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JOYCE STUDIES IN ITALY

22

JOYSPACE
JAMES JOYCE AND SPACE

Edited by
Roberto Baronti Marchiò

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Volume pubblicato con il contributo
di The James Joyce Italian Foundation

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Direttore responsabile: Franca Ruggieri
Registrazione Num.R.G, 1885/2016, Tribunale Ordinario di Cassino

ISSN 2281 – 373X

© 2021, Editoriale Anicia s.r.l. - Roma
http://www.edizionianicia.it
info@anicia.it

Single copy price: €18.00
Subscription rates (one issue annually):
Personal: €18.00
Institutional: €30.00

The journal will be published on the following website:
https://thejamesjoyceitalianfoundation.wordpress.com/
Purchases can be made by directly contacting the publisher and then completing a bank transfer covering the price of the book and postage costs (this is €5.00 within Italy, but varies according to the country of destination).

Address: James Joyce Italian Foundation
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ANNALISA FEDERICI

ULYSSES AND THE TEXTUAL SPACE OF LITTLE MAGAZINE SERIALISATION

Abstract: This essay analyses the serialisation of *Ulysses* in *The Little Review* in terms of the role played by the little magazine context with its paratextual elements (advertisements, pictures, editorial announcements and notes, letters, comments and essays) on the text of the novel as it was experienced by its first readers, as well as on the enactment of promotional strategies which helped to forge the image of Joyce as a literary celebrity, and which the editors Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap turned to their own advantage in order to grant visibility to *The Little Review*. Moving from the assumption that the impact of the novel's formal experimentation can be better understood when contextualised within the material forms and circuits of print culture through which it was produced, distributed and promoted as a *succès de scandale*, this study argues that Joyce's recourse to little magazine serialisation in advance of the volume publication of *Ulysses* reveals the ways in which his work challenges what is generally assumed to be the cultural politics of high modernism and the traditional identification of the little magazine as epitome of high modernist publishing space. Quite the contrary, the appearance of the novel within the pages of *The Little Review* further undermined an already faltering cultural divide between the elite and the popular and ultimately brought visibility to both the author's work and the journal that publicised it. *Ulysses* increasingly became a powerful promotional tool for the periodical which in turn promoted it. By means of this editorial move, Joyce's name was right from the start framed by a tense balance between commercial forces and cultural capital, and intellectual prestige became inextricably interwoven with monetary concerns.

Keywords: *Ulysses*, *The Little Review*, Serialisation, Celebrity culture, Print culture

Pierre Bourdieu's sociological theory of literature has recently proved to have strong methodological implications for literary and cultural studies,

and particularly for some major issues addressed in this essay, namely the necessity of redefining both what Andreas Huyssen famously named the "great divide"[1] between modernism and mass culture, and the role played by little magazines in such dichotomy; the importance of conceiving early twentieth-century literary production and reception as an integrated network in which writers, editors, publishers, printers, distributors, critics and readers collaborate; and finally the appropriation by high modernist authors of self-promotional strategies often typical of the commercial sphere within the context of an emergent celebrity culture. According to Bourdieu, the field of cultural production is specifically concerned with the creation and dissemination of symbolic or cultural capital, which has an apparently antagonistic relationship to economic capital. In fact, in Bourdieu's view, cultural capital is only acquired when quintessentially economic interests are absent or concealed, since these threaten the field's claim to a monopoly of influence according to which cultural goods are valued. In theorising the field of cultural production in such terms, Bourdieu can be said to construct a cultural geography analogous to the supposed Manichaean split between early twentieth-century canonical literature and mass culture as a source of potential contamination. In this model, artistic distinction is determined not by economic profit, but by symbolic capital derived from recognition. Therefore, highbrow art emerges as the mirror image of the commodity-driven marketplace, with the rules of "the economic world reversed" (Bourdieu 1993: 29). Bourdieu further claims that the field is structured, in the first instance, around the fundamental opposition between what he calls the "sub-field of restricted production" and the "sub-field of large-scale production" (*ibid.*: 53). The agents operating in the former – conceived as an autonomous grouping associated with elite culture and where the myth of the individual producer

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[1] See *After the Great Divide*, with its famous predicament that "modernism constituted itself through a conscious strategy of exclusion, an anxiety of contamination by its other: an increasingly consuming and engulfing mass culture" (Huyssen 1986: vii). However, scholars have recently explored this dichotomy in greater detail, challenging the commonplace of modernism's inveterate antagonism to mass culture, and portraying high modernists as more acute about mass marketing strategies of self-promotion and authorial self-fashioning, especially by means of the visibility granted by the periodical press. See, for instance, Dettmar and Watt 1996; Willison, Gould and Chernaik 1996; Rainey 1998; Cooper 2004; Rosenquist 2009.

