

Publishing Modernist Fiction and Poetry



Publishing Modernist Fiction and Poetry

Edited by Lise Jaillant

EDINBURGH
University Press

Edinburgh University Press is one of the leading university presses in the UK. We publish academic books and journals in our selected subject areas across the humanities and social sciences, combining cutting-edge scholarship with high editorial and production values to produce academic works of lasting importance. For more information visit our website: edinburghuniversitypress.com

© editorial matter and organisation Lise Jaillant, 2019
© the chapters their several authors, 2019

Edinburgh University Press Ltd
The Tun – Holyrood Road
12(2f) Jackson's Entry
Edinburgh EH8 8PJ

Typeset in 11/13 Adobe Sabon by
IDSUK (DataConnection) Ltd, and
printed and bound in Great Britain.

A CIP record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978 1 4744 4080 6 (hardback)
ISBN 978 1 4744 4082 0 (webready PDF)
ISBN 978 1 4744 4083 7 (epub)

The right of Lise Jaillant to be identified as the editor of this work has been asserted in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, and the Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003 (SI No. 2498).

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	viii
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	ix
Introduction	1
<i>Lise Jaillant</i>	
Part I: Pioneers	
1. Modernism, Reform and the Traditional Business of Books: The B. W. Huebsch Imprint	15
<i>Catherine Turner</i>	
2. Young Americans: Transatlantic Connections in the Early Years at Knopf	34
<i>Amy Root Clements</i>	
3. ‘Glad to be in the Fold’: Boni & Liveright’s Multifold Marketing of Modernism	51
<i>Jennifer Sorensen</i>	
4. The Hogarth Press	70
<i>Claire Battershill</i>	
5. Bringing the Modern to Market: The Case of Faber & Faber	88
<i>John Xiros Cooper</i>	
Part II: Fine Books	
6. Shakespeare and Company: Publisher	109
<i>Joshua Kotin</i>	
7. Publishing the Avant-Garde: Nancy Cunard’s Hours Press	135
<i>Mercedes Aguirre</i>	
8. ‘Flowers for the Living’: Crosby Gaige and Modernist Limited Editions	154
<i>Lise Jaillant</i>	

Part III: Publishing Modernism after the Second World War

9. New Directions Books	175
<i>Greg Barnhisel</i>	
10. Grove Press and Samuel Beckett: A Necessary Alliance	193
<i>Loren Glass</i>	
11. Calder and Boyars	214
<i>Adam Guy</i>	
12. Cape Goliard	232
<i>Matthew Sperling</i>	
<i>Notes on Contributors</i>	250
<i>Bibliography</i>	253
<i>Index</i>	268

List of Figures

3.1	Front Cover, <i>The Hard-Boiled Virgin</i> (1926)	61
3.2	Dust Jacket, <i>Tropic Death</i> (1926)	66
6.1	Gertrude Stein's Lending Library Card	112
6.2	<i>Ulysses</i> Prospectus	117
6.3	<i>Ulysses</i> Printings, 1922–1930	123
6.4	Lending Library Flyer	125
6.5	Advertisement for <i>Two Worlds Monthly</i> with Beach's Annotations	126
6.6	Letter of Protest against Samuel Roth	127
6.7	Cover, <i>Our Exagmination Round his Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress</i> (1929)	130
8.1	Crosby Gaige in the 1940s	157
8.2	Virginia Woolf's <i>Orlando</i> , Crosby Gaige Edition (1928)	164
10.1	Front Cover, <i>Waiting for Godot</i> , Evergreen Edition	200
10.2	Title Page, <i>Waiting for Godot</i> , Evergreen Edition	201
10.3	Front Cover, <i>Endgame</i> , Evergreen Edition	202
10.4	Front Cover, <i>Molloy</i> , Evergreen Edition	207
10.5	Front Cover, <i>Malone Dies</i> , Evergreen Edition	208
10.6	Front Cover, <i>The Unnamable</i> , Evergreen Edition	208
10.7	Front Cover, <i>Three Novels by Samuel Beckett</i> , Grove Press Hardback Edition	209

Acknowledgements

It has been a privilege to lead this project to completion – thanks to a group of enthusiastic contributors. I am very grateful to them! Over the years, I have met several of them at conferences and during research trips. I look forward to further conversations on modernist publishers.

My own chapter on Crosby Gaige was funded by a Grolier Club fellowship and a Modernist Studies Association Research Grant. I am grateful to these institutions for the opportunity to carry out essential archival work in the United States.

Lise Jaillant

The editor and contributors wish to thank W. W. Norton & Company for permission to reproduce Figures 3.1 and 3.2; Princeton University Library for permission to reproduce Figures 6.1 to 6.7; and the Kuhlman Archive for permission to reproduce Figures 10.1 to 10.7 (covers designed by Roy Kuhlman).

List of Abbreviations

CORC	Charles Olson Research Collection, Archives and Special Collections (Thomas J. Dodd Research Center), University of Connecticut
GPC	Grove Press Collection, Special Collections Library, Syracuse University
HBL	Egleston, Charles (ed.), <i>The House of Boni & Liveright, 1917–1933: A Documentary Volume</i>
HPA	Archives of the Hogarth Press, Special Collections, University of Reading
HRC	Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin
JC	Archives of Jonathan Cape Ltd, Special Collections, University of Reading
NTP	Nathaniel Tarn Papers, Special Collections (Green Library), Stanford University
PUL	Princeton University Library
RH	Random House Records, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University



'Flowers for the Living': Crosby Gaige and Modernist Limited Editions

Lise Jaillant

Crosby Gaige (1882–1949) started his own publishing house in New York in 1927. Unlike most of his competitors in the field of fine books and limited editions, he actively sought out texts by contemporary authors. Editions of 'well-known contemporaries', he recalled,

seemed to me to be a much more interesting and useful form of limited-edition publishing than the practice of eternally issuing reprints of the classics in new dress. I have always thought flowers for the living, and in this case the living author, more grateful and fragrant than garlands for the dead.¹

Gaige often travelled to Europe to meet modernist writers and convince them to publish limited editions in the United States. In May 1928, he met Virginia Woolf for tea, and later that year he issued the first American edition of *Orlando* (a few days before the UK trade edition). Other titles which appeared under the Gaige imprint include *Anna Livia Plurabelle* by James Joyce with a preface by Padraic Colum, and *The Sisters* by Joseph Conrad with an introduction by Ford Madox Ford.

