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# How to be Modern: The Darantière Press and Anglo-American Writers in France

Fiona McMahon

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- <sup>1</sup> The careers of Anglo-American writers living in France in the first decades of the twentieth century bear a remarkable debt to the Darantière press, a small yet well-established printer who operated in Dijon from 1870 to 1928<sup>1</sup> and whose name continued to uphold its printing legacy in Burgundy for close to 150 years. There have been various successors to the original press since 1928, after which time the Darantière family relinquished direct ownership. The most recent commercial offshoot associated with the Darantière name, one of the printers entrusted with Gallimard's prestigious Bibliothèque de la Pléiade collection, was established in the outskirts of Dijon before closing in 2014.<sup>2</sup> In the early decades of the twentieth century however, Darantière's position as commercial printer was far from restricted to French literary circles. Most notably, it was of particular relevance to a constellation of expatriate anglophone writers seeking publication in France. James Joyce, whose relationship with the Darantière press was remarkably documented in a 1988 volume by the modernist scholar Jean-Michel Rabaté, is by far the most celebrated among these expatriate writers. *Maurice Darantière, les années vingt: bibliographie d'imprimeur* is a unique archival record that recounts the circumstances surrounding the printing of the first edition of James Joyce's *Ulysses* by the Darantière press in 1922.
- <sup>2</sup> Though located in Dijon, Burgundy, at some remove from Paris, a center of literary activity for expatriate writers (Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein, James Joyce, Ernest Hemingway), the printing house was to play an important part in the realization of one of the cornerstones of literary modernism and its avant-garde heritage. In a general sense, the press was a key component to what was later commemorated as the distinctively warm welcome lavished upon the "new American literature" in France in the 1920s (Beach 12). Works by such writers as William Carlos Williams, Sherwood Anderson, Robert McAlmon and Ernest Hemingway comprise in part Darantière's

American catalogue in the 1920s. What Darantière's press accomplished on behalf of these writers continued in the 1930s through collaborations with Gertrude Stein and Hilda Doolittle, other major figures of literary modernism. What these examples demonstrate is that while Darantière's printing from the corrected proofs for *Ulysses* is certainly an important touchstone for assessing the audacity of the press, it is only the first stage in an innovative cultural economy that continued after the early 1920s. Upon close inspection, it becomes apparent that the Darantière catalogue includes elements of a corpus that helped shape the landscape of Anglo-American experimental prose and poetry in the first decades of the twentieth century. Arguably, Darantière's support of experimental writing buttresses the assertion made by Jerome McGann that "the history of modernist writing could be written as a history of the modernist book" (74). Of interest, in point of fact, is how the fabrication of Darantière's books casts new light on the circumstance of modernist aesthetic experiment. In comparison with standard production routes, the deviations undertaken by the press are particularly productive for expatriate writers whose departures from literary convention barred them from established commercial publishing houses. On this basis alone, Darantière's role in creating an audience for Anglo-American literary modernism deserves further scrutiny.

## Master Printer

- 3 The early years of the printing house help bring into focus the distinct nature of Maurice Darantière's participation in the print culture of Anglo-American modernism in France. Historically, the reputation of the press is established upon the outstanding craftsmanship of its original founder, Victor Darantière (1840-1922), who began a career combining his skills as a lithographer, typographer and bookseller. The artistry of Victor Darantière has been amply expounded in Maud Simonnot's study of literary life in Burgundy between 1820 and 1920. In her 2008 PhD dissertation, Simonnot provides a well of information about the editorial and commercial structures that mediated between authors, their works and reading publics in the area.<sup>3</sup> It is recalled how Victor Darantière carved out a place in what was already a long line of Dijon printers in 1870 when he took over the press run by J.-E. Rabutôt, a well-known local printer.<sup>4</sup> The Darantière press built up a solid reputation amongst bibliophiles, printing *de luxe* collector editions that included volumes on local history celebrating Burgundy historical figures such as Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet and Charles De Brosses. However, its reputation grew quickly beyond Burgundy, since it worked from the very outset with publishing houses in Lyon and Paris, commissioned for instance by Stock to print works by prominent and polemical nineteenth-century writers such as Léon Bloy and Joris-Karl Huysmans (Simonnot, 2008 166).<sup>5</sup>
- 4 The evolution of the press in the twentieth century is indebted to the expertise of Victor Darantière and the recognition he earned from his peers as a *maître imprimeur*. In its simultaneous appeal to bibliophilic, erudite and popular audiences, the operation of the printing house from its beginnings was to have direct bearing on the fortunes of Anglo-American modernism. The most auspicious signs of this vocational influence are apparent in the undertakings of the next generation. When Anglo-American literary historians speak of Darantière, they generally refer not to Victor Darantière, but to his son, Maurice Darantière (1882-1962), who took up his father's mantle in the first

decades of the twentieth century. Hugh D. Ford is one of the first historians to extensively document the relationship between American and British expatriate writers in Paris and their printers and publishers between 1920 and 1939. In his account, the younger Darantière is awarded his father's title of "masterprinter" (40). His achievements are lavishly praised more than once, as when Ford describes the "material majesty"<sup>6</sup> (131) of the works his press was commissioned to produce.

