

# Motivations for Patronage: Early Modernist Literature as a Case Study

Walter R. Crozier

## ABSTRACT

Patronage of early modernist English-language writers is investigated, drawing upon biographical source material. The process of identifying patrons started with Imagist poets in the first decades of the twentieth century followed by a search for their social connections with fellow writers and patrons. Fifteen patrons were identified who brought new money into the network of connections, twelve of them women. Analysis of their personal characteristics reveals a distinctive pattern of substantial, inherited financial resources, education, literary interests and unorthodox lifestyle, notably for the women in the sample. Explanations of motivation in terms of social identity, gift exchange and co-creation are discussed.

**Keywords:** avant-garde, literature, modernism, patronage.

**Published Online:** December 19, 2022

**ISSN:** 2796-0064

**DOI:** 10.24018/ejlang.2022.1.6.50

**W. R. Crozier\***

School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University, Cardiff, UK

(e-mail: ray.crozier@hotmail.com)

\*Corresponding Author

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Literary Patronage

The aim of this research is to examine motivations for patronage of avant-garde writing during the early years of the twentieth century, at the beginnings of English-language modernism. There are published studies of forms of patronage during this period and speculation about its potential influence on its beneficiaries (Carr, 2009; Rainey, 1999; McSherry, 2017). While there are accounts of patrons, little attention has been paid to the characteristics of benefactors of the emerging modernist writers: who were they and, more specifically, what was their motivation for patronage? Accounts of the period (for example, Carr, 2009) emphasize three features. Patrons and writers formed part of a social network, along with editors, publishers, printers, booksellers, reviewers, and critics. Second, writers aimed to produce and promote literature that was distinguished from writing that had preceded them, for example by the Georgian poets, and that explicitly aspired to be modern, i.e., avant-garde. Thus, the likelihood would be that little income would be generated from sales of their work. Third, a large number of small, short-lived, literary magazines sprang up to facilitate and disseminate new writing. Again, these magazines were unlikely to generate income from sales or paid advertisements, and all led a precarious existence. Thus, this writing and these magazines depended upon patronage and the aim of the research reported here is to identify the individuals who provided the necessary income and to ask what their motives were for doing so.

More generally, patronage must be understood with reference to the cultural and economic system within which original artworks, in this case, literary products, are created and disseminated (Jaffe, 2010). Publishing changed markedly during the nineteenth-century, with the emergence of a mass reading public and a rapid increase in the numbers of people professionally involved, including writers of diverse kinds of material (Gissings's novel, *New Grub Street*, published in 1891, portrays this world). Literary products have become a commodity. This made available new sources of income for writers, but on the other hand it remained challenging for those whose output did not appeal to a mass market.

The need for patronage varies with the market for cultural products. One relevant distinction is between high and low culture (DiMaggio, 1986). DiMaggio argues that these two forms of culture cannot be distinguished on intrinsic grounds, but in terms of their social status and their forms of organization. Low culture tends to survive on the basis of sales, is promoted by entrepreneurs and finds success, or otherwise, in the marketplace. High culture is less marketable, and its survival requires some form of subsidy, whether by individuals or organizations. Patronage thus has greater relevance for high culture. Bourdieu (1983, p. 319) distinguishes between "autonomous" and "heteronomous" writers and works. In the former, authors achieve high status – cultural legitimization – on the basis of judgments by their peers, and thereby gain entry into the literary canon and university and school curricula. Heteronomous writers and works are defined in terms of their dependence on influences and standards external to the literary field. This can take the form of endorsement by the bourgeoisie and success in the marketplace. Bourdieu (1983; 1986) postulates dominant and dominated factions within each of these sub-fields. He pays particular attention to

the avant-garde which, he argues, typically originates in a dominated autonomous position but seeks to challenge the dominant writers, whom the avant-garde regards as having “sold out” or have become passé and out of tune with the Zeitgeist.

There is a dearth of research into the psychology of patrons and what motivates certain individuals to become patrons. One theme in the literature on patronage more generally is that, over and above investing for economical capital, there are two related motives for patronage: (1) The acquisition of prestige; (2) Social exclusiveness, the creation and maintenance of barriers against infiltration by less valued groups. For example, in a study of Mozart’s career, Elias (1993) points out that social elites preferred the musical form was opera. Because it was expensive to produce, only the wealthiest could afford to fund it so it served to create a barrier separating them from socially ambitious bourgeois groups. Composers and orchestras were servants of the elite, and their success reflected well on their patrons, contributing to their prestige, and demonstrating their good taste to their peers. In her study of Beethoven, DeNora (1995, p. 45) also argues that music was “a primary medium for acquiring and demonstrating [social] prestige” and for maintaining barriers against less elite groups eager to acquire social and cultural capital. Patronage of the arts facilitates access to elite groups, potentially establishing the patron as a recognized leader of cultural life. Boundaries can also be maintained by supporting and valuing challenging artworks that require skills, knowledge, and patience for their consumption: in the case of writing, literary styles and “difficult” poetry rather than bestsellers, genre fiction and accessible verse.

An alternative approach to explaining motivation for patronage draws upon gift theory (Schwartz, 1967; Lévy-Strauss, 1969; Mauss, 2002; McSherry, 2017; van den Braber, 2017), which construes the patron-beneficiary relationship as a form of gift exchange. The patron donates money and provides other forms of support and receives in return nonmaterial gifts such as feelings of pride or the sense of being part of something significant. To enter this gift relationship, the potential benefactor presumably calculates that the receipt of such nonmaterial gifts is sufficient to compensate for the loss of economic capital entailed by the donation. Of course, as van den Braber (2007) illustrates, the relationship is not one-sided, and the patron might not have the power or control that characterized the traditional model of patrons, for example, by Queen Christina of Sweden, patron of Descartes, by Louisa Ulrica, Queen of Sweden (patron of Voltaire) or by Anna Amalia, the Grand Duchess of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach and her son Grand Duke Karl August, patrons of Goethe and Schiller. Patronage has a temporal dimension, where its continuation may depend upon reciprocity and mutual satisfaction. It can also be a dynamic relationship, entailing shifts in the balance of power.

