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The Ineluctable Modernity of the Visible: The Typographic Odyssey of *Ulysses* in Interwar Print Culture

Tekla Mecsnóber

Abstract

Joyce was not always directly involved in decisions regarding the material shape in which *Ulysses* reached potential readers, but his interest in visual aspects of the written word appears to have made its impact on the novel's text as well. Examining the specific significance of type choice – as part of the bibliographic code – in designing and promoting *Ulysses* as a printed text, this study traces some of the salient changes that accompanied the novel's development from its first serialisation in the little magazines of the 1910s to its appearance as book in various editions of the 1920s, 1930s and in 1940 (the last to be issued during Joyce's lifetime). It also draws upon contemporary and later assessments of the "character" of relevant typefaces and highlights the role of some influential European and American typographers, anchoring these early editions among the revivalist and modernist design trends of the interwar years. These analyses suggest that whereas the typography of most of the earlier editions, as well as their publicity materials, tended to rely on historicising typefaces to convey connotations of classic dignity, artistic quality and craftsmanship, editions in the 1930s began to borrow from modernist typographic trends to promote the book as a modern work.

Keywords

Ulysses – publicity – typography – typefaces – bibliographic codes – visual design – print culture – modernism – revival

On or about December 1932, the visual identity of Joyce's *Ulysses* changed. As was the case with the alteration of "human character" that Virginia Woolf

famously dated to 1910,¹ this change was not sudden or definite. But a change there was: whereas the typography of most earlier *Ulysses* editions and publicity materials tended to evoke connotations of classic distinction or artistry and craftsmanship, the prospectus issued by the Odyssey Press between 12 October 1932 (when Joyce signed the contract)² and late December 1932 (when the first copies were ready) began to market the book as a “modern classic” not only in words but also in appearance (see illustration 12.1). Although making a gesture to ancient Greece through its meander border ornament, the leaflet was set entirely in the distinctive and extremely influential geometric modern typeface

ILLUSTRATION 12.1
*Prospectus issued by the Odyssey Press in 1932.*³

FROM THE COLLECTION OF ALASTAIR JOLLANS.

- 1 Virginia Woolf, “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown”, *Nation and the Athenaeum* 34, no. 9 (1 December 1923): 342–43.
- 2 Luca Crispi, “*Ulysses* in the Marketplace: 1932”, *Joyce Studies Annual* (2012): 51.
- 3 “*Ulysses* Publicity Leaflet Front”, accessed 6 December 2016, <https://paperbackrevolution.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/ulysses-publicity-leaflet-front.jpg>.

Futura, issued in 1927 and marketed from the beginning as “the typeface of our time” (“die Schrift unserer Zeit”).⁴

With this, *Ulysses* – described in the 1921 subscription prospectus of the first edition as “a contemporary of the future” and advertised in 1927 by the publisher of the German translation as the work of the “Homer of Our Time” (“der Homer unserer Zeit”),⁵ entered the space of visual modernity. In Joyce’s life, this look of modernity arguably culminated in the 1934 Random House edition, which was also negotiated in 1932,⁶ advertised as “one of the monumental novels of our time”,⁷ and visually marketed through advertisements and a cover design that also relied on the same Futura type family to accentuate the message of the modernity of *Ulysses*.

This essay sets out to suggest that the typographic link between these first two large trade editions of the novel is not as accidental as it may seem. It will suggest that the inescapably visual nature of the written word became an increasingly visible motif in *Ulysses* as Joyce became involved in decisions regarding the material shape of his book. It will trace some of the salient changes in the typographic form that accompanied the odyssey of *Ulysses* in print from its first serialisation in the *Little Review* (March 1918 to September–December 1920) and the *Egoist* (January to December 1919) to the last version to appear in Joyce’s lifetime, the 1940 Modern Library edition. It will highlight a number of visual clues that the typographic form of the novel and the printed publicity materials appear to have provided as to the nature and value – or, as Edward Bishop has argued using Pierre Bourdieu’s concept, the cultural capital⁸ – of the novel. In doing so, this essay focuses on a salient and purely visual aspect – typeface (font) choice – within what Jerome McGann called the bibliographic

4 Christopher Burke, *Paul Renner: The Art of Typography* (London: Hyphen Press, 1998), 86–87. Unless otherwise indicated, all type identifications are mine. For the standard names, designers and dates of typefaces, I have consulted *Encyclopaedia of Typefaces*, eds. W. Pincus Jaspert, W. Turner Berry and A.F. Johnson (55th anniversary edition, London: Cassell Illustrated, 2008). Exact font identifications are complicated by design differences between various sizes of the same typeface, the proliferation of authorised and unauthorised copies, the concomitant variety of alternative type shapes and names and, occasionally, the quality of the reproductions available.

5 *Der Homer Unserer Zeit: Deutschland in Erwartung des “Ulysses” von Joyce: Letzte Gelegenheit zur Subskription* (Basel: Rhein-Verlag, 1927). Subscription prospectus, Zurich James Joyce Foundation.

6 Crispi, “*Ulysses*”, especially 35–38.

7 Random House display advertisement, *The New York Times Book Review* (28 January 1934): 21; my italics.

8 Edward L. Bishop, “Re: Covering *Ulysses*”, *Joyce Studies Annual* 5 (1994): 22–55.

code, “the physical form of books and manuscripts (paper, ink, typefaces, layouts) or their prices, advertising mechanisms and distribution venues”⁹ – as a foundational category in recent scholarship on the material aspects of literature. Drawing upon contemporary and later assessments of the “character” of relevant typefaces, the essay also anchors these early editions of Joyce’s work among the design trends of the interwar years, during the increasingly mature and ultimately decisive emergence of a modern visual language in Europe and North America. Finally, it will attempt to briefly highlight the involvement of a number of influential European typographers and graphic designers in determining this form.

The Ineluctability of the Visible

Despite Stephen’s memorable ruminations about the fundamental difference between the visible and the audible, between the spatial *nebeneinander* of visual arts and the temporal *nacheinander* of literature, visual characteristics of printed verbal matter appear to claim significant and ever increasing attention in the text of *Ulysses*. Stephen makes a connection between verbal content and visual appearance when the battered school book that describes the battle of Asculum is characterised as “gorescarred” (*U* 2.12). Later he seems to link the sensational content of a used book claiming to contain the “Eighth and ninth book of Moses. Secret of all secrets” to its visual design (“Seal of King David”) and visual clues to its popular success (“Thumbed pages: read and read”) (*U* 10.844–46). He interprets his sister Dilly’s purchase of a “coverless” French primer as the token of a doomed aspiration to achieve common cultural capital with him and involve him in her “drowning” (*U* 10.867–76).

Like Howard Bridgewater, whose book on advertising Joyce is known to have perused with some attention,¹⁰ Buck Mulligan is very much aware of the importance of suitable typography for business purposes. Amid the drunken revelry of the “Oxen of the Sun” episode, he establishes his credibility by producing “a set of pasteboard cards which he had had printed that day at

9 Jerome J. McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 12. Although the terms “typeface” and “font” have slightly different definitions in typography, they will both be used in this essay to refer to the graphic shape of a set of characters.

10 Howard Bridgewater, *Advertising or the Art of Making Known* (London: Isaac Pitman & Sons, n.d., c. 1910) discusses the typography of letter headings and showcards (5–10) and newspaper advertisements (14, 19, 27–28, 30–31). For Joyce’s interest in and use of advertising, see Sabrina Alonso’s, Matthew Hayward’s and David Spurr’s essays in this volume.

