

OXFORD

The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines

Volume I, Britain and Ireland 1880-1955



Edited by Peter Brooker
and Andrew Thacker

THE OXFORD CRITICAL
AND CULTURAL HISTORY OF
Modernist Magazines

GENERAL EDITORS

Peter Brooker Andrew Thacker

Volume I. Britain and Ireland 1880–1955
Volume II. North America
Volume III. Europe



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CONTENTS

<i>List of Illustrations and Tables</i>	<i>xii</i>
<i>List of Contributors</i>	<i>xvi</i>
General Introduction	I
PETER BROOKER AND ANDREW THACKER	
Introduction	I
Materialist modernisms and periodical codes	5
Modern, modernist, avant-garde	9
Defining ‘littleness’	11
Cultural formations	16
Methods and models	21
Structure and periodization	23
PART I. VICTORIAN PRECURSORS	
Introduction	29
1. The Pre-history of the ‘Little Magazine’	33
KYRIAKI HADJIAFXENDI AND JOHN PLUNKETT	
2. In the Beginning, There Was <i>The Germ</i> : The Pre-Raphaelites and ‘Little Magazines’	51
MARYSA DEMOOR	
PART II. <i>FIN DE SIÈCLE</i> VENTURES (1884–1906)	
Introduction	69
3. Aestheticism and Decadence: <i>The Yellow Book</i> (1894–7), <i>The Chameleon</i> (1894), and <i>The Savoy</i> (1896)	76
LAUREL BRAKE	

4. Symbolism in British 'Little Magazines': *The Dial* (1889–97),
The Pageant (1896–7), and *The Dome* (1897–1900) 101
DAVID PETERS CORBETT
5. 'The Arts and Crafts Movement': *The Century Guild Hobby Horse*
(1884–94), *The Evergreen* (1895–7), and *The Acorn* (1905–6) 120
IMOGEN HART

PART III. EARLY STATEMENTS (1899–1915)

- Introduction 145
6. Yeats and the Celtic Revival: *Beltaine* (1899–1900), *Samhain*
(1901–8), *Dana* (1904–5), and *The Arrow* (1906–9) 152
ALEX DAVIS
7. The New Poetry, Georgians and Others: *The Open Window*
(1910–11), *The Poetry Review* (1912–15), *Poetry and Drama* (1913–14),
and *New Numbers* (1914) 176
DOMINIC HIBBERD

PART IV. TRANSITIONS

- Introduction 199
8. Democracy and Modernism: *The New Age* under
A. R. Orage (1907–22) 205
ANN L. ARDIS
9. Ford Madox Ford and *The English Review* (1908–37) 226
CLIFF WULFMAN
10. *The London Mercury* (1919–39) and Other Moderns 240
J. MATTHEW HUCULAK

PART V. INTERVENTIONS

- Introduction 263
11. Gender and Modernism: *The Freewoman* (1911–12),
The New Freewoman (1913), and *The Egoist* (1914–19) 269
JEAN-MICHEL RABATÉ

12. The 'Little Magazine' as Weapon: *BLAST* (1914–15) 290
 ANDRZEJ GASIOREK
13. Harmony, Discord, and Difference: *Rhythm* (1911–13),
The Blue Review (1913), and *The Signature* (1915) 314
 PETER BROOKER

PART VI. EDITORS AND PROGRAMMES

- Introduction 339
14. The Idea of a Literary Review: T. S. Eliot and *The Criterion* 346
 JASON HARDING
15. Enemies of Cant: *The Athenaeum* (1919–21) and *The Adelphi* (1923–48) 364
 MICHAEL H. WHITWORTH
16. Standards of Criticism: *The Calendar of Modern Letters* (1925–7) 389
 JOHN LUCAS
17. The Cause of Poetry: Thomas Moulton and *Voices* (1919–21),
 Harold Monro and *The Monthly Chapbook* (1919–25) 405
 MARK S. MORRISSON
18. Desmond MacCarthy, *Life and Letters* (1928–35),
 and Bloomsbury Modernism 428
 JANE GOLDMAN

PART VII. INTO THE 1920s: DISPERSAL AND DIFFERENCE

- Introduction 455
19. Aftermath of War: *Coterie* (1919–21), *New Coterie* (1925–7),
 Robert Graves and *The Owl* (1919–23) 462
 ANDREW THACKER
20. Literature and the Visual Arts: *Art and Letters* (1917–20)
 and *The Apple* (1920–2) 485
 REBECCA BEASLEY
21. Cinema and Visual Culture: *Close Up* (1927–33) 505
 LAURA MARCUS
22. Interventions in the Public Sphere: *Time and Tide* (1920–30)
 and *The Bermondsey Book* (1923–30) 530
 JANE DOWSON

23. Cultural Criticism at the Margins: Wyndham Lewis,
The Tyro (1920–1), and *The Enemy* (1927–9) 552
PAUL EDWARDS
24. Nostalgia and Reaction: Austin O. Spare and *Form* (1916–17,
1921–2), *The Golden Hind* (1922–4), and *The Decachord* (1924–31) 570
STEPHEN ROGERS

PART VIII. COMMITMENT TO THE NEW

- Introduction 591
25. Cambridge Magazines and Unfinished Business: *Experiment*
(1928–30), *The Venture* (1928–30), and *Cambridge Left* (1933–4) 599
SCOTT MCCRACKEN
26. Art and Politics in the 1930s: *The European Quarterly* (1934–5),
Left Review (1934–8), and *Poetry and the People* (1938–40) 623
PETER MARKS
27. Poetry Then: Geoffrey Grigson and *New Verse* (1933–9),
Julian Symons and *Twentieth Century Verse* (1937–9) 647
STAN SMITH
28. A New Prose: John Lehmann and *New Writing* (1936–40) 669
FRANÇOISE BORT
29. ‘National papers please reprint’: Surrealist Magazines in Britain:
Contemporary Poetry and Prose (1936–7), *London Bulletin*
(1938–40), and *Arson: An Ardent Review* (1942) 688
ROD MENGHAM

PART IX. BEYOND THE METROPOLIS

- Introduction 707
30. *Wales* (1937–9), *The Welsh Review* (1939–40) 714
CHRIS HOPKINS
31. From Revolution to Republic: Magazines, Modernism, and
Modernity in Ireland: *The Klaxon* (1923), *The Irish Statesman*
(1923–30), *The Dublin Magazine* (1923–58), *To-Morrow* (1924),
Ireland To-Day (1936–8), and *The Bell* (1940–54) 735
FRANK SHOVLIN

32. Modernism and National Identity in Scottish Magazines:
The Evergreen (1895–7), *Scottish Art and Letters* (1944–50), *The
 Scottish Chapbook* (1922–3), *The Northern Review* (1924), *The Scots
 Magazine* (1924–), *The Modern Scot* (1930–6), *Outlook* (1936–7),
 and *The Voice of Scotland* (1938–9, 1945, 1955) 759
 CAIRNS CRAIG
33. A New ‘Art of the Theatre’: Gordon Craig’s *The Mask* (1908–29)
 and *The Marionette* (1918–19) 785
 OLGA TAXIDOU
34. Modernism as ‘Uninfected Discourse’: Laura Riding,
Epilogue (1935–7) and *Focus* (1935) 806
 MARK JACOBS

PART X. THE CALL TO CRITICISM AND MODERNIST
 DESTINIES

- Introduction 827
35. ‘Say Not the Struggle Naught Availleth . . .’: *Scrutiny* (1932–53) 833
 SEAN MATTHEWS
36. Cyril Connolly’s *Horizon* (1940–50) and the End of Modernism 856
 SEAN LATHAM
37. The Apocalyptic Poets, ‘New Modernism’, and ‘The Progressive
 View of Art’: *Poetry London* (1939–51) and *Indian Writing* (1940–2) 874
 JAMES KEERY
- Bibliography* 899
Index 931

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Cover of <i>The Adelphi</i> (Jan. 1925) and advertisements from <i>Rhythm</i> (1912–13)	7
2. Cover of <i>The Germ</i> (Jan. 1850)	53
3. Cover of <i>The Yellow Book</i> (Oct. 1895)	78
4. Cover of <i>The Chameleon</i> (1894)	79
5. Advert for the publisher Leonard Smithers (c.1894)	80
6. Cover of <i>The Savoy</i> (Jan. 1896)	82
7. Cover of <i>The Dial</i> (1897)	104
8. Cover of <i>The Pageant</i> (1896)	107
9. Cover of <i>The Dome</i> (Lady Day, 1897)	114
10. Inside cover of <i>The Dome</i> (Lady Day, 1897)	115
11. Cover of <i>The Evergreen</i> (Winter, 1896–7)	121
12. Cover of <i>The Century Guild Hobby Horse</i> (April 1884)	122
13. Front cover of <i>The Acorn</i> (1905)	123
14. Cover of <i>The Studio</i> (April 1893)	124
15. Page 13 of <i>The Century Guild Hobby Horse</i> (April 1884)	128
16. Page 151 of <i>The Evergreen</i> (Winter, 1896–7)	128
17. Design by Aubrey Beardsley for J. M. Dent's <i>Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte D'Arthur</i> (1893–4)	129
18. Cover of <i>Beltaine</i> (Feb. 1900)	154
19. Cover of <i>Samhain</i> (Dec. 1906)	161
20. Cover of <i>Dana</i> (June 1904)	170
21. Cover of <i>Open Window</i> (Feb. 1911)	178
22. Cover of <i>Poetry Review</i> (Feb. 1912)	179
23. Advertisement for the Poetry Bookshop from <i>Poetry and Drama</i> (Mar. 1913)	187

24. Cover of <i>Poetry and Drama</i> (Mar. 1913)	190
25. Cover of <i>New Numbers</i> (Dec. 1914)	195
26. Cover of <i>The New Age</i> (Feb. 1916)	207
27. Cover of <i>The New Age</i> (May 1907)	209
28. Advertisement from <i>The New Age</i> (Dec. 1908)	221
29. Cover of <i>The English Review</i> (Dec. 1908)	227
30. Advertisement, 'What to Read', from <i>English Review</i> (Dec. 1908)	232
31. Cover of <i>The London Mercury</i> (Feb. 1925)	241
32. Cartoon by Will Dyson, <i>London Mercury</i> , 1923	250
33. Cartoon by Will Dyson, <i>London Mercury</i> , 1923	251
34. Cover of <i>The Freewoman</i> (May 1912)	272
35. Cover of <i>The New Freewoman</i> (June 1913)	276
36. Cover of <i>The Egoist</i> (Nov. 1914)	282
37. Cover of <i>BLAST</i> 1 (1914)	291
38. Cover of <i>BLAST</i> 2 (1915)	295
39. Cover of <i>Rhythm</i> by John Duncan Fergusson for <i>Rhythm</i> (Summer, 1911)	318
40. Cover of <i>The Blue Review</i> (May 1913)	319
41. Cover of <i>The Signature</i> (Oct. 1915)	322
42. John Duncan Fergusson, <i>Rhythm</i> 1911, oil on canvas, University of Stirling	327
43. Anne Estelle Rice, <i>Schéhérazade</i> , in <i>Rhythm</i> , 1:1 (Summer 1911)	329
44. John Duncan Fergusson, <i>Les Eus</i> , c.1911–13, oil on canvas, Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow. Fergusson Gallery, Perth and Kinross Council, Scotland	331
45. Anne Estelle Rice, drawing, <i>Rhythm</i> , 1:4 (Spring 1912)	331
46. John Duncan Fergusson, <i>Rose Rhythm, Kathleen Dillon</i> , 1916, private collection	333
47. Cover of <i>The Criterion</i> (Apr. 1925)	348
48. Cover of <i>The Athenaeum</i> (Feb. 1920)	365
49. Adverts, rear cover of <i>The Adelphi</i> (Jan. 1925)	381
50. Cover of <i>The Calendar of Modern Letters</i> (Nov. 1925)	390
51. Cover of <i>Voices</i> (Jan. 1919)	406

52. Cover of <i>The Monthly Chapbook</i> (May 1923)	420
53. Cover of <i>Life and Letters</i> (July 1928)	429
54. Contents page of <i>Life and Letters</i> (Mar. 1932)	440
55. Cover of <i>The Owl</i> no. 1 (May 1919) by William Nicholson	468
56. <i>The Picnic</i> by William Nicholson, from <i>The Owl</i> (May 1919)	471
57. Cover of <i>Coterie</i> , no. 6/7 (Winter 1920–1) by Nina Hamnett	474
58. Cover of <i>Coterie</i> , no. 3 (Dec. 1919) by William Roberts	480
59. Cover of <i>New Coterie</i> , no. 2 (Spring 1926) by William Roberts	481
60. Cover of <i>Art and Letters</i> (Jan. 1918)	488
61. Cover of <i>The Apple</i> (First Quarter, 1920)	496
62. Cover of <i>Close Up</i> (Jan. 1929)	506
63. Signed photograph of Sergei Eisenstein, <i>Close Up</i> (Jan. 1929)	524
64. Picture of Paul Robeson in 'Borderline', <i>Close Up</i> (July 1930)	524
65. Cover of <i>Time and Tide</i> (1920)	533
66. Cover of <i>The Bermondsey Book</i> (Dec. 1928–Feb. 1929)	544
67. Cover of <i>The Tyro</i> , no. 2 (1922)	558
68. Cover of <i>The Enemy</i> , 3 (First Quarter, 1929)	560
69. Cover of <i>Form</i> (Apr. 1916)	572
70. Cover of <i>The Golden Hind</i> (Jan. 1923)	578
71. Cover of <i>The Decachord</i> (May–June 1924)	583
72. Cover of <i>Experiment</i> (Nov. 1929)	601
73. Cover of <i>Cambridge Left</i> (Summer 1933)	603
74. Cover of <i>European Quarterly</i> (Nov. 1934)	626
75. Cover of <i>Left Review</i> (July 1936)	633
76. Cover of <i>Poetry and the People</i> (Sept. 1938)	641
77. Cover of <i>New Verse</i> (Jan. 1933)	648
78. Cover of <i>Twentieth Century Verse</i> (Mar. 1938)	649
79. Cover of <i>New Writing</i> (Spring 1936)	671
80. Cover of <i>Contemporary Poetry and Prose</i> (July 1936)	690
81. Cover of <i>Arson: An Ardent Review</i> (1942)	701
82. Cover of <i>Wales</i> (Autumn 1937)	719
83. Cover of <i>The Welsh Review</i> (Aug. 1939)	727

84. Cover of <i>The Klaxon</i> (1923)	738
85. Title page of <i>The Klaxon</i> (1923)	739
86. 'Cinema' from <i>To-Morrow</i> (Sept. 1924)	743
87. Cover of <i>Ireland To-day</i> (Aug. 1936)	752
88. Cover of <i>The Bell</i> (Feb. 1945)	754
89. Cover of <i>The Scottish Chapbook</i> (June 1923)	766
90. Cover of <i>Northern Review</i> (Sept. 1924)	773
91. Cover of <i>The Modern Scot</i> (Apr. 1932)	774
92. Cover of <i>Outlook</i> (Apr. 1936)	778
93. Cover of <i>The Mask</i> (Jan. 1911)	786
94. Illustration for 'Mask of the Fool' by W. B. Yeats, designed by Gordon Craig, <i>The Mask</i> (Apr. 1911)	793
95. Announcements, <i>The Mask</i> (July 1911)	803
96. Isadora Duncan, <i>The Mask</i> (Aug. 1908)	804
97. Cover of <i>Epilogue</i> (Autumn 1935)	807
98. <i>Alice in the Grotto</i> by John Aldridge, in <i>Epilogue</i> , 2 (Summer 1936)	820
99. Cover of <i>Scrutiny</i> (June 1933)	834
100. Cover of <i>Horizon</i> (Feb. 1948)	860
101. Cover of <i>Poetry London</i> (Oct.–Nov. 1942)	875
102. Cover of <i>Indian Writing</i> (Spring 1940)	893

LIST OF TABLES

1. Timeline for Selected Periodicals, 1908–19	22
2. Prices of Selected Periodicals, c.1850–1950	24

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

PETER BROOKER AND ANDREW THACKER

Introduction

‘Usually the history of a little magazine’, wrote Malcolm Cowley, ‘is summarised in its format. The first issue consists, let us say, of sixty-four pages, with half tone illustrations, printed on coated paper. The second issue has sixty-four pages, illustrated with line cuts. The third has only forty-eight pages; the fourth has thirty-two, without illustrations; the fifth never appears.’¹ Cowley has in mind the short life of the magazine *Broom* during whose final days he served as a co-editor. *Broom* in fact lasted for twenty issues over the three years that it was published in turn in Rome, Berlin, and New York, but did in the end decline by stages in the way Cowley describes. He tells this tale with a light touch but all the same it highlights the serious economic and cultural plight of the ‘little magazine’: at once dogged by the costs of production, haunted by the threat of censorship, at loggerheads with more conventional publications, and at war with the philistinism of a prevailing business culture.

The beginning of this or other stories of other magazines would tell us why editors and sponsors embarked on this perilous course. They felt, of course, that they would make a difference; that a fight ‘for purely aesthetic motives’ or for ‘a new sort of literature’, as Cowley puts it, was worth the struggle, the quarrels, and penury. Magazines of this combative type—which Cyril Connolly termed ‘dynamic’ (directed ‘like a commando course’ against ‘the enemy position’)—shared this cultural ambition with the manifesto of which they were often also the vehicle, ‘analogue or extension’.² Richard Ellmann once commented that ‘Literary movements pass their infancy in inarticulate disaffection, but mature when they

¹ Malcolm Cowley, *Exile's Return: A Literary Odyssey of the 1920s* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1951), 188.

² Cyril Connolly, ‘Little Magazines’, [1960] in *The Evening Colonnade* (London: David Bruce and Watson, 1973), 414; Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane, ‘Movements, Magazines and Manifestoes: The Succession from Naturalism’, in *eidem* (eds), *Modernism, 1890–1930* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), 192–205, esp. 203.

achieve a vocabulary.’³ A manifesto is one way for a movement to shift from youthful grumblings to adulthood; starting a magazine in which to publish one’s manifesto enables those mature reflections to reach, hopefully, a wider audience. Janet Lyon notes how the manifesto form is linked to a critique of modernity itself, and dates its rise to the late nineteenth century. As she observes:

In the decades following the revolutionary activities of the 1871 Commune, the manifesto emerged as the signature genre for avant-garde groups announcing the birth of artistic movements. The aesthetic coteries of the historical avant-garde—from symbolists to vorticists, from futurists to surrealists—adapted the manifesto’s revolutionary discourse to signal their own radical departures from bourgeois artistic forms and practices.⁴

That most of these groups published magazines as well indicates the close ties between the defiance of the manifesto form and the vehicle for that defiance, the magazine. Ezra Pound confirmed this association in his important essay, ‘Small Magazines’, when he noted that a magazine must have a strong editorial policy of only two or three points and that he was in favour of ‘a clear announcement of a program—any program. A review that can’t announce a program probably doesn’t know what it thinks or where it is going.’⁵ For Pound a magazine does not only publicize the manifestos of a movement, the magazine itself functions as a form of manifesto.

Together magazines and manifestos, along with related artistic activities and forms of independent production, belonged to the institutions that sustained and promoted modernism. Richard Sheppard, discussing German Expressionism, gives the examples of ‘the café, the periodical, the back-room press, the reading evening, the little book’.⁶ Often these venues and outlets formed an urban network across which individual writers and artists moved or formed groups or associations. As such, in an active challenge to prevailing orthodoxies, they published new and experimental writing and visual art, announced a new movement and ‘became the primary centres for establishing new taste’ as Bradbury and McFarlane put it.⁷ Periodicals functioned as points of reference, debate, and transmission at the heart of an internally variegated and often internationally connected counter-cultural sphere, or what we describe below as a network of cultural formations. If they were doomed to flare and fade, powered by a sense of mission out of

³ Richard Ellmann, *Golden Codgers: Biographical Speculations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 101.

⁴ Janet Lyon, *Manifestoes: Provocations of the Modern* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999), 5. Also on manifestos see Martin Puchner, *Poetry of the Revolution: Marx, Manifestoes and the Avant-Gardes* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006).

⁵ Ezra Pound, ‘Small Magazines’, *English Journal*, 19:9 (Nov. 1930), 703.

⁶ Richard Sheppard, ‘German Expressionism’, in Bradbury and McFarlane (eds), *Modernism*, 285.

⁷ Bradbury and McFarlane, ‘Movements, Magazines and Manifestoes’, 204.

all sensible proportion to their financial resources and readerships, magazines belonged to a nexus out of which an ongoing campaign for artistic, intellectual, and broadly political values were launched and launched again. This was, we might say, the dialogic matrix of modernism, at times expressed as an affinity, at times posed in frank opposition to the forms of technological and commercial modernity.

The role of periodicals along these lines—servicing new writing, introducing readers to new movements in the arts across different continents, engendering debate, disseminating ideas, and challenging settled assumptions—is now well recognized in modernist studies. Periodicals, as Peter Marks has pointed out, show us how the newness of modernist forms first came into the world in tentative, exploratory, and dynamic ways. They provide, he writes, ‘unrivalled contemporary documentation of . . . ongoing literary developments, of rivalries and collaborations, of short-lived enthusiasms and failed projects and of rich and illuminating work of lasting value’ and as such question and historicize the later monumentalized curriculum of a few select and familiar names.⁸

That the formative role of magazines is not, however, an entirely new recognition is evident from the accounts of those such as Cowley and Connolly, Bradbury and MacFarlane, and the still standard bibliographical works by Hoffman et al. and Sullivan.⁹ For the most part, though, it would be fair to say that magazines have represented an unexplored place on the map, or more prosaically the library shelves and basement archives of modernism, rather than a new intellectual territory busy with students and researchers. Research has been carried out upon what remains a fairly limited range of Anglophone modernist magazines: British magazines such as *The Egoist*, *BLAST*, *The Criterion*, and *Scrutiny*; American magazines such

⁸ Peter Marks, ‘Making the New: Literary Periodicals and the Construction of Modernism’, *Precursors and Aftermaths: Literature in English 1914–1945*, 2:1 (2004), 37.

⁹ Frederick J. Hoffman, Charles Allen, and Carolyn F. Ulrich, *The Little Magazine: A History and a Bibliography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947); Alvin Sullivan (ed.), *British Literary Magazines: The Victorian and Edwardian Age, 1837–1913* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984) and *British Literary Magazines: The Modern Age, 1914–1984* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986). See also Edward E. Chielens (ed.), *American Literary Magazines: The Twentieth Century* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992). The following indicate a sporadic but long-term bibliographical interest in the field of broadly modern British magazines: F. W. Faxon, ‘Ephemeral Bibelots’, *Bulletin of Bibliography* 3 (1903–4); J. R. Tye, *Periodicals of the Nineties. A Checklist of Literary Periodicals Published in the British Isles at Longer than Fortnightly Intervals, 1890–1900* (Oxford: Occasional Publications no. 9, Oxford Bibliographical Society, 1974); Marion Sader (ed.), *Comprehensive Index to English-Language Little Magazines, 1890–1970, Series One*. 8 vols. (Millwood, NY: Kraus-Thomson, 1976). For comparable early studies of modern American magazines, see Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines. Volume V: Sketches of 21 Magazines, 1905–1930* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1968), and Elliott Anderson and Mary Kinzie (eds), *The Little Magazine in America: A Modern Documentary History* (New York: Pushcart Press, 1979).

as *Poetry*, *Little Review*, *Others*, and *The Dial*; and European ventures such as *Transatlantic Review* and *transition* have all warranted attention, some of it in the form of monographs upon specific magazines.¹⁰ Further commentary has focused on thematic clusters of magazines or on questions of gender and the role of editors, the character of magazines in particular periods, or in relation to location and geography.¹¹ But even if we feel we have some available knowledge of the ten magazines listed above, scholars of modernism are increasingly aware of the vast hinterland that remains unexplored. It is easy to name magazines of interest and significance about which relatively little is known: British magazines such as *Voices*, *Form*, *The Acorn*, *Coterie*, *The Apple*, *Venture*, *Seed*, and *Poetry and the People*. In relation to questions of gender and the role of editors the struggles of Dora Marsden and Harriet Shaw Weaver at *The New Freewoman/Egoist*, or Harriet Monroe and *Poetry* are reasonably familiar—but what do we know about the Mexican-born Idella Purnell Stone and her poetry magazine *Palms* (1923–30), or about *Epilogue*, the magazine edited by Laura Riding from Majorca in the 1930s? In terms of location the fact of publishing a modernist magazine in London in the first years of the twentieth century hardly bears comment. However, the different geographical inflections given to magazines published in Ireland (*Dana*, *Samhain*, *Beltaine*, *The Bell*, *Klaxon*), Scotland (*The Evergreen*, *The Modern Scot*, *Northern Review*), or Wales (*The Welsh Review*, *Wales*) have not been sufficiently studied as part of the story of modernism in Britain and Ireland. And to this picture of regional magazines we might add the expatriate publications *Epilogue*, once more, or Gordon Craig's *Mask*, edited from Florence. One of the aims of this volume, therefore, is to venture out into this hinterland of British and Irish periodicals, hoping not only to make readers more aware of this material, but also to stimulate future research into areas, including individual magazines we have

¹⁰ For studies of individual magazines see Nicholas Joost, *Scofield Thayer and The Dial: An Illustrated History* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1964); Douglas McMillan, transition: *The History of a Literary Era, 1927–1938* (London: Calder and Boyars, 1975); Francis Mulhern, *The Moment of Scrutiny* (London: New Left Books, 1979); Paul Edwards (ed.), *Blast: Vorticism 1914–1918* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000); Jason Harding, *The Criterion: Cultural Politics and Periodical Networks in Inter-war Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Suzanne W. Churchill, *The Little Magazine Others and the Renovation of Modern American Poetry* (Aldershot/Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006).

¹¹ On editors and gender see, for example, Ellen Williams, *Harriet Monroe and the Poetry Renaissance: The First Ten Years of Poetry* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1977); Jayne E. Marek, *Women Editing Modernism: 'Little' Magazines and Literary History* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995); on periods, see A. T. Tolley, *British Literary Periodicals of World War II and Aftermath: A Critical History* (Kemptville, Canada: Golden Dog Press, 2007); and on regions, see Ken Norris, *The Little Magazine in Canada, 1925–1980* (Toronto: ECW Press, 1984); Adam McKible, *The Space and Place of Modernism: The Russian Revolution, Little Magazines and New York* (London/New York: Routledge, 2002).

not been able to consider here.¹² Subsequent volumes on magazines in North America (including Canada) and Europe will add to the further exploration of the field.

Materialist modernisms and periodical codes

Two recent changes in literary studies have had an impact upon the relative neglect of magazines and modernism. The first is the improved access to digitized versions of some magazines, made possible through the use of new technologies, such as has been pioneered by the Modernist Journals Project at Brown University and in which the present project is also engaged.¹³ As Sean Latham argues of modernist criticism in this new age of digital reproduction, such ‘technologies . . . will alter fundamentally our conception of early twentieth-century journals and their place in our critical practices’ with fully searchable digital texts removing some of the constraints surrounding access to the materials, thereby ‘providing a scholarly technology uniquely suited to the study of the little magazines, one capable of opening new kinds of discursive and historical networks’.¹⁴

The second change follows from what can be termed the ‘materialist turn’ in modernist studies, which can be seen in the increased attention to questions of the text and historicity. George Bornstein, a proponent of this deepening of the textual criticism characteristic of contemporary literary studies, has argued, for example, for the importance of ‘examining modernism in its original sites of production and the continually shifting physicality of its texts and transmissions’.¹⁵ As Bornstein demonstrates in his account of Marianne Moore’s poetry, publication in magazines such as *The Egoist* or *Poetry* produces very different poetic texts, according to the

¹² Mainly for reasons of space we have been unable to include chapters on a number of magazines in the period covered. We were unable, for example, to include magazines such as Douglas Goldring’s *The Tramp* (1910–11), Holbrook Jackson’s *Today* (1917–24), A. R. Orage’s *New English Weekly* (1932–49), Ronald Duncan’s *Townsman* (1938–45), or *Seven* (1938–40): all magazines with an interesting take on modernism and the modern. We also decided not to include *Wheels* (1916–21), the Sitwells’ vehicle for modern poetry, since it had more of the character of an anthology (the first issue was subtitled ‘An Anthology of Verse’) than a magazine and hence was on a par with the Georgian and Imagist anthologies.

¹³ For the website of the Modernist Magazines Project see <http://modmags.cts.dmu.ac.uk/>. One notable and unresolved problem facing the digitization of magazines is the issue of copyright. For Brown’s Modernist Journals Project see <http://dl.lib.brown.edu:8081/exist/mjp/index.xml>.

¹⁴ Sean Latham, ‘New Age Scholarship: The Work of Criticism in the Age of Digital Reproduction’, *New Literary History*, 35:3 (Summer 2004), 412–13. See also Sean Latham and Robert Scholes, ‘The Rise of Periodical Studies’, *PMLA*, 121:2 (March 2005), 517–31.

¹⁵ George Bornstein, *Material Modernisms: The Politics of the Page* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 1.

specific forms of layout employed by each magazine and the juxtaposition of material alongside the poem. Bornstein thus argues that an alteration in ‘the bibliographic and contextual codes changes the meaning of the poem, even though the words remain the same.’¹⁶ Bornstein is here following the division proposed by Jerome McGann between the linguistic codes (the semiotics and semantics of the actual words) and the bibliographic codes of a text (such matters as ‘typefaces, bindings, book prices, page format’).¹⁷ A number of contributors to this volume analyse the bibliographic codes of specific magazines, emphasizing an important point made by McGann that in any text ‘Meaning is transmitted through bibliographical as well as linguistic codes’ and that these two signifying systems work together to generate the overall meaning of a text.¹⁸ The physical material of the magazine itself is, therefore, a crucial factor in understanding the texts and images found within its pages.

We can also make McGann’s bibliographic codes more precise by discussing a particular subset, the *periodical codes* at play in any magazine, analysing a whole range of features including page layout, typefaces, price, size of volume (not all ‘little’ magazines are little in size), periodicity of publication (weekly, monthly, quarterly, irregular), use of illustrations (colour or monochrome, the forms of reproductive technology employed), use and placement of advertisements, quality of paper and binding, networks of distribution and sales, modes of financial support, payment practices towards contributors, editorial arrangements, or the type of material published (poetry, reviews, manifestos, editorials, illustrations, social and political comment, etc.). We can also distinguish between periodical codes internal to the design of a magazine (paper, typeface, layout, etc.) and those that constitute its external relations (distribution in a bookshop, support from patrons). However, it is often the *relationship* between internal and external periodical codes that is most significant. Advertisements, for example, constitute both internal and external codes, indicating, on the one hand, an external relationship to an imagined readership and a relationship to the world of commerce and commodities, while operating, on the other hand, in their placement on the page or position in the magazine as a whole, as part of the magazine’s internal code. There is a world of difference between a magazine that only advertises bookshops or other publishers tucked away in the back pages, and the example from the front page of *The Adelphi* seen in Figure 1.

¹⁶ Bornstein, *Material Modernisms*, 99.


¹⁷ See Jerome McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 13. See also D. F. McKenzie on the importance of the material forms of books in his *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

¹⁸ McGann, *Textual Condition*, 57, 67.

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Fig. 1. Cover of *The Adelphi* (Jan. 1925) and advertisements from *Rhythm* (1912-13)

The Adelphi was edited by John Middleton Murry in the 1920s and made abundant use of advertisements, ranging from 10 to 25 per cent of the total page contents.¹⁹ Not only the back and front inner pages but also the front and back covers were given over to adverts, and although many were for publishers and book-sellers, others were for department stores like Harvey Nichols and Debenhams. Also prominent on the front covers from 1923 to 1925 were advertisements for chocolates and typewriters, essential items, we might say, for all writers. However, an interesting comparison can be made with an earlier magazine edited by Murry, *Rhythm* (1911–13). The percentage of advertisements contained in *Rhythm* is, overall, less than that of *The Adelphi*. There are no adverts in the first two issues, and then only on three of the forty-two pages of the next issue. The change of publisher in 1912 saw a modest rise in the number of advertisements, now placed in the initial pages as well as towards the end of the magazine. Adverts never averaged more than around 10 per cent of the total, however, which either testifies to a reticence by the editors or, as seems more likely given the parlous state of Murry and his publisher's finances, an inability to attract more extensive custom.²⁰ The majority of the advertisements are for cultural products—publisher's lists, galleries, other magazines (*Poetry Review*, or the important Berlin magazine, *Der Sturm*, for example), or art suppliers (see Fig. 1). A number of adverts are from friends (the Parma Rooms was run by Ida Baker, under the name of 'Lesley Moore', who was a friend of Katherine Mansfield, a key contributor to *Rhythm* who indeed did have her hair scientifically combed) or professional colleagues (the Paris Ashnur Galleries run by Horace Holley, a friend of *Rhythm* artists, Anne Estelle Rice and J. D. Fergusson).

Comparing the periodical codes in this respect points up a significant difference between these two magazines. That Murry found adverts for a range of commodities more acceptable in the later *Adelphi* indicates how external relations to the economic realities of magazine publishing impinged upon it, altering the periodical codes displayed in the adverts, and thus changing the meanings of the magazine overall. Attention to these and other periodical codes interestingly returns us, assisted by a more robust analytical apparatus, to the claim made at the start of this Introduction by Malcolm Cowley that 'the history of a little magazine is summarised in its format'.

A further relevant aspect of the materialist turn in modernist studies concerns the question of historicity. In this volume Ann Ardis argues that modernist studies needs both to historicize the conventions of modern literary history and to distance itself 'from the interpretative and evaluative paradigms through which the study of early twentieth-century literature and art was institutionalized in the 1920s, '30s

¹⁹ For example, *Adelphi* 11:2 for 1924 has 90 pages, with around 10½ full pages devoted to adverts; 1:7 for 1923 has 110 pages in total, with 23 devoted to advertisements.

²⁰ Murry was almost bankrupt by the collapse of the paper on two occasions; see Anthony Alpers, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), ch. 7 for details.

and beyond'. In particular, this recommends us to decentre, but not to dismiss, the works comprising the established modernist canon, to critique the terms of canon formation, and to resituate its authors and texts in the broader originary field which Ardis describes as 'the work of the modernist avant-garde, as published in its original material historical context(s)'.

The Modernist Magazine Project, of which this and two further volumes are a central part, was conceived much in this spirit. Our general aim has been to elaborate upon what Michael Levenson described as a 'micro-sociology of modernist innovation, within which small groups of artists were able to sustain their resolve . . . to create small flourishing communities'.²¹ 'Little magazines', as suggested above, were a key context and vehicle for such innovation, resolve, and expressions of community: a meeting point for both major and minor contributors to artistic modernism. To this end, the following chapters aim to illuminate the rich, miscellaneous contents of the magazines, examining the role of editors, sponsors, and patrons, and the relations between readers, advertisers, printers, censors, and an emerging mass press. These multiple relationships shaped both individual magazines and groups of magazines in the dialogic network of modern arts and ideas.

Modern, modernist, avant-garde

Such an historicizing and materialist approach brings its own interpretative strategies and agenda. Periodical study is well established in Victorian Studies but there is a thrill for many critics and scholars of modernism in entering a largely under-researched archive of original documents.²² It would be foolish, however, to suppose that this material yielded its significance to a supposedly objective gaze. There are questions at the outset, and only touched on above, of definition and method. First of all, the terminology of the 'modern', 'modernist', and the 'avant-garde' clearly shadows any recent research in the field.²³ In one commonly accepted move, the singular authority of the largely Anglo-American and male

²¹ Michael Levenson, 'Introduction', to Levenson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 6.

²² The Research Society for Victorian Periodicals (RSVP; <http://www.rs4vp.org>) has been in existence since 1968.

²³ See, amongst numerous studies, Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987); Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists* (London: Verso, 1989); Peter Nicholls, *Modernisms: A Literary Guide* (London: Macmillan, 1995); and Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Boi, and Benjamin Buchloh, *Art since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2005). For a recent attempt to redefine and reactivate this field see two articles by Susan Stanford Friedman: 'Definitional Excursions: The Meanings of Modern/Modernity/Modernism', *Modernism/Modernity*, 8:3 (Sept. 2001), 493–513,

modernist canon has been placed ‘under erasure’; that is to say, acknowledged as a institutionalized cultural phenomenon while at the same time dispersed into the settings and relationships out of which it emerged. The poststructuralist concept of ‘difference’ has been accordingly evoked to dispel the hierarchies of high and low and their associated vocabularies of elite or minority and mass or popular. The result of this cultural deconstruction, however, can seem to have merely replaced a former hierarchy with a flat plateau of newly expandable, rhizomatically branching modernisms. A pluralist recognition of different modernisms, that is to say, once it has questioned the selective attribution of cultural value bestowed upon an established orthodoxy, is prone to substitute a paradoxically undifferentiated plane of difference for distinctions of value. A more historicized and materialist deconstruction will seek to disclose how different modernisms are marked by the accents of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and region, and, as indicated above, will investigate the relations between *artistic* forms, techniques, and strategies and prevailing social and *economic* conditions.²⁴

A further, suggestive position, adumbrated by Ann Ardis, would seek to retain the antagonism towards dominant forms and values associated with ‘avant-garde cultural politics’ and deploy the category of the ‘modern’ as a term encompassing both this combative impulse and an experimental but latterly ‘normalized’ modernism.²⁵ A similar distinction was drawn by Raymond Williams’s proposal that we understand the largely ‘retrospective’ labels ‘modernism’ and the ‘avant-garde’ as designating, firstly, ‘alternative, radically innovating experimental artists and writers’ who ‘proposed a new kind of art for a new kind of social and perceptual world’ and, secondly, ‘fully oppositional groups’ aggressively determined on ‘a breakthrough to the future’ by way of a militant ‘creativity which would revive and liberate humanity’.²⁶ This thinking has the double advantage of bringing a politicized investment and historicized self-consciousness to the conception of plural modernisms laid across a stratified, synchronic field of ‘difference’. It enables us to recover both the energies of a range of internally harmonious *and* discordant

and ‘Periodizing Modernism: Postcolonial Modernities and the Space/Time Borders of Modernist Studies’, *Modernism/Modernity*, 13:3 (Sept. 2006), 425–43.