Despite his importance in the American publishing landscape, Gaige has attracted very little attention from scholars of modernism and print culture. This is partly due to Gaige's dilettantism: a wealthy Broadway producer, he dabbled in fine books but also gourmet cuisine and expensive wine. The Gaige imprint lasted less than three years. In 1929, he sold his publishing enterprise to James Wells, who continued to publish limited editions under a new

imprint (Fountain Press). Despite its ephemerality, Gaige's enterprise marked a key moment in the US trade in rare books and limited editions. In the early twentieth century, American publishers of fine books generally preferred to issue older texts in editions reminiscent of the pre-industrialised era. Influenced by William Morris's Kelmscott Press, 'American bibliophilia of the 1920s consciously nurtured much that was antithetical to the modernism emanating from central Europe.'² In contrast, Gaige embraced contemporary literature and showed that unconventional, difficult texts could be sold to American bibliophiles. The trade in modernist limited editions was not a new thing, but it had so far been largely associated with Europe (think of the first edition of James Joyce's *Ulysses* published by Shakespeare and Company in Paris). The Gaige imprint sheds light on a turning point in the history of modernism, when American readers finally had access to the new literature in a wide range of editions.

Drawing on extensive archival work at Columbia University, the Grolier Club and Yale's Beinecke Library, this chapter shows that the association of modernist writers with small presses did not end when commercial publishers and cheap reprint series became interested in the new literature. Texts such as *Orlando* were available in limited editions but also in inexpensive editions for a much broader market. In other words, modernism continued to be imbued with the prestige of luxurious editions, while also expanding its market thanks to cheap books. The chapter starts with an overview of the networks that Gaige used to manage his business. His fine books were typically designed by Frederic Warde or Bruce Rogers, produced by the William Edwin Rudge printing plant, and distributed by Random House to local book dealers. In a second section, I turn to several case studies of books issued by Gaige – including *Orlando* and *Anna Livia Plurabelle*. The conclusion examines the legacy of the Gaige imprint and the Watch Hill Press, a micro-press that Gaige operated at his home in Peekskill, NY.

Crosby Gaige's networks: connecting bibliophilia and modernism

From an early age, Crosby Gaige showed an entrepreneurial spirit. The son of a postmaster and a housewife, he attended Cazenovia Seminary, NY, and then sold a life of Christ from door to door until

he had US\$250.³ One of his instructors, Father Doody, encouraged him to go to university in New York City. ‘You were born in the country and you’ve had it all your life’, Doody told him. ‘What you need is the city and the things a great city can bring to you.’⁴ Gaige entered Columbia University in 1899. Determined to make his way up by doing newspaper writing, Gaige edited the university magazine, *Spectator*, and served as the campus correspondent for *The New York Times*. But theatre proved a more enticing and lucrative option. He went to work for Elisabeth Marbury, a noted play agent, and then Alice Kauser, who had set up a rival office in the Empire Theatre building on 42nd street. Gaige then worked with Archibald and Edgar Selwyn, becoming their right-hand man in 1912 when they produced the melodrama *Within the Law*. Starring Jane Cowl, the play made over US\$1 million. The Selwyn-Gaige partnership led to several hit shows, and Gaige was vice president and financial adviser of the firm until 1923. He then became an independent producer and was involved in famous plays such as *Broadway* (1926) and *Coquette* (1927) starring Helen Hayes.⁵

Gaige had skipped the final examinations at Columbia and he never graduated, but he kept close links with his alma mater. As a young agent representative, he lived on Morningside Heights near the university. His bachelor apartment had a comfortable living room with a fireplace and shelf room for his books. In recognition of his knowledge of books, he was admitted to the prestigious Grolier Club, one of the youngest members ever to be entered.⁶ Gaige also kept touch with Columbia alumni – including Donald Brace and Alfred Harcourt. After graduation, Brace and Harcourt both worked for the publishing house of Henry Holt. Brace specialised in book planning and manufacturing, while Harcourt was based in the editorial and trade sales departments.⁷ In 1919, the two men launched their own firm, which became ‘Harcourt, Brace and Company’ shortly after. In his autobiography, Gaige claimed some credit for this successful ‘publishing marriage’, for which he ‘acted as Cupid’.⁸ He was a director in the new company and was delighted to see it prosper with a series of bestsellers by Sinclair Lewis, Lytton Strachey and others.

In the late 1920s, Gaige decided to follow Brace and Harcourt’s example and to launch his own imprint. Unlike his friends, however, he had little interest in trade books. As a collector of fine contemporary editions, he wanted to publish limited editions for readers like him – successful and educated businessmen with plenty of money to spend on their hobby. His publishing enterprise became an extension

of his own collection, housed in a large pine-panelled room in his apartment on Upper Fifth Avenue. There was a large fireplace, and ‘long shelves of richly colored bindings gave the room great dignity and beauty’.⁹ This interior conveyed wealth and aristocratic taste and showed that Gaige had come a long way from his modest social origins. It was also reminiscent of fine printers’ workplaces, which often featured fireplaces, luxurious furniture and fresh flowers.¹⁰ Economic and cultural capital were combined to signify the distinction and high social status of all actors in the fine book trade – from printers to collectors (Figure 8.1).