Mr Quinnell's bearing a legend printed in fair italics: *Mr Malachi Mulligan. Fertiliser and Incubator. Lambay Island*" (U 14.658–60). The same episode also refers to a dubious plan to print and advertise an exclusive artisanal book edition that irreverently recalls those of the Dun Emer Press, run, following the example of William Morris and the advice of Emery Walker, by Yeats's sister Elizabeth and her friend Evelyn Gleeson in Dundrum: "To be printed and bound at the Druidrum press by two designing females. Calf covers of pissedon green. Last word in art shades. Most beautiful book come out of Ireland my time" (U 14.1454–57).¹¹ The same passage also seems to evoke Mulligan's earlier comic critique of the pretensions of books with archaic colophons, claiming to have been printed "in the year of the big wind" – if not quite "by the weird sisters" (U 1.365–67) – as was the case with the first volume published at the Dun Emer Press, the 1903 edition of W.B. Yeats's collection *In the Seven Woods*.¹²

A similar appreciation of printed matter characterises Bloom, too. He spots the "crooked botched print" of the copy of Aristotle's *Masterpiece* as a sign of an inferior publication (U 10.585), and is reported to have spent "two bob" on a second-hand book with "fine plates in it worth double the money, the stars and the moon and comets with long tails" (U 10.526–28). Bloom's attention to bibliographic detail such as printing type, illustrations and cover and his passion for collecting fine printed matter is blown into hyperbolic proportions in the Ithacan list of the "visual impression" (U 17.1357) of the contents of Bloom's bookshelves. Understandably, these somewhat erratic descriptions focus first on the binding (Shakespeare's works bound in "dark crimson morocco, gold-tooled" (U 17.1365); Spinoza bound in "maroon leather" (U 17.1372), but with a transition through the "black boards, Gothic characters" of Gustav Freytag's *Soll und Haben* (U 17.1383), they penetrate – rather less plausibly, for a mirror image – into the printed pages as well. The bibliographic precision culminates in an account of the various traditional type sizes used for printing *A Handbook of Astronomy* (with, indeed, "5 plates" [U 17.1391]) whose purchase M'Coy appears to have witnessed (U 10.528): "antique letterpress long primer [10 point], author's footnotes nonpareil [6 point], marginal clues brevier [8 point], captions small pica [11 point]" (U 17.1392–93). In the last and longest description, a book called *Short but yet Plain Elements of Geometry* is made to visually proclaim its age through the novel's use of archaic long "f"[s] characters in its rendition of the front matter ("printed for R. Knaplock at the Bifhop's Head, MDCCXI, with

11 See also Jerome J. McGann, *Black Riders: The Visible Language of Modernism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 5ff.

12 Cf. Don Gifford, *"Ulysses" Annotated: Notes for James Joyce's "Ulysses"*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 20.

dedicatory epistle to his worthy friend Charles Cox, esquire", *U* 17.1398–1401) and handwritten note ("the property of Michael Gallagher ... carpenter, Dufery Gate, Ennifcorthy, county Wicklow, the fineft place in the world", *U* 17.1403–7) to be found in it. As the habit of using this alternative shape for s was discontinued in standard English printing between 1785 and the 1810s,¹³ the text of *Ulysses* reinforces the eighteenth-century origin of Bloom's book through this subtle visual clue.

Special typographic characters like the archaic long f in the description above or the various diacritics¹⁴ that Joyce inserted into his text as purely visual clues have formed some of the more obvious (although not necessarily recognised)¹⁵ typographic challenges of the book. There is, however, a passage in the novel where the role of typography is not so striking, but still crucial to the understanding of the "content" itself. In "Lestrygonians", Bloom reminisces about the stickers that he used to see on the walls of public toilets, advertising bogus medicine to cure gonorrhoea:

All kinds of places are good for ads. That quack doctor for the clap used to be stuck up in all the greenhouses. Never see it now. Strictly confidential. Dr Hy Franks. ... Got fellows to stick them up or stick them up himself for that matter on the q. t. running in to loosen a button. Flybynight. Just the place too. POST NO BILLS. POST II O PILLS.

U 8.95–101

The capitalised part of this passage is a translation crux and a typographic crux as well. The suggestion seems to be that the loss of a few lines in the lettering forbidding advertisements on the wall can turn the official injunction into a potential promise to send medicine by mail (in the same way as Bloom received his "rubber preservatives" and his Wonderworker [*U* 17.1804, 1819–22]). This interpretation depends crucially on the recognition of the possibility of visually

13 Michael Twyman, *Printing 1770–1970: An Illustrated History of Its Development and Uses in England* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1970), 77–78.

14 See Tekla Mecsnóber, "Diacritic Aspirations and Servile Letters: Alphabets and National Identities in Joyce's Europe", in *Doubtful Points: Joyce and Punctuation*, eds. Elizabeth M. Bonapfel and Tim Conley, *European Joyce Studies* 23 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2014), 167–88.

15 John Ryder does not mention these aspects at all in "Editing *Ulysses* Typographically", *Scholarly Publishing* 18, no. 2 (1987): 108–24. Bernard Benstock provides a thorough interpretative account of many typographic peculiarities of *Ulysses*, but not these; "Bedeviling the Typographer's Ass: *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*", *Journal of Modern Literature* 12, no. 1 (March 1985): 3–33.

transforming the word NO into something that can be read as the number 110. This possibility is, as the following excerpts from early *Ulysses* editions show, largely determined by the choice of the text type and, consequently, of the kind of capitals and numerals used.

Closely supervised by Joyce, the 1922 Shakespeare and Company edition created as good a solution as was possible with the text typeface used (see illustration 12.2 below). The small capitals chosen match the size of the old style (ranging, lower case) numerals, the zero is not too different from the O and (apparently by default)¹⁶ the space between the two 1s is sufficient for a defective N. The fact that some of the serifs in 11 (top left, bottom right) could not have been there in a stipulated original N in the case of most serif typefaces suggests that Bloom may have visualised an inscription in sans serif letters, but this suggestion does not seem to have been taken up by printers. Although the O/o connection is made clear, the 1932 Odyssey Press edition¹⁷ (and the 1936 Bodley Head edition¹⁸) use capitals of unequal height and thus weaken the connection between the capital N and the lower-case 11, threatening to block the interpretative association between the two sentences (see illustration 12.3).

This typographic puzzle may be seen as another example of the attention that the text of *Ulysses* appears to pay to the ineluctably visual nature of the written word. That this attention seems to culminate in the detailed bibliographic descriptions and typographic imitation of the penultimate episode and in the

ILLUSTRATION 12.2

Type used for the "POST NO BILLS" passage in the first edition of Ulysses printed in 1922 by Shakespeare and Company (page 146).

COURTESY PRIVATE COLLECTION.

POST NO BILLS. POST I IO PILLS.

ILLUSTRATION 12.3

Type used for the "POST NO BILLS" passage in the 1932 Odyssey Press edition (page 156).

COURTESY PRIVATE COLLECTION.

NO BILLS. POST 110 PILLS.

