



## WHERE CUCKOOS NEST: JAZZ AND THE NIGHT LIGHT, TWO RISQUÉ ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PERIODICALS IN INTERWAR PARIS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE FRENCH ENTERTAINMENT PRESS

*Dónde anidan los cucos: Jazz y The Night Light, dos revistas en inglés de contenido atrevido en el París de entreguerras y sus relaciones con la prensa de entretenimiento francesa*

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**ABSTRACT** *The aim of this article is to throw light on the production, financing, distribution, circulation and, to a lesser extent, reception of Jazz and the Night Light, two festive English-language periodicals in interwar Paris, in order to better understand their interactions with the French entertainment press of the time. However, as we will see, both publications should also be understood within the context of the Anglo-American tourism industry that was in full bloom in the Paris of the 1920s, and within the American indigenous cultural context of the time, which involved a liberal protest against Christian conservatism, including Prohibition, censorship, and some sexual restrictions. From a methodological perspective on periodical studies, this case study speaks once more for the fertility of material approaches to periodicals. Production, financing, distribution, circulation and reception data, even when they are partial, are gold mines to refine our understanding of broader cultural phenomena.*

**KEYWORDS** English-language periodicals; interwar Paris; Jazz (1924-1927); Night Light (1927); French entertainment press.

**RESUMEN** El objetivo de este artículo es arrojar luz sobre la producción, financiación, distribución, circulación y, en menor medida, la recepción de Jazz y The Night Light, dos revistas en inglés de contenido festivo en el París de entreguerras, para comprender mejor sus interacciones con la prensa de entretenimiento francesa de la época. Sin embargo, como veremos, ambas publicaciones también deben entenderse dentro del contexto de la industria del turismo angloamericana que florecía en el París de la década de 1920, así como dentro del contexto cultural estadounidense de la época, que involucraba una protesta liberal contra el conservadurismo cristiano, que incluía la Ley Seca, la censura y algunas restricciones sexuales. Desde una perspectiva metodológica de los estudios de revistas, este estudio de caso vuelve a subrayar la fertilidad de los enfoques materiales en el análisis de publicaciones periódicas. Los datos sobre producción, financiación, distribución, circulación y recepción, incluso cuando son parciales, son minas de oro para refinar nuestra comprensión de fenómenos culturales más amplios.

**PALABRAS CLAVE** Periódicos en lengua inglesa; París de entreguerras; Jazz (1924-1927); Night Light (1927); Prensa de entretenimiento francesa

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# 1. Introduction and Methodology: ‘other’ transnational English-language periodicals in interwar Paris

Ever since Hugh Ford’s 1975 pioneering work on American and British writers, printers and publishers in Paris between 1920 and 1939, the English-language periodical scene in interwar Paris has been associated with famous newspaper titles, such as the Paris editions of the *New York Herald Tribune* and *Chicago Tribune*, and even more so with now celebrated exilic avant-garde magazines such as *Gargoyle*, *transatlantic review*, *This Quarter*, *transition*, and *Tambour*. However, as historians Nicole Fouché and Nancy Green have underlined more recently, the American community in interwar Paris was not limited to the influential circles of intellectuals, writers, and artists who became known as the “Lost Generation”. Many other professions and occupations were represented, other experiences were lived, as lawyers, bankers, businessmen and businesswomen, aristocrats, students, and tourists, often residing on the Right Bank, produced and consumed culture that did not exactly coincide with the expectations and productions of the better-known intellectual groups who famously peopled the Left Bank.

Other historians have worked towards opening up our perspectives on the cultural input of the American exiles in interwar Paris. Ronald Weber has broadened our perception of the cultural surface covered by the “Lost Generation” by studying the parallel journalistic careers many of its members pursued both in France and back home. Starting from the idea that “Americans who participated in the book world of Paris were much more diverse than the Bohemian circle of writers who lived on the Left Bank” (Maack, 2005: 399), Mary Niles Maack has thrown light on the work of American women at the American Library of Paris. While refining our knowledge of the cultural scene of the time, these studies have also tended to work towards a better inclusion of some of its more neglected contributors, such as women or people dealing in more popular or middlebrow forms of culture. In many cases, as shown by Weber and others, they have also allowed to draw a more complete, complex portrait of some of the better-known actors of this history, revealing how they worked across the social spectrum of the cultural industry, and not with its more socially or culturally distinctive productions only.