Gaige wanted to publish beautiful limited editions of contemporary texts, rather than reprints of older works. His own collection of books – which started with Thomas Hardy and ended with Virginia Woolf – served as a guide for the new imprint. Describing the modern classics he collected, Gaige said that he was interested in authors of his generation who ‘might stand the years’.¹¹ When he started his imprint, Gaige had more than two decades of experience collecting contemporary books, and he showed remarkable flair at selecting writers such as Woolf and Joyce who did, indeed, join the literary



Figure 8.1 Crosby Gaige in the 1940s

canon. Gaige's passion for contemporary editions also enabled him to expand his network of contacts in the publishing industry. In 1908 or 1909, he read *The Old Wives' Tale* by the English writer Arnold Bennett. Deeply impressed by the book, Gaige contacted Bennett's American publisher, George Doran, who became a close friend and put him in touch with many people in Britain (including Bennett).

Thanks to his extensive network of contacts, Gaige was able to approach writers and convince them to sign deals for limited editions in advance of regular publications. 'This procedure was welcomed by the authors', he wrote, 'because it brought them additional compensation, and it also gave them the advantage of design and typography they might otherwise not have enjoyed'.¹² When he was in London in 1926, Gaige started negotiating with authors he would later publish – including Siegfried Sassoon, whose collection of poems, *The Heart's Journey*, was published by Gaige the following year.

To package contemporary texts, Gaige looked for book designers who were both innovative and sufficiently distinguished to attract collectors. A former assistant of Bruce Rogers at the printing firm of William E. Rudge, Frederic Warde became Gaige's favourite typographer and designer. Born in 1894, Warde had worked as Director of Printing at Princeton University Press before spending nearly three years in Europe in the mid-1920s.¹³ Warde was 'a paragon of training', wrote George Macy, the founder of the Limited Editions Club. 'He trained himself, not only in the art of book design, but also in its history, its traditions and background.'¹⁴ Warde and his wife Beatrice spent months studying European typography and printing in libraries in Paris and London, and travelled throughout the Continent to meet distinguished printers.

In a 1926 letter, Warde described the Officina Bodoni directed by Hans 'Giovanni' Mardersteig as 'the finest hand-press establishment in Europe – I think in the world'.¹⁵ Mardersteig looked towards the past and the future. He told Warde that his greatest wish was to get away from the machines and to reconnect with the artistic side of a printer's work.¹⁶ But he was also associated with modernism (for example, he later designed the covers of the Albatross Modern Continental Library).¹⁷

It is this modern outlook that had a significant impact on Warde. In the United States, he had been trained into traditional methods largely inspired by William Morris. Warde rejected this training, claiming that Morris 'was dead before he was born' and that US typography was 'old fashioned in its preciousness and

over-conservatism'.¹⁸ American printers were deeply influenced by what they saw as European – including woodcut illustrations modelled on fifteenth-century books and broad margins around dense blocks of texts. During his travels, Warde discovered that real-life European printers had a different approach. He particularly admired printing in Germany, which skilfully combined industry and art. Like Gaige, Warde thought that American bibliophiles were too timid, preferring older classics packaged in a form often inspired by the pre-industrial era. The Gaige-Warde collaboration led to the publication of important modern texts – including Joyce's *Anna Livia Plurabelle* and Woolf's *Orlando*.

Although the new imprint targeted only a small audience, Gaige's notoriety as a theatre producer led to several articles in the mainstream New York press. 'Crosby Gaige announces small editions of new books by Joyce, AE [George William Russell], Yeats and others', titled *The New York Times*. The article stressed the originality of a fine press that specialised in current authors: 'the first press in this country to be devoted exclusively to the publication of new or unpublished books of famous contemporary writers in fine limited editions, to be designed by leading craftsmen'. While the Gaige imprint focused mostly on British and Irish authors, its Americanness was central to its positioning. By employing American book designers and printers, the press showed that the country could compete against the finest English enterprises such as the Nonesuch Press. 'There will be no separate English edition of any book on the list', wrote *The New York Times*, 'but the English market will be supplied from the American printings'.¹⁹ Fine books produced in America had reached the same level of perfection as English presses, wrote the Dublin-born critic Ernest Boyd for the *New York Independent*:

Save for the Nonesuch Press, I know of no other recent enterprise of this kind which so successfully combines the publication of books that are beautiful with books that are at the same time wanted. The Nonesuch, of course, has chiefly specialized in the English classics, giving us works of which no other adequate edition is available, whereas Mr Gaige is resolutely contemporary.²⁰

Here, the Gaige imprint appeared as an American response to the Nonesuch Press: a press that combined the finest craftsmanship with a fresh and innovative approach to literature.

It is not a coincidence that Gaige contracted with Bennett Cerf of Random House, the distributor of the Nonesuch Press in America.

Like Gaige, Cerf had an entrepreneurial attitude and a fierce determination to develop his publishing business. As the publisher of the Modern Library series, he was associated with cheap series of reprints. To distribute the Nonesuch Press, he and his partner Donald Klopfer created a new imprint: Random House. Cerf did not expect the new enterprise to be profitable. 'As far as I can see', Cerf wrote in October 1926, 'there will be little or no profit accruing to us from the sale of these books; what we have to look forward to is the prestige that we may gain through handling the line and the hope that one day we may be able to publish something in conjunction with them'.²¹ Cerf wanted to move to a position in the publishing field where economic gains were less important than the accumulation of symbolic capital, in Pierre Bourdieu's terms. But this apparent disavowal of profit led to new opportunities that made the Random House imprint a profitable enterprise. Following the Nonesuch deal, Random House became a reference in the fine book trade, rather than an unknown imprint directed by two young men associated with inexpensive reprints.