- 16 The page number on page 110 of the novel is practically identical to the characters displayed in POST IIO PILLS in this edition.
- 17 James Joyce, *Ulysses* (Hamburg: Odyssey Press, 1932), 156. The 2nd and subsequent impressions (1933–39) “corrected” the second sentence to read: “POST NO PILLS”, and this reading was transmitted to the Random House edition as well, although set entirely in small caps: “POST NO PILLS” (151).
- 18 James Joyce, *Ulysses* (London: The Bodley Head, 1936), 142. Some modern editions use lower case numerals in combination with regular capitals but thus lose both the N/11 and the O/o association and effectively efface all visual clues.

wilful expulsion of purely visual (visible but inaudible) signs like apostrophes from the last episode is unlikely to be accidental. It was during the drafting of the “Ithaca” episode between February and October 1921 (*JJII* 442) that, arguably for the first time in his life, Joyce was given a chance to become actively involved in the visual design of his own work. After the serialisation of *Ulysses* was made impossible in the *Little Review* by a decision of the Court of Special Sessions (21 February 1921; *JJII* 503) and the refusal of New York publisher W.B. Huebsch to publish the text without alterations (5 April 1921, *JJII* 504), Joyce’s agreement with Paris bookshop and lending library owner Sylvia Beach offered him a unique opportunity to shape not only the verbal but also the visual substance of the novel. The well-documented gusto with which Joyce proceeded to insist on a particular shade of blue for the paper cover to evoke the Greek flag (*JJII* 524)¹⁹ and the less well-known care with which he suggested, with his printer’s consent, typographic details like replacing the Grasset type of the headings of “Aeolus” in the Shakespeare and Company edition (February 1922) with “block capitals” in the Egoist Press edition (October 1922) – “especially as these are the type used by newspapers”²⁰ – suggest that by this time, Joyce was very much aware of the effect that the “visual impression” of the bibliographic code could have on the reception of his work.

The *Little Review* (1918–20)

As suggested above, Joyce did not always have so much influence on the visual connotations of his text, and this was very much the case when *Ulysses* was serialised. Focusing on the August 1917 issue, Edward Bishop has argued that this magazine was “frankly amateur” and was meant to look like it, too: “there are no pretensions to fine printing here, and the cover is not a cover”, adhering to Ezra Pound’s advice that “The plain exterior and the coloured label, are right”.²¹ If one focuses on the appearance – in both senses – of *Ulysses* in the *Little Review*, however, the picture becomes more complex. Readers who encountered the first instalment of *Ulysses* in the March 1918 issue found a visually more striking but arguably also more professional-looking review (see illustration 12.4). Sporting a masthead printed in bold and condensed capitals of the extremely

19 See also Sylvia Beach, *Shakespeare and Company* (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), 72.

20 James Joyce to Harriet Shaw Weaver, 17 October 1922, Harriet Shaw Weaver Papers, Add Ms 57346, British Library, London.

21 Edward Bishop, “Re: Covering Modernism – Format and Function in the Little Magazines”, in *Modernist Writers and the Marketplace*, eds. Ian R. Willison, Warwick Gould and Warren Chernaik (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 307.

ILLUSTRATION 12.4

Front cover for the Little Review of March 1918.

COURTESY OF THE MODERNIST JOURNALS PROJECT.

successful commercial type family Cheltenham,²² the new cover was literally much bolder than previous versions, with the colour of the paper (purple, pale green, bright orange, yellow, deep blue) providing an ever more powerful visual effect.

An even bolder and, this time, rugged and individual effect was achieved by the cover design introduced in May 1919, in the issue that also contained the second part of episode 9 of Joyce's novel. This new design was not unlike the lettering on the cover of *The Seven Arts* (1916–17), a (similarly) New York-based little magazine that the editors of the *Little Review* followed with some interest.²³ It used chunky woodcut-like letters for the name of the magazine and bold sans serif capitals and a heavy rule to – literally – underline its self-definition: "A MAGAZINE OF THE ARTS / MAKING NO COMPROMISE WITH THE

22 Stanley Morison, *A Tally of Types*, ed. Brooke Crutchley, new ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 19.

23 See Ezra Pound, *Pound/The Little Review: The Letters of Ezra Pound to Margaret Anderson: "The Little Review" Correspondence*, eds. Thomas L. Scott and Melvin J. Friedman, with the assistance of Jackson R. Bryer (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), especially 143.

ILLUSTRATION 12.5

Front cover for the Little Review of July 1919.

COURTESY OF THE MODERNIST JOURNALS PROJECT.

PUBLIC TASTE” (see illustration 12.5). The freedom from conventional forms of visual harmony was made more striking in the first few months of the new cover design (May to July 1919) by the choice of patterned (flowery or striped) cover paper as the background to the blocky lettering. By this time, as the June 1919 issue announced, “Ezra Pound has abdicated and gone to Persia”²⁴ and the influence of Jane Heap, a visual artist by training and a future art gallery manager (1924–27²⁵), had increased.

- 24 *Little Review* 6, no. 2 (June 1919): verso of the cover. Pound went to France and Italy with his wife and was, for a time, foreign correspondent for the *Dial*; see Pound, *Pound/The Little Review*, 259.
- 25 On Heap’s involvement with modern visual arts, see Susan Noyes Platt, “Mysticism in the Machine Age: Jane Heap and *The Little Review*”, 20/1: *Twentieth-Century Art & Culture* 1, no. 1 (1990): 18–44. Platt attributes an earlier (summer-autumn 1916) change in the design of the magazine (from “drab brown cover to brilliantly coloured jackets and bolder type-faces”) to the influence of Jane Heap, who became involved with Anderson and the *Little Review* at that time; see Susan Noyes Platt, “*The Little Review*: Early Years and Avant-Garde Ideas”, in *The Old Guard and the Avant-Garde: Modernism in Chicago, 1910–1940*, ed. Sue Ann Prince (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 152. In fact, the change in the magazine’s design was a more gradual process: coloured labels appeared on the cover in August 1916, but bolder type only in October 1917.

There was a parallel change between the covers: the makeshift and somewhat cheap look of the March 1918 issue (with its mix of typefaces, the slightly condensed text face, closely printed lines, almost total lack of images) developed, by the end of 1919, into a more generously proportioned Caslon-like text face, wider line spacing and four-line capitals to mark the beginning of sections. Reproductions of art works were introduced in the November 1917 issue, were approved by Pound and readers alike²⁶ and, together with author portraits, contributed to the increasing visual distinction of the magazine. *Ulysses* was here, then, part of a visual bibliographic environment that was quite complex: visually appealing and at once emphatically non-defiant (on the cover) and respectable (inside), but neither obviously modern, nor obviously classic.

The Egoist (1919)

Readers who encountered *Ulysses* in the London-based magazine the *Egoist* between January and December 1919 faced perhaps less complex but none

ILLUSTRATION 12.6

Front cover for the *Egoist* of January–February 1919.

COURTESY OF THE MODERNIST JOURNALS PROJECT.

ILLUSTRATION 12.7

Front cover for the Egoist of July 1919.