as charismatic genius is prevalent – measure value primarily in aesthetic terms, while those operating in the latter, seeing their craft as a commercial enterprise, recognise that extra-cultural principles of legitimacy pertain, and thus measure value chiefly in economic terms. Between these two extremes, however, several positions combining the two perspectives in various degrees may obviously occur. Bourdieu emphasises the dynamic nature of these subfields as well as their continual mutual interaction and conflict, in a manner that is relevant to two crucial aspects of high modernism underlined here: its relationship with a popular print culture aimed at a large audience, and the emergence of a growing celebrity culture mainly through the periodical press. It has been widely recognised, indeed, that modernist publishers and printers, like many avant-garde writers, could not exclusively profess the pure ideal of art for art's sake. Over the last few decades, literary and cultural studies have revealed the importance of reassessing high modernism with reference to its intersections with mass or popular culture. Several critics have challenged the assumption that modernist authors scorned popular appeal, refused to advertise themselves and sought refuge from the commercial sphere, thus forcing readers to rethink preconceived notions of the relationship between high art and the marketplace. This recent proliferation of work demonstrates that, far from being opposed to the economy of production and consumption, canonical modernists were thoroughly preoccupied with marketplace concerns and entertained "multiple, conflicting, often productive if always ambivalent relations with emergent mass culture" (Collier 2006: 2). Joycean scholarship has not failed to trace such relations. Kevin Dettmar, for instance, has shown that "Joyce's anxious efforts to market *Ulysses* [...] were not at all anomalous, but rather symptomatic of the complex and often contradictory attitude the modernists held toward advertising, marketing, and mass and commodity culture" (1993: 796). More specifically, "because of the contradiction built into modernism, Joyce felt he must disdain his reading public, eschew publicity, and feign indifference to his books' sales, while at the same time trying, for reasons of artistic affirmation and good old-fashioned self-esteem, to promote his books. He tended, finally, to push others to push his books – so that he could maintain the vaunted modernist air of impersonality, while subtly influencing the reception and interpretation of his texts" (*ibid*.: 797-798).

As Joe Moran has demonstrated, moreover, Bourdieu's notion of the competition for different forms of capital within and between distinct fields provides a useful analytical framework for examining literary celebrity, a phenomenon which "tends to be mediated in such a way that the author represents both cultural capital and marketable commodity" (Moran 2000: 6). In particular, "since they tend to straddle the divide between the restricted and the extended subfields of cultural production, celebrity authors are ambiguous figures. As cultural signifiers they often contain elements of the idea of the charismatic, uniquely inspired creative artist associated with the autonomization of the cultural field, but they also gain legitimacy from the notion of celebrity as supported by broad popularity and success in the marketplace" (*ibid*.: 7). Finally, in Bourdieu's relational theory of context, literary practice is conceived as an action having meaning only in the interaction between different agents (not only writers but also mediators of all kinds) and the well-ordered positions they occupy, the field being a social space that engages a collective history of its productions. Matthew Philpotts (2012) has convincingly applied Bourdieu's structural model of sociocultural relations to print culture and periodical studies. In his view, not only does the journal editor transform the literary text into a commodity by introducing it into the market; more specifically, Bourdieu's notion of "habitus", seen as a set of dispositions generating the perceptions and practices of individual agents in the field, also allows us to consider the editor as a figure negotiating the complex nexus of social, economic and artistic relations which find material form in a magazine. Bourdieu ascribes a distinctive type of habitus to a category of cultural agents, such as gallery directors and publishers, who mediate between the aesthetic and the commercial fields; caught between conflicting logics, these "*double* personages" combine "completely contradictory dispositions: economic [...] and intellectual" (Bourdieu 1996: 216). Moreover, following Bourdieu's discussion of André Gide's achievement as editor of *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, Philpotts proposes to analyse the "common habitus" of a periodical as the defining "ethos" which "unites the members of what one calls the 'nucleus'" and which acts as "a unifying and generative principle" (*ibid*.: 273) for its cultural practice. In Bourdieu's theoretical assessment of the value of a literary journal, its table of contents represents "an exhibition of the symbolic capital available to the

enterprise", while the editor's success lies in their ability to acquire such capital: "the gathering together of the authors and, secondarily, of the texts that make up a literary review has as its genuine principle [...] social strategies close to those governing the constitution of a salon or a movement" (*ibid*.). The efficacy of Bourdieu's model of the field as a theoretical tool, then, lies precisely in its ability to articulate a mediating ground between textuality and social history, between symbolic value and material production. Furthermore, it provides a broad analytical framework allowing to perceive writing and reading as thoroughly social practices.

