

1 Joyce and his Contemporaries

1.1 James Joyce as a Visual Artist

Man Ray In the early twentieth century Man Ray photographed just about every artist of note and many famous contributors to the culture of the day. The fact that Joyce was among his subjects is no surprise. That the well-known portraits were taken as early as 1922 is more remarkable¹ – and their appearance even more so. Technically, they are simple, not overtly informed by Ray's experimental photography, but conventions are not adhered to: no stack of books is in evidence. Man Ray would not have insisted on such bourgeois paraphernalia, and Joyce certainly did not do so either. In fact, César Abin's later caricature¹⁶ arose out of Joyce's refusal to let himself be portrayed in such a way.

One portrait's most remarkable feature is Joyce's left eye. While the right one is blurred behind thick lenses, the perfectly circular outline of the spectacles touches the left pupil. A sad facial expression is given a hauntingly observant twist through the positioning of the iris on the photograph: vertically, it is exactly at the centre of the image. While the features show a vulnerable man, the calculated geometry of the left eye speaks of the calculated nature of Joyce's work. The intersections of the eye's curves and the round lens almost inevitably remind today's viewer of the Euclidean diagram that Joyce was to use in *Finnegans Wake*.²

The best-known portrait ¹ shows Joyce's bent head in profile, resting his forehead on the fingers of his right hand. This is an intellectual portrait, making use of the gesture of the melancholic artist, which Joyce suggested himself.³ Only five years earlier, *The Thinker* was placed over Auguste Rodin's grave, at the artist's request.⁴ Echoes of Walther von der Vogelweide in the literary arena and Dürer in the visual arts combine to provide not just a particular tradition for the image, but a topos that signals high art tradition per se – without the need for that stack of books.

One element, however, does not collude with this message: the roughly woven (hessian?) fabric that is the backdrop.⁵ An interesting tension ensues. It encapsulates much of what Joyce undoubtedly wished to convey: the nature of *Ulysses* in its juxtaposition of high art traditions and less refined everyday life. The portrait photographs are thus a well thought-out propaganda exercise for the recently published novel, and more: they are works of avant-garde art, despite the fact that they do not belong to the overtly experimental part of Man Ray's oeuvre.⁶

4 Johann Baptist Pinzinger, Salzach Museum, details photographed by Adolph Fischer, subsequently published by Joyce in transition 16/17, 1929

Joyce had an active part in determining his posture (gesture was always one of his interests) and maybe the juxtaposition between formal dress and rough fabric. To think of such implications is well within Joyce's reach. He did not need to be a connoisseur of painting to engage in this type of intellectual exercise, which is essential for the creation and interpretation of the already conceptualized artistic practice of the day. Seven years later, the writer went even further.

James Joyce, Artist Morton P. Levitt is most outspoken in his doubt that painting could have influenced Joyce: "I would be very surprised, indeed, if we were ever to find a painter who influenced Joyce, or one whom Joyce saw as an analogue to his own work".⁷ Some exceptions need to be made concerning the first case,⁸ and the latter case occurred when Joyce spoke of Jack B. Yeats' work.⁹ One would not normally regard as accomplished works of art Joyce's drawing of Bloom¹⁰ or his design for the poster announcing the opening of the Volta cinema in Dublin.¹¹ Several authors have tried to redress the balance and argue for strong visuality in Joyce's work.¹² Often this has been carried out a little too enthusiastically, and some scepticism remains. The following proposition, however, avoids the necessity for such scepticism, because it concerns aspects of visual art outside of painting.¹³

If I just stopped short of calling Joyce an artist in relation to Man Ray's portraits, I would like to overstep that boundary with regard to a work that has an indirect connection with Man Ray and photography. Man Ray knew the sculptor Constantin Brancusi in Paris and showed his friend how to photograph his sculptures installed in carefully stage-managed arrangements in his studio. Joyce repeatedly visited Brancusi, who drew his portrait in 1929. In the magazine *transition* 16/17, 1929, Brancusi published two photographs, one of his studio with sculptures, dating from around 1923. It is possible that Joyce saw to the publication of these two photographs of his work in *transition*, because he got on well with the artist. It was Brancusi's first publication in *transition* – and it would not have been the first time Joyce suggested material to the editors. Brancusi's photographs of avant-garde sculpture set the scene for what must be called Joyce's own visual contribution: the *Fluviana*.

Immediately following the pages with Brancusi's work, which often features wooden components, Joyce had published photographs of driftwood pieces.¹⁴ ⁴ They appear courtesy of James Joyce and show found objects of wood, shaped and smoothed by moving water to resemble animals. Their origin is the river Salzach near Salzburg, where Joyce

had spent some time in July 1928¹⁵ and where “Photo Fischer” (Adolph Fischer) photographed them. Johann Baptist Pinzinger, mill-owner, fruit wine producer, biscuit-maker, publican of Salzachschenke and ferryman, had his so-called “Salzachmuseum” (closed since the 1950s and now destroyed) at Gries 18.¹⁶ Joyce thus neither collected these objects himself nor commissioned the photographs, yet the name of the photographs must have appealed to him. But what were Joyce’s intentions and what is the status that the photographs acquire in their new context in *transition*, as opposed to what was a collection of curiosities on the banks of the Salzach in Raitenhaslach? Pinzinger’s purpose was undoubtedly to show the strange quirks of nature in the tradition of the *Wunderkammer* and late medieval woodcuts of roots.¹⁷ Were it not for Joyce’s doing, they would not be that remarkable.

The merit of the *Fluviana* lies in their placement into new contexts: that of *transition*,¹⁸ Brancusi’s works and (most importantly) into the context of *Work in Progress*, published in instalments in *transition*. In displacing the photographs of already displaced objects, Joyce followed Duchamp’s strategy of the ready-made, devised over a decade earlier. He also established a link with (Zurich) Dadaist creations, especially the “found” poems by Tristan Tzara and Hans (Jean) Arp’s introduction of the element of chance into sculpture. Arp, another contributor to *transition*, in his later sculptures aspired to parallel shapes found in nature.

The *Fluviana* belong to the history introduced by Roger Cardinal and now widely accepted under the name of Outsider Art. The interest in work by children, self-taught artists, the mentally ill, and prehistoric and non-European work was prevalent in avant-garde circles in the early twentieth century. The editors of *transition* published some embroidery (no. 4), Aztec sculpture (no. 5) and work by schizophrenic people. Joyce thus knew that such material found on his travels would be embraced. He cannot, however, be called an outsider artist himself or merely the “curator”¹⁹ of the work in the imaginary exhibition context of *transition*. He must be viewed as the creator of the *Fluviana* as art works because he clearly wished them to comment on his (other) work. To this end, he let them appear under his name. In no way does he indicate that they are situated outside the realm of his work, since the place of publication is the same. Joyce renders them interpretable in relation to the artist’s/the displacer’s/the arranger’s writerly work. In that regard, they are immensely fruitful.

But what *is* the comment the *Fluviana* make on Joyce’s texts? The objects are of a sufficiently general nature to be found anywhere if some-

one with a collector's mind only cared to pick them up.²⁰ Thus they comment on the procedures Joyce used in *Work in Progress*, because he habitually understated the crafted nature of his work and claimed to rely solely on found material.²¹ The reference to outsider art stresses the lack of a distinction between, or deliberate conflation of, “high” and “low” as part of Joyce's procedures within his literary oeuvre. The *Fluviana* are objects one could potentially find on the beaches of Dublin Bay, a factor not to be underestimated with Joyce. They are what the “child of a strandlooper” (FW 110.31–32) and “beachwalker” (ibid. 36) could have found. This passage, already published in *transition* at the time, can even serve as a precedent in terms of motif.

→ 4.2 The *Fluviana* are small and have a haptic appeal.²² Synaesthesia has always been one of Joyce's concerns, with the “Anna Livia” chapter proving the writer's continued interest in appealing to many senses around the time of the *Fluviana*'s publication. Because synaesthesia can be used to unite the world,²³ the *Fluviana* can vouch for Joyce's universalist ambitions. Indeed, they thus highlight Joyce as one of those contemporaries actively engaged in creating a total work of art or *Gesamtkunstwerk*.²⁴ Joyce's interdisciplinary practice²⁵ is underlined by a contemporary visual artist's disapproving comments. In 1930 Joyce encouraged his daughter Lucia to discontinue her dancing career and take up the visual arts instead. Stella Steyn criticized Joyce sharply for thinking that the arts were interchangeable in this way.²⁶ In the *Gesamtkunstwerk*'s context, Joyce's foray into the visual arts should not come as a surprise.²⁷

The *Fluviana* immediately strike one as corresponding perfectly with the preoccupations of the writer of *Work in Progress*, especially the “Anna Livia” chapter, which Stella Steyn illustrated in *transition*'s next issue (no. 18), along with “The Ondt and the Gracehoper”. The metamorphosis of the washerwomen on the banks of the Liffey into tree and stone, aided and represented by the rhythmically flowing language of the river, finds an ideal visual, conceptual and haptic correspondence in driftwood pieces in the shape of a racer or lobster. Tree and water combined to shape these objects which resemble living creatures. Pinzinger also collected stones from the river. His personality may also have suggested to Joyce a correspondence with HCE.