²⁴ See Jennifer Wicke’s comment that ‘Appreciation—valuing—enthusiasm must be rigorous, historical, aesthetically incisive, and politically aware all at once’: ‘Appreciation, Depreciation: Modernism’s Speculative Bubble’, *Modernism/Modernity*, 8:3 (Sept. 2001), 402. See also on these issues, inter alia, Michael North, *The Dialect of Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Suzanne W. Churchill and Adam McKible (eds), *Little Magazines and Modernism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); Ann L. Ardis and Leslie W. Lewis, *Women’s Experience of Modernity, 1875–1945* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); and Robert Scholes, *Paradox of Modernism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

²⁵ Ann Ardis, ‘The Dialogics of Modernism(s) in the *New Age*’, *Modernism/Modernity*, 14:3 (Sept. 2007), 428 n. 6, 427 n. 4.

²⁶ Williams, *The Politics of Modernism*, 51.

‘dialogic’ voices and the specificities of a variegated material cultural history (the ‘modern’) in which they took part.

Periodical studies in this respect brings a new focus to these questions of analysis and the distinctions between ‘modernism’, the ‘modern’, and the ‘avant-garde’. The words in our own series’ title ‘Modernist Magazines’ would seem to opt for one term. While in itself this simplifies the complexity of usage, it oversees a reflection on this very category and serves to introduce a set of case studies of magazines which participated in the *making* of a ‘modernist’ cultural aesthetic and the institution of modernism. For this specific history the ‘modern’ is too capacious a term, and for this present British-based history, the ‘avant-garde’ makes too infrequent an appearance. We see this history, nonetheless, as a complex process built upon singular, joint, and opposed contributions expressing sometime avant-gardist, modern, anti-modern, and anti-modernist positions. Our judgement over what to count as a ‘modernist magazine’ has centred upon an understanding of the dominant character of a magazine, of how it contains sufficient material to constitute some version of modernism or significant discussion of modernism, or is closely related to other important contemporary cultural formations or attitudes towards the newness of social modernity. This project, it is useful to emphasize, is not about periodical culture per se, but about how modernism emerged in particular forms of periodical and how modernism itself impelled into being certain, very diverse, types of publication. A number of other types of periodicals and publications, including mass-market magazines, the mainstream press, and printers and small presses, also played a part in this.²⁷ Our survey is inevitably limited, therefore, but, we hope, sufficiently comprehensive and suggestive to inspire other studies.

Defining ‘littleness’

If the term ‘modernism’ signals an indicative and not exclusive terrain, the companion term ‘magazine’ raises questions of its own. The starting point here is the subgenre of the ‘little magazine’, often thought to be short-lived, committed to experiment, in constant financial difficulties, and indifferent or directly opposed to commercial considerations. A description along these lines was sketched out in Hoffman, Allen, and Ulrich’s *The Little Magazine*, published in 1947 and is still a

²⁷ For work on presses and printers see, for example, Jane Lidderdale and Mary Nicholson, *Dear Miss Weaver* (London: Faber and Faber, 1970); Laura Marcus, ‘Virginia Woolf and the Hogarth Press’, in Ian Willison, Warwick Gould, and Warren Chernaik (eds), *Modernist Writers and the Market Place* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), 124–50; James G. Nelson, *Elkin Mathews, Publisher to Yeats, Joyce, Pound* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989) and *The Early Nineties: A View from the Bodley Head* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971); and Mark Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism: Little Magazines, Audiences and Reception, 1905–1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001).

common source of reference. Their account attributes two leading features to the corpus of 'little magazines'. Firstly, that they live 'a kind of private life... on the margins of culture' as 'sponsors of innovation', and have often 'raised defiantly the red flag of protest and rebellion against tradition and convention'.²⁸ Secondly, 'A little magazine is a magazine designed to print artistic work which for reasons of commercial expediency is not acceptable to the money-minded periodicals or presses.'²⁹ Such magazines are 'noncommercial by intent' and 'appeal only to a limited group, generally not more than a thousand persons'. In this respect 'little' does not refer to size, contents, or lack of payment to contributors, but 'designated... a limited group of intelligent readers'. The contributors to 'little magazines', at odds with convention and tradition, are therefore mirrored by a readership willing to learn about 'the particular schools of literature that the magazines represented'.³⁰

We might note that 'reasons of commercial expediency' and 'noncommercial intent' are not the same thing, and wonder whether a group of writers and artists on the margins is the same company who would mount, in Williams's description above of the avant-garde, a 'breakthrough to the future' of liberated humanity,³¹ but these are the kind of contradictions and compromises of rhetoric with economic and political reality in which the 'little magazine' was embedded. Dora Marsden, editor of the *New Freewoman/Egoist*, pointed to just such a contradiction when appealing for money from readers and supporters: 'The fact that practically all papers are sold below cost is the reason why the English Press has to be subsidised by advertiser or capitalist, and in consequence laid open to corruption.'³²

Another important aspect of Hoffman's definition of 'little' is the focus upon the readership as 'a limited group of *intelligent* readers' (emphasis added). This indicates the New Critical heritage behind Hoffman's volume and the influence of a related modernist critical orthodoxy. T. S. Eliot, for example, in his 1926 article, 'The Idea of a Literary Review', noted that a review's heterogeneous content should 'resolve into order' for the 'intelligent reader'. It will reach to the assumed 'interests of any intelligent person with literary taste' or 'the man of general culture'.³³ Recent work by Mark Morrisson has stressed a contrary tendency in certain modernist magazines, an impulse 'to enter into what we now call the public sphere, rather than to create magazines to cater to a small elite'.³⁴ Chapters in this volume on

²⁸ Hoffman, *The Little Magazine*, Preface, p. v.

²⁹ *Ibid.* 2. ³⁰ *Ibid.* 2-3. ³¹ Williams, *Politics of Modernism*, 51.

³² Dora Marsden, 'Circular', for the *New Freewoman*, 1913, British Library, ADD Ms 57355.

³³ T. S. Eliot, 'The Idea of a Literary Review', *New Criterion*, 4:1 (Jan. 1926), 2, 4.

³⁴ Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism*, 17. Another drawback with Hoffman's definition concerns the historiography of the term 'little magazine', which he suggests only starts during the First World War. This ignores earlier instances of its usage and, crucially, its roots in continental Europe. F. W. Faxon's guide to 'Ephemeral Bibelots' of 1903 makes much use of the term to describe

magazines such as *Time and Tide* or *New Writing* confirm Morrisson's insight that certain, though not all, publications, sought out more than a minority of intelligent readers.

A more recent definition by Churchill and McKible echoes, yet broadens, the features identified by Hoffman:

little magazines are non-commercial enterprises founded by individuals or small groups intent upon publishing the experimental works or radical opinions of untried, unpopular or under-represented writers. Defying mainstream tastes and conventions, some little magazines aim to uphold higher artistic and intellectual standards than their commercial counterparts, while others seek to challenge conventional political wisdom and practice.³⁵

Both Hoffman's account and this description would embrace modernist innovation and avant-garde cultural politics as distinguished above. In general, however, they both incline to the latter and indeed Hoffman had suggested that 'advance guard' might be a better name than 'little magazine'.³⁶

Many British and Irish magazines, it must be said, meet Churchill and McKible's description: amongst the most well known would be *BLAST*, *The Egoist*, and *Rhythm*. Most of the magazines discussed in this and future volumes are devoted to a conception of the new, even where a valued art and literature belongs to the past and is thought due for renewal: they struggle financially, and are, at their most successful, advocates of an adversarial minority cultural position who find a supportive, independently minded readership. At the same time, however, many key magazines like *The New Age*, *The Athenaeum*, and *Criterion* do not conform to the type delineated above. Some claim, or are given, different identities by the more neutral sounding 'periodical' or 'journal', some take on the more traditional subhead of 'quarterly' or 'weekly', and some present themselves as more popular 'papers' or as more highbrow and academic, 'literary' or 'critical

chapbooks and hundreds of other such publications before 1900. One clear European antecedent for the term is found in Remy de Gourmont's essay and bibliography of *Les Petites Revues*, published in a 1900 edition by the Bookshop of the *Mercure de France*.

³⁵ Adam McKible and Suzanne Churchill, 'Little Magazines and Modernism: An Introduction', *American Periodicals: A Journal of History, Criticism and Bibliography*, 15:1 (2005), 3.

³⁶ Hoffman, *Little Magazine*, 3. Of interest in this respect are the earlier accounts by Ezra Pound in his essay on 'Small Magazines' (1930) and William Carlos Williams's 'The Advance Guard Magazine', *Contact* (Feb. 1932, Second Series 1, no. 18), 86–90. Williams's essay comprises brief notes on a dozen or so American-based 'small magazines' motivated in their reaction to Europe and the national monthlies by 'a desire for conscious self expression' (87). Innovations in verse were, he says, 'to the forefront' (ibid.). Most magazines, however, in Williams's view, soon failed on one count or another. He ends interestingly with the comment that the "small magazine" ... represents the originality of our generation free of an economic burden' and the maxim that "The measure of the intelligent citizen is the discretion with which he breaks the law' (89–90).

reviews'. Even as 'little magazines' a number are on occasion, by instinct, or on principle, more conservative in form and content (*New Numbers*); some have more stable subscription lists (*Century Guild Hobby Horse*) or large readerships (*New Writing*); others acquire the sponsorship of individuals, publishers, or institutions (*Egoist*, *Criterion*, *Close Up*, *Tyro*); many welcomed commercial advertising (*Life and Letters*; *Adelphi*) and some survived for a longer period than the stereotypical fugitive magazine (*The New Age*, *The Mask*). The 'little magazine' and companion small press, it should also be said, has survived longer than the cut-off point of the 1930s so often suggested in critical accounts, and even into the age of the Internet.³⁷

The 'little magazine' is, then, '[d]iverse in size, agenda and longevity' as Churchill and McKible put it.³⁸ This diversity and the internal tensions on occasion of format and content is brought out particularly well in Edward Bishop's attention to the 'bibliographic environment' or what we have termed the 'periodical codes' of a range of magazines from *The Yellow Book* and *The Savoy* to *The Criterion*. Thus, the controversial topics of the sex war, masturbation, and homosexuality discussed in Dora Marsden's *Freewoman* appear in a 'deeply conservative' format which claims a seriousness through its use of 'heavy titling and solid blocks of print' much like the *Times Literary Supplement*.³⁹ But as the more literary *Egoist*, known amongst other things for its publication of Joyce, the magazine dropped the subtitle 'an individualist review' and 'the heavy, barbed Latin Antique typeface' for 'the more slender and elegant Cason, with Garamond italics for the leading article'. In the end, under the editorship of Harriet Shaw Weaver and T. S. Eliot (as assistant editor), Bishop argues, it became 'more refined' in appearance and content, losing 'some of the punchy, bull-dog quality' of earlier editions.⁴⁰ The American *Little Review*, perhaps a more consistently cutting-edge publication and also known—and subject to legal censure—for its publication of Joyce, was pointedly amateur: 'the cover is not a cover, it is at first just a paste-on label or the table of contents in a colour patch stencil on to the flimsy paper, seldom centre exactly, and not bothered by the occasional bit of overspray at the sides.'⁴¹ It was committed to experiment

³⁷ The view of the short life of the 'little magazine' is summed up succinctly by Edward Bishop: 'The little magazine flourished for about forty years, from 1895 to 1935.' 'Re:covering Modernism—Format and Function in the Little Magazines', in Willison, Gould, and Chernaik (eds), *Modernist Writers and the Marketplace*, 287. But see David Miller and Richard Price, *British Poetry Magazines 1914–2000: A History and Bibliography of 'Little Magazines'* (London: British Library Publishing, 2006). A notable example of an Internet magazine is *Jacket* accessible on <http://jacketmagazine.com/00/home.shtml>. *Jacket* was established by John Tranter in 1997. It is committed, like many traditional 'little magazines', to new poetry and new poetry criticism but has no advertising, is distributed free to readers across the world, and makes all its back issues permanently available. *Jacket* uses the technology of the Internet, says Tranter, in terms reminiscent of an earlier avant-garde impulse, to pull capitalism 'inside out'.

³⁸ McKible and Churchill, 'Little Magazines', 3.

³⁹ Bishop, 'Re:covering Modernism', 300.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 307.

in the arts and provocatively declared its intention to make ‘no compromise with the public taste’. At the same time, it welcomed advertising (for, amongst other things, Goodyear tyres, restaurants and tea-shops in Greenwich Village, or the prize-winning popular fiction *Diane of the Green Van*). Its periodical codes would seem to conflict with its uncompromising cultural politics, but in essence it simply used the economic means at hand for its own ends rather than be used by them. In Pierre Bourdieu’s terms, in knowingly exploiting the meagre resources of ‘economic capital’ available to it, *The Little Review* accumulated significant ‘symbolic value’.⁴² A third example, *Poetry* (Chicago) in Bishop’s account, declared its conservatism in its ‘black letter typeface with the initial capital letters set off in red’ and ‘the device (also in red) of a scroll and pen’ on its title page.⁴³ Though under Ezra Pound’s influence *Poetry* was the first to publish the Imagists, its editor Harriet Monroe was, to his lasting frustration, cautious about Eliot. It nevertheless enjoyed a degree of ‘economic capital’, through its Chicago backers and in the eyes of contributors, since it paid \$10 a page, whereas *The Little Review* paid nothing. Only with Eliot’s *Criterion*—launched with the financial backing of Lady Rothermere and subsequently published at a loss by Faber and Gwyer—did economic and symbolic or cultural capital coincide. This was fitting, we might think, given Eliot’s skill in achieving the best economic and cultural advantage in the publication of his *The Waste Land* in *The Dial*.⁴⁴

All of these magazines, whether more conservative or more radical, earned a reputation as supporters of ‘modernism’, whether in its more formally experimental or culturally combative modes. Some other magazines which included modern or new writers were not at all ‘little magazines’. H. L. Mencken’s *Smart Set*, for example, seems closer to mass-market American magazines such as *Vanity Fair* or *The New Yorker*, but included work by Conrad, Pound, Joyce, Lawrence, and Scott Fitzgerald. Other magazines, amongst those considered in this volume, such as *Form* or *The London Mercury* were non- or anti-modernist, though they were engaged in determining questions of literary, artistic, and moral value and in promoting a rival notion, for or against, of what it was to be modern. In the case of *The London Mercury*, seen by Middleton Murry as an arch-rival to his own *Adelphi* and fellow progressives, this meant that its editor J. C. Squire did regularly review and debate with tendencies he opposed. The non- or anti-modernist therefore gave definition to the modernist, just as the latter gave definition to the more radical avant-garde. Others attempted to blast both modernist and

⁴² Ibid. For this distinction in Bourdieu, see his *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993) and *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

⁴³ Bishop, ‘Re:covering Modernism’, 307.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 309–14. And see Lawrence Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), ch. 3.

anti-modernist positions. One minor example is *The London Aphrodite* (1928–9), started by two Australians in London, Jack Lindsay and P. R. Stephensen, as a deliberate retort to *The London Mercury*. An initial manifesto, however, attacked both Squire's magazine and the camp he opposed: 'We stand for a point of view which equally outrages the modernist and the reactionary,' proclaimed the first issue.⁴⁵ Both camps, however, outlived the assault by the *Aphrodite*. The fuller picture, therefore, confirms the need to view magazines and the variety of tendencies comprising ideas of the modern as a lively congress of opinion and exchange rather than a flat segmented map or set of inflexible hierarchies. Clearly the juxtaposition Hoffman implies between the 'little' magazine and its larger rivals simply will not capture the nuanced distinctions evident in the periodical culture of modernism.

Equally complex is the distinction between the minority 'little magazine' and mainstream publications and their respective relations to dominant cultural attitudes, mores, and economies. It is a mistake clearly, given the above, to see this relation as a static binary opposition of distinct, homogenous areas. If mainstream or hegemonic culture, by definition, exercises power it does so for the most part by gaining consent and through strategies of exclusion, negotiation, or assimilation. Magazines in their turn, existing on the margins, and as part of a stratified counter or subaltern public sphere, contest, appropriate, and negotiate with this dominant realm. The chapters by Ardis, Dowson, and Morrisson, in particular, draw on Jürgen Habermas and others to explore the notion of the public and counter public sphere. We need a flexible and dialogic version of this distinction between spheres to understand the dynamic of the avant-garde and the relative stability, over time, of a 'normalized' modernism, overtaken, side-stepped, or made new again by its inheritors. We need to appreciate too the play of 'symbolic capital' accumulated by conspicuously non-commercial magazines against the hard-nosed economic capital which structures their very form and determines their survival. In addition we should note how 'symbolic capital' might accrue to a commercial publication that includes the avant-garde as a marker of its own 'being modern'.⁴⁶

Cultural formations

Discussion along these lines, informed by Habermas and Pierre Bourdieu, clearly assists us in framing the heterogeneous field of modernism in magazines. So too, we believe, does the work of Raymond Williams and his elaboration of the concepts of

⁴⁵ Jack Lindsay, cited in Earl G. Ingersoll, 'The *London Aphrodite*', in Sullivan, *British Literary Magazines*, 237.

⁴⁶ This aspect is seen in the publication or discussion of avant-garde figures such as Stein and Joyce in American mainstream magazines such as *Vanity Fair* or *The New Yorker*.

hegemony and formations.⁴⁷ Williams's distinction between 'dominant', 'residual', and 'emergent' cultural tendencies or practices has at the outset a flexibility that other more static identifications of the unitary character of cultural epochs or binary distinctions do not have. '[T]he complexity of culture', Williams writes, 'is to be found . . . in the dynamic interrelations at every point in the process, of historically varied and variable elements.'⁴⁸ The 'residual' he describes as that which 'has been effectively formed in the past, but it is still active in the cultural process, not only and often not at all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present'; 'emergent' emphasizes how 'new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships and kinds of relationship are continually being created'.⁴⁹ At the same time both the 'residual' and 'emergent' are defined in their variable relations with the dominant, itself responsive to change. Thus 'some part' or 'some version' of a residual cultural element 'will in most cases have had to be incorporated if the effective dominant culture is to make sense in these areas'.⁵⁰ Similarly, of the new meanings and practices associated with the 'emergent', Williams writes how 'it is exceptionally difficult to distinguish between those which are really elements of some new phase of the dominant culture . . . and those which are substantially alternative or oppositional to it, emergent in the strict sense, rather than merely novel.'⁵¹

Williams's model of a stratified cultural order in the process of change has a number of advantages for the study of periodical culture. In general, it offers a way of describing the relation of magazines to a hegemonic mainstream as an active and changing set of relationships, but also helps us identify 'residual' and 'emergent' emphases *within* single magazines or across the career of a changing title, group, or generation. Williams's terms therefore provide us with a cultural vocabulary, or the beginnings of a such a vocabulary, for describing, for example, the coexistence in *The English Review* of the established Thomas Hardy and Henry James along with the 'emergent' Pound and Wyndham Lewis; for situating the differences between the contemporaneous 'residual' features of *The Athenaeum* and the 'emergent' avant-gardist *BLAST*; for tracking the changes which took *Rhythm* from its experimental first phase of 'Bergsonian modernism' to its life as the more conventionally Georgian *Blue Review*; and for investigating the 'novel', 'alternative', or 'oppositional' features of the politically radical *Cambridge Left*, *Left Review*, and *Poetry and the People* in the 1930s, or of the several magazines edited by Scottish poet and polemicist C. M. Grieve (Hugh MacDiarmid). Many of these examples are taken up in the following chapters.

⁴⁷ See in particular Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); *Culture* (London: Fontana, 1981); and 'The Bloomsbury Fraction', in *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London: Verso, 1980).

⁴⁸ Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 121.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 122, 123.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 123.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

The second related term introduced by Williams is that of ‘cultural formations’. The term is a useful one in that it serves to connect a general social history of culture to specific cultural productions, styles, and forms (such as the many ‘movements’ or ‘isms’ which appeared increasingly in the modern period). A cultural formation is a formal or informal association of individuals engaged in some nature of cultural production which in turn sets them in different relations with broader trends in society. Williams discusses three artistic groupings in detail in these terms: William Godwin and his Circle, the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, and Bloomsbury, and we can readily see how this description might apply to some of the magazines of the 1930s, as above, or to the critical movement associated with the magazine *Scrutiny* (see Chapter 35).⁵² The emphasis on the group and the companionship, collaboration, and friction across artistic debate and social identities this involves is crucial to our understanding of how magazines work and how they encapsulate dialogic features in modernism(s) at large.

Williams’s discussion is suggestive, therefore, on a number of counts, particularly in its emphasis on the social relations of even relatively informal modes of cultural association and production. Even in Williams’s main examples, however (the ‘relatively simple’ Pre-Raphaelites and the ‘relatively complex’ formation of Bloomsbury), he introduces a typology ‘in bare outline’ which remains at many points in need of elaboration and concrete demonstration.⁵³ One general issue concerns the variety and scale of cultural formations: guilds or professional associations; the loosely organized and short-lived independent groupings of friends and associates we often see with ‘little magazines’; and ‘Schools’ or ‘movements’ such as Futurism or Surrealism. The most important and useful analytical guide across this wide field is the distinction Williams draws between a formation’s *internal organization* as a group and its *external relations*, both proposed and actual, to other organizations and to society more broadly. ‘Little magazines’ often belong to the type of ‘independent formations’ whose internal organization is ‘not based on formal membership, but organised around some *collective public manifestation*, such as an exhibition, a group press or periodical, or an explicit manifesto’.⁵⁴ This *collective* manifestation would distinguish those magazines produced by and representing a group agreed on a common literary or artistic taste or set of values, from a more individual production (one thinks of the difference between the cultural formation linked to *Scrutiny* and a magazine such as Lewis’s *Enemy*). Not

⁵² See *Marxism and Literature*, 115–20; *Culture*, 56–86; and ‘The Bloomsbury Fraction’, 148–69. For a detailed analysis of this notion see David Peters Corbett and Andrew Thacker, ‘Raymond Williams and Cultural Formations: Movements and Magazines’, *Prose Studies* 16:2 (August 1993), 84–106. Francis Mulhern argues in his study of *Scrutiny* that magazines comprise a set of practices in a specific history bound to other histories in a general historical conjuncture. *Scrutiny* he sees ‘not as an expression of a master-subject (Leavis) but as a play of many voices, within the ideological formation of which *Scrutiny* was the organizer and bearer’. *The Moment of Scrutiny* (‘Preface’, p. ix).

⁵³ Williams, *Culture*, 81–2.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 68.

all magazines, that is to say, embody a cultural formation. Sometimes, too, more than one manifestation (exhibition, press, periodical, manifesto) will be associated with a particular group (the Vorticists and *BLAST*); sometimes, indeed most often, a group will do no more than found a magazine, unaccompanied by other events or even by a manifesto.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, says Williams, a change occurred in the nature of certain cultural groups: some became not only internally structured as a 'working organization', but started to cohere around 'some much more general programme, including many or indeed all the arts, and often additionally, in relation to this, some very general cultural (and often "political") position'.⁵⁵ As examples he cites Futurism and Surrealism, groups working across various media, but also espousing general positions on the nature of society. At this point, the analysis of cultural formations, suggests Williams, requires us to attend not only to their internal organization but to their external relations to the wider world. He distinguishes between three types of such external relations: 'specializing' (which seek to support work in a particular medium or style); 'alternative' (which provide for forms of work excluded by present institutions); and 'oppositional' (which directly oppose existing institutions and the social and political conditions which uphold them).⁵⁶ All of these types can be explained by the increased diversity and specialization encouraged by a liberal market economy and associated class relations: either to occupy a niche position (specializing) or to set themselves against 'the practices and values of a "commercial" and "mechanical" civilisation' (alternative and oppositional).⁵⁷

Williams's emphasis is upon the social relations and public manifestation of forms of cultural production, of which magazines are but one example. Analysis of a wide range of magazines such as in the present volume demonstrates a landscape of perhaps more gradations than Williams's tripartite structure of specializing, alternative, and oppositional positions can easily capture. Some magazines can clearly be linked to fully formed cultural formations in which explicit positions are taken on the cultural or political issues (often found in the editorial statements and common in Left magazines of the 1930s); other magazines are linked to groups with an informal internal organization but who retreat from any active external relations to the wider world (Ricketts and *The Dial*; Graves and *The Owl*); in some others, such as *The Signature*, edited by Murry and Lawrence, the intended oppositional relations to the wider world (in this case the First World War) are neither truly shared nor executed: hampered both by the lack of a more coherent internal organization and by the magnitude of the ambition.

Williams refers to magazines as one kind of 'collective public manifestation' around which an informal group might organize itself. To study magazines more extensively, however, helps expand our understanding of the broad concept and

⁵⁵ Ibid. 69.

⁵⁶ Ibid. 70–1.

⁵⁷ Ibid. 73.

actuality of cultural formations. Firstly, it shows us how we need a vocabulary for the embryonic, modest, or limited examples as well as the 'simple' and 'complex' formations Williams identifies, where the latter have a more manifestly shared internal life and public profile. Secondly, it reveals how formations change over time: encompassing the often characteristic relations between magazines of imitation, rivalry, and competition or of their amalgamation, evolution, and decline. Part of this process and the character of the formation includes too the changing role of advertising and the fluctuation and segmentation of readerships and general relations of production.

What throughout is of interest is the relation between these 'internal' and 'external' worlds; between, in other terms employed in this volume, the counter-cultural or subaltern and the public sphere, for it is this which determines the well-formedness of a cultural formation and the position it takes as 'specializing', 'alternative', or 'oppositional'. These terms too, in practice, prove less compartmentalized than an abstract schema can easily comprehend, and are complicated also by the social relations of the group and the dominant social hierarchies of the broader society. Williams concentrates in this respect in his three most developed examples on social class and class 'fractions' to describe, for example, the, in some ways dissenting, in some ways conformist, position occupied by both the Pre-Raphaelites and Bloomsbury within and against a dominant English middle-class formation. However, the lesson of the magazines themselves emphasizes the importance of questions of gender, ethnicity, region, and nationality as well as social class, and these are factors brought out in subsequent chapters.

Williams does indeed comment, briefly and interestingly, on nationality and on the avant-garde in general as a 'paranational' formation.⁵⁸ This phenomenon he associates with immigration to the metropolis and with a metropolitan-based dissident artistic culture. Paranational 'avant-garde formations of this type', he writes, express a 'consciousness and practice . . . developing in the directions of metropolitan and international significance beyond the nation-state and its provinces, and of a correspondingly high cultural mobility'.⁵⁹ This speaks to a contemporary critical agenda on 'transnationality' and 'cosmopolitanism' and alerts us to the mobility of individuals, ideas, movements, and magazines across national borders.⁶⁰ Some obvious examples come to mind: *The Little Review* which shifted from Chicago to New York and Paris, and the transatlantic magazines *Broom* and *Secession*, which migrated respectively across European sites (Rome, Berlin, Vienna, Berlin, Florence) and New York. The metropolitan scene of London conformed to some of the features Williams outlines, but the British situation generally did not produce mobile avant-garde movements or magazines of this type. Ford Madox Ford's

⁵⁸ Williams, *Culture*, 83–4. ⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 84.

⁶⁰ See, for an original approach to this theme, Rebecca L. Walkowitz, *Cosmopolitan Style: Modernism beyond the Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

Transatlantic Review (considered in Volume 2 of this series) was edited from Paris, while *Close Up* was edited in Switzerland, printed in Dijon and then England, and networked through its various contacts across cinema cultures in Berlin, Moscow, Paris, New York, and London. Gordon Craig's *Mask* and Laura Riding's *Epilogue* were produced respectively in Florence and Majorca—away in fact from the major metropolitan centres. These were also, it has to be said, exceptions, which did not exhibit the literal mobility of some transatlantic and many 'paranational' European magazines. At the same time, many British-based writers and artists were very aware of European developments—from the 1880s onwards by way of the conduit of Paris—and this influenced the contents of magazines as different in other ways as *The Savoy*, *New Age*, and *Rhythm*. The design, editorial team, reviews, and advertising of the latter were also a clear indication of its international ambitions. Many magazines from the mid-1920s and in the 1930s, including *The Criterion*, *New Coterie*, *Close Up*, *European Quarterly*, and *New Writing*, were also consciously European or internationalist in their outlook and in their contributors. Throughout this history, too, Irish, Welsh, and Scottish magazines present a variously inflected relation to their own national cultures, to Europe, and to a dominant English modernism, calling on residual and emergent features to discover an alternative or oppositional stance.

The differences and similarities at the national and transnational level call for a geocultural analysis of the intricately dialogic and migratory character of modernism as an international or paranational formation. Williams's thoughts sketch a compelling perspective upon these criss-crossing networks. At the same time, as Williams reminds us, 'no full account of a formation can be given without attending to individual differences inside it.'⁶¹ Both the common and more specific or individual histories belong to the dramatic social, cultural, and economic narrative of twentieth-century modernity. We hope that the case histories of this and subsequent volumes will aid our understanding of both the material detail and dynamic relations of modernisms and modernity.

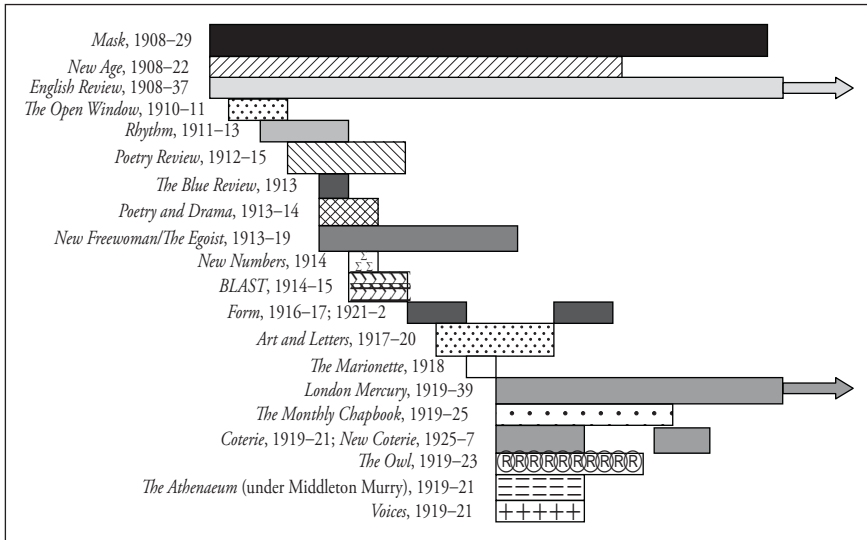
Methods and models

The very range and diversity of material discussed in this volume suggests how different critical methodologies might help analyse the different features of magazines. One suggestive method is presented by Franco Moretti's use of graphs, maps, and tables to analyse or 'model' an extensive literary field.⁶² Though we do not have

⁶¹ Ibid. 85.

⁶² See Franco Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for Literary History* (London: Verso, 2005).

Table 1. Timeline for Selected Periodicals, 1908–19



the space here to fully explore such a model for the study of modernist magazines a few examples might suggest a direction for future work.

One fruitful analytic tool is provided by a timeline of magazines and we offer an abbreviated version of such a device here for magazines from 1908 to 1919—a period which saw the emergence of modernism in Britain, the impact of the war, and the changed post-war environment for culture (Table 1).

This timeline, first of all, illustrates the coexistence of magazines otherwise thought of separately. Sometimes, too, unexpected magazines come into view: the year 1914, for example, highlights the coexistence of *The New Age*, *Egoist*, and *BLAST*, but reminds us also of other magazines published at this time such as the *English Review*, *Poetry and Drama*, and *New Numbers*. In 1919 London witnessed the coexistence of the *Mercury*, *Art and Letters*, *Form*, *Chapbook*, *Coterie*, *The Owl*, and *Athenaeum*. This alerts us to a set of synchronic relations or possibilities, a sense of the range of magazines an individual writer or illustrator could contribute to at any one time. It also indicates clusters of magazines running concurrently with an awareness of each other, in an overlapping or complimentary relation, but frequently in a relation of rivalry and competition, even if this was sometimes cooked up to boost sales. Diachronic patterns also appear, indicating the comparatively short or long lives of particular magazines. The perspective a timeline offers helps us appreciate the longevity of certain ‘little magazines’, for example *The Mask*, as well as giving us a sense of the average life cycle of the short-lived magazine (2–3 years seeming to be a norm here). We see also how production

was interrupted before picking up again in the changed world of post-war society, confirming how 1919 was a key year in the emergence of new voices. Looking back, we might question too, on this evidence, whether 1910, that key modernist year for Virginia Woolf, was as significant as 1908 or 1913 for the emergence of modernist projects.

A second approach might focus attention on a very material detail such as the price of magazines (Table 2). A number of features are worth commenting upon here. As we can see from Table 2, 2s. and 6d. seems to become a fairly standard price for both quarterlies and monthlies. However, this drops in the 1930s to 1s. and 6d., reflecting both economic factors at play in the period and, in the case of left-leaning magazines, a commitment to making the publication more widely available. Price is, of course, conditioned primarily by economic necessities but in certain cases where a magazine was supported by private finance or patronage, the price could reflect other factors. The relative cheapness of *Poetry Review*, *New Age*, and *Egoist* (all 6d.), for example, indicates an attempt to gain a wider readership or help produce a counter public sphere to that of the mainstream press.

Magazines whose price stands out as expensive in comparison to the norm tell a different story. The relatively high price of *The Owl*, *Golden Hind*, *Arson*, and *Epilogue*, for example, though they were very different kinds of publication, reveals an allegiance to an older tradition of the luxury cultural commodity (compare the price of *The Dial*, *Hobby Horse*, or *Yellow Book*) or the 'Book Beautiful' tradition, which was uninterested in reaching a large readership. T. S. Eliot's choice of the relatively expensive price of 3s. and 6d. for *The Criterion*, a periodical supported by individual patronage, suggests an attempt to deliberately market the magazine as appealing to the 'intelligent reader', which, as we have seen, was the selective readership Eliot envisaged.

Models and statistical analyses such as this are only indicative, and much more could be made of data of this kind on, for example, subscriptions, readership, circulation, sales, advertisements, and patterns of geographical distribution. This is clearly a direction in which the study of periodical codes might usefully go.⁶³

Structure and periodization

The present volume is organized into ten groups of magazines in sections ranging from a discussion of changes in publishing and readership in the nineteenth century to the situation after the Second World War. The discussion embraces the early nineteenth-century quarterlies and the Irish periodical *The Bell* which closed in 1954. Two other magazines referred to here, *The Studio* and *Time and Tide*, went

⁶³ We hope to put a range of such data on the Modernist Magazines Project website in due course.

Table 2. Prices of Selected Periodicals, c.1850–1950

Title	Shillings	Pence	Year	Frequency
<i>The Germ</i>	1		1850	Monthly
<i>The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine</i>	1		1856	Monthly
<i>The Yellow Book</i>	5		1894	Quarterly
<i>The Savoy</i>	2	6	1896	Quarterly
<i>The Dome</i>	1		1897	Quarterly
<i>The Dial</i>	10		1889	Irregular
<i>The Pageant</i>	6		1896	Annual
<i>The Acorn</i>			1905	Annual
<i>The Evergreen</i>	5		1895	Irregular
<i>Beltaine</i>		3	1899	Irregular
<i>Sambain</i>		6	1901	Irregular
<i>Dana</i>		6	1904	Monthly
<i>The Green Sheaf</i>		13	1903	Monthly
<i>The Poetry Review</i>		6	1912	Monthly
<i>Poetry and Drama</i>	2	6	1913	Quarterly
<i>The New Age</i>		1	1907	Weekly
<i>The English Review</i>	2	6	1908	Monthly
<i>The London Mercury</i>	2	6	1919	Monthly
<i>The Freewoman</i>		3	1912	Semi-monthly
<i>The New Freewoman</i>		6	1913	Semi-monthly
<i>The Egoist</i>		6	1914	Semi-monthly
<i>BLAST</i>	2	6	1914	Annual
<i>Rhythm</i>	1		1911	Quarterly
<i>The Blue Review</i>	1		1913	Monthly
<i>The Criterion</i>	3	6	1922	Quarterly
<i>Athenaeum</i>		6	1919	Monthly
<i>The Adelphi</i>	1		1923	Monthly
<i>The Calendar of Modern Letters</i>	1	6	1925	Monthly
<i>The Monthly Chapbook</i>	1		1919	Monthly
<i>Voices</i>	1		1919	Monthly
<i>Life and Letters</i>	1		1928	Monthly
<i>Coterie</i>	2	6	1919	Quarterly
<i>The Owl</i>	10	6	1919	Irregular
<i>Art and Letters</i>	1		1917	Quarterly
<i>The Apple</i>	6		1920	Quarterly
<i>Close-Up</i>	1		1927	Monthly
<i>The Bermondsey Book</i>	2		1925	Quarterly
<i>Wheels</i>	2	6	1916	Annual
<i>The Tyro</i>	1	6	1921	Irregular
<i>The Enemy</i>	2	6	1927	Irregular
<i>Form</i>	4		1921	Monthly
<i>The Golden Hind</i>	6		1922	Quarterly
<i>The Decachord</i>	1		1924	Bi-monthly
<i>Experiment</i>	1	6	1928	Irregular
<i>Cambridge Left</i>		9	1933	3-a-year
<i>Left Review</i>		6	1934	Monthly
<i>European Quarterly</i>			1934	Quarterly
<i>Poetry and the People</i>		6	1940	Monthly
<i>New Verse</i>		6	1933	Bi-monthly
<i>Twentieth Century Verse</i>		6	1937	8-times-a-year
<i>New Writing</i>	6		1936	Irregular
<i>Contemporary Poetry and Prose</i>		6	1936	Monthly
<i>London Bulletin</i>	1		1938	Monthly
<i>Arson</i>	5		1942	One only

(cont.)