Ezra Pound, who played a major role in the advancement of modernism as poet, editor and distributors of funds that he obtained from patrons, notably John Quinn, addressed the issue of patronage of the avant-garde, writing in a letter to John Quinn in 1915, “If a patron buys from an artist who needs money (needs money to buy tools, time and food), the patron then makes himself equal to the artist: he is building art into the world; he creates. If he buys off living artists who are already famous or already making £12,000 per year, he ceases to create. He sinks back to the rank of a consumer” (Paige, 1950, pp. 53–54). The patron does not create art but creates the conditions to make art possible (Wolfe, 1991). We can interpret this as Pound’s attempt to use flattery to persuade Quinn to be his patron, arguing elsewhere that patronizing an artist yet to be recognized would be more likely to result in their benefactor being remembered in posterity than would supporting an established artist (Wolfe, 1991). Nevertheless, it is possible that the rewards obtained from patronage might resemble those obtained in artistic success, intrinsic motivation as opposed to, or alongside extrinsic rewards in the sense of publication, recognition, reputation, entry into the literary canon. Stohs (2009) has shown that intrinsic motivation helps explain artists’ persistence at their art over time. This explanation would imply the patron’s involvement or close interest in the process of making art as opposed to gaining rewards from subsidizing the final product or the established artist. The distinction is clearer if we contrast Peggy Guggenheim, one of the sample of patrons in this study, a benefactor of modern artists including Jackson Pollock, a collector of contemporary art and owner of an art gallery, with her uncle, the wealthy businessman Solomon R. Guggenheim who amassed a substantial collection of artworks although he had few connections with practicing artists and relied upon the artist Hilla von Rebay, who moved in modern art circles, to purchase works on his behalf.

There have been no tests of these hypotheses other than examination of the careers of individual distinguished artists, which can yield a distorted picture by concentrating solely on “successful” outcomes of patronage, ignoring cases where patronage was obtained but did not result in increasing the artist’s reputation. What characteristics might predispose someone to become a benefactor of the literary avantgarde? Bourdieu’s concept of habitus is relevant here: an individual’s occupation of a particular place in the literary field can be understood in terms of his or her socialization and life trajectories, how they have come to be the person they are and make the contribution that they do. This can be investigated by drawing upon biographical information, and this provides the basis for the method used in this study to identify patrons.

In light of the history of patronage of literature, access to surplus money is a prerequisite for individual

patronage. Being personally wealthy is important but it is an open question whether it is essential; patrons might have access to alternative sources of funding. The source of an individual's financial resources might also be relevant, whether inherited or earned, as might financial commitments elsewhere, such as supporting a family. A pre-existing interest in literature and/or the avant-garde would also be relevant although this might be more challenging for research to specify. Cultural capital in terms of access to education relevant to literary pursuits is likely to be involved. Other candidates include evidence of participation in the literary field prior to or beyond patronage; evidence of an interest in other contemporary art forms; adoption of a bohemian lifestyle associated with the arts or association with such a lifestyle; radical political interests or activism. Opportunities to encounter avant-garde work and writers would also be important. Much of this information is available in biographical sources.

### *B. A Working Definition of Patronage*

It is essential to adopt a working definition of patronage. Dictionaries converge on a definition of patronage of the arts in terms of a person who gives financial or other support to an artist or writer. Such definitions are broad and encompass financial support that is not usually considered as patronage, for example, where a publisher makes advances on royalties, or an editor is employed to provide advice on draft versions of a work in progress. I offer a definition of what might be labelled the "classical" form of patronage in the context of literature: an individual or organization, drawing on their own resources and without necessary expectation of financial return, offers financial, material, or other practical forms of support to assist a writer's literary creation. This definition aims to distinguish patronage from instances where people are employed to support writers, for example, agents or editors, or where corporations sponsor literary festivals as a form of advertising or to set donations against tax. It also distinguishes it from patronage in its alternative meaning of a purchaser of works. "Other practical forms" is something of a "catchall" that might include, for example, poets offering editorial advice to fellow poets or helping them get published. It is important to be open to the possibility of finding unanticipated forms of patronage. In the study reported here, I concentrate on the financial support that individual benefactors provide for individual writers. I exclude patrons who host soirées or literary salons. This is not to deny their significance during this period, for example the salons in London hosted by Violet Hunt, Olivia Shakespear, Brigit Patmore and Viscountess Rothermere, and W. B. Yeats's Monday evenings at Woburn Place or, in New York, the salon hosted by Mabel Dodge, or Scofield Thayer's literary dinners. This theme deserves treatment on its own.

### *C. Research Strategy*

In summary, patronage in this period has been extensively documented from an historical perspective yet we lack understanding of fundamental issues such as who patrons of literature are at any given time, how they differ from their peers who do not adopt this role, what benefits they obtain from supporting writers, particularly those who are little-known, and what kinds of relationships they form with their beneficiaries. This study takes early modernist writing as a case study. It identifies patrons and their beneficiaries during this period and examines motives for patronage in terms of patrons' habits. It explores the hypothesis that social identity is a factor in patron's membership of the avantgarde and considers whether there is evidence of patrons' continuing involvement in the creative process. For the purposes of analysis, habitus is defined in terms of financial resources; education, early literary interests; evidence of an interest in other contemporary art forms; adoption of, or association with an unorthodox lifestyle frequently associated with avantgarde art; radical political interests and participation. The method of identifying patrons allows examination of inter-connections among modernist writers and patrons, and these relationships can be scrutinized to investigate why patrons were drawn to these writers and not to other writers active at the time.

## II. METHODOLOGY

Addressing these questions requires finding a means of identifying the sample of interest, namely membership of the English-language avant-garde at a particular period in time, in this case the early years of the twentieth century. The strategy adopted here is to begin a search process with the publication of the first Imagist anthology in 1914, the collection of poems widely credited as the beginning of modernism (Eliot, 1965; Jones, 1972). The key figures were the youthful poets Richard Aldington, Hilda Doolittle (H. D.) and Ezra Pound, whose informal meetings at the British Museum in London led to the production of the anthology. Aldington was English, the other two American and newly resident in London. The next step was to scrutinize biographical and autobiographical source material to identify interpersonal relationships in which these three poets were involved as well as evidence of any patronage given or received. These connections were examined in turn for further connections. The individuals thus identified, and their links were entered into a database. The focus here is on relations of patronage, which were

operationalized in terms of: financial, material, or other tangible support for writing and publishing; collaboration or editorial support for writing, such as critical reading and editing prior to publication, publishing or helping obtain publication. Identified connections comprised events such as X sets up a trust fund for Y; X covers the losses of journal Z; X makes a one-off payment to Y who is in financial need; X finds accommodation for Y; X offers editorial advice to Y while Y is writing.