The *Fluviana* assume an interestingly fleeting/floating place in the chain of being to which Joyce alluded so often. There could also be a correspondence with *Ulysses*, since in “Proteus” Joyce explored nature's language by letting the sea and the rocks “speak”. Moreover, Bloom later

picks up a (driftwood?) stick on the beach and writes with it in the sand.

Without any reference to the *Fluviana*, Jacques Aubert has linked Joyce's practice to the *xoana*,²⁸ the first Greek sculptures, which were pieces of wood (sometimes also of stone), thought to be invested with divine powers – often because they resembled living beings, gods. David Freedberg, in *The Power of Images*, gives a detailed account and follows the question of what it was that rendered them divine.²⁹ The *Fluviana* as modern-day *xoana* highlight Joyce's ambition to create or at least parallel holy scriptures and his interest in Greek sculpture before – and coinciding with – Daedalus, where archaic form and numinosity appear to correlate.

Pinzinger had given the *Fluviana* titles, which Joyce took over or modified,³⁰ a literary activity pertaining to a visual artist. They were chosen according to the shapes one can vaguely recognize in them or associate with them: Hydra, Foot, Lobster, Racer, Head of Gazelle and Seal. This not only alludes to common artistic – especially Surrealist – practice but also to the procedure employed and applied to art by Sigmund Freud in his 1910 essay on Leonardo da Vinci, which Joyce owned.³¹

Concerning *Virgin and Child with St. Anne*, 1506/10, Freud reiterates that the shape of a vulture, turned on its back, was embedded in Mary's blue-grey cloak. He used the bird's symbolism for his analysis of the artist's childhood. Joyce and Pinzinger, on the other hand, certainly do not wish to "analyse" nature psychoanalytically or to ask why the river had created a "racer" or a "hydra". Joyce is not in an analyst's position but in that of an artist whose conceptual work consists of placing (or displacing) an object into an art context.

The readers of *transition*, well acquainted with contemporary sculptors' practices, would have had no difficulty in seeing the *Fluviana* in this context, especially since they are placed alongside Brancusi's work. Owing to the *Fluviana* and the task of transference required of any viewer and reader, i.e. between the photographs and Joyce's name and work, a better understanding of the fragments of *Work in Progress* which were published in *transition* could well have been the result. That may indeed have been one of Joyce's intentions, since in 1929 he was faced with severe criticism of his latest work. He enabled recipients to arrive at a "translation" from one art form to another, which in Joyce's view undoubtedly corresponded to it. At the same time, he did not need to spell things out, i.e. to invert the recipients' active role.

Within the context of ready-mades and contemporary sculpture, published in *transition* and visible in Paris galleries at the time, Joyce's

Fluviana certainly are valid works in their own right. Although this does not imply a value judgment about how successful they are as art works, they certainly deserve some attention within Joyce scholarship and within art history. In the terminology of this discipline, the *Fluviana* are *sculptures involontaires*. This term is linked with the names of Salvador Dalí and Brassäi.³² Their collaboration is similar to that of Johann Baptist Pinzinger, Photo Fischer and Joyce, but postdates it by four years: 1933. Thus, it is quite possible that the virtually unknown visual works that Joyce introduced into the avant-garde context had, at least indirectly, entered the art-historical canon – as sources of inspiration for Dalí and Brassäi, who published close-up³³ photographs of crumpled or rolled waste paper and other items in *Minotaure*, a Paris avant-garde magazine similar to *transition*.

Cork Furthermore, the *Fluviana* are interesting because they clearly transpose into visual art one of Joyce's important literary innovations: the way in which he ended the ideal separation of the story and the book, consisting of words. The materiality in artists' works that have been inspired by Joyce will be a central concern. Indeed, when considering the materiality of the *Fluviana*, another work by Joyce with some similar traits comes to mind: the photograph of Cork city, mounted in a frame of cork, which Joyce displayed in his Paris apartment.³⁴ If the *Fluviana*'s main claim to art originated in Joyce's conceptual move to have them published in an art context in *transition*, the Cork picture's merits lie in taking a word literally and displaying its material manifestation.³⁵ This punning display of the inseparability of form and content is common Surrealist practice (René Magritte) and in Conceptual art, as it was developed a decade before Joyce's time in Paris, most notably by Marcel Duchamp.³⁶

The reference here to Duchamp can serve to dispel another myth about the incompatibility between Joyce and visual art: his conventional taste, favouring Dutch masters and Renoir.³⁷ Ready-mades and the move towards conceptual decision-making as the task of the artist have the following goals in mind: the intellectualization of art (in the process allocating a central role to language in art) and its divorce from taste, subjectivity, and an over-reliance on feeling. Joyce had seen artistic strategies move in that direction in Trieste, where he became knowledgeable about Futurism.³⁸ To simplify: ever since approximately 1913 an avant-garde artist has to be intelligent, not necessarily tasteful.

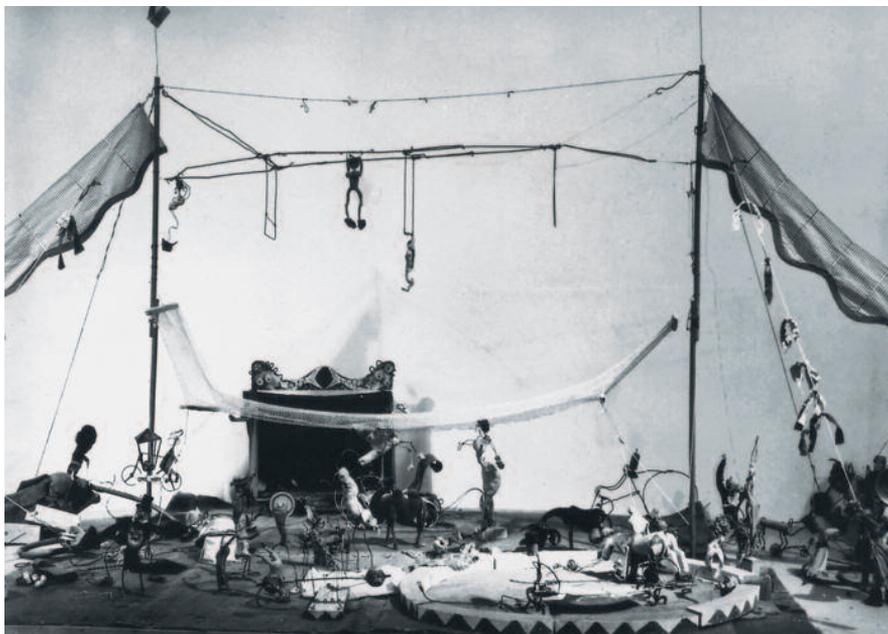
While both the *Fluviana* and Joyce's C/cork frame are certainly art now, and were considered as such in avant-garde circles in Joyce's Paris

days, were they art for Joyce? Was it an important issue for him? According to his early thoughts on the subject, they are probably not art. In 1903 he held that a wooden object, for example a cow, more or less accidentally created by “a man hacking in fury at a block of wood [was not art, although] houses, clothes, furniture [are works of art w]hen they are so disposed for an aesthetic end”.³⁹ Moreover, “a work of sculptural art must be surveyed according to its rhythm and this surveying is an imaginary movement in space”.⁴⁰

Publishing the *Fluviana* in 1929 is strong evidence that Joyce had realized a slight inconsistency in his earlier notebook entry, most likely induced by the different ways in which art had developed. Indeed, in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* such changes are already signalled by Lynch’s dismissive response to Stephen’s aesthetic theories. The little pieces of driftwood (and even the photos) may not have been created for an “aesthetic end”, but they can be surveyed by means of an “imaginary movement in space”, and they were undoubtedly published for an aesthetic end.

It follows that Joyce now wished to insert the *Fluviana* and the Cork frame into an art context – as equals. This, however does not mean that their status as works of art was the decisive factor for him, nor that it should be for us,⁴¹ as long as they remain interpretable in relation to Joyce’s work and contemporary art practice. Joyce’s visual works not only modestly complement his writing, they also affirm the strategies pursued in the well-known visual and musical aspects of his books. They are artworks inspired by his writing and, as such, they occupy a privileged position.

Alexander Calder Stella Steyn was an original draftsman and Ireland’s only Bauhaus-educated artist. She had previously enjoyed a Dublin art education under Patrick Tuohy, and it was this link with the portraitist of the Joyce family that gained her entry into Joyce’s Paris home in 1929 (before her Bauhaus year in 1931/32), where she became a friend of Lucia Joyce. Strangely, however, as far as visual art is concerned, Joyce’s implied (never directly expressed) judgments seem to hold up better than Steyn’s – just as the writer had been better informed than his artist friend Frank Budgen about Futurism while in Zurich.⁴² Steyn criticized Joyce for having sent Lucia to be taught by Alexander Calder, of whose credentials as an artist Steyn was more than doubtful.⁴³ Calder, now securely established in the canon, was an early twentieth-century sculptor who questioned solidity and stability. His humour and his penchant for the circus were also aspects that may have endeared him to Joyce.