However, little to no attention has been paid to the varied, small periodicals aimed at the socially diverse Anglo-American population in Paris, ranging from American and British residents, to the soldiers of the American Army Expeditionary Force in France, and the numerous Anglo-American tourists visiting Paris between the two wars – a large group<sup>1</sup> studied in particular by Harvey Levenstein and by Joanne Vajda in their respective histories

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1. According to Nancy L. Green in *The Other Americans in Paris: Businessmen, Countesses, Wayward Youth, 1880-1941*, there were 40,000 American residents in Paris at the end of the 1920s (p. 18), and 300,000 American tourists visited Paris yearly in the 1920s, against 100,000 in 1906 (p. 17).

of American tourism in Paris. These ‘other’ English-language magazines published in interwar Paris, mostly in the 1910s and 1920s, have gathered much less critical attention than their avant-garde counterparts. But, albeit small or very small, these publications were fairly numerous and varied, which can be accounted for by the fact that “ordinary”, non-intellectual middle-class Britons and Americans in Paris formed a sizeable group of relatively wealthy people mostly willing to enjoy the pleasures of “Gay Paree” at a time when, in Western Europe as in the U.S., the entertainment and the print industries were still booming.

Let’s mention a few of these newspapers and magazines. The *Franco-American Eagle*, which ran between 1917 and 1918, addressed American soldiers fighting in France, offering them a selection of news from home, as well as mouthwatering descriptions of the good time to be had in bars, restaurants, theaters, movie theaters, cabarets, and music halls, while on leave in “Gay Paree”. So did, in 1918 and 1919, *Stars and Stripes*, the official newspaper of the American Army Expeditionary Force, edited by Harold Ross – who became in 1925 the editor of the *New Yorker*. Some general interest magazines were apparently intended for the American colony in Paris, such as *Paris Review*, “The Illustrated American Magazine in France”, between 1919 and 1922, the *Cosmopolitan Leader*, in 1924 and 1925 at least, and *Paris Comet*, an “Anglo-American Magazine”, from 1927 to 1930. Other magazines more specifically addressed the Anglo-American tourists in Paris. Two subgroups can be distinguished: the travel magazines, such as the *Anglo-American Travel Review* (in 1926 at least), and the *American Tourist Review* (in 1928 at least) gave information on places of cultural interest in Paris, France, and the rest of Europe, while risqué, nightlife-related periodicals, such as *Jazz*, between 1924 and 1927, and the *Night Light*, in 1927, and maybe 1928, surfed on the long-time identification of Paris as a “gay” city.

The aim of this article is to throw light on the production, financing, distribution, circulation and, to a lesser extent, reception of *Jazz* and the *Night Light*, in order to better understand their interactions with the French cultural context in which they were born, and more specifically the French periodicals with which they interacted. How exactly did the two magazines use a preexisting, indigenous cultural and editorial infrastructure in order to develop? Scrutinizing the materiality of these interactions should allow us to refine our understanding of their relationship with the French entertainment press of the time, in particular the French comic press represented by myriads of light, slightly risqué, comic magazines such as *La Vie parisienne*, *Le Rire*, and *Le Sourire*, and the music-hall press embodied, among other examples, by *Paris Music Hall*. However, as we will see, it would be a mistake to limit our understanding of *Jazz* and the *Night Light* to their relationship with the French entertainment press. Both publications should also be understood within the context of the Anglo-American tourism industry that was in full bloom in the Paris of the 1920s. They should also be apprehended within the American indigenous cultural context of the time, which involved a liberal reaction against Christian conservatism, including Prohibition, censorship, and some sexual restrictions<sup>2</sup>. In

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2. Some elements in this introduction also appear in Céline Mansati, “Anglo-American Cultural Outsiders in World War I and Interwar Paris: Building Other Periodical Communities”, *Journal of European Periodical Studies*, 10.1, to be published.

other words, *Jazz* and *The Night Light* should be understood as products of both French and American culture, the result of transnational forces which also produced avant-garde exilic magazines such as *Gargoyle*, *transatlantic review*, *This Quarter*, *transition*, and *Tambour*.

## 2. Introducing *Jazz* (1924-1927) and the *Night Light* (1927-1928?): production, financing, distribution, and circulation

Targeted at Anglo-American tourists – a theater review in the first issue addressed “American and English readers, welcome guests in Paris” (*Jazz*, vol. 1, n°1, 1 April 1924, 12) –, *Jazz* was published in Paris between April 1924 and February 1927. It was a small bimonthly, and then monthly, twenty-page publication, with about forty issues, all in black and white. Counterintuitively, *Jazz* did not talk about jazz, but rather celebrated the pleasures of the “Jazz Age.” The *Night Light*, a monthly, started in July 1927, and was subtitled “a worldly magazine” – which could be understood in both senses of the word, as a sophisticated magazine, and, maybe in opposition to the more literary publications of the “Lost Generation”, as a periodical concerned with ordinary life and physical pleasures. Beginning its life five months after *Jazz* folded, it was probably meant to fill the gap left by its sister magazine. If the *Night Light*’s birthdate is clear, the date of its final issue raises questions. Library catalogs, including Worldcat, do not provide any information. The French National Library, the only library in the world to own the *Night Light*, has only six issues, the last one dated December 1927. However, I have found subscription forms for the *Night Light* throughout the 15 October 1928 issue of the French music hall magazine *Paris Music Hall*.