It is evident from the historical literature on this period and from the biographical source material that small, financially precarious, and often short-lived literary magazines played a significant role in the dissemination of modernist works, by publishing works, essays, and critical articles. The “little magazines” were founded by individuals, edited by them, and closed down when they left for whatever reason. Involvement in patronage of these magazines is taken into account when searching the sources.

### III. FINDINGS

#### A. Identification of Patrons

The search started with Aldington, Doolittle and Pound. Of note, they were far from affluent; all had small allowances from their family. Doolittle, daughter of a university professor in Pennsylvania, had an annual allowance of £200. Pound, son of an American government employee, struggled financially while at university. During the period of interest here he lodged in cheap boarding houses in London and at times needed recourse to pawnbrokers. His income, all from writing for magazines, was £41 for the final three months of 1912 and £42 for the year 1915; when he married Dorothy Shakespear, his new wife had an annuity of £150 (Stock, 1974). Aldington, son of a solicitor, was obliged to curtail his university studies because of his father’s debts and found temporary employment as a life-class model and part-time sports journalist. The three poets did not set out with significant financial resources. *Des Imagistes*, the first anthology of modernist poetry, first appeared in *The Glebe* magazine in New York in 1914; the magazine lasted for only one year, produced ten issues and had a circulation of around 300. The anthology was published in book form in the same year in New York and London but sold few copies.

The database, constructed from the identified connections, comprises 65 individuals and there are 112 links between them. Inspection of the links indicated 22 relations involving patronage. Fifteen individuals are “primary sources,” in the sense of bringing “new” finance into the network without themselves recipients of patronage. These are the focus here. Details of the sample are displayed in Table I. Two other entries in the database are noteworthy in that they both received and dispersed patronage. Robert McAlmon entered a marriage of convenience with Bryher in 1921. He received substantial funds from her and her father and used these to dispense money to many writers and filmmakers. Ezra Pound played a similar entrepreneurial role, drawing money from John Quinn and others and using it to provide financial and editorial support to T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, and W. B. Yeats, among others, the three major figures of literary modernism.

Biographical material about the individuals was searched for evidence of their financial resources, educational level attained; literary interests prior to patronage; interest in other forms of contemporary art; an unorthodox lifestyle; radical political interests and participation. Indices of the presence of these five variables are displayed in Table I in terms of: inherited family wealth; university degree; early exposure to literature via family library and reading; interest in other art forms; extramarital relations; political involvement.

#### B. Financial Resources

A very considerable degree of inherited wealth by inheritance or marriage is a significant feature for ten of the fifteen. Edith Rockefeller McCormick was a daughter of John D. Rockefeller, founder of Standard Oil; her husband was son of Cyrus McCormick, inventor of the mechanical reaper in 1834. Annie Ellerman, who preferred to be called Bryher, (father’s wealth from shipping and newspapers); Cunard (Cunard Shipping Line); Guggenheim (mining, smelting); Lowell (industry); Thayer (woolen mills); Hildegard Watson (Whitin Machine Works); her husband, J. S. Watson (Western Union Telegraphic Company; Eastman Kodak Company) all inherited money from extremely wealthy parents. Cravens and Weaver both inherited money on their mother’s side. Cravens’ uncle, James Lanier, made his fortune in banking, finance and railroad investment. Sylvia Beach set up her bookshop, Shakespeare and Company, in Paris with \$3,000 from her mother’s savings. Lady Gregory was a daughter of the landowning Anglo-Irish gentry and married into the same class and an extensive estate at Coole Park, which would become famous as a subject of Yeats’s poetry. Mary Lilian Share married Harold Harmsworth, Viscount Rothermere, the English newspaper magnate. Weaver had substantial private means, but nothing on the order of the preceding patrons. Quinn and Monroe are exceptions: John Quinn acquired his wealth from his legal practice, having come from a poor, Irish immigrant family. Harriet Monroe set up Poetry magazine after winning \$5,000 in a court case against a newspaper. With the exception of Quinn, Beach and Monroe, none of the fourteen earned the money they spent on supporting writers.

TABLE I: FIFTEEN PATRONS OF EARLY MODERNISM, THEIR BACKGROUND AND RESOURCES

Patron	Inherited or married into Wealth	Higher Education	Early literary experience	Unorthodox relations	Other art forms	Radical involvement
Beach, Sylvia 1887-1962 Bryher	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
(Annie Winifred Ellman) 1894-1983	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Cunard, Nancy 1896-1965	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cravens, Margaret 1881-1912	Yes	No, but private music education	Yes	No	Yes	No
Augusta, Lady Gregory 1852-1932	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Guggenheim, Peggy 1898-1980	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Lowell, Amy 1874-1975	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	yes
McCormick, Edith Rockefeller 1872-1932	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Monroe, Harriet 1860-1936	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Quinn, John 1870-1924	No	Yes	?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rothermere, Lilian 1874-1937	1874-1937	Yes	?	No	?	No
Thayer, Scofield 1889-1982	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Watson, Hildegarde Lasell 1888-1976	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Watson, James Sibley 1894-1982	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Weaver, Harriet Shaw 1876-1961	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes

### C. Education

Gender differences in educational experiences among the sample are marked. All three men attended Harvard (as did Eliot, Gilbert Seldes, an editor at *The Dial*, and E.E. Cummings, a beneficiary of patronage provided by Thayer and both Watsons). J. S. Watson qualified as a doctor. None of the women obtained university degrees. Beach had no formal education apart from a brief period at a boarding school in Lausanne; she studied French literature for a year at the Sorbonne and the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris in 1917 at the age of thirty. The women's education mostly took the form of governesses at home in the early years followed by private boarding school: Guggenheim at Jacobi School in New York; Monroe at the Visitation Academy in Georgetown DC. There are variations. Augusta Gregory was taught solely at home; her mother disputed that "book learning as of any great benefit for girls" (Hill, 2011, p. 6). McCormick was taught at home by private tutors and did not attend finishing school. Weaver was educated at home by Miss Spooner from age 10-18; she worked as a voluntary social worker and attended courses at the London School of Sociology and Social Economics and the London School of Economics when she was aged 29. I have found no information on the education of the Cravens, Hildegarde Lasell Watson or Viscountess Rothermere other than the first two both studied music, Cravens to a high level with private tutors. (Watson's son described the family home as "full of music, literature, art, ideas and interesting people.")