Table 2. *Continued*

Title	Shillings	Pence	Year	Frequency
<i>The Welsh Review</i>	1		1939	Monthly
<i>Wales</i>	1		1937	One only
<i>The Bell</i>	1		1940	Monthly
<i>Klaxon</i>	1		1923	One only
<i>Poetry Scotland</i>	4	6	1944	Irregular
<i>Northern Review</i>	1		1924	Monthly
<i>The Modern Scot</i>	2		1930	Quarterly
<i>Million: New Left Writing</i>	2		1943	Irregular
<i>Scottish Art and Letters</i>	5		1945	Quarterly
<i>Daylight</i>	7	6	1941	One only
<i>Scrutiny</i>	2	6	1932	Quarterly
<i>Horizon</i>	1		1940	Monthly
<i>Poetry London</i>	1	6	1939	Bi-monthly
<i>Now</i>	2		1945	Irregular
<i>Kingdom Come</i>	1	6	1939	Irregular
<i>Epilogue</i>	7	6	1935	Annual

on into the 1960s and 1970. Individual chapters on particular magazines, therefore, take us from the embryonic ‘little magazine’ *The Germ*, the organ for its short lifetime in 1850 of the Pre-Raphaelites, to the discussion in the final chapter of F. R. Leavis’s *Scrutiny*, no longer a magazine of art and creative writing, but of criticism, which closed in 1953. This movement over a century from an artistic to a critical formation is symptomatic of the emergence, consolidation, and institutionalization of a version of predominantly literary modernism. It is a history of considerable variety, however, which at its end produced not only a canonical modernism but different claims on the relation of art, literature, and modernity. The individual chapters and the Part Introductions take up this history in detail but, in general, this is a story of the struggle to establish and maintain criteria of aesthetic and cultural value as a force in society from an embattled and combative position. While the magazines considered here were often opposed to the newness of modernity, conceived as a destructive force in the public realm of politics, mass society, and the economy, they defended and promulgated the new (which could mean a revaluation or re-instatement of the old or residual) in art and culture and saw this as the harbinger of some alternative order. Towards the end of the history considered here a more radical ‘new modernism’, drawing on the heritage of Romanticism and Surrealism, presented itself in Tambimuttu’s *Poetry London*, just at a time when *Scrutiny* (and a generation of American magazines) had installed modernism in the academy. But *Scrutiny*, as well as the earlier *Calendar of Modern Letters* which had helped inspire it, along with the contemporary magazines *New Verse* and *Twentieth Century Literature* and more overtly political publications, had fought in their own terms for an independent and principled creative spirit against a moribund and amnesiac society. At every point a study of the magazines renders

a seemingly homogenous and linear history back into the miscellaneous initiatives, fluid mergers, contentious factions, and strongly alternative *partis pris* which have composed it, revealing a loosely assembled cultural tradition of critical thinking: fragile and transitory, but, by that very token, testimony to an attitude of dissent and artistic innovation which is of lasting value.

I

VICTORIAN PRECURSORS



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INTRODUCTION

As discussed in the General Introduction, modernism and the avant-garde are commonly associated with the type of publication we describe as ‘little magazines’. Typically, these publications were short-lived, edited by a single-minded solo editor or a group of like-minded, if fractious, individuals and were devoted to a specific artistic or more broadly cultural programme which would transform experience and perceptions, not least of art itself. As we have argued, not all ‘modernist magazines’ or those which engaged with modernism were of this kind. Nor were all magazines conforming to the type of the ‘little magazine’ given to artistic experiment. They did, however, occupy a position at odds with or opposed to a received mainstream and did so out of a conviction that they stood for something better or more modern. This placed them in an alternative or counter public sphere or cultural formation.

We think of this type of magazine as we tend most often to think of modernism as a late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century phenomenon, ushered in by the forces of contemporary modernity and modernization. Amongst other developments this included changes in print culture and readerships and thus in book and magazine production and format. These changes were apparent from the 1830s. We would do well, therefore, as the following two chapters suggest, to extend our historical view if we are to appreciate the shaping social and technological context out of which kinds of modernism and a type of modernist magazine emerged.

Hadjiafxendi and Plunkett begin their account with some discussion of the form of the quarterly review, begun in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Its leading examples, *The Edinburgh Review* (1802–1929), *The Quarterly Review* (1809–1967), *Blackwood’s Magazine* (1817–1980), and *The Westminster Review* (1824–1914) came to assume a powerful role across most of the century. They took the form of miscellaneous publications examining literary, political, social, or historical issues and had relatively small readerships. Unlike the small circulations of later magazines however, the quarterlies served a select class of opinion makers at the centre of power and influence. Their high price reinforced this air of privilege. Several examples did, of course, continue into the twentieth century. When Ezra Pound arrived in London he was keen to write for *The Quarterly Review* whose harsh and unsympathetic comments in the previous century on John Keats had, so it is often

said, destroyed the poet. Pound's involvement in a quite other type of magazine, *BLAST*, the most declamatory and avant-garde magazine of the London scene, had something of the same effect. It 'stamps a man too disadvantageously', in the judgement of the *Quarterly's* then editor G. W. Prothero.¹ The *Quarterly's* doors and those of some other magazines were henceforth closed to him, contributing to a loss of income and his decision to quit London in some bitterness and disillusionment in 1920.

This episode in the 1910s appeared to set the old and new in stark opposition. On the one side there was the respected journal with respectable contents whose mission was to maintain both artistic and moral standards. On the other the outspoken magazine of avant-garde experiment which sought to disrupt convention, intervene in, and so transform the world. The past here clashed with the very modern. However, the differences between the *Quarterly* and *BLAST* had been shaped a good deal earlier. They derive, suggest Hadjiafxendi and Plunkett, from an earlier and somewhat paradoxical widening and narrowing of taste and reading publics. The miscellaneous contents of the reviews meant that their editors, contributors, and select readership could command a broad field of issues and debate at the centre of public life. The partisan differences between, say, the Whig *Edinburgh* and the Tory *Quarterly* were differences that operated within this hegemonic sphere. With the expansion of literacy, however, and the advent—or discovery—of an apparently hitherto unseen popular readership, the structure of public culture changed. Hadjiafxendi and Plunkett identify the practice of serialization, the appearance of popular penny fictions, the syndication of titles, and the impact of circulating libraries as key further developments. The quarterlies had helped professionalize the figure of the writer who could shift across the genres of fiction, commentary, and short essay in their pages. But the class of those who lived by the pen was subsequently faced more with a choice between the popular—allied of course to a mass market, the cynicism of hack writing, or possible commercial success—and the serious or minority pursuit of the art of writing. Both spheres, the 'popular' and the 'literary', though set against each other and clear evidence of how the centralized unity of earlier decades had been undermined, were also internally segmented: the one into a plethora of idioms and genres, the other into the narrower set of traditional genres, principally poetry, drama, and, above all, the novel. This situation itself became the subject of debate and fiction, as in George Gissing's *New Grub Street* (1891), on which Hadjiafxendi and Plunkett draw. Were serious artists to pursue their craft, preserve their integrity, and write honestly for an adult readership or surrender to conservative publishers, agents, and go-betweens who served a tame and moralizing middle-class readership—at the same time as 'popular' mass publications ran the gamut of sensation and sentiment? Individual writers, including Thomas Hardy, to whom Hadjiafxendi and Plunkett

¹ Ezra Pound, *Literary Essays* (London: Faber, 1960), 358.

draw attention, proposed their own solutions. The conditions were set, however, for the emergence of a coterie of writers and artists, or for the singular individual, to pursue their art in ways that outpaced commercial interests and a mass-market readership. Yet in seeking the niche of the 'little magazine' as the publication of choice, they were, as Hadjiafxendi and Plunkett argue, not only reinforcing the grand divide between high and low art and their respective audiences, but adopting the very strategies of the diversified market. Hence, in some ways, perhaps, the mixed polemics, vision, and frustration of the modernist endeavour. In the event, as further essays in this volume show, the situation was more complicated still, since the 'little magazine', if the prime vehicle for modernist innovation, was not the only stage on which different publics or writers and critics engaged with its forms and ambitions.

But we would be mistaken, once again, if we felt that all of this belonged to the turn of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, common though this emphasis has been. Both these chapters draw us back to earlier beginnings: in the second case, in Marysa Demoor's essay, to the Pre-Raphaelite magazine *The Germ* and to what she argues is the 'little magazine' in embryo.

The inception of *The Germ* in 1849 puts it significantly outside the usual periodization of modernism as a movement. But the 1840s were also precisely the decade when, as Hadjiafxendi and Plunkett report, market forces saw the simultaneous rise of a sustained popular readership for print media and an early trend towards the specialization which was to fragment that same expanding market. Liberal hopes that the freedom of the marketplace would bring an improvement in public taste had to contend with its simultaneous stratification and, in particular, the division between the serious and the popular. The quarterlies had been the organs of a select class with a wide social and intellectual purview. As the official magazine of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, *The Germ* was testimony to an altered situation where a magazine could serve the cause of art alone or, more precisely, the aesthetic taste and principles of a coterie. Art and the writer-artist might now occupy their own dissident, alternative realm.

The magazine, so it is thought, was the brainchild of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Its editor and chronicler was the teenaged William Michael Rossetti and the other members of the Brotherhood, Holman Hunt and James Collinson, were contributors and part-owners. It ran from January 1850 as a monthly at the price of one shilling with at first anonymous contributions of poetry, essays, and etchings, more than half of which were from the Rossetti family. It announced its aims in the mode that was to become customary of an editorial manifesto—essentially this was to 'enforce a rigid adherence to the simplicity of Nature either in Art or Poetry'. Its sales fell way below its high ambition, however. The first issue sold seventy copies, the second forty, the third and fourth under a new title, *Art and Poetry: Being Thoughts towards Nature*, fared no better and the magazine closed in April of the same year.

The story here, of a lack of financial acumen, recriminations and rivalry amongst its members, and loss of interest as the work of the individuals involved moved off in different directions, becomes a familiar one, repeated in the short lives of later magazines. But, remarkably, if this seems to sketch an ill-fated and poorly received venture, *The Germ* is recognized for significant contributions by the Rossettis, Ford Madox Brown, Thomas Woolner, and others, and, in an irony of the marketplace, had been republished twice by the turn of the century as Pre-Raphaelitism gained in popularity and copies of the magazine acquired a rising monetary value.

The influence of *The Germ* can be seen too in the short-lived undergraduate magazine (itself something of a subgenre of the 'little magazine') the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* (1856) and two American magazines, *Crayon* (1855–61) and the *New Path* (1863–5), equally inspired by Pre-Raphaelitism in general and Dante Gabriel Rossetti in particular. The *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, though it carried no illustrations, was broader in content than *The Germ*, and in William Morris, who financed the magazine, it produced a figure who took Pre-Raphaelite ideas in the direction of Arts and Crafts and a distinctive tradition of English socialism.

What still united these tendencies, however, was what Raymond Williams has termed their 'alternative' or at points 'oppositional' stance: based upon a shared belief in the Middle Ages as an artistic and social ideal and what Burne-Jones termed a 'Crusade and Holy Warfare against the age'. For Williams, the Brotherhood and its followers were ambiguously positioned as a class fraction, opposed to the philistinism of an increasingly dominant commercial and industrial bourgeoisie to which in their personal backgrounds and circumstances they themselves nevertheless belonged: they were in 'revolt against that class but for that class' as Williams puts it.²

This conflicted class position was to become, as Williams points out, a familiar feature in the situation of later modernist and avant-garde groups. They too experienced an often temporary unity around a principled appeal to the truth of art, if this was differently understood, and frequently viewed the past, in a disruptive set of new discriminations, as a source of renewal in the present. The specific aesthetics of these groupings were different and on these grounds alone we might not wish to view the Pre-Raphaelites or the specific contents of *The Germ* or *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* as 'modernist'. But this is something they prompt us to reconsider. More clearly, the social and artistic *relations* they embodied made them harbingers of the modernist configurations to follow. As the manifest and outward expression of these relations the Pre-Raphaelite 'little magazines' exemplified the very modern conundrum posed for an innovative and oppositional art movement in a modernizing society.

² Raymond Williams, *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London: Verso, 1980), 159.

THE PRE-HISTORY OF THE 'LITTLE MAGAZINE'

KYRIAKI HADJIAFXENDI AND JOHN PLUNKETT

The rise of the periodical press is the great event of modern history [...] it represents the triumph of moral over physical force; it gives every one of us a new sense—a sort of omniscience, as well as a new power—a sort of ubiquity.¹

In 1859, E. S. Dallas grandiosely proclaimed the instrumental role that the periodical press played in the development of nineteenth-century literary culture, and indeed society as a whole. The justification for his statement derived from a series of interlocking technological, cultural, and political developments that fuelled a tremendous increase in the production of books, newspapers, and periodicals from the 1830s onwards. By 1864, *Mitchell's Newspaper Press Directory* already listed 1,764 periodical titles; in 1887 it listed 3,597; and, by 1901, there were 4,914 periodicals being published in Britain.² This chapter argues that the rise of what became known as the 'little magazine' was part of this phenomenal expansion, even though its advent constituted an alternative and sometimes oppositional direction to dominant trends in newspaper and periodical production.

While the role of the 'little magazine' as a venue for the publication of modernism and other related artistic movements is the subject of continuing scholarship, little work has been done on the role that nineteenth-century print culture played in their development. There are obviously significant differences between the various magazines that flourished from the *fin de siècle* onwards, not all of them conforming to the fugitive and experimental type associated with the description 'little magazine'; nonetheless, the development of this type as an identifiable

¹ [E. S. Dallas], 'Popular Literature—the Periodical Press (No. 1)', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 85 (1859), 101.

² Simon Eliot, *Some Patterns and Trends in British Publishing, 1800–1919* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1993), 148.

format was keyed into changing perceptions of the nineteenth-century literary marketplace. Whereas subsequent essays offer analyses of individual magazines, this chapter traces the antecedents of the 'little magazine' in the Victorian newspaper and periodical press, with a particular focus on the discursive paradigms used to discuss nineteenth-century print media.

The character of the 'little magazine' and its corresponding role in modernist literary culture owes much to two basic elements of the periodical: its ephemeral nature and the commercial impetus driving their proliferation during the nineteenth century. In one of the first analyses of periodical literature as a distinct cultural form, the founder of the quarterly *Westminster Review* (1824–1914), James Mill, declared that, by its very nature, 'the production of any thing periodical, prompts to the study of immediate effect, of unpostponed popularity, of the applause of the moment.'³ The need for periodicals to make an immediate impact holds true for 'little magazines' in so far as they aimed to shape the artistic moment they were living through, often ceasing as quickly as they emerged.

In this same article Mill also claimed that, because of their dependence upon immediate influence, in order to be successful periodicals needed to 'patronise the opinions which are now in vogue, the opinions of those who are now in power'.⁴ Mill's opinion was often repeated: in 1859, for instance, E. S. Dallas noted that periodical literature 'should be calculated for the appreciation not of a few, but of the many. Periodical literature is essentially a popular literature.'⁵ In this light, the 'little magazine' was the exception that proved the rule in that it often contrasted with the commercialism driving the development of nineteenth-century print media, which did indeed create an inherent disposition towards 'popular' periodicals. The challenge 'little magazines' presented to the dominant aesthetic norms rendered any commercial success negligible, if not impossible, from their inception.

It is important to note that Mill's article focuses on the quarterly review, which, as a format, bestrode the cultural scene until mid-century, when cheap magazines started dominating the periodical press. Quarterlies began with the Whig *Edinburgh Review*, founded in 1802, followed by the Tory *Quarterly Review* in 1809, which opened in deliberate opposition to the *Edinburgh*; in 1817, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, a monthly magazine, was founded to undercut both, while the radical quarterly, *The Westminster Review*, was launched in 1824. Quarterlies provided a new forum for critical discussion: they reinvented the form of the review so that it became an extended discussion on literary, political, social, and historical issues. Their format was enormously influential throughout the nineteenth and

³ [James Mill], 'Periodical Literature I. Edinburgh Review. Vol. 1, 2, &c.' *Westminster Review*, 1 (Jan. 1824), 207.

⁴ *Ibid.* 209. ⁵ [Dallas], 'Popular Literature', 110.

twentieth centuries, as evidenced by subsequent periodicals such as the *Fortnightly Review* (1865–1954) and *Contemporary Review* (1860–).

Quarterlies differed from the 'little magazine' in two key ways that exemplify the more homogenous world of the early Victorian periodical press. The quarterlies consisted of articles on a wide range of subjects—science, history, politics, and literature—a practice continued by subsequent reviews. Joanne Shattock has noted that the 'crucial assumption of each number was that all areas of knowledge were not only accessible, but potentially of interest and part of one's general cultivation'.⁶ In contrast, early 'little magazines' such as *The Germ* (1850) and the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* (1856) were narrowly centred around a distinct aesthetic agenda or movement (see Chapter 2). Quarterlies also differ from 'little magazines' in that, partly because of their miscellany of articles, they were in the mainstream of cultural and political debate. Contributors included many of the key intellectuals and politicians of the period such as William Hazlitt, T. B. Macaulay, Harriet Martineau, Matthew Arnold, Henry Brougham, Herbert Spencer, and George Eliot.

Despite their differences, the fact that quarterlies emerged before the advent of a mass market for literature meant that they prefigured aspects of the non-commercial character of the 'little magazine'. Quarterlies were undoubtedly cultural heavyweights: like the 'little magazine', they had low circulations, with their importance stemming from the social position of their readers, not the numbers printed. At a time when literacy was relatively circumscribed, the quarterlies were expensive six-shilling periodicals, which operated as the connecting threads of a network among cultural and political decision-makers who, in turn, consolidated their own positions by grouping themselves around specific publications. This is particularly evident in the political associations of each periodical and the sometimes cliquish reviews of the arts, as, for example, the famously disparaging 1807 review of the 'Lake Poets' in *The Edinburgh Review*. In functioning primarily as organs for the views of particular cultural-political groups, they also prefigure the coterie character of the 'little magazine'.

What, in addition, 'little magazines' (and many other journals) inherited from the nineteenth-century quarterly reviews was the importance of the periodical as the *sine qua non* of critical discussion. As George Eliot put it, in an essay for *The Westminster Review* in 1854 on women's role in the seventeenth-century literary salon, 'What was once lavished prodigally in conversation, is reserved for the volume, or the "article"; and the effort is not to betray originality rather than to communicate it.'⁷ Intellectual exchange, even that taking place amongst the

⁶ Joanne Shattock, *Politics and Reviewers: The 'Edinburgh' and the 'Quarterly' in the Early Victorian Age* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1989), 10.

⁷ George Eliot, *Essays of George Eliot*, ed. Thomas Pinney (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), 60.

extremely small numbers who belonged to elite or avant-garde circles, now took place through the public forum of the periodical press.

Periodicals not only provided a new critical space: they also had a liberating effect on writers in that the growing number of journals and magazines allowed authors to live by their pens. Reviews and magazines, in part simply through their advent, but also through the multitudinous subjects they covered, provided significant new opportunities for writers to publish remunerative works. Authors of all sorts benefited—most importantly novelists—because many other journals and magazines, in contrast to the quarterlies, included fiction. Moreover, classifying authors as novelists, reviewers, or journalists invariably downplays the multiple forms of activity they carried out for the periodical press. Mary Elizabeth Braddon (*Belgravia*), Dickens (*Household Words*, *All the Year Round*), George Eliot (*Westminster Review*), Thackeray (*Cornhill Magazine*), and Trollope (*Fortnightly Review*) are among the well-known mid-Victorian writers who aspired also to work as journal editors.

Such was the importance of periodical production that, in an article for *Fraser's Magazine* in 1847, George Henry Lewes felt able to declare that 'Literature has become a profession. It is a means of subsistence, almost as certain as the bar or the church.'⁸ Lewes was in no doubt that the extensive commercial development of the periodical press was the prime mover in the professionalization of authorship: 'It is by our reviews, magazines, and journals, that the vast majority of professional authors earn their bread.'⁹ Against those who disparaged the fragmentary nature of periodical literature in favour of serious, heavyweight works, Lewes claimed that journals or essays provided the ideal intellectual space for succinct creative expression: 'A brilliant essay, or a thoughtful fragment, is not the less brilliant, is not the less thoughtful, because it is brief, because it does not exhaust the subject.'¹⁰ The confined space of the essay or article—in contrast to the time required for an extended treatment of a subject—encouraged the 'little magazine' to become a preferred vehicle for movements such as aestheticism or symbolism towards the end of the century because it allowed avant-garde writers and artists to make an immediate public intervention.

The increasing professionalism of the man and the woman of letters was only one consequence of the commercial dynamic driving the expansion of the periodical press. Publishing and printing were significant beneficiaries of the industrial revolution with advances in all aspects of the production and dissemination of texts, from the development of steam presses to the burgeoning railway network that carried novels and newspapers to every corner of Britain. Industrialization helped to make cheap print media possible. Charles Knight, the publisher who probably

⁸ [George Henry Lewes], 'The Condition of Authors in England, Germany, and France', *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*, 35 (1847), 285.

⁹ *Ibid.* 288.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 293.

worked hardest to disseminate low-cost reading matter in the 1830s and 1840s, once shrewdly declared that the process of printing was 'unquestionably a cheap process, provided that a sufficient number of copies of any particular book are printed, so as to render the proportion of the first expense upon a single copy inconsiderable.'¹¹ The Victorian periodical press, encouraged by population growth, rising living standards, and educational change and reform, was driven largely by the economic logic Knight identified. Increasing numbers of readers created economies of scale for publishers, which overall favoured lower prices and more production, which in turn attracted more readers in a continuous cycle of growth.

During the 1880s and 1890s, however, new developments in publishing led to attacks on the perceived dominance of the literary marketplace. Thanks in part to the influence of the periodical press, authors seemed to be increasingly caught between the incompatible demands of art and commercialism. George Gissing's *New Grub Street* (1882), for example, presents a jaundiced view of literary production in which the central character, the aspiring and calculating, yet unprincipled, writer, Jasper Milvain, unashamedly declares that literature is now a trade. In contrast to Lewes's celebration of the author-as-professional, Milvain's label brands authorship with the servitude of paid labour. For Milvain, the self-declared 'literary man of 1882', authors had to be ready to adapt themselves to the ever-changing demands of the market, such that 'when one kind of goods begins to go off slackly, he is ready with something new and appetising'.¹² In contrast to Edwin Reardon, the struggling novelist who fails to adapt his creative vision to the demands of the three-volume novel, Milvain embraces the protean demands of the market, selling his talents to a variety of periodicals before reaching the elevated position of a journal editor. Yet the greater Milvain's entrepreneurial brio, the more *New Grub Street* suggests that playing the literary marketplace demands insincerity. Published just before the first flowering of the 'little magazine', *New Grub Street*'s portrayal of the corrupt state of the periodical press shows how art has become no more than an alienated commodity.

The advent of the 'little magazine' in the last decades of the nineteenth century has often been seen as part of the well-known 'great divide' between modernism and mass culture.¹³ Recent criticism though has argued for a more nuanced understanding of the connections, rather than differences, between mass culture and modernism.¹⁴ Mark S. Morrisson has argued, for example, that, where 'little magazines' are concerned, 'The publicity and mass publication techniques that

¹¹ Charles Knight, 'The Commercial History of a Penny Magazine', *Penny Magazine*, 2 (1833), 377.

¹² George Gissing, *New Grub Street*, ed. Bernard Bergonzi (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), 38.

¹³ See Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987).

¹⁴ See, for example, Mary Hammond, *Reading, Publishing, and the Formation of Literary Taste in England, 1880–1914* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006); Lawrence Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

made wealthy men of publishers like Harmsworth, Pearson and Newnes in England [...] were quickly adapted, in varying degrees, by suffragist, socialist, and anarchist groups for their own purpose.¹⁵ ‘Little magazines’ occupy a contradictory position in that, while they provided an alternative, usually avant-garde, publishing space, they were nonetheless influenced by dominant trends in periodical production. An overview of the changing structure of the nineteenth-century periodical market demonstrates that the advent of the ‘little magazine’ was not only a response to the dominance of mass-market journals in the final decades of the century but a culmination of the broader fragmentation of the periodical market, and indeed of literary production in general.

While it was frequently claimed that the commercialism of the periodical press was one of the factors restricting the aesthetic development of literature in the 1880s and 1890s, it is important to emphasize that this was itself a reaction against the previously dominant discourse concerning print media. In the 1820s and 1830s in particular, but also in subsequent decades, the achievement of a free market in periodicals, newspapers, and books was seen as both liberating and politically radical. The infamous Six Acts of 1819, introduced by the government in the aftermath of the Peterloo massacre, together with the persecution of unstamped journals in the early 1830s, typify the way legal regulation of the press curtailed the operation of a free market, and had the particular aim of preventing the creation of cheap periodicals.¹⁶ It was only when the newspaper Stamp Duty was made optional in 1855, and paper duty was abolished soon afterwards in 1861, that the battle against the ‘Taxes on Knowledge’ seemed to have finally been won.

Significantly, aversion to the market was predominantly a Tory discourse. In contrast, Radicals and Whigs sought to promote a market-led economy by arguing for the democratic and progressive role of print media. They claimed that cheap periodicals had the potential to ‘raise’ the mental level of the nation as a whole—and to prevent revolution. The 1830s saw the commencement of several inexpensive ‘improving’ periodicals, most notably *The Penny Magazine* (1832–45), which was launched by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, *The Saturday Magazine* (1832–44), and *Chambers’s Edinburgh Journal* (1832–1926, with changes of title). The first issue of *The Penny Magazine* famously sold 213,241, an enormous number at the time.¹⁷ It was in the 1840s, however, that the victory of market forces

¹⁵ Mark S. Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 2001), 5.

¹⁶ On the Six Acts and the unstamped press, see Patricia Hollis, *The Pauper Press: A Study in Working-Class Radicalism of the 1830s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970). Other examples of the demand for a free market include the campaign against the Bookseller’s Association, which, from 1829 to 1852, upheld an agreement that prohibited booksellers from heavily discounting book prices.

¹⁷ Scott Bennett, ‘Revolutions in Thought: Serial Publication and the Mass Market for Reading’, in Joanne Shattock and Michael Woolf (eds), *The Victorian Periodical Press: Samplings and Soundings* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982), 225.

saw the rise of a sustained popular market for print media. Moreover, thanks to the dominance of serialization as a mode of publication, the fortunes of fiction and the periodical press became closely entwined.¹⁸ Although Dickens is well known for launching his career through the highly successful serial publication of *Pickwick Papers* (1836–7), the novel was actually published in relatively expensive shilling monthly parts. Serial fiction was equally enthusiastically taken up by the growing number of cheap penny journals in the 1840s, which sold hundreds of thousands of copies per week. Examples of best-selling penny fiction magazines include *The Family Herald* (1842–1940), *The London Journal* (1845–1928), *Reynolds's Miscellany* (1847–69), and *Cassell's Illustrated Family Paper* (1853–67). The circulation of these periodicals was enormous, even though many of the serial fictions, which were their principal attraction, have long since been forgotten. In 1852–3, the weekly circulation of *The London Journal* was over 500,000; in comparison, Dickens's *Bleak House*, issued as a monthly serial from March 1852 to September 1853, only averaged sales of around 34,000 per issue.¹⁹

The market dominance of penny fiction weeklies led to numerous attempts to conceptualize 'popular' literature. Critical accounts from the 1840s to the 1860s are significant in terms of the subsequent development of the 'little magazine' in that they wrestle with the conundrum of a marketplace ostensibly being newly divided between the 'popular' and the 'literary'. Whereas the 'little magazine' further substantiated a segmented periodical market, at mid-century there remained the Whiggish hope that the 'improvement' of popular taste could overcome the fracturing of the literary marketplace. There was a strong belief that people would naturally choose good literature if they were sufficiently liberated through education. 'Improvement', in other words, was part of a bid to create a common literary culture, and to concomitantly unify the market, based on a narcissistic belief that everyone wanted to read what the improver desired. Two influential articles, both written by middlebrow novelists, and published almost simultaneously in 1858—Margaret Oliphant's 'The Byways of Literature: Reading for the Million' and Wilkie Collins's 'The Unknown Public'—exemplify the fracturing of the market created by the success of cheap periodicals. Writing in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, Oliphant surveys a sixpence's worth of penny periodicals and discovers a multiplicity of literatures:

There are few words so difficult to define as that word literature, which is in everybody's mouth. To confine its meaning to that which we call literature, is about as exclusive and limited a notion as it is to confine that other term society to the fashionable world, which claims its name in sublime disdain of all competitors.

¹⁸ This bias continued in subsequent critical histories. For all its benefits, *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals* (1966–89), notoriously, did not include listings of poetry.

¹⁹ On the history of *The London Journal*, see Andrew King, *The London Journal 1845–83: Periodicals, Production and Gender* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

Almost as numerous as the distinct ‘circles’ which, upwards to the highest *haut monde*, and downwards to the genteel coterie of a village, each calls itself by the all-comprehending name, are the widespread oligarchies and democracies of that Republic of Letters.²⁰

Oliphant evades a simple high/low hierarchy, instead acknowledging the existence of numerous distinct literary fields, each with their own conventions, authors, and readers. While most of the article analyses the distinct features of penny fiction periodicals, Oliphant’s implicit assumption is that the literary market is fragmented to the extent that the readers of *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* have little cognisance of the completely different literary field occupied by *The London Journal* and *Family Herald*.

Wilkie Collins’s ‘The Unknown Public’, published in Dickens’s *Household Words* in August 1858, is similarly concerned with the impact of penny fiction periodicals. It has since become one of the most well-known pieces on nineteenth-century mass-market reading and exemplifies the anxiety created by the realization that the fiction market was becoming divided between the ‘popular’ and ‘literary’. Collins supposedly adopts an earnest ‘scientific’ method, akin to that of his friend, Henry Mayhew, in *London Labour and the London Poor*. He sets out to explore those who make up a previously ‘Unknown Public’ of some three million readers, professing—with surprise and astonishment—to have just discovered that the readers of newspapers, reviews, and circulating libraries constitute only a fraction of the British reading public. He makes it his mission consequently to explore the ‘Unknown Public’ and the profusion of penny novel-journals that cater to their literary tastes:

I left London and travelled about England. The neglected publications followed me. There they were in every town, large or small. I saw them in fruit-shops, in oyster-shops, in lollypop-shops. Villages even—picturesque, strong-smelling villages—were not free from them. Wherever the speculative daring of one man could open a shop, and the human appetites and necessities of his fellow mortals could keep it from shutting again, there, as it appeared to me, the unbound picture quarto instantly entered, set itself up obtrusively in the window, and insisted on being looked at by everybody.²¹

Collins’s quasi-anthropological approach—the explorer bravely daring to enter an unexplored literary wilderness—is obviously premised on a patronizing fallacy. The ‘Unknown Public’ he claimed to have discovered was certainly not unknown to itself, but only to the literary establishment to which Collins belonged.

²⁰ [Margaret Oliphant], ‘The Byways of Literature: Reading for the Million’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 84 (Aug. 1858), 203.

²¹ [Wilkie Collins], ‘The Unknown Public’, *Household Words*, 18 (21 Aug. 1858), 217.

Collins's class-based presumptions suffuse the article; indeed, one of the reasons why it has been so successful is that it seductively codifies many tropes concerning the spread of mass-market periodicals. Thus, for all his supposedly extensive efforts in tracking down readers, he is unable to find a single example of them. The 'Unknown Public' is never given a chance to speak for itself. Moreover, its taste is defined in commodity-led terms in being said to look for quantity in its reading rather than quality. The conclusion was that it was unable to appreciate 'good' literature, as defined by Collins and others like him: 'The Unknown Public is, in a literary sense, hardly beginning, as yet, to learn to read.'²² As evidence, Collins recounts how a proprietor of a penny novel-journal commissioned translations of Alexandre Dumas's *Le Comte de Monte Cristo* (1844–6) and Eugène Sue's *Les Mystères de Paris* (1842–3) and *Le Juif Errant* (1844).²³ The circulation of the journal, however, decreased markedly when these fictions were introduced, from which Collins infers that its readers were unaccustomed to the 'delicacies and subtleties of literary art'. The presumption that the 'Unknown Public' would desire the literary fare Collins thinks they should be reading—if only their taste was properly educated—is premised on his belief in a common aesthetic judgement.

Collins's response to a segmented literary market was to hope for the advent of a heroic man of letters who would unite its disparate publics. The future writer who was able to educate the 'Unknown Public' would achieve an unprecedented success:

A great, an unparalleled prospect awaits, perhaps, the coming generation of English novelists. To the penny journals of the present time belongs the credit of having discovered a new public. When that public shall discover its need of a great writer, the great writer will have such an audience as have never yet been known.²⁴

This desire for a unified literary culture pervades discussions of print media during this period. Its most famous expression is probably Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), in which he argues that the laissez-faire approach to literary judgement is encouraged by the absence of an authoritative cultural centre like an Academy. The problem was exacerbated, for Arnold, by the way that the periodical press proliferated to reflect the diverse literary tastes of its readers: 'Each section of the public has its own literary organ, and the mass of the public is without any

²² Ibid. 222.

²³ Collins's example stems from when Bradbury and Evans, the publishers of *Household Words*, bought the *London Journal* in 1857, and assigned its editorship to a friend of Dickens and Collins, Mark Lemon. Andrew King has shown that Lemon's attempt to rebrand the *London Journal* resulted in a huge loss of readership. For more details, see King, *The London Journal*, 17–20.

²⁴ [Collins], 'Unknown Public', 222.

suspicion that the value of these organs is relative to their being nearer a certain ideal centre of correct information, taste, and intelligence, or farther away from it.²⁵

Like Collins, Arnold's fear was that the fragmentation of the periodical market—with each journal having its own dedicated readership—created an unduly heterogeneous public sphere instead of a common culture. It is this heterogeneity that certain 'little magazines' were to capitalize on, seeking an elite readership able to appreciate the particular avant-garde tendency they promoted.

The split between mass-market periodicals and 'quality' literature was part of a much broader fragmentation of the periodical market. The expansion of the periodical press was characterized not only by the growth of individual circulation figures but by the proliferation of journals devoted to specific interests. Each trade, art, religious group, and social cause had its own organ: there was a mining journal, a racing post, a shipping gazette, *The Builder* for architects, and *The Mechanics' Journal* for artisans. In his 1859 survey of the periodical press, Dallas declared that the 'multiplicity and speciality of its divisions' was 'the most remarkable characteristic of periodical literature'.²⁶ According to Dallas, it was now 'the rarest thing in the world for a periodical to succeed which does not either represent a class of readers or select a class of subjects.'²⁷

This proliferation of what were called 'class' journals turned the periodical press into a form of popular representation in so far as every interest had a public voice; however, they also demonstrate the extent to which it was thoroughly imbued with the logic of the market. There was a tendency towards specialization that encouraged each periodical entering the market to create its own niche in order to successfully differentiate itself from those already in circulation. Novelists were also increasingly subject to this logic: Leopold Wagner's *How to Publish* (1898) advised writers to begin by establishing 'a reputation in the magazines for a special kind of story', explaining how 'Mr Kipling is identified with Indian life, Mrs Stannard ("John Strange Winter") with cavalry life, Mr G. R. Sims with London life (of a sort), while Mr Anthony Hope, Mr Machen, and others are all *specialists* in fiction.'²⁸ The segmentation identified by Dallas and others was also key, as we can see, to the emergence of the 'little magazine' which gave a public voice to small artistic groupings. For although often set against a market-driven literary economy, the 'little magazine' was equally the product of the specialization encouraged by the wider economy of the periodical market.

²⁵ Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, ed. J. Dover Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 110.

²⁶ [Dallas], 'Popular Literature', 102. For a similar analysis, see, 'Cheap Literature', *British Quarterly Review*, 29 (April 1859), 313–45.

²⁷ [Dallas], 'Popular Literature', 102.

²⁸ Leopold Wagner, *How to Publish a Book or Article and How to Produce a Play: Advice to Young Authors* (London: G. Redway, 1898), 43.

