Joyce and His New Novel” (March 1932); Jolas’s “Marginalia to James Joyce’s *Work in Progress*” (February 1933); Armand Petitjean’s “Joyce and Mythology: Mythology and Joyce” (July 1935) and Jolas’s “Homage to the Mythmaker” (April-May 1938). In these exegetical efforts Joyce is invariably presented as “an experimenter of linguistic possibilities of expression” (Giedion-Welcker in Deming 2005: 499), an appreciative judgement which resonates – amid the harsh condemnations of detractors – in other expatriate little magazines of the time. In a contribution to the March 1932 number, marking both Joyce’s fiftieth birthday and the tenth anniversary of the publication of *Ulysses*, Thomas McGreevy paid homage to his compatriot by affirming that “Joyce’s work is of universal significance” (in Mikhail 1990: 142). In the same context, Jolas discussed Joyce as “a mile-stone in the literature of the world”, who “has revolutionized literary expression”; his *oeuvre* is described as “a gigantic architecture of a subjective-objective cosmos” and *Work in Progress*, in particular, as a “Herculean task”, a “work without parallel in modern literary history” (in Deming 2005: 570). Such cosmic dimension of the book as *world* seems to have naturally evolved from Larbaud’s first appraisals – reiterated by several scholars throughout the years – of *Ulysses* as the

product of the European extent of Joyce's genius, closely related to his condition as an exiled writer.

While the history of modernism in the magazines reveals complex entanglements among high art, intellectual thought, mass culture and the commercial marketplace, where Joyce mainly appears in the public dimension as a *succès de scandale*, an analogous dichotomy between public and private, high and low, celebrity and mass culture can be observed in some examples of modernist expatriate autobiography. What seems distinctive of this tradition is essentially the fact that the sense of community and place plays a fundamental role: the focus on the personal, self-contained dimension, which is typical of life-writing as a genre, is enlarged and extends to a collective dimension, as these memoirs usually represent an emerging communal spirit rising from the shared experience of living as voluntary exiles in a cosmopolitan city, which is part of the narrative itself. It is perhaps for this reason that, in the autobiographies of friends, acquaintances and fellow expatriates, Joyce – the undisputed protagonist of the Parisian literary scene of the time – features prominently, but what is even more notable is that in these works Joyce the virtuoso writer is essentially portrayed alongside Joyce the man. For instance, in the partly fictionalised sketch of his own post-war life in England and (mainly) France entitled *It Was the Nightingale* (1934), Ford is primarily concerned with the artists that shaped his experience of Paris, and the impression of the city very much emerges from the interweaving of his personal affairs and the portraits of those artists. The account of his own arrival in “darkly tumultuous and crowded Paris” (Ford 1954: 180) is characterised by a vivid description of the vibrancy of the cosmopolitan intellectual milieu he found in a metropolis that “gyrated, seethed, clamoured, roared with the Arts” (*ibid.*: 259). Life-writing turns here into a depiction of what Ford himself calls “Paris's literary geography” (*ibid.*: 181), where Ezra Pound and Sylvia Beach act as intermediaries and mentors introducing him to British, French and American writers of the Left Bank. Unsurprisingly, Joyce is immediately mentioned and presented in the guise of a sacred figure surrounded by ardent disciples, which gives us a clear idea of the high reputation he enjoyed in the public sphere:

I had my view of foreign literary life in Paris through Miss Sylvia Beach. That untiring lady battered me without ceasing. She demanded that I should write innumerable articles about *Ulysses* and, with lance in rest, slaughter all his English detractors. I did! So I had a view of Joyce enthroned with adorers, complete somewhere on the slopes of Mount Parnassus, which is one of the Seven Hills of Paris. And I was brought into contact with Mr. Valéry Larbaud, Joyce's chief Continental champion (*ibid.*: 181).

Ford's account of Sylvia Beach's attempt to enlist him in the coterie of friends who were primarily Joyce's supporters, promoters and defenders against detractors is as humorous as it is overstated. The Irish writer's central position in the expatriate cultural community settled in Paris is highlighted in multiple passages; however, despite his high visibility among devotees in the public, intellectual sphere, Joyce is portrayed as an artist secluded in an ivory tower, devoted to his private life and the cult of his own genius:

There was [...] at that date a great colony of Anglo-Saxon *littérateurs* and practitioners of the arts. The two centers for writers were Ezra Pound and James Joyce. [...] Mr. Joyce seemed to take little share in the rough and tumble of several vortices. As befitted the English writer of distinction, he sat as if wrapped in sacred shawls, a high priest on an altar at which one was instructed to offer homage. It was a good thing. It was salutary that the most distinguished Anglo-Saxon writer in Paris should observe an attitude of dignity. Some one there must be to preserve the cult of the sacred flame (*ibid.*: 183-184).