Like Cerf, Gaige chased prestige rather than economic gains. For example, he sometimes used advance payments as a form of patronage for struggling authors. A former Imagist poet, Richard Aldington was doing freelance writing to make ends meet. In 1927, Aldington told Gaige that he was making £400 a year with book reviewing, but he wanted to go back to poetry and serious writing.²² Gaige paid him a US\$1,000-dollar advance royalty for an unpublished book, and left him entirely free to choose the topic.²³ Aldington offered to write a piece of scholarly work on Romance languages, which would have been difficult to place with another publisher. *Fifty Romance Lyric Poems* was published in 1928 with a 'preface-letter' to Crosby Gaige. The book design by Bruce Rogers attracted many collectors, and Ernest Boyd praised the 'handsome, sober blue binding with gold lines'.²⁴

Aldington used his advance to finance the writing of his First World War novel, *Death of a Hero*, which became a bestseller. In 1933, he wrote to Gaige:

Years ago you did me a great service, which I have never forgotten. The money you gave me for *Fifty Romance Poems* [sic] enabled me to get free from the slavery of highbrow journalism by giving me the leisure to write *Death of a Hero*. I feel sure you will be pleased to know that my latest novel, *All Men Are Enemies*, has started off well in America with a subscription sale of 10,000, while the movie rights have been sold to Fox Films for \$12,500.²⁵

Not everyone was pleased with the publication of *Fifty Romance Lyric Poems*. Its physical format disappointed Bennett Cerf. 'We have sold a considerable number of this book at a \$15.00 price on the basis of it being a Bruce Rogers item', Cerf wrote. 'The finished product, however, looks a great deal more, to me, like a \$1.50 text book than an expensive limited edition'.²⁶ While Aldington was then a little-known English poet, Rogers was a distinguished book designer whose name could be used to attract book collectors with the promise of quality and taste. However, Cerf felt that this promise had not been delivered, and he resented being associated with a poorly-produced book that threatened his own reputation as publisher and distributor of fine books. He also resented the commercial failure of several Gaige books – including Woolf's *Orlando*.

Publishing modernism

On 4 May 1928, Virginia Woolf wrote in her diary that she had received the visit of several Americans – including Crosby Gaige. 'The "fame" is becoming vulgar & a nuisance', she wrote, 'it means nothing; & yet takes one's time'.²⁷ Two days before, she had been awarded the Femina Vie Heureuse Prize for *To the Lighthouse*.²⁸ The novel had made her an 'established figure' on both sides of the Atlantic, and it was through her American publisher Donald Brace that Gaige got an introduction.²⁹ While Woolf did not enjoy meeting Gaige, the American businessman described a totally different experience. In his autobiography, he remembered going to the Woolfs' 'charming flat at Tavistock Square'. For Gaige, Woolf was 'a person of exceptional literary insight and delicacy of feeling'. And he added: 'she and her husband seemed most happy and companionable'.³⁰ It is not difficult to understand why Gaige kept such an enchanted memory of his tea with Virginia Woolf. As a collector and publisher, he preferred British and Irish literature, which constituted four-fifths of the books he published. Gaige also loved to socialise in elite environments, with distinguished guests, beautiful surroundings and exquisite food. The English upper-class held a particular appeal to him – hence the references to Woolf's father Sir Leslie Stephen and to Siegfried Sassoon's wealthy family.³¹ Publishing limited editions was a way for Gaige to transform his economic capital into social and cultural capital, and to gain access to circles that remained closed to him as Broadway producer.

The Woolfs took a few days to consider Gaige's offer to publish a limited edition of *Orlando*. On 9 May, Leonard Woolf sent a note to the Savoy Hotel in London, where Gaige was staying:

We have thought the matter over, and my wife would be very glad for you to do her new book in the limited edition for America without an English edition under an English imprint. I do not know of course whether you would agree to this or whether you consider it essential to have an English edition. But we are averse to having a limited edition brought out here under an imprint not our own, and at the same time we are not anxious to handle it ourselves.³²

For the Woolfs, it was essential to keep control over the publication of Virginia's work in England. By the late 1920s, the Hogarth Press had become a commercially successful enterprise, and it would have made no sense to let other British publishers benefit from Virginia's fame and commercial appeal. This is why the Woolfs rejected Jonathan Cape's offer to issue *The Common Reader* in a cheap edition and decided to include the title in the Uniform Edition published by their own press.³³ Letting Gaige publish an English edition was therefore out of question. A compromise was reached when Gaige promised that no UK imprint would issue the limited edition of *Orlando*; however, 200 copies of his American edition would be distributed in England by Dulau and Company.³⁴

After accepting Gaige's offer, Virginia Woolf resented the effort she had to devote to the limited edition of *Orlando*. By the time the page proofs had been revised for the American edition, she had corrected eighty typographical errors and had made more than 600 substantial changes in the text.³⁵ In June, she wrote to Edward Sackville-West:

I have been blind and dead: nothing but proofs do I see; and the entire worthlessness of my own words. I have been correcting for 6 hours daily, and must now write my name 800 times over. Pen and ink and my own words disgust me.

The signature of the famous writer increased the aura (and the monetary value) of the limited edition. But for Woolf, having to sign her name in 800 copies of the book seemed a senseless task. She concluded her letter on a more optimistic note, moving away from the frustrations of finishing a book towards the pleasures of starting a new project. 'Why does one write these books after all? The drudgery, the

misery, the grind, are forgotten every time; and one launches another, and it seems sheer joy and buoyancy.³⁶

The signed copies of *Orlando* were also numbered, to distinguish the book from mass-produced editions. As Megan Benton puts it, 'assigning each copy a unique number underscored the limited size of the edition, ostensibly clarifying its rarity and consequent value to collectors'.³⁷ In addition to the 800 copies signed and numbered, there were sixty-one copies not for sale, out of a total print run of 861. This was slightly more than the average print run of Gaige books (circa 700 copies).