Bearing in mind not only Bourdieu's sociological theory of literature, but also the point made by Jerome McGann that, in any text, "meaning is transmitted through bibliographical as well as linguistic codes" (1991: 57) – the former consisting in such matters as "typefaces, bindings, book prices, page format" (*ibid*.: 13) and the latter being the semiotics and semantics of the actual words – this essay proposes to analyse the serialisation of *Ulysses* in *The Little Review* in terms of the role played by the little magazine context with its paratextual elements (advertisements, pictures, editorial announcements and notes, letters, comments and essays) on the text of the novel as it was experienced by its first readers, as well as on the enactment of promotional strategies which helped to forge the image of Joyce as a literary celebrity, and which the editors Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap turned to their own advantage in order to grant visibility to *The Little Review*[2]. Both author and journal editors, therefore, can be said to have experimented with the possibility that readers experienced not only the purely linguistic codes of the text of *Ulysses*, but also the bibliographical codes surrounding and publicising it. As Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker remind us in their comprehensive work *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, "the physical material of the magazine itself is [...] a crucial factor in understanding the texts and images found within its pages" (2009: 6), to the point that they propose to introduce a subset of bibliographic codes at play in any journal which they call "periodical codes", namely "a whole range of features including page layout, typefaces, price, size of volume [...], periodicity of publication [...], use of illustrations [...], use and

[2] On the textual and contextual significance of *Ulysses* as it appeared in *The Little Review*, see also Gaipa, Latham and Scholes 2015, and Hutton 2019.

placement of advertisements, quality of paper and binding, networks of distribution and sales, modes of financial support, payment practices towards contributors, editorial arrangements, or the type of material published" (*ibid*.). The present essay, therefore, moves from the assumption that the impact of the formal experimentation of a text like *Ulysses* can be better understood when contextualised within the material forms and circuits of print culture through which it was produced, distributed and publicised as a *succès de scandale*, and that, in modernist literature in general, the multiple relationships between new forms and the methods for circulating and marketing them were mutually influential and enabling.

In a recent contribution to the growing field of modern periodical studies, Alan Golding aptly remarks that little magazines now occupy center stage in the critical history of modernism, at the same time a position that "associates them with the promotion of cutting-edge activity across the arts and grants them a foundational role in the construction of an experimental modernism that set itself against an allegedly philistine mass culture", and one that, in the last few decades, "has begun to be complicated by a growing body of scholarship that focuses on the verifiable connections rather than the rhetorical disparities between the magazines and that same mass culture" (2012: 61). Joyce's recourse to little magazine serialisation in advance of the volume publication of *Ulysses* reveals the ways in which his work – so often understood as representative of an elitist modernism, although recent scholarship has emphasised the ways it persistently subtends both high and low culture, the commercial as well as the aesthetic[3] – challenges what is generally assumed to be the cultural politics of high modernism and the traditional identification of the little magazine as epitome of high modernist publishing space. Quite the contrary, the serialisation of *Ulysses* within the pages of *The Little Review* repeatedly subverts any implied opposition between "high" and "low", between intellectual and mass culture, showing that the modernist authors' engagements with the print market and promotional strategies were rich and diverse. The scandal of *Ulysses*'s appearance in *The Little Review* – fourteen episodes serialised in twenty-three instalments between March 1918 and December 1920, notoriously

[3] See, for instance, Kershner 1996 and Leonard 1998.

ending with the infamous trial of 1921, during which Anderson and Heap were prosecuted and fined for publishing allegedly obscene material – further undermined an already faltering cultural divide between the elite and the popular and ultimately brought visibility to both the author's work and the magazine which publicised it.