The specialization of the 'little magazine' was also the product of dissatisfaction with the general character of the miscellany, which had been the staple form of so many periodicals. The late nineteenth-century desire for more dedicated discussion of aesthetic concerns is well expressed towards the end of Gissing's *New Grub Street*. Marian Yule believes she has inherited £5,000 following the death of her uncle; her father, the literary journalist Alfred Yule, suggests that she should invest her money in his pet project, a new, exclusively literary, review, which would discuss the pressing concerns of 'modern' literature as well as including serial fiction 'of the better sort'. As his friend Quarmby declares, 'The *Fortnightly*, the *Contemporary*—they are very well in their way, but then they are mere miscellanies. You will find one solid literary article amid a confused mass of politics and economics and general clap-trap.'²⁹ Yet it was the miscellaneous nature of the *Fortnightly* and *Contemporary* that helped to ensure their continued viability. In the novel, Marian wisely rejects her father's offer, describing it as a speculation, and wonders if the £5,000 would be enough capital to provide the necessary start-up funds. As 'little magazines' would discover, the scale of the late nineteenth century periodical press meant that ever-larger capital was required to make a new journal a sustainable enterprise, hence the emergence of media magnates like George Newnes, founder of *Tit-Bits* (1881–1970) and *The Strand* (1891–1950); Alfred Harmsworth, who launched the halfpenny *Daily Mail* (1896–); and Arthur Pearson, publisher of the *Daily Express* (1900–) and *Pearson's Magazine* (1896–1939). The scale of their operations was reflected in the circulation figures: *Tit-Bits* and *Pearson's* enjoyed sales of 400,000–600,000 in the late 1890s, while the July 1896 issue of *The Strand* sold 392,000 copies.³⁰

Those who believed that an unbridled commercialism was afflicting the periodical and newspaper press ascribed blame to various causes. One of the chief culprits, in both contemporary discussion and subsequent histories, was the 1870 Education Act, which made it compulsory for children between 5 and 13 to attend school. As a result, a generation of youthful readers came to the fore. In *New Grub Street*, once more, Milvain, declares that 'it's obvious what an immense field there is for anyone who can just hit the taste of the new generation of Board School children.' However, he immediately warns that such writing requires the cultivation of a specific type of vulgarity.³¹ The number of 'juvenile' novels recorded by the *Publisher's Circular* rose from 188 in 1874 to 470 in 1879, while the 1880s and 1890s also saw large circulations achieved by new periodicals aimed at the juvenile market, such as *Boy's Own Paper* (1879–1976), *Chums* (1892–1934), *Girl's Own Paper*

²⁹ Gissing, *New Grub Street*, 344–5.

³⁰ Richard Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 396.

³¹ Gissing, *New Grub Street*, 65.

(1880–1965), and *The Captain* (1899–1924).³² *The Boy's Own Paper* and *Girl's Own Paper* claimed to enjoy circulations of 200,000 soon after they were launched in 1880.³³

Not everyone, however, welcomed the new generation of Board School readers and the further market segmentation created by the advent of another distinct group of literary consumers. The fears over the type of reading matter that would be produced are typified in *New Grub Street* by Whelpdale's plans for a new journal dedicated to the 'quarter-educated'. The journal was to be called *Chit-Chat*, a clear parody of Newnes's recently launched *Tit-Bits*. No article in the paper was 'to measure more than two inches in length, and every inch must be broken into at least two paragraphs'.³⁴ *Chit-Chat* was to be for those who could read, albeit rudimentarily, and who were thereby perceived as incapable of sustained attention. One corollary of this anxiety over the new generation of readers was the declining status of the man of letters. Writing in *The Fortnightly Review* in 1889, Walter M. Gattie, echoing Gissing, warned that he had lost his role as a guider of public taste, declaring that 'we have extended the literary franchise, and those who would succeed must learn to pander to the new electorate.'³⁵

Debates about the character of the periodical and newspaper press were particularly charged because as well as exercising a general cultural influence they continued to have a significant impact on the production and dissemination of fiction. Graham Law has argued that, from around the mid-1870s, the dominant mode of periodical production for novelists 'moved from serialisation in single metropolitan magazines, whether monthlies like *Cornhill* or weeklies like *All the Year Round*, to syndication in groups of provincial weekly newspapers with complementary circulations'.³⁶ The shift from periodicals to newspapers for the publication of serial fiction also led to literature being more explicitly treated as a commercial entity: 'The general trend during the Victorian period was from the predominance of monthly serialisation in relatively expensive, low-circulation formats, produced as petty commodities for the bourgeois market by the book publishers to that of weekly circulation in relatively cheap, high circulation formats, produced as commodities for the mass-market by newspaper proprietors.'³⁷

Shilling monthly journals, like *The Cornhill Magazine*, *Temple Bar* (1861–1906), *Belgravia* (1866–99), *Tinsley's Magazine* (1867–92), *Macmillan's Magazine*

³² Peter Keating, *The Haunted Study: A Social History of the English Novel 1875–1914* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1989), 32.

³³ Kirsten Drotner, *English Children and Their Magazines, 1751–1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 115. See also Altick, *English Common Reader*, 395.

³⁴ Gissing, *New Grub Street*, 494.

³⁵ Walter Montague Gattie, 'What English People Read', *Fortnightly Review*, n.s. 46 (September 1889), 323.

³⁶ Graham Law, *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 33.

³⁷ *Ibid.* 14.

(1859–1907), and *The Argosy* (1865–1901), which enjoyed large circulations when they were launched in the 1860s and which serialized the fiction of George Eliot, Braddon, Trollope, and Wood, found their influence waning in the face of organizations such as Tillotson's Fiction Bureau. Tillotson's is probably the best known of the various coteries that organized the syndication of fiction into newspapers. It put together its first deal in 1873, when William Frederic Tillotson, proprietor of the *Bolton Weekly Journal*, paid £450 for the short-term serial rights to Mary Elizabeth Braddon's new novel, *Taken at the Flood* (1880), which subsequently appeared in a dozen provincial newspapers.³⁸

The effect of syndication, depending on one's viewpoint, was either to further the commodification of literature or to provide another financial opportunity for authors. Novelists obviously benefited by reaching larger readerships through different forms of publication. As Simon Eliot has demonstrated, this was a well-established pattern by the 1880s: thus a novel was initially serialized in a periodical or newspaper, then released as a three-decker, and then went through a series of cheap reprints, beginning at 3s. 6d. and moving down to a paperback at 6d.³⁹ With syndication, the complexity of publishing arrangements gave rise to a new phenomenon, the literary agent. That such a development continued to attract opprobrium from those wedded to a more romantic view of literary production is evident in a diatribe sent by Ouida to *The Times* in 1891, in which she complained bitterly against both syndication and the literary agent. For Ouida, 'the question of pounds, shilling, and pence must always chafe and jar when brought into connection with the children of thought.'⁴⁰ Ouida's views even led her to attack the Society of Authors for working to protect and further the interests of writers simply because it treated authorship as a profession. (The Society of Authors was founded in 1883, with Walter Besant as its guiding force and first chairman.) The problem, however, was not simply the issue of creative freedom because, as Peter Keating has pointed out, traditional modes of publication began to come up against the fact that 'The novelist had metamorphosed himself into an Artist, and described himself proudly as such.'⁴¹ As Gissing and Ouida demonstrate, antagonism towards the market itself encouraged a highly romantic view of literary labour.

The demands of publishers, libraries, and journals meant that the desire for a man of letters who would unite the disparate literary publics through the operation of the market crucially shifted into the converse perception: that writing according to a common literary standard set by the market was aesthetically restrictive. The high-Victorian enlightenment aspiration for a common literary

³⁸ Ibid. 41.

³⁹ Simon Eliot, 'The Business of Victorian Publishing', in Deidre David (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 53.

⁴⁰ Ouida, 'New Literary Factors', *The Times*, 22 May 1891, 3.

⁴¹ Keating, *Haunted Study*, 387.

culture metamorphosed into *fin de siècle* fears that the dominance of mass-market fiction would reduce literary taste to the lowest common denominator. As Mary Hammond has pointed out, 'The diversity and success of the mass publishing industry helped to encourage a new emphasis on limited editions, sponsorship, and coterie publishing as the only radical places to go.'⁴²

Tension caused by the influence of naturalism and aestheticism was exacerbated as the growth of the reading public revived fears about the moral influence of fiction. In one example of the constraints experienced by novelists attempting to push the boundaries of fiction, Thomas Hardy in 1887 agreed to a contract with Tillotson's for *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* for one thousand guineas. Not for the first time in Hardy's career, however, changes were demanded in the novel after Tillotson had seen proofs and was 'taken aback' by the content. On this occasion Hardy refused, and the contract was amicably cancelled. *Macmillan's Magazine* and *Murray's Magazine* also turned down *Tess*.⁴³ Edward Arnold's comments for *Murray's Magazine* on the portrayal of 'immoral situations' in novels exemplify the way journals could hold back experimentation: 'I know well enough that these tragedies are being played out every day in our midst, but I believe the less publicity they have the better, and it is quite possible and very desirable to grow up and pass through life without knowledge of them.'⁴⁴

Tess was eventually serialized in the *Graphic* in a bowdlerized version. When it was published in book form in 1891, Hardy noted that only then could he 'piece the trunks and limbs of the novel together, and print it complete, as originally written two years ago'.⁴⁵

The conservatism of journals and fiction syndicates was not the only part of the publishing and circulation network to put a brake on literary experimentation. George Moore's pamphlet *Literature at Nurse, Or, Circulating Morals* (1885) famously attacked circulating libraries for stunting the aesthetic development of fiction. Moore's target was the influence of circulating libraries over publishers, readers, and, ultimately, the creative choices of authors. For its many late-Victorian critics, circulating libraries were a cause célèbre of the way the relationship between authors and the network of publishers and libraries had become weighted in favour of the latter. The lack of creative autonomy experienced by writers like Moore, whose work was influenced by the naturalism of Émile Zola, played its part in encouraging the advent of 'little magazines' as a space for avant-garde writing.⁴⁶

⁴² Hammond, *Reading, Publishing, and the Formation of Literary Taste*, 196.

⁴³ Hardy's difficulties with journals are more fully described by Keating, *Haunted Study*, 259–64.

⁴⁴ Quoted *ibid.* 261. ⁴⁵ Quoted *ibid.* 262.

⁴⁶ Mary Hammond demonstrates that the conservative reputation of public and circulating libraries was widespread, although the writers they excluded were not invariably the same. See

Before the establishment of large numbers of public libraries in the late 1880s and 1890s, circulating libraries were one of the principal spaces where readers could gain access to new novels. At the forefront of their development had been Charles Mudie's 'Select Library', which first opened in London in 1842. For a yearly fee of a guinea, subscribers were allowed to borrow one volume at a time, thereby providing access to a volume of reading matter that they could never afford to buy. Mudie's, together with competitors like W. H. Smith's, provided a guaranteed market for the publication of novels in the standard three-volume format, which were otherwise available only at the very expensive industry-set price of 31s. 6d. The fact that they provided a guaranteed large sale of new novels in three volumes meant that they could regulate what was published and how it was published.

Mudie's moral standard was set by what could be shown to a respectable young girl without embarrassment. The 'Select' in Mudie's title emphasized that it only provided 'respectable' fiction for its predominantly genteel readers. Moore famously labelled Mudie's as the 'British Matron'—turning the literary arena into a place where 'none can enter except in baby's clothes'—after it had refused to stock his novel, *A Modern Lover* (1883). Mudie reputedly wrote to Moore to tell him that 'two ladies in the country had written to him to say that they disapproved of the book, and on that account he could not circulate it.'⁴⁷ At one level Moore's response in *Literature at Nurse* is problematic in that, like Gissing, he creates a gendered binary between the 'adult' concerns of his own work and the bland, orthodox, restrictive mass market, that is both feminized and infantilized. Nonetheless, his response to Mudie's—to successfully publish *A Mummer's Wife* (1885) in a single volume priced at 6s.—was a sign of things to come. The moribund three-volume novel was finally discarded in June 1894, when Mudie's and W. H. Smith announced that they would no longer pay more than 4s. per volume for fiction.

Much of Moore's ire was directed at what he saw as the hypocrisy of the circulating libraries since Mudie's supplied popular fiction with scenes as sexually graphic as any in his novels. He saw that his work was perceived as immoral because of its avant-garde associations. Here, the case of the publisher of Moore's pamphlet, Henry Vizetelly, is particularly revealing of the antagonism created by the new literary movements of aestheticism and naturalism. Despite unmistakable warnings, persecution from the National Vigilance Association meant that Vizetelly risked, and eventually served a prison sentence in 1889 for publishing a translation of Zola's *La Terre* (1887). Whereas in the 1830s writers and publishers risked imprisonment for their political views, towards the end of the century it seemed as if it was the *aesthetics* of print media that needed rescuing through a heroic stance against

Hammond, *Reading*, 47–50. On Mudie's, see Guinevere L. Griest, *Mudie's Circulating Library and the Victorian Novel* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1970).

⁴⁷ George Moore, *Literature at Nurse, Or, Circulating Morals* (London: Vizetelly, 1885), 3–4.

oppression. Market segmentation had developed its own self-evident truth: what was required were specialized outlets where ‘advanced’ writing and criticism could be published for the small numbers able to appreciate it.

That the ‘little magazine’ stems from a reaction against the literary marketplace, and yet was simultaneously a product of its segmentation, is particularly evident in a well known set of articles published in *The New Review* in 1890. Essays by Walter Besant, Eliza Lynn Linton, and Thomas Hardy, while offering very different solutions, were united in what they saw as the constraints afflicting British fiction. Moreover, Linton, and Hardy both sought to promote and institutionalize, rather than decry, the fractured nature of the market. In his article, Besant—ever the arch-professional—was quite happy to declare that ‘Average Opinion’ was essentially philistine, and thereby to accept that when the writer enters the literary marketplace, ‘He who works for pay must respect the prejudices of his customers.’⁴⁸ While Besant, himself a three-volume novelist, acknowledged the moral censorship of the circulating libraries in restricting the portrayal of sexual relations, he argued that ‘Average Opinion’ was right in so far as authors must recognize that ‘such [unmarried] Love is outside the social pale and is destructive of the very basis of Society’.⁴⁹

Linton went much further than Besant in arguing that English readers were the ‘most restricted in their choice of subjects’ due to the influence exerted by the British matron.⁵⁰ She particularly attacked the imposition of a common moral and aesthetic standard, whereby all fiction had to be suitable for a young woman about to be married. Her response was to demand a fiction-market regulated at the point of reception, so that writers would not have to neuter their work by making it universally suitable:

To whom ought Fiction be addressed?—exclusively to the Young Person? or may not men and women, who know life, have their acre to themselves where the *ingénue* has no business to intrude? Must men go without meat because the babes must be fed with milk? Or because men must have meat, shall the babes be poisoned with food too strong for them to digest? I, for one, am emphatically in favour of specialised literature. Just as we have children’s books and medical books, so ought we to have literature fit for the Young Person and literature which gives men and women pictures of life as it is.⁵¹

Linton’s desire was for a fiction-market segmented as much between experimental and popular writing as between material suitable for adults and that for children. Like Moore, Linton’s anger was exacerbated by what she saw as the hypocrisy of

⁴⁸ Walter Besant, ‘Candor in English Fiction’, *New Review*, 2 (Jan. 1890), 7.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 9.

⁵⁰ Eliza Lynn Linton, ‘Candor in English Fiction’, *New Review*, 2 (Jan. 1890), 10.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* 11.

the mass market which allowed popular journals, as she saw it, the freedom to print all manner of graphic details denied to serious fiction.

Linton's solution was to return to the practice of the locked bookcase that would prevent access to those texts not suitable for young readers. In her view, the conflicts created by an increasingly segmented market could only be alleviated by replicating this fragmentation at the level of access and distribution. Typically, her solution is both conservative and liberating. On the one hand, she implicitly accepts the further fragmentation of the market; on the other, she remains concerned about the influence of the indiscriminating availability of texts that dealt freely with matters of sexuality—hence the patriarchal model of the locked bookcase.

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, given his own experience with editors and publishers, Hardy's article for *The New Review* also ascribed the dishonest portrayal of relations between the sexes in fiction to the influence of the periodical press and circulating libraries. Like Linton, Hardy saw the problem in terms of novels having to be acceptable for a universal moral and aesthetic standard. Popular magazines and circulating libraries aimed at 'household reading, which means, or is made to mean, the reading either of the majority in a household or the household collectively'.⁵² Whereas such institutions initially fostered literature, now 'They directly tend to exterminate it by monopolising all literary space.'⁵³ In a literary marketplace whose strictures were becoming more pervasive the 'little magazine' was to emerge as one of several responses to the need for just such an alternative publishing space.

Hardy's solution, like Linton's, was to regulate access to literary texts, institutionalizing a segmented mode of production and readership. His suggestions included allowing books to be bought but not borrowed in order to encourage them to 'resolve themselves into classes instead of being, as now, made to wear a common livery in style and subject, enforced by the supposed necessities in addressing indiscriminately a general audience'.⁵⁴ In other words, to encourage purchasers to recognize books corresponding to their taste, publishers should aim at creating distinctions, rather than a commonality, of form. Hardy also suggested there should be magazines for adults 'who have artistic interests at heart', as well as magazines for the middle-aged and old. Hardy's solutions only serve to reinforce market segmentation further. His call for 'adult' periodicals centred on aesthetic concerns exemplifies the motivation of many 'little magazines' in reaction to the dominant values of the periodical market.

In his essay 'Small Magazines' (1930), Ezra Pound conveniently declared that the origin of the 'little magazine' was lost in obscurity, while simultaneously arguing that the format was necessitated because 'the "better magazines" had

⁵² Thomas Hardy, 'Candor in English Fiction', *New Review*, 2 (Jan. 1890), 17.

⁵³ *Ibid.* 17. ⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 21.

failed lamentably and even offensively to maintain intellectual life.⁵⁵ Pound's unflattering description of mass-market journals in his essay—ephemeral and monotonous—would have been immediately recognizable to Gissing, and even Collins. In making the 'little magazine' the hero of a struggle between art and the market, Pound, like Linton and Hardy in *The New Review*, drew upon an already overdetermined binary. In so doing he neglected the more variegated fracturing of the periodical market described by Oliphant, Dallas, and Arnold, without which the 'little magazine' would not have emerged as an alternative publishing space to the mass-market journals of the 1880 and 1890s.

⁵⁵ Ezra Pound, 'Small Magazines', *The English Journal*, 19:9 (Nov. 1930), 689.

IN THE BEGINNING, THERE WAS *THE GERM*

The Pre-Raphaelites and ‘Little Magazines’

MARYSA DEMOOR

The Pre-Raphaelites and ‘little magazines’? It seems like a contradiction in terms. How can one associate the painters of those grand, moralizing scenes with the genre of the ‘little magazine’, a type of publication which conjures up ephemerality, youth, subversiveness, and sometimes even immorality. Indeed, the genre of the ‘little magazine’, as discussed in the Introduction to this volume, is generally associated with a modernist print culture. Thus, Edward Bishop limits the flourishing period of the ‘little magazine’ to the years 1895–1935 and Felix Pollak situates the beginning of the ‘little magazine’ ‘for all practical purposes around 1900’.¹ One tends to forget, however, that there are instances of ‘little magazines’ throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In fact, the ‘little magazine’ as a genre is still very much alive today or is at least constantly being resuscitated.² Admittedly, the so-called modernists were probably the most vociferous generation of the past three centuries, and they brilliantly succeeded in appropriating the genre as their own, making sure later generations think of them whenever they hear the phrase. Theirs was, indeed, a period in which ‘little magazines’, as we know them, proliferated.

¹ Edward Bishop, ‘Re:covering Modernism—Format and Function in the Little Magazines’, in Ian Willison, Warwick Gould, and Warren Chernaik (eds), *Modernist Writers and the Market Place* (London: Macmillan, 1996), 287.

² See Elliott Anderson and Mary Kinzie, *The Little Magazine in America: A Modern Documentary History* (Yonkers, NY: The Pushcart, 1978); Wolfgang Görtschacher, *Little Magazine Profiles: The Little Magazines in Great Britain, 1939–1993* (Salzburg: University of Salzburg Press, 1993) and *Contemporary Views on the Little Magazine Scene* (Salzburg: University of Salzburg Press, 2000); and also David Miller and Richard Price (eds), *British Poetry Magazines 1914–2000: A History and Bibliography of ‘Little Magazines’* (London/Newcastle: British Library/Oak Knoll Press, 2006).

No wonder therefore that the first attempt at mapping the genre came immediately after the Second World War and the demise of the original modernist movement.³ In 1947 Hoffman, Allen, and Ulrich in their *The Little Magazine: A History and a Bibliography*, made a first, valuable attempt at defining the genre of the 'little magazine'. Quite typically for the age in which they wrote, they focused on the role 'little magazines' played in *literary* history and the careers of such canonical male authors as 'Sherwood Anderson, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, Erskine Caldwell, T. S. Eliot'.⁴ Their main criterion in the allocation of the label 'little magazine' or 'advance guard' magazine (a name they use but drop when it comes to the title of their volume or further references to the genre) is the non-commercial nature of these publications.⁵ Most of them were launched with the intention of exploding existing literary norms and, because of the problems related to both these aspects, they were for the most part short-lived. But there are additional reasons for their frequent early termination. In many cases, the editors or the contributors simply lost interest or quarrelled and broke up.⁶

Hoffman and his collaborators remember, in their introduction, that there were avant-garde magazines before 1912, but they seem to remember only the American pioneers such as *The Dial*, along with Henry Clapp's *Saturday Press*, the *Chicago Chap Book*, the *Lark*, and *M'lle New York*. The self-professed companion volume in 1978 to the historical overview of Hoffman et al. was *The Little Magazine in America: A Modern Documentary History*, edited by Elliott Anderson and Mary Kinzie. This purported to collect the views of those who had had live experience of 'little magazines'. Taken together, the two volumes give a fair idea of what is to be understood by the concept 'little magazine'; however, both, even the historical overview, focus on the twentieth century, entirely omitting the Pre-Raphaelite enterprise.

From *Germ to Art and Poetry*

It was too good—that is to say, too refined and of too lofty a class, both in its art and in its poetry—to be sufficiently popular to pay even the printer's bill. The name, too, was against it, being somewhat unintelligible to the thoughtless, and conveying to the considerate a notion of something very juvenile.⁷

³ The chronology in Michael Levenson's *Cambridge Companion to Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) covers the period 1890–1939.

⁴ Frederick J. Hoffman, Charles Allen, and Carolyn F. Ulrich, *The Little Magazine: A History and a Bibliography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947).

⁵ *Ibid.* 2.

⁶ *Ibid.* 6.

⁷ 'Art and Poetry', *Critic*, 1 (June 1850), 278.

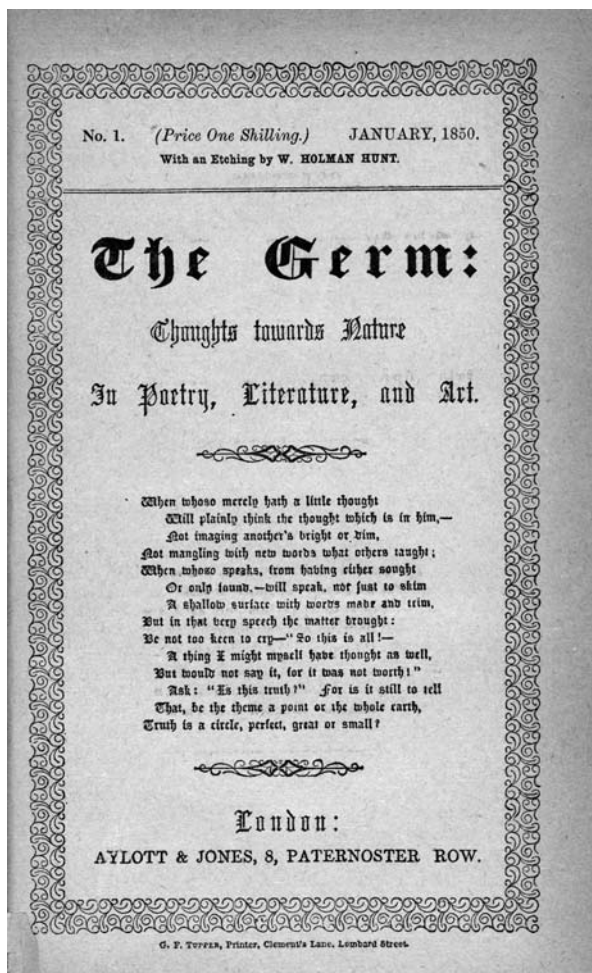


Fig. 2. Cover of *The Germ* (Jan. 1850)

It is surprising that neither of the above seminal histories mention *The Germ* since the magazines included and described were not so well documented as the earlier Pre-Raphaelite venture. To be sure, the creators of *The Germ* had the foresight to record the progress of the magazine in minute detail in the letters they wrote and even in a diary especially devoted to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (PRB). Also, there must have been enough extant copies to scrutinize since the four issues of the journal were republished twice at the turn of the nineteenth century when *The Germ* had become a much sought-after item. In his introduction to the English facsimile reprint of the journal, published by Eliot Stock in 1901, William Michael Rossetti wrote, 'One heard of such prices as ten shillings for a set of *The Germ* then £2, £10, £30, etc., and in 1899 a copy handsomely

bound by Cobden-Saunders was sold in America for about £104.⁸ Another, American reprint of the journal had been published by Thomas Mosher in 1898. The introduction to that edition was Ashcroft Noble's informative article on the journal which he had written for *Fraser's Magazine* shortly after the death of Dante Gabriel Rossetti.⁹

Both Noble and W. M. Rossetti described the contents of the journal in great detail in their retrospective essays. They admired and rejected, they attributed and contextualized, Rossetti going furthest in his attempt to record every step of its genesis for posterity. Many of the facts are listed in the *Memoir* of his brother and the *PRB Journal*, the diary of the Brotherhood mentioned above, which he compiled without consulting the others.¹⁰ The scholarly work of William Fredeman guaranteed the survival of much of this information not only by his careful edition and annotation of the Rossetti letters but also by editing and publishing W. M. Rossetti's diary of the PRB and by his meticulous reconstruction of the rise and decline of the magazine. In the twentieth century there have been reprints of the journal in 1970 by the University of Miami Press, edited and introduced by Robert Stahr Hosmon, and in 1992 by the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, with a preface by Andrea Rose. But its availability was vastly improved recently when Jerome McGann made the full text accessible online in the Rossetti Archive.¹¹

The idea for a 6d. magazine which was to be the official organ of the Pre-Raphaelites was conceived in August 1849, almost a year to the day after the founding of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. The first reference to the projected journal is to be found in the entry for 13 August of William Michael Rossetti's diary when the title given to it was *Monthly Thoughts in Literature, Poetry and Art*.¹² The prominence of literature in this title and in the first conception of the journal was not that surprising. D. G. Rossetti, Holman Hunt, James Collinson, and W. M. Rossetti had been the nucleus of a short-lived poetry club, the Literary Society,¹³ which predated the founding of the Brotherhood. The impact of the PRB, however, was such that this earlier society was all but forgotten by later art historians until Fredeman unearthed it in his footnotes to the Rossetti letters. The members of the

⁸ William Michael Rossetti, Preface to the 1901 Facsimile Reprint of *The Germ*. Available at URL: <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/ap4.g415.1901.wmr.rad.html>; Robert Stahr Hosmon (ed.), *The Germ: A Pre-Raphaelite Little Magazine* (Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1970), 21.

⁹ Ashcroft Noble, 'A Pre-Raphaelite Magazine', *Fraser's Magazine* (May 1882), 568.

¹⁰ *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family Letters with a Memoir*, 2 vols. (Boston: Robert Brothers, 1895); *The PRB Journal: William Michael Rossetti's Diary of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood 1849–1853*, edited from the Original Manuscript with an Introduction and Notes by William E. Fredeman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

¹¹ See <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/ap4.g415.rawcollection.html>.

¹² *PRB Journal*, 10.

¹³ *The Correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: The Formative Years 1835–1862*, ed. William E. Fredeman, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2002), 54, 67.

Literary Society were each drawn towards literature and were inspired by some of the immortals on the list they drew up at the end of August 1848.¹⁴ Unlike the other artists, however, Gabriel Rossetti was as ambitious a writer as he was a painter. He had sent some of his work to Leigh Hunt in January 1848, asking the older poet which of the arts he should pursue. Hunt advised him to continue to paint since it was hard, he argued, to live by the fruits of his poetry. Rossetti followed Hunt's advice while continuing to write verse. In 1848, for instance, he wrote the first drafts of some of his most famous poems and published (albeit anonymously) 'My Sister's Sleep' in the *New Monthly Belle Assemblée*.¹⁵

In the first journal entry on the projected magazine of 13 August, it is described as 'a project for a monthly 6d. magazine for which 4 or 5 of us would write, and one make an etching, each subscribing a guinea and thus becoming a proprietor'.¹⁶ The financial burden, it appears, was to be shared by all the PR Brothers but they were not keen. It cost Dante Gabriel Rossetti all the energy he had to convince the others of the need for this publication to propagate their artistic ideas. According to the younger Rossetti:

every one of his colleagues regarded the enterprise as rash, costly, foredoomed to failure, and an interruption to other more pressing and less precarious work. But Rossetti was not to be denied. The magazine was enacted in his mind; it was to be, and was to enlist the energies of all the P.R.B.'s, and of some other persons as well. With varying degrees of reluctance his friends yielded. As the project progressed, some of them seem even to have yielded with willing assent. Among these, Hunt, Woolner, and myself, may have stood foremost.¹⁷

William Michael Rossetti was appointed editor of the journal, on 22 September 1849, while he was vacationing on the Isle of Wight. The publishers were to be Aylott and Jones, the printers George and John Tupper. The publication of the

¹⁴ *PRB Journal*, Appendix 2, p. 107.

¹⁵ See *Correspondence*, i. 54. W. M. Rossetti does not seem to have realized that the poem had appeared anonymously in *La Belle Assemblée*. In his *Memoir*, he writes:

Rossetti was quite inclined now to make a little way in the literary world, if he could find an opening. Major Campbell was more than willing to assist him, and he showed 'My Sister's Sleep' to the editor of the *Belle Assemblée*, a philandering magazine which had seen better days. The editor expressed great admiration of the poem, but did not publish it. Perhaps payment was wanted, and funds were at a low ebb. This may have been before the year 1848 was far advanced. I cannot recollect that my brother made any further endeavour for publication. (111)

¹⁶ *PRB Journal*, 10.

¹⁷ William Michael Rossetti: *Gabriel Rossetti: His Family-Letters with a Memoir*, vol. i (London: Ellis, 1895), 150.

magazine was costed at £13 an issue.¹⁸ The biggest bone of contention, however, was to be the title of the magazine. It took the brotherhood four months to settle on a title. The fairly unknown William Cave Thomas drew up reams of titles indicating by means of exclamation mark those which he preferred. Of the list of 4 December 1849 he thought the first four (*The Sower*, *The Progressist*, *The Seed*, and *Aspects of Nature*) were the best. But it was to be the first one on a second list, drawn up on 19 December, that was to gain the vote of most of the members: *The Germ*. The subtitle, 'conducted by the artists', which had at one point been proposed by Dante Gabriel, was dropped for the first two issues, possibly on account of William Michael's objections since he was the editor and perhaps did not consider himself an artist.¹⁹

The first issue of *The Germ* finally appeared on 1 January 1850 at a price of one shilling. It consisted of forty-eight octavo pages and contained thirteen contributions by both members and non-members of the PRB. All contributions were anonymous. The Rossetti family, Dante Gabriel, William Michael, and Christina, figured largely in it; indeed they were to write more than half of the contributions which were to be published in the four issues of the magazine. To this first issue William Michael Rossetti contributed the sonnet on the wrapper, a review of A. H. Clough's *Bothie of Toper-na-fuosich* and 'Her First Season: Sonnet'. Christina wrote 'Dream Land' and 'The End', and Gabriel was the author of 'Songs of One Household no.1'²⁰ and the tale 'Hand and Soul'. The other contributions were by the sculptor Thomas Woolner, the painter Ford Madox Brown, the printer John L. Tupper, and the poet Coventry Patmore. The first and second number of *The Germ* closed, interestingly, with the same manifesto-like editorial which announced what the editors hoped to publish in the projected issues and what the aims and ideals of the journal were. The first goal was 'to claim for Poetry that place to which its present development in the literature of this country so emphatically entitles it' and the second was 'to encourage and enforce an entire adherence to the simplicity of nature'.²¹ This programmatic text was somewhat revised for issues three and four. It was now made clear that the purpose of the journal was to give a voice to artists, giving them the opportunity to express themselves in a language other than 'their own proper one',²² and the two previously professed aims were conflated into one: 'enunciate the principles of those who, in the true spirit of Art, enforce a rigid adherence to the simplicity of Nature either in Art or Poetry'. Compared to the flamboyantly aggressive manifestos of modernist journals like *Rhythm* or,

¹⁸ Jan Marsh, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Painter and Poet* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1999), 60.

¹⁹ Hosmon (ed.), *The Germ*, 5. The subtitle was retrieved for issues 3 and 4 but changed into 'Conducted principally by Artists'.

²⁰ This is the title he gave his poem 'My Sister's Sleep', which had already been published in the *La Belle Assemblée* (see n. 15).

²¹ *Germ* (Jan. 1850), 50; (Feb. 1850), 98.

²² *Ibid.* (Mar. 1850), 146; (May 1850), 194.

perhaps even more so, *BLAST* or the caricatural pretence of Tristan Tzara's 'Dada Manifesto 1918',²³ this is an earnest but extremely cautious, even shy, declaration. But its inclusion at the end of each of the issues of *The Germ* and *Art and Poetry* enhanced its power and urgency.

Unfortunately, the artistic world was not waiting for this journal. The first issue, with its romantic Holman Hunt etching as its frontispiece, looked appealing enough, yet the sales were extremely disappointing. Only seventy copies were sold,²⁴ leaving the Brothers in serious doubt as to the judiciousness of publishing another issue. The PRB met on 2 February to consult about the fate of the journal and, as the editor was to report, they were

unanimously of the opinion that it will not reach another No. Calculating the number of copies sold among ourselves as ninety-five (not I think more than in fact) and by the Publisher as seventy, which can scarcely amount to 15s, it seems that the expense to each of us beyond the receipts will be £1.15.5 1/4. This is a kind of experiment that won't bear repetition more than once or twice.²⁵

The experiment *was* repeated, however, this time revealing the names of the authors, with the sole exception of Christina Rossetti, whose contributions appeared under the pseudonym Ellen Alleyn. Nevertheless the sales were even more disastrous. William Michael reported in his journal entry for 9 February that he had heard from the publisher that only forty copies had sold. This was what he called the 'last knock-down blow'.²⁶ What happened then was quite unpredictable. The journal had received some favourable reviews,²⁷ and so the printers of *The Germ*, John and George Tupper, thought the journal should get another chance at their expense, though perhaps with a different title. They suggested it should be called *Art and Poetry: Being Thoughts towards Nature*.²⁸ It was henceforth to appear on the last day of the month for which it was to be dated and the publishers Aylott and Jones were to be assisted by Dickinson & co.²⁹ Yet despite of all the efforts to make the journal better known to the general public the two issues with the new title

²³ Janet Lyon, *Manifestoes: Provocations of the Modern* (Ithaca, NY/London: Cornell University Press, 1999), 42 ff.

²⁴ Estimates of the sales of no. 1 were 95 according to the PRB; 70 according to the publisher in 2 February 1850. This figure rose to 100 copies in the course of February. See *PRB Journal*, 119–20.

²⁵ *Ibid.* 51. ²⁶ *Ibid.* 53.

²⁷ Hosman mentions unfavourable comments in *The Spectator* and *The Literary Gazette*, but also points to the praise in the *Art-Journal*, *The Weekly Dispatch*, the *Builder*, *The Critic*, and *The Guardian* (18–19), while William Michael Rossetti refers to a positive review in *The Standard of Freedom* (Hosman, *The Germ*, 62).

²⁸ Despite the printers' selfless commitment to the journals, they are not mentioned in the entry on *The Germ* written for Alvin Sullivan's reference work; see Kerry McSweeney, 'The Germ', in Alvin Sullivan (ed.), *British Literary Magazines: The Victorian and Education Age, 1837–1913* (London: Greenwood Press, 1984).

²⁹ *Correspondence*, i. 143.

fares no better than the previous two and the fate of the journal was sealed. When the fourth issue sold only 106 copies George Tupper wrote to W. M. Rossetti: 'I do not feel myself justified in bringing out another number.'³⁰

The Germ may confidently be claimed to have been Dante Gabriel Rossetti's brainchild. With a group like the PRB it was, and perhaps still is, a slightly hazardous enterprise to credit one of the brothers with a new idea. When, after Dante Gabriel Rossetti's death in 1882, his growing posthumous fame quickly turned *him* into the leading figure of the movement, William Holman Hunt retorted with a series of three articles in the *Contemporary Review* in which he made it absolutely clear that he and Millais had been the originators. Their shared bitterness over this and the, to them, quite unjust appraisal of their own position vis-à-vis the Brotherhood and Rossetti's influence was voiced most sharply by Millais when he wrote to Hunt:

We made a great mistake in accepting others to form a brotherhood with us, when we knew little or nothing of their abilities and dispositions... You taught Gabriel to paint and I kept back no secret from him. We brought out our very precious guineas to start *The Germ*, in which the writers published their poems and articles; and we did etchings in addition. Did they ever do anything for us? No!³¹

It is a good thing that these serious tensions between the former members of the Brotherhood are unknown to most of their admirers since they do diminish their stature as men.³² They never hid their individualistic outlook on their careers though, and it was that which made them each go their own way after this brief infatuation with themselves as a group and their joint creation. Interestingly enough, William Michael Rossetti himself identified individualism as the essential characteristic of Pre-Raphaelite and English art, thus drawing a direct connection between Englishness, individualism, and Pre-Raphaelitism.³³

If the central members of the Brotherhood were each manifestly bent on being credited with having fathered the idea of the Brotherhood,³⁴ there seems to be

³⁰ *PRB Journal*, 120.