### D. Literary interests

What the women did have was access to libraries and literature. Beach, Bryher, Cunard, Guggenheim, Lowell, Monroe, Watson and Weaver had access to family libraries and read literary works from an early age. Cunard's mother was friendly with the Irish novelist George Moore and Cunard spent much time with him in her childhood (Cunard, 1956). Weaver's father recited poetry to her and encouraged her to memorize it. Gregory discovered literature at the age of 15 at the time of her religious conversion and she began to



read widely. Beach studied literature as an adult. The men too had literary interests. Thayer and J. S. Watson had been editors of the student journal at Harvard. While he was still at high school in America, Quinn became interested in contemporary British literature and began collecting first editions.

Literary interests and writing in adulthood characterize the sample. Bryher, Cunard, Lowell, and Monroe were published poets and were involved in editorial work. Gregory was a dramatist, collector of Irish folklore and co-founder and co-dramatist with Yeats at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin. Thayer and J. S. Watson were editors at *The Dial*, for which Thayer wrote literary criticism, and he wrote short stories while at Harvard. Guggenheim had worked as a volunteer for the Sunwise Turn Bookshop in Greenwich Village, where she encountered avant-garde writers. Lilian Rothermere's English translation of André Gide's *Le Prométhée mal enchaîné* was published by Chatto and Windus in 1919. Weaver became editor of, and contributor (under a pseudonym) to *The Egoist*. Quinn remained an avid book and literary manuscript collector. He acted as defence lawyer for *The Little Review* during its trial for obscenity for publishing episodes of Joyce's *Ulysses*. Beach's ambition of opening her own bookshop was triggered after discovering Adrienne Monnier's shop, a regular meeting place for writers. Little is known about Margaret Cravens who committed suicide at a young age, but her correspondence reveals that she was fluent in French and Italian. Shortly after she met Pound, she provided him with an annual allowance that was a substantial proportion of her own and made a huge difference to his lifestyle until her untimely death (Pound and Spoo, 1988). Hildegard Watson was a musician and actor but there is little evidence of involvement in literary pursuits beyond her patronage of Cummings (and a privately printed memoir, *The Edge of the Woods*, 1979).

#### E. An Unorthodox Lifestyle

Deviation from conventional marriage provides one index of unorthodoxy during this period. Among the set of women, Hildegard Lasell Watson (married from 1916 to her death in 1976) and Mary Lilian Harmsworth, Viscountess Rothermere (married from 1893 to her death in 1937) had enduring marriages. So too did Augusta Gregory (married from 1880 to the death of her husband in 1892) although she did have affairs with Wilfred Scawen Blunt in the 1880s and with John Quinn in 1912. Monroe never married and there is no evidence of any affairs. Cunard had numerous lovers, including writers and artists; she was also noted for her bohemian appearance and lifestyle. Guggenheim claimed to have slept with 1,000 men and had an affair with Samuel Beckett. She also had same-sex relations, including with Mary Reynolds (Dearborn, 2014). Beach, Bryher and Lowell were lesbians (as were H. D., Margaret Anderson and Jean Heap, co-editors of *The Little Review*). Monroe and Weaver never married. Bryher and H. D. had complex sexual inter-relationships with Pound, McAlmon and Kenneth MacPherson, a film maker, journalist, and novelist, Bryher marrying the last two men. Pound was at one time engaged to H. D. and had an affair with her lover, Frances Gregg. He married Dorothy Shakespear but had a long-term lover, Olga Rudge, by whom he had a child. Quinn was known as a womanizer and left bequests to two mistresses. There are other unusual relationships. The poet e. e. Cummings had an affair with Thayer's wife and had a child, whom Thayer adopted (and paid for the adoption) while continuing to provide financial support for Cummings and the couple (Sawyer-Lauçanno, 2006). Banking and business held no interest for J.S. Watson: a friend commented that he was "quietly rebelling against his life and environment" (quoted by Joost, 1967, p. 119).

#### F. Involvement in Other Avant-Garde Art Forms

Cunard, Guggenheim, Quinn, and Thayer all collected contemporary art. Thayer assembled a large collection of modern art, over 800 artworks, which were left to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Guggenheim set up the *Art of this Century* gallery in New York and became a patron of Jackson Pollock and the Abstract Impressionists. Cunard collected African art; she was also involved in the French jazz music scene. Bryher and James Sibley Watson became involved in film making. Bryher financed Macpherson's film activities, co-founding with him and Doolittle his company Pool Productions in 1927 producing and appearing along with H. D. in the film *Borderlands*, and founding the magazine, *Close Up: An International Magazine Devoted to Film Art*. Watson became active in making experimental short films and directed *The Fall of the House of Usher* in 1928 (in which Hildegard Watson appeared).