*Jazz* and the *Night Light* had similar agendas, and a few contributors in common (John Harkaway, Dennis O’Meagher, Gregory F. Stevens), although most contributions were anonymous or protected by pseudonyms, making overlaps hard to identify. Both magazines belonged to a long lineage of English-language periodicals published in Paris which “straddled the cultural and entertainment fields” (Cooper-Richet, 2011: 589), to use Diana Cooper-Richet’s description of a group of periodicals aimed at the British community in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Paris<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, the contents of the two magazines, specifically jokes and short fiction, suggested that *Jazz* and the *Night Light* were primarily targeting white, heterosexual, middle-class, Anglo-American male tourists.

What do we find in the pages of *Jazz* and the *Night Light*? Unlike travel magazines, such as the *Anglo-American Travel Review* and the *American Tourist Review*, which classically listed places of cultural interest, both magazines focused on amusements, giving advice about where to go out in Paris, for food, drinks, and shows, and running ads for restaurants, bars, and cabarets.

3. My translation from the French: “à la frontière du culturel et de l’*entertainment*”.

Hotels were also advertised, confirming the identity of the main intended readership – tourists. Both magazines featured theater, music-hall and movie show reviews, with, for example, a two-page review for the Paris-New York revue at the Casino de Paris in the July 1927 issue of the *Night Light* (n°1, 16-17), or a recommendation for the New York-Montmartre revue at the Moulin Rouge in the “What To See in Paris” column of an April 1925 issue of *Jazz* (vol. 2, n°14, 15 April 1925, 1). Light short fiction was published in both magazines, with titles such as “Nini of the Halles” (*Jazz*, vol. 1, n°4, 15 May 1924, 3), “He Saw the Nude” (*Jazz*, vol. 1, n°5, 1 June 1924, 3-4), “Confessions of a Bad Old Man” (*Jazz*, vol. 2, n°9, 1 February 1925, 8, 11), “Suzette, a Story of Subtle Revenge” (*Jazz*, vol. 2, n°10, 15 February 1925, 9, 11), “The Wicked Uncle” (*Jazz*, vol. 3, n°1, 15 January 1926, 5, 8, 10-11), “Grounds for Divorce” (*Night Light*, n°3, September 1927, 6-9), “A Transaction in Love” (*Night Light*, n°4, October 1927, 8-9), and “The Lady in the Fur Coat” (*Night Light*, n°6, December 1927, 14-15, 18-19, 27).

Humor columns (“Here and There,” “Bare Facts and Bare Backs,” “Did You Get This One?,” “Between Ourselves” in *Jazz*; “Topical Tales” and “Interval Anecdotes” in the *Night Light*) included jokes and sometimes limericks, such as this bilingual limerick: “There was a young plumber of Blois/ Who plumbed a girl in the Bois/ Said she: ‘Stop your plumbing/ There’s somebody coming’/ Said he: ‘Ma chérie, c’est moi!’” (*Jazz*, vol. 3, n°1, 15 January 1926, 4). Both *Jazz* and the *Night Light* ended with a personal ads section, entitled “Petite Correspondance” in *Jazz* and “Between Ourselves” in the *Night Light*. While most ads were probably issued by “maisons de rendez-vous”<sup>4</sup> looking for new patrons, some ads may have been written by private individuals, such as this one, exceptionally written in French: “Couple with very good education is looking for couple of industrialists or very rich for outings and entertainment. The Gentleman could be used as a secretary.”<sup>5</sup> (*Jazz*, vol. 2, n°3, 1 November 1924, 11). In their closing pages, both magazines also printed ads for “maisons de rendez-vous” and for bookstores selling risqué books, photographs, and postcards. Both magazines displayed light drawings and pictures of scantily dressed music-hall stars, often photographed by Walery, a renown photographer of music-hall female performers.