5 Alexander
Calder, *Circus*
1926-31

But Joyce did not only have his own preferences in mind when he suggested that Lucia informally work with and learn from Calder. Rosalind Krauss describes Calder's mobiles in terms of sculpture's relationship to theatre, time and dance, which was previously Lucia Joyce's art form.⁴⁴ Many Parisians saw Calder's *Circus* of metal wire figures in motion at his Montparnasse apartment from 1927 onwards.⁵ Joyce cannot but have been among them, maybe prompted by Calder's contribution to *transition*, since otherwise there would be no ground for Stella Steyn's complaints. Martha Graham had some of the figures enlarged as "plastic interludes" for her modern dance performances. Calder suited the Joyces in many ways. Lucia found a lover in him.⁴⁵ Did her father provide suitable inspiration for Calder's work in developing his mobiles at the time? With these mobiles, created from 1932 on – when Duchamp coined the term, Calder pursued a pleasing and playful, but carefully constructed, lightness that Joyce was achieving in his writing.

While no conclusive answer can be given in this case, Joyce's active participation in Paris' visual culture can be viewed as better established than previously was the case. Further such tantalising possibilities for reciprocal inspiration must now be explored.



1.2 Early Responses

Encounters The suggestion of reciprocity in the Joyce portraits by Man Ray, as well as the inevitability of a meeting between Calder and Joyce, pave the way for an investigation of work created by contemporaries of Joyce and in his vicinity. The latter case joins the suggestive almost-encounters or unreported (and probably uneventful) meetings, whose mere possibility has been one of the most fascinating inspirations for artists.

Tom Stoppard's play *Travesties*, 1975, imagining the encounter between Joyce, Tristan Tzara and Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (Lenin) at the Zurich public library, is best known. John Cage let his love for reading Joyce aloud¹ evolve in 1988 into a radio play entitled *James Joyce, Marcel Duchamp, Eric Satie – An Alphabet*. In it, many contemporaries and figures from all ages appear together. Sorel Etrog has commented on perceived correspondences between Joyce and Dada, by applying Dada typographical formats to relevant texts from both sides, for example juxtaposing Molly Bloom's repeated "yes" with "dada", the Russian word for yes. Micheal Farrell not only painted Joyce in Brancusi's studio, which the writer repeatedly and reportedly visited, but also showed him at a party with Dalí and in a Paris café with Picasso.² ⁸ Peter Milton has taken Joyce's meeting with Marcel Proust as the starting point for a large print, *The Ministry*, 2003.³

While such anecdotes, which undoubtedly make good sources of artistic inspiration, are no substitutes for art-historical scholarship, it is possible to state that Joyce was part of thriving avant-garde communities in Trieste, Zurich and Paris. He apparently enjoyed the atmosphere of innovation generated by the circles around the *Little Review* and *transition*. As early as 1921, the *Little Review* compiled a poster with contributors' signatures. Joyce figures here among the visual artists Brancusi, Jean Cocteau, Théo van Doesburg, László Moholy-Nagy, Fernand Léger, Tristan Tzara, Juan Gris, Wyndham Lewis, Hans Arp, Marcel Duchamp (Rose Sélavy) and others.⁴

Any artworks relating to Joyce that were produced during his lifetime will be of great interest within the framework of this study. I present early responses alongside each other in this chapter because of the possibility of reciprocal inspiration, the Joycean part of which I will at times have to leave to others to explore more fully, since it is, strictly speaking, not the subject here. It is not my intention to revive a category such as

6 Mary Reynolds, Ulysses Binding and slipcase
not dated (1920s)

7 Constantin Brancusi, Portrait J. Joyce
ca. 1928



8 Micheal Farrell,
Café de Flore
1993

the *Zeitgeist* to interpret these early examples or to devote myself to every portrait, because its early creation and/or the artist's friendship with Joyce render it canonical. Not all early works deserve art-historical scrutiny today.

Frank Budgen One clear example of this is Francis Spencer Budgen's work. The painter and model to sculptors is well known as a vital source for understanding Joyce's working process regarding the parts of *Ulysses* written during his Zurich years. This is where the problem begins: Budgen's portrait of Joyce from 1919 ⁹ shows, according to him, "a true impression of the Joyce of the *Ulysses* period – sprawling and seemingly relaxed but still alert and watchful". Joyce's observations were positive, with a humorously pointed corollary, "I like the pose in your portrait but for the love of Manfield tell the buyer that my size in shoes is a small seven".⁵ Budgen's work is realistic to the extent that the less than elegantly painted right foot, the elongated trunk and the odd angle of the right thigh are to be classed as shortcomings, rather than intentional distortions. Joyce picked this up clearly, well aware of Budgen's traditional views concerning (visual) art. The fact that it was the writer who lent the *Futurist Manifesto* to the artist is just one example of Joyce's better



9 Frank Budgen,
Portrait of Joyce
1919

informed views concerning contemporary art practice.

The reason why this work is then included here is the possible argument that, since it was executed before *Ulysses* was published, a naturalistic work on Joyce is thus still a valid comment – especially because this is a portrait in the wake of *A Portrait*. This argument must fail on two counts. Budgen had read large sections of *Ulysses* at the time and thus knew something that in fact did change his practice ever so slightly towards a more angular rendering of Joyce and himself enjoying a glass of wine. Strangely, though, his *Ulysses* illustrations again revert to that very traditional style.

2.2 →

The portrait painting reveals the second idiosyncrasy in relation to Joyce's early oeuvre (*Dubliners*), easily accessible to Budgen at the time. His intention to show a flattering image of the writer is thwarted: Joyce may have frequently worn a brown suit, but by showing him in one in an artwork, Budgen associates his friend with the colour that stands in Joyce's texts not for relaxation but for paralysis⁶ – not the intended outcome.

Thus, although Clive Hart rightly points out that both Joyce and Budgen believed in a hard-working artistic ethos,⁷ hard work on the part of the visual artist is not merely a focus on the handling of paint. It has

much to do with that same intellectual attitude that is required of the writer. When Nathan Halper “asked Budgen whether he or Joyce had known Tristan Tzara or any of the other dadaists in Zurich, he looked down his nose; then he snorted, ‘No!! *We* had work to do’.”⁸ That jejune comment would not have done for Joyce (who, as Halper continues, certainly at least knew of Tzara) – and it will not do for artists who claim to create work complementing Joyce’s.

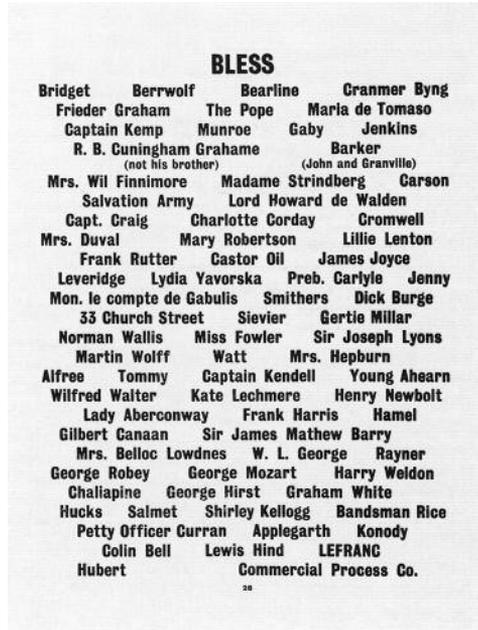
Pablo Picasso appears here not as a source of inspiration for Joyce, nor as an artist inspired by him, although some correspondences have been put forward, namely their Modernist uses of the brothel as subject matter.⁹ It is to clarify some of the points of criticism just made in relation to Budgen. As with some other issues touched upon in this chapter, themes for further discussion can be introduced.