In August, Bennett Cerf expressed doubts about the market for *Orlando*, and he refused to guarantee more than 350 copies for distribution.³⁸ Cerf was well aware of modernist trends: Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* appeared in the Modern Library in early 1928, followed a few months later by Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*. While Cerf was ready to include Woolf in a reprint series priced at 95 cents, he doubted that American bibliophiles would be interested in a US\$15 fine edition of *Orlando*. In mid-October, he wrote an angry letter to Gaige. Their distribution arrangement had been 'a dismal failure', he claimed before adding: 'it is out of the question for us to continue on the present basis'. Although limited editions were often over-subscribed before publication, he still had 200 copies of *Orlando* in his stock room. Since Random House paid US\$7.25 for each book (around half of the price charged to customers), the stock amounted to US\$1,450.³⁹ One year after the publication of *Orlando*, only 328 copies had been sold – a dismal 41 per cent of the total number for sale, and the worst performance among Gaige books.⁴⁰ While limited editions by Joyce and Conrad were nearly sold out, Woolf's book was a flop.

This is all the more surprising given that *Orlando* sold very well in the trade edition published by Harcourt, Brace later in October. The first printing of 6,350 copies was followed by five re-impressions totalling 14,950 copies between November 1928 and February 1933.⁴¹ The Gaige edition was five times more expensive than the trade edition, and its failure shows that the American market was not ready to consider Woolf a collectable writer. Among American bibliophiles, few collected contemporary authors – let alone female contemporary authors. In April 1918, shortly before Gaige went to Europe, Cerf told him to acquire texts by Bernard Shaw, Rudyard Kipling, Lytton Strachey, Aldous Huxley, James Stephens and Norman Douglas.⁴² Overall, Gaige agreed that this (exclusively male) list was what the market was prepared to buy. He later published Strachey's *Elizabeth and Essex*

and Stephens's *Julia Elizabeth*. But unlike Cerf, Gaige included Woolf among the most notable writers in England, and she became the only female author to appear on his list.

Designed by Frederic Warde, the Gaige edition of *Orlando* was beautifully presented (Figure 8.2). The upper cover featured the publisher's device of a ram on a green base. Golden patterns decorated the spine and cover. The seven illustrations, and the pure rag paper, also gave the book a luxurious feel. Fifteen copies were printed on green paper, making this special issue even more exclusive as it was reserved for Gaige himself and his close friends and associates. Other Gaige books also appeared in very limited editions of coloured paper. Since these special issues were not for general sale, book collectors resented a practice that made the regular edition less rare, and therefore less valuable. After receiving several protests, Cerf told Gaige he thought this was a harmful thing and should be discontinued.⁴³ However, the Random House directors also eagerly collected green paper editions, and Cerf asked Gaige to send copies for himself and Klopfer.⁴⁴ The special edition may have been harmful for the trade, but the Random House owners hoped to benefit from their close association with Gaige to add valuable books to their own libraries.

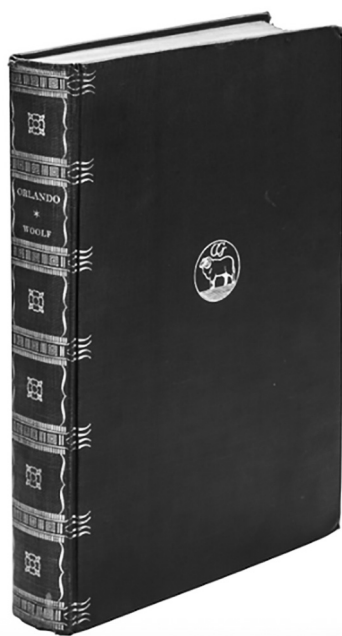


Figure 8.2 Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, Crosby Gaige Edition (1928)

A copy was sent to Woolf, who was not impressed. 'One miserable specimen, on pale green paper like a widows hymn book, has arrived', she told Edward Sackville-West, who had requested a copy for his library. 'I don't think you can wish for this', Woolf continued, 'so I'll wait for the white paper ones, and send you what I trust may be less cadaverous. The Americans have surpassed themselves, in pretention, fuss, and incompetence.'⁴⁵ Woolf looked down on Gaige's attempts to compete against the finest presses in England. For her, he remained a tasteless American businessman, who had no right to the prestige associated with fine books.

Yet, Woolf also wanted to widen her audience in the United States. In September 1928, shortly before the publication of *Orlando*, she published an article on Laurence Sterne in the *New York Herald Tribune* (which later appeared as a preface to the Oxford World's Classics edition of *Sentimental Journey*). Later that year, the Modern Library edition of *Mrs Dalloway* included a new introduction by the author. In these two introductions, Woolf placed readers at the centre of her analysis: like Sterne, she saw the literary text as a two-way conversation with readers, rather than a monologue addressed to a passive audience.⁴⁶ As new editions of her books appeared in both cheap and expensive format, Woolf was excited about her growing American readership. In late October, she thanked Gaige for 'the most attractive edition of *Orlando*'. Putting herself in the shoes of her readers, Woolf wrote: 'It is easy to read, and delightful to look at.' The edition seemed to her to 'fulfil all the needs of a reader', and she hoped that Gaige would 'find the American public appreciative'.⁴⁷ Although the Gaige edition targeted only a small audience, it served Woolf's ambition to engage with a new public across the Atlantic.