What editorial information do we have on *Jazz* and the *Night Light*? Given the fact that both were very small publications, not much. We have very little information about their editorial teams: we do not know who edited the *Night Light*, and I found no relevant information on G. Fleuriot, credited either as the “gérant” (“manager”) or the publisher of the *Night Light*. As for *Jazz*, an Arthur de Grezan was credited as the director of the publication from 5 July 1924 on, but I was unable to identify him; it might just have been a pseudonym. An Arthur Phillips was credited as the chief editor of *Jazz* from 1 October 1924 on, but I found equally little information about him, except that he was the author of a guidebook to Paris entitled *The Gay City, Being a Guide to the Fun of the Fair in Paris*, published in 1923 or earlier. The information we have on the two magazines’ contributors is likewise disappointing. Photographs and drawings were

4. Unlike “maisons de tolérance,” “maisons de rendez-vous” were places where prostitutes worked but did not live.

5. My translation from the French: “Ménage très bonne éducation cherche ménage d’industriels ou très riche pour sorties et distractions. Le Monsieur pourrait servir de secrétaire.”

usually credited, but most texts were unsigned, or signed with initials or pseudonyms, or names that remain mysterious. No circulation data is available for either *Jazz* or the *Night Light*.

So what do we *do* know? First, we know that there was a sizable audience for these publications, however specialized they were, targeting as they did American middle-class male tourists. Thousands of English-speaking tourists visited Paris each day (especially in the Summer), and *Jazz* seems to have relied partially on the editorial structures linked to the English-language tourism industry: as I was mentioning, the chief editor of *Jazz* was the author of a guidebook to the gay life of Paris, and *Jazz's* main addresses, 41 rue de la Victoire and 28 rue Feydeau, were the two addresses used by Éditions First, whose main publication was an annual tourist brochure distributed in hotels and entitled *The Charm of Paris*.

Second, we know that the editors of *Jazz* and the *Night Light* probably had hopes for survival, if not for substantial profit. The advertising market for the leading Anglo-American periodicals in Paris, such as the Paris edition of the *New York Herald Tribune*, was seen as very profitable, as Basil Woon, an American writer and journalist, recalled in his memoirs:

we (...) see the *New York Herald* charging nearly as much for its advertising space as does *L'Intransigeant*, which has probably fifty times the *Herald's* circulation. We see the *Herald* getting twice as much advertising as *L'Intransigeant* and advertising of a quality out of comparison with that appearing in the French newspaper. (Woon, 1927: 300)

Smaller publications like *Jazz* or the *Night Light* probably hoped that there was money to be made, and they tried to sell advertising space. In January 1926, *Jazz* wrote in French, to potential announcers: “*Jazz* is entering its Third Year, he’s already a big boy, who walks by himself, moves forward and goes everywhere. He can bring you with him to his Rich English and American friends, loaded with Sterling Pounds and Dollars.”<sup>6</sup> (*Jazz*, vol. 3, n°1, 15 January 1926, 1). The will, or necessity, to convey this discourse is highlighted by its contrast with a contradictory impulse to reassure tourist readers, as in this ad for a French tourist agency, published in English: “Frequently visitors who come to Paris to enjoy themselves are skinned by sharpers, who, on pretext of showing them the capital, exploit them. The easiest way to avoid this is to address yourself to a reliable agency whose reputation is the best guarantee.” (*Jazz*, vol. 1, n°4, 15 May 1924, 11).

Third, we have information on the price and distribution channels of both *Jazz* and the *Night Light*. *Jazz* was sold in kiosks, by mail, as well as in bars, as we learn in a 1925 issue of the magazine (vol. 2, n°10, 15 February 1925, 8). Although *Jazz* was aimed at relatively wealthy Anglo-Americans, its price remained modest: it cost two francs in March 1926, less than fifteen cents. At four francs in August 1927 (or twenty-five cents, as mentioned on the cover of the

6. My translation from the French: “*Jazz* entre dans sa Troisième Année, c’est déjà un grand garçon, qui marche tout seul, va de l’avant, et pénètre partout. Il peut vous emmener avec lui chez ses Riches amis Anglais et Américains, bourrés de Livres sterlings et de Dollars.”

September issue), but with a color cover and seemingly better paper, the *Night Light* was slightly more expensive, but not more than small comic magazines back home, such as *Hot Dog*, edited in Ohio by Jack Dinsmore, which also cost twenty-five cents<sup>7</sup>. However, *Jazz*, and the *Night Light*, for that matter, were more expensive than *Le Sourire*, a French risqué magazine with which *Jazz* developed special connections, as we will see. In 1926, *Le Sourire* cost only one franc and fifty centimes, and was much more beautiful than *Jazz*, with its thirty pages (against twenty for *Jazz*), and its color illustrations.