Picasso and Joyce knew of each other. The writer once complained that the genre differences of their activities meant that he was earning far less than the painter,¹⁰ but otherwise they seem to have avoided having much to do with one another: Picasso did not wish to portray Joyce or illustrate *Ulysses*.¹¹ Brancusi and Matisse took up these tasks respectively. Joyce, who disliked Picasso’s “aggressive” style(s), nevertheless remained curious as to how the “Mediterranean” artist would have responded to *Ulysses*.¹²

Much has been written about Joyce and Cubism. Max Halperen’s understanding of spatial ambiguity and Jo Anna Isaak’s comparison of the novel treatment of point of view in *Ulysses* are immensely valid¹³ – as opposed to the simpler, more metaphorical understanding (like Budgen’s) that Cubism provided an all-round characterization of an object or person. Wendy Steiner has shown the Joyce-Cubism-link to be “arbitrary and overgeneralised”¹⁴ if it is not specific in its claim to stylistic parallelism. She then locates correspondences in a “peculiar tension [...] between the representational and nonrepresentational features of the medium [and a rejection of history] as a plotted narrative moving toward a resolution”.¹⁵

One aspect highlighted by the comparison between Picasso’s Cubism and Joyce’s writing takes on central importance for artists of the post-Picasso era who wish to respond by pictorial means to Joyce:

The polyphonic text ‘destroys the monologic of representational literary discourse and sets the general scene for a kaleidoscopic and pluralistic way of writing in which we see nothing, for it is the writing that sees us. [...]’¹⁶



10 **Wyndham Lewis,**
Blast
1914

This “inversion of traditional values”,¹⁷ including the beautiful and the ugly, could (as was also remarkable in Picasso’s case) even include monstrous Classicism, a cornucopia of styles and media. It should become clear that this perspective is far from constrictive; indeed, it opens a world-like multiplicity. What it, however, does prevent any serious artist from doing in the wake of Joyce (and his contemporaries in the visual arts) is painting realistic, one-dimensional, pleasingly narrative and beautifully boring nineteenth-century-style paintings – until, that is, the advent of postmodernist appropriation techniques in art.¹⁸

Wyndham Lewis In *Time and Western Man*, 1927, Wyndham Lewis writes that, “It was about six or seven years ago that I first became acquainted with his [Joyce’s] writing [...] the *Dubliners* [...] I have just read.” Considering that Wyndham Lewis had already entered Joyce into his Vorticist manifesto *Blast* in 1914¹⁰ and thus produced the very first artwork that can be included in the current study, it is rather in keeping with the visual artist’s complaints about Joyce’s adherence to the “time school” that at least six years remain unaccounted for.

Joyce’s inclusion under the heading “Bless” cannot but be understood as a doubtful blessing, especially because the list features Cromwell and

11 Wyndham Lewis,
Portrait of
James Joyce
1921



Castor Oil. On the other hand, it is also reverential, taking into account that Joyce was trying to place Wyndham Lewis' first novel *Tarr* in Switzerland at the time. *Blast* was meant to shock in that Futurist way – a feature it shares with the movement whose earlier manifestations Joyce had witnessed in Trieste. The English artist is clearly aware of Joyce's admirable position vis-à-vis the European avant-garde. That is why he seeks to depict Joyce, as I see it, as a traditionalist. The drawing with the title *The Duc de Joyeux Sings* shows the writer in an almost baroque costume. At other times, Lewis did draw him more flatteringly angular and “modern”,¹¹ but what seems most striking is that, with his criticism of Joyce, Lewis unintentionally casts a very traditional light on to himself. Joyce thus appears to have reciprocated by giving the spiritless Ondt in “The Ondt and the Gracehoper” traits of Wyndham Lewis.¹⁹ In *Time and Western Man*, Lewis explains his attitude to Joyce in the following way: “It is a good deal as a pictorial and graphic artist that I approach these problems; and a method that does not secure that definition and logical integrity that, as a graphic artist, I require, I am, I admit, hostile from the start.”²⁰

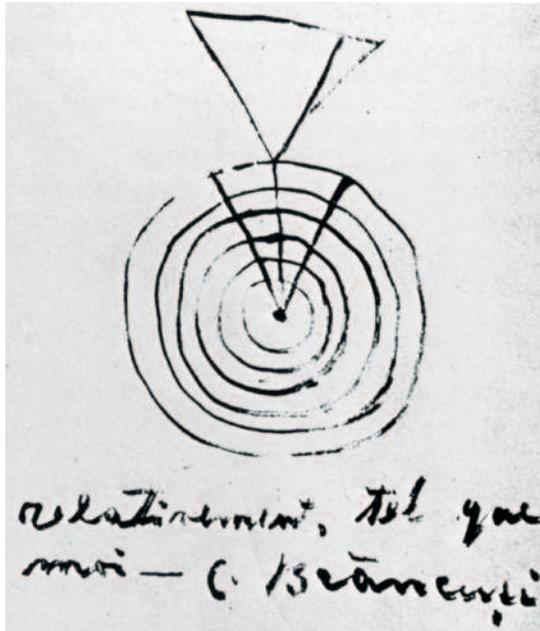
Despite his practice as a doubly gifted artist, Lewis espouses what is very much a rationalist, even Classicist, Lessing-like distinction between

the *Nebeneinander* (simultaneity) and the *Nacheinander* (succession), locating Joyce and himself at opposite poles.²¹ Lewis could very well have drawn different conclusions from an incidence, which he himself reports. Lewis, again classicist, objected to the accumulation of detail on the façade of Rouen Cathedral, while Joyce liked it (the spatial sprawl), “adding that he himself [...], in words, did something of that sort”.²² Lewis did not in the least realize, it appears, that his own fascination with Futurism in the visual arts was for a movement glorifying speed – or that Joyce’s work only partly gives way to “[...] the ritual of time-gods, and of breathless transformations”,²³ the other part being his calculated use of space (for example in “Wandering Rocks”).²⁴

Far from paralleling Wyndham Lewis’ hostility, I can in anticipation of further discussions state that visual artists have since found that Joyce’s use of space meets their own concerns halfway, while it offers fruitful ideas for the use of time in their genres.

Constantin Brancusi While Wyndham Lewis hoped for reciprocal inspiration (even influence) when it came to Joyce,²⁵ some evidence exists of reciprocity in relation to Constantin Brancusi. The Romanian sculptor appears in “The Mookse and the Gripes”, as Nathan Halper has pointed out.²⁶ Joyce himself tells the story of Brancusi drawing his portrait. “He first did a kind of a head of me which the C [rosbys who published extracts from *Work in Progress*, the “Tales Told of Shem and Shaun”] didn’t much like so he went on and did something like this. [...] I get on well with Brancusi (who is something of a fogey like myself) deploring modern feminine fashions, the speed of modern trains etc. etc.”²⁷ Apart from the interesting comment on speed – a possible rebuttal of Wyndham Lewis’ claims, while stressing the common ground between the arts – there is more to this portrait commission than meets the eye.

Rather than needing to ask Brancusi to “go on” and draw another one, Richard Ellmann, who later interviewed him, reports that the artist responded to the request to “do something more abstract [by saying] He *had* [my italics ...] a ‘Symbol of Joyce’ [...] to express the ‘*sens du pousser*’”,²⁸ or rather *poseur*. Brancusi seems to have exceeded his task and completed more work than was commissioned. He was interested in an inner “sense” of Joyce. Indeed, he reciprocated Joyce’s feeling of being “like myself” and expressed it in his art. In the vein of the *Symbol of Joyce* (not part of the portrait commission) Brancusi also created a relief entitled *Portrait J. Joyce*.²⁹ 7



12 Constantin Brancusi, *relativement, tel que moi* not dated

Here he juxtaposes the quotidian material cardboard – a disc with a cut to the centre from where it hangs on a nail – with a copper spiral suspended from the same nail. Copper is the symbol of one of the ages, which Joyce used for structuring the *Wake*. It is a conductor whose spiral shape refers to the path of the sun and thus time. Similarly the cardboard disc itself could stand for completeness. Owing to its incision, it can be interpreted as the plan of a megalithic passage tomb aligned with the sun and thus measuring time, but also as a sundial. The spiral, a gnomon, could then link *Dubliners*, where this word occurs on the first page, with the concerns of *Work in Progress* and its cyclical or spiral-shaped structure. *Ulysses* is echoed in the materials, oscillating between quotidian cardboard and sublime copper with its reference to tradition. Brancusi explained: “Joyce is like that: He departs from one point, and you’ll never meet him again.”³⁰ The relief thus goes much further in its references to Joyce than the *Symbol of Joyce*, where the main (undecidable) question would be whether the spiral refers to Joyce’s thick spectacles or to the ear privileged in *Work in Progress*, Earwicker’s story that is meant to be read aloud.