The focus on simple everyday incidents, as well as the idea of taking part in an animated coterie of self-exiled artists in Paris, relate Ford's impressionist memoirs to McAlmon's *Being Geniuses Together*, originally published in 1938 and unsystematically covering the years 1920-1934. Like Ford, McAlmon seems to use his autobiography particularly to record his (not always amiable) impressions of people and

places. For example, while he describes his early interactions with Lewis, Pound, Stein, Hemingway and other expatriates, geography is privileged to the point that Paris becomes a sort of character in the narrative, rather than its mere setting. Among friends and acquaintances, the presence of Joyce in *Being Geniuses Together* is quite diffuse; however, while, on the one hand, the imposing figure of the renowned modernist writer features prominently, on the other hand it is mainly his private and intimate qualities that are (often unfavourably) depicted. No sooner has McAlmon described his own arrival in Paris than he recalls paying due homage to Joyce, the acclaimed, but reserved, protagonist of the French literary scene, a man enjoying the company of other intellectuals while also refusing to join any movements or collaborative enterprises which were not aimed at his self-promotion:

In Paris I had a note from Harriet Weaver, publisher of the Egoist Press, to present to James Joyce. His *Dubliners* I much liked. The Stephen Dedalus of his *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* struck me as precious, full of noble attitudinizations [...]. Nevertheless, the short stories made me feel that Joyce would be approachable, as indeed did passages of *Ulysses* which had already appeared in the *Little Review*. At his place on the Boulevard Raspail I was greeted by Mrs. Joyce [...]. Joyce finally appeared, having just got up from bed. Within a few minutes it was obvious that he and I would get on. Neither of us knew anybody much in Paris, and both of us liked companionship. As I was leaving he suggested that we have dinner together that night, and we met at eight for an apéritif and later went to dine. At that time Joyce was by no means a wordly man [...]. He had come but recently from Zurich, and before that Trieste, in both of which cities he had taught languages at the Berlitz School in order to support his family. He was still a Dublin-Irish provincial, as well as a Jesuit-Catholic provincial, although in revolt (McAlmon and Boyle 1968: 27-28).

McAlmon occasionally evokes moments of his professional relationship with Joyce that he considers as particularly significant in his self-

perception. For example, he relishes telling of his own changes to the “Penelope” episode of *Ulysses* while typing the manuscript, by making corrections haphazardly, rather than where Joyce had carefully dictated in his notebooks (*ibid.*: 130-131). Elsewhere, he recalls Joyce’s *séances* for reading extracts from the novel or, later, from *Work in Progress*, as well as his immense love of words:

He was working on *Ulysses* at the time and often would make appointments to read rather lengthy extracts of what he had most recently written. Probably he read to me about a third of the book. It was impressive to observe how everything was grist to his mill. He was constantly leaping upon phrases and bits of slang which came naturally from my American lips, and one night, when he was slightly spiffed, he wept a bit while explaining his love or infatuation for words, mere words. Long before this explanation I had recognized that malady in him, as probably every writer has had that disease at some time or other, generally in his younger years. Joyce never recovered (*ibid.*: 28).

Nevertheless, from these memoirs one gets the impression that the writer’s personal affairs (such as family, health and financial problems), rather than his writing, become alluring and deserve recording. For McAlmon, Joyce is more often than not the companion of a bohemian lifestyle, comprising expensive dinners in elegant restaurants and heavy drinking followed by squabbles with Nora, something that seems to have caused Joyce’s resentment – to the point that he later referred to McAlmon’s book as “the office boy’s revenge” (*JJII*: 672) – and a consequent cooling of their relationship. The account of the elite status of the modernist celebrity, therefore, does not exclude recounting ordinary situations and experiences.