5 The year before Joyce's *Ulysses* was published, Maurice Darantière organized an exhibit in Dijon to showcase the technical prowess of his printing house. This was highlighted in the labels describing some of the *beaux livres* produced by the press in 1921, as in the following example detailing the materials and techniques used to print and bind a collection of poems by Pierre de Ronsard, "*Le Premier livre des sonnets pour Hélène*, Pierre de Ronsard, vendomois, 1524-1565. Paris, Société Littéraire de France, M. CM. XXI. In-quarto coquille, composed in old-style italic elzevirs, ten-pt font. Cover, frontispiece, banners on each page, designed in the lush style of Sambin, the illustrious Burgundian Renaissance ornamentalist, and engraved on stone by André Hofer. Printed on June 24, 1921" (Laurent 42).<sup>7</sup> Writing in *La Revue de Bourgogne* (a journal also printed by the Darantière press), the critic Jacques Laurent celebrates the sophisticated assortment of typeface and paper used for the handpressed books championed by Darantière.<sup>8</sup> This was in the months before Darantière began allocating substantial resources to the gargantuan task of fabricating the proofs for the 732 pages of *Ulysses*. It was already apparent for the admirers of the press in 1921 how the mythology of the new, so central to the modernist ethos, was combined with Darantière's reverence for beauty and for craft: "But producing beautiful books is not the only ambition of the Dijon master. As with his Renaissance predecessors, he tirelessly combines his search for beauty and for new and ingenious techniques" (my translation, Laurent 44).<sup>9</sup> In the course of his extensive research on the writing, production and publication of *Ulysses*, Hugh Kenner touches upon this very matter: the challenge of creating a balance between the innovation displayed in Joyce's literary style and the nascent technology (linotype machine-setting) that was available to printers at the time. The key question that is raised pertains to the preparedness of Darantière's press to print what would become the quintessential modern novel. Kenner stresses how unlikely a choice Darantière may seem, given his position as a printer of small *deluxe* editions, not to mention the remoteness of the Dijon house from Paris, the center of French printing (599). The traditional handset methods employed by Darantière's press provide for a technically complex environment whereby "the first novel unequivocally of the machine age was being forced through a wholly unsuitable technology" (Kenner 600). Darantière's compositors, who neither wrote nor read in English, had to contend with the staggering length of the novel, a dearth of letter types commonly used in English (Kenner details the problems encountered with the letter "W"), and Joyce's endless insertions during the production process. There is every reason to remark, as Kenner does, upon the "heroism" of the enterprise undertaken not only by Darantière but by the compositors who handset the entire novel, a first edition deserving of its belated acknowledgement as "a piece of handcrafted bookmaking" (Kenner 604-605).

6 The strengths of this accomplishment argue in favour of awarding a place for Darantière's printing house in an early twentieth-century anglophone tradition of beautiful book-making. The production of *Ulysses* tested to no end the ability and the patience of the French compositors, whose feats may be compared, in line with Hugh Kenner's assessment, to those of the Dun Emer/Cuala printing house run by the Yeats

family at the turn of the twentieth century (600). Darantière's career most certainly displayed not only a keen interest in anglophone authors, to an exceptional degree in the context of French printing, but also a marked appreciation of the audacity expressed in innovative writing. If Darantière was commissioned in response to the reluctance or outright refusal of English and American presses, intent upon avoiding controversy, censorship or risky financial investment, it would be a discredit to Darantière to remember his printing house merely as a pragmatic avenue for expatriate writers.<sup>10</sup> Joyce's *Ulysses*, as we shall see, was the first of many subsequent ventures, beginning in 1921, where the printer would demonstrate his willingness, often at financial risk to his firm, to take part in the production of modern literary experiment authored by a host of anglophone authors.<sup>11</sup>

## Anglo-American Modernist Volumes, 1920-1928

- 7 Archival material attests to Darantière's pursuit of craft but importantly, they also suggest an encyclopedic proclivity. Handwritten lists, housed in the collections of the Dijon Municipal Library, provide an indication of the exhaustiveness of his repertoire that intertwines cultures, historical periods and styles. (Figures 1 and 2)



Figure 1. *Fonds typographiques Darantière*. © *Fonds Darantière*, Bibliothèque municipale, Dijon. Reproduced courtesy of the Bibliothèque municipale, Dijon



Figure 2. Fonds typographiques. © Fonds Darantière, Bibliothèque municipale, Dijon.

Reproduced courtesy of the Bibliothèque municipale, Dijon

- 8 Alongside works of regional and sometimes anecdotal flavour,<sup>12</sup> the lists display a range of French canonical works by Du Bellay and Ronsard, Jean de la Fontaine, Voltaire and other eighteenth-century writers, such as Goethe. This combination demonstrates the place awarded to popular literature alongside a variety of erudite or literary cultures stemming from diverse cultural traditions and historical periods. According to this picture, Darantière's mandate as a printer was a widely diverse one, as he routinely wove together works from categories of "high" and "low" culture alike. He was not only content to publish innovative French authors of his day, among them Philippe Soupault, Max Jacob and Paul Valéry, but also worked with an impressive number of publishing firms invested in contemporary literature.<sup>13</sup> By the early 1920s, Darantière was actively supporting the careers of an array of expatriate Anglo-American writers. Lesser-known and idiosyncratic collections such as Harry Crosby's self-published anthology of poems (*Anthology*, 1923) and Joyce's ambitiously controversial *Ulysses* (1922) stand side by side in his catalogue. The dense fabric of relations that brought these figures together within the compass of the Darantière press has not been overlooked by literary historians (Fitch; Rainey). The extensive panorama of Darantière's involvement in the production of modernist texts has been brought to light in particular by Jean-Michel Rabaté, who focuses crucially on the activity of the press in the 1920s, a period of intense literary output by the substantial community of expatriate writers in France.
- 9 Through a small publishing house, *Ulysse fin de siècle*,<sup>14</sup> Rabaté was notably instrumental in the publication of an inventory of all the volumes that came off the Darantière presses between 1920 and 1928, before Maurice Darantière moved to Paris,<sup>15</sup> where he continued to build up his own publishing venture, under the name Éditions



du Raisin.<sup>16</sup> The list featured in Rabaté's bibliographic volume, *Maurice Darantière, les années vingt : bibliographie d'imprimeur*, contains all the works that are housed either in the collections of the Dijon Municipal Library or conserved by the estate of the Dijon book binder, André Vercey.<sup>17</sup> It shows that while Maurice Darantière was at the helm of the family business, the social, economic and aesthetic development of the material culture of Anglo-American modernism became inextricably melded with French literary culture. These resources have all since been digitized, and the narrative of expatriate publications in Paris has variously celebrated the Darantière press, but in 1988, Jean-Michel Rabaté's initiative in collaboration with the curators and administrators of the Dijon Municipal Library was decisive. Importantly, it opened a window onto the unique relationship between a French provincial press and the emergence of some of modernism's leading writers in the second decade of the twentieth century.<sup>18</sup>