### 3. Where cuckoos nest: using the cultural and editorial infrastructure of the French entertainment press

A specificity of both *Jazz* and the *Night Light* compared to other exilic magazines of the time is that they both established connections with the Parisian nightlife entertainment press. The little editorial information I managed to uncover about *Jazz* and the *Night Light*, combined with some elements related to the contents of these two periodicals, allowed me to understand that both the *Night Light* and *Jazz* partially inserted themselves, slipped themselves, into the production and distribution networks of the indigenous French press, just like cuckoos laying their eggs in other birds' nests. In other words, *Jazz* and the *Night Light* used some of the existing solid frameworks of the French comic press, in particular *Le Sourire*, and of the French music-hall press, in particular *Paris Music Hall*, in order to develop.

Both *Jazz* and the *Night Light* had close links with *Paris Music Hall*, a French periodical which apparently started in 1919, as an informative, quality magazine about the music-hall, before adopting around 1927 a lighter, sexier tone, with lots of pictures of scantily dressed music-hall performers. The three magazines published numerous photographs by Walery, and both *Jazz* and the *Night Light* published many ads for *Paris Music Hall*, one of the most advertised items in each of the two magazines. Ads for *Paris Music Hall* were published in at least eleven issues of *Jazz*. No other publication was promoted so extensively, which tends to suggest that *Jazz* meant to repay *Paris Music Hall* for favors done. Moreover, in its second issue, *Jazz* thanked *Paris Music Hall* – among other periodicals – for its hearty welcome, and reprinted one of its anecdotes (*Jazz*, vol. 1, n°2, 15 April 1924, 31). Two months later, *Jazz* printed an extract from a review by Charles Dennery originally published in *Paris Music Hall* (*Jazz*, vol. 1, n°4, 15 May 1924, 16). In November 1927, a few months after the disappearance of *Jazz*, *Paris Music Hall* was advertised in the *Night Light* as “the most flippant of all French magazines”, a slogan very close to *Jazz*'s former self-description as “a flippant magazine”. Other advertisements, such as “A French magazine – but understandable for all: *Paris Music Hall*” (*Night Light*, n°1, July 1927,

7. A currency convertor is available here: [https://canvasresources-prod.le.unimelb.edu.au/projects/CURRENCY\\_CALC/](https://canvasresources-prod.le.unimelb.edu.au/projects/CURRENCY_CALC/). Last accessed 11 May 2024.

20), encouraged the English-speaking readership of the *Night Light* to take the step of buying a French magazine.

Stronger connections existed between the *Night Light* and *Paris Music Hall*, than between *Jazz* and the *Night Light*, as production data reveal. First, they shared the same address, 23 rue Notre-Dame-de-Lorette. Second, the *Night Light*'s "gérant" (manager) or publisher, G. Fleuriot, served as *Paris Music Hall*'s director. "Managers" do not seem to exist as such in today's press, but the notion was apparently used at the time as a synonym of director and publisher, to refer to the person who was legally and financially responsible for a publication (Union latine, 1981: 160). In other words, the *Night Light* and *Paris Music Hall* apparently shared the same publisher, a hypothesis confirmed by a recurring ad for Éditions de Paris in *Paris Music Hall* (from 1 January to 15 October 1928), which offered subscription forms for both *Paris Music Hall* and the *Night Light* (see for example *Paris Musical Hall*, n°155, 1 January 1928, n. p.)

Aside from its relationships with the music-hall press, *Jazz* was also linked with the Paris comic press. In its first issue, in an editorial uncharacteristically written in French<sup>8</sup>, *Jazz* paid tribute to several well-known light, comic magazines of the time:

We want to thank our undoubtedly unwitting "collaborators": *Le Rire*, *La Vie Parisienne*, *Fantasio*, *Le Sourire*, our ancestors (if we may say so), have, needless to say, largely inspired us in the presentation and creation of this publication. *Paris-Plaisirs*, *Paris-Flirt*, *L'Humour* and others have also been of use, and we will be happy, when we get on in years, to help them back.<sup>9</sup> (*Jazz*, vol. 1, n°1, 1 April 1924, 15)

The influence of the French comic press on *Jazz* can hardly be overrated. *Jazz* translated jokes taken from the "journaux amusants" ["amusing magazines"] in its column genuinely entitled "Du pot de colle aux ciseaux" ("from the glue pot to the scissors"), and, even more strikingly, the magazine replicated some of the sections that characterized the "journaux amusants": the short risqué novelettes, the light, comic drawings, and the typical double page of ads on which magazines such as *Le Rire* and *Le Sourire* closed. *Jazz* also shared with the French light comic press a good number of illustrators, such as Mimouca (from *Le Rire*), Spahn (from *Le Sans Gêne* and *L'Humour*), Ludovic Chauviac (from *L'Humour*, *Le Sans Gêne*, and *Paris Flirt*) and Jack Abeillé (from *Le Rire*, *Le Frou-Frou*, *Pages folles*, and *Parisiana*).