#### G. Radical Political Involvements

Cunard, Quinn, Pound, Thayer and Weaver were active in radical politics. Beach was attracted to feminism and women's suffrage. Although not directly involved with a political party, Gregory's collection of native Irish folklore was unusual for someone of her social class and (Protestant) religion; her work for the emerging Irish Literary Theatre and the Abbey Theatre in Dublin was courageous as well as unconventional. Her involvement necessarily had political implications during the struggle for Irish independence. Cunard publicly opposed racism, producing a pamphlet *Black Man and White Ladyship* in 1931 and editing a large collection of poems, fiction and non-fiction by African American writers, *Negro Anthology* (1934), for which Pound wrote a preface. She also published attacks on the rise of Fascism in Italy and Spain, and during World War II worked in London for the French resistance. Quinn supported the

Paterson silk mill workers strike by helping organize a pageant in Madison Square Garden in New York on June 7, 1913, in aid of the strikers. Thayer was a socialist and a close friend and supporter of Randolph Bourne, an influential figure on the American left and a contributor to *The Dial*. Monroe, like Bourne, opposed World War I, and *Poetry* published protest poems; Lowell, too, wrote anti-war poetry. Weaver's employment as a teacher and social worker in London was also unconventional for her class, she felt guilty about living on unearned income. She joined the British Communist Party in 1938. The most notorious involvement was Pound's espousal of fascism that culminated in his broadcasts from Mussolini's Italy during World War II that led to his arrest for treason and commitment to psychiatric hospital in America for thirteen years.

#### H. Exposure to Modernism

Whereas patterns of personal characteristics might predispose individuals toward patronage of early modernist writers, what is less evident is why these particular writers should be subsidized. The early modernists promised what was new and this might have drawn in potential patrons. The writers themselves considered that what they were aiming for was highly significant. This is evident in the strong claims they made in reviews of the work of their contemporaries. For example, Eliot (1923/1975) pronounced that Joyce's *Ulysses* in *The Dial* represented "a step toward making the modern world possible for art". He introduced his review with the assertion, "I hold this book to be the most important expression which the present age has found". What potential patrons needed was at least exposure to this new writing. We can trace this through the connections identified in the selection of the sample, notably the contributions of Ezra Pound. He did not invent literary modernism even though Imagism is credited as playing a seminal role. He had been unofficially engaged to Hilda Doolittle while at the University of Pennsylvania, where he also met the poet William Carlos Williams. Soon after arriving in London in 1908, he made contact with a group of young poets led by F. S. Flint and T. E. Hulme who met regularly at the city's La Tour Eiffel restaurant. The group's discussions of what poetry ought to be set the stage for Imagism. Pound soon became active in promoting these poets along with Aldington and H. D. in *Poetry* magazine and then in the anthology, *Des Imagistes*. Amy Lowell was attracted to this work when she arrived in London, and she would fund the successor anthologies. Pound also sought out the literary salons, where he encountered Yeats in 1914. He learnt from Yeats about Joyce, who was then living in Trieste, and wrote to him, offering to place his work in the magazines for which he acted; he included a poem by Joyce in the Imagist anthology. Beach encountered avant-garde writers at Adrienne Monnier's *La Maison des Amis des Livres*. Quinn and Yeats were instrumental in persuading Thayer, who had recently, along with J. S. Watson, become owners of *The Dial*, to employ Pound as a correspondent with the aim of bringing in new writers; Pound was paid 750 dollars per annum for this. Similarly, we can trace links to the remaining patrons in our sample. Patrons knew the writers; sometimes they were the writers. They knew the editors of the little magazines, contributed to them, and helped to edit them, promoting one another's career by doing so. They were convinced of the wider significance of their work for the future of literature and were dismissive of the work that had gone on before.

#### I. The Little Magazines

*The Dial*, *The Little Review*, *Poetry* and *The Egoist* depended upon financial support from the individuals in this sample. Not all magazines paid their contributors, nevertheless being published was crucial for writers' success and, for many writers, these outlets offered their only opportunity. Furthermore, many of the poets of this period, including Aldington, H. D., Eliot, and Pound, obtained employment in editorial roles in magazines. The magazines themselves required subsidies because they were never financially viable otherwise. *The Dial* was a long-established journal, but it was nearly bankrupt when it was taken over by Thayer and Watson. It never sold more than 2,000 copies under their stewardship and made a cumulative deficit of 220,000 dollars, which the two owners paid personally. As soon as they ceased to own the magazine, it closed down. Margaret Anderson started *The Little Review* in Chicago in 1914 without any money behind her and its circulation was always small. Quinn agreed to support it for two years, paying Pound \$750 a year – \$300 for his editorial duties and \$450 to pay contributors (Hutton, 2019, p. 35). This enabled the magazine to pay at least some of its contributors. He provided legal advice and represented *The Little Review* during the first obscenity trial of *Ulysses* in New York. Soon after Anderson relinquished editorship of the magazine, it ceased publication. For a while Quinn also paid Eliot's salary as an assistant editor of *the Egoist* at one pound per week. Patrons encouraged others to make financial contributions, for instance, Quinn secured a total of £1200 from three New York individuals for *The Little Review*. *The Egoist* lost money and relied on Weaver's subsidies for its survival. She became preoccupied with publishing Joyce's work and when she was unable to do this in the journal for legal reasons, she wound it up. It had only 400 subscribers at the end. Harriet Monroe edited *Poetry* from 1912 to her death in 1936. She launched it with five thousand dollars awarded in settlement of a court case, together with a commitment to regular modest sponsorship that she elicited from one hundred Chicago business leaders. Initially she took no stipend and after that only a modest one. Viscountess Rothermere underwrote the printing costs of T.S.

Eliot's journal, *The Criterion*, from its first issue in 1922 (which included Eliot's *The Waste Land*) until 1926.

Patrons also underwrote small publishing houses. Bryher founded the Contact Press set up by McAlmon and William Carlos Williams, which published Bryher, Ford Madox Ford, H. D., Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein, and Williams. Cunard founded and funded The Hours Press, which published Aldington, Samuel Beckett, and Pound. Weaver set up the Egoist Press, which published Eliot, Joyce, H. D., and Marianne Moore. Beach and Monnier published Joyce's *Ulysses*.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The method adopted here identified fifteen individuals who provided financial support to modernist, English-language writers in the early years of the twentieth century. Our investigation suggests that the writers can be construed as a social network, with many interpersonal interconnections among them. Patronage was defined in terms of individuals who introduced financial resources into the network, money that was not derived from sales or purchase of products but was offered as support to facilitate ongoing writing without being contingent on publication of specific works. A key finding is that private patronage played a significant role during this period; there was little evidence of commercial or state patronage. There was minimal support from the state or other institutions, outside of one small state award to Joyce (obtained with support from Cunard and Pound), from mass-circulation magazines or from established publishing houses. No evidence was found of support from aristocrats or wealthy individuals who stood outside the network of writers. Quinn was a collector of art objects including manuscripts, but his patronage went beyond this and included support for less established writers and precarious magazines.