But what about evidence that Brancusi also felt that Joyce was “like” him? The juxtaposition of precious and poorer materials (often wood

and polished metal or marble) is not sufficient proof. The display of the Joyce relief, however, goes further in finding this evidence. Brancusi showed the work prominently in his studio's main space, behind his *Infinite Columns*,³¹ until his death in 1957.³² What was also to be seen on the walls of Brancusi's studio was a drawing on, or scratched into, the plaster, featuring not a spiral but concentric circles, as well as a superimposed triangle and a wedge pointing towards the centre. The same six concentric circles, this time with a triangle or pyramid, echo the wedge and stand, point down, on top of the circles.¹¹ This undated drawing was signed by Brancusi: "relativement, tel que moi – C. Brancusi".³³ It is thus a self-portrait – one very much on the same terms as the Joyce portrait, showing clear correspondences, as well as some telling differences.³⁴ Although both men may have commented on the *Symbol of Joyce* in a deceptively dismissive way,³⁵ they both took the work seriously.³⁶

Further evidence of long conversations between Brancusi and Joyce is a study for or variation of the *Symbol of Joyce* drawing,³⁷ which includes groups of capital letters (each with a dot) placed at either end of the drawing's spiral and slightly wavy lines (drawn with a brush). Nathan Halper and Sidney Geist have attempted to decipher their meaning,³⁸ and a collaboration of a *Wake* scholar (and one-time gallerist) and an artist and curator with specialization on Brancusi, the team is well equipped for the task.³⁹ They find a possible solution for one group of three letters to be a schoolboy joke: The letters "O.E.P." stand in Greek for "ouk elabon polin", now on p. 269 of the *Wake*, which can be pronounced in French as "Ou qu'est la bonne Pauline?". Halper and Geist conclude that

We do not know how much (if any) of this Joyce had in mind when he had Brancusi drape the alphabetical addenda along the sides of his *Portrait*. [...] But we do feel, with some measure of confidence, that the letters did experience a metamorphosis. They became the frivolous comments in the margins of *Storiella*.⁴⁰

In an art-historical context, such schoolboy jokes using capital letters that are placed alongside a portrait cannot be viewed without recourse to Marcel Duchamp's 1919 parody of the *Gioconda*. He drew a moustache and a goatee beard on the *Mona Lisa*'s face (in a reproduction) and placed the letters L.H.O.O.Q. underneath – a more risqué "joke" (in French pronunciation) than the one featured by Brancusi/Joyce. Would one not be correct in ascribing enjoyment of such schoolboyish word-plays more to Joyce than to Brancusi? The sculptor did encounter problems, because his works sometimes take on a phallic shape, but his

intentions would perhaps not have included this specific vulgarity. At any rate, the two men enjoyed their conversations, which were probably more mutually beneficial than has previously been acknowledged. Their relationship certainly should be kept in mind as a background to the *Fluviana*.⁴¹ It may also be interesting to know that the conversation on schoolboy jokes may indeed have concerned Duchamp directly. He, too, admired Brancusi, frequented his studio and bought some of his sculptures after the death of John Quinn.⁴²

Marcel Duchamp Joyce's and Duchamp's "parallel lives", as Jeanne Haunschuld has called them,⁴³ their corresponding interests in the linguistic and conceptual handling of taboo subjects, and of course their canonical status in either field render them prime examples of the tantalizing almost-connections that I have mentioned.

Was theirs reciprocal inspiration? Maybe, especially when they are as suggestive as the title *Given!* of part of Duchamp's secret last work, denoting a nude female torso beside a "waterfall", while "The keys to. Given!" is part of the second last line of *Finnegans Wake*.⁴⁴ Various authors have written on the subject,⁴⁵ but the only evidence for Joyce's awareness of Duchamp's work (or vice versa) remains the writer's comment on the artist's title page for *transition* (Winter 1937), an inscribed dog-comb. ¹⁴ This, Joyce jokingly stated, "was the one used to comb out Work in Progress".⁴⁶ There is also the slight possibility that Duchamp appears in the *Wake* in conjunction with Paul Klee, "Moy jay trouway la clee dang les champs" (FW 478.21).⁴⁷

One can certainly observe common occupations and even approaches, from gender transgressions (Bloom in "Circe" and Rose Sélavy) to work that challenges authorship and an immense (stylistic) versatility. But the most striking feature of that possible connection between the two innovators in their fields in the twentieth century is that the connection (understood as a causal relationship) really cannot be verified – that it remains an inspiring possibility. For post-Duchampian (i.e. broadly speaking all postmodernist) artists the thought needs to be entertained that using Joyce as part of an artistic strategy could serve to elude Duchamp's all-encompassing shadow, while still remaining within the same "catchment area" regarding the canon of recent Western art. Paradoxically, artists – from the 1960s onwards, as we shall see – could still follow Duchamp in this: "What mattered", Duchamp said, 'was an attitude, more than an influence, to know how he [Raymond Roussel in this instance] had done all that, and why...'"⁴⁸



13 Marcel Duchamp,
cover for
transition
1937

Mary Reynolds was Marcel Duchamp's partner from July 1923. They repeatedly collaborated on Reynolds' book binding, as in the case of Jarry's *Ubu Roi*, where Duchamp designed the binding and Reynolds executed it.⁴⁹ Reynolds bound no. 301⁵⁰ of the limited first edition of *Ulysses* (1922, Shakespeare & Company, Paris, 1000 copies).⁶ It is the first book object or artist's book created "on" Joyce. Although one cannot determine the exact date of the binding, the suggestion is that it was carried out relatively soon after publication, probably in the 1920s.

Reynolds is true to Joyce's understated, classicist and symbolic design of the first edition in that she retains the font and the blue colour in full Moroccan leather. The lettering on the spine is gold, rather than white or cream. Reynolds bound in the original paper covers. The most striking feature are the maps: French maps of Ireland and Greece from 1826. They are cut to provide the endpapers and the cover for a slipcase, where Asia Minor can be identified.

Reynolds comments knowledgeably on the book's contents, providing, along with the maps, a hint at the universal implications of that Dublin day. Moreover, maps are appropriate not only to Odysseus' and Bloom's travels, but also to an interpretation of Joyce's "spatial" techniques, thus focusing on an aspect that can bridge Joyce's writerly

4.4 →

→ 4.5

practice with visual art. Further artworks using maps will follow the same route. It is fascinating to find that in Reynolds' house, Duchamp had a room (or studio space) that he had wallpapered with maps.⁵¹ Thus the *Ulysses* binding may constitute as much as a creative statement of perceived correspondences between Joyce's and Duchamp's interests. It was probably Reynolds' statement, but her partner could easily have had a part in the choice of maps.

Reynolds' *Ulysses* is more conventional than her (and Duchamp's) Jarry bindings; nevertheless it inhabits a Surrealist (or Joycean and Duchampian) space in its inclusion of found material. Apart from the cover, the book itself, with its untrimmed paper, remains untouched, as in most of Reynolds' works. It is in some way a ready-made, entering (being bound into) the realm of visual art – a worthy precedent for the *Fluviana*. Since Joyce frequented Mary Reynolds' "open house" evenings,⁵² he may indeed have supplied the incentive, the ideas, or the copy of *Ulysses* for the binding.

Lucia Joyce *Lettrines* by Lucia Joyce, although not originally conceived to be published with any particular text in mind, still achieve a commentary on her father's work, in whose "climate" they originated. If Joyce suggested that Lucia turn to visual art, the most obvious and frequently stated point of reference in this field with regard to *Work in Progress/Finnegans Wake* would be the Book of Kells, with its illuminated initials. Lucia Joyce updated these initials by giving them abstract, angular interior motifs with a slightly art-nouveau feel. No animals curl up inside the letters.

→ 3.2, 4.1

Joyce also showed an interest in the shape of letters and both highlighted and changed them in his so-called sigla. Updating traditional Irish culture was one of his main concerns. To displace these *Lettrines* into a text by a different author, Chaucer, seems to make another point that can also be related to Joyce: the adaptability of any other literary and historical material to the approach taken. Since these remained the only published designs Lucia Joyce completed, she must have felt that she had not yet found her own course to follow within the visual arts. The *Lettrines* are, one can speculate, too closely related to her father's oeuvre.

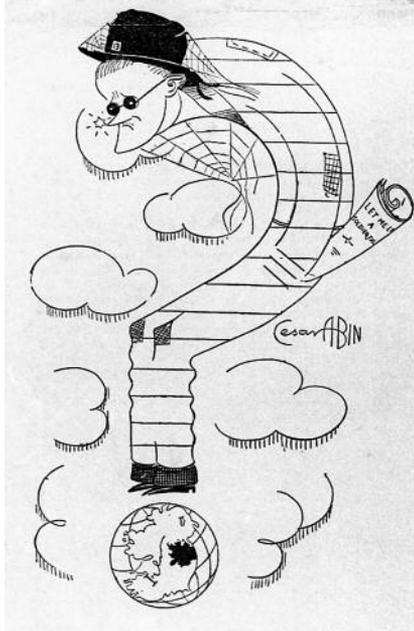
Stella Steyn Joyce's wish to have Stella Steyn "illustrate" *Work in Progress* in 1929 should be viewed in conjunction with all the other schemes and projects meant to increase acceptance of Joyce's latest writing: the *Fluviana*, Brancusi's portrait commission and, most elaborately,



14 **Stella Steyn,**
The Ondt's
Funeral
1929

Our Exagmination. In late 1928 and spring 1929, Joyce worked on “The Ondt and the Gracehoper”. He read passages of the text to the eighteen-year-old Steyn, who admitted to understanding nothing. Joyce explained to her about meaning on more than one level and suggested scenes that she could draw.

The Ondt's Funeral ¹⁴ is one scene where there is evidence of such doubling in so far as the square, the aperspectival carriage of the pram bearing the ondt (a man) also denotes a boxing ring and perhaps a grave. As with the other images accompanying the “Anna Livia” chapter, Steyn’s work shows naive elements and is characterized by a flower-repleted *horror vacui*. This accumulation does seem to suit *Work in Progress* rather well; however, it is not a response to the text, since, for example a market scene in Marseille is depicted in the same way. The flow and rhythm of the episode do not find a correspondence, and there is no evidence that Steyn may have attempted to develop (or that Joyce suggested) new visual approaches to match the author’s reading. It was only later at the Bauhaus that she was encouraged to vary her techniques and stylistic repertoire.