In 1929, after Gaige sold his list to James Wells, *Orlando* appeared in the catalogue of the newly-founded Fountain Press. By that time, Cerf and his partner Donald Klopfer were desperate to sell their stock of Gaige books. This commercial failure was not only costly, it also threatened their reputation. Indeed, Random House advertisements explicitly presented modern editions as a good investment that would yield healthy profits. In November 1928, shortly after the publication of *Orlando* and other Gaige books, an announcement in *Publishers' Weekly* claimed: 'These are the recognized first editions for both England and America and will almost certainly command substantial premiums in short time. Enterprising booksellers should take advantage of the public's growing interest in modern first editions.'⁴⁸ Since *Orlando* had already been advertised as a desirable book that would soon sell out, the Random House owners designed

a new strategy. They listed the Woolf book and another slow-seller, Carl Sandburg's *Good Morning America*, as out of print 'with the deliberate intent of stimulating a certain amount of interest in these books, and of making them scarce'.⁴⁹ This misleading strategy was not uncommon among fine book publishers. As Benton points out, announcements of sales figures, and especially news that an edition was sold out, served as marketing tools to make books more desirable and hasten sales.⁵⁰

After the *Orlando* fiasco, Cerf refused to take a risk on another Woolf book in an expensive edition. When Wells announced his intention to publish *A Room of One's Own*, Cerf told him that he could not raise the quantity above 350 copies at US\$10. 'We sold only 350 copies of Mrs Woolf's widely acclaimed *Orlando*', Cerf said. 'Surely we can expect to do no better with the very much less important *A Room of One's Own*.'⁵¹ Once again, Cerf thought that American bibliophiles were not ready for Woolf's work. A feminist text had little chance to attract an audience of book collectors, at a time when most collectors were men.

In July 1928, *Publishers' Weekly* gave three reasons why so few women collected fine books. First, 'the hobby is an antisocial one, the book collector working best alone'. Women preferred social activities such as literary clubs, talks and lectures. Second, 'the acquiring of the knowledge necessary to the book collector is unattractive to women'. Without this knowledge, books could not be displayed as decorative objects. In other words, book collecting was incompatible with home decoration – a favourite pastime for women. And third, 'the handling of old books in bookshops has an unaesthetic phase that does not appeal to femininity'.⁵² This article highlights the prejudices of the book trade of the time. Few women challenged these prejudices to show that they were equally able to pursue knowledge on their own, and to manipulate dusty old books. And in turn, publishers responded to a male-dominated market by mostly selecting books by male writers. This choice reinforced the conviction that men writers were more gifted and valuable.

Whereas less than half of *Orlando* had been sold one year after publication, this number reached 99 per cent for Joyce's *Anna Livia Plurabelle*, an extract of *Work in Progress*.⁵³ The two books had been designed by Frederic Warde, published with a similar print run (800 copies for general sale) and sold for the same price (US\$15). In both cases, Gaige found the texts difficult to understand. He described *Orlando* as a 'baffling and elusive story'. And he admitted that he did not think much of Joyce as a writer. 'Anyone who wants

to know more about Anna Livia has my permission to buy the book', he added.⁵⁴ The literary text was not Gaige's main concern. Instead, he was interested in the value of an author's name in the market for fine books, a market based on prestige as a precondition for real monetary gains.

In the late 1920s, James Joyce was sufficiently well known to attract American collectors. The scandal of *Ulysses* – which was still banned in the United States – underlined his reputation. He was, in Gaige's words, 'already a prime collector's item'.⁵⁵ For Gaige, publishing *Anna Livia Plurabelle* was a coup that positioned his press as a major player in the field of fine books. 'You are becoming quite an "éditeur de luxe", and I hope you make some money', Theodore Rousseau told him. 'Unless the "Society for the prevention of Pornography" gets hold of you, I imagine you will do well!'⁵⁶ As a Paris-based agent of the Guaranty Trust Company of New York, Rousseau was familiar with censorship on both sides of the Atlantic: he knew that publishing Joyce was riskier in the United States, a country with tough obscenity laws and anti-pornography activists. Acting on behalf of Gaige, Rousseau gave Joyce US\$675 for the corrected copy of *transition* no. 8, which served as the basis for the Gaige edition.⁵⁷ 'Joyce is a very interesting man – almost blind, and quite charming', Rousseau claimed.

Publishing Joyce allowed Gaige to meet the author in person, a disappointing meeting that differed from his charming afternoon tea with the Woolfs. The millionaire was shocked by Joyce's 'stuffy flat that might have been imported from the Bronx'. 'Its squalid, unhandsome confusion was not unlike Joyce's literary work', wrote Gaige, 'and the man's conversation was nearly as muddled as his prose'.⁵⁸ Here, Gaige presented Joyce as a lower-class writer who lacked the taste of Virginia Woolf and her ability to pleasantly interact with guests. In contrast with this unflattering description of Joyce, announcements for *Anna Livia Plurabelle* used the vocabulary of literary distinction. 'A new prose work by the author of *Ulysses* – conceived and executed with brilliancy and dexterity – a complete episode from a work in progress which the author believes to be his finest work', declared the blurb written by James Wells.⁵⁹

The text was not long, and the challenge was to make it look like a book rather than an isolated fragment. Gaige could have added illustrations but, instead, he commissioned a preface by the Irish writer Padraic Colum. Two years earlier, Colum had written the introduction to the Modern Library edition of Joyce's *Dubliners*. With the Gaige edition, Colum addressed a wealthier audience, but he kept the same objective: explaining this difficult text to readers with no

or little experience of modernism. Adopting a scholarly tone, Colum gave an overview of the publication history of Joyce's text, which had first appeared in *Le Navire d'Argent* in September 1925, before being expanded and published in *transition* in November 1927. 'Again expanded, it is here published in its definite form and with a title given it: *Anna Livia Plurabelle*', Colum wrote.⁶⁰ The promise that the text would no longer be revised or changed reassured bibliophiles of the long-term value of the book.