COURTESY OF THE MODERNIST JOURNALS PROJECT.

the less significant visual clues. As Edward Bishop has noted, this magazine underwent a change from the “punchy, bull-dog quality” associated with its treatment of controversial social subjects as well as the “heavy, barbed, Latin Antique typeface” of the masthead (see illustration 12.6), to a “more refined” character with more emphasis on literature and a more “slender and elegant” Caslon masthead (see illustration 12.7).²⁷

A few points remain worth adding. For instance, the temporal gap and the dramatic visual differences between the March-April 1919 issue (which carried episode 3 of *Ulysses*) and the subsequent July 1919 issue of the – originally monthly – magazine may very well have been largely caused by Joyce’s novel. In contrast to Ellmann’s assertion that – after much difficulty – “one printer was prevailed upon to do a few episodes (II, III, VI, and X)” of *Ulysses* in the *Egoist* (*JII* 443), the first two episodes published in the magazine (episodes 2 and 3) were actually published by a different printer (the Complete Press, West Norwood) than the issues containing the later episodes, printed at the Pelican Press in London. As the editors remained unchanged (Harriet Shaw Weaver, T.S. Eliot and Dora Marsden), the sudden typographic refinement of the magazine is likely due to the typographic excellence that manager Francis

27 Bishop, “Re: Covering Modernism,” 300.

Meynell had aspired to since the founding of the Pelican Press in 1916.²⁸ By July 1919, Stanley Morison acted as “Designer of Printed Matter”²⁹ at the Press and it is thus Morison, soon to become the immensely influential future typographic advisor of the Monotype Corporation and one of the foremost typographic authorities of the United Kingdom, who is most likely to have been responsible for the sudden visual overhaul of the magazine. The Press was remarkable for combining the advantages of modern mechanical composition on Monotype machines with a selection of typefaces with a pre-nineteenth century, pre-industrial character (Monotype Venetian, Plantin and two typefaces based on Caslon: Old Face and Imprint), for which they also acquired specially designed extra letters and ligatures.³⁰

The shift in both the masthead and the text body from graceless and quotidian nineteenth-century typefaces (like the spiky Latin Antique) to conscious revivals of earlier designs (like Caslon) was symptomatic of one of the important typographic trends of the age. An early eighteenth-century design, Caslon was revived (complete with the by then defunct long f) in the 1840s to print literary (and devotional) texts with a “period” flavour³¹ and by the 1900s became a marker of literary quality: it was the type used to print G.B. Shaw’s plays,³² W.B. Yeats’s poetry (at the Dun Emer and Cuala Presses³³) and literary periodicals

— Blazes Boylan, Mr Power said. There he is
airing his quiff.

Just that moment I was thinking.

Mr Dedalus bent across to salute. From the
door of the Red Bank the white disc of a straw hat
flashed reply: passed.

Mr Bloom reviewed the nails of his left hand,
then those of his right hand. The nails, yes. Is
there anything more in him that she sees? That
keeps him alive. They sometimes feel what a
person is. Instinct. But a type like that. My nails.
I am just looking at them: well pared. And after:
thinking alone. Body getting a bit softy. I would
notice that from remembering. What causes that.
I suppose the skin can’t contract quickly enough
when the flesh falls off. But the shape is there.
The shape is there still.

ILLUSTRATION 12.8

Extract from page 44 of the “Hades”
episode printed in the *Egoist* issue
of July 1919, set in Caslon and using
archaic ligatures.

COURTESY OF THE MODERNIST
JOURNALS PROJECT.

28 Nicolas Barker, *Stanley Morison* (London: MacMillan, 1972), 70–71.

29 Barker, *Morison*, 83–84.

30 Barker, *Morison*, 84.

31 Robin Kinross, *Modern Typography: An Essay in Critical History*, 2nd ed. (London: Hyphen Press, 2010), 39. See also Twyman, *Printing*, 78.

32 Sebastian Carter, “Typeface Design for the Monotype Corporation”, in *History of the Monotype Corporation*, eds. Andrew Boag and Christopher Burke (London: Printing Historical Society; Woodstock: Vanbrugh Press, 2014), 204.

33 McGann, *Black Riders*, 16.

like the *Yellow Book*, *Samhain* or the *English Review*. By switching to Caslon, the *Egoist* also became associated with this sense of quality – but arguably also with a nostalgic longing for a pre-industrial world of dignified artistry and craftsmanship that had induced William Morris's printing revival at the Kelm-scott Press as well. Thus, it may have come as even more of a surprise to readers of the previous two episodes of *Ulysses* that the text of the "Hades" episode, like most of the newly designed July 1919 issue, was not only set in Caslon, but also generously sprinkled with ligatures (tied letter combinations for *ct*, *st*, *is* and *in*), as shown in illustration 12.8.

It was thus given a distinctly archaic – and rather anachronistic – flavour, which appears to have had little to do with the early twentieth-century Dublin colloquial language that the text relies on here. Ligatures survived into the second half of "Hades", published in the September issue, but by the time "Wandering Rocks" (episode 10) began in the last issue of the magazine in December 1919, the anachronistic ligatures were withdrawn from most of the magazine, including Joyce's text (as well as, more debatably, from T.S. Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent"). Having swung from visually indifferent to preciously archaic, the typographic form of *Ulysses* in the *Egoist* settled to give a suggestion of solid literary quality, just before the serialisation was abandoned.

Shakespeare and Co. and Egoist Press (1922–30)

As suggested above, the first book edition of *Ulysses* also provided Joyce with the chance to rescue the visual form of his work from the power of editors, printers and typographic designers: design decisions were made by Lyon master printer Maurice Darantiere in close consultation with Joyce and first-time publisher Sylvia Beach. The outcome of these negotiations was an impressively large and squarish volume whose typographic virtues have been the subject of some debate.³⁴ Despite the questionable utility of the book as reading matter, it does seem to make a more unified visual statement than either of the previous, rather protean serialisations. The types used to define the visual identity of the first edition of *Ulysses* appear to counter the degradation involved in the charge of obscenity by making the novel look indisputably dignified and classic. Thus, the minimalistic front cover carries, against a blue background,

34 See Peter de Voogd, "Joycean Typeface", in *Aspects of Modernism: Studies in Honour of Max Nänny*, eds. Andreas Fischer, Martin Heusser and Thomas Hermann (Tubingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1997), 203–18; Bishop, "Re: Covering *Ulysses*", 22–55; Glenn Storhaug, "'Seems to See with his Fingers': The Printing of Joyce's *Ulysses*", in *Type & Typography: Highlights from "Matrix", the Review for Printers and Bibliophiles* (West New York: Mark Batty Publisher, 2003), 323–31; John Ryder, "Editing", 108–24.

ILLUSTRATION 12.9

Front cover of the first edition of Ulysses published by Shakespeare and Company in 1922.

COURTESY OF THE MODERNIST VERSIONS PROJECT (MVP.UVIC.CA).
MADE POSSIBLE BY THE GENEROUS
SUPPORT OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES
AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL
(SSHRC) OF CANADA.

the words “ULYSSES / BY / JAMES JOYCE” in white capital letters modelled on formal square capitals as used on antique Roman monuments (see illustration 12.9).

Designed in 1846 by Louis Perrin of Lyons as “*caractères augustaux*” and also known as Lyons titling, these august capitals constitute a perfect match with the type in which the text was set. The text type is a member of the “*Elzévir*” family of fonts,³⁵ which were developed from Perrin’s designs and which copied his capitals rather faithfully.³⁶ The first Shakespeare and Company edition possessed, then, a typographic unity, and was evocative – through the classic letter shapes and all-capital setting of the cover page – of the dignity of Roman antiquity in a way appropriate for a book called *Ulysses*.³⁷ (There is, of course, quite some cognitive dissonance between the quasi-Arnoldian “high seriousness” of the visual appearance of the book and the comedy and contingency of much of the verbal substance.) The text type had similarly serious historic

35 John Ryder identified the type as Ancien Romain by Deberny (“Editing”, 118), while Joyce and Darantiere used the (generic) name *Elzévir*. I rely on Ryder’s work for the identification of the typefaces of the body text and “*Aeolus*” headings in the book editions (1922–1936).

36 G.W. Ovink, “Nineteenth-Century Reactions against the Didone Type Model – II”, *Quaerendo* 1, no. 4 (October 1971): 282–301.