8. Although *Jazz* was mostly published in English, French was also used at times, especially at its beginning, when José de Bérès seemed to take on an editorial role (probably until around October 1924, when a more Anglophone editorial team seems to have taken over). José de Bérès (1883-1957) was the author of countless music-hall sketches and boulevard plays, a revue director, the general secretary of various theaters, and the collaborator to many light periodicals. His archives at the Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris were consulted, but no information was found on his relationship with *Jazz*.

9. My translation from the French: "Nous tenons à remercier les 'collaborateurs' bien involontaires sans doute : *Le Rire*, *La Vie Parisienne*, *Fantasio*, *Le Sourire*, nos ancêtres (sans vouloir les dénigrer) nous ont – inutile de vous le dire – largement inspirés dans la présentation et la réalisation de ce journal. *Paris-Plaisirs*, *Paris-Flirt*, *L'Humour* et d'autres nous ont également servi, nous serons heureux, quand nous aurons pris un peu de bouteille, de leur rendre la pareille."



The strong influence of the French light, comic press on *Jazz* invites us to briefly retrace its lineage. *La Civilisation du journal*, a remarkable “cultural and literary history of the French press in the 19th century”, as its subtitle indicates, shows how a “joyful, ironic, and mocking” press was born “as early as the beginning of the 1820s, as a reaction to the conservative turn of the reign of Louis XVIII” (*Civilisation du journal*, 2011: 326), and then how, after the Fieschi laws restraining the freedom of the press in 1835, “the satirical press embraced [...] entertainment” (424). This “laughter press” [“presse du rire”] met with “enormous success” (783), diversified, and specialized. It reached a new step in 1863 with the launch of *La Vie parisienne*, a light, comic, slightly risqué illustrated weekly that did not stop publication before 1970. *La Vie parisienne* contributed to the myth of a “Gay Paree” of elegance, sophistication, and wit. Devoted to bourgeois Parisian life, and aimed at the bourgeoisie, *La Vie parisienne* seems to have inspired hosts of light, comic, more popular magazines at the turn of the century, such as *Le Rire*, *Le Sourire*, *Le Frou-Frou*, *Fantasio*, *Le Fêtard*, *La Vie en culotte rouge*, *Le Sans Gêne*, and *Paris Flirt*. Other magazines followed after World War I, such as *L’Humour*, *Parisiana*, and *Paris Plaisirs*.

Whereas these magazines form an important chapter in the history of French popular culture, they have not received much scholarly attention. The only full-length study on *La Vie parisienne* was published fairly recently, in 2018, and an article by Laurent Bihl on *Le Rire* explains that late 19<sup>th</sup>-century comic and satiric French magazines have been overlooked. The same thing could arguably be said of similar early 20<sup>th</sup>-century periodicals. In the 1930s, magazines such as *Paris Sex-Appeal* (1933-1951) and *Pour lire à deux* (1934-1939) were not unrelated to the periodicals I have mentioned, but they already signaled a move away from the risqué and a step towards the mainstreaming of the pornographic, with their numerous photographs of naked women, which contrasted with the lighter touch of the rather candid drawings and veiled photographs that characterized the “journaux amusants”. As this brief overview suggests, *Jazz* came at the end of a long line of French light magazines, some of which were bought, or were intended to be bought, by English-speaking readers, as the publication of ads in English in *Le Sourire* and *Le Rire* suggested<sup>10</sup>. However, the editors of *Jazz* further adapted to the market by offering a whole periodical in English.

Within the field of the Paris comic press, *Jazz* seems to have established tighter relationships with *Le Sourire*, especially towards the end of its life. In March 1925, *Jazz* announced a price raise “in company with our contemporary *Le Sourire*” (*Jazz*, vol. 2, n°12, 15 March 1925, 2). The following year, as it was facing censorship and economic difficulties that eventually led to its disappearance after the publication of its February 1927 issue, *Jazz* announced that it was going from being published twice a month to being published once a month; however, as if to offset the bad news, it promised contributions by the best writers of *Le Sourire*: “There will always be masses of amusing articles and stories and pictures in the magazine [...]. Some of the best authors in the famous French magazine *Le Sourire* will contribute monthly stories,

10. See for example, at the end of each magazine, the ads for “Kiss’s editions” in *Le Sourire*, n°459, 18 February 1926, n. p., and for the Chaubard bookstore in *Le Rire*, n°283, 5 July 1924, n. p.

as well as some of the old writers in *Jazz*." (*Jazz*, vol. 2, n°1, 15 December 1926, 1). Moreover, in December 1926, two months before it folded, *Jazz* moved to 26 rue Cambon, where *Le Sourire* had been based since 1923.