³¹ Anne Clark Amor, *W. H. Hunt: The True Pre-Raphaelite* (London: Constable, 1989), 215.

³² For a detailed discussion of the row, see *ibid.* 300 ff.

³³ This is convincingly argued by Laurel Bradley in 'The "Englishness" of Pre-Raphaelite Painting: A Critical Review', in Margaretta Frederick Watson (ed.), *Collecting the Pre-Raphaelites: The Anglo-American Enchantment* (Aldershot: Ashgate 1997), 202–3.

³⁴ William Michael Rossetti tried to formulate this diplomatically in the memoir of his brother when he wrote:

Some writers have said that Rossetti was the originator of Præraphaelitism. This ignores the just claims of Hunt and Millais, which I regard as co-equal with his. Rossetti had an abundance of ideas, pictorial and also literary, and was fuller of 'notions' than the other two, and had more turn for proselytizing and 'pronunciamentos'; but he was not at all

no doubt about who was behind the founding of the magazine. William Michael Rossetti, the editor of the magazine, was adamant: 'IF Dante Rossetti cannot rightly be credited (in derogation of Hunt and Millais) with inventing the Præraphaelite movement and Brotherhood, a very significant enterprise, he certainly *can* be credited with inventing *The Germ*.'³⁵

The repeated emphasis on individual action and responsibility and the need to record those actions for posterity is reminiscent of the strategy of some of the modernist writers, like Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, and Virginia Woolf making sure the world recognized their literary clique as separate and different from the preceding generation as well as from some of their contemporaries whom they thought represented a mere continuation of conventional forms. Also, the ways in which the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood aired their convictions and aesthetic ideals can fruitfully be compared to the strategies followed by subsequent generations.³⁶ Apart from the manifesto on the back cover of each issue there were John Tupper's, John Orchard's, and F. G. Stephens's articles on art, propounding the views which the PRB held dear.³⁷ This extract from Stephens's article of February 1850 gives a fair taste of the style and the confidence with which they advocated their views:

The modern artist does not retire to monasteries, or practise discipline; but he may show his participation in the same high feeling by a firm attachment to truth in every point of representation, which is the most just method. For how can good be sought by evil means, or by falsehood, or by slight in any degree? By a determination to represent the thing and the whole of the thing, by training himself to the deepest observation of its fact and detail, enabling himself to reproduce, as far as possible, nature herself, the painter will best evince his share of faith.³⁸

Whatever Hunt and Millais thought about the magazine in hindsight, the publication had had its purpose and significant results: for it marked the launch of the PRB on the artistic scene and signalled the beginning of these young artists' public

more resolute in wanting to do something good which should also be something new. He was perhaps the most defiant of the three; and undoubtedly a kind of adolescent defiance, along with art-sympathies highly developed in one direction, and unduly or even ignorantly restricted in others, played a part, and no small part, in Præraphaelitism. (*Memoir*, 128)

³⁵ Ibid. 149.

³⁶ McSweeney, 'The Germ', in Sullivan (ed.), *British Literary Magazines: The Victorian and Edwardian Age*, 140.

³⁷ John Tupper, 'The Subject in Art, I and II'; John Orchard, 'A Dialogue on Art'; F. G. Stephens, 'The Purpose and Tendency of Early Italian Art' and 'Modern Giants'. See <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/ap4.g415.rawcollection.html>.

³⁸ Hosmon (ed.), *The Germ*, 59.

fight for their own ideals. For William Michael Rossetti, a mere 18 year old when he started this editorship, it meant the beginning of his career as an art critic. Soon after the first issue, he was invited by the *Critic*, a high-quality literary periodical, to start reviewing for them. Unfortunately, this was to lead to another, less pleasant phase in the lives of the brothers. William thought the exhibition at the British Institution which opened on 4 February of that year might be a good subject with which to launch his career with the *Critic*. He went to see the exhibition with his older brother and it so happened that Gabriel Rossetti decided to write part of the review and more specifically the section on Frank Stone's work. Both men knew Stone and intensely disliked him since he had written a highly critical review of some of the PRB paintings for the *Athenaeum*.³⁹ They thenceforth called him 'F.S.' or 'the unmentionable'. Stone was an academician with a reputation to defend, but that did not stop Gabriel Rossetti. His review of Stone's painting 'Sympathy' was absolutely devastating. When he wrote that 'the faces of these young ladies were made of wax, their hair of Berlin wool, and their hands of scented soap', he naturally incurred Stone's wrath and sworn vengeance. It signalled the beginning of a well-organized hate campaign against the PRB.⁴⁰

Apart from the art-historical value of *The Germ* there is its obvious literary value. On the whole, the second issue is considered the finest of the four. It contains the first version of Gabriel Rossetti's best-known poem, 'The Blessed Damozel', three poems by Christina Rossetti, and contributions by James Collinson, John Seward, W. B. Scott, Calder Campbell, Ford Madox Brown, Thomas Woolner, and the young editor, William M. Rossetti, himself.

Literary historians have tried to pin down the reasons for the failure of the journal, listing as causes the lack of business experience and large bank accounts, and the fact that none of the contributors, apart from Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'had real literary gifts'.⁴¹ But probably the main reason for its demise was Gabriel Rossetti's dwindling interest in his brainchild. When the fourth and last issue appeared on 30 April 1850 he tried to include more contributions by William Bell Scott because, he argued, 'we are most of us beginning again to work at our painting, in the purpose of astounding Europe next year and have consequently but little time to write.'⁴² It must therefore have come as a relief to Gabriel Rossetti that the printers gave up on the journal and that he was again allowed to concentrate entirely on his painting for a while. A few years later, however, and with a new, young, and eager generation of Pre-Raphaelite followers the earlier dream was reborn.

³⁹ 'Fine Arts. Royal Academy. Paintings', *Athenaeum* (2 June 1849), 575.

⁴⁰ See Amor, *W.H. Hunt*, 66 ff.; and Jorge L. Contreras, 'Frank Stone and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood', available at URL: <http://www.victorianweb.org/art/illustration/fstone/contrerasi.html>.

⁴¹ McSweeney, 'The Germ', 141.

⁴² *Correspondence*, i. 143.

A worthy sequel: the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*

Who has done this? Who is it who has thus made new again and beautiful this old touching story, which so endears to us the memory of the great Voice of Italy?—One Dante Gabriel Rossetti.⁴³

A new Brotherhood of seven, also called ‘The Set’, all undergraduates from Oxford and Cambridge, became friends in the period 1853–5. The original seven, according to Robert Stahr Hosmon, were Edward Burne-Jones, William Morris, Richard Watson Dixon, Cornell Price, Charles Faulkner, Harry Macdonald, and William Fulford.⁴⁴ They were later joined by Godfrey Lushington, Vernon Lushington, and Wilfred Heeley.⁴⁵ Like the older generation of Pre-Raphaelites they saw the Middle Ages as the artistic and social ideal; their objective in life was, in Burne-Jones’s words, to launch a ‘Crusade and Holy Warfare against the age’.⁴⁶ In 1855 the interest of the group was aroused when confronted with paintings by Holman Hunt and Rossetti at an exhibition at the Clarendon Press. That same year they also read a copy of *The Germ*.⁴⁷ All this led them to opt for art rather than the monastic life they had aspired to previously. The idea of setting up their own journal was Dixon’s, though Morris, avowedly the wealthiest of them all, was supposed to edit as well as fund the journal. Their model was *The Germ* but there had been a long tradition of undergraduate magazines at Oxford starting more than a hundred years earlier with the *Student* or *Oxford Monthly Miscellany* of 1750.⁴⁸ Their initiative was, therefore, at first sight, not unique.

The first title suggested for the new magazine, *The Brotherhood*, was quickly replaced by the fairly uninspiring *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*. One of the differences from the earlier undergraduate magazines was thus made plain: the founders of the *O&CM* were students of two universities who shared an ideal: ‘We have such a deal to tell people, such a deal of scolding to administer, so many fights to wage and opposition to encounter that our spirits are quite rising with the emergency.’⁴⁹ They realized that theirs was not to be a commercial success, ‘not one magazine in a hundred pays’ Burne-Jones wrote

⁴³ Vernon Lushington ‘Two Pictures’, *Oxford & Cambridge Magazine* (1856), 479.

⁴⁴ Robert Stahr Hosmon, ‘*The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*’, in Sullivan (ed.), *British Literary Magazines*, 295.

⁴⁵ See also Fiona MacCarthy, *William Morris: A Life for Our Time* (London: Faber, 1994), 60 ff., 97 ff.

⁴⁶ Hosmon, ‘*Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*’, 295. ⁴⁷ Ibid. 295 ff.

⁴⁸ Fiona MacCarthy mentions this magazine, calling it a ‘little magazine’, as well as the *Oxford Sausage* (1764–76), and the *Oxford Magazine* (1834–); see MacCarthy, *William Morris*, 98. The ambitions of these magazines did not live up to the usual definition of a ‘little magazine’ though.

⁴⁹ Hosmon, ‘*Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*’, 296.

in September 1855, but since Morris was to bear the cost, money was not a concern.⁵⁰

The first issue of the *O&CM* appeared on 1 January 1856; it was published by Bell and Daldy, contained sixty-four pages, and cost one shilling. All contributions were anonymous. There were no illustrations as in *The Germ* but the first letter of every text was elaborately decorated, resembling those in a medieval illuminated manuscript, and there was an ornate, again mediievally inspired, masthead.

Morris relinquished the editorship after the first issue to William Fulford but he eventually contributed the grand total of nineteen items to a journal that lasted only a year.⁵¹ Other contributors of note, apart from Dante Gabriel Rossetti, were Edward Burne-Jones and his wife-to-be, then still Miss MacDonald. The subjects ranged from architectural topics such as the churches of Northern France to literary criticism and philosophy. There were reviews, poems, tales, and essays. The whole, it seems, was governed by a positive feeling, with the contributors intent on defending what was 'new' especially when it had some relation with Pre-Raphaelite values and aesthetics. In a review of Browning's 'Men and Women' of March 1856, one reads:

This accusation against Browning of carelessness, and consequent roughness in rhythm, obscurity in language and thought, has come to be pretty generally believed; and people, as a rule, do not read him; this evil spreading so, that many, almost unconsciously, are kept from reading him, who, if they did read, would sympathize with him thoroughly.

But it was always so; it was so with Tennyson when he first published his poems; it was so last year with Maud; it is so with Ruskin . . . as his circle grew larger, and larger, embracing more and more truth, they more and more fell off from him . . .

The story of the Prae-Raphaelites—we all know that, only here, thank Heaven! The public has chosen to judge for itself somewhat, though to this day their noblest pictures are the least popular.⁵²

Of course, this was not the only reference to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. *The Germ*, Rossetti's poetry, and the PRB ideals featured prominently in the journal from the very start. In fact, the first issue contained a most unusual homage to *The Germ* and Gabriel Rossetti. In part, this reads:

⁵⁰ Hosmon, 'Oxford and Cambridge Magazine', 296.

⁵¹ On the inside cover of the copy of the magazine in the Cambridge University Library a kindly soul has written in pencil that Morris's contributions are listed in H. B. Forman's *The Books of William Morris described with some account of his doings in literature and in the allied crafts* (London: Frank Hollings, 1897).

⁵² *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* (Mar. 1856), 172.

Some few years ago a monthly periodical was published upon the subject of art and poetry; it appears to have ceased after a few numbers, not without having spoken something that will live in echoes yet. As the frontispiece of one number was an etching by Holman Hunt, an illustration indeed to a poem, but the latter having so little reference to it, that it may well stand for an independent picture; truly a song without words, and yet not wholly speechless, for out of its golden silence came voices for all who would hearken, telling a tale of love. . . . Out of oblivion, for the sake of justice, I have made this memorial of a forgotten picture; not for invidious distinction, or because it is the only articulate voice among so many: it serves to exemplify my meaning about story in pictures. There is one more I cannot help noticing, for its marvellous beauty, a drawing of higher finish and pretension than the last, from the pencil of Rossetti, in 'Allingham's Day and Night Songs,' just published; it is I think the most beautiful drawing for an illustration I have ever seen. . . . Why is the author of the Blessed Damozel, and the story of Chiaro, so seldom on the lips of men? If only we could hear him oftener, live in the light of his power a little longer.⁵³

Gabriel Rossetti read this and was immensely flattered. These young men were after all only a few years younger than himself: 'That notice in Oxford and Cambridge Mag. was the most gratifying thing by far that ever happened to me,' he wrote to William Allingham, '—being unmistakably genuine. I thought it *must* be by your old acquaintance Fryer of Cambridge, he having called on me once about those same things. But it turns out to be by a certain youthful [Edward Burne-]Jones, who was in London the other day, and whom . . . I have now met.' 'Surely', he added, 'this cometh in some wise of the *Germ*, with which it might bind up!'⁵⁴

In truth, the journal served as a letter of introduction from the new group to the older generation of Pre-Raphaelites. And the older group were keen to be published in this newly resurrected version of their *Germ*. John Lucas Tupper sent a poem to Gabriel Rossetti, hoping he would get it into the *O&CM*. Rossetti was very hopeful: 'Jones wrote me that your poem will most likely be in the next *Gurm*.'⁵⁵ But Tupper's poem was not published. Gabriel Rossetti did have some of his own poems published in the *O&CM*. 'The Burden of Nineveh' was published in the August issue, a new version of 'The Blessed Damozel' in November, and the 'Staff and Scrip' in the December issue.

Rossetti was introduced to each one of these admirers and soon felt justified to call the men behind the *O&CM* 'friends of mine'.⁵⁶ By August of that year,

⁵³ 'Essay on the Newcomes', *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* (Jan. 1856), 60.

⁵⁴ *Correspondence*, ii. 101.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* III. *The Gurm* was the PRB's nickname for *The Germ*. Rossetti is using it here to refer to the *O&CM*, thus indicating how much he thought *O&CM* was a re-incarnation of the earlier volume.

⁵⁶ *Correspondence*, ii. 138.

however, the main members of the group had lost interest in their journal. As Burne-Jones wrote in his diary, ‘The Mag is going to smash—let it go. The world is not converted and never will be.’⁵⁷ Paradoxically enough, it was the growing closeness between the two generations of Pre-Raphaelites that sounded the death knell for the journal. Rossetti’s bodily presence and ideas were vastly more interesting than conducting and writing for a journal which nobody seemed to notice anymore after the first issue.⁵⁸ Burne-Jones and Morris were invited to assist Rossetti in painting murals on the walls of the Oxford Union, the other members drifted off, and the journal came to an end with the last issue in December. Its lifespan was exactly one year.⁵⁹ Unlike *The Germ*, the *O&CM* issues were never reprinted.⁶⁰

The final assessment of the *O&CM* by Gabriel Rossetti seems to be one with no regrets: ‘it was “too like the Spirit of Germ. Down, down!” & has vanished into the witches’ cauldron.’⁶¹ And Morris did not think too much of this investment of his either: ‘it was a failure, and on the whole deserved to be,’ he wrote in a letter to Edward Nicholson, then an undergraduate with plans to launch a periodical.⁶² When compared to its model, *The Germ*, the *O&CM* is definitely more imitative in its aims, less innovative, and iconoclastic. It was the work of talented undergraduates who followed the example of what they believed a most admirable though too short-lived publication. They brandished their adherence and extolled the works of those artists they admired but they published no manifesto.

Even so, the journal did serve a purpose in forging a link between two talented groups of artists. For Morris it acted as a catalyst, showing him which path to follow while revealing his considerable writing skills. Rossetti too recognized Morris’s literary talent: ‘Morris’s facility at poetizing puts one in a rage. He has been writing at all for little more than a year I believe, and has already poetry enough for a big book.’⁶³ Eventually the younger poet was to publish his first volume *The Defence of Guenevere* as early as 1858.

The *O&CM* was the second and last of the Pre-Raphaelite journals on British soil. In the USA the Pre-Raphaelite ‘little magazines’ had longer-lived followers

⁵⁷ Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones: 1868–1898* (New York: Macmillan, 1904), i. 108.

⁵⁸ Hosmon, ‘*Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*’, 299. ⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 300.

⁶⁰ H. Buxton Forman described the contents and identified the contributors to *O&CM* in *The Books of William Morris* (1899) and Rossetti’s contributions and those passages relevant to the history of *The Germ* and Rossetti are now available online in the Rossetti Archive.

⁶¹ *Correspondence*, ii. 146. ⁶² *Ibid.* i. 86.

⁶³ *Ibid.* ii. 146–7.

with the *Crayon* (1855–61) and the *New Path* (1863–5).⁶⁴ The *Crayon*, a fervent promoter of John Ruskin's aesthetics and Pre-Raphaelitism, was clearly the most successful of the two in terms of duration and contacts with its British source of inspiration. This monthly was edited by the landscape painter and critic William J. Stillman and the editor John B. Durand. It re-published Rossetti's 'The Blessed Damozel' in 1858 and William Michael Rossetti contributed regularly as its English correspondent. A few years later, the Society for the Advancement of Truth in Art, led by the art critic Clarence Cook, launched its organ, the *New Path*, which ostensibly aspired to be a new, American *Germ*. With hindsight this may be seen as the more radical of the two journals and the mouthpiece of what is now known as the short-lived American Pre-Raphaelite movement, a small group of meticulous landscape painters.

So was Robert Stahr Hosmon's subtitle for his edition of *The Germ* 'A Pre-Raphaelite Little Magazine' a justified choice? And were the editors of these volumes right when claiming for *The Germ* and *O&CM* a place among the better known exemplars of the genre? The answer is yes. Both of these magazines share the enthusiasm and the confidence of the 'little magazines' of the early decades of the twentieth century. It was their founders' intention to improve upon a previous generation, or to be the mouthpiece of an artistic group that wanted to do something different, something 'new'. They established their publication despite their impecuniousness and used it, like their modernist counterparts, as an immediate outlet for their best writings. *The Germ* had its own manifesto; the *O&CM* professed adherence to aesthetic ideals in its essays. They published poetry and essays, and paid considerable attention to layout and presentation. They might claim the moral high ground too, in not selling their souls by publishing advertisements of any kind. In a sense therefore, though apparently less calculating and more idealistic than later magazines, they stand less outside the genre than as an early exemplar.

⁶⁴ For more information on these two journals see the Rossetti archive at <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/n1.c9.raw.html> and <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/n1.n55.raw.html>

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II

FIN DE SIÈCLE VENTURES (1884–1906)



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INTRODUCTION

The period known to literary history as the ‘nineties’ or the *fin de siècle* was one of enormous growth in the publication of printed matter of all kinds, with the literary and artistic ‘little magazine’ being no exception. J. R. Tye’s checklist of literary periodicals of the 1890s gives short details for 138 such publications in the British Isles; Brad Faxon’s *Ephemeral Bibelots* (1903), devoted to both American and British ‘modern chapbooks’ with literary or artistic content, lists around 250 such items.¹ The emergence of this particular kind of publication was linked, as the chapters here demonstrate, to various styles and cultural formations such as Aestheticism, Symbolism, Decadence, and the Arts and Crafts movement. However, in order to understand the nature and significance of these publications it is essential, as elsewhere in this volume, to place them within a wider cultural field of periodical publication at the time.

The 1890s saw the rise to prominence of mass-market publishing, prompted by the increasing mechanization of publishing as an industry, and signalled by the success of the *Daily Mail*, founded in 1896. By the end of the nineteenth century, argues Richard Altick, ‘periodical printing became one of the most highly mechanised of all English mass-production industries.’² The high circulations of weekly magazines such as George Newnes’s *Tit-Bits* (1880) or *Pearson’s Weekly* (1890) utilized the new technologies and also, in the case of Newnes, modelled themselves upon the practices of successful American magazines like *Harper’s* and *Scribner’s*. Such magazines increased their revenue by expanding the pages in the periodical devoted to advertising, and were then able to dramatically cut their

¹ J. R. Tye, *Periodicals of the Nineties: A Checklist of Literary Periodicals Published in the British Isles at Longer than Fortnightly Intervals, 1890–1899* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 1974); Tye excludes professional magazines, cheaper publications, and weeklies but does include ongoing and long-lived periodicals such as the *Edinburgh Review* or *Pall Mall Magazine*. F. W. Faxon, ‘Ephemeral Bibelots’, *Bulletin of Bibliography* 3 (1903–4). See also C. N. Pondrom, *English Literary Periodicals 1885–1918*, Ph.D., (New York: Columbia University, 1965).

² Richard Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800–1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 357.

prices, hence boosting circulation.³ Newnes followed his success with *Tit-Bits* with the founding of the middlebrow *Strand Magazine* in 1891, with the first issue selling 300,000 copies at 6d.⁴ One significant feature of *The Strand* was the shift to short story publication (most famously in the case of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories) and a rejection of serialization, which had been the staple of the older quarterly magazines earlier in the century. Though twentieth-century magazines did continue the practice of serialization (Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist* in *The Egoist*, for example) the dominance of the short story format for fiction is noticeable in many modernist magazines. The 'evanescence' that Ian Fletcher sees as one characteristic of 1890s Decadence is, as he notes, ideally suited to the short story format.⁵ The rise of the decadent, and then modernist, short story is, therefore, intimately related to the new conditions of wider periodical publishing at the time.

In many ways, however, the magazines considered in this section set themselves against both the mass market and mechanization in ways that determine not only the content of the magazines but also what McGann calls their 'bibliographic codes' or what we term 'periodical codes'.⁶ However, their relation to the commercial aspects of publishing cannot be seen only in terms of a principled rejection. In the late nineteenth century a complex relation emerges between art and commerce, felt most acutely in the field of those publishing 'little magazines'. If Fletcher is correct in stating that 'the 1890s were the founding period of that most crucial form of modern artistic action, the small magazines', then any search for continuities between a magazine such as *The Yellow Book*, considered in this section by Laurel Brake, and *BLAST* should look for more than just possible similarities of style or contributor, though this is also important.⁷ Rather we should look at what these two magazines shared in terms of their understanding of the role of a magazine whose primary orientation is not towards making money, but publishing certain kinds of artistic work, in a landscape dominated by the concerns of commercial publishing. That both *The Yellow Book* and *BLAST* were published by John Lane,

³ For an account of this strategy see Richard Ohmann, *Selling Culture: Magazines, Markets, and Class at the Turn of the Century* (London: Verso, 1996). For more on Newnes see Hadjiafxendi and Plunkett, Chapter 1 in this volume.

⁴ See Jerold Savory, 'The Strand Magazine', in Alvin Sullivan (ed.), *British Literary Magazines: The Victorian and Edwardian Age, 1837–1913* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), 399.

⁵ See Ian Fletcher, 'Decadence and the Little Magazines', in *idem* (ed.), *Decadence and the 1890s* (London: Edward Arnold, 1979), 174. And see Peters Corbett on the story 'The Editor of the *Jonquil*', Chapter 4 in this volume.

⁶ See Jerome J. McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 13–14. For the concept of 'periodical codes' see the General Introduction.

⁷ Fletcher, 'Decadence and the Little Magazines', 174. Peter Nicholls, for example, persuasively argues that the style of 'decadence, far from being a dead letter, was actually still a pervasive force within early modernism'; see Peter Nicholls, 'A Dying Fall? Nineteenth-Century Decadence and Its Legacies', in Tracey Hill (ed.), *Decadence and Danger: Writing, History and the Fin de Siècle* (Bath: Sulis Press, 1997), 15.

under his Bodley Head press, indicates that the magazines of the 1890s were indeed in one way the precursors of the more avant-garde publications of the twentieth century.⁸ But it also suggests that a clearer understanding of the commercial pressures evident in the 1890s, and the cultural responses of figures at that time, can tell us much about the subsequent course of the modernist magazine in Britain.

A number of the magazines considered in this section employ periodical codes that indicate an allegiance to the 'Book Beautiful' tradition championed in the Arts and Crafts practices of, *inter alia*, William Morris and Charles Ricketts.⁹ Examples include wide margins around text with an emphasis upon blank white space; the choice of antiquated typefaces not found in commercial machine presses, such as the Caslon old-face used by *The Century Guild Hobby Horse* and *The Yellow Book*; the use of elaborate initial letters or catchwords at the bottom of the page such as in *The Yellow Book*; decorative or ornamental borders; choice of high-quality paper; and careful attention to the reproductive methods used for illustrations.¹⁰ William Morris, for example, stressed that there should be a difference of 20 per cent between each margin on a page, with the narrowest being the inside edge, followed by the top, the outside edge, and finally the bottom edge being the largest.¹¹ Morris related this to the medieval practice of regarding the unit of the book as two open pages, rather than the modern practice of seeing a single page as the unit of design. In many of the magazines of the 1890s the layout of text on the page does follow Morris's views; and, arguably, the typographic experiments of parts of Wyndham Lewis's *BLAST* are also indebted to this visual practice.

Such periodical codes indicate an antagonism to the mass publications that surrounded these well-crafted objects, an opposition to viewing books as 'trade commodities', in Ricketts's phrase.¹² Ricketts thus wrote in the first issue of *The Dial* that the magazine was 'out of date in our belief that the artist's conscientiousness cannot be controlled by the paying public'.¹³ The magazine was thus intended to uphold the artistic conscience over and against trends in commercial publishing, a position that also informed the choice of reproductive technology: all the woodcuts and lithographs, noted Ricketts in the first issue, are taken from the artist's

⁸ For a study of the Bodley Head see James G. Nelson, *The Early Nineties: A View from the Bodley Head* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971).

⁹ For key accounts of this tradition see Charles Ricketts, *A Defence of the Revival of Printing* (London: Ballantyne Press, 1899) and various essays by William Morris such as 'Printing' and 'The Ideal Book', in William S. Peterson (ed.), *The Ideal Book: Essays and Lectures on the Arts of the Book* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

¹⁰ For an interesting account of these practices see Linda Dowling, 'Letterpress and Picture in the Literary Periodicals of the 1890s', *Yearbook of English Studies*, 16 (1986), 117–31.

¹¹ William Morris, 'Note on the Founding of the Kelmscott Press', in *The Art and Craft of Printing: Collected Essays by William Morris* (New York: Elston Press, 1902), 4.

¹² Ricketts, *Defence*, 32.

¹³ Charles Ricketts, 'Apology', *Dial*, 1 (1889), 36.

hands and not photographic reproductions. In order to maintain control over such features the editors of the magazines often founded independent presses, such as Ricketts's Vale Press, which followed the earlier example of Morris's Kelmscott Press.

However, another dimension to these debates over the relation between artistic conscience and commerce is the sense that certain periodicals are to be regarded as objects of luxury, and hence involved in a form of commodification. At one level the periodical codes of a magazine based on Morris's rules for the appearance of type on the page, such as the *Hobby Horse*, signified that the publication was not a disposable object of mass consumption such as *Tit-Bits*; on the other hand the very same periodical codes, and other publishing practices, signified that this was an object to be treasured and preserved not only for its literary contents, but also for its very status as a luxury object. As Linda Dowling argues in relation to the *Hobby Horse*, although the solidity of its typeface resists 'the mechanical consumption of the page by the eye' this sort of 'typographical resistance' turns the magazine into 'a visual object, a commodity'.¹⁴ *The Yellow Book* presents another example of this tendency in its initial prospectus, where it is said that its aim is to escape 'the bad old traditions of periodical literature' by providing an 'Illustrated Magazine which shall be beautiful as a piece of bookmaking' and will become 'a book—a book to be read, and placed upon one's shelves, and read again; a book in form, a book in substance; a book beautiful to see and convenient to handle'.¹⁵ The appeal here is precisely to the book as sumptuous luxury object, to be kept and read, yes, but also to be kept with one eye on its value as a commodity.¹⁶

Separated from the mass productions of the 'New Grub Street', magazines such as *The Dial* or *The Dome* also partook of an economy of scarcity signified in references to their limited print runs and the availability of deluxe editions printed on fine paper of potential value for collectors.¹⁷ Oldmeadow, founder and editor of *The Dome*, for example, had founded the Unicorn Press to publish deluxe, limited edition books based upon the aesthetic ideals of William Morris: books that were to be objects of handmade and crafted beauty, rejecting the mechanization of the

¹⁴ Dowling, 'Letterpress and Picture in the 1890s', 126–7. Dowling, however, distinguishes between the typographic practices of *The Yellow Book* and those of the *Hobby Horse*.

¹⁵ Quoted in Laurel Brake, *Subjugated Knowledges: Journalism, Gender and Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), 163.

¹⁶ Also of interest in this prospectus is the clear use of a discourse of advertising—this from a magazine that boldly stated it would carry no advertisements other than the lists of publishers.

¹⁷ *The Dial* was limited to 200 copies; *The Pageant* to only 150; the scandalous *Chameleon* to only 100 numbered copies; the *Hobby Horse* was only sold to annual subscribers, never reaching 500. See Fletcher, 'Decadence and the Little Magazines', 183.

printing process.¹⁸ *The Dome* also published an American edition for a while and a collector's edition, indicating both an attempt to market the magazine widely and an awareness of the book as art commodity.

Many of the magazines considered here are simultaneously resistant to commercial philistinism and complicit in the marketing of themselves as high-quality commodities. Arguably, given an awareness that they would struggle to reach a mass circulation and that they eschewed large numbers of advertisements, they could not avoid trying to maintain their finances by drawing upon certain practices of the luxury book trade.

These pressures upon magazines, as David Peters Corbett argues in relation to *The Dome*, *The Dial*, and *The Pageant*, produced an interesting set of meditations upon the nature of the audience or readership. Peters Corbett characterizes what he sees as the 'open' and 'closed' positions taken by different periodicals in this period: 'open', such as the early *Dome*, in trying to reach out to a wider public and make them aware of modern art; 'closed', in the case of *The Dial* and *Pageant*, in the sense that Ricketts and Shannon, recognizing the lack of a place for art in the modern world, retreated to a 'little coterie' of like-minded individuals to function as their audience. Hence the readership for the print run of *The Pageant* could well have consisted mainly of the set that gathered around Ricketts and Shannon at their home, the Vale, in Chelsea. The character of this cultural formation—withdrawn, inward, and hermetic—is, as Peters Corbett demonstrates, also shown in much of the literature and art published in *The Dial* and *The Pageant*. In contrast, *The Dome*, with its cheaper pricing (1/- compared with *The Pageant* at 1 guinea and the first *Dial* at 7s. 6d) attempted to reach out to a wider public, a strategy welcomed by one of its key contributors, Laurence Binyon. However, the difficulty of this plan is also represented in some of its contents, such as the short story concerning an editor of a commercial periodical, analysed by Corbett. As Corbett argues, the neglect of art is a theme that runs throughout these late nineteenth-century periodicals.

As noted earlier, one key feature of magazines like *The Dial* and *The Pageant* was the stress upon handcrafted work that looked back, like the Pre-Raphaelites, to the pre-mechanized world of the medieval period. Such nostalgia is evident not only in the periodical codes employed, but also in the content of the magazines. As Corbett notes, very few of the pieces in the periodicals take contemporary society as their topic. A similar interest in medievalism is also evident in some of the Arts and Crafts-related magazines considered by Imogen Hart. A magazine such as *The Century Guild Hobby Horse*, with its jousting knight on the cover, harked back to the medieval guild system where artisan producers worked in small

¹⁸ Although sales of these editions were reputed to be very small, and Laurence Houseman, one *Dome* contributor, claimed that Oldmeadow 'was neither a good editor nor a good business man'; see Paul West, 'The Dome: An Aesthetic Periodical of the 1890s', *The Book Collector*, 6:2 (1957), 162.

communities, rejecting the division of labour and maintaining a direct contact between consumer and producer.¹⁹ All three magazines considered by Hart also demonstrate an interest in being ‘handcrafted’, either in the use of handmade paper from William Morris’s Kelmscott Press (*The Evergreen*) or in employing signatures rather than typed names at the end of articles (*The Acorn*).

This emphasis upon handicraft is one signifier of the Arts and Crafts movement overall, connecting it to the socialist politics of John Ruskin or William Morris, who opposed mechanized forms of production. Hart carefully shows, however, how none of the three magazines considered here can easily be seen as mouth-pieces for the Arts and Crafts movement. A number of claims made by Arthur Mackmurdo in the *Hobby Horse* seem directly antagonistic to Morris’s conception of the relation of art and socialist politics. There is also, for example, some overlap in terms of style and design with the contemporary Aesthetic Movement, often seen as a group opposed to the committed values of the Arts and Crafts group.²⁰ Though all three magazines were interested in alternative forms of community, evident in the collective nature of *The Evergreen* or the links between *The Acorn* and the bohemia of Bedford Park garden suburb, they did not openly espouse a group position through a manifesto as later avant-gardist groups were to do in their magazines. The only statement resembling a manifesto considered in Hart’s chapter, the *Hobby Horse*’s ‘Century Guild Flag Unfurling’, is a tentative attempt to reconcile being an individual artist with living under the banner of a collective identity: ‘we find it convenient to weave our individualities as separate threads, into a tapestry of some connected texture and homogenous design.’ This is an interesting trope that combines the handcrafting of an object with the nature of the group, but it continues by rejecting any strong sense of a unified formation: ‘we can commit ourselves in adhesion to no absolute dogma, no close creed . . . [it is] unity of sentiment that bands us together—not fast fettering creed.’²¹ This statement of the aims of the group is certainly more direct than the withdrawn coterie of Ricketts’s *Dial*; it is, however, a long way from the aggressive rhetoric of a movement such as Vorticism proclaimed in *BLAST*.

Existing somewhere between the nervous ‘unity of sentiment’ of the *Hobby Horse* and the avant-gardist gesture of Vorticism we find the movements of aestheticism and decadence, associated with the magazines discussed here by Laurel Brake. *The Yellow Book*, *The Savoy*, and *The Chameleon* epitomize various tendencies

¹⁹ For an account of the revival of the guilds in the period see Stella Tillyard, *The Impact of Modernism 1900–1920: Early Modernism and the Arts and Crafts Movement in Edwardian England* (London: Routledge, 1988), ch. 1. As Tillyard shows, there are important links between the Arts and Crafts movement and the emergence of modernism in Britain.

²⁰ See *ibid.*, p. xvi on this point.

²¹ Arthur Mackmurdo, ‘The Guild’s Flag Unfurling’, *Century Guild Hobby Horse*, 1 (Apr. 1884),

within the culture of the period, an important one of which was metropolitan homosexuality. As Brake shows, the trial of Oscar Wilde was a significant event in shaping the change of direction of *The Yellow Book*, as well as the inception of *The Savoy*. Mounting a critique of bourgeois morality in the work of figures like Wilde and Beardsley the decadent movement represented a step up from the cautious cultural formations associated with *The Dial* or *The Century Guild Hobby Horse*. *The Yellow Book*, as Brake notes, was interested in commercial success or at least in becoming ‘popular and fashionable, if not quite mainstream’ and was thus engaged in a different relation to the economics of publishing than the positions found in Ricketts and the magazines related to the Arts and Crafts movement. The presses that published *The Yellow Book* and *The Savoy* (John Lane and Leonard Smithers) were of a more commercial bent than Ricketts’s Vale Press or the Caradoc Press, which published *The Acorn*. The discussion, in various forms, of sexuality and gender in these three magazines also indicates a formation ready to challenge and shock, whether in the promotion of the New Woman, publication of material with openly homosexual themes, or the risqué illustrations of Beardsley. Battles with censorship, a strong feature of many magazines in the twentieth century, begin here: *The Chameleon* closed after one issue due to its homosexual contents; after Wilde’s trial the offices of *The Yellow Book* were attacked by a mob; and *The Savoy* (unlike *The Yellow Book*) was refused distribution by W. H. Smith’s.

These three magazines clearly indicate that the gesture to shock was intimately connected to a sense of the new, and the changing conditions of the modern world. Almost all of the magazines considered here also look for ‘newness’ by discussing theories of art, such as symbolism, found in Europe. Yeats, for example, a contributor to many of the magazines here, wrote in *The Dome* of ‘a new manner in the arts of the modern world’.²² The opening up of a journalistic space to discuss gender and sexuality was also new, and was to reappear in later magazines such as *The New Freewoman* and *Egoist*. The transnationalism that was to become recognizable as part of modernism can be noticed in, for example, discussion of symbolist painting in *The Dial*, in Charles Holmes on Japanese art in *The Dome*, and of Arthur Symons’s ‘Dieppe 1895’ in *The Savoy*. The term ‘modernity’ also occurs in many of the magazines, perhaps most interestingly in *The Acorn*’s ‘In Defence of Modernity’, discussed by Hart. In the ‘little magazines’ of the *fin de siècle*, therefore, we encounter many of the themes and issues that were to delineate the shape of the modernist magazine of the twentieth century.

²² W. B. Yeats, ‘A Symbolic Artist and the Coming of Symbolic Art’, *The Dome*, NS I (Dec. 1898), 233.