15 César Abin,
Caricature of
James Joyce
1932

César Abin The year César Abin's caricature of Joyce ¹⁵ was published in *transition*, the artist's catalogue of 56 portraits of artists appeared. They are as illustrious as (if at times a little more traditional than) those portrayed by Man Ray.⁵³ Abin included attributes pertaining to the personalities depicted, with Joyce somewhat more "distorted" than most. His body is in the shape of a question mark with the dot as the globe, covered only by Ireland and showing Dublin in black. There are many cobwebs in evidence and Joyce as a whole is "in the clouds".

The image was put to immediate use in *transition* to counter (unsuccessfully)⁵⁴ the perceived severity of the personality of Goethe, whose anniversary was marked by some attacks in the magazine. The merit of the image beyond this (or even in this) scheme is very limited. A caricature can render something that is supposedly difficult – and this is the implication of the question mark – a little lighter and more humorous, but this drawing seems somewhat too light in that Joyce is "in the clouds" (quasi "for the birds") and looks miserable.⁵⁵ He even appears outdated (cobwebs) – traits which serve only too well those who wish to dismiss him.

Kurt Schwitters There is some sense in which Kurt Schwitters and Joyce seem to belong to the same artistic galaxy, to remain with Abin's

celestial metaphor. Is Anna Blume, the subject of Schwitters' love poem (*An Anna Blume*), a conflation of Molly Bloom and Anna Livia – or does Joyce owe this to Schwitters? Neither is the answer, because the poem dates from 1919, when the Blooms were long named. But the humorous, grammar-bending poetry would not be misplaced as a source of inspiration for *Finnegans Wake*. Despite a contribution by Schwitters to *transition*, there does not appear to have been any direct contact between Joyce and the Hanoverian artist. Or was there? “Merzmard! I met with whom it was too late. My fate! O hate! Fairwail!” (FW 345.13-14). If this passage is indeed linked to Schwitters' brand of Dada, which he called Merz (after a snippet from a newspaper advert for Commerz Bank and before the occurrence of “Kommerzial” in the *Wake*, 069.35), it suggests a missed meeting.

At any rate, Carola Giedion-Welcker considered Schwitters “a parallel to Joyce in what he does with the rubbish of everyday life and transforms it in composition”⁵⁶ and found similar methods in his writings and those of Hans Arp. She had both artists' visual works in her collection, but Joyce and Schwitters did not meet, while “I had him [, Joyce, at my house] together with Arp [...] and they didn't speak a word.”⁵⁷ Arp, however, is (also) mentioned in *Finnegans Wake* and cannot have been too hostile to Joyce, since he commended Giedion-Welcker on her letter to Carl Gustav Jung in defence of *Ulysses*.⁵⁸

Schwitters, whom Giedion-Welcker erroneously thought was dead during the time of her friendship with the Joyces,⁵⁹ was in exile, where he was at one point photographed sitting in a dry riverbed in England, collecting stones for pebble sculptures (which he carried out in the 1940s). As early as 1920, he worked in his collages with *Fluviana*-like found wooden pieces (for example *Merzbild 29 A*). Interestingly, Schwitters, who was a collector and innovator of the first rank, nevertheless returned repeatedly to painting naturalistic, well-executed landscapes and portraits (to support himself in exile). This unorthodox position and multiplicity of styles had its origin mostly in the circumstances of his exiled existence and the need to paint portraits to survive, but there may also be something prefigured that will emerge as a pattern: the Joyce-related willingness of visual artists to embrace a stylistic multiplicity.

2.1 →

Max Ernst, Dada and Surrealism Joyce thought it necessary in a letter to his brother Stanislaus to counter claims “that I founded in Zurich the dadaist movement which is now exciting Paris (report of Irish Press last

week) [September 1920]”.⁶⁰ Although this connection may sound tempting, the extent to which Joyce needed to control his artistic output immediately suggests a difference in procedures, despite common interests. That argument rests, however, on the presumption that the Dada members, Hans Arp and Sophie Taeuber-Arp, who are credited – alongside Duchamp – with the introduction to visual art of chance elements, actually did employ chance. In fact, they clearly and deliberately composed even their “chance” works, which thus do not constitute direct parallels to Tzara’s found poetry. Much has been written on this subject, which Hans Richter, one of the *dramatis personae* in Zurich, summarized appropriately:

This game with language, sound, words, and associations of sound has become part of the growth of language [... It] is as meaningful as it appears meaningless. It was taken up on all sides and in many countries [...] and Joyce developed his own artistic style from it.⁶¹

In advertising for the just-published *Finnegans Wake* in *transition* 21, Joyce seems to have placed himself in closer proximity to Dada than one would have thought likely: “Humptydump Dublin’s *granddada* of all rogues”,⁶² complete with italics. But the several occurrences of the two syllables in the *Wake* cannot prove or disprove any link adequately.

Dougald McMillan devotes a whole chapter in his book on *transition* to Dada in the magazine, stating: “nowhere else is this tradition so well displayed as in *transition*.”⁶³ In Joyce’s Paris years Hans Arp, contributed both poetry and images of sculptures to the journal. It is easy (and maybe too simple) to imagine that a multilingual poet-cum-sculptor would have been able to irritate Joyce even slightly, as Carola Giedion-Welcker reports it, especially since he was aware of and used Arp’s pioneering writing.⁶⁴

But when [not Arp but] Max Ernst, the Surrealist, came [to visit the Giedions], Joyce was thrilled. I had bought a picture of Max’s, which Joyce liked very much. It was called *Europe après la pluie*. It was only a [map –] it becomes crazy, you know? First you look at it and say, ‘Ah, it’s the Mediterranean. No, it’s the Caucasus – no, it’s this or that!’ Max wanted to show, as early as 1933, what was coming when Hitler would come to power. [... Joyce and Ernst] got on marvelously. Max played word games [...] with him [...] and Joyce made a puzzle out of [the work’s? title:] ‘Europe – Pyrée – Pyorrhée’.⁶⁵

Joyce’s delight at *Europe after the Rain* requires further attention. I suggest that Carola Giedion-Welcker’s description of reading the painting echoes quite closely the experience of reading Joyce’s similarly fluid *Work in Progress*, namely the deciphering of *portmanteau* words,

which sometimes appear to mean one thing, then another: “It becomes crazy”. Max Ernst also enhanced the fluidity of his paintings by means of technical innovations, namely decalcomania (the technique of transferring wet paint from one material on to another, usually from glass to canvas) and frottage (a pencil or crayon rubbing structured surfaces on to paper or canvas). He thus invites and uses accident and chance in the working process, enhancing resulting shapes to arrive at a dream-like effect with small, recognizable detail in larger, seemingly undetermined areas of his paintings. The *Fluviana*, with their animal shapes, show related concerns – and *Finnegans Wake* could be said to share, if not procedures, then certainly effects of clear detail within the surrounding “night”.

Carola Giedion-Welcker’s account of the meeting between Ernst and Joyce in (or shortly after) 1933 takes pride of place in terms of a proven encounter. Their works, however, may have crossed paths earlier – Ernst’s contribution to *transition*’s second volume could suggest as much. I am thinking particularly of Ernst’s 1920 over-paintings of a Cologne catalogue of teaching materials. This playful inversion of pedagogy is situated on the border between Dada and Surrealism in that its humour reveals a more dream-like but also a more interpretable use of found materials that pertain to rational discourse. I suggest that this is akin to Joyce’s later Nightlesson, sharing the aim of the criticism of pedagogy in *Ulysses* (“Ithaca”), but by other means.⁶⁶

Considering this early manifestation of Surrealism, which was exhibited in the Galerie Au Sans Pareil in Paris in May 1921, initiated by André Breton,⁶⁷ I find it over-enthusiastic of Barnett Newman to claim that

[...] the Surrealists got their ‘language’ and their techniques from the great writer Joyce. It was Joyce who taught the Surrealists how to use words as if they were clay that could be molded and shaped to produce a plastic form. They have never paid their debt to Joyce. Were it not for him Surrealism could not have arisen, and *Finnegans Wake* is the most intense and compact Surrealist work yet produced.⁶⁸

On the other hand, Ernst commented on his wish to transform “that, which was previously only banal advertisement material into drama, revealing my innermost desires”, a stance which Werner Spies has conclusively linked with Joyce’s concept of epiphany.⁶⁹ One can only suggest that there may well have been earlier and more comprehensive exposure to Joyce’s theories.⁷⁰ To speak of reciprocity (at times conscious, at times not) in the relationship between Joyce and Surrealism,⁷¹ most notably Max Ernst, now appears a realistic option.