- 10 Among the 83 twentieth-century titles in the catalogue, many of the anglophone authors are by now all familiar, some to the wider public and others to university syllabi, while some merely to a smaller circle of modernist scholars: Sherwood Anderson, Ernest Hemingway, James Joyce, Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein and William Carlos Williams fall into the first two groups. In addition to these authors, Robert McAlmon's *Contact Collection of Contemporary Writers* (1925) features a host of other expatriate figures variously associated with the formation of a literary modernist canon: Djuna Barnes, Bryher, Benjamin Brooks, Mary Butts, Harry Crosby, H.D., Ford Madox Ford, Kenneth Macpherson, Wallace Gould, Marsden Hartley, John Herrmann, Mina Loy, Dorothy Richardson, May Sinclair and Edith Sitwell. As part of this diverse group, McAlmon's collection also includes English intellectuals and writers such as the physician Havelock Ellis, the novelist and travel writer Norman Douglas and the prolific, mainstream novelist and playwright Arnold Bennett.

## Darantière, Adrienne Monnier and Literary Patronage

- 11 Jean-Michel Rabaté's introduction to the repertoire provides an essential focus on Darantière's role in the release of the first edition of Joyce's *Ulysses* on February 2, 1922, for which purpose Sylvia Beach had founded in 1921 a publishing house under the name of her Paris bookshop, Shakespeare and Company. Importantly, Rabaté's volume also emphasizes the acknowledgement to "Maurice" and his "Penelopean patience" that Joyce wove into the fabric of his later tome, *Finnegans Wake* (1988 27). The courtesy Joyce pays to his printer is indicative of the unique conditions of literary patronage from which he benefited. In the case of *Ulysses*, the exacting demands of the production process were arguably shared by all parties involved—writer, publisher and printer.<sup>19</sup> In truth, Joyce's metatextual allusion highlights the printer's association with a model of literary patronage for which another bookseller, Adrienne Monnier, had laid the foundations some years earlier, in 1915, through her Paris bookshop, La Maison des Amis des Livres. The support network Monnier provided for emerging French literature and, by association, for innovative English-language literature would become an important model for Sylvia Beach when she founded her own bookshop, Shakespeare and Company, in 1919. When Beach was seeking a printer for Joyce's extravagantly long and controversial manuscript, she took Monnier's advice and travelled to Dijon in the spring of 1921 to meet Darantière. The Dijon printer had met Monnier in 1917 and by



the early 1920s, he was a welcome visitor to the bookshop Monnier had opened on the rue de l'Odéon in 1915. By then, it had become a meeting ground for the older and the younger generations of French literati, including André Gide, Guillaume Apollinaire, Valéry Larbaud, Paul Valéry, Jules Romains, Blaise Cendrars, Louis Aragon and André Breton.<sup>20</sup> In some ways providing what resembled more a reading room or a *cabinet de lecture* for writers than a commercial bookshop, Monnier's goal was to foster careers and to bolster the diffusion of contemporary literature, an astonishingly ambitious project just as World War I was getting underway (Murat 31). The very name of the bookshop flew in the face of the growing conflict on the continent, extending an invitation to partake in a community of like-minded bibliophiles. For La Maison des Amis des Livres, Monnier carried not only the catalogues of the leading avant-garde French publishing houses and journals (Murat 31), but from the very start she endeavored to establish a transatlantic literary way station, in what has been described as her "bookshop salon" (Ford 7). To this end, she created an extensive lending library that made available translations of American and British literature. In addition, there was a monthly record of new publications and literary events announced in *Le Bulletin des amis des livres* and between 1920-1923 a collection entitled the *Cahiers des amis des livres*, published by Monnier and Pierre Haour, and printed in Dijon by Darantière (Simonnot, 2008 193-194). Lastly, along with Jean Prévost, and with the editorial assistance of Sylvia Beach, Monnier edited a monthly literary journal entitled *Le Navire d'argent*. Several English-language authors were featured the one year during which the journal was issued (1925-1926), including an entire issue in May 1926 devoted to American literature. There were selections in French translation from Walt Whitman, early short stories by Ernest Hemingway (Murat 112)<sup>21</sup> and Robert McAlmon, extracts in prose by e.e. cummings and William Carlos Williams.<sup>22</sup> As a sign of the journal's commitment to Anglo-American writing, its very first number in June 1925 included T. S. Eliot's 1915 poem, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," first translated into French by Adrienne Monnier and Sylvia Beach (Murat 110) and in October 1925 early draft fragments from Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*.