Finally, *Man from Babel* – which Jolas started writing sometime in the 1930s, but which remained unpublished until much later – provides further evidence of the inherent tension within modernist expatriate autobiography, focusing on a collective dimension of life-writing and on the public face of the movement, while also aiming to present

more intimate and authentic portraits of modernist artists than those proliferating in the emerging media. The book affords valuable insights into literary friends and fellow expatriates as much as into the author himself. Therefore, Jolas's life in Paris appears to be deeply entwined with the lives of other exiled intellectuals in a cosmopolitan *milieu*. Among these, Joyce the celebrity modernist is portrayed as a figure who is both private and public, at once deeply ordinary and exceptionally remarkable. After a brief description of the literary scene Jolas found in Paris when he moved there in 1925 – where Beach, Larbaud, Stein, Hemingway and others as usual occupy pride of place – Joyce makes his first, obviously triumphal appearance in the memoirs as a man preceded by his own fame:

I never succeeded in interviewing James Joyce. In 1924, when I was presented to him by Sylvia Beach at a testimonial dinner given for Valéry Larbaud, he was already aureoled by the fame of *Ulysses*. [...] This, my first meeting with Joyce, was to be followed later by years of close friendship [...], but I did not get to know him well until several years later, when I launched *transition* with Elliot Paul (Jolas 1998: 76-77).

On the whole, however, the tone of Jolas's portrait of Joyce in *Man from Babel*, where the story of their friendship is told with warmth and affection, is quite different from Ford's detached decorum in *It Was the Nightingale*, or McAlmon's outspoken candour – and even self-betrayal – in *Being Geniuses Together*. In Jolas's memoirs, the boundaries between the public and the private sphere constantly blur for the essential reason that the story of his personal relationship with Joyce overlaps with that of the magazine *transition*. Here, for example, is the account of the emergence of an enduring private as well as professional alliance:

We went to the Shakespeare Bookshop in the Rue de l'Odéon and asked Sylvia Beach to speak in our favor to James Joyce. This she very kindly did and within a few days, overjoyed, we held in our hands a bulky manuscript bearing the title "Work in Progress". One

Sunday afternoon, at the end of 1926, Joyce invited Miss Beach, Mlle Monnier, Paul, Maria and myself to his home in the Square Robiac, to listen to him read from the opening pages of his manuscript, which was subsequently to appear in the first issue of *transition*. [...] We were staggered by the revolutionary aspect of this fragment. [...] we were faced with a unique literary work, one before which all critical canons would have to be abandoned. For Joyce had apparently found a solution of his language problem that was essentially his own, a solution that was also exclusively applicable to the English language, to which he gave a polysynthetic quality (*ibid.*: 89).

Throughout the book, Joyce features as “our bellwether” (*ibid.*: 96), the leading proponent of new forms and techniques and great experimenter with words, whose prominent place in the cultural panorama of the time not even detractors could fail to recognise, mainly thanks to the visibility bestowed by the literary press. However, Jolas also allows us glimpses “behind-the-scenes” of both his life and literary career, revealing not only some peculiar aspects of Joyce’s compositional methods (such as his endless and apparently arbitrary additions to proofs), but also an intimate portrait of “a man of great warmth and charm” (*ibid.*: 101) who, especially towards the end of his life, was increasingly drawn into a private dimension, largely dominated by his own and his daughter Lucia’s health problems:

As a point of fact, it always took him some time to accept easy comradeship in social intercourse. At first he appeared to be on his guard, an attitude that was particularly noticeable during the explosion of fame that followed the publication of *Ulysses*. Later, as his own personal tragedy deepened, a dour and almost inhuman passion seemed to impinge on all his outside relationships, and he was able to live in his cavern of despair with what appeared to be pitiless indifference to events that did not touch him directly or, through friends, indirectly. [...] once he had left his anarchic, misanthropic isolation, he could enjoy the companionship of his friends with a conviviality that brought out his essential nature (*ibid.*: 101).

In later chapters of *Man from Babel*, Joyce's presence becomes – at least until his death in 1941 – so far-reaching that Jolas's autobiography almost turns into Joyce's biography or the story of an intimate friendship. The book, therefore, is also a remarkable example of the collaborative spirit of modernism, whose leading figures did not limit themselves to joining movements or signing manifestos, but also directed their efforts towards telling the stories of their joint lives and close associations.

It seems reasonable to conclude that the modernist expatriate autobiographies discussed in this brief analysis evidence not only the public image of the artist and his art, but also his intimate life in “off-duty” moments, thus crossing the boundaries between high and low culture, between the ordinary and the exceptional. In sharing details of the private lives of those mainly notable to the public for their high cultural achievements, these memoirs support the promotional culture, propaganda and mass circulation of literary portraits that little magazines ensured. In the specific case of Joyce, they provide a multifaceted picture of an artist that we feel we can identify as the archetype of the self-exiled genius, also thanks to the impressions of those who shared with him the experience of being expatriates together in a cosmopolitan intellectual *milieu*, and who made of their knowing him and his works a hallmark of that experience.

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