There was considerable variation among the benefactors. Surplus economical capital would be assumed to be a prerequisite for private patronage, but while the sample includes individuals with very considerable wealth, some patrons had little disposable money. Small-scale literary magazines were crucial in advancing modernist writing. This provided one means for less affluent patrons such as Monroe and Weaver, as well as wealthier individuals, such as Bryher, Cunard, Quinn, and Thayer, to offer patronage to writers, whether as payment for contributions, providing editorial roles, or presenting opportunities to be published and be eligible for future patronage. The magazines provided a route for Pound to play an "impresario" role in attracting patronage for the benefit of fellow writers, directly and indirectly, for example making use of his editorial roles to promote individuals.

The biographies of the sample of patrons were searched for information on personal financial resources, level of education, interest in literature that preceded their involvement with modernism, participation in the literary field, interest in other contemporary art forms, bohemian lifestyle, and radical political interests. Although not all benefactors were represented on all these criteria, variations of this pattern characterized the sample. This implies that a combination of particular factors predisposed individuals to act as patrons of modern writing during the period under investigation.

One of these factors is an unorthodox lifestyle, decisions about one's life that deviate from what would be expected of individuals occupying a certain standing in society. Sons of successful businessmen defied parental expectations and did not follow their father into business as was expected: Thayer and Watson. Daughters of respectable families did not marry or enter "appropriate" forms of employment. If one adds that all the patrons were exposed to literature and poetry at an early age and had interests in literature, participation in the literary field would prove attractive.

The preponderance of women is instructive in this respect. This finding is consistent with long-standing evidence that women have achieved greater critical success as artists in literature than in the visual arts or classical music. This trend might reflect problems faced by women in acquiring training and practice opportunities in forms other than literature – they require training in conservatories and studios, rather than a "room of one's own", to quote Virginia Woolf on writing. Women who defied sexual and other conventions (escaping the domestic duties and social conventions of marriage, having money of their own, lacking responsibilities for children) might have had the social capital to withstand such hostility and to compete with men.

It is noteworthy, as reported in the Findings section, that the women in the sample tended to lead unconventional lives in terms of their social class, economic position, and social relationships. The prominence of lesbians in modernism as patrons, editors and writers has attracted considerable discussion (Benstock, 1986; Medd, 2012; Souhami, 2020). Beach, Bryher, Lowell were lesbian, as were H. D. and Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap, the editors of *The Little Review*. Guggenheim was notoriously promiscuous and had relationships with women as well as with men. Medd (2012) argues that Quinn's relationship with Anderson and Heap was influenced by his hostility to lesbianism and, more generally, that Quinn and Pound were misogynous in their attitude to women patrons and editors.

Another feature of the sample is the duration of benefactor-beneficiary relationships, which lasted for



years in several cases: Weaver made frequent, generous payments to Joyce from 1917 until his death in 1939 and thereafter to his widow until at least 1941 (Lidderdale and Nicholson, 1970). In 1923 she gave him a capital gift of £12,000, raising the total capital she donated to him to £20,000, yielding £850 a year after taxes (Birmingham, 2014: 287). Thayer supported Cummings from 1916 until 1924, when he paid legal fees for the poet's adoption of Nancy Thayer – Thayer retired from public life following his nervous breakdown in 1926. The Watsons supported the poet financially from at least 1924 to 1948. Guggenheim provided stipends for Djuna Barnes for most of the writer's life from the 1920s to the 1970s. Yeats first met Gregory in 1886 and he visited her home at Coole Park the following year. Thereafter, she allowed him to use the house as a place to write every summer for many years and they were in close contact until her death in 1932. Bryher provided support for H. D. from when they first met in 1918 until the latter's death in 1961.

Nevertheless, assistance was often temporary and targeted at specific needs; it might be for a specific project, for example, Rothermere's financial support for the *Criterion*, although she was critical of much of the material it included. More specifically, when Mary Colum, a literary critic, friend of Joyce and wife of Padraic Colum, who had been an editor at *The Dial*, approached Thayer to plead for financial support to enable Joyce to pay outstanding legal fees; Thayer promptly donated 700 dollars and J. S. Watson a further 300 dollars (Colum, 1947). Gregory made a financial contribution towards Joyce's fare when he left Dublin for Paris in 1902.

A third feature is that relationships can be fraught. In February 1918, Edith McCormick deposited 12,000 francs to Joyce's credit and a monthly allowance of 1,000 francs, which made a significant addition to his income, but she unilaterally withdrew the funds in October the following year after he rejected her offer to pay for his psychoanalysis with Jung. Guggenheim's support led to resentment among her beneficiaries. She was not as rich as many assumed because of their perception of the overall wealth of the Guggenheim family. Overestimating how much money she had at her disposal, beneficiaries considered her gifts and loans to be miserly, however regular they were and how dependent they were upon them. Djuna Barnes did feel resentment, as two episodes demonstrate. Helen Fleischman observed Barnes typing in her underwear and noticing the poor condition of this garment, persuaded Guggenheim to give her some lingerie. But rather than donate something new, Guggenheim passed on her "third-best" cast-offs, to Barnes's indignation (Guggenheim, 2005, p. 28). When Guggenheim hosted Barnes at Hayford Hall in Devon (and paid Barnes's fare from America to get there) the writer complained that she was only allocated a bedroom that no one else wanted (Field, 1983, p. 198). These were small events but lingered in the memory: Guggenheim describes the first incident in her autobiography, written in 1946. Guggenheim wrote in a letter in April 1940, "I think Djuna is the most ungrateful & spoilt person I have ever helped...She hates me at bottom because I help her" (Herring, 1995, p. 201). When Yeats repaid an overdue loan of £500 (a sizeable sum in 1913) to Augusta Gregory, she worried that the payment would "cloud our friendship or your thoughts of me – remember that no one knows or will ever know anything of the matter – & I would far rather keep that friendship & affection that have meant so much to me" (Hill, 2011: 404). The patron-friend balance in their relationship was under threat and she worried that if he became less financially dependent on her, their friendship would become less important to him.