- 12 As Monnier continued to demonstrate her interest in the circulation between French and English-language literature, the Dijon press was an essential source of technical and commercial support. Darantière's first printing of Monnier's magazine, *Les Cahiers des amis des livres*, and then her poems in 1923 (*La Figure*),<sup>23</sup> suggests that the printer's position as a member of this community of patrons, producers and readers is not to be underestimated. From his Dijon outpost, Darantière arguably played a role in the "commodification" of literary modernism, as Rainey called it, transforming readers into consumers and collectors of exclusive and valuable books. For Rainey, the production of a limited edition of 1,000 copies of *Ulysses* in 1922 and the marketing of that edition by the rare book trade signal "the decisive entry of modernism into the public sphere" (44). A distinctive and enabling feature of this process is the bilingualism of French literati and, to a lesser degree, of Anglo-American writers. As noted by Rabaté in his essay on the printing of *Ulysses*, Darantière had a fascination for English-language literature and poetry, in particular. He spoke and wrote English reasonably well, though his typesetters, called upon again and again to reset Joyce's proofs, had no command of English.<sup>24</sup> On this score, in a letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver, the English editor of the second printing of the first edition of *Ulysses* (Egoist Press, 1922), Sylvia Beach once pointedly underlined Darantière's fluency in English:

I would suggest you make all arrangements directly with Darantière my printer. He knows English very well himself if his printers do not and I think a correspondence between you in English would force him to be much less evasive and slippery. He is such a Jesuit that you will have to make him sign papers with official stamps promising to stick to his final estimate to a penny and to supply the exact number of copies you arrange to have printed—otherwise he will find subtle reasons for evasions (sic). (Letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver, June 26, 1922, in Walsh 98)

- 13 The promptness with which Darantière provided countless proofs for *Ulysses* indicates that he was a great deal more reliable than Beach suggests in this account. Nor can he be remembered as a particularly cunning businessman, if one takes into account the endless resetting of the Joycean proofs or his consenting to print before subscriptions were collected, therefore without any guarantee of payment. Equally noteworthy and a tribute to the network of influence established by Anglo-American writers in France in the 1920s was Darantière's willingness to print books in a language other than French. The support his press provided for American poetry is especially striking. Unlike the American, William (Bill) Bird, who headed up Three Mountains Press in Paris, and Ford Madox Ford, who ran the *Transatlantic Review*, also based in Paris, Darantière was not himself initially closely associated with Anglo-American expatriate writers.

## Darantière and Contact Editions

- 14 Darantière's close connection to Adrienne Monnier drew him into a select circle of anglophone expatriates who were shaping the avant-garde cultural production of the day. For instance, his connection with Robert McAlmon's Contact Editions shows how the example of publishing by subscription engineered by Monnier, or by Joyce and Beach, could represent a beacon of hope for some in 1920s Paris. The distance separating anglophone writers from the publishing centers of London, New York or Chicago was one obstacle. The difficulty of securing financial backing in the absence of an established American or British publishing house was another. While there were smaller houses in the 1920s willing to risk publishing innovative texts (the American publisher Boni & Liveright, for instance), the relationship between writers and printers was all the more crucial for the expatriate endeavours that failed to garner their support. The commercial allowances made by Darantière<sup>25</sup> and, additionally, the creative choices to which he agreed were contingent upon two essential factors. First, his departure from his vocation as an *imprimeur de terroir*, a local printer, so as to support experimental projects in a foreign language caused him and his typesetters hours upon hours of anguish. Secondly, on a more private note, his loyalty to the Paris *côterie* associated with Adrienne Monnier and Sylvia Beach certainly might explain his interest in an assortment of writers disinterested in literary norms. His own social marginality is in keeping with the portrait literary historians provide of Darantière living as a reputedly flamboyant homosexual in the town of Dijon in the early twentieth century. This context may reasonably suggest that the ties consolidated between his press and expatriate literature was only a prelude to his own relocation to Paris in the late 1920s, away from the conservatism of provincial France.
- 15 Darantière's willingness to embrace the exoticism of Anglo-American circles made his relations arguably easier with the enterprising though inexperienced and prickly mediator that was Robert McAlmon. Between 1923 and 1926, McAlmon brought a total of 10 volumes to Dijon that bore either the imprint Contact, Contact Publishing or the

joint imprint, Contact Editions, Three Mountains Press, the latter reflecting McAlmon's collaboration with William Bird, an American who ran a small press in Paris. The works which ran through the Dijon presses in the mid-1920s carried an important association with Robert McAlmon. While he was self-publishing several of his own volumes,<sup>26</sup> he was also anthologizing the work of his peers (*Contact Collection of Contemporary Writers*, 1925) and securing the publication of major modernist volumes under the Contact Publishing Co. imprint, such as *Spring and All* (1923) by William Carlos Williams. Significantly, the colophon printed at the end of these books did not merely read as in most instances "Printed by Darantière" (as with Djuna Barnes's 1928 chapbook, *Ladies Almanack*) or "achevé d'imprimer par Darantière". Instead, the colophon highlighted the personal association between these works and their printer, as though sealing a partnership. For example, as with most of these volumes, at the back of the *Contact Collection of Contemporary Writers*, the inscription reads rather conspicuously "Printed at Dijon by Maurice Darantière." (Figures 3 and 4).