Contrary to any univocal appraisal of *The Little Review* as a coterie organ thoroughly committed to the "new" and to a range of emergent artistic, social and ideological movements, Golding proposes to consider this avant-garde periodical as "internally dialogic, enacting an ongoing and often heated conversation about modernism within its own pages" (*ibid*.: 62), and ultimately as "a magazine in persistent dialogue with itself" (*ibid*.). On close analysis, the review aimed to encourage open and lively debate concerning the nature and value of art chiefly by means of a column entitled "The Reader Critic" – a discursive public space where readers entered into dialogue with the material printed in each issue and with the editors themselves, who frequently responded in skirmish – as well as startling, provocative, flamboyant declarations of its own elitist position within the often perceived tension between the artistic and the vulgar. It is well-known that *The Little Review* adopted irreverent slogans by means of which it apparently cast itself as a highbrow publication: "A MAGAZINE OF THE ARTS MAKING NO COMPROMISE WITH THE PUBLIC TASTE" (appearing continuously from the June 1917 to the January-March 1921 issue), or "THE MAGAZINE THAT IS READ BY THOSE WHO WRITE THE OTHERS" (a subtitle running from October 1917 to April 1919). These can be considered as part of the periodical's "broader tendency to use page design for the avant-garde purpose of discomfiting readers, writers, and commercial and social institutions" (*ibid*.: 71). If the overt criticism of her own contributors, readers and even co-editor was a recurring, provocative feature of Anderson's editorial practice, the cheerful outspokenness of these straplines might at first seem to epitomise, as Katherine Mullin has observed, modernism's frequently perceived hostility to mass culture. On close scrutiny, however, these catchphrases, far from voicing a haughty dismissal of audience, reveal the magazine's tone of buoyant self-parody, "for the journal both flaunts and ridicules its own intellectual and aesthetic aspirations, undermining any tendencies

towards high modernist seriousness in ways which made it the ideal location for the debut of *Ulysses*" (Mullin 2008: 380).

Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap at the same time prided themselves on, and manifested discontent with, *The Little Review*'s status as a coterie publication with a few hundred subscribers. On the one hand, they showed commitment to youth, rebellion, change and the avant-garde by defiantly publishing the work of authors they held in high esteem – T.S. Eliot, H.D., Ford Madox Ford, Wyndham Lewis, Marianne Moore, Ezra Pound, Dorothy Richardson, May Sinclair, Gertrude Stein, William Carlos Williams along with Joyce himself – regardless of censorship or popular taste. On the other hand, they were eager to appropriate mass marketing techniques and advertising rhetoric in order to reach as many readers as possible, broaden the magazine's circulation and increase its constantly precarious revenues. To this purpose, they indiscriminately ran eclectic advertising spaces and often created, as Edward Bishop (1996: 304-307) has pointed out, bizarre juxtapositions between, for instance, lavishly-illustrated ads for Goodyear tyres and articles on the anarchist Emma Goldman. The advertisements carried by *The Little Review* could range from notices for other literary journals (mainly *Poetry* and *The Egoist*) and publishing houses, various organisations and events, alongside restaurants, tea and ball rooms, or the products of mainstream culture such as Mason & Hamlin pianos, Hammond typewriters and mass-market fiction (like Leona Dalrymple's prize-winning novel *Diane of the Green Van*), showing that "refusal to compromise with the public taste did not, and could not, extend to refusal to engage with the marketplace" (Golding 2012: 69). Such enthusiastic participation in the discourse of mass culture is also typical of other periodicals of the time and proves that "literary ambitions and idealistic actions associated with the editing of a little magazine [...] were deeply imbued with material and promotional concerns" (Aijmer Rydsjö and Jonsson 2016: 72), and that marketing strategies frequently merged with tactics for gaining legitimacy on the cultural scene.

Taken together, the dialogic relation with its readership, the choice of ostentatious slogans and the appropriation of promotional strategies further highlight the provocative nature of *The Little Review*'s commitment to "making no compromise with the public taste". It is no surprise that recent scholarship has emphasised Anderson's skilful enactment of

marketing tactics prominently used by popular magazines. Mark Morrisson, for instance, argues that *The Little Review* embodies "the imbrication of commercial mass culture with the public self-fashioning of modernism" in the interests of audience building and contact with the public sphere (2001: 134). In his view, the "Reader Critic" section represented a lively public arena which ascribed equal status to correspondents and professional authors alike, and "closely resembled a widely popular institution of commercial journalism – letter and advice columns for youth in newspapers and magazines" (*ibid*.: 153). Matthew Hannah similarly contends that Anderson "developed a complex site for audience participation in the burgeoning world of celebrity modernism by using the magazine as a forum for readers to see themselves in print next to major experimenters. This participatory aspect mirrored broader periodical trends in the early twentieth century that used the magazine format as a marketing technique to sell proximity to a growing celebrity culture" (2014: 224). Such accounts demonstrate that the editors aimed to merge the marketing strategies of mainstream periodicals with their aspirations to establish a venue for the elite world of modernism to discuss experimental trends in art and literature. To borrow Hannah's words again, the "Reader Critic" column "exemplifies the complex position *The Little Review* negotiated in providing a space for readerly involvement while maintaining an attractive coterie character" (*ibid*.: 235).