How is motivation to be understood? A common assumption in the literature on patronage is that benefactors are motivated by the search for prestige or by social exclusiveness, specifically the creation and maintenance of barriers against infiltration by less valued groups. Pound regarded the commercial market as the enemy of innovation in art and argued that the elite can gain distinction from patronage if the writers, they support prove critically successful (Wolfe, 1991). He further argued that the reward for patrons of innovative work would be that they could regard themselves as co-creators of the work and, in the long term, be remembered for this by posterity. Reference to prestige raises questions. Prestige in whose eyes? Historical examples refer to social peers who are not themselves artists or musicians as opposed to the views of the circle of beneficiaries. Furthermore, prestige depends on the artistic success of beneficiaries, and patrons are taking risks with investing in avant-garde authors of challenging works. The explanation pays too little attention to embeddedness of patrons in the social network of writers.

From the start, modernism was self-consciously regarded by its adherents as a campaign, as a movement in opposition to the literary establishment. Manifestos were produced and editorials written, the little magazines sprang up, meetings were held in hotels, cafes, bars, bookshops, and literary salons. We can understand social exclusiveness in terms of inter-group dynamics. As would be predicted in theories of inter-group behavior (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) social distance is maintained between the in-group and out-groups. Modernists sought to maintain distance between the movement and "public taste", which was denigrated. Patronage by Quinn and others enabled *The Little Review* to survive on modest sales. Its motto was "making no compromise with the public taste." *The Dial* too appealed to a like-minded audience. Thayer wrote in the journal upon becoming editor in 1919: "we can assure all concerned that our choice of materials will be independent of the conventional considerations" (Joost, 1967, p. 243). Joost (1967, p. 245) argued that the two journals were in a contest "to see who published which promising – or, to the

unsympathetic observer, notorious – author or artist first... Becoming a front runner depended on the artist's ability and willingness to shock and often as not affront the larger public". Works that appealed to a mass audience or were published in large-circulation magazines were regarded as suspect. Pound unashamedly used his editorial positions in journals to promote fellow modernists (Pound, 1917). Golding (2005) argues that the two magazines were not as competitive as often assumed and were effectively a collective project: each having its meaning in relation to the other. *The Dial* and *The Little Review* came together when the existence of Anderson's magazine was threatened after the setback of losing the *Ulysses* court case.

From this perspective, the modernist movement offered a source of social identity, particularly where members were more than followers but were active participants through patronage, editorial work in publishing, and writing. This does, however, warrant more systematic investigation. Moreover, this perspective is limited in that it has little to say about the various roles that are occupied in the group or on competition within the group, for example in the competition between Lowell and Pound for control of Imagism or between the literary magazines.

Another way to approach the question of the motivation of benefactors is to assume that the patron and beneficiary have entered into a "gift relationship," and ask what it is about potential patrons that might make such a relationship rewarding for them. That is, what can the artist offer that is perceived by the potential benefactor to be of sufficient value to warrant the loss of economic capital entailed? In the case of the sample of patrons studied here, it is understandable that original contemporary writing would be of value to these patrons, in terms of the pattern of their backgrounds and other interests identified above. Their interest in, and support for the arts existed prior to patronage of this set of writers. The duration of financial support can also be adduced as evidence. Weaver supported Joyce for many years without ever meeting him and despite her difficulties in understanding his work, particularly *Finnegans Wake*, writing to him that "I do not care much for...the darkness and the unintelligibility of your deliberately-entangled language system" (Lidderdale & Nicholson, p. 269). On his part, Joyce took care to keep her informed of his progress and ignorant of his excessive expenditure on socializing, fearful of losing her patronage. Yet, individuals will construe the exchange differently: Weaver's rewards may be quite different from those of Guggenheim or Quinn, who had more than one beneficiary and were more active in the network. The findings of this study suggest that a successful explanation of the motives underlying patronage during this period will need to consider the social inter-relationships involving benefactors and beneficiaries in addition to the different kinds of gift they anticipate.

#### A. Limitations of the Study

Alternative approaches can be taken to the study of patronage within a given period. At a structural level, one can examine the role of patron in the context of the art world of the time, the network of writers and "support personnel," in Becker's (1982) terminology. What are the conventions governing patronage, the "rules of the game"? What forms of patronage are available? How do they vary with the structure of the publishing economy, whether the conglomerates producing books and magazines for a mass audience or the small presses with their short runs of magazines, poetry books and pamphlets for a minority readership? This study focuses on the level of actors (Cluley, 2012), to investigate who the patrons were, what resources, qualities, or "capital" they brought to the role and how their motives might be understood. This is worthy of investigation even if it provides only a partial picture of patronage.

The methodology adopted in this study raises the issue of sampling, finding a means of identifying patrons of the period in a systematic way, since patronage is not an explicitly defined or registered occupation like publisher or bookseller. A search of biographical documents has limitations, notably how to be confident that the search is robust, representative, and exhaustive, and how to determine when sampling should cease. One can never know if it is exhaustive because fresh evidence can always become available. In defense of the methodology of this study, the individuals who feature in this sample are those that figure in historical accounts of the period and no patron of significance seems to have been omitted. An additional limitation is that there is no comparison between the sample and wealthy individuals who did not act as patrons.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis found that private patronage was a significant factor in the development of literary modernism as opposed to state or commercial patronage. Benefactors were embedded in the literary field, with many having close personal relationships with their beneficiaries, and they were frequently participants in the field over and above their financial contributions, whether as writers, critics, or magazine editors. This contrasts with forms of patronage where benefactors stand outside the artistic community, often relying on intermediaries to make contact with artists and to recommend or negotiate the purchase of artworks, whether from artists, galleries or at auctions. There were no patrons, however wealthy, who had little direct involvement in the field. A number of patrons were extremely wealthy through family

inheritance whereas others with less economic capital were nevertheless able to support writers through their financial support of literary magazines. This is distinct from the motivations of individuals whose donations lead to their names being associated with orchestras, concert halls, art galleries, and so on, or individuals whose name appears in a dedication to them in a book's introduction, a common source of literary patronage in the eighteenth century (Korshin, 1974). A pattern of personal experiences is shared by the patrons in the sample, and it would be valuable to investigate whether this is true of literary patrons in other periods or locations. The embeddedness of patrons in the literary field they support needs to be taken into account when attempting to explain individual motives for patronage. It suggests that they see themselves as participants in a shared enterprise, and this has implications for their social identity and for the sources of prestige that they value.