Even with the preface, the edition designed by Frederic Warde had only sixty-four pages. The brown cover was a reference to the River Liffey flowing through Dublin. Sylvia Beach said that it had to be published in a tea-coloured cover because the Liffey was the colour of tea.⁶¹ The cover featured an inverted triangle of three rules, with the inner rule dentelle. This represented Anna Livia's symbol, the river delta. As in the case of *Orlando*, 800 copies signed and numbered were for general sale. A special issue of fifty copies on green paper completed the regular edition. Once again, Cerf was not impressed by the physical format of Gaige publications. He described *Anna Livia Plurabelle* as 'a sorry-looking affair for \$15.00'.⁶² Ten days later, he told Gaige: 'It becomes increasingly evident that you are not very much concerned with making your imprint stand for something in the publishing world, and that we will have to take more stringent steps to protect ourselves in the matter.' Cerf's criticism can be seen as a negotiation strategy to extract better conditions from Gaige and to lower the risks Random House was taking. In the same letter, Cerf asked to be shown the proofs and specimen covers before giving his approval to distribute the books. 'Frankly, we will refuse to accept any more books that look like the Joyce or the de la Mare', he concluded.⁶³

After Gaige moved away from the publishing business, the Fountain Press continued to publish Joyce in limited editions. In November 1930, the Press announced the publication of *Haveth Childers Everywhere*, another fragment of *Work in Progress*. The US\$20 edition included 500 copies printed on handmade paper. A deluxe edition at US\$40 had a smaller print run of 100 copies, printed on Japan Vellum and signed by Joyce, in a green and gold box, of which only fifty were allotted to America.⁶⁴ Despite the economic crisis of the 1930s, investing in Joyce books remained a popular strategy among wealthy collectors.

Other Gaige authors fared less well in a changing market. James Branch Cabell was one of those who saw his reputation collapse during the Depression. Two of his books available in the Modern

Library – *Beyond Life* and *Cream of the Jest* – were discontinued in the 1930s. But back in 1928, when Gaige published *Ballades from the Hidden Way*, Cabell was at the height of his popularity. Despite the high price (US\$20), 85 per cent of the print run of 831 copies sold within one year of publication.⁶⁵ The book was based on a 1916 collection of poems, rearranged by Cabell ‘to make up a volume of the exact size desired by my present publishers’.⁶⁶ The new introduction by the author aimed to create interest in a mere reprint, but many collectors were disappointed. The original edition was still available for US\$2, ten times less than the Gaige edition. ‘We have had over 100 copies returned to us so far on the entirely justifiable grounds that this book was originally represented as a new item, and is, in fact, merely a reprint’, Cerf wrote.⁶⁷ Collectors who returned their purchase feared that the Cabell book was a bad investment. They were right: today, first editions of *Ballades from the Hidden Way* can be found for around US\$30 – whereas Gaige editions of *Orlando* and *Anna Livia Plurabelle* sell for US\$2,000 to US\$3,000.

Conclusion

In his autobiography, Gaige presented himself not as a traditional publisher but as a book collector frustrated by the lack of fine editions by contemporary writers. Rather than wait for publishers to discover this untapped market, Gaige used his immense energy and entrepreneurial drive to issue books himself. Like other book-collectors-turned-publishers, Gaige issued many fragments, adding paratextual elements to make them look like fully-developed works. For Joseph Conrad’s unfinished novel, *The Sisters*, Gaige enlisted Bruce Rogers to stretch the text to a respectable number of pages. The book designer added extra space between the lines and a series of typographic ornaments. Gaige also approached Ford Madox Ford, asking him to finish the novel. Conrad’s friend and collaborator refused, but he did write an introduction to the Gaige edition. For the following four decades, this edition of *The Sisters* remained the only one available. It was not until 1968 that Ugo Mursia, a Conrad enthusiast and Italian publisher, issued a reprint of the uncompleted novel.

Although he refused to identify as a professional publisher, Gaige left a significant legacy in publishing and literary history. Not only did he publish famous names such as James Joyce, he also took risks on writers who were not yet well-established in America. At the time when American bibliophiles largely dismissed women collectors and

writers, Gaige openly endorsed Virginia Woolf as a collectable author. He became a patron for Richard Aldington, who was able to complete his First World War novel *Death of a Hero* after receiving a generous payment. In turn, Gaige benefited from his association with writers across the Atlantic. As a Broadway producer, he probably would not have been admitted into exclusive literary circles in England. But as a publisher of fine editions, he could socialise with Siegfried Sassoon and Virginia Woolf. He almost forgot his background as a successful businessman. Commenting on the closure of his imprint, he said: ‘by early 1929 the production of limited editions for the delectation of the book collector had become more of a business than a pastime as more commercially minded men than I took it up’.⁶⁸

By the time Gaige sold his press, he had fully transitioned to what Bourdieu calls the field of restricted production. Adopting a ‘loser wins’ attitude, he dismissed the logic of business and the pursuit of profit.⁶⁹ His next venture was a private press, the Watch Hill Press, which he managed at his home in Peekskill, NY, with the help of Frederic Warde. The press was mainly used to communicate with Gaige’s friends, often at Christmas time. Print runs rarely exceeded 100 copies. For example, Rupert Brooke’s *Letter to the Editor of the Poetry Review* had a print run of fifty copies. Whereas his friends Donald Brace and Alfred Harcourt published modernism for a large audience in the 1930s, Crosby Gaige turned away from difficult modernist works, preferring to publish easily-readable texts for a very small audience.