It is also particularly revealing that *Ulysses* increasingly became a powerful promotional tool for the magazine which in turn promoted it. Even before the serialisation started, Joyce made his appearance in the "Reader Critic" section of the June 1917 issue with a letter sent from Zurich, in which the prospective contributor announced: "I hope to send you something very soon – as soon, in fact, as my health allows me to resume work", in the meantime wishing "*The Little Review* every success" (*LR* 4.2: 26)[4]. To underline his alignment with the journal, Joyce's presence in the "Reader Critic" alongside letters from regular subscribers was accompanied by advertisements for his books. The back cover carried an ad (repeated from the May 1917 issue) for the Egoist edition of *A Portrait*

[4] All quotations from *The Little Review* refer to the digital version made available by the Modernist Journals Project, Brown and Tulsa Universities: https://modjourn.org/journal/little-review/ (accessed 29 December 2020).

– described as “the most important and beautiful piece of novel writing to be found in English today” – to be sold, in alternative to *Dubliners* as readers may please, on a “Special Offer” together with “a year’s subscription to *The Little Review* for $2.50” (*ibid*.: n.p.). It seems clear that, by means of this editorial move, Joyce’s name was right from the start framed by a tense balance between commercial forces and cultural capital, and that intellectual prestige was inextricably interwoven with monetary concerns. This seems to confirm Celia Aijmer Rydsjö and AnnKatrin Jonsson’s argument that, in early twentieth-century magazines, “promotional language and financial issues were hardly restricted to a separate space devoted to advertising and economic matters; they surface in manifestos, editorials, information to contributors, letters, and comments” (2016: 85). Even earlier, and precisely in the March 1917 issue, the editors had paved the way for Joyce’s direct appearance in their magazine by publishing a brief note by Jane Heap on *A Portrait* (where she announced she had just received the book from the publisher and promised to write extensively on it in the following issue) and filling the back cover with an advertisement for Huebsch editions of Joyce’s fiction. Here, the author is commended as “an Irishman of distinction whose two books compel the attention of discriminating seekers after brains in books” (*LR* 3.9: n.p.). Regarding *A Portrait*, the ad guarantees that “psychological insight, masterly simplicity of style, and extraordinary naturalism make this book more than a promise of great things. Joyce stands pre-eminent among the young Irish writers to-day” (*ibid*.). In buying *Dubliners*, moreover, readers can rest assured that “with perfect objectivity and the reticence of reserve power, each of these short stories proves a tensely wrought composition, disclosing in balanced relief some idea of situation of universal import. No reader can fail to become a Joyce enthusiast” (*ibid*.). As declared the previous month, the April 1917 issue actually contained warm reviews of *A Portrait*, a work hailed as “the most beautiful piece of writing and the most creative piece of prose anywhere to be seen on the horizon to-day. [...] The interest in the *Portrait* is in the way its aesthetic content is presented” (*LR* 3.10: 9). Moreover, in an editorial announcement boisterously entitled “‘Surprise’!”, Anderson revealed:

> The “surprise” I promised in the last issue is this: Ezra Pound is to become Foreign Editor of “The Little Review”. This means that he and T.S. Eliot

> will have an American organ (horrible phrase) in which they can appear regularly once a month, where James Joyce can appear when he likes, and where Wyndham Lewis can appear if he comes back from the war. Also it means two or three other names of the "young blood" who will contribute from time to time, and altogether the most stunning plan that any magazine has had the good fortune to announce for a long, long time. It means that a great deal of the most creative work of modern London and Paris will be published in these pages. So that by getting "The Little Review" and "The Egoist" you will be in touch with the two most important radical organs of contemporary literature. (*ibid*.: 25)

This announcement is interesting for several reasons: it recognises in advance the fundamental relationship between Pound's role as mediator and the serialisation of *Ulysses* in the magazine, itself publicised as a coterie venue in which the best experimental literature of the time would find a proper outlet; it grants visibility to another subversive publication, namely Dora Marsden and Harriet Shaw Weaver's London-based *The Egoist*, thus retrospectively and prospectively establishing a close connection with fellow editors across the Atlantic committed to the cause of publishing Joyce's work[5]; last but not least, it gives special prominence, among the various representatives of the "young blood" mentioned, to Joyce as an international celebrity and a genius whose creative vein does not need to submit to editorial constraints, being allowed to "appear when he likes". Quite interestingly, both the "Special Offer" advertisement and an appraisal of *A Portrait* are reiterated in the August 1917 issue, where a "List of Books" with "Comment by Ezra Pound" (*LR* 4.4: 6) features "James Joyce's Novel. *The Egoist, London. B.W. Huebsch, New York*" (*ibid*.: 7). It is instructive that, unlike other books mentioned, the title of Joyce's novel is just alluded to in the heading and only quoted in full in the body of the review, as if no reader could fail to recognise it, given the celebrity status of an author whose international renown is also underlined by the double place of publication. Pound opens his commentary by admitting that "*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* was so well