## REFERENCES

- Becker, H. S. (1982). *Art worlds*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Benstock, S. (1986). *Women of the left bank. Paris 1900–1940*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Birmingham, K. (2014). *The most dangerous book: The battle for James Joyce's Ulysses*. London: Head of Zeus.
- Bourdieu, P. (1983). The field of cultural production. *Poetics* 12: 311–356. doi: 10.1016/0304-422X(83)90012-8.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986) *The rules of art*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Carr, H. (2009). *Verse Revolutionaries: Ezra Pound, H.D. and the Imagists*. London: Jonathan Cape.
- Cluley, R. (2012). Art words and art worlds: The methodological importance of language use in Howard S. Becker's sociology of art and cultural production. *Cultural Sociology*, 6(2), 202–216. doi: 10.1177/1749975512440223.
- Colum, M. (1947). *Life and the dream*. London: Macmillan.
- Cunard, N. (1956). *GM. Memories of George Moore*. London: Rupert-Hart Davis.
- Dearborn, M. V. (2014). *Peggy Guggenheim. Mistress of Modernism*. London: Virago.
- DeNora, T. (1995). *Beethoven and the construction of genius: Musical politics in Vienna, 1792–1803*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- DiMaggio, P. J. (1986). Cultural entrepreneurship in nineteenth-century Boston. In: DiMaggio, P.J. (ed.) *Nonprofit enterprise in the arts: Studies in mission and control*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 181–201.
- Elias, N. (1993). *Mozart: Portrait of a genius*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Eliot, T. S. (1923/1975). Ulysses, order, and myth, *The Dial*, November 1923, reproduced in Kermode, F. (ed.) *Selected prose of T. S. Eliot*. London: Harcourt.
- Eliot, T. S. (1965). *To Criticize the Critic*. New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux.
- Ellman, R. (1951). *James Joyce*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Field, A. (1983). *The formidable Miss Barnes. A Biography of Djuna Barnes*. London: Martin Secker & Warburg.
- Gissing, G. (1891/2016). *New Grub Street*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Golding, A. (2005) *The Dial*, The Little Review, and the dialogics of modernism. *American Periodicals. A Journal of History Criticism and Bibliography*, 15(1), 42–55. doi: 10.1353/amp.2005.0007.
- Guggenheim, P. (1946/2005). *Out of this century: Confessions of an art addict*. London: André Deutsch.
- Herring, P. F. (1995). *Djuna Barnes. The life and work of Djuna Barnes*. London: Penguin.
- Hill, J. (2011). *Lady Gregory: An Irish life*. Cork, Ireland: The Collins Press.
- Hogan, E. (2021). *Daisy chains*. *London Review of Books*, 20<sup>th</sup> May, p. 37–41.
- Hutton C. (2019). *Serial encounters: Ulysses and the Little Review*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jaffe, A. (2010). Publication, patronage, censorship: Literary production and the fortunes of modernist value. In P. Brooker, A. Gasiorsek, D. Longworth, & A. Thacker, (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Modernisms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 178–198.
- Jones, P. (ed.) (1972). *Imagist poetry*. London: Penguin.
- Joost, N. (1967). *The Dial 1912–1920. Years of transition*. Barre, MA: Barre Publications.
- Korshin, P. J. (1974). Types of eighteenth-century literary patronage. *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 7(4), p. 453–473. doi: 10.2307/3031599.
- Lévy-Strauss, C. (1969). *The elementary structures of kinship*. Translated by James Harle Bell, edited by Rodney Needham. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Lidderdale, J., & Nicholson, M. (1970). *Dear Miss Weaver. Harriet Shaw Weaver 1876–1961*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Mauss, M. (2002). *The Gift: The form and reason for exchange in archaic societies*. London: Routledge.
- McSherry, S. (2017). "To fulfill a private obligation." Marianne Moore, her patrons, and the social obligation of the gift. *NANO: New American Notes Online*. <http://nanocrit.com/issues/issue11/To-fulfill-a-private-obligation-Marianne-Moore-Her-Patrons-and-the-Social-Obligation-of-the-Gift>. Accessed 23 February 2022.
- Medd, J. (2012). *Lesbian scandal and the culture of modernism*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Paige, D. D. (ed.). 1950. *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Pound, E. (1917). Editorial. *The Little Review* 4(1), 3–6.
- Pound, E. (1960). The Renaissance. In T. S. Eliot (Ed.), *Literary essays of Ezra Pound*. London: Faber and Faber, pp. 214–226. Originally published in *Poetry*, 1914.
- Pound O., & Spoo, R. (eds.) (1988). *Ezra Pound and Margaret Cravens: A tragic friendship 1910–1912*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Sawyer-Lauçanno, C. (2006). *E. E. Cummings. A biography*. London: Methuen.
- Schwartz, B. (1967). The social psychology of the gift. *American Journal of Sociology*, 73(1), 1–11. doi: 10.1086/224432.
- Souhami, D. (2020). *No modernism without lesbians*. London: Head of Zeus.
- Stock, N. (1974). *The life of Ezra Pound*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin.
- Stohs, J. H. (2009). Intrinsic motivation and sustained art activity among male fine and applied artists. *Creativity Research Journal*, 5(3), 245–252. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10400412909534438>.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of inter-group conflict. In W. G. Austin, & S. Worchel (eds.) *The psychology of intergroup relations*. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole, pp. 33–47.
- Van den Braber, H. (2017). Reciprocal interactions and complex negotiations: three nineteenth-century models of patronage. *European Journal of English Studies*, 21(1), 43–60. doi: 10.1080/13825577.2016.1274544.
- Wolfe, C. (1991). Ezra Pound and the politics of patronage. *American Literature*, 63(1), 26–42. doi: 10.2307/2926560.