Notes

1. Gaige, *Footlights and Highlights*, p. 201.
2. Benton, *Beauty and the Book*, p. 41.
3. ‘Crosby Gaige Dies’, *New York Times*, 9 March 1949, p. 25.
4. Gaige, *Footlights and Highlights*, p. 33.
5. Cunningham, ‘Gaige, Crosby’.
6. Gaige, *Footlights and Highlights*, p. 54.
7. Dzwonkoski, ‘Harcourt Brace’.
8. Gaige, *Footlights and Highlights*, p. 40.
9. Gaige, *Footlights and Highlights*, p. 200.
10. Benton, *Beauty and the Book*, p. 53.
11. Gaige, *Footlights and Highlights*, p. 200.
12. Gaige, *Footlights and Highlights*, p. 201.
13. See Loxley, ‘Frederic Warde, Crosby Gaige, and the Watch Hill Press’, and *Printer’s Devil*.

14. George Macy, 'A Note on Fred Warde', nd, Box 2, Paul Bennett: Papers relating to Frederic Warde, Grolier Club Library Manuscript and Archival Collections (hereafter referred to as Bennett/Grolier).
15. Warde to Thomas Nast Fairbanks, 4 January 1926, Box 1, Frederic Warde Papers (hereafter referred to as Warde/Grolier).
16. Mardersteig to Warde, 17 August 1931, Box 1, Warde/Grolier.
17. Jaillant, *Cheap Modernism*, p. 106.
18. Warde to William Kittredge, 25 November 1926, Box 1, Bennett/Grolier; Warde to Henry Kent, 22 September 1925, Box 1, Warde/Grolier.
19. 'Forms Limited Press for Current Authors', *The New York Times*, 30 March 1928, p. 14.
20. Boyd, 'Readers and Writers'.
21. Bennett Cerf to Manuel Komroff, 28 October 1926, Catalogued Correspondence, RH.
22. Aldington to Gaige, 19 May 1927, Box 1, Richard Aldington Collection, Yale University Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library (hereafter referred to as Aldington/Yale)
23. Gaige, *Footlights and Highlights*, p. 203.
24. Boyd, 'Readers and Writers'.
25. Aldington to Gaige, August 1933, Box 1, Aldington/Yale.
26. Cerf to Gaige, 12 July 1928, Box 173, RH.
27. Woolf, *Diary* [4 May 1928], vol. 3, p. 183.
28. The prize was presented to Woolf at the Institut Français in South Kensington, London on 2 May 1928.
29. Woolf, *Diary* [6 June 1927], vol. 3, p. 137; Gaige, *Footlights and Highlights*, p. 203.
30. Gaige, *Footlights and Highlights*, p. 204.
31. Gaige, *Footlights and Highlights*, pp. 204, 202.
32. L. Woolf to Gaige, 9 May 1928, Leonard Woolf Papers (SxMs-13), University of Sussex Library.
33. See Jaillant, *Cheap Modernism*, pp. 123–4.
34. Gaige to Virginia Woolf, 11 June 1928, Leonard Woolf Papers (SxMs-13), University of Sussex Library.
35. Online Exhibition, 'Woolf in the World: A Pen and a Press of her Own', Smith College Libraries, <<https://www.smith.edu/libraries/libs/rarebook/exhibitions/penandpress/case11a.htm>> [accessed 11 April 2018] (hereafter referred to as 'Woolf in the World').
36. Woolf to Edward Sackville-West, 24 June 1928, *Letters of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 3, p. 510.
37. Benton, *Beauty and the Book*, p. 77.
38. Cerf to Gaige, 10 August 1928, Box 173, RH.
39. Cerf to Gaige, 15 October 1928, Box 173, RH.
40. Benton, *Beauty and the Book*, p. 206.
41. Kirkpatrick, *A Bibliography of Virginia Woolf*, p. 63.
42. Cerf to Gaige, 19 April 1928, Box 173, RH.

43. Cerf to Gaige, 6 August 1928, Box 173, RH.
44. Cerf to Gaige, 18 October 1928, Box 173, RH.
45. Woolf to Edward Sackville-West, 22 October 1928, *Sothebys*, <<http://www.sothebys.com/fr/auctions/ecatalogue/lot.214.html/2016/english-literature-history-childrens-books-illustrations-l16408>> [accessed 10 April 2018].
46. See Jaillant, *Cheap Modernism*, pp. 37–42.
47. Woolf to Gaige, 29 October 1928, ‘Woolf in the World’.
48. Advertisement for Random House, *Publishers’ Weekly*, 17 November 1928, p. 2101. Quoted in Thompson, ‘Birth of the First’, p. 184.
49. Donald Klopfer to James Wells, 5 April 1929, Box 173, RH.
50. Benton, *Beauty and the Book*, p. 205.
51. Cerf to Wells, 28 June 1929, Box 173, RH.
52. ‘Women and Book Collecting’, *Publishers’ Weekly*, 21 July 1928, p. 239.
53. Benton, *Beauty and the Book*, p. 206.
54. Gaige, *Footlights and Highlights*, pp. 204–5.
55. Gaige, *Footlights and Highlights*, p. 204.
56. Theodore Rousseau to Gaige, 1 February 1928, Box 5, James Joyce Collection, Yale Beinecke.
57. Wynne and Reynolds, ‘James Joyce’, p. 74.
58. Gaige, *Footlights and Highlights*, pp. 204–5.
59. Wells to Cerf, 17 February 1928, Box 173, RH.
60. Colum, ‘Preface’, p. viii.
61. Quoted in Ellmann, *James Joyce*, p. 603.
62. Cerf to Gaige, 17 September 1928, Box 173, RH.
63. Cerf to Gaige, 27 September 1928, Box 173, RH.
64. ‘First Editions for Sale: The Fountain Press Imprint’, 24 November 1930, Box 173, RH.
65. Benton, *Beauty and the Book*, p. 206.
66. Cabell, ‘Preface’, *Ballades from the Hidden Way*, n.p.
67. Cerf to Gaige, 17 September 1928, Box 173, RH.
68. Gaige, *Footlights and Highlights*, p. 211.
69. Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 39.