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[5] *The Egoist* had serialised *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* between February 1914 and September 1915, and published its first book edition in 1917. In 1919 it would print 'Nestor', 'Proteus', 'Hades' and a portion of 'Wandering Rocks' in the issues for January-February, March-April, July (episode 6, part 1), September (episode 6, part 2) and December, respectively.

reviewed in the April number of this paper that I might perhaps refrain from further comment" (*ibid*.). Even so, he cannot help acknowledging that "Joyce is the best prose writer of my decade. Wyndham Lewis's *Tarr* is the only contemporary novel that can compare with *A Portrait*; *Tarr* being more inventive, more volcanic, and 'not so well written'" (*ibid*.).

Joyce was very soon placed at the centre of *The Little Review*'s marketing drive and promotional strategy of both his masterpiece *Ulysses* (accompanied by extensive commentary and responses framing the work's future reception) and, through its infamous reputation, of the magazine which dared to print it. Scholars like Timothy Galow (2011), Jonathan Goldman (2011) and Faye Hammill (2007), focusing on the celebrity culture which pervaded literary modernism, claim that these advertising possibilities, relying on a wide range of media including periodicals, were part and parcel of modernist cultural production, and that authors fashioned themselves as literary celebrities through a process of self-authorising vis-à-vis the modernist text: "the matrix of associations supporting their reputations is not intrinsically image-based but predicated instead on a distinctive textual mark of authorship, a sanction for distinguishing a high literary product from the inflating signs of consumption" (Jaffe 2005: 1). Indeed, the complex relationship between modernist production and the print market concerned not merely the dissemination and reception of works, but also the actual form with which such works appeared in the magazines, including the various advertising policies employed to grant them visibility and the engagement of literary production with nonliterary discourse. In both the January and the February 1918 issues, Anderson proudly announced that the serialisation of *Ulysses* would start rightly in March:

> I have just received the first three instalments of James Joyce's new novel which is to run serially in The Little Review, beginning with the March number. It is called "Ulysses". It carries on the story of Stephan [sic] Dedalus, the central figure in "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man". It is, I believe, even better than the "Portrait". So far it has been read by only one critic of international reputation [Ezra Pound]. He says: "It is certainly worth running a magazine if one can get stuff like this to put in it. Compression, intensity. It looks to me rather better than Flaubert". This announcement means that we are about to publish a prose masterpiece. (*LR* 4.9: n.p.)

Following an already well-established promotional strategy, Joyce is presented as an author of undisputed renown by reference to, and continuity with, his previous work, now even surpassed by his latest masterpiece having just received praise from "one critic of international reputation". Quite appropriately, the frontispiece of the March 1918 issue simply read "'ULYSSES' by JAMES JOYCE", thus giving special prominence to this contribution among others, while the inside flyleaf was crowded with advertisements – quoting enthusiastic reviews appeared in *The New Republic*, *The Nation* and *The New Statesman* – for Huebsch editions of *A Portrait*, *Dubliners* and even the forthcoming *Exiles* (then amply discussed in the January 1919 issue). To quote Mullin again, "readers of the first episode were in no doubt about the dual value of Joyce's acquisition" (2008: 383). Moreover, "on the one hand, Joyce was repeatedly invoked as a crucial guarantor of *The Little Review*'s lofty commitment to literary experiment. On the other, that invocation led to his increasing entanglement within a distinctly 'low' promotional discourse" (*ibid*.: 384).

Throughout its history, *The Little Review* published – besides fourteen serialised episodes of *Ulysses* – a photograph of Joyce (in the July-August 1920 issue) as well as twenty-two instances of commentary on his work, most of these appearing together with the various instalments so as to help create a critical context for the reception of the novel. Such discourse is certainly of central importance to the magazine's championing of Joyce and shows that "the experimental potential inside modernist texts is often inextricable from those material outsides" (Sorensen 2017: 253). As evidence of the novel's immediate impact on the audience, it is revealing that the "Reader Critic" began to publish comments on *Ulysses* already in May 1918, two months after the serialisation began. Within this column, which gathers the very first reader responses (positive, negative, or simply baffled) to Joyce's masterpiece, several recurring features can be identified. For instance, while the magazine editors or professional writers invariably praised the author's break with narrative conventions, many lay subscribers often responded in bewilderment. In the May 1918 issue, Israel Solon calls the April number "the best single number I have yet come across" and acknowledges the role of Joyce, among other top-grade contributors, in ensuring the commercial as well as cultural value of *The*