To sum up, production links seem to have existed between *Jazz* and *Le Sourire* on the one hand, and the *Night Light* and *Paris Music Hall* on the other hand. However, because we do not have enough information about who was doing what, or what a shared address really meant (from merely sharing office space to sharing editorial staff, contributors, contents, etc.), I find it hard to be more specific than I have been. There were certainly archives related to the production of these magazines, but they probably disappeared. What can be ascertained is that *Jazz* and the *Night Light* were not mere English versions or even imitations of their French counterparts. Both *Jazz* and the *Night Light* had their own lives, they mostly developed their own contents, while using, in ways and proportions which are hard to specify, the indigenous editorial infrastructure which they either relied on out of convenience, because such infrastructure already existed, or out of necessity, because they needed it to survive. In the absence of archives or other sources of information, we are left with conjectures.

This is why I am going to suggest a story, the story of what I think might have happened. Because Éditions First and *Jazz* successively shared two addresses, and both catered to the reading needs of the Anglo-American tourists in Paris, it is probable that the creation of *Jazz* was somehow linked to Éditions First; however, towards the end of its life, *Jazz* was experiencing difficulties, and, probably as a result, its destiny was apparently tied to that of a much bigger, powerful indigenous sister magazine, *Le Sourire*, to give it another chance. But the rescue mission failed, and *Jazz* folded in February 1927. When the *Night Light* was founded in July 1927, probably as a successor to *Jazz*, we can imagine that it was therefore decided right away to tie it to a big indigenous sister magazine, which happened to be *Paris Music Hall*, a magazine with which *Jazz* had already established special links, at least since July 1924, when *Jazz* started to publish an impressive series of ads for *Paris Music Hall*, located at the beginning of the magazine, a place of distinction. We can also imagine that it was G. Fleuriot himself, the publisher of *Paris Music Hall*, who presided over the creation of the *Night Light*.

#### 4. Beyond the French entertainment press: *Jazz*'s and the *Night Light*'s connections with the American cultural context and periodical scene of the 1920s

In any case, it would be a mistake to restrict our understanding of *Jazz* and the *Night Light* to their relationship with the French entertainment press or with the Anglo-American tourism industry that was in full bloom in the Paris of the 1920s. Both publications should also be understood within the American cultural context of the time, and in particular as two examples

of the liberal reaction against the moral conservatism of “New Puritanism”<sup>11</sup>. Indeed, both *Jazz* and the *Night Light* denounced Prohibition, censorship, and some of the sexual restrictions that were common at the time in the U.S. The cover for the September 1927 issue of the *Night Light*, showing a semi-naked young woman wearing panties adorned with grapes, and raising her glass while glancing at two champagne bottles covered with a label reading “H2O”, can hardly be understood outside of the context of Prohibition, even though the *Night Light* was published in Paris. As for *Jazz*, its discourse was characterized by its repeated denunciation of moral conservatism, in letters, film reviews, essays, fiction, and art. Let’s take but one example: the “Bars and Cabarets” section of the first issue of *Jazz*, in April 1924, featured a review of Harry’s Bar, 5 rue Daunou. It was paired with a short fictional piece entitled “Cocktails,” in which the reader was encouraged to

picture a little family scene in the year 1950 when America is so dry that even the parchment is drying up and the Lincoln highway is lined with ford camels and their trains. Five o’clock and the family have not spoken for days only making guttural sounds to themselves. Suddenly, Tom, a college graduate who has run upon some old cocktail recipes left by Jack Riebert the American artist who had studied in France, jumps up.

Once the cocktails are ready, “A pandemonium of joy struck the household like a comet. The lost art of speech had returned to Mr and Mrs Gloom and little Gus.” (*Jazz*, vol. 1, n°1, 1 April 1924, 11). By contrast, France was presented as a sanctuary, for example in this editorial targeting censorship in the U.S. and in Great Britain:

We are [...] seriously concerned at any attempt, on the part of our own home folks, to interfere with the liberty of expression, whether it be literary, artistic or theatrical, that exists in France. We refer to the several recent complaints that have been lodged by some of our ‘Kill-Joy’ snivellers from England and America against “the disgusting indecency of the French Stage.” (*Jazz*, vol. 2, n°3, 1 November 1924, 3)

A further inscription of *Jazz* within the American cultural context of the 1920s is suggested by its kinship with a small, light, comic and risqué New York periodical entitled *Cap’n Joey’s Jazza-Ka-Jazza*, published in Greenwich Village in 1922-1923, and edited by Joseph Burten, a former World War I U.S. Army lieutenant, a professional football player, and an editor of various “spicy” magazines (as well as sports magazines) in the 1920s and 1930s. As Will Straw notes, *Cap’n Joey’s Jazza-Ka-Jazza*

was like certain other magazines of its period, in which a coherent male editorial personality hovered over assortments of miscellany. The template for these magazines was offered by *Capt. Billy’s Whiz Bang*, launched by William Fawcett in 1919 in Minneapolis, in which folksy commentary on contemporary morality wound its way between lewd poetry, ‘sexy’ cartoons and humorous brevities. (Straw: 2016, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13688804.2016.1262247>)

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11. The phrase is used in particular by H. L. Mencken, who analyzes it in numerous writings including *A Book of Prefaces* in 1917.