37 This was by no means Darantiere’s default style: his covers for Ernest Hemingway’s *Three Stories and Ten Poems* (1923) and Rudyard Kipling’s *Sept poèmes des Barracks Room Ballads* (1925) are both strikingly different.

associations. In parallel with the revival of Caslon typefaces in England and the United States, the “Elzévir” were designed in mid-nineteenth-century France with the intention of returning to pre-industrial (this time, seventeenth-century) models and breaking the monopoly of “modern” (Didot-inspired) types. (With their relatively thick vertical strokes, thin horizontal lines and serifs and geometric construction, “modern” types could suffer from low legibility and a monotonous appearance.) As was the case with Caslon, the Elzévir were often used in the late nineteenth-century for high-quality literary texts and works with a “period” flavour. What Sylvia Beach has called Darantiere’s “famous type”³⁸ was, then, like the Caslon used in the later issues of the *Little Review* and the *Egoist*, a conscious claim for visual distinction: in the words of one of the standard typographic works of the age, Elzévir commanded “high respect” and were to be used on “special occasions”.³⁹

Another effect of the close collaboration of printer, publisher and author is the matching design of the subscription prospectus (see illustration 12.10). Printed in the same Elzévir typeface, this is in perfect harmony with the visual form of the first edition of *Ulysses*.

ILLUSTRATION 12.10

Subscription prospectus for the 1922 edition of Ulysses issued by Shakespeare and Company.

COURTESY OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS,
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-
MILWAUKEE LIBRARIES.

38 Beach, *Shakespeare and Company*, 58.

39 Daniel Berkeley Updike, *Printing Types, Their History, Forms, and Use: A Study in Survivals* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1922), 232. In contradistinction, Ovink suggests that “the elzévir lost their special appeal at the turn of the century”; Ovink, “Nineteenth-Century Reactions – II”, 301.

In the hands of Beach, *Ulysses* thus received a unified visual identity, making claims for links with classical antiquity and special literary value. This unity did not remain intact in subsequent editions. The October 1922 edition by the Egoist Press, for instance, relied on the design, printing plates and printer of the Shakespeare and Company edition, but the publicity flyer made a different visual statement. Printed in a type inspired by eighteenth-century engraved characters (issued as “Nicholas Cochin” in 1912), this flyer seems to downplay classical connotations in favour of connotations of a more generalised artistic quality.⁴⁰

Two Worlds Monthly (1925–26)

The trend for nostalgic pre-industrial visual connotations, present in the *Egoist* serialisation and the Egoist Press publicity material, continued in Samuel Roth's enthusiastic but not quite authorised serialization of the first fourteen episodes in his *Two Worlds Monthly* between July 1926 and October 1927 (see illustration 12.11).⁴¹ Printed on good paper using prestigious typefaces like Caslon, sold for a respectable 50 cents (just like the double issue of the *Little Review* that carried the last *Ulysses* instalment) and boasting a list of famous names (Arthur Symons, Arthur Schnitzler, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound), the magazine presented itself as a carrier of indisputable literary value. (This is somewhat incongruous with its being, as the subtitle claimed, “Devoted to the Increase of the Gaiety of Nations”). In harmony with the conscious attempt at “old style” typographic refinement in the publication, *Ulysses* was advertised at the top of the cover in the first three issues in a type (Pabst Oldstyle, 1902) that was supposed to attract “the eye of the man who knows” and “give an air of distinction to the best of work”.⁴²

With its distinctive shapes, strong tone and slightly irregular outline, the letters used by Roth clearly meant to evoke the solid craftsmanship and artistry associated with historicising printing, visually linking the magazine to his more exclusive quarterly, *Two Worlds*, and embodying his claims about the

40 The complete resetting of the text for a new Shakespeare and Company edition in 1926 also disturbed the unified look insofar as the text face was changed. In addition, Beach's *Ulysses* advertisements began to use more commercial types as well.

41 For a recent account of Roth's complex dealings with Joyce, see Jay A. Gertzman, *Samuel Roth: Infamous Modernist* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013), 63–100.

42 *American Specimen Book of Type Styles* (Jersey City: American Type Founders Company, 1912), 413. The type is also known as Pabst Roman.

ILLUSTRATION 12.11

Front cover of the first (July 1926) issue of Samuel Roth's *Two Worlds Monthly*, advertising "The FIRST CHAPTER of ULYSSES By JAMES JOYCE". The issue contained the first three episodes.

COURTESY OF THE MODERNIST VERSIONS PROJECT (MVP.UVIC.CA). MADE POSSIBLE BY THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL (SSHRC) OF CANADA.

"excellence" and "permanent value" of his monthly magazine.⁴³ In contrast, when Roth issued a full book edition of *Ulysses* in 1929, he practically forged the 1927 Paris impression. Copying the understated classicism of the original, he abandoned the conscious and somewhat nostalgic flavour carried by his serialised version.

Odyssey Press (1932–39)

It was the Odyssey Press (a purpose-made imprint of the newly established paperback publisher, the Albatross Press)⁴⁴ that – at least among the English-language editions – first made an unmistakable gesture towards modernity in

43 Call for subscription, *Two Worlds Monthly* 1, no. 1 (July 1926): 4.

44 For detailed discussions of the establishment and significance of the Albatross Press, see Alistair McCleery's "Tauchnitz and Albatross: A 'Community of Interests' in English-Language Paperback Publishing, 1934–51", *Library* 7, no. 3 (2006): 297–316, and "The Paperback Evolution: Tauchnitz, Albatross and Penguin", in *Judging a Book by Its Cover: Fans, Publishers, Designers, and the Marketing of Fiction*, eds. Nicole Matthews and Nickianne Moody (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 3–18.

the visual identity of *Ulysses*. As suggested above, not only did the prospectus call Joyce's work a "modern classic", it also made it look both classic and modern: the former quality was suggested by the meander border and the traditional symmetrical layout, the latter by the exclusive use of the iconic modernist Futura typeface, designed a few years earlier (1927) and as exemplified above in illustration 12.1. It is useful to recall that it was the German printer of the first impressions of the book, Jakob Hegner, who had encouraged Paul Renner to design an entirely modern sans serif typeface that would eschew the intensely and increasingly political dichotomy of "German" (Gothic) and "non-German" (serifed Roman) typefaces and who appears to have suggested the slogan "the typeface of our time" to Renner.⁴⁵ Futura soon became part of the international language of modern design and was sold or copied by all major type foundries in Europe and North America. The use of this type for the conspicuous reddish publicity leaflet of *Ulysses* has an air of international modernism, but also creates a visual link with the other initial flagship

ILLUSTRATION 12.12

*Cover for Dubliners published by Albatross Press in 1932.*⁴⁶

FROM THE COLLECTION OF ALASTAIR JOLLANS.

⁴⁵ Burke, *Paul Renner*, 81ff.

⁴⁶ "Albatross Dubliners", accessed 6 December 2016, <https://paperbackrevolution.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/albatross-1-dubliners.jpg>.

modernist publication of Albatross Press, Joyce's *Dubliners* (1932). Published a few months before *Ulysses* as the inaugural volume of Albatross's "Modern Continental Library" and printed in Italy, *Dubliners* – like subsequent volumes of the press – physically embodied modernity not only in being machine-composed and mass-produced, but also in looking new (see illustration 12.12). Designed by renowned typographer and printer of fine books Giovanni (earlier Hans) Mardersteig, titles in the series sported striking colour-coded paper covers, displaying freshly designed sans serif typefaces like Futura, Gill Sans (1928) or, in the case of *Dubliners*, the Italian Semplicità (1931).