Little Review: "it is first rate from a purely commercial stand point also. Hueffer, May Sinclair and Joyce ought to be good business getters for any commercial magazine. How in the world did Pound ever get hold of them?" (*LR* 5.1: 62). Solon treats the author of *Ulysses* as emblematic of the experimentalism of the magazine itself, noting that "Joyce has plunged deep into himself [...]. He has developed a technique that none but the most disciplined, the most persistent and sympathetic are able to break through. [...] He is the most sensitive writer alive" (*ibid.*: 63). Quite the contrary, the anonymous "S.S.B., Chicago", writing in the June 1918 issue, describes himself as a "fairly intelligent" reader of *Ulysses*, but nonetheless one puzzled by "what it's about, who is who or where" (*LR* 5.2: 54). He declares to be baffled by Joyce's lack of coherence, complaining that "each month he's worse than the last" (*ibid.*). He finally proclaims that "Joyce will have to change his style if he wants to get on. Very few have the time or patience to struggle with his impressionistic stuff – to get nothing out of it even then" (*ibid.*). Jane Heap, printing such comments under the ostentatiously capitalised heading "What Joyce Is Up Against", bluntly answered in defence of the artist's genius: "you consider yourself an intelligent, 'well-read' person. Did it ever occur to you to read anything on the nature of writers? [...] All compulsion exists within the artist. [...] The only concern of the artist is to try in one short lifetime to meet these inner compulsions. He has no concern with audiences and their demands" (*ibid.*). Similarly, when one "R. McM., Los Angeles" complained "I'd like to hear convincing justification of Joyce other than mere statement that 'his work is art'. [...] Justify some of Joyce's obscene commonplaces taken from life neither for power nor beauty nor for any reason but to arrest attention" (*ibid.*: 56), Heap rebutted: "it is impossible for Joyce to be obscene. He is too concentrated on his work. He is too religious about life" (*ibid.*). As Clare Hutton aptly remarks, "responses of this kind – engaged, intelligent, astute, and knowing – created a sense of fuss round *Ulysses*, a sense of coterie, of an evolving interpretive community, with just a few insiders who really understood Joyce and respected his compulsions as an artist" (2019: 55). While several readers continued to give voice to their discomfort in reading *Ulysses*, a number of writers responded to such critiques by endorsing Joyce's experimentalism. In the July 1918 issue, Frank Stuhlman harshly condemns "the much bepraised Joyce's 'Ulysses'"

as "punk", adding that the author's "pleasing habit of throwing chunks of filth into the midst of incoherent maunderings is not at all interesting and rather disgusting" (*LR* 5.3: 64), whereas in the final letter of the "Reader Critic" section, titled "Joyce and Ethics", Hart Crane offers an impassioned defence of Joyce's art and morality against the charge of decadence and the association with Wilde and Swinburne. Appropriately to an issue featuring works by Jules Laforgue, Arthur Rimbaud and the Goncourt brothers, Crane aligns Joyce with Baudelaire on the grounds that "the principal eccentricity evinced by both is a penetration into life common to only the greatest", and concludes that "the most nauseating complaint against his work is that of immorality and obscenity. The character of Stephen Dedalus is all too good for this world" (*ibid*.: 65).

Besides publishing favourable and unfavourable comments alike, sometimes *The Little Review* would simply persuade readers – as it happened between June and August 1919 – to subscribe or buy the ensuing number by including Joyce on a list of "*Contributors for* 1919" (*LR* 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4: n.p.) or the authors "*TO APPEAR SOON*" (*LR* 6.4: n.p.), immediately followed by the boldfaced recommendation "SUBSCRIBE NOW" (*LR* 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4: n.p.) printed on the inside front cover. As evidence of the role played by the magazine context in the initial reception of Joyce's masterpiece, it is also particularly illuminating that the joint serialisation of *Ulysses* and Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage* between June 1919 and May 1920 may have encouraged the audience to read them side by side and find resonances mainly concerning their use of the interior monologue. Unsurprisingly, in critical responses to the journal content which were published in the September 1919 issue, Joyce and Richardson are often mentioned together. In a brief article titled "Dorothy Richardson", John Rodker makes reference to the frequent comparison between their methods (*LR* 6.5: 41), while in "Four Foreigners", William Carlos Williams praises the two novelists for managing "to endow their work with the bloom of excellence" (*ibid*.: 36) and for capturing the living present: "their form lives! [...] It lives in its today. They plunge naked into the flaming cauldron of today" (*ibid*.: 38). In the December 1919 issue, Joyce and Richardson again appear together in joint advertisements for the Huebsch edition of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Dubliners*, *Exiles* and *Chamber Music*, along with a new uniform edition of *The*