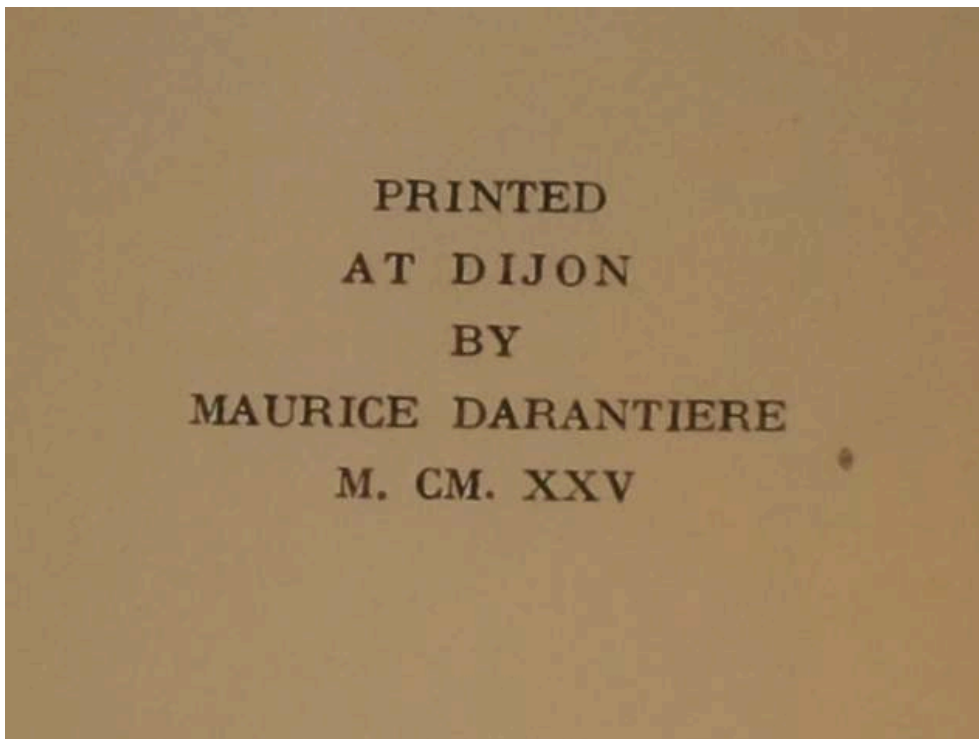


Figure 3. Colophon, *Contact Collection of Contemporary Writers*. Paris: Contact Editions, 1925. Reproduced courtesy of the Bibliothèque municipale, Dijon.

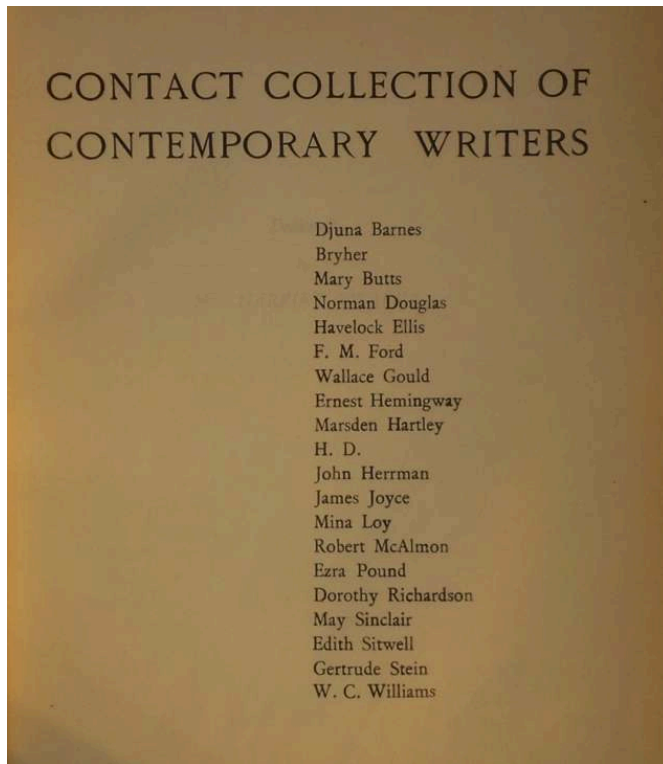


Figure 4. *Contact Collection of Contemporary Writers*. Paris: Contact Editions, 1925. Reproduced courtesy of the Bibliothèque municipale, Dijon.

- 16 One author on the *Contact* list who had the most enduring and perhaps the most complex personal relationship with Darantière was Gertrude Stein. After she gave up on the efforts of literary agents to intercede on her behalf in the United States and England (Ford 233), Gertrude Stein approached Robert McAlmon in Paris in 1925 about a Contact edition for her manuscript, *The Making of Americans Being a History of a Family's Progress*, first presented fourteen years earlier to the English publisher Grant Richard, who then rejected it (Ford 56).<sup>27</sup> Darantière printed a single volume of 925 pages (September 1925), sidestepping the strained business relationship between Stein and McAlmon, and essentially finding himself drawn into the thick of sometimes fraught exchanges with Stein and Alice B. Toklas. For instance, while reviewing the proofs for *The Making of Americans*, Toklas complained of the difficulty both she and Stein had with the “errors of French compositors” (quoted in Ford 62). Stein was characteristically shrewd about the repercussions these typesetting errors had on her circuitous prose, claiming that she didn’t bother to correct them in each instance:

[...] lots of people will think many strange things in it as to tenses and persons and adjectives and adverbs and divisions are due to the French compositors’ errors but they are not it is quite as I worked at it and even when I tried to change it well I didn’t really try but I went over it to see if it could go different and I always found myself forced back into its incorrectness so there they stand. (quoted in Ford 63)