The 1932 Odyssey Press edition was also the first to realise Joyce's suggestion that the headings of "Aeolus" should follow the example of newspapers and should be printed neither in a serif type richer in tone than the text type (as was the case with the headings of the 1922 to 1925 editions, set in Grasset, as reproduced in chapter 10, illustration 10.2) nor in capitals of the text type (as happened in the 1926 reset Shakespeare and Company text), but in sans serif "block capitals" (see illustration 12.13). To create the visual association with newspaper headings, the 1932 edition used a carefully designed but not overly innovative sans serif (Reform Grotesk). By choosing this type, designed in 1904 (and reissued in 1932), the designer created a visual reference that could encompass the early 1900s but would still feel sufficiently contemporary.

The professional appearance of the book was completed by the neat typeface of the main text (Monotype Baskerville, cut in 1923 as part of the revival programme initiated by the same Stanley Morison who most probably designed the last three instalments of the novel in the *Egoist*), also used in the cloth-bound one-volume limitation on the modest sand-coloured binding. The lettering on two-volume versions, printed in bright red on a grey paper board,

ILLUSTRATION 12.13

Sans serif block capitals used for the headings of "Aeolus" in the Odyssey Press edition of 1932.

COURTESY PRIVATE COLLECTION.

made a more pronounced gesture towards the pre-industrial past by using a refined historicising open type (Naudin Champlevé, 1910s–1920s).

Random House (1934)

The Random House edition, brought out a few weeks after Judge Woolsey's decision to lift the ban on the text on 6 December 1933, continued to balance modernist visual features with the traditional and classic. Designer Ernst Reichl created a complex layered design. The hand-drawn elongated monoline black letters which spell out the book title on the front and spine of the celebrated dust jacket could be seen to evoke archaic Greek inscriptions as well as modern sans serif letters (see illustration 12.14). The asymmetrically placed rectangular red field draws attention to the author's name and could gesture towards the geometric abstract art of painters like Piet Mondriaan, while stencil-like geometric Futura Black (1930) letters in lower case echo the innovative visual language of the Bauhaus and the New Typography.

While repeating the red-black-cream colour scheme of the wrapper, the binding shifts the referential balance towards tradition and antiquity through the use of the slightly irregular, calligraphic capitals (Weiss Roman Initials, Series 1, 1926) which playfully evoke ancient inscriptions of a less formal kind

ILLUSTRATION 12.14

Dust jacket design by Ernst Reichl for the Random House edition of Ulysses published in 1934.

COURTESY PRIVATE COLLECTION.

ILLUSTRATION 12.15

Title spread of the Random House edition of Ulysses published in 1934.

COURTESY PRIVATE COLLECTION.

and introduce a visual element that runs through the book (see illustration 12.15). The same initials crop up on the right side of the innovative title spread, the left page being occupied by a huge initial U in the same style. Similar enlarged initials mark the opening of the three main sections of the book, spreading the classical and calligraphic visual clue through the book, but also harmonising with the fine text type (Linotype Baskerville).

If the design of the first Random House edition blends visual references to modernity, antiquity and craftsmanship, the publicity focused on modernity and, more emphatically, on accessibility. As was the case with the Odyssey Press edition, the first authorised American edition was advertised as a “modern classic”, but also claimed, more enticingly, that it was about “an average man”, had been “suppressed for 20 years” and was now available in an “unexpurgated edition” and “in a format worthy of its contents” for \$3.50.⁴⁷ The advertisement from which these descriptions are taken appeared in the *New York Times Book Review* three days after the novel was published and had to compete against dozens of book ads, often of a much larger size (see illustration 12.16). That it still managed to attract attention is to a large extent due to its distinctive design. While most advertisements used custom-made bold typefaces of the recent boom in display types that they helped to generate⁴⁸ (serifs like Cooper Black, geometric sans serifs like Cable, rugged angular sans serifs like Neuland, formal scripts like Bernhard Cursive Bold), the *Ulysses* advertisement was dominated by hand-drawn letters. As was the case with

47 *New York Times Book Review* (28 January 1934): 21.

48 Advertisements in the news section of the same issue of the *New York Times* (28 January 1934) made copious use of other recent popular types inspired by Futura, Cable and Bodoni Ultra to promote, chiefly, luxury items like fur coats (4–6). Bold versions of the Cheltenham family were used in advertisements as well as news headlines.

*Suppressed for 20 years
Published here at last!*

SUPPRESSED in America for 20 years, now released by action of the Federal Court, just published, *ULYSSES* is one of the monumental novels of our time... the story of a day in the life of an average man... complete, uninhibited, devastating, profound. It has powerfully marked the literature of the entire civilized world. *Random House* is proud to make this great modern classic available to readers in America and offers this unexpurgated edition with a new preface by the author, the complete decision of Judge Woolsey, and in a format worthy of its contents.

800 pages. At bookstores, \$3.50

James Joyce's
ULYSSES

Random House, 20 East 57th Street, New York

ILLUSTRATION 12.16

Random House advertisement for Ulysses placed in the New York Times Book Review issue of 28 January 1934.

some of the other book advertisements that also displayed book covers,⁴⁹ an attempt was made to create a recognisable visual identity through matching the typography of the advertisement with that of the cover design. The word *ULYSSES*, which occupies about a fifth of the entire advertisement space, is displayed, accordingly, in long, individual, pen-written capitals that managed to strike a visual balance between the delicate elongated lettering on the dust jacket depicted above it, and the informal script in which Joyce's name and the hyperbolic initial announcement (*"Suppressed for 20 years / Published here at last!"*) was given.

49 E.g. the advertisements for Pearl Buck's *The Mother* and Sinclair Lewis's *Work of Art* in the same issue of the *New York Times Book Review* (28 January 1934): 11, 13. There were of course limitations to the extent of matching: a technical limitation would have been the availability of type, a practical one the visual salience of letter styles used on the cover. In the case of *Ulysses*, for instance, using the delicate thin lettering of the dust jacket in the ad would have produced a rather weak visual impact.

The same informal-looking script and the pen-drawn capitals were to serve as part of the promotional visual identity of the edition: they were used, occasionally in a slightly modified form or with different advertising texts, in several other newspaper ads.⁵⁰ The design can be seen as adding a low-key personal touch to the advertising materials, bringing the “modern classic” closer to the “average man”. As Catherine Turner suggested with reference to the double-page ad in the 10 February 1934 issue of the *Saturday Review of Literature*, the script “looked inviting, almost like a letter”.⁵¹ Similar script and pen-drawn capitals were used on the cover of the reading aid that Random House issued as a separate folder (see illustration 12.17).⁵² Created by Aaron Sussman,⁵³ the folder displayed, inside, a prominent hand-lettered title “How to enjoy JAMES JOYCE’S great novel ULYSSES”, mixing the script used on the cover with long slab serif capitals which create a ready connection with the dust jacket, depicted prominently in the bottom right corner. As a third salient typographic style, modernism also appeared in the folder: the note referring readers to the list of other Random House books inside and all further information on the cover were couched in a recent Futura-inspired type (Metroblack, 1929–30).