AESTHETICISM AND DECADENCE

The Yellow Book (1894–7), *The Chameleon* (1894), and
The Savoy (1896)

LAUREL BRAKE

Taking the word Decadence, then, as most precisely expressing the general sense of the newest movement in literature, we find that the terms Impressionism and Symbolism define correctly enough the two main branches of that movement.¹

For its very disease of form, this literature is certainly typical of a civilization grown over-luxurious, over-inquiring, too languid for the relief of action, too uncertain for any emphasis in opinion or in conduct. It reflects all the moods, all the manners, of a sophisticated society; its very artificiality is a way of being true to nature: simplicity, sanity, proportion—the classic qualities—how much do we possess them in our life, our surroundings, that we should look to find them in our literature—so evidently the literature of decadence?²

This chapter will look at three overlapping and closely entwined high-culture serials, *The Yellow Book* (1894–7), *The Chameleon* (1894), and *The Savoy* (1896), which immediately followed the publication of Arthur Symons's defining classifications above. Launching and folding within a span of only four years, this cluster of titles share a moment of self-conscious Decadence, and one associated too with the charges and trials of Oscar Wilde. However, I will argue that the sharpening of homophobia in metropolitan culture in England was discernible even as *The Yellow Book* launched in the spring of 1894 and that it governed the demise of them all in, respectively, 1895, 1896, and 1897. These titles are also

¹ Arthur Symons, 'The Decadent Movement in Literature', *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 87 (Nov. 1893), 859.

² *Ibid.*

positioned at a moment of great upheaval in the patterns of Victorian publishing, when the longstanding arrangement for the first book publication of new fiction in three expensive 'Library edition' volumes collapsed. The increasing incidence of the short story had already been consolidated by George Newnes's immensely popular *Strand Magazine*, monthly from 1890, and shorter, cheaper, and more accessible single-volume new fiction became the norm after the demise of the publisher-circulating library agreements in 1894. The resulting alleviation of pressure on periodicals to publish serial fiction monthly meant that the aberration from the monthly frequency seen in all three of these titles became economically feasible again, or at least thinkable, a choice of frequency that signalled an aesthetic and retrogressive resistance to the vaunted speed of modern life and the popular press. The appearance of the *Daily Mail*, the first truly mass-market daily in the UK, in May 1896 meant that the lineaments of this market and its economic power clearly marked the separation between it and these three titles. By comparison they are little, infrequent, literary, expensive, decadent, and coterie. Their contents are affiliated with art rather than news, and their design with Arts and Crafts rather than with newspaper layout and advertising. Their 'news' is the daring and experimental nature of their literary and art contents, and the graphics of the aesthetic press. Like the dailies, they are alert to foreign news, in their case largely French and cultural. Lastly, they share a consciousness of a framework of Decadence, which Arthur Symons, a contributor to *The Yellow Book* and editor of *The Savoy*, had mapped in November 1893 in the article 'The Decadent Movement in Literature' in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*.³ *The Yellow Book*, *Chameleon*, and *Savoy* are titles whose editors, writers, artists, readers, and moment overlap, while their formats, editorial strategies, and longevity differ interestingly in a short timespan.

The earliest and most long-lived of the three journals is *The Yellow Book* (1894–7), a stout quarterly volume of 250 pages throughout its run. The most commercial and exemplary of the New Journalism, it aimed to be popular and fashionable, if not quite mainstream. With 'star' and coterie contributors like Henry James and George Egerton respectively, a policy of signature, its (in)frequency, and its inclusion of risqué art and letterpress targeted a connoisseur readership that its London publisher, Elkin Mathews and John Lane,⁴ was already attracting to its book list. Its hard and garish yellow cover, stamped with Beardsley's graphic art, was distinctly novel in its get-up for a periodical, invoking a confusing and provocative mixture of yellow volumes of French fiction, indigenous, cheap

³ Ibid.

⁴ The partners separated soon after *The Yellow Book* was launched, and from number 3, it was published by John Lane alone. See Katherine Lyon Mix, *A Study in Yellow* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1960), 35–9; and Mark Samuels Lasner, *The Yellow Book: A Checklist and Index* (London: Eighteen Nineties Society, 1998), 7.

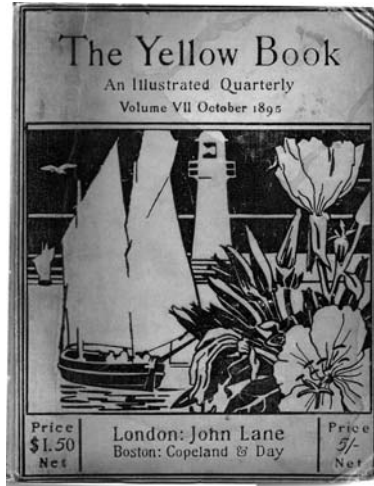


Fig. 3. Cover of *The Yellow Book* (Oct. 1895)

yellow-backs of railway bookstalls, and vulgar annuals. Costing 5s., *The Yellow Book* was cheaper than the single volumes of new fiction that began to prevail in 1894 and the old quarterlies, both priced at 6s., but more expensive than most of the monthly up-market reviews of the day selling at 2s. or 2s. 6d., and far more expensive than the lavishly illustrated shilling monthlies such as the *Cornhill*.

The Chameleon: A Bazaar of Dangerous and Smiling Chances, which appeared seven months later in November 1894, was tiny and non-commercial by comparison, emanating as it did from the Oxford undergraduate community. That it only ran to one number of sixty pages is directly attributable to aspects of homosocial culture at the time, and links between the university and celebrity metropolitan culture.

Like its predecessors, *The Savoy* (January–December 1896) is also intricately historically contingent in its inception and production on the trials and current print culture. Not only is it the other side of the trials, which had strengthened intolerance of expression of ‘the new [homosexual] culture’, but it is also ‘after’ the appearance of *The Yellow Book*, which it both resembles and resists. *The Yellow Book* and *The Savoy* are specialist or ‘class’ journals, in that they are *not* miscellanies that include a variety of subjects like most extant quarterlies, monthlies, and weeklies of their day. Politics, travel, geography, fiction, and poetry do not appear under the yoke of a single title in *The Yellow Book* or *Savoy*. They are part of the increasing incidence of specialist titles that characterized the last quarter of the century. A widening readership fostered diversity of interests coupled with sufficient volume of purchasers for more narrowly defined topics, resulting in the development of more and more populated niche markets. In this case, *The Yellow*

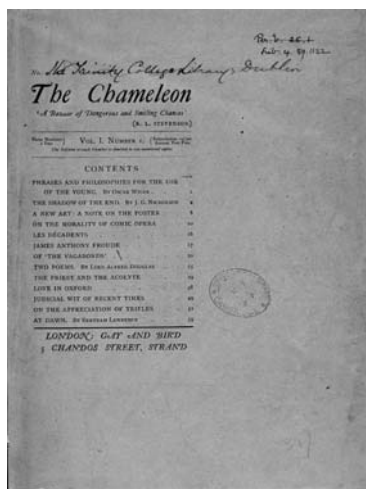


Fig. 4. Cover of *The Chameleon* (1894)

Book and *The Savoy* were *literary* and *art* magazines, and, as such, a cross between a popular, mainstream, predominantly literary monthly such as the *Cornhill*, which published quality articles and fiction accompanied by sumptuous illustrations, and the irregular, coterie art/literary press, such as *The Germ* (1850), *The Century Guild Hobby Horse/Hobby Horse* (1884–94), and Shannon’s and Ricketts’s *Dial* (1889–97). That *The Savoy* and most volumes of *The Yellow Book* were issued with uncut pages indicated to their readers an intention to identify with the art press, while their desire for high sales pointed to the wider audience of the *Cornhill*.

Like *The Yellow Book*, the material in *The Savoy* was divided into Literature and Art categories, each with a separate Table of Contents and a named editor.⁵ The weighting of visual art as equal in importance to letterpress symbolized by this representation of the contents and the dual editorship was polemically announced in the manifesto of *The Yellow Book*; eighteen months later in *The Savoy* Prospectus, the new project was simply described as containing ‘six or more illustrations independent of the text’.⁶ While a number of artists and writers gravitated to the new publication from *The Yellow Book*, Aubrey Beardsley was the most visible sign of the genealogy of *The Savoy*, and its close relationship with its rival. As Beardsley was, serially, the Art Editor of both, the publication of *The Savoy* is a direct

⁵ In both cases Aubrey Beardsley was named publicly as Art Editor in advertisements, published literary gossip, and announcements, but not on the title page of either. Symons’s name appeared alone on the cover of *The Savoy*, but no editors were named as such in the pages of *The Yellow Book*.

⁶ ‘Prospectus’ *Savoy* (Nov. 1895), 1.

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Fig. 5. Advert for the publisher Leonard Smithers (c.1894)

result of the effect of the Wilde trials on *The Yellow Book*, which had extirpated Beardsley from its staff in April 1895 in response to a rumour, erroneous on both counts, of Wilde's involvement with *The Yellow Book*, and his 'friendship' with Beardsley.⁷

The publishers of the journals in 1896, Leonard Smithers of *The Savoy* and John Lane of *The Yellow Book*, were also competing for similar readers in their more general lists. However, by 1896 Lane's firm was more economically buoyant, extensive, transparent, fashionable, upbeat, and timely with its support for new women writers in its Keynote series, while Smithers dealt covertly in pornography,⁸ and publicly in risqué and/or male homosexual texts that necessarily had to rely more on word of mouth for sales than Lane's list did. Like Lane, Smithers already employed some contributors to his new periodical publication who were already 'his' authors,⁹ whom the periodical would publicize, and like Lane he had an extant readership to draw on, but he hoped to augment it with *Yellow Book* readers who would follow Beardsley to *The Savoy*.

It is striking, however, that the contents of the two titles reflect their publishers' extant lists. *The Yellow Book* overcame its initial misogyny and proceeded to include

⁷ These allegations were disputed at the time, and are discussed routinely in accounts of the trials by Wilde scholars.

⁸ For example, Smithers published the anonymous homosexual novel *Teleny* in 1893, and *Priapeia* in 1889 and 1890. See James Nelson, *Publisher to the Decadents* (High Wycombe: Rivendale Press, 2000), 13–20, 34–6.

⁹ The first issue of *The Savoy* carried advertisements for Symons's *London Nights*, Wratislaw's *Caprices*, and a slip-in for an edition of Pope's 'Rape of the Lock' with Beardsley's artwork. Works by Beerbohm, Symons, and Dowson were 'In preparation'.

a steady number of women contributors,¹⁰ while the gender profile of *The Savoy* was overwhelmingly masculine, both in its literary and art contributors and in their risqué representation of sexualized men and women. Smithers and his editor attempted to court the public with a number of strategies, from a free Beardsley Christmas card slipped into the first number to the cultivation of notoriety through the management and quotation of reviews, and a shift from the sedate retro rhythm of the quarterly which piggybacked on *The Yellow Book* to the modern beat of the monthly.¹¹ Despite these tactics, however, sales didn't materialize sufficiently to augment Smithers's shaky finances. Number 8 was announced as the last, and it was written entirely by the editor, whose rueful account of the reasons for its demise suggests that there were problems of under-pricing, of censorship among distributors, and of the miscalculation of a readership 'in the world', of people 'who really cared for art, and really for art's sake'.¹² The journal's exclusive appeal to male readers, and its sacrifice of half of the reading public are never mentioned in explanations for the demise of *The Savoy*, but the potential of this buoyant market was readily acknowledged by publishers from Samuel Beeton to George Newnes and W. T. Stead. Ada Levenson, however, makes the gender-marked contents of *The Savoy* clear in her 'Saveloy or the Savoy', a parody appearing in *Punch*, just a month after the first appearance of Smithers's and Symons's journal:

Here is a charming magazine, written by contributors who have the full courage of their women's creed, and very refreshing it is to turn from the morbid philosophy of the Besantine school of literature to the sweet fresh air of the new world to which Mr Weirdsley and his colleagues ['Simple Symons' and 'Max Mereboom'] take us. There is not an article in the volume that one can put down without feeling the better and purer for it.¹³

The dialogue of *The Savoy* with *The Yellow Book* was continual but changing. *The Savoy* began as a quarterly like *The Yellow Book* with Beardsley's signature work ubiquitous, inside and out. However, its quarto size and Arts and Crafts look—with board covers of dusky pink—made the upstart distinct from its rival in its unambiguous identity as a magazine rather than a book, its subdued colouration, and its low price of 2s. 6d. per issue. It continued at quarterly intervals twice until its third (July) number when it announced its transformation into a monthly. Six monthly numbers appeared between July and December in flimsy paper covers of pale green at 2s. each. Its first bumper issues weighed in at 170 and 197 pages

¹⁰ See for example Linda K. Hughes, 'Women Poets and Contested Spaces in *The Yellow Book*', *SEL*, 44:4 (Autumn 2004), 849–72; Sally Ledger, 'Wilde Women and *The Yellow Book*: The Sexual Politics of Aestheticism and Decadence', *ELT*, 50:1 (2007), 5–26.

¹¹ See Laurel Brake, 'Marketing Notoriety: Advertising the *Savoy*', in *eadem*, *Print in Transition, 1850–1910: Studies in Media and Book History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 171–9.

¹² Symons, 'A Literary Causerie', *Savoy*, 8 (1896), 92.

¹³ [Levenson, Ada], 'The Saveloy', *Punch*, 110 (1 Feb. 1896), 49.

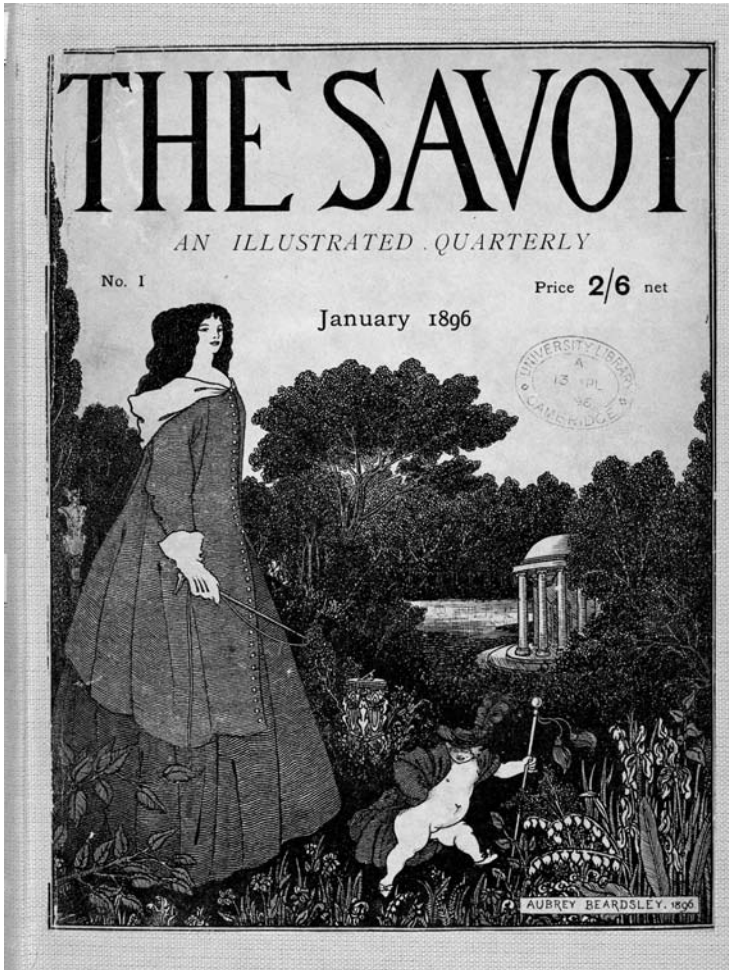


Fig. 6. Cover of *The Savoy* (Jan. 1896)

respectively, but the pagination nearly halved in July, dropping to 102 (when Beardsley was ill and monthly issue commenced), before settling around 90 for subsequent monthly numbers. As such, the monthly *Savoy* was about a third of the length of the quarterly *Yellow Book*. But none of the experiments with frequency resulted in a successful publishing venture in the period; the demise of *The Yellow Book* in April 1897 followed that of *The Savoy* in December 1896.

It is notable that all of these titles were short-lived, and that the causes of their respective demise were characterized more by similarity than difference. They were all primarily attributable to a moment of homophobia in the mid-1890s, before, during, and after the Wilde trials. In the autumn of 1896, while the November number of *The Savoy* was in the press, in which the closure of

the journal was first announced, Grant Richards declined to consider buying it and developing a new series; in his view ‘the “reaction” against what the reading public associated with Wilde and his disciples “had not spent itself”’.¹⁴ That Lane’s *Yellow Book*—the most commercial, the most informed by the New Journalism and the ‘new woman’, and the magazine emanating from the most stable publisher—survived longest is predictable, given the economic and social climate.

The Yellow Book was also least vulnerable to a factor to which both it and *The Savoy* were subject: the illness and/or death of its contributors. Yeats called the writers of the 1890s ‘a tragic generation’,¹⁵ and of the cluster of authors, editors, and artists around these titles, Beardsley, Crackanorpe, Johnson, and Wilde were dead by 1902,¹⁶ and many others were ill, through depression, alcoholism, or TB in the latter parts of their lives. Beardsley is the most potent example: both *The Yellow Book* and *The Savoy* were seriously affected by his ‘loss’, if from different causes. Ejected from *The Yellow Book* during the trials because of public misconceptions, he was forced to abandon *The Savoy* by the latter stages of TB at the crucial moment that the journal went monthly. It coped by publishing some of his earlier drawings as covers and inside, and thus retained the visual branding of the journal. It also featured replacement images by William Blake, but the dearth of new artwork overall and the loss of Beardsley’s art direction were body blows to the title, particularly under the pressure of monthly publication. Under these conditions sales suffered and it didn’t last long, whereas it might be argued that once *The Yellow Book* adjusted to Beardsley’s absence, after number 5, it survived another two years, even with competition from *The Savoy* for the entirety of 1896.

However, periodicals are by nature composite and collaborative texts, and neither *The Yellow Book* nor *The Savoy* is reducible to a single personality, even if Beardsley’s artwork became synonymous with the ‘look’ of these journals through their cover designs. Because of its greater volume of pages, *The Yellow Book* particularly had integrated Beardsley’s work among its large stable of artists and writers, many of whom were ‘stars’ or quality contributors, whereas *The Savoy*’s policy of publishing a smaller group of contributors who were encouraged to experiment across the genres meant the loss of Beardsley’s drawings, poetry, and fiction left its issues far more vulnerable to his absence. But considering the richness of the literary content of *The Savoy*—its criticism, poetry, and fiction by a variety of

¹⁴ Quoted by Stanley Weintraub (ed.), *The Savoy: Nineties Experiment* (University Park, PA/London: Penn State University Press, 1966), p. xxxix.

¹⁵ See W. B. Yeats, *The Trembling of the Veil* (London: T. Werner Laurie, 1922), Book IV: ‘The Tragic Generation’.

¹⁶ Beardsley (1872–98), Crackanorpe (1870–96), Lionel Johnson (1867–1902), Oscar Wilde (1854–1900).

contributors—it is misleading to promulgate Hesketh Pearson’s view that it might be dubbed ‘The Beardsley’.¹⁷

Lastly, the competition between the two titles might have been a significant factor in their demise: while their combined sales might have supported either *The Yellow Book* or *The Savoy*, their division of the market was fatal to both in this vulnerable period. The readership wasn’t large enough, as Symons speculated, but perhaps not because of dearth of interest but because of a divided critical mass.

The Yellow Book

The Yellow Book appeared in 13 quarterly issues over a span of three years, between April 1894 and April 1897. It was novel in its day on a number of counts. Although it was a magazine, it came out as a hard-cover, book-like volume. Moreover, its quarterly frequency was anomalous for a popular magazine; it invoked both the now archaic quarterly reviews of the early nineteenth century, vestiges of which still survived in the 1890s, and contemporary connoisseur art publications such as the faltering *Hobby Horse*, the last erratic numbers of *The Century Guild Hobby Horse* (1884–94). Lastly, the bright yellow colouration of its cover and its dramatic poster-art graphic design signalled an alliance with the avant-garde art press and French poster art, while simultaneously invoking paperback novels published in France and British railway fiction. It was a combination that wrested the art press from the connoisseurs and attempted to relocate it in the popular market, badged with the accoutrements of New Journalism—in the cover graphics and colour, in the sensationalism of the contents inside, and in the advertisement and identification of its star contributors named on the back cover. Like other magazines, it carried advertisements. Contemporary reviewers, quick to juxtapose its high-culture claims with its popular get-up, likened it to children’s annuals on the one hand and garish gift books on the other, as the *Saturday Review* acerbically remarked.¹⁸

If the hybridity of *The Yellow Book* created a brand identity overnight, the separate constituents of the product have been readily traced. *The Century Guild Hobby Horse*, in its last phase *The Hobby Horse*, is a particularly visible antecedent in its identification with Aestheticism, visual art, fine printing, and graphic Arts and Crafts; the overlap of its contributors with those of *The Yellow Book*; its matching quarterly frequency;¹⁹ and the continuity of its publisher, Mathews and Lane, with that of *The Yellow Book*. That is, as the publishers’ investment in the *Hobby Horse*

¹⁷ Cited in Weintraub, *The Savoy*, p. xlii.

¹⁸ See ‘New Books and Reprints’, *Saturday Review*, 77 (28 Apr. 1894), 5.

¹⁹ The frequency of *The Century Guild Hobby Horse* altered over its ten-year run; originally an annual, it appeared as such in 1884, skipped 1885, reappeared in 1886–92 as a quarterly, and in a new series announced as quarterly, appeared in 1893 twice and in 1894 once. And see this volume, Chapter 5.

ceased, *The Yellow Book* was launched. An altogether distinctive antecedent was the monthly review that ushered in the 1890s, *The New Review*, founded in 1889. Revamping itself in January 1894, *The New Review* called attention to the addition of illustrations to its format, but as *The Yellow Book* would also claim three months later, its visual contents were included on merit, to add to meanings, rather than as decorative filler. *The New Review's* indication of the New Journalism market at the onset of 1894 is informative about the conditions of the print culture industry into which *The Yellow Book* was launched.²⁰

Another cultural environment in which *The Yellow Book* was both an intervention and a formative participant was the gender wars between the increasingly articulate and published new women writers and readers and their rebarbative male interlocutors. These included vilifiers of literary women such as Henry James and novelists such as Thomas Hardy and George Moore, who objected bitterly to the censorship of the novel in Britain by publishers and circulating libraries, in the name of women readers. While this context of *The Yellow Book* has received much attention in recent years, it is a key aspect of the world in which *The Yellow Book* appeared.²¹ I offer a simplified series of three snapshots to anchor the point: just prior to the appearance of *The Yellow Book*, the publication of a sensationalist series in the *Nineteenth Century* on 'The Revolt of the Daughters' (January–March 1894); the launch (from December 1893) of a series of volumes of short fiction by the publisher of *The Yellow Book*, called 'Keynotes', that prominently included women writers and current topics such as the woman question, aestheticism, and decadence; and the events of spring 1895, in which Oscar Wilde was tried, with serious repercussions for not only himself but for *The Yellow Book* and the publishing industry as a whole.

Less prominent is a further important ingredient in the chemistry of *The Yellow Book*. That is the import by Henry Harland, its American-born, New York editor, of his experience of raucous American journalism and specifically the rabid New York press, to which he had been contributing his literary work. Traffic between the United States and Britain was characteristic of the New Journalism in the 1880s and 1890s, and the cross-fertilization of the British *Yellow Book* with American input was not an unexpected phenomenon at this time. Harland, who emigrated from the USA to the UK in 1889, was not only the son of a one-time journalist on the *New York World*, but coming from New York as he did, Harland had been witness to the lightening transformation between 1883 and 1889 of this paper after it was acquired

²⁰ See Brake, *Print in Transition*, 161–2, where this argument is expounded in detail.

²¹ See *ibid.* Hughes, 'Women Poets and Contested Spaces in *The Yellow Book*'; Ledger, 'Wilde Women and *The Yellow Book*'; Margaret Stetz, 'The *Yellow Book* and the Beardsley Myth', *JENS*, 26 (1999), 33–42, and 'The Snake Lady and the Bruised Bodley Head', in Catherine Maxwell and Patricia Pulham (eds), *Vernon Lee* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006); and Mark Turner, 'Urban Encounters and Visual Play in the *Yellow Book*', in Laurel Brake and Julie Codell (eds), *Encounters in the Victorian Press* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005).

by Pulitzer.²² Quickly transformed into a sensationalist, illustrated paper with a huge popular appeal, its cheap journalism dominated the New York market until the advent of Hearst's *Morning Journal* in the autumn of 1895, at which point a cut-throat newspaper war between the two titles ensued.²³ It played out as *The Yellow Book* attempted to recover from the effect of the Wilde trials. By the time Harland arrived in the UK, he was also a published novelist and an habitué of Rome and Paris, as well as witness to American journalism's inroads into the popular market. The combination of Beardsley's orientation to the visual avant-garde of France and England, Mathews and Lane's success in creating and marketing the Keynote series which catered for the new market of women readers, and Harland's knowledge of the American press might well be regarded as an auspicious mix for *The Yellow Book* project. The eclecticism of the triumvirate of publisher and editors may go some way to explain the innovative hybridity of the barefaced yellow volumes that first appeared in April 1894.

When Linda Hughes refers to the trajectory of *The Yellow Book* as subject to an 'historical divide: B.T and A.T.'—before and after [the Wilde] trials²⁴—she alerts us both to a chasm in what is sometimes represented as 'the 1890s' and to the dynamic landscape of *The Yellow Book*, which in a manner characteristic of journals, which are so closely tied to the prevailing vicissitudes of the market, changes significantly over the course of a run. Unlike some titles, which suffer life-changing alterations of publisher, title, political party, frequency, price, and/or editor, in the wake of the trials *The Yellow Book* merely lost, overnight, some contributors and an art editor, who was never replaced.²⁵ Its loss of readership was more gradual.

There is a gratifyingly long history of critique of *The Yellow Book*—its bespoke self-critique in its second issue, Katherine Mix's dedicated study of 1960, and a steady stream of work up to the present which, together, may be said to have established that the discourses of *The Yellow Book* were heterodox and contradictory. This is confirmed by the variety included in its early numbers: new women writers of fiction and poetry, misogynist pieces of literature and criticism, naturalism, decadence and aestheticism, and impressionist, realist, and avant-garde artwork. Rather than review these arguments, I shall examine the shape and contents of a *Yellow Book* number after the departure of Beardsley to see how *The Yellow Book* changes—and into what. To assess it in this way at the level of the single issue and structure rather than via overarching themes or the contribution of individual journalists helps keep the material culture of the journal in view.

²² See Stanley Weintraub in *ODNB*.

²³ See William Grosvenor Bleyer, *Main Currents in the History of American Journalism* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1927), 325–39.

²⁴ Hughes, 'Women Poets and Contested Spaces in *The Yellow Book*', 849.

²⁵ See Mix, *Study in Yellow*, 164.

What did Harland do, for example, to construct issue 6, the number following the extirpation of Beardsley, and the departure of those who abandoned *The Yellow Book* in support of him? This was not a number in which the threat to the integrity and dignity of art posed by the trials to culture was avoided. If anything, a high proportion of the prose addressed these questions. Henry James was deployed to open the number, just as he had in number 1, now to re-establish the authority of the journal. James was one of the older generation of contributors to *The Yellow Book*, one of its stars, and one who could set the requisite tone of respectability and work of the highest quality aesthetically. His story 'The Next Time' is plangently apposite to the renewed claim of *The Yellow Book* to appear above the affray, in the blue sky of high culture. Its subject was the repeated attempts of a talented male novelist ('Poor Ray Limbert') to write a novel which will be successful in the circulating libraries, and on occasion to edit a periodical that he renders popular. He fails on both counts, because he simply cannot, it is argued, write *badly* enough. As in James's initial story for *The Yellow Book*, 'The Death of the Lion', the plight of the male novelist is set against that of a wealthy woman. She is not the consumer of his fiction and his life as formerly, but, as in the earlier story, she effortlessly survives him. In the new story she is a woman author, and the main possessor of the elusive but shameful skill sought by the failed male literary man, namely to write what James implies is very badly indeed; she succeeds in consistently writing best sellers, and achieving 'the doom of popularity'.²⁶

This story about the literary marketplace invokes the register of *The Yellow Book* as distinct from popular journalism. Art is allied with relative economic 'failure', or by analogy with small sales, a position familiar from modernism and implicit in the concept of the 'little' magazine. This is arguably not the idea of the publisher and editor of *The Yellow Book*, who might sympathize with Mrs Highmore's tendency never to regard 'the literary motive as if it were distinguishable from the pecuniary'.²⁷ James is the respectable face of aestheticism, in implicit contrast to its discredited association with Wilde and Beardsley.

A second short story in number 6 exposes the materiality of the art market as opposed to the literary market, in connection with the poster, a form of art which Beardsley had recently defended.²⁸ Evelyn Sharp's tale, 'A New Poster', reveals that the impecunious English artist whom a wealthy American widow is about to marry in the delusion that he is dedicated to Art is like herself, and her wealthy American lover, involved in trade, the market, and monetary ambition, and is self-deluded and deceitful to boot. She reconsiders her proposals, marries the American factory owner, and cuts the artist. So, here Art is insistently linked to the art *market*, which is depicted as corrupt, *and* associated with the vulgarity of the popular in the particular choice of art, the manifestation of contemporary

²⁶ Henry James, 'The Next Time', *The Yellow Book*, 6 (July 1896), 13.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 30.

²⁸ Aubrey Beardsley, 'The Art of the Hoarding', *New Review*, 11 (July 1894), 53–5.

art displayed in the street, and in this case compounded by its association with advertising. Sharp's location of this argument, in a domestic marriage plot, and from the point of view of a woman enable us to view 'A New Poster' and 'The Next Time' as gendered perspectives on these debates about the nature of Art and Literature, their relationship to the increasingly visible market, and how or if Art and Literature will survive. As in George Gissing's conservative reading in *New Grub Street*, the writer of Literature dies in James's 'The Next Time', overcome by his honourable failure, but in Sharp's narrative if Cynthia Milton marries the wealthy American manufacturer rather than the artist, she still doesn't escape the market.

As if to endorse this view, Harland gives space to a critical piece by G. S. Street defending the best-selling fiction of Ouida. While Street's case is weakly argued, its presence is a reminder of the ideological eclecticism of *The Yellow Book*. It is not that *The Yellow Book* bars cultural politics, but that, in a way some modernist journals imitate, it avoids single 'party' politics. In this it is distinct from the traditional alliance of journals with political parties over the century. However, the heterodoxy of *The Yellow Book* does echo one of the newer heavyweight reviews, *The Nineteenth Century* (founded 1877). Similarly claiming political diversity and neutrality, the 'symposia' of *The Nineteenth Century* gave a form to structured debate among interlocutors, many of whom had confronted each other in actual Metaphysical Society debates before publication). In its neutrality and inclusiveness, *The Yellow Book* also arguably provided a model for the eclecticism of the later *New Age* under A. R. Orage.

Harland commissioned more, sharper, pieces in number 6 that return to the question of the degree to which a work of art and authorship can coexist in the marketplace. 'The Auction Room of Letters' by Arthur Waugh considers the link between the novelist and the auctioneer, alleged by a 'leading man of letters' in the previous month. Waugh's view, that the Author has now replaced the publisher as the kingpin of the industry, accords with the turn towards signature and 'stars' (displacing anonymity) that the New Journalism had promulgated. It also chimes with the emphasis on the individual artist in modernism, which Waugh alleges is connected with 'pecuniary award' as a marker of 'recognition', and 'the multiplication of periodical literature'.²⁹ The discussion of quality has been supplanted by a discussion of pay, and of taste by 'the mob'/'the general public', who crave 'amusement' (i.e. 'stories') rather than 'criticism, sociology, philosophy'.³⁰ Waugh calls upon living novelists to own the 'Dignity' of letters, and to desert the 'vulgar' 'new era'.

A last piece in this faceted debate in *Yellow Book* number 6 is a short story set in a location in which the extreme case of writing for the market is scrutinized directly.

²⁹ Arthur Waugh, 'The Auction Room of Letters', *The Yellow Book*, 6 (July 1896), 259–60.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 262

'In an American Newspaper Office', by Charles Miner Thompson, represents the worst case imagined by the defenders of art—writing against time in a market-driven industry. The story is naturalistic, dwelling on the night desk of a filthy office, the poorly paid and ill-kempt journalists, the noise and bad language, the cruel but elegant proprietor who are all pitted like a machine against the suffering of an old, worn-out sub-editor, who loses his mother and his job on the night in question. Prompted by a news story that he is subbing, the sub-editor decides to commit suicide, but not before inserting an obituary in the paper about himself, in which he exposes the inhumanity, secrets, hypocrisy, and sharp journalistic practices of the cynical proprietor of this self-proclaimed, respectable family newspaper, the *Dawn*. While this Gothic piece, laced with sensation and melodrama, is stylistically anomalous in *The Yellow Book*, its suggestion that the ethics of the worst of the newspaper economy are akin to Cain's murder of Abel is emblematic of the worst fears of aestheticism about journalism, imagined as its antithesis.³¹

In many of the short stories of *Yellow Book* number 6, then there is an anxiety about the register and quality of Art. On the one hand, there is a tendency to juxtapose art and literature with the market, and with journalism, that form of writing allegedly most closely tied to the market, and, on the other hand, to worry that Art is *already* implicated in the market, to its detriment. Nothing in these articles and stories that touch on key critical issues of the day suggests that the intellectual courage of *The Yellow Book* has been traduced in the aftermath of the Wilde trials.³² Harland even publishes a story in French in number 6, defying popular identification of France as the source of much of the decadence, and as the recent refuge of Wilde's friends and acquaintances. The same boldness cannot be ascribed to the artwork of *The Yellow Book* after number 5. In particular, Gertrude Hammond's sketch 'The Yellow Book', which attempts to domesticate the journal by depicting a young man reading it to a modest young woman, for whom it is now, *sans* Beardsley, supposedly safe, is indicative of the anodyne, often pleasant art in the issue. The good quality and interest of the prose persisted in subsequent issues, with a parade of contributions by recognizable names, including Douglas Ainslie, John Buchan, Hubert Crackanthorpe, Ella D'Arcy, Max Beerbohm, A. C. Benson, Baron Corvo, Ella Hepworth Dixon, Menie Murial Dowie, Richard Garnett,

³¹ Even George Egerton, in 'The Captain's Book', her fanciful tale of the imaginative storyteller who never wrote his book, juxtaposes this failed author, whose 'work' is repeatedly deferred, with his glib journalist son, who steals his father's stories for his paper and for his personal aggrandisement. See George Egerton, 'The Captain's Book', *The Yellow Book*, 6 (July 1896), 103–16.

³² See Richard Le Gallienne's 'Four Prose Fancies', part 3 in this issue, which Margaret Stetz identifies as an explicit defence of Wilde in *The Yellow Book*, soon after the trials. Stetz also suggests that a poem by Richard Garnett in this number supports Wilde more obliquely. Margaret D. Stetz, 'The Love That Dared Not Speak *His* Name: Literary Responses to the Wilde Trials', in Jonathan Allison (ed.), *Bound for the 1890s* (High Wycombe: Rivendale Press, 2006), 52, 55–6.

Richard Le Gallienne, George Gissing, Kenneth Grahame, Henry James, Vernon Lee, Ada Levenson, Leila Macdonald, Edith Nesbit, Evelyn Sharp, Netta Syrett, Rosamund Marriott Watson, William Watson, H. G. Wells, and Yeats. But if the letterpress remained robust, the visual art never reached a comparable standard after issue 5, a problem exacerbated by the routinely poor reproduction of the visual material.

The Chameleon

The short life of *The Chameleon*, its modest size, preponderance of anonymity, simple paper cover, and insouciance were commonplace features among undergraduate magazines of the period. However, its inclusion of a signed piece by a well-known author (Wilde) and its pronounced decadent orientation were not. Nor was its target—a coterie readership of male aesthetes lured by the unpredictability, danger, and guile indicated by its title and subtitle. Conceived as a ‘little magazine’, it sought to become an instant collector’s piece, with a tiny print run of 100. It was edited by John Francis Bloxham of Exeter College, and has been positioned as a continuation of the undergraduate journal, the *Spirit Lamp* (1892–3), which Lord Alfred Douglas had edited and to which Wilde and Bloxham had contributed.³³ For a projected frequency of three numbers per year, the *The Chameleon*’s high subscription rate of 15s. also guaranteed its exclusivity. If it lacked illustration, it was aesthetically designed, with its font, page layout, paper, and typography all announcing its consciousness of its contemporaries—*The Century Guild Hobby Horse* (1884–94), whose final number had only appeared the previous month and William Morris’s Kelmscott Press (1891–8).