- 17 In blurring the distinction between her own stylistic experiments and the technical errors imputed to the printer, Stein appears to be planting the seeds of literary legend: can any heed be paid to the somewhat fanciful notion that Darantière’s typesetters were unwitting members of the literary avant-garde? Stein’s equivocations appear to dangle before our eyes an image of modernism in the making. In a superbly paradoxical manner, the writer seizes upon the failings of modern machinery to instrumentalize

the reception of her experimental prose. Technique in its relationship to art is celebrated not for its precision and productivity, as one might expect. Instead, Stein draws attention to its capacity for error and the ensuing randomness of the creative process. Was this the sign of a prescient writer, anticipating procedural contemporary poetics, or simply a ploy on Stein's part to further obfuscate attempts to explicate her syntax? At the very least, Stein's efforts to narrativize her compositional processes are in no way hindered by her ambiguous relationship with Darantière and his typesetters. The alleged errors of the printing house notwithstanding, once the book was finished, praise was heaped upon Darantière and his workshop, to the detriment of McAlmon, her publisher, whose involvement Stein discounted as far as the design of her book was concerned (Ford 68). Darantière's sheets were used to print 500 copies and five deluxe issues printed on Japanese velum (100 distributed in the US, plus 5 deluxe issues printed on Japanese Velum),<sup>28</sup> before being purchased by New York publishers Charles and Albert Boni for a small number of American issues published in 1926. The technology of Darantière's press was appropriated in this fashion, returning American literature from whence it came, by way of a small controversial publishing firm. Stein's writing was thus taken up by an elaborate production circuit, transiting from Paris to Dijon and then across the water to New York, so as to appear ultimately before a small American readership.

- 18 Through Darantière, Stein gained a new measure of control over the production and distribution of her writing. After struggling notoriously with the publication of her work (Stone)—until the popular success in 1933 of *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*—Stein appeared to avail at last of a creative and commercial nexus that had eluded her for years. Perhaps unsurprisingly then, she subsequently called upon Darantière directly for some work on the series of books she co-edited in the early 1930s with Alice B. Toklas under the Plain Edition imprint<sup>29</sup>. But she wasn't quite prepared to sacrifice the quality of her books for the sake of readership. When Stein saw the binding for her 1931 volume *How to Write*, this time she voiced her displeasure, chastising Darantière for the faulty molding and overall slipshod assemblage of the book. Here, as the “master printer” argued in his defense, the blame lay with the mechanics of modern printing: “What can you expect, Madame? It is machine-made, it is not done by hand” (Ford 241). Tellingly, for future endeavours, Darantière promised to turn his back on modernity and handpull her books.<sup>30</sup> Despite these small upsets, Darantière was valued for his craftsmanship and, interestingly, for his career not as a deluxe craftsman but as a commercial printer. He was called upon to produce books that would allow for wider distribution and sales. To that effect, Alice B. Toklas wrote to Darantière in the early 1930s that “Gertrude Stein wants readers not collectors” (Ford 244).

## Conclusion

- 19 There is a strong case for correlating the accomplishments of Darantière's press on behalf of those writers who would go on to represent literary modernism and the transatlantic circulation of literary culture. It may legitimately be asked whether Stein would ever have found an audience for *The Making of Americans* without Darantière. The professional relationship he maintained with McAlmon and Stein for close to ten years is instructive in this regard. By virtue of his sometimes straddling the role of editor and printer, he helped these avant-garde practitioners navigate in and out of the margins

of the marketplace. Others may argue to the contrary, as indeed Laurence Rainey, who has suggested that Darantière's limited editions have exacerbated the "privatization of culture" to some degree, citing the example of the volumes by Hilda Doolittle that were printed in Dijon in the 1930s. Highlighting H.D.'s choice to address her work to a "minute coterie" and comparing the circumstances of H.D.'s editions to the 1922 edition of *Ulysses*, Rainey argues: "recourse to Darantière had been prompted by a legal obstruction of cultural circulation and debate; now it was merely a mechanism to avoid the public sphere altogether" (154).<sup>31</sup> At the same time, the ties between the French and Anglo-American circles radiating out of Monnier and Beach's lending libraries were only stronger thanks to his press. Having put out William Carlos Williams's *Spring and All* in 1923, and by the end of the 1920s, printing copies of Ezra Pound's journal, *The Exile* (Murat 150), Darantière appears to have secured a place in the material and symbolic communities of literary modernism. If, as Shari Benstock has suggested, literary modernism was a "social, political, and publishing event" (21), Darantière's deft management of the demands often laid at his feet directly by authors—thereby overriding intermediaries—underscores the centrality of the printer's role. His willingness to adapt the technology of his printing press to meet the specific letter-type requirements of English-language modernist works is no less noteworthy. The multilingual environment displayed in the Darantière catalogue reads as a unique model for the print economy of literary modernism and, more widely, of transcultural book production.

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## NOTES

1. In "'Thank Maurice': A Note About Maurice Darantière," Jean-Michel Rabaté explains that the 1928 successor to Maurice Darantière, baron d'Avout, was allowed to retain the name of the press. Having spoken with some of the remaining employees of the press, still alive in the late 1980s, Rabaté adds that the original printing house was destroyed by fire in the early 1950s (Rabaté, 1991 245-246). This account is a slightly amended version of Rabaté's original note (Rabaté, 1988), translated into English for the *Joyce Studies Annual* (Rabaté, 1991).
2. Established in Quétigny, a suburb of Dijon, the Darantière printing press underwent a court-ordered liquidation in 2013 and then was definitively closed on July 1, 2014.
3. In addition to the accomplishments of Victor Darantière, *maître imprimeur*, Maud Simonnot provides an account of Maurice Darantière's activity in an essay subsequently published as part of a broad study compiled by academics and local historians of the city of Dijon, France (Simonnot, 2021).