The message of accessibility was apparently successful: an ad in the 18 March 1934 issue of the *New York Times Book Review* boasted of high sales (“Now 35th thousand”) and cited a more accurate publication history (“After thirteen years, a best seller everywhere!”), while preserving the lure of a “complete, unexpurgated” edition (see illustration 12.18).⁵⁴ Listing six “Random House Successes”, with *Ulysses* at the top, this advertisement made modernity its dominant characteristic. It uses the striking and very recent Futura Display face (1932) to focus attention on the publisher’s name and the book titles,

50 E.g. *New York Times Book Review* (11 February 1934): 19 and (11 March 1934): 24. The advertisement published in the 18 February 1934 issue of the *New York Times Book Review* (18) has the same overall design – with a triple display of the pen-drawn ULYSSES logo – as the pre-publication announcement that appeared in the *Saturday Review of Literature* 30, no. 27 (20 January 1934); see the image reproduced in Catherine Turner, *Marketing Modernism between the Two World Wars* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 203. Turner reproduces two further advertisements from the same paper (*The Saturday Review of Literature*, 27 January and 10 February; see Turner, *Marketing*, 202, 206) using modified lettering.

51 Turner, *Marketing*, 207–8.

52 The inside of the folder was identical with the advertisement in the *Saturday Review of Literature* 10, no. 30 (10 February 1934): 474–75.

53 Turner, *Marketing*, 205.

54 *New York Times Book Review* (18 March 1934): 16.

ILLUSTRATION 12.17

*Random House promotional folder for the 1934 Ulysses.*⁵⁵

COURTESY OF DARTMOUTH COLLEGE LIBRARY.

with a type of the recent slab serif revival (Stymie, 1931) providing the authors' names and advertising copy.

Limited Editions Club (1935)

The *Ulysses* of the Limited Editions Club, designed by publisher George Macy and containing a variety of typographic styles, has received some criticism, being described as a typographic farce⁵⁶ and as a coffee-table book.⁵⁷ The fact that the text was introduced by the most widely recognised Joyce scholar of the age, Stuart Gilbert, and contained special textual corrections⁵⁸ suggests, however, that the publisher was aiming at some intellectual distinction as well. The cover carries the names of the author and of the illustrator (Henri Matisse) and an image that is not obviously related to the text, echoing Matisse's "illustration"

⁵⁵ *How to Enjoy James Joyce's Ulysses* (New York: Random House, 1934).

⁵⁶ Ryder, "Editing", 113; see also 122.

⁵⁷ Sam Slote, "*Ulysses*" in *The Variable Editions of Joyce's Novel* (Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 2004), 22; Slote also quotes Ryder.

⁵⁸ Slote, "*Ulysses*", 22–23.

**RANDOM
HOUSE**
Successes

JAMES JOYCE
ULYSSES
After thirteen years, a best seller
everywhere!—Now 35th thousand.
Complete, unexpurgated. \$3.50.

GERTRUDE STEIN
**FOUR SAINTS
IN THREE ACTS**
The complete text of the opera as
produced with Virgil Thomson's
music. \$1.

**SELECTED POETRY and
PROSE of COLERIDGE**
The Nonesuch Press edition; over
800 pages. \$3.50

EUGENE O'NEILL
**AH, WILDERNESS!
DAYS WITHOUT END**
His two great current dramatic suc-
cesses. Each \$2.50

ROBINSON JEFFERS
**GIVE YOUR HEART
TO THE HAWKS**
His new book of poems. \$2.50

**THE BROTHERS
KARAMAZOV**
A superb edition of DOSTOYEV-
SKY'S masterpiece, with illustra-
tions by BOARDMAN ROBINSON.
\$3.50.

SEND FOR COMPLETE CATALOG OR SEE
THESE BOOKS AT ANY BOOKSELLER'S
RANDOM HOUSE 20 E. 57 ST., N. Y.

ILLUSTRATION 12.18

*Random House advertisement for Ulysses
placed in the New York Times Book
Review issue of 18 March 1934.*

ILLUSTRATION 12.19

Title page of the Limited Editions Club Ulysses issued in 1935.

COURTESY OF THE ZURICH JAMES JOYCE FOUNDATION.

of the meeting of a Homeric Nausicaa and Odysseus. With its gilt-stamped and embossed design, the cover emphasises antique associations and the sheer lavishness of the production. This latter feature returns on the pages of the book: the title page is dominated by a finely drawn script, creating a visual clue of intimacy and delicacy which is present on the spine, recurs on every page and also marks the commencement of sections (see illustration 12.19).

While the text face is a regular but not especially refined Scotch Roman, the “Aeolus” chapter revels in setting the headings in an unprecedented variety of typefaces, including blackletter, nineteenth-century French script designs (like Typo Upright, also known as Parisian Ronde), early twentieth-century American commercial high-flyers (like Cheltenham Bold Condensed) as well as German-made geometric modernist sans serifs (like Cable), a sample of which is shown in illustration 12.20.

Although this multiplicity has been severely criticised by typographers who prefer a more understated style, it does playfully but strikingly recall the extreme diversity – as well as some specific typefaces – of American newspaper typography in the mid-1930s, especially as regards advertising. It thus introduces an unexpectedly frivolous visual motif, which is also congruous with the kaleidoscopic nature and stylistic multiplicity of Joyce’s text. Avowedly exclusive and respectable in its intention, the design of the book becomes playfully experimental here, and may be linked to such previous examples of uninhibited typographic eclecticism as Dadaist texts (like Hugo Ball’s 1916

ILLUSTRATION 12.20

Headlines of the "Aeolus" episode printed in the Limited Editions Club Ulysses.

COURTESY OF THE ZURICH JAMES JOYCE FOUNDATION.

poem "Karawane") or the yellow-black-magenta book jackets that Stanley Morison, an otherwise very refined arbiter of taste, designed in the 1930s for Victor Gollancz's popular Mundanus books.⁵⁹

Bodley Head (1936)

If the typographic clues associated with the first authorised American edition were confident in their complexity, and the second authorised edition exuded exclusivity but revelled in variety, the first edition printed in England struck a more cautious, but also more unified, visual note. Designed by Eric Gill, the green linen front cover carried no words, only a gilt-stamped bow, subtly orienting the reader towards Homer's heroic epics.⁶⁰ The white dust wrapper repeated the antique bow reference on the spine and allowed the front to be dominated by the title and Joyce's name, printed in black. The typography is reminiscent of the 1922 edition in its proportions, placement and shape, although Joyce's name has been made relatively more prominent. The type, however, is actually a recent design: Eric Gill's Perpetua (released in 1932). Rooted in Gill's practice of stone lettering, these crisp titling capitals gesture towards formal Roman inscriptions, creating an effect that is at once fresh and evocative. Although Gill is usually credited only with designing the cover,⁶¹ his influence appears to reach further: the half-title and the title page echo the dust cover in using Perpetua (and its italic version), as shown in illustration 12.21, while the

59 Alan Powers, *Front Cover: Great Book Jackets and Cover Design* (London: Beazley, 2001), 22–23; Barker, *Morison*, 238.

60 One hundred copies were bound in white calf vellum.

61 For instance, John J. Slocum and Herbert Cahoon, *A Bibliography of James Joyce, 1882–1941* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), 34. The newspaper advertisement announcing the Bodley Head edition in the *Observer* made the same assertion: "Binding design by Eric Gill", (11 October 1936): 11.

ILLUSTRATION 12.21

Title page of the Bodley Head edition of 1936.

COURTESY OF THE ZÜRICH JAMES JOYCE FOUNDATION.

headings of “Aeolus” are set in Gill’s celebrated and characteristic humanist sans serif, Gill Sans. Arguably, this use of Gill Sans is somewhat anachronistic (as the type was released in 1928) and slightly incongruous (as it was used in newspapers mostly for advertising, rather than article headlines),⁶² but it did add a touch of sleek newspaper modernity to a book otherwise dominated by the classic reminiscences of Perpetua and the time-tested English literary associations of the Caslon text face.