The unmistakable homosexuality of discourses in *The Chameleon* and its embrace of Oscar Wilde and Alfred Douglas are a response to and an indication of its disdain for the commercial dimension of *The Yellow Book*, which prohibited these elements in the interests of breadth of readership. At the same time, the gender orientation and persona of *The Chameleon* reveal its continuity with the *Artist*, a monthly trade paper, which in April had sacked Charles Kains-Jackson, its outspoken editor for an explicit article on homosexuality, titled ‘The New Chivalry’. Kains-Jackson, along with other contributors to the *Artist*, were among the authors found in *The Chameleon* seven months later. The gender of *The Chameleon* is also reinforced by its London publisher/printers, Gay and Bird, whose current list featured volumes of verse—by Theodore Wratishaw (*Caprice*, 1893) and Stanley Addleshaw (*Love Lyrics*, 1894)—that included poems about love between men. That *The Chameleon* never published numbers 2 and 3 for which its subscribers had paid is due to exposure of its homosexual contents within weeks of

³³ See Timothy D’Arch Smith, ‘Introduction’, *The Chameleon* (London: 1890s Society, 1978), 4.

its appearance by the editor of a weekly gossip paper.³⁴ Drawn to the existence of this obscure and scarce ‘little magazine’ by the attributions on the cover to Lord Alfred Douglas and Oscar Wilde, Jerome K. Jerome’s strictures in *To-day* of 29 December 1894 resulted in a notoriety fatal to its survival. Notably, these skirmishes in the press around male homosexuality in the April number of the *Artist* and December 1894 precede the outbreak of mass homophobia in and around the trials of Oscar Wilde in March and April of 1895.

The Savoy

The inception of *The Savoy* seems to have been publisher-led, with Leonard Smithers seeing a potential market in the fallout from the weakened *Yellow Book*, severed from its signature art editor, Aubrey Beardsley, by its own hand. Smithers’s alertness to John Lane’s fortunes is unsurprising, as their markets as publishers overlapped. However, their difference is germane here: Smithers’s list and personal taste appealed precisely to the readership being squeezed by the Wilde trials—those interested in sexual liberation, and he did not share the scruples of Lane and his *Yellow Book* contributors to keep it respectable and free from the taint of Wilde. Thus it was that Smithers approached Arthur Symons, whose poem in the first number of *The Yellow Book*, ‘Stella Maris’, combined qualities calculated to appeal to Smithers for a new and downmarket rival—notoriety, skill, and sexual license. Moreover, in the wake of the trials, Lane had refused to publish *London Nights*, Symons’s volume of poems that included the provocative poem, and the volume appeared in June 1895 under Smithers’s imprint.³⁵ Likewise, although Beardsley’s risqué work had continued to appear in Lane’s list after his exclusion from *The Yellow Book*, Beardsley’s talent, fame, unemployment, and ill health were factors in Smithers’s creation of a rival journal. According to Nelson, a combination of altruism and an eye to business motivated Smithers to found *The Savoy*.³⁶

Once established, Smithers’s *Savoy* normally paid its contributors at rates above the norm, and for its short life supported a clutch of young writers and artists that included regulars such as Symons, Beardsley, Yeats, Dowson, Theodore Wratislaw, Max Beerbohm, Selwyn Image, Havelock Ellis, Rudolf Dircks, Charles Shannon, and W. T. Horton, and occasional contributors such as Conrad, Frederick Wedmore, Hubert Crackanthorpe, Edward Carpenter, Vincent O’Sullivan, George

³⁴ Most explicit was the short story ‘The Priest and the Acolyte’, by its editor but published only with the signature X. The number also includes numerous homosexual poems, including Douglas’s ‘Two Loves’ and an obituary of Froude, which morphs into a paean for Walter Pater, an icon of this part of the Oxford community.

³⁵ James G. Nelson, *Publisher to the Decadents: Leonard Smithers in the Careers of Beardsley, Wilde, and Dowson* (High Wycombe: Rivendale Press, 2000), 58.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

Moore, Ernest Rhys, Olivia Shakespear, Fiona Macleod, Lionel Johnson, Ford Madox Hueffer, John Gray, Gabriel Gillett, Will Rothenstein, Walter Sickert, Charles Conder, A. Kay Womrath, Mrs Percy Dearmer, and Phil May. Nelson argues that, for both the regulars and the others, *The Savoy* provided welcome income and literary exposure.

As this list suggests, the pages of *The Savoy* were filled largely by male contributors, and women were rare. At best there is a token presence, which is not surprising, given the louche, risqué masculinities characteristic of *The Savoy*.³⁷ Of eight issues, women—artists or writers—were found in seven, but in the preponderance of these, female contributors were limited to one per issue, and in the remaining three issues to two. So, there were never more than two female contributors to any issue, each of which consisted of forty plus items of letterpress and artwork in the two quarterly numbers, and approximately twenty-five items in the monthly issues. Two numbers (3 and 7) had no literary work by women at all. Olivia Shakespear's two-part story, 'Beauty's Hour', which led in numbers 4 and 5 sounded the only unmistakable note of writing by a *new* woman, a feature that came to characterize *The Yellow Book* eventually. Other pieces by women identifiable through their signature—such as the poets Mathilde Blind and Leila Macdonald, and artists Edith M. Thomas and Mrs Percy Dearmer—strike other chords. But two disturbing and decadent stories by 'A New Writer' in numbers 2 and 6 are attributable retrospectively to an additional female writer, Clara Savile Clarke, an acquaintance of Beardsley's.³⁸

Contributors to *The Savoy* stemmed from a number of identifiable circles, including various periodicals, social networks, literary styles, and publishers' lists. Yeats, Dowson, and Symons, for example, regulars at the heart of the magazine, were members of the Rhymers' Club which met at the Cheshire Cheese pub for two or three years from 1891, and along with two other member-contributors, Lionel Johnson and Ernest Rhys, constituted five of the seven poets who made

³⁷ Stanley Weintraub's selection of *The Savoy* published in 1966 unselfconsciously reinforces the preponderant masculinity of the journal. Adopting Pearson's suggestion, Weintraub entitles his Introduction 'The Beardsley' and excludes all of the artwork and letterpress by women contributors.

³⁸ Clarke is identified as the author of 'A New Writer' by both Sturgis (Matthew Sturgis, *Aubrey Beardsley: A Biography* (London: HarperCollins, 1998), 281) and Nelson, *Publisher to the Decadents*, 75. Daughter of Henry Savile Clarke, playwright, drama critic, and journalist, and friend of Ada Levenson, she published two volumes of short stories in 1891 (*The Poet's Audience*) and 1893 (*The World's Pleasure*). In 1894 she had a story in the Christmas number of the *Lady's Pictorial* as one of 'Seven Stories by Modern Women' (see Valerie Fehlbaum, *Ella Hepworth Dixon: The Story of a Modern Woman* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 76), along with Ella Hepworth Dixon, Maria Corelli, Violet Hunt, Iota, Mrs W. K. Clifford, and Clo. Graves. In October 1896 she published 'A Novel in a Nutshell: The Coiffeur' in the *Sketch* (28 Oct. 1896), the same month that her second story, 'Elsa', appeared in *The Savoy* by 'A New Writer'. Beardsley seems to have mooted her as a contributor to Smithers (see Sturgis, *Aubrey Beardsley*, 281, and Henry Maas, J. L. Duncan, and W. G. Good (eds), *The Letters of Aubrey Beardsley* (London: Cassell, 1970), 115–16).

up the group. Wratislaw, Gillett, and John Gray wrote homosocial pieces for the *Artist*; Selwyn Image and Lionel Johnson were part of the nucleus of *The Century Guild Hobby Horse* (1884–94), the annual and then quarterly journal of the Century Guild.³⁹ The Arts and Crafts orientation to the design and graphics of the *Hobby Horse* was reflected in its choice of printer, the renowned Chiswick Press,⁴⁰ which also printed *The Savoy* for Smithers from its second issue. Indeed, the high print quality of *The Savoy*, particularly the artwork, is one aspect that distinguishes it from the routine printing of *The Yellow Book* by the Ballantyne Press.

But the trail from the older quarterly to its rival is unmistakable, some of it resulting from abandonment of *The Yellow Book* after April 1895 and a succession of contributors from the old title to the new, and some of it from overlap, with a few, freelance journalists appearing simultaneously in both. Together these included Beerbohm, Conder, Crackanthorpe, Dowson, Gosse, Lionel Johnson, Leila Macdonald, Pennell, Rothenstein, Wratislaw, and Yeats, as well as Beardsley and Symons, all of whom appeared in the first six numbers of *The Yellow Book* before *The Savoy* was announced in November. In general, the profile of *The Savoy* contributors was notably younger than that of *The Yellow Book*, with a few men only, such as Gosse and Pennell, among the established, rather than the up-and-coming.

By the time that *The Savoy* appeared in January 1896 Dowson, Ellis, and Symons had appeared in Smithers's list of publications, Dowson and Ellis as translators of Zola's fiction in 1894–5, with a cornucopia of titles by *Savoy* artists and authors (Beardsley, Beerbohm, Conder, Dowson, O'Sullivan, Symons, and Wratislaw) issued by Smithers in 1896 during publication of *The Savoy*.⁴¹ Even as it announced its closure in number 8, *The Savoy* included an advert for a deluxe re-issue of the run as a Christmas book in three volumes bound in royal blue. This cluster of authors and artists represented a constituency from its publisher's list in the make-up of the journal, but is also indicative of the ways in which journals throughout the nineteenth century could be at the heart of publishing firms, attracting authors, carrying advertising, and consolidating lists. If *The Savoy* was a smaller journal than *The Yellow Book*, more indebted to Arts and Crafts in its production and less apparently industrial, with a shorter run, smaller circulation, and smaller group of contributors, it was *not* a stand-alone 'little magazine', like *The Dial*. It was clearly

³⁹ Ian Fletcher, 'Decadence and the Little Magazines', in *idem* (ed.), *Decadence and the 1890s* (London: Edward Arnold, 1979), 180.

⁴⁰ For more on the Chiswick Press, see Nelson's rich Appendix B, 'Smithers and the Chiswick Press' in his *Publisher to the Decadents*, 295–308, which includes an essay and a detailed checklist. Chiswick Press records are held in the New York Public Library's Rare Books and Manuscript Division.

⁴¹ See the invaluable Appendix D, 'A Checklist of Leonard Smithers's Publications', by Nelson and Peter Mendes in Nelson, *Publisher to the Decadents*, 311–52.

embedded, like *The Yellow Book*, in a publishing economy of a venture publisher running a firm, however haphazardly in Smithers' case.

The eclectic legacy of *The Savoy*, with its layered and multiple antecedents, gives some credence to Symons's disavowal in the Prospectus and Editorial Note that *The Savoy* was not confined to a single 'point of view'—neither 'Realists, Romanticists or Decadents'. It is up to the reader to discover that this does not mean that these elements do not appear in the journal, as they do in the first number, but that the editorial policy is not to delimit the copy to any one of these. Other aspects of the Editorial Note are multivalent. Originality, fame, celebrity, audaciousness, and notoriety are similarly disavowed as criteria of selection, but signature—a form of personal journalism serving all of the above—was used to considerable effect in the first number, which delivered dollops of celebrity, notoriety, and originality (e.g. Beardsley, Symons, Verlaine, Shaw) in a mixture which does bear out the editor's intention to avoid timidity from fear of offending 'the elderly minded'.

The name of the journal itself, chosen by Beardsley, functioned in similar ways to signature.⁴² It proved a brilliant brand. It not only referenced the luxurious Savoy Hotel, resplendent with the new technology of electric lights throughout, but invited 'the intelligent' (identified as the readers in the Note) to remember the theatrical association of the title, and its associations with Wilde. 'Patience', Gilbert and Sullivan's musical portrait of aestheticism, one of the Savoy operas originally performed in the Savoy theatre attached to the hotel, had helped circulate Wilde's notoriety as a young man in 1881, and very recently the hotel had been cited in the trials as a venue in which Wilde and his young men had consorted. This was a bold title indeed. Inside the first number, Symons's centrepiece on Dieppe (the longest item in the number) also obliquely invokes the trials, in referencing a French location to which homosexuals had fled in 1895 before and during the trials, as well as the scene, which Symons relates, of the planning of *The Savoy* in the previous summer. It also introduced the French 'note' of *The Savoy*, a persistent characteristic that commentators noted at the time and after, as a constituent of its adherence to the risqué. One critic who claimed that 'It would not be rash to call the *Savoy* an Anglo-French periodical' suggested that the French concurred, as it was reviewed by the French press.⁴³ As I have argued elsewhere, notoriety was also actively pursued by both Symons and Smithers in subsequent advertisements for the journal.⁴⁴ *The Savoy's* embrace of audaciousness and notoriety not only fitted with Smithers's extant niche in the book trade, but also functioned economically, crucially marking a brand difference between the audacious *Savoy* and

⁴² See Mix, *Study in Yellow*, 164.

⁴³ See Thomas Jay Garbaty, 'The French Coterie of the *Savoy* 1896', *PMLA*, 75:5 (Dec. 1960), 609, 611.

⁴⁴ Brake, *Print in Transition*, 171–9.

The Yellow Book, widely associated with alleged timidity in the wake of the Wilde trials.

With respect to the contents, perhaps the first quality to be noted was *The Savoy's* emphasis on genre and form, a predilection reflecting Paterian Aestheticism.⁴⁵ On the Contents pages which fronted each issue, the *type* of the item was specified along with its title and author. Thus, the Literary Contents page of number 1 reads 'Editorial Note', 'On Going to Church. *An Article* by G. Bernard Shaw', 'To Nancy. *A Story* by Frederick Wedmore', and 'Mandoline. *A Poem*, translated by Arthur Symons from the "Fetes Galantes" of Paul Verlaine (illustrated)', where the form is indicated by the use here of italics. Articles, poems, and stories are the counters, and they are alternated in discernible patterns. The art contents are similarly particularized in respect of genre, with Charles Conder's 'Wood-Engraving from a Water-Colour Drawing' described in detail, along with Shannon's lithograph, 'After a Crayon Drawing' by Lemmen, 'printed in sanguine'.

One of the types of article with which *The Savoy* distinguished itself was its literary criticism, and there is a march of featured authors through the run. First was Zola, whose fiction of naturalism had occasioned recent attention from the National Vigilance Association and the jailing of Henry Vizetelly in 1888, for publishing a translation of Zola's *La Terre*. Zola was the subject in number 1 of a considered piece on his life and work by Havelock Ellis, who contributed a second weighty piece on Nietzsche, a controversial, godless figure himself, in number 2. The French decadent poet Verlaine was also explored in number 2, in a tripartite article that included an autobiographical account by Gosse, a newsy report of Verlaine's visit to England in 1894 by Yeats, and Verlaine's own narrative, in translation, of his visit to London. These critical features on individual authors were accompanied in number 2 by an 'essay' by Vincent O'Sullivan which addresses a critical term ('the morbid') associated with charges against the new French school, but instead of defending the school outright, he reduces the term to an apparently harmless manifestation of the treatment of death. This prepares the way for various contributions about death, most notably Dowson's naturalistic 'study', 'The Dying of Francis Donne' in number 4, which combines scientific observation with a fictional first-person observer. Other authors whose work was studied seriously in *The Savoy* included William Blake, by Yeats; the subject of Blake's illustrations to the *Divine Comedy* particularly exploits the dual emphasis of *The Savoy* on literature and art, and on its production values, of fine printing and artwork. The ending of the Blake series in number 5 is succeeded in number 6 with an eloquent and lengthy defence of Thomas Hardy and the alleged license of *Jude the Obscure*, the criticism of which had been so harsh that Hardy turned from the novel to poetry. Its author,

⁴⁵ Although Walter Pater died in July 1894 after two numbers of *The Yellow Book* had appeared, his influence is disseminated in both this and *The Savoy* through key figures such as Symons, Gosse, and Lionel Johnson.

Ellis again, continued to blaze his way through the run in number 6, to which he contributed a serious, if short, piece on Casanova, another figure like Zola, Blake, and Hardy perceived by conventionally minded men of the day as sexual libertines. Symons's own critical assessments/obituaries of Millais and Pater, in numbers 6 and 8 respectively, were of two contemporaries in literature and art, who were similarly controversial; the former is criticized for buckling under and accommodating the market at the expense of his talent, while Pater is carefully disentangled from charges of immorality in his writing. This emphasis on a succession of single artists emblematic of the avant-garde for this mid-1890s group of young men linked *The Savoy* both with the contemporary interest in 'personality', the individual, and the interview habitual in the New Journalism and with the narrowing focus on the individual artist of the avant-garde that will come to characterize modernism. But together the critical pieces on these figures—Zola, Nietzsche, Blake, Hardy, Casanova, and Pater—anchored *The Savoy* and displayed its primary colours.

Collectively then, the multimedia, multinational, and multidisciplinary characteristics of this series of articles replicated *The Savoy* project itself, the subjects of its contents, and the practice of many of its journalists who appear in its pages across genres and disciplines, as poets/artists/critics/novelists. Arguably, the miscellany of writings in the pages of *The Savoy* by individual writers justifies the designation 'journalist' for the 'core' figures—Yeats, Beardsley, Symons, and Dowson—who did, in 1896 in this publication, function as journalists do, 'covering' any newsworthy event or subject that will make 'copy'. Perhaps the limits of their capacity to function as journalists together with the publisher's limited capital are part of the explanation of why the monthly *Savoy* proved insupportable. It was not only the zeitgeist, the unwilling distributors, and the insufficient sales identified by Symons in his last 'Editorial Note'. Beardsley's illness, coupled with the new plan of monthly publication, did not appear on Symons's list of causes for the termination of *The Savoy* either. The dearth of input from Beardsley put pressure on this relatively small core and their contacts to produce more, and more frequent copy, with sufficient speed at a journalistic frequency and regularity. It also had financial implications, on Smithers's capacity to pay them (in addition to Beardsley whom Smithers continued to support) for the increased amount and frequency of their work.

That *The Savoy* was both a quarterly and a monthly in its short life invites scrutiny of how these different genres of magazine played out in the one title, and how they influenced it. For example, their deployment of serialization might distinguish them, with the quarterly issues (numbers 1 and 2) less likely to attempt serialization over three-month intervals than the monthly numbers (number 3 onwards). Serialization was part of the basic grammar of serials, a structure designed to assure continuity of sales by linking one issue, and thus one sale, to another; in this way the 'present' refers back to the past number as well as anticipating the

future number. So, as expected in number 3, the first of the monthly numbers of *The Savoy*, two new serials appeared: a series of three articles on Blake, and the editor's leader or column, 'A Literary Causerie', which normally served as a French pendant to each number, and echoed the 'Roundabout Papers', Thackeray's leaders in the *Cornhill* that similarly appeared as tailpieces in each number. However, and surprisingly for a quarterly, the first issue of *The Savoy* kicked off with serial fiction, Beardsley's 'Romantic Story', 'Under the Hill', and the serial contents was compounded by the launch of Havelock Ellis's three-part series on Nietzsche in number 2, which sat beside chapter 4 of Beardsley's novel in that April issue. In so far as serialization was not generally favoured by quarterlies because of the long interval separating numbers, the publication of serial fiction in quarterly publications was particularly unusual. Was this singular practice another example of the experimental thrust of *The Savoy*, extending the possibilities of the quarterly format beyond the formula of *The Yellow Book*? Or was it an indication that Beardsley saw the parts of his story as more loosely related than those of a novel, functioning both as stand-alone short-story-like episodes, *and* parts of a longer work?⁴⁶ It is also possible that this hybrid practice of the incremental inclusion of serial structures across issues in numbers 1 and 2 suggested or made it easier to transform the quarterly *Savoy* into a monthly magazine.

If monthly publication was not part of the original scheme drawn up for *The Savoy* in August 1895 at Dieppe when displacement of the quarterly *Yellow Book* was uppermost, soon after *The Savoy*'s delayed appearance in mid-January of 1896, and certainly by late March when number 2 went to press, the decision to abandon the staid quarterly rhythm of *The Yellow Book* and to join in the monthly affray of modernity was taken. Certainly, the (third) July number was the *second* to be published at a quarterly interval, but its light green paper cover that differed from the pink cardboard covers of numbers 1 and 2 identify it as the first of the new monthly sequence appearing halfway through the calendar year. Ultimately, the monthly issues would constitute six of the total eight issues that make up *The Savoy*'s full run. When and how was this new format signalled? In the 'Publisher's Note' at the end of the (second) April issue, reference to a forthcoming change is only oblique. In an item implying completion of the first volume with that number, it drew attention to provision at the number's end of 'a print of the covers of numbers 1 and 2, pulled on white paper, which may be bound in, in substitution for the pink cardboard covers'.⁴⁷ This notion of a first bound volume

⁴⁶ In the event, Beardsley's health resulted in the discontinuation of the serial publication of 'Under the Hill' after number 2, so no instalments appeared in the monthly numbers. See the announcement in number 3 (103), which refers to 'Mr Beardsley's severe and continued illness'. When the letterpress of the second instalment appeared in number 2 in April, it was already 'short' and adversely affected by Beardsley's health: an apology in the back of the number for a missing drawing from Beardsley promised it for number 3 (number 2, p. 197).

⁴⁷ *Savoy*, 2 (1896), 197.

was immediately addressed by Symons in the opening ‘Editorial Note’ of number 3, in which a new volume was announced of monthly numbers, as ‘a Quarterly comes with too occasional an appeal’ (number 3, p. 7). So, issue 2 was self-consciously (and formally) the last of the quarterly numbers, and number 3 the first of the monthly succession, wrapped in new, colour-coded covers. Even though it appeared three months after its predecessor, its frequency was determined by that of its successor. The interest in form indicated by the attention to the genres and media of its Literary and Arts contents, noted earlier, is in evidence here, with respect to the genre, format, and frequency of the journal itself.

But the attempt to outdo *The Yellow Book* on its own ground of superior, new writing and art persisted beyond the change of frequency. The French note sounded in number 1 by Symons’s centrepiece on ‘Dieppe’ and Ellis’s weighty article on Zola, which were supported by a poem by Verlaine in translation, was continued through the run partly by the series of editor’s ‘causeries’ from number 2. While these vary in topic, as columns do, the first announced *The Savoy*’s reiterated adherence to French exemplars, ‘On Some Novels, mainly French’, as do three of the total five. Arguably, the formal turn to France that *The Savoy* exemplified in the aftermath of 1895 chimed with recent expressions of disillusion with the constraints on British writing, especially fiction,⁴⁸ the English crackdown on sexual deviation,⁴⁹ the cultural achievements of French poetry, fiction, and visual art,⁵⁰ and the gravitation to Paris of new artists from all over Europe. In this respect, the overlap of the culture of *The Savoy* with that of modernism’s transnational locations was self-evident.

While the preponderance of fiction in *The Savoy* took the form of short stories, some had serial elements, in that they were linked in various ways: pairs of stories by Symons and Wedmore featured continuity of character, like the wildly successful contemporary Sherlock Holmes stories in the *Strand*.⁵¹ Others were linked by author alone, notably two by ‘A New Writer’, which was the only signature in *The Savoy* letterpress that announced its anonymity.⁵² Signature and the ‘star’ system,

⁴⁸ See the succession of protests about the censorship of new fiction in George Moore’s pamphlet, ‘Literature at Nurse’ (1885), and in two symposia—‘Candour in English Fiction’, *New Review* (Jan. 1890), 6–21, and ‘The Science of Fiction’ in *New Review*, 4 (Apr. 1891), 304–19.

⁴⁹ That is, in the period immediately following the trials of Oscar Wilde, whose plays were closed in the West End.

⁵⁰ See poetry by Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Mallarmé, and Verlaine, novels by Balzac, Flaubert, Sand, Gautier, and Zola, short stories by de Maupassant and Flaubert, and painting and sculpture by Ingres, Delacroix, the Impressionists, the post-Impressionists, neo-impressionists such as Seurat, and proto-modernists such as Lautrec.

⁵¹ Symons’s ‘Pages from the Life of Lucy Newcome’ and ‘The Childhood of Lucy Newcome’ are separated by six numbers in numbers 2 and 8, while Frederick Wedmore’s stories about Nancy appear in successive numbers (1 and 2), which suggests that they were commissioned as a pair and published successively by design.

⁵² The two stories are the intriguing ‘A Mere Man’ and ‘Elsa’, in numbers 2 and 6, respectively.

in the New Journalism fashion, were the overwhelming practices in *The Savoy*, designed to benefit publisher and authors alike, who were anxious to 'brand' names so as to improve sales of both the journal and titles by authors that Smithers was publishing. The position of Beardsley's serial fiction, the penultimate slot in the number, was immediately filled, once it was vacated in number 3, by Symons's Causeries, but numbers 4 and 5 lead with fiction for the first time. Instead of opening weakly and self-consciously with an Editorial Note as numbers 1-3 had done, Olivia Shakespear's sumptuous 'Beauty's Hour', a 'Phantasy' novella in two parts, immediately confronted the reader.

These two numbers of *The Savoy* are particularly strong, as both parts of 'Beauty's Hour' are followed by Yeats's commentaries on Blake's illustrations of Dante, and Blake's drawings themselves. Then each number has riches to follow: number 4 has Ellis's last piece on Nietzsche, three sonnets by Lionel Johnson, and a story by Dowson; and number 5 Dowson's 'Song', a haunting story by Theodore Wratishaw, and Symons's characteristically erotic and spectacular 'At the Alhambra: Impressions and Sensations'. Once the monthly format of *The Savoy* was established, then the periodical deployed a variety of techniques linked to its increased frequency and the genre of the contemporary monthly magazine—a plethora of items in a variety of forms linked by topic (e.g. Nietzsche) or contributor (e.g. Beardsley) or column (e.g. Causerie) to form a series over time which coincided with and promulgated the serial nature of the publication as a whole. Simultaneously, the parts also work in each successive present or moment of issue, as rich aesthetic objects that claim careful attention from the reader. Arguably, *The Savoy*, unlike *The Yellow Book*, desired to yoke high aesthetic status with the racy ephemerality, speed, and rhythm of journalism. Among other things, Beardsley's poster-like graphic art, crafted for industrial printing, invokes Lautrec's contemporary, public, street art, celebrated by Beardsley in his contribution to the *New Review's* symposium on 'The Art of the Hoarding' in July 1894.

The bid for additional readers in its monthly, cheaper form had led Symons to feature fiction by leading with it, but also to compensate for Beardsley's absence with respect to the art contents by coupling the publication of the Blake drawings with commentary by Yeats. The title, subject, and position of the Shakespear story suggest that women may have been among the new readers targeted, despite the fact that (or perhaps because) W. H. Smith had already refused to distribute number 3 on the grounds of the full frontal male nude appearing in a Blake plate. Number 6 continued to lead with fiction, this time with an uncomfortable story, 'The Idiots', by a young Joseph Conrad, which was followed by Ellis's stout defence of *Jude the Obscure* and Symons's raw denunciation of Millais, just dead, for having sold out as an artist to commerce. By any account, *The Savoy* was hard, and not polite reading, occupying the high ground of Art and Literature, and unlike Millais, refusing to compromise. Beardsley returned to *The Savoy* in numbers 6 and 7, though sparsely, compared to his ubiquity in numbers 1 and 2. Only in the last number (8), in which

Beardsley was the sole Contributor of Art (as Symons was of letterpress) did his work again mark *The Savoy* as ‘his’. Arguably, the *absence* of his characteristic and immediately identifiable work from numbers 3 to 5, as the monthly was attempting to take root, may have seriously contributed to the failure of the new venture to attract new readers.

The efflorescence of Decadence in three journals in the mid-1890s was short-lived—its contents haunted by loss; exhausted by perversity and its defence of high culture and the avant-garde; its sales pinched by the popular and cheap; and its contributors decimated by catastrophe, poor health, and death. Those who remained, like Ford and Yeats, were energized by the new millennium and grasped the trope of ‘the future’, while journals such as *The New Age* and *The English Review* also looked forward, leaving the wreckage of Decadence behind.

SYMBOLISM IN BRITISH 'LITTLE MAGAZINES'

The Dial (1889–7), *The Pageant* (1896–7), and
The Dome (1897–1900)

DAVID PETERS CORBETT

Dining with the 'aesthetic partnership', those 'heirs of the great generation', Charles Ricketts and Charles Shannon, in the early years of the twentieth century, W. B. Yeats recorded that they 'talked of . . . the disordered or broken lives of modern men of genius and the so different lives of the Italian painters'.¹ Ricketts, reported Yeats, 'said in those days "men of genius were cared for", that now the strain of life was too heavy, that no one thought of them till some misfortune came—madness or death'. Yeats goes on: Ricketts 'then spoke, as he often does, of the lack of any necessary place for the arts in modern life'.²

This theme—the neglect of art in late nineteenth-century culture—is a central one for three periodicals of the 1890s: *The Dial*, a highly self-conscious aestheticist periodical edited by Ricketts and Shannon in five occasional parts between 1889 and 1897; *The Pageant*, edited in two parts in 1896 and 1897 by Shannon and Gleeson White and continuing the aestheticist interests of *The Dial*; and *The Dome*, a more commercially interested and non-partisan periodical that E. J. Oldmeadow edited in two series from 1897 to 1900 with significant help and influence from the poet, art historian, and literary and artistic entrepreneur Laurence Binyon. Binyon was also among the most important members of the circle of artists, writers, and thinkers who gathered around Ricketts during these years, and *The Dial*, *The Pageant*, and *The Dome* mark important moments in what has been called the 'assimilation' of continental movements such as Symbolism

¹ W. B. Yeats, *Autobiographies* (London: Macmillan 1980), 169.

² W. B. Yeats, *Memoirs* (London: Macmillan, 1974), 215. This edition indicates that the date is likely to have been 23 April 1904 (215 n. 1).

into native British culture.³ Binyon and Ricketts share much but also diverge over the question of audience, and I shall suggest that these periodicals offer an instructive contrast between the positions they represent, and operate with different views about the problem—which they nonetheless shared—posed by the perceived marginalization of art and the indifference or unresponsiveness of the public.

Tucked away at the very end of the first number of *The Dial*, edited and published by Ricketts and Shannon in 1889, is a short piece of text headed ‘Apology’:

The sole aim of this magazine is to gain sympathy with its views. Intelligent ostracism meets one at every door for any view whatsoever, from choice of subject to choice of frame. If our entrance is not through an orthodox channel, it is not, therefore, entirely our fault; we are out of date in our belief that the artist’s conscientiousness cannot be controlled by the paying public, and just as far as this notion is prevalent we hope we shall be pardoned our seeming aggressiveness.⁴

The convoluted prose, winding its passive-aggressive insult slowly out of the supposed ‘apology’, is not untypical of the tone Ricketts and Shannon took with their audience. Characterized by John Rothenstein, who knew them well, as living ‘an intense and all-engrossing devotion to the arts . . . remote from real life’; they promoted a super-refined aestheticist version of the arts.⁵ Ricketts’ multiple roles as connoisseur and collector, private press publisher, illustrator, critic, and artist are all defined by the assertion of this rarefied culture of taste and discrimination. Together with Shannon he promoted an anti-modern ethic of polished and superior appreciation of both the fine and the applied arts, and asserted the virtues of craft as opposed to mechanical production, most notably through the private Vale Press which he ran from 1896 to 1903. The Press was intended to contribute to, or indeed create, the conditions for a revival of printing in the late nineteenth century, emphasizing artisanal values of truth to materials and hand-crafting. *The Dial*, which was published by Ricketts and Shannon from the Vale, accordingly assures its readers that all its woodcuts are printed directly from the wood and not by photographic reproduction, ‘to ensure the greater sweetness in the printing’.⁶ *The Pageant* similarly announces that ‘to ensure the greatest possible delicacy of effect, the pictures interleaved have been printed throughout by the Swan Electric Engraving Company, by whom also the blocks have been made [while] the mixing of the coloured inks has been supervised by the art-editor’, and goes on to underline

³ Malcolm Bradbury, ‘London 1890–1920’, in Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane (eds), *Modernism, 1890–1930* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), 175.

⁴ *Dial*, 1 (1889), 36.

⁵ John Rothenstein, *The Artists of the 1890s* (London: Routledge, 1928), 185, 189.

⁶ Advertisement, *The Dial*, 1 (1889).

the hand-crafted and individually created character of the design in the periodical.⁷ Explicitly, for Ricketts, books are no longer to be 'trade commodities, but things made to abide their proper season with us, and to show what value we moderns set upon our accumulated inheritance of poetry and prose'.⁸ Small wonder that Ricketts complained frequently—as Yeats reported—that he 'had no set... no prepared public' and bemoaned the fact that he was having to attempt to create the taste that would support his own artistic activity and that of what was referred to as his 'little coterie'.⁹

This set of preoccupations places *The Dial* within a wider context of anxiety about the relationship of art to the expanded audiences of the last half of the nineteenth century which saw an escalating scepticism about the role and function of art. The thought of the Ricketts' circle was fundamentally conditioned by this situation. But it also marks the point where the thinking of Ricketts and Binyon diverge. Whereas both were preoccupied above all by what seemed to them the invidious gap sundering the public from the aesthetic, Binyon's desire was to develop a mechanism through which these connections might be re-achieved and the cultural gap closed, while Ricketts pursued the possibilities opened up when the elite culture he felt himself to represent was willingly severed from the mass culture of his time.¹⁰

The Dial

The Dial embodies Ricketts' position in the tightly defined range of its contributions. Apart from Ricketts himself (the most prolific contributor) and Shannon, work across the five issues appeared by the poet, theorist, and graphic artist Thomas Sturge Moore, John Gray, Reginald Savage, Lucien Pissarro, 'Michael Field' (the writing partnership of Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper), Laurence Housman, and Herbert Horne, all of whom were close to Ricketts and—with the exception of Horne and Housman who were more sceptical and contributed only single items to the periodical—were part of the 'little coterie' who gathered at the home of Ricketts and Shannon, the Vale in Chelsea where *The Dial* was made, to hear Ricketts pontificate and to share ideas and attitudes. The periodical published prose, poetry, and artwork by this group, including Ricketts, who wrote anonymously on Puvis de Chavannes, one of the nineteenth-century artists he most admired, and contributed a number of prose stories which recall Oscar Wilde's prose writing in the mode of

⁷ *Pageant*, 2 (1896), n.p. [front matter].

⁸ Charles Ricketts, *A Defence of the Revival of Printing* (London: Ballantine Press, 1899), 32.

⁹ J. G. Paul Delaney, *Charles Ricketts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 41; 'Theocritus', 'The Vale Artists', *Sketch*, 23 January 1895, 617.

¹⁰ See David Peters Corbett, 'Lawrence Binyon and the Aesthetic of Modern Art', *Visual Culture in Britain*, 6:1 (2005), 101–19.

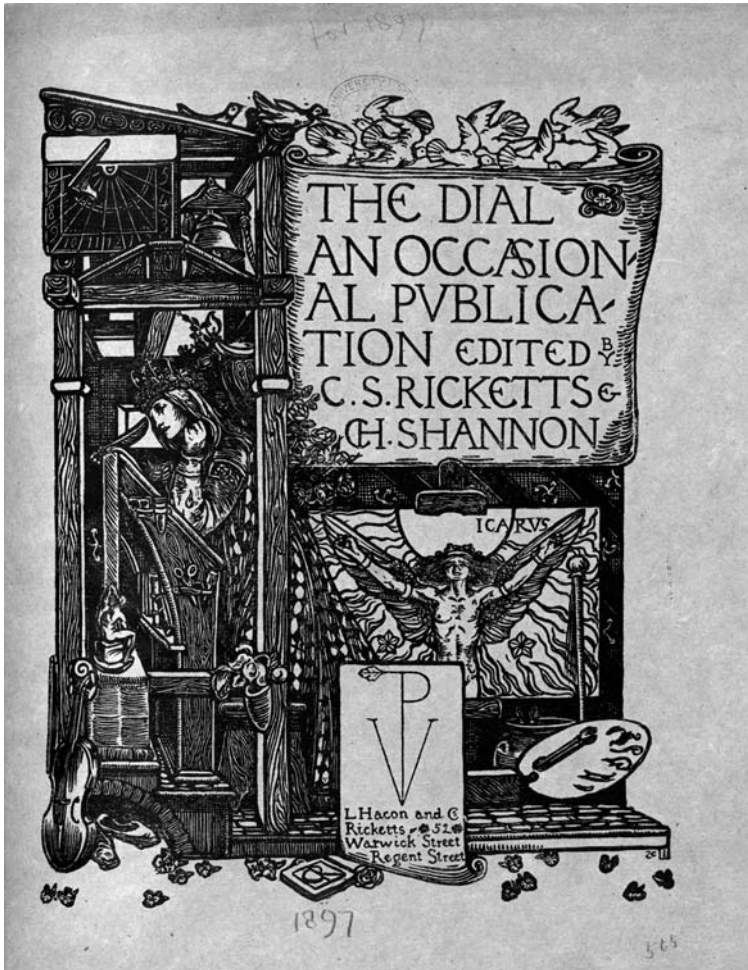


Fig. 7. Cover of *The Dial* (1897)

‘The Happy Prince’, as well as his lithograph, ‘The Great Worm’, reproduced in colour in the first number and clearly referencing Gustave Moreau. John Gray wrote on the Goncourt brothers; there were woodcuts, lithographs, and engravings by Shannon, Moore, and others; and Moore contributed an essay on ‘Maurice de Guérin’, whose prose poem ‘The Centaur’ he also translated. Emile Verhaeren’s poem ‘La vie élargie’ appeared in French in number 5.