Tunnel, *Pointed Roofs*, *Honeycomb*, *Backwater* and *Interim* by Alfred Knopf. Here Joyce's reputation is magnified by quoting Pound's acclaim that "James Joyce produces the nearest thing to Flaubertian prose that we now have. He is the best prose writer of my generation in English" (*LR* 6.8: n.p.) as well as a short excerpt from a review in *The Manchester Guardian*: "Mr. Joyce's literary gift is beyond praise. At his best he is a master" (*ibid*.). Moreover, in a section titled "Discussion: Books, Music, the Theatre" and placed in the middle of the same issue, Jane Heap commenting on May Sinclair's *Mary Olivier* unfavourably compares its author, "a best standard novelist", to Joyce, "a man of sheer genius" (*ibid*.: 30). To quote another revealing example, in the January 1920 issue, Israel Solon gives an appraisal of the previous number and discusses Joyce alongside Richardson and other contributors, holding the Irish author in the highest esteem: "James Joyce is beyond doubt the most sensitive stylist writing in English. There is enough skill and matter in a single Episode of 'Ulysses' to equip a regiment of novelists. He never fails to give you more than you bargain for" (*LR* 6.9: 30). Regarding Djuna Barnes, furthermore, he writes: "it would be as childish and futile, of her as of anybody else, to take anything from Joyce, for instance. His technique is inseparable from his matter; it will not do for anybody else what it does for him" (*ibid*.: 32).

Despite several attempts to throw light on *Ulysses*, or perhaps justify its obscurity as the accomplishment of the artist's genius, most readers – who obviously could not benefit from schemas or interpretive grids – kept feeling perplexed by the development of its increasingly complex plot and narrative technique, to the point that a subscriber writing in the "Reader Critic" column for the May-June 1920 issue candidly asked: "can you tell me when James Joyce's 'Ulysses' will appear in book form? Do you think the public will ever be ready for such a book? I read him each month with eagerness, but I must confess that I am defeated in my intelligence. Now tell the truth, – do you yourselves know where the story is at the present moment, how much time has elapsed, – just where are we? Have you any clue as to when the story will end?" (*LR* 7.1: 72). Besides the book's impenetrability, Joyce's alleged appetite for obscenity was also extensively debated, particularly in the "Reader Critic" section of the three issues in which 'Nausicaa' was serialised (April, May-June and July-August 1920). This paved the way for the September-December 1920 issue, where the

first instalment of "Oxen of the Sun" – the very last instalment of *Ulysses* in *The Little Review* – appeared. In the opening pages, the editors announced the reasons for the magazine's delayed publication: "the hazards and exigencies of running an Art magazine without capital have forced us to bring out combined issues for the past months. Publication has been further complicated by our arrest on October fourth: Sumner vs. Joyce. Trial, December thirteenth. Mr. John Quinn has taken the case for Mr. Joyce. We will give a full report of the trial in the *Little Review*" (*LR* 7.3: n.p.)[6]. In this final issue, moreover, the well-known apologias "Art and the Law" by Jane Heap and "An Obvious Statement (for the millionth time)" by Margaret Anderson also appeared. Here the editors expressed their indignation that a work of art like *Ulysses* should be subject to legal review, and eloquently defended the freedom of expression of the artist, who is not responsible, in their opinion, to the public. Such statements definitely prove that the editors of *The Little Review* were able, until the very end, to use *Ulysses* and even the scandal it generated to further publicise both the novel and their own magazine, defiantly reaffirming its bold motto – still printed on its cover in 1920 – "making no compromise with the public taste".

In her autobiography *My Thirty Years' War*, Anderson retrospectively regarded *Ulysses* as "the epoch's supreme articulation" (1930: 230) and acknowledged that publishing Joyce's masterpiece was *The Little Review*'s greatest accomplishment. This essay has attempted to show that, as the modern movement became widely recognised, Anderson and Heap granted visibility to its pre-eminent exponents and used their fame to generate interest in their own magazine. In the specific case of Joyce, this happened essentially by advertising proximity to literary celebrity within the "Reader Critic" column, and by making the serialised text of *Ulysses* available to readers together with an array of paratextual elements serving the function of publicising and commenting upon it. While the book's reputation as a notoriously ingenious but also controversial work grew, the notoriety of the magazine also did, until its suppression granted both *Ulysses* and *The Little Review* the tantalising aura of a *cause célèbre* they still retain.

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[6] Anderson's report of "the trial of the *Little Review* for printing a masterpiece" (*LR* 7.4: 22) actually appeared in the January-March 1921 issue as "*'Ulysses' in Court*".

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