Described by Morison as “artistic”, “literary” and “distinguished”,⁶³ Perpetua seems to have been the most prominent type in the newspaper advertisements announcing the book as well, suggesting that it was meant as part of the visual identity of the book (see illustration 12.22). A comparison with the other book ads that surround them does indeed reveal how “classic” the look of the *Ulysses* announcements is. In, for instance, the 11 October 1936 issue of the *Observer*, all the other advertising on page 13 uses strikingly black titling faces like the “modernised” Monotype Bodoni Ultra Bold or the rugged modern sans serif

62 The Gill Sans type family was represented on almost all pages of the book advertising section of the 11 October 1936 issue of the *Observer*. By this time, Gill Sans was widely used in a range of other contexts, having also become part of the visual identity of railway companies as well as, since 1935, Bodley Head’s Penguin paperbacks; see Barker, *Morison*, 350; Powers, *Front Cover*, 30–31.

63 Morison, *Tally*, 104.

ILLUSTRATION 12.22

Bodley Head advertisement for Ulysses placed in the Observer issue of 11 October 1936.

IMAGE PUBLISHED WITH PERMISSION OF PROQUEST LLC. FURTHER REPRODUCTION IS PROHIBITED WITHOUT PERMISSION.

Othello or the somewhat more refined Gill Extra Bold, and even the relatively modestly designed other Bodley Head announcements resort to Bodoni Bold italics. In comparison, the *Ulysses* announcement, printed in crisp and classic Perpetua and the similarly recent, crisp and classic-looking Times New Roman (1931, 1933), makes a particularly dignified impression.

The visual clues that characterised the first British *Ulysses* are, then, rather homogeneous, stressing associations of classic perfection and literary distinction, with just a hint of modernity. It is tempting to conjecture that the fact that this edition may have intended to convey the same message with British types as the 1922 edition did with French types may have something to do with the uncertainty of the legal situation surrounding them, in which a serious work of recognisable artistic value may – as was the case after the 1933 Woolsey decision – be more immune to charges of obscenity.

Modern Library (1940)

The reissue of *Ulysses* by Random House as a Modern Library Giant in 1940 deserves attention not only because it completed the shift towards mass appeal but also introduced a new visual element that is still relevant. While most of the book design was identical to the 1934 version (although some misprints had been corrected),⁶⁴ the dust jacket was redesigned (see illustration 12.23). Presenting “Ulysses” in an informal script style, with ascenders and descenders reaching from the top to almost the bottom, the dust jacket seems to focus on accessibility. Joyce’s name, however, is spelled out in more solemn hand-drawn capitals, among which the round E may have been intended to rhyme with ancient Greek epsilons or Irish half-uncials. Having served as a typographic

64 Slote, “*Ulysses*”, 21.

ILLUSTRATION 12.23

Dust jacket (front and spine) for the reissue of Ulysses in the Modern Library series of 1940.

COURTESY PRIVATE COLLECTION.

sign of “Irishness” since the mid-nineteenth century, half-uncial and uncial lettering was to become a recurring element of the visual identity of many later Joyce editions (as was the case with editions of Viking in the 1960s or Dover in the 1990s). The spine of the Modern Library dust jacket, on the other hand, gives author and title in the signature modernist face Cable (1927), a geometric contemporary and rival of Futura. The cover thus reiterates elements of the visual presentation of the previous Random House edition, and appears to add a novel reference to Irishness, but the message of accessibility has by now fairly conquered the dust jacket.⁶⁵

Conclusion

Ernst Reichl's 1934 *Ulysses* dust jacket has been hailed by design historians as “a striking cover that foreshadowed the rigorous formal and conceptual experimentation of American design in the coming decades”.⁶⁶ Giovanni Mardersteig's refined classic modernist cover for Joyce's *Dubliners* in the Albatross series has also been seen as a trendsetter that served as inspiration for the design of the immensely successful and influential Penguin books.⁶⁷ While these designs appear to have exerted a wider influence, the typographic

65 This is seen as a sign of “middlebrow” by Edward Bishop (“Re: Covering *Ulysses*”, 43) and a case of “suburban blandness” by Ned Drew and Paul Sternberger, *By Its Cover: Modern American Book Cover Design* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005), 15.

66 Drew and Sternberger, *By Its Cover*, 12.

67 Powers, *Front Cover*, 30.

form of most interwar editions of *Ulysses* were not so much pioneers as participants in the momentous graphic developments of the age, which have left an indelible stamp on the visual characteristics of all written communication today. Thus, *Ulysses* in print shows – and in some cases reflects on – the profusion of newly designed revivalist and modernist typefaces that catered for the need created by such technological innovations of the nineteenth-century as machine composition and high-speed dry-paper printing.⁶⁸ As the creator of advertising agent Bloom and one-time reader of advertising manuals, Joyce would have been interested to know that as *Ulysses* took ever newer material shapes, many of the types characteristic of the print culture of the interwar years were beginning to be experimentally tested with regard to their semantic associations and “appropriateness”.⁶⁹ Such scholarly publications provided evidence for what printers, publishers and advertising professionals had thought for a long time: in the ineluctable visibility of the printed word, typography is a decisive factor.

Ulysses is remarkable for receiving attention from some of the century’s most seminal typographers, thus illustrating the emergence of typographic design as a distinct profession,⁷⁰ called forth by the proliferation of relevant designs and information. Like so many other participants in the print culture of the age, these typographers often formed networks of collaboration and influence: Stanley Morison (probable designer of the last issues of the *Egoist*) worked together with Giovanni Mardersteig (designer of the Albatross *Dubliners*) in the 1920s and had a crucial role, as advisor to the Monotype Corporation, in the commissioning and introduction of Eric Gill’s Perpetua and Gill Sans typefaces (prominently used in the Bodley Head *Ulysses*); Ernst Reichl (designer of the Random House *Ulysses*) received his early editorial training in Germany at the same publisher (Kurt Wolff) with whom Mardersteig had also worked and formed a lifelong friendship⁷¹ – and whom Joyce had unsuccessfully approached in 1920 about a German translation of the *Portrait*.⁷² These designers also illustrate the decisive influence of many European artists

68 See, for instance, Twyman, *Printing*, 79; Ovink, G.W., “Nineteenth-Century Reactions against the Didone Type Model – I”, *Quaerendo* 1, no. 2 (April 1971): 18–19.

69 See, for instance A.T. Poffenberger and R.B. Franken, “A Study of the Appropriateness of Type Faces”, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 7, no. 4 (December 1923): 312–29.

70 Kinross, *Modern Typography*, 67–69.

71 Marshall Lee, “Ernst Reichl”, *Fine Print: A Review for the Arts of the Book* 7, no. 3 (July 1981): 106; Giovanni Mardersteig, *Ein Leben den Büchern gewidmet* (Mainz: Gutenberg-Gesellschaft, 1968), 4.

72 Kurt Wolff, *Kurt Wolff: A Portrait in Essays & Letters*, ed. Michael Ermarth, tr. Deborah Lucas Schneider (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 45–46.

in shaping the form in which early readers encountered Joyce's text, but also the profoundly international nature of modern graphic design, in which type designs, trends and typographers moved between different cultures with ease and success.

Most of the typefaces that were used to print, cover and advertise *Ulysses* in Joyce's life are, chiefly in digitalised versions, still part of our typographic landscape. This is so because the revivalist and modernist typographic trends of the 1920s and 30s, exemplified by the visual identities devised and rehearsed for the early *Ulysses* editions, have created lasting designs and protocols. The typographic odyssey of *Ulysses* is certainly not over, but the modernity of the visible has proved ineluctable.

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