4. Simonnot retraces in her dissertation the history of the printing press in Dijon between 1820-1920 (2008 18-23). She documents how a series of printers took over the presses originally founded by Jean-Baptiste Noëllat (printer's patent, 1820). In 1870, Victor Darantière took over this press from J.-E. Rabutôt, who had set up his business in 1858, at 1-3 place Saint-Jean in Dijon. Maurice Darantière ran the press at this address until 1928 (Simonnot, 2008 20-21). See also, *Dictionnaire des imprimeurs-lithographes du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*.
5. Historical accounts relate nevertheless that the relationship between Huysmans and Stock was sometimes strained, owing to Huysmans's frustration with the delays incurred by the Dijon press (Walbecq 242-243).
6. In this instance, Ford is referring to the work commissioned by Edward Titus and his Black Maniken Press (associated with Titus's Paris bookshop, At the Sign of the Black Manikin, rue Delambre): a collection of four free-verse portraits of Giotto, Michelangelo, Galileo, and Richelieu by William Van Wyck entitled *Some Gentlemen of the Renaissance* (1928) (Ford 131).
7. My translation. "*Le Premier livre des sonnets pour Hélène*, Pierre de Ronsard, vendomois, 1524-1565. Paris, Société Littéraire de France, M. CM. XXI. In-quarto coquille, composé en elzévir v. vieux style italiques, corps dix. Couverture, frontispice, bandeaux à chaque page, dessinés dans le style luxuriant de Sambin, l'illustre ornemaniste bourguignon de la Renaissance, et gravés sur pierre par André Hofer. L'achevé d'imprimer est du 24 juin 1921" (Laurent 42).
8. "Une vingtaine de typographies s'offraient aux yeux des visiteurs, dans la variété des corps les plus classiques, et dans le chatoiement des ornements et des figures en noir, en bistre, en sanguine, tirés sur d'opulents papiers à la forme. C'est à regret qu'il nous faut contenter de choisir quelques fleurs dans ce bouquet fastueux" (Laurent 42).
9. "Mais le maître dijonnais n'a pas seulement l'ambition de réaliser de beaux livres, à l'instar de ses grands devanciers de la Renaissance, il allie infatigablement à la recherche du beau celle de procédés ingénieux et nouveaux" (Laurent 44).
10. Hugh Kenner suggests as much when describing print production in France in the 1920s. When he introduces the example of Joyce's *Ulysses* by Darantière's press, the argument reads: "It would have to be printed in France where printers gave you no trouble so long as you paid them" (599).
11. Robert McAlmon's *Contact Collection of Contemporary Writers* (1925) and Gertrude Stein's *The Making of Americans* (1925) being two notable examples.
12. Jacques Vonlett, *La vraie méthode de bien trancher les viandes* (1926) ; Maurice des Ombiaux, *Les fromages* (1926).
13. Rabaté underlines Darantière's association with Payot, Stock, Rieder and eventually Gallimard (1991 246).
14. In 1987, Jean-Michel Rabaté founded the Ulysse fin de siècle publishing venture with François Dominique. It was later taken up as a series by the Éditions Virgile.
15. As Rabaté has noted, Darantière sought out the freedom afforded by Paris to a married, though homosexual, man that he was unable to find in the conservative society of Dijon (1991, 247).
16. Darantière founded his publishing house in 1926, thus expanding his activity from printing to publishing, as did other printers such as Léon Pichon et François Bernouard.
17. The Dijon Municipal Library has also established a list of works printed by Darantière but missing from its collection:  
[patrimoine.bm-dijon.fr/pleade/functions/ead/detached/darantiere\\_03.pdf](http://patrimoine.bm-dijon.fr/pleade/functions/ead/detached/darantiere_03.pdf). Accessed 9 June 2023.
18. A longer repertoire made available by the Municipal Library of Dijon (erroneously stated as being restricted to the historical perimeter 1910-1928) featuring all works printed by Darantière in the 1920s shows that he also printed re-issued volumes of nineteenth-century American

literature. One example: a translation into French of Edgar Allan Poe's tale *The Fall of the House of Usher*, published by a certain Georges Servant based in Arcachon.

19. J.-M. Rabaté points out that though Darantière was a publisher in his own right, issuing the *Revue de Bourgogne* and then starting his own publishing house, Les Éditions du Raisin in 1926, his reputation internationally was founded upon his work as a printer (1988 26).

20. The story of Adrienne Monnier's career and that of Sylvia Beach have been well documented thanks to the recollections they provided through their own memoirs and their correspondence. Historians such as Shari Benstock, Hugh D. Ford, Noel Riley Fitch or more recently, the French essayist, Laure Murat, have also played their part, accounting for the lives and work of these two key figures in the interwar years.

21. "The Undefeated," later appearing in Hemingway's second collection of short stories, *Men without Women* (1927) and translated as "L'Invincible." It was subsequently included in the French collection, *Cinquante mille dollars* (1928). Between June 1925 and May 1926, twelve issues of *Le Navire d'argent* were published before Monnier was obliged to curtail her editorial work owing to financial constraints. Also published in the January 1926 volume of *Le Navire d'argent*: Robert McAlmon's short story, "Advertising Agency," French translation by Sylvia Beach and Adrienne Monnier. [gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k81789c.texte.langFR.r=cahier](http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k81789c.texte.langFR.r=cahier). Accessed 28 March 2023.

22. e.e. cummings, "Sipliss," from *The Enormous Room* (1922), French translation by Georges Duplaix; fragments from *In the American Grain* (1923; 1925) by William Carlos Williams, French translation by Auguste Morel. [gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k81789c.texte.langFR.r=cahier](http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k81789c.texte.langFR.r=cahier). Accessed 9 June 2023.

23. Monnier's book of poems commemorating her friendship with French poets and the bookseller Sylvia Beach: *La Figure*, Paris, René Julliard, 1923. Darantière's printing of two volumes of poetry by Paul Valéry published by Gallimard (*Charmes*, 1926; *Eupalinos*, 1924) is another indication of his ties with some of the principal figures of 1920s literary modernism. For a full description of the publishing history of Adrienne Monnier and her circle, see the biography of Adrienne Monnier as a bookseller and literary personal in Laure Murat (2005).