16 Ernst-Ludwig
Kirchner, Portrait
James Joyce
1931

Paul Klee's appearance in *Finnegans Wake* is well-known: "la clee".⁷² Carola Giedion-Welcker finds in both a mixture of burlesque and mythical elements.⁷³ She also frequently noted correspondences between the artist and the writer: Joyce "achieved that sort of 'totalization of the object' that Paul Klee strived [*sic*] for in painting. This totalization, with which he sensuously and intellectually surrounded things, people and events, never permitted a single-layer picture",⁷⁴ but a "dualism not being treated as such but as complementary parts of a unity. [...] Like Klee with his paintings, Joyce linguistically humanized the world of things and creatures".⁷⁵ All this, however, cannot testify to inspiration, either conscious or not.

Klee, while studying in Munich, met the Expressionist Blue Rider group. The topic of Expressionism in relation to Joyce will follow outside of a chronology of Modernist "isms", because the only work by one of the German Expressionists on Joyce is from the early 1930s.

Ernst-Ludwig Kirchner and Expressionism In all likelihood, Joyce and Kirchner never met. The visual artist, resident in Davos, Switzerland, did however create a Joyce portrait in 1931, ¹⁶ or so the pencil drawing's inscription reads. In the drawing, Joyce is not at his most recognizable,

since he is not wearing glasses, although the face is slightly concave. Neither does he adopt, as far as I can ascertain, any of the poses handed down by well-known photographs. Despite the fact that the sources of and the occasion for, this work remains uncertain, it is known that Kirchner owned *Ulysses* and read and admired Joyce.⁷⁶

This fact, more than the solitary drawing, is of some considerable interest here, since it is proof of Expressionist interest in and feelings of affinity with Joyce's work – however late it occurs in Kirchner's oeuvre (Expressionism had been on the wane since the end of World War I). The drawing can nevertheless serve as a precedent for visual work on Joyce, which is indebted to Expressionism.

Stephen's thoughts on art and expression in *A Portrait*, Joyce's awareness of Expressionist literature and the "Expressionist" nature of the "Circe" episode⁷⁷ seemingly provide a solid basis from which to work in an Expressionist vein.

To speak of these things and to try to understand their nature and, having understood it, to try slowly and humbly and constantly to express, to press out again, from the gross earth or what it brings forth, from sound and shape and colour which are the prison gates of our soul, an image of the beauty we have come to understand – that is art.⁷⁸

This seems to be in keeping with Expressionism's urgency and interiority, as well as the personal responses that Joyce's writing elicits. However, it is also problematical, because Stephen Dedalus' aesthetic theory contains aspects that are diametrically opposed to Expressionist, emotional (which Joyce calls "kinetic") approaches to creating art, even clearly espousing (in *Stephen Hero*) the "classical temper" as a prerequisite of art that can communicate truth.⁷⁹ Joyce's use of the *Odyssey* in *Ulysses* did not recommend the book to Expressionists, who wished to dissociate themselves from Classicist traditions.

The "medieval temper" in *Ulysses* may offer a reconciliation between Joyce's works and Expressionist artists.⁸⁰ This seem to be more valid in relation to Expressionist work (for example its use of the woodcut) than Stephen's or Joyce's own theories about Classicism and Romanticism as "constant states of mind [... whose conflict is] the condition of all achievement".⁸¹

It may indeed be symptomatic that Kirchner turned to Joyce at a point when left-wing thinkers were fighting over Expressionism in the 1930s. Georg Lukács in 1934 slighted Expressionisms' creative method as sharing features (like a fake activism) with fascism. While Expressionists mostly did not share these politics, they could nevertheless easily

(however marginally) be incorporated. Max Bloch answered famously that the fragmentary character of current social experience was a response to the crises of a transitional epoch and thus implicitly a protest against the imperialist Great War.⁸² The politics of Expressionism are thus contradictory: while conservative and elitist in their media and subject matter, stylistically the works are radical. While Joyce can similarly be seen as making no overt political statements in his works, he was not at that point (or to that extent) accused of collusion. Soon, however, similar points of criticism (elitism and Classicist positivism) were levelled against Joyce and Expressionist artists from that leftist perspective.⁸³ For Lukács, Joyce's retreat from plot was a retreat from social realities.

Sergei Eisenstein This renders Sergei Eisenstein's⁸⁴ enthusiasm for the writer a rather brave stance, considering the political climate in post-revolutionary Russia around 1934, when he tried in vain to sway opinion in favour of Joyce, from whom he believed Russian writers should learn.⁸⁵ Eisenstein first came into possession of *Ulysses* in February 1928 and he famously visited Joyce in Paris in November 1929, leaving a good impression on the writer.⁸⁶

"Eisenstein obviously had no difficulty finding the visual aspect and sensing the visual possibilities of Joyce's writing."⁸⁷ Here, he can serve as an example of an artist who considered his first reading of *Ulysses* a turning point for his intellectual development and who retained a life-long allegiance.⁸⁸ Eisenstein's general reflections on Joyce-inspiration should therefore be quoted.

The most ridiculous aspect of criticism of Joyce is that when they [...] write about learning from Joyce they keep viewing learning as slavish copying. [...] But learning is not copying but understanding what the particular process consists of; not borrowing of external form, but in understanding the principle, reexamining the principle and making it one's own.⁸⁹

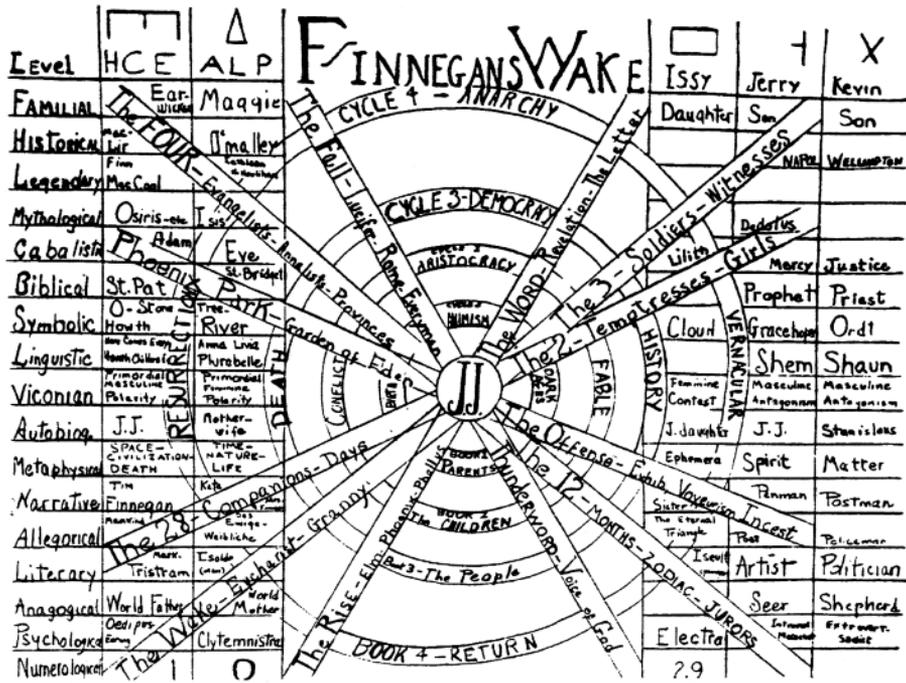
Otto Dix, John Heartfield, *Neue Sachlichkeit* Vincent Deane has used the art-historical term *Neue Sachlichkeit* in relation to Joyce.⁹⁰ However, he relates this to Joyce's changing approaches during the work on *Ulysses* and not to visual art. *Neue Sachlichkeit* (translated as new sobriety, objectivity or "matter-of-factlyness") refers to figurative art after abstraction, something that had only just surfaced around 1922 and that was not so called until 1926, when an exhibition in Mannheim was given this title. This figurative tendency succeeded (Berlin) Dada and answered a need

for political messages conveyed in an increasingly polarized political climate in Germany. Given the above-mentioned leftist criticism and Joyce's political abstinence, what was it in the 1920s and 30s that leftist avant-garde visual artists found particularly inspiring about Joyce? John Heartfield⁹¹ and Otto Dix not only defended, but also eulogized, Joyce.

This had initially little to do with *Finnegans Wake* (*Work in Progress* at the time), but with aspects of what has already been said about Dada and Expressionism, as both movements fed into *Neue Sachlichkeit*. It was this legacy that brought Eugene Jolas to Berlin in 1929, where he met with the *Sturm* circle protagonists, including George Grosz, who subsequently published a new work in *transition* 19/20, 1930. Its appearance is far from Expressionist, but a perceptive broadside against the rise of Nazism: *The Little Agitator*.