However,

*Capt. Billy's Whiz Bang*, *Hot Dog: The Regular Fellow's Monthly* (launched in Chicago in 1919 by Jack Dinsmore) and *Quirt* (born c. 1920, edited in Minneapolis by J.M. Near) offered a male editorial voice marked by a musty roguishness and wide-eyed distance from cultural changes occurring in the 1920s. In contrast, magazines launched slightly later, like Glynn's *Jamboree* (launched in 1922 by Harry A. Glynn of New York City), *The Flapper* (likewise begun in 1922, edited by Thomas Levis in Chicago) and Joe Burten's *Cap'n Joey's Jazz Ka Jazz*, offered male editorial personalities seemingly at home in the liberalizing environments of modern US cities. (Ibidem)

*Cap'n Joey's Jazz-Ka-Jazza* thus belonged to a coherent tradition of small American comic and risqué periodicals eager to denounce the stifling effects of Christian fundamentalism, including sexual prudishness, Prohibition and censorship. The parallels with *Jazz* are clear, and made all the clearer by a series of formal similarities which, together, invalidate the possibility of mere coincidences. Born in 1924, *Jazz* chose a similar title to its American older sister's, used a similar column title ("Jazzing Around" in *Cap'n Joey's Jazz-Ka-Jazza* in March 1922, "Best Jazzing Round" in the first issue of *Jazz* on 1 April 1924), and coined similar neologistic variations on the word "jazz". In March 1922, *Cap'n Joey's Jazz-Ka-Jazza* wrote in a self-promotional announcement: "This publication writ, put up and put out by the Village jazzers in their jazzorium (...)" (n°2, n.p.). Likewise, *Jazz* boasted on the cover of its 1 April 1925 issue: "*Jazz* is the jazziest paper that ever jazzed" (vol. 2, n°13). Last but not least, the two magazines' titles shared an eerily similar typography, characterized by an overuse of broken lines to form their letters. Interestingly, this typography was kept by publisher Louis Querelle when he took over *Jazz* at the beginning of 1927 in order to progressively turn it into a different, prestigious art magazine, written in French for a French audience. The following year, Querelle also used the same kind of typography for the cover title of Félicien Champsaur's novel *Le Jazz des masques*. *Jazz* and *The Night Light* did use French nests, but they also used American ones, and *Jazz* did not bow out without leaving to its French heir a beautiful American feather as a reminder of its passage.

## 5. Conclusions

*Jazz* and the *Night Light* took advantage of the preexisting cultural and editorial infrastructure of the French entertainment press in order to develop. However, a broader perspective reveals that they were born out of the encounter of three different cultural traditions: the French entertainment press, the Anglo-American tourism industry, and the American small comic, liberal press of the 1920s which grew out of a reaction to "New Puritanism" – a singular constellation which turned them into quite unique objects. Interestingly, by creating interactions between the French and American cultural contexts, *Jazz* and the *Night Light* brought together two indigenous periodical traditions with different histories but common values. This transnational encounter allowed to rekindle the subversive power of the French "journaux amusants" at a time when it tended to get blunted, after decades of existence.

The two magazines were also an interesting meeting point between the Parisian interwar entertainment industry and a blooming global star system developing at the time on Broadway and in Hollywood. From a more methodological perspective on periodical studies, this case study speaks once more for the fertility of material approaches to periodicals. Production, financing, distribution, circulation and reception data, even when they are partial, are gold mines to refine our understanding of broader cultural phenomena.

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#### *The Night Light*

*The Night Light*, a Worldly Magazine: six issues of about thirty pages each, in black and white, with a color cover, published monthly from July 1927 to December 1927. There may have been later issues, as suggested by the bimonthly publication of a subscription form for the *Night Light* in Paris Music Hall from 1 January through 15 October 1928. Price per issue: four francs (in August 1927) or twenty-five cents (in September 1927). Circulation data unknown. Address: 23 rue Notre-Dame-de-Lorette. G. Fleuriot is mentioned as the “gérant” [manager] in the first two issues and as both the “gérant” and the publisher in the last four ones. *The Night Light* is only available at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

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