24. Consider Darantière typesetters, who knew no English and yet were part of the elaborate transformations required by the multiple proofs of *Ulysses* that arrived in Dijon, laid out with series of marks and strokes directing them to new handwritten lines in the margins.

25. For instance, in the case of *Ulysses*, Darantière's press followed the principle of publishing by subscription, according to which payment was conditional upon receipt of subscriptions. As for Gertrude Stein's 1925 volume, *The Making of Americans*, payment for the printer was contingent upon subscriptions being collected as well (Ford 59).

26. *Post-Adolescence*, Contact Publishing, Dijon, 1923; *Village: As It Happened Through a Fifteen Year Period*, Contact Publishing, Dijon, 1924; *The Portrait of a Generation, Including the Revolving Mirror*, Contact Editions, Three Mountains Press, Paris, 1926. See Fonds Vercey, Dijon Municipal Library.

27. Ford documents how Carl Van Vechten had failed to have his own American publisher, Knopf, take up Stein's manuscript in 1923, though it was later serialized by Ford Madox Ford's *Transatlantic Review* magazine and subsequently came out in an Albert and Charles Boni Edition (1926) that was made from Darantière's 1925 sheets (56-57).

28. See *Annotated Reference Guide to Collectible Books and Original Prints*. [artunderwraps.com/Gertrude-Stein.html](http://artunderwraps.com/Gertrude-Stein.html). Accessed 9 June 2023.

29. Between 1930 and 1933 the Plain Edition released five books: *Lucy Church Amiably* (1930), *Before the Flowers of Friendship Faded Friendship Faded* (1931), *How to Write* (1931), *Operas and Plays* (1932), and *Matisse, Picasso and Gertrude Stein* (1933).

30. The next book printed by Darantière was *Matisse, Picasso and Gertude Stein, with Two Shorter Stories by Gertrude Stein*, Plain Edition, 1933: "What Darantière proposed was that all future Plain books be set by monotype, a 'comparatively cheap' process, after which he would 'handpull' the books on 'good but not too expensive paper' and have them bound in 'heavy paper' like that used

for *The Making of Americans*, and then slipped inside little boxes covered with yellow paper of the same shade used on the cover of *Americans*” (Ford 245).

31. Rainey recalls how Bryher funded the printing of H.D.’s works (*The Hedgehog*, *Kora and Ka*, *Nights*) by Darantière between 1934 and 1936 (154).

## ABSTRACTS

The collaboration between Sylvia Beach, James Joyce, and the Dijon printer Maurice Darantière that resulted in the first printing of *Ulysses* in 1922 was commemorated in a 1988 study by the modernist scholar Jean-Michel Rabaté: *Maurice Darantière, les années vingt: bibliographie d'imprimeur*. The bibliography appended to the investigation of Darantière's publishing history (1900-1928) reveals a remarkable number of volumes of English-language poetry, essays and fiction during this period. Along with French translations of a range of English-language short stories (by Sherwood Anderson or Edgar Allan Poe), Darantière’s catalogue boasts over a dozen English-language volumes, including those by some of the key figures of anglophone literary modernism (Bryher, Robert McAlmon, Gertrude Stein, William Carlos Williams, H.D.). Darantière’s willingness to print books in a language other than French is a tribute not only to the audaciousness of his enterprise but to the network of influence established among Anglo-American writers, publishers and booksellers in France in the first decades of the twentieth century. What can a new examination of the Darantière collection (Bibliothèque municipale, Dijon) bring to light about the mediation of avant-garde Anglo-American writing in France and what Lawrence Rainey has called the “commodification” (44) of modernist print culture? The contribution of Darantière in the dissemination of Anglo-American literary experiment will be measured alongside the expanding role of the printer, from craftsman to vector of the new expatriate writing.

En 1988 le critique moderniste Jean-Michel Rabaté commémorait dans son ouvrage *Maurice Darantière, les années vingt: bibliographie d'imprimeur* la collaboration entre Sylvia Beach, James Joyce et l'imprimeur dijonnais Maurice Darantière qui aboutit à la première impression du roman *Ulysse* en 1922. La bibliographie annexée à l'enquête sur l'histoire de l'imprimerie Darantière (1900-1928) révèle un nombre remarquable de volumes de poésie, d'essais et de fiction en langue anglaise au cours de cette période. Outre les traductions en français d'un ensemble de nouvelles en anglais (Sherwood Anderson, Edgar Allan Poe), le catalogue de Darantière compte plus d'une douzaine de volumes en anglais, dont ceux signés par des figures clés du modernisme littéraire anglophone (Bryher, Robert McAlmon, Gertrude Stein, William Carlos Williams ou encore H.D.). La volonté de Darantière d'imprimer des livres dans une autre langue que le français souligne non seulement l'audace de son entreprise mais aussi le réseau d'influence établi auprès d'écrivains, d'éditeurs et de libraires anglo-américains en France dans les premières décennies du xx<sup>e</sup> siècle. Dans quelle mesure un nouvel examen de la collection Darantière (Bibliothèque municipale, Dijon) permet-il de faire la lumière sur la médiation de l'écriture anglo-américaine d'avant-garde en France et sur la place qu'elle occupe dans le régime d'exception auquel participe selon Lawrence Rainey la « marchandisation » de la culture imprimée moderniste (44) ? La participation de Darantière à la diffusion de l'expérimentation littéraire anglo-américaine sera mesurée à l'aune du rôle croissant de l'imprimeur qui, d'artisan, devient véritablement vecteur de la nouvelle écriture des expatriés anglophones en France.

## INDEX

**Mots-clés:** Darantière, culture de l'imprimé, distribution, modernisme, avant-garde, France

**Keywords:** Darantière, print culture, diffusion, modernism, avant-garde, France

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