The context clearly suggests that (leftist) *Neue Sachlichkeit* artists would have been partial to the heroically anti-nationalist stance of ordinary citizens in *Ulysses* and the novel's hyper-realist presentation of the sleazy and paralytic aspects of city life: *Neue Sachlichkeit* in its leftist manifestation, *avant la lettre*. Did Joyce know about such work on the modern city and did he give credit for it to Otto Dix in the variation on Dear Dirty Dublin, "Dix Dearthly Dungbin" (FW 370,09)? For *Neue Sachlichkeit* artists, the formally innovative characteristics of *Ulysses* and *Work in Progress* were certainly additionally important, because the impression had to be averted that a return to figuration and heightened realism was in any way regressive. Searching for literary precedents could thus be useful. Bearing in mind Thomas MacGreevy's remark that *Work in Progress* was "the carrying on of realism to the point where it breaks",⁹² there may indeed even be a correspondence between Joyce in the late 1920s and 1930s and *Neue Sachlichkeit* artists.

His pioneering work in photomontage renders John Heartfield a very likely supporter of *Ulysses*. The fact that he was indeed one,⁹³ however, has further implications for the relationship between visual art and literature at the time. Walter Benjamin met Heartfield in France, while they were both émigrés. Their discussions inspired Benjamin's seminal essay on *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, 1936. Heartfield's practice was acutely aware of issues of reproduction in and of art, because he did not wish to add to the tradition of easel painting, but assure a wide dissemination of his (political) views. He thus created photomontages for the *AIZ* (Workers' Illustrated Newspaper) and, importantly, designed dust jackets for the books published by his brother's Malik publishing house. Although Malik did not publish



17 Leslie L. Lewis, *Finnegans Wake* schema from László Moholy-Nagy, *Vision in Motion*.

Joyce, it was evident to leftist contemporaries which art form they would choose when it came to sources of inspiration. The fact that *Ulysses* was widely available in multiple copies costing less than an easel painting, along with clear self-referential aspects concerning printing and reproducibility (especially the “Aeolus” episode), seems to have gone some way towards neutralizing leftist literary criticism. Photographic literacy on Joyce’s part and collage or montage techniques should not, of course, be underestimated either.⁹⁴

László Moholy-Nagy published photographs in *transition* 15 alongside *Work in Progress*. The one-time director of the Bauhaus and staunch supporter of the kind of photographic literacy just mentioned seems to have discovered *Finnegans Wake* only when he was in charge of the New Bauhaus in Chicago. This is probably because he was only then learning English.

The position that he accords Joyce in an art-education curriculum is, however, unrivalled among writers. Joyce’s works (both *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*) were essential reading for students: the chapter on the writer in his posthumously published *Vision in Motion*, 1947, takes up ten pages,⁹⁵ while Freud is treated to only half a page.

Moholy-Nagy's emphasis is on the multiple meaning of Joyce's language. He quotes extensively, recommends secondary literature, explains *portmanteau* words and utilizes an "augmented" schema for *Ulysses*, as well as a diagrammatic drawing for *Finnegans Wake*. These were prepared by Leslie L. Lewis, who apparently delivered a lecture series on creative writers at the Institute of Design.¹⁷ Richard Kostelanetz has taken the *Wake* diagram to be Moholy-Nagy's work,⁹⁶ and, looking at Joyce's own diagrams in *Finnegans Wake* (pp. 293, 308) and at Bauhaus history, it is easy to see why. Teachers there achieved a unique blend of their own creative practices (often suffused with spirituality, as here in the central wheel- or sun-like shape) and the rationality of the efficiently abbreviated, pedagogically useful message.⁹⁷

While typographical innovations and again correspondences with Dada⁹⁸ feature in the Design College director's book, links with his own works are less apparent. One hint, however, can be taken from the title, *Vision in Motion*. Moholy-Nagy absorbed mathematical theories on the fourth dimension and let them enter his best-known work, the *Light-Space-Modulator (light prop)* from 1930.⁹⁹ This early kinetic (i.e. moving) sculpture is a cosmic machine, generating multiple views and aligning itself with (literary) time concerns and the stage. The "useless machine" was, according to Walter Gropius, the first stage of Bauhaus protagonists to face up to the phenomena of industry and the machine.¹⁰⁰ This may shed light on Joyce's description of *Finnegans Wake* as just such a machine, one to square the circle.¹⁰¹

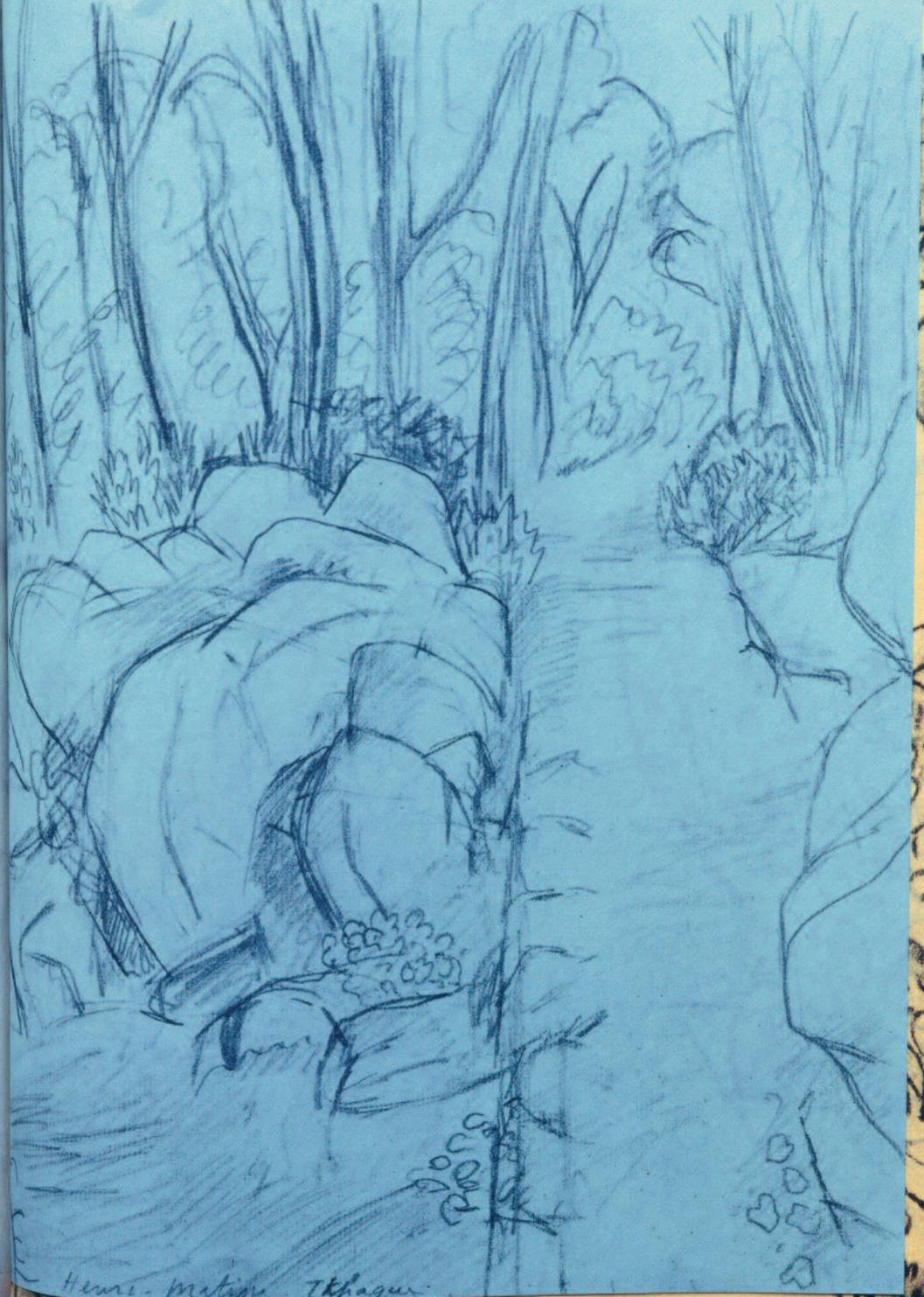
These concerns can easily be married with the artist's emerging interest in Joyce. In his teachings, he apparently made the connection. Little wonder then that some of Moholy-Nagy's students, such as Tony Smith, who attended the Chicago New Bauhaus from 1937, turned out to be the most avid interpreters of Joyce among visual artists. But this is no longer a matter of early responses.

3.1, 3.2 →

The main difference between the reactions of Joyce's contemporaries and some later responses is that the earlier artists' oeuvres did not grow with and through a knowledge of Joyce's (complete) writings. What the works already discussed did display, however, are multi-faceted approaches to the writer, already generating many insights into artists' ways of responding to his work. The themes and approaches touched upon will be useful for discussions of other artists' works. They include multi-dimensionality and openness, tradition and innovation, wordplay, the use of language in art, book objects, gender and sexuality, collage and montage techniques, media implications, the materiality of (Joyce's)

language, (personal) expression(ism), formal(ist) views, commitment and political implications, the nature of inspiration, Joyce within an educational framework (art school, the canon) and naturally matters of illustration (Steyn) and portraiture (Budgen, Abin, Brancusi).

It is with the players in these more traditional genres that I will begin to populate the stage.



Herrn-Matthias Thagun



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