In much of the periodical, Ricketts and his contributors are plainly drawing on a knowledge of the aesthetics of continental Symbolism. The anonymous essay ‘The Unwritten Book’, for instance (almost certainly by Ricketts), draws on the language and ideas of Jean Moréas’ 1886 ‘Symbolist Manifesto’ to offer as what ‘we think common to all good art’ what they call ‘Document’:

Record of some remembered delight, record perhaps of a mere moment in transfigured life . . . the word *Document* represents some exquisite detail in a masterpiece convincing to the spectator as a thing known, yet not of necessity the symbol of borrowed story—possibly there, the mere symbol of time. [In Whistler's *Symphony in White, No 2*] some stray notes . . . convey undertone—symbol, pre-existence, and chime about the picture faintly, like evening music echoed by a river.¹¹

In an echo of Moréas' assertion that 'phenomena will not be described for their own sake', but as corresponding affinities with 'primordial ideals', Ricketts emphasizes that the *Document* is 'a thing easily imagined away from a picture', but 'is authoritative there, as a gesture, or poetical recollection, the lattice-light cast upon the wall in Rossetti's "Proserpine"'.¹²

The short stories contributed by Ricketts and others all use an intense registration of experience that either is exotic or is allowed to be banal or object in order to reveal or evoke unspecified but resonant meanings and emotions located beneath the surface of events. Shannon's 'A Simple Story', which tells of a single day, almost a single moment, in the life of a small Dark Age village receiving a rare visit from its peripatetic bishop, is a case in point. After an unemphatic account of the preparations of the villagers, hinting at the ordinary desires, hopes, and gentle feuding of their lives, the climax comes when the bishop sets off to go: 'When he turned towards them the sun flamed like a halo round his sparsely-locked head. Footsteps clattered on the beach, and the water gently lapped in golden ripples lined with green.'¹³

This sort of thing leads regularly to overheated prose, but the effects achieved are not always precarious. Ricketts' story 'The Marred Face' succeeds in deploying this style to contrive a story set in a corrupt, remote, and exotic Chinese past. A queen is obsessed by the severed head of a lover who has been executed for rebellion. Eventually, driven mad perhaps, she dies, clutching the head, as a further rebellion burns her with her palace: 'She kissed her lover's face, as if she inhaled the deep fragrance of a flower.'¹⁴ For Ricketts, the real interest of the story seems to reside in the language, which is self-consciously elaborate and evocative, defining emotion and the intensity of unusual and perverse experience to offer a powerful series of images and sensations to the reader: 'Something, as yet but half understood, flashed suddenly upon him, as if an oblique light, full of revelation, had been cast between his eyes and the dead man's eyes; vanishing, it left a partial recollection, or echo, in his brain, vibrant as a splash of white upon a ground of black, but, like it, formless.'¹⁵

It would be possible to read Ricketts' story, with its decadent, highly strung aristocrats, its betrayals, neurosis, and ultimate, defiant, death at the hands of the mob, as an allegory of *The Dial* circle's understanding of the relationship between

¹¹ *Dial*, 2, 26.

¹² *Ibid.* 25.

¹³ *Dial*, 1 (1889), 7.

¹⁴ *Dial*, 2, 7.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 2.

the artist and the mass of the public. John Gray's essay on the Goncourts in the first number had already defined this contrast between the frenetic, nerve-racked creator and the mob:

Never was great work more destitute of charm for the vulgar. . . . To the few, to artists in fact, their studies, aphorisms, epithets, are exquisite beyond praise; but by no effort can they prevail upon the applauding public to perform its proper functions. For the multitude they are far too mature. . . . With every quality so fresh, so rare, words so daintily chosen and attuned, small wonder they make mediocrity nervous and irascible.¹⁶

Small wonder that for Gray 'the artist is always an abnormal creature, a being with an over-developed brain, or diseased nerves, as some express it', to be 'specially distinguished from the literary grocer'.¹⁷ But Gray's essay is in other ways an argument for hope in the question of the artist and the public, for Gray tries to believe, in writing about the Goncourt brothers, that, however much real art is neglected or appreciated 'by comparatively few', it can still achieve an 'indirect influence' which, if it succeeds, 'can be widely traced'.¹⁸ 'It is quite the rule that the really great only gain their place after fierce struggling; for apart from the actual work, they have to create a taste for it, a task generally tedious in proportion to its worth.'¹⁹

There are many examples throughout *The Dial* of both this figure of the big-brained artist who, like the Goncourts, has a frustrated 'dream . . . that the obvious superiority of *their* work would, as soon as it appeared, hurry them to a high seat of honour', and of this mechanism by which, despite neglect and contempt from the masses, the work nonetheless mysteriously percolates out from the coterie magazine, the journal, and the short story which only a handful of like-mindedly superior souls read, to exercise a powerful but indeterminate influence on the minds and spirits of the wider citizenry. This trope appears too in both *The Pageant* and *The Dome*.

The Pageant

Ricketts' biographer, J. G. P. Delaney, views *The Pageant* as a response to the decline of the Arts and Crafts movement 'in the hands of inferior artists who did not understand the great tradition established by the Pre-Raphaelites'.²⁰ Delaney is not very clear about what this tradition was, and in reality Ricketts and Shannon were more inclined to refer to Pre-Raphaelitism as a blind to avoid admitting a

¹⁶ *Dial*, I (1889), 9.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 10.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Delaney, *Charles Ricketts*, 100.



Fig. 8. Cover of *The Pageant* (1896)

debt to continental Symbolism than for any very cogent reason or obligation.²¹ Something of this can be gauged from the first number of *The Pageant*, edited not by Ricketts but by Shannon ('art editor') and Gleeson White (1851–98), who was a significant figure in arts and crafts matters, who was the first editor of *The Studio* in 1893, and who became 'literary editor' of *The Pageant*. Published by the art book publisher, Henry & Co. of 93, St Martin's Lane, *The Pageant* featured a title page designed by Selwyn Image, end papers by Lucien Pissarro, and a range of content including reproductions of Millais' 'Love, a Brush Drawing' and *Sir Isumbras at the Ford*; Rossetti's 'The Magdalene at the House of Simon the Pharisee' and *Monna Rosa*; Ricketts' 'Psyche in the House' and 'Oedipus'; Watts's *Ariadne* and *Paolo and Francesca*; Shannon's 'A Romantic Landscape' and 'The White Watch'; and other work by Reginald Savage, Will[iam] Rothenstein, Whistler (a lithograph portrait of his brother), and Botticelli, *Pallas and the Centaur*. Literary contributions came from Swinburne, Yeats, Verlaine ('Monna Vanna'), John Gray, Maurice Maeterlinck (a translation of 'Et s'il revenait'), T. Sturge Moore, Robert Bridges, Michael Field, Lionel Johnson, R. B. Cunninghame Graham, Frederic Wedmore, and Max Beerbohm. Alfred W. Pollard contributed an art-historical piece on 'Florentine Rappresentazioni and their Pictures'.

The issue of Pre-Raphaelitism is in fact broached only in Gleeson White's long and important essay 'The Work of Charles Ricketts'. White begins by attempting to define the term, stumbling over the impossibilities of his task and finding himself admitting very rapidly that Ricketts's 'definition of the aims and ideals conveyed

²¹ Ricketts was, however, interested in Rossetti; see Delaney, *Charles Ricketts*, 35–6, and 43 for Delaney's observations on Ricketts's disinclination to admit to continental influences.

by that word would differ entirely from the current acceptation'.²² The interesting thing about White's essay is not this rather desperate striving for typology (in any event not taken up anywhere else in the periodical or in *The Dial*), but the fact that Pre-Raphaelitism is used here to refer to the refined and unpopular in late nineteenth-century art.

Pre-Raphaelite!—the term is accepted, and a singularly individual movement of romanticism in literature and art must needs be content with the ill-formed adjective. But when one sets out on a career of appreciation of an artist who restricts himself to this method of expression that is not, and never was, sympathetic to the masses, it is with no hope of convincing anyone who chances to be prejudiced against it. In writing of art, the critic merely writes to convince himself. . . . Thus he is assured of one convert at least.²³

The Athenaeum may have thought the article 'injudicious', but it is clear enough about the circumstances of its subject.²⁴ He exists in a world at odds with the merely 'journalistic', where 'are to be seen the first attempts at a new Renaissance of the Pre-Raphaelite idea', an ideal which 'born in England, and peculiar to our country, is nevertheless still regarded as exotic, even by those who could so easily be better informed'. Pre-Raphaelitism is Symbolism defined as a native flowering, unappreciated in its own country and superior to Grub Street and 'the parochial influences of contemporary criticism'.²⁵

In this context, Ricketts is revealed as a 'prominent' actor on behalf of this 'movement' in art, whose work is 'produced . . . regardless of exterior criticism'.²⁶ White focuses on Ricketts's graphic and publishing work, stressing the refinement and 'peculiar individuality of his style', so that his work is said to be 'severe', 'full of lavish invention', but marked by 'the most reticent expression of the idea'.²⁷ White compares an early work, the drawing *The Sphinx*, reproduced in this number of *The Pageant*, with Ricketts's later illustrations for Oscar Wilde's poem *The Sphinx*.

In the earlier work, minute decoration, elaborate symbolism, exquisite daintiness of finish, are carried to their final utterance; in the other, the adventurous idea is curbed, and the prodigal imagination brought within the most restrained limits. . . . Each class appeals to students; but whereas merely intelligent patience may unravel the first, to grasp the intention of the second demands a poetic vision hardly less keenly sustained than that of its author. Such work never has been, and is never likely to be, popular with the multitude. The simplicity of the commonplace they understand; the perplexity of the complex is also sufficiently dazzling to charm, if not to convince, them; but the final simplicity which is not

²² Gleeson White, 'The Work of Charles Ricketts', *Pageant*, 1 (1896), 79.

²³ *Ibid.* ²⁴ Cited in Delaney, *Charles Ricketts*, 100. ²⁵ White, 'Ricketts', 79, 81.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 81. ²⁷ *Ibid.* 82.

to be appreciated without equal renunciation on the part of the spectator—equal knowledge of his unexpressed but deliberate ignoring of all but the essential—that can never appeal to any but those already in touch with the idea.²⁸

Ricketts's art—scholarly, informed by a deep understanding of the past, and aesthetically refined—is that of a 'consummate master'.²⁹ But this, as White continues his argument, turns out increasingly to mean that it subsists within its own world of reference. The more refined Ricketts's art is found to be, the less the opportunity for him to connect to a wide audience: 'to be misunderstood of the careless or ignorant, and yet understood of the artistic people [*sic*], has often been the reward of an artist.'³⁰ White finds himself defending the position that 'only a poet can fully gauge the whole of a poet's meaning'.³¹ Thus 'only a fellow-decorator can fully appreciate . . . Mr Ricketts' art . . . it would be foolish to indulge in rhapsodies which would be superfluous to those who know, and unintelligible to the rest.'³² In the end, White is driven back on the position discernible in *The Dial* as well: posterity will eventually, and inevitably, make all temporary errors right:

Yet as the first person who tells the truth before its time is usually held to be a proved liar thereby—perhaps it would have been more seemly to refrain from an attempt to formulate opinions not yet accepted by all men of light and leading, although one has no doubt of the final verdict. For an artist so individual and distinctly true to his own ideals . . . as Mr Ricketts assuredly is, will certainly receive complete appreciation ultimately from those who can consider his work dispassionately, with full documentary evidence of the influence exerted on his successors, and its relative position among contemporaneous efforts.³³

This is a desperate position: the mismatch between White's assessment of Ricketts and the art he represents and the character of his reception ceaselessly niggles at the basis of his essay. Blunter versions of the same views were expressed by Frederick York Powell in his essay on 'Wilhelm Meinhold', where he approves of the fact that Meinhold retreated from society because he 'saw through the vulgar popular ideas of his day . . . turning occasionally to smite the yelping curs he despised'.³⁴

The character of the contents in *The Pageant* 1 reveals its closeness to the aesthetics of *The Dial* in other ways as well. Like *The Dial* there is a pseudo-medievalism and self-conscious archaism in much of the language. 'Thus riding on, they came that morning near to a forest wherein were birds making great melody among themselves', is from the translation of a supposedly medieval Dutch 'Tale of a Nun'.³⁵ 'A traveller wandered at night amid the ruins of an immense forsaken palace. Through portals of marble and passages of porphyry, he at length attained a

²⁸ *Ibid.* 83. ²⁹ *Ibid.* 84. ³⁰ *Ibid.* ³¹ *Ibid.* 91. ³² *Ibid.* 86.

³³ *Ibid.* 93. ³⁴ F. York Powell, 'Wilhelm Meinhold', *Pageant*, 1 (1896), 119.

³⁵ 'Tale of a Nun', trans. L. Simons and L. Housman, *Pageant*, 1 (1896), 105.

little inner court which had been the private garden of the princess underneath the window of her chamber', is from a contemporary story.³⁶ Both are characteristic of the periodical in tone and language.

The second number, published in an edition limited to 150 copies, continued the interests of the first, featuring contributions to the literary side from White ('The Picture of Gustave Moreau'); Michael Field; Edmund Gosse ('Jules Barbey D'Aureville'); Laurence Housman; John Gray; Beerbohm; Maeterlinck (a translation of 'The Seven Princesses'); Villiers de l'Isle-Adam (a translation of 'Queen Ysabeau' by Alexander Teixeira de Mattos); Lionel Johnson; and Ricketts ('A Note on original Wood-Engraving'). On the art side, there were reproductions of Moreau's *Hercules and the Hydra*, *The Apparition*, and *The Sphinx*; Rossetti's *La Pia*; Shannon's 'A Study in Sanguine and White' and 'A Wounded Amazon'; Burne-Jones' *Perseus and the Sea-Maidens* and *The Call of Perseus*; Puvis de Chavannes' *Young Girls by the Sea* and *Young Girls and Death*; and Watts' *The Death of Abel* and *The Genius of Greek Poetry*, as well as works by Housman, Conder, William Rothenstein, William Strang, Lucien Pissarro, and Ricketts ('The Autumn Muse').

Once again, the predominant tone is derived from Symbolist models, but given a characteristically British twist of medievalizing codswallop. Housman's 'Blind Love' is a story about 'how a king's love for his wife, and the faithful worship he kept for her, brought great pains to them both, by the working of one fairy's malice'; Michael Field's poem 'Renewal' begins 'As the young phoenix, duteous to his sire | Lifts in his beak the creature he has been'; Walter Delaplaine Scull's (author of the 'drama' *Bad Lady Betty*, published by Elkin Mathews in 1897) 'Virgo' sees its heroine throwing 'off her mail and her helmet . . . and [finding] a hollow place, fit for the grave of a strong warrior'; and R. Garnett's 'The Laggard Knight' contains lines like 'The mighty dragon's crest of gold | Lies cloven on the cavern's sparry floor'.³⁷ Maeterlinck's play 'The Seven Princesses' is full of queens, princes, heightened language, and keenly dramatic moments of emotional intensity. Although there are moments when other concerns peep through, this is emphatically the dominant tone of the second number of the periodical, as of the first.

Alongside this, however, there is a more sceptical strand of thought that seems markedly less persuaded of the virtues of the abstruse, elitist, and rather weakly culture represented by Garnett, Sturge Moore, and Michael Field. At its most incisive, this strand questions the preoccupation with tradition that enervates the least convincing examples of *The Pageant* or *The Dial*, even as it powers the best of the work produced or espoused by Ricketts and Shannon and their extended

³⁶ R. Garnett, 'A Handful of Dust', *Pageant*, 1 (1896), 117.

³⁷ All in *Pageant*, 2: Laurence Housman, 'Blind Love', 64; Michael Field, 'Renewal', 185; W. Delaplaine Scull, 'Virgo', 195; R. Garnett, 'The Laggard Knight', 221.

circle.³⁸ In the first issue Max Beerbohm, then enjoying success with *The Works of Max Beerbohm* (1896) and 'The Happy Hypocrite' which appeared in *The Yellow Book* in October 1896, and referred to in the second number of *The Pageant* as 'our ingenious younger forger of paradoxes',³⁹ published an essay under the oblique title 'Be it Cosiness'. Despite its tone, the essay is a subtle rumination on modernity, opening with a brilliant tour de force in which Beerbohm is depicted as an undergraduate arriving in Oxford and finding it a modern town:

on aurait dit a bit of Manchester through which Apollo had once passed; for here, among the hideous trams and the brand-new bricks—here, glared at by the electric-lights that hung from poles, screamed at by boys with the *Echo* and the *Star*—here, in a riot of vulgarity, were remnants of beauty I discovered. There were only remnants.⁴⁰

As the essay develops, however, it becomes evident that Beerbohm's target is less modernity than the aestheticist response to it. Although his principal biographer says of Beerbohm's essays that they were written not 'to instruct or edify but only to produce aesthetic satisfaction', there is certainly a resistance to the pomposity of aestheticism at work in this one.⁴¹

Amidst the crude modernity of Oxford, Beerbohm sees the apostle of aestheticism, sighting Walter Pater himself in 'Ryman's stationers', 'a small, thick, rock-faced man, whose top-hat and gloves of *bright* dog-skin struck one of the many discords in that little city'.⁴² It is Pater's famous injunction in the 'Conclusion' to *The Renaissance* that we should spend the 'interval' of consciousness allotted to us 'in getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time' to provoke 'this fruit of a quickened, multiplied consciousness', the achievement of 'the highest quality to your moments as they pass' that Beerbohm takes as his target.⁴³ In contrast, he discerns a total absence of pulsations, even in Oxford.

I discovered that the scope of my quest for emotion must be narrowed. That abandonment of one's self to life, that merging of one's soul in bright waters, so often suggested in Pater's writing, were a counsel impossible for to-day. . . . To

³⁸ For a discussion of tradition in the context of the Ricketts Circle see Peters Corbett, 'Laurence Binyon and the Aesthetic of Modern Art', and *The World in Paint: Modern Art and Visuality in England 1848–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994).

³⁹ Edmund Gosse, 'Jules Barbey D'Aureville', *Pageant*, 2, 23.

⁴⁰ Max Beerbohm, 'Be it Cosiness', *Pageant*, 1 (1896), 231. The essay was subsequently lightly revised and entitled 'Diminuendo' when reprinted; see *The Works of Max Beerbohm* (London: William Heinemann, 1922).

⁴¹ David Cecil, *Max: A Biography* (London: Constable, 1964), 145.

⁴² Beerbohm, 'Be it Cosiness', 230.

⁴³ Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, the 1893 text, ed. Donald L. Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 190.

unswitch myself from my surroundings, to guard my soul from contact with the unlovely things that compassed it about, therein lay my hope.⁴⁴

As he pursues this thought he begins to understand ‘how small a thing it were to sacrifice those external “experiences” so dear to the heart of Pater, by a rigid complex civilisation made so hard to gain.’⁴⁵ Since he is determined that it should be ‘to thought that *my* life should be dedicated’ he resolves to give up experience of the sort the modern world can offer:

It was, for me, merely a problem how I could best avoid ‘sensations’, ‘pulsations’, and ‘exquisite moments’ that were not purely intellectual. I was not going to attempt to run both kinds together, as Pater seemed to fancy a man might. I would make myself master of some small area of physical life, a life of quiet, monotonous simplicity, exempt from all outer disturbance.⁴⁶

Therefore, adds Beerbohm with conviction born of irrefragable logic, ‘I have been casting my eye over the suburbs of London.’ He is determined to live a fully bourgeois life, closeted in some raw, new suburb, home of the despised middlebrow, ‘I have taken a most pleasant little villa in ___ham, and here I shall make my home.’⁴⁷ Solaced only by the ‘infrequent cart’ of the circulating libraries, ‘Buzzard or Mudie’, and by ‘the asbestos in my grate’ putting forth ‘its blossoms of flame’ at the proper season, Beerbohm’s life can be free of incident, so that he can ‘contemplate the world’.⁴⁸ Equipped with the systems of communication offered to him by modern life, ‘no pulse of life will escape me. The strife of politics, the intriguing of courts, the wreck of great vessels, wars, dramas, earthquakes, national griefs or joys; the strange sequels to divorces, even, and the very mysterious suicides of land-agents at Ipswich—in all such phenomena I shall steep my exhaurent mind.’⁴⁹ An irony here is perhaps that Pater’s recommendations for a heightened life focus on art as the most intense repository of these things, and Beerbohm’s essays remain magnificent testimonies to the pleasures of the imagination. Nevertheless, in case we are teetering on the edge of conviction by this point in Beerbohm’s eloquent exposition, there is a final, and typical, sting in the tail: ‘nor will I try to give anything in return’.⁵⁰ He has renounced writing.

This theme appears elsewhere in the periodical, if without Beerbohm’s intelligent exposure of the futility of aestheticism at the extreme. Lionel Johnson’s short story ‘Incurable’ presents a young mediocrity whose three volumes of poetry offer ‘nothing worth revealing, and nothing to compensate’ their readers for the effort of perusing them.⁵¹ Despite a life-affirming brush with death he finds he cannot give up his poetry-fixation and never learns his lesson, continuing incorrigibly to

⁴⁴ Beerbohm, ‘Be it Cosiness’, 232.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 233.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 234.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* ⁴⁹ *Ibid.* ⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 235.

⁵¹ Lionel Johnson, ‘Incurable’, *Pageant*, 1 (1896), 131.

pen rubbish and to eschew life in order to fulfil a fantasy of himself as an artist. Johnson's short story in the second number, 'The Lillies of France', also has a contemporary setting and, dealing, as it does, with atheism and anarchism, is one of the few pieces in either *The Pageant* or *The Dial* to take up modern life and social questions.⁵²

The incisiveness of Beerbohm's essay notwithstanding, *The Pageant* as a whole celebrates its refinement and distance from popular taste. Its concern with its appearance, its promotion of an art it believes will be unpopular, and its worrying about the status of its posterity reflect fundamental concerns equally active in *The Dial*, but also in *The Dome*.

The Dome

When the young Charles Holmes—later Sir Charles, editor of the *Burlington Magazine*, and Director successively of the National Portrait Gallery and the National Gallery—was casting around to make his career in the mid-1890s, he was recommended to capitalize on his interests. 'You know something about Hiroshige,' Laurence Binyon told him, 'write an article about him for the "Dome" and make two guineas.'⁵³ Holmes's—painfully constructed—article appeared in number 3 of the periodical's first series, which was published on 'Michaelmas Day 1897'. It confidently argued of Hiroshige's time that 'the languid culture of the past is swept away by the impetus of a new generation, less delicate, less experienced perhaps, but certainly far wider in aim and more forcible in expression', an organic process of change which *The Dome* and its contributors seemed to envisage happening in Victorian England as well.⁵⁴

The Dome published a much more eclectic and wide-ranging selection of art, literature, and music than *The Dial*. The first number included pen and ink drawings of medieval architecture, reproductions of engravings by Martin Schongauer, Jacopo de Barbari, and Mantegna, together with an essay, 'Three Engravings of the Early Renaissance' by Laurence Binyon. It published the allegorical painting *Charity*, by G. F. Watts, a virgin and child by Botticelli with Gleeson White's appreciation 'Sandro Botticelli', a ghost story, poetry by Louis Barsac, a pastoral play by the editor, music for the piano, and a setting of a song by Heine. Subsequent issues maintained this breadth of medium and interest. There are short stories by Laurence Housman, more poetry by Barsac, reproductions of Charles Méryon with an essay by Gleeson White, engravings by Durer and Cranach, but also William Nicholson and other contemporaries, reproductions of Rossetti and

⁵² Lionel Johnson, 'The Lillies of France', *Pageant*, 2.

⁵³ Charles Holmes, *Self and Partners (Mostly Self)* (New York: Macmillan, 1936), 186–7.

⁵⁴ *Dome*, 3 (o.s.) (1897), 63.

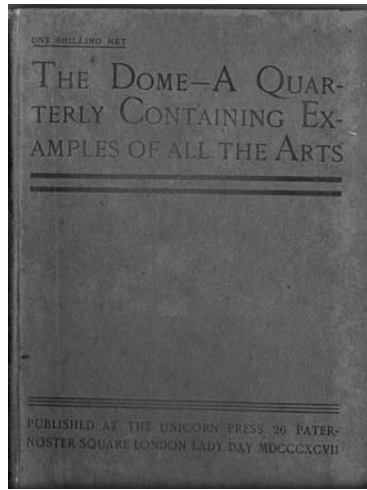


Fig. 9. Cover of *The Dome* (Lady Day, 1897)

commentary and essays on Rossetti, Cranach, Altdorfer, and others by Campbell Dodgson, who was Binyon's chief at the British Museum print room, poetry by Arthur Symons and Yeats, and work in prose by Symons, Binyon, and others. Maeterlinck's story 'The Massacre of the Innocents' appeared in translation in number 2 of the new series. Something of *The Dome's* sense of its audience can be gauged by comparing the cover price of 1s. with the cost of *The Pageant* (1 guinea, although, admittedly, the periodical was conceived as 'a gift book'⁵⁵) and *The Dial* (the first number of which was priced at 7s. 6d.). *The Yellow Book*, to take a famous nineties example, cost 5s.

According to Charles Holmes, *The Dome* 'was edited and mostly written, under various pseudonyms, by that versatile journalist E. J. Oldmeadow, to whom Binyon, from his knowledge of art and letters, was a welcome adjutant'.⁵⁶ Oldmeadow, 'a mercurial 1890s figure', in the words of a recent historian, had started life as a non-conformist minister and metamorphosed into a 'journalist, music critic, comic novelist and publisher'.⁵⁷ He later added to these qualifications by launching a successful career as a 'Soho wine merchant', and, after his conversion to Roman Catholicism, became a notably crusading and combative editor of the Catholic periodical *The Tablet*.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Robert Stahr Hosmon, 'The Pageant', in Alvin Sullivan (ed.), *British Literary Magazines: The Victorian and Edwardian Age, 1837–1913* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), 303.

⁵⁶ Holmes, *Self and Partners*, 187.

⁵⁷ John Hatcher, *Laurence Binyon: Poet, Scholar of East and West* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 57.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

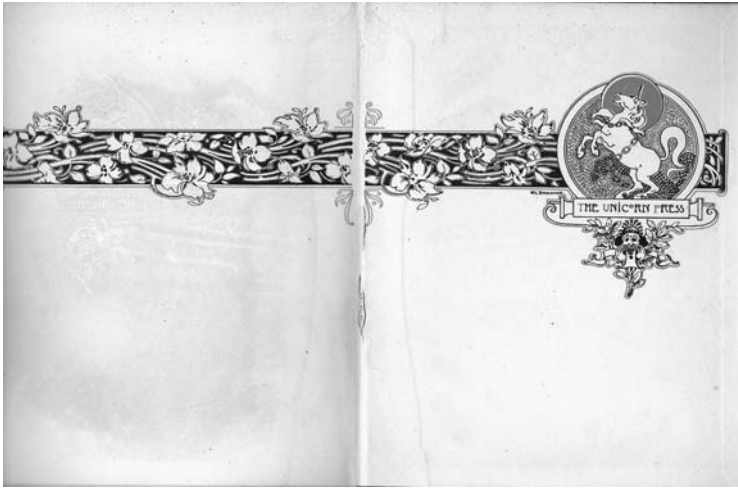


Fig. 10. Inside cover of *The Dome* (Lady Day, 1897)

In 1897 when he started *The Dome* Oldmeadow was the proprietor of a small publishing house, the Unicorn Press, based, with a conscious sense of London publishing history, in Paternoster Square next to St Paul's Cathedral. *The Dome* first appeared 'on Lady Day 1897' and ran for five numbers before a 'new series' was established in 1898, by which time 'the Sign of the Unicorn' had moved to Cecil Court off St Martin's Lane where it remained until the periodical abruptly stopped in 1900 after a further seven issues.⁵⁹ The editor was declared to be 'J. E. Woodmeald', the pseudonym (and anagram) under which Oldmeadow had published his comic novel *Lady Lohengrin* in 1896, also through the Unicorn Press. The first issue contained a cod review lamenting that 'as there are already twice as many magazines in existence as there ought to be, we are a little sorry that the Editor of this latest addition to their numbers has not condescended to spare half-a-dozen pages for an account of his aims.'⁶⁰ Such restraint, as well as the facetiousness, is characteristic of *The Dome* which makes it clear from the first that it has no patience with the self-importance or pretentiousness of decadent periodicals of the sort represented by *The Yellow Book*, *The Pageant*, or *The Dial*, all of which ceased publication in this same year. There is a deliberate decision not to offer any systematic or even summary statement of artistic aims and purpose: 'we didn't so much as stick up a handbill explaining our artistic faith or our aims,' Oldmeadow claimed later.⁶¹

The theme of popularity and the status of the readership is one that emerges frequently in *The Dome*, however, as in *The Dial* and *The Pageant*. The fake

⁵⁹ On the Unicorn Press, see the entry for *The Dome* in Sullivan (ed.), *British Literary Magazines*.

⁶⁰ *Dome*, 1 (1897), 101. ⁶¹ *Dome*, 'Special Announcement Number' (Aug. 1898), 4.

review of the first number makes quite a lot of this, pretending to take Gleeson White to task for his essay on Botticelli and ‘remarking with all the foppishness of the Culchawd Person, that to avow a fondness for Botticelli and Browning just now “requires courage”—simply, forsooth, because they are popular’.⁶² White, of course, had done no such thing, arguing instead a more subtle point, and one more representative of the hopes Oldmeadow’s periodical had for its relationship with its public. In his ‘appreciation’ of Botticelli, White argued that ‘the proof by which a master stands revealed’ is ‘that even if you are repelled at first it is only to become subject later’, and he gives Botticelli and Whistler as examples.⁶³ There is evidence of an abiding faith here that the public will eventually come round to the art the writer values by sheer force of quality which recalls Gray’s *Dial* argument around the Goncourts.

Oldmeadow, in an 1899 advertisement for the periodical taken out in *The Chord*, claimed *The Dome* had earned ‘a world-wide reputation as an organ of literary and artistic opinion’, and, however much this may have reflected aspiration rather than achievement, the desire to be widely received is significant.⁶⁴ This ambition connects once again with Binyon, who had very wide-ranging and developed ambitions for the public reception of his art and that of the large number of contemporaries whose work he espoused and promoted. John Hatcher, Binyon’s biographer, notes how congenial this aspect of *The Dome* was to Binyon, partly because, priced at a shilling, ‘it was accessible to a wider audience than its more sumptuous predecessors [like *The Dial*] and divested itself of the self-conscious marginality and coterie aura of the archetypal 1890s periodical’.⁶⁵ Binyon had been preoccupied from the first with the marginalization of art and its increasing redundancy. His whole career, from the books on Eastern art and its spirituality, to his poetry, editorship of book series on art, extensive art criticism, and promotion of the careers of many younger colleagues, saw Binyon wrestling with the incomprehension or indifference of the public to art and literature. The series ‘The Artists’ Library’, which was published by the Unicorn Press, is a representative and important venture. It announced in *The Dome* its ambition to be ‘contemporary’ and ‘a straightforward appreciation’ of art for the general reader.⁶⁶ *The Dome*’s similar character, recently described as ‘wide-ranging, non-partisan, mildly avant-garde, symbolist but emphatically post-Decadent’, suited this aspect of Binyon’s thought very well.⁶⁷ *The Dome* was, if not populist, then determined to break the over-refinement of periodicals like *The Dial* and to reach out to the widest audience it could envisage.

⁶² *Dome*, 1 (1897), 102.

⁶³ *Ibid.* 87.

⁶⁴ Cited in Hatcher, *Laurence Binyon*, 57–8.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 58. ⁶⁶ *Dome*, ‘Special Announcement Number’, 23.

⁶⁷ Hatcher, *Laurence Binyon*, 58.

However, as was the case with Ricketts, what such connection with an audience might mean in the closing decades of the nineteenth century was opaque. In issue three of the first series, the following commentary appeared in the 'Notes' section:

Some person who is quite good enough for *The Daily Mail* has been reading the twelve lines by Mr W. B. Yeats which appeared in our last number ['The Desire of Man and of Woman']. This 'Sonnet', as he intelligently calls it, had the effect of sending him careering back to commonplaceness with a sigh of relief. All humane men and women will feel glad that *The Daily Mail* person returned to his own plane so safe and sound, and nice and early, after his venturesome little excursion in foreign parts.⁶⁸

Such explosions at the obduracy or vulgarity of the audience appear throughout the run of *The Dome* and sit uncomfortably alongside the desire to reach out and persuade new constituencies of the virtues of the art and literature on offer.

Once the new series began in 1898 there was, despite considerable continuity in editing and the nature of the contributions, a sense of a more forthright commitment to high art and to complex or difficult positions in relation to this. The first number of the new series, for instance, published Arthur Symons's essay 'Ballet, Pantomime and Poetic Drama', which mounts a defence of artifice and distance from reality in order to achieve a more authentic account of that reality: 'I do not see why people should ever break silence, on the stage, except to speak poetry.'⁶⁹ Symons calls for 'a new, abstract beauty...formed out of th[e] outlines' of the physical world and based upon 'the beauty of convention', for the creation of a separate world in which the deeper truths can be plumbed through a vatic and abstracting art.⁷⁰ The same theme is picked up more forcefully in number 3 of the new series when Yeats published his essay 'The Theatre', which begins 'all intense painting and all intense poetry have become not merely unintelligible but hateful to the greater number of men and women.'⁷¹

Why should we thrust our works which we have written with an imaginative sincerity and filled with spiritual desire, before those quite excellent people who think that Rossetti's women are 'guys', that Rodin's women are 'ugly', and that Ibsen is 'immoral'... We must make a theatre for ourselves and our friends, and for a few simple people who understand from sheer simplicity what we understand from scholarship and thought.⁷²

This desire to produce plays, that will be 'for the most part remote, spiritual and ideal' as an alternative so that 'the right people may escape the stupefying memory of the theatre of commerce', was shared by Binyon, who was the author of a number

⁶⁸ *Dome*, 3, 70.

⁶⁹ *Dome*, 1:1 (n.s.) (1898), 68.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 70.

⁷¹ *Dome*, 3 (n.s.), 49.

⁷² *Ibid.*

of poetic plays, as well as Symons.⁷³ Binyon's own contributions to the new series took up the evocation of mood through language and meditation in several prose poems: 'I seemed to have gone past all human desolation to some ultimate region of time, where all things were so immeasurably old that they had taken on a new primevity [*sic*], and the ruined memorials of mankind were as wave-washed rocks of the seashore.'⁷⁴

Although contributions like this are intercut with others which preserve the more down-to-earth character of the original series, the overall development is towards a greater scepticism about the audience and a greater commitment to a self-consciously refined and heightened art and aesthetic experience. Even Charles Holmes denounced the absurdity of the common reader's belief that 'a knowledge of art can be gained by a few experiments in water-colour painting and some casual visits to exhibitions, strengthened of course, by that impregnable bulwark . . . natural taste'.⁷⁵

In number 2 of the new series, Woodmeald printed his own story on this theme, 'The Editor of "The Jonquil"'. In keeping with his other contributions, this is a light-hearted, self-consciously 'amusing' story, but in this case it seems to reflect on the periodical and its public directly. The story recounts how taking a job—at £300 a year—as editor of a periodical in order to marry, leads a young man to the edge of nervous breakdown. Although its name might suggest decadent aesthetics, *The Jonquil* in fact 'contained three ounces of advertisements, and five ounces of double-extra sentimental stories and hopeless love-songs, with hints for the toilet, for making chocolate trifle, and for pasting odds and ends of wall-paper . . . round disused mustard tins'.⁷⁶ In other words, it is a blatant commercial publication, catering to the tastes and interests of one part of the newly expanded and multiple reading publics of the late nineteenth century, precisely the realm of the popular and the vulgar that *The Dial* saw itself as struggling against and precisely the milieu that Oldmeadow seems to have operated within for most of his own long and varied career. The poor editor of *The Jonquil* is eventually forced to produce, at enormous speed, whole stories of love, hate, and melodrama, forcing out the overheated prose of romantic fiction 'with feverish swiftness'.⁷⁷ Faced with the relentless deadlines and brain-destroying piffle of *The Jonquil's* output, the editor eventually collapses and, in his fever, is discovered by his wife, prostrate and starting 'to mutter low, broken words'. She 'strained forward and listened', only to hear her husband declare to her horror, 'there is another . . . she, not you, is my lawful wedded wife . . . it is the truth, the hideous, shameful truth . . . would to heaven it were a lie like the rest! You are not my wife.'⁷⁸ With the aid of the office boy, whose close textual knowledge of *The Jonquil* is appropriately delivered in a thick cockney accent, the appalled wife is able to identify the origin of the reams of fervid prose pouring from her husband

⁷³ *Dome*, 3 (n.s.), 49.

⁷⁴ *Dome*, 1:1 (n.s.), 86.

⁷⁵ *Dome*, 2 (n.s.), 140.

⁷⁶ *Dome*, 1 (n.s.) (1898), 168.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* 172.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 174–5.

as stories he has published with titles like 'Millicent's Mistake', 'Lady Gwendoline's Revenge', and 'Dorothy's Love Story, or, My Face is My Fortune'. He is saved by Puggins, the epitome of a vulgar plutocrat, responsible for *The Jonquil's* motto—'not what they need, but what they want and what they pay for'—and proprietor of a string of crowd-pleasing papers.⁷⁹ Puggins transfers him in the nick of time to *The Financial Fanfare and City Clock*, a calming journal of capitalism, and thus saves his sanity and restores his wedded bliss.

The gradual encroachment of readings of the situation of this sort suggests the ways in which the initial impulse of *The Dome* away from the self-consciously hermetic and isolated version of the arts–society relationship were difficult to sustain. The editor of *The Jonquil* after all embraces his fate—that of peddler of trash at capital's behest—enthusiastically at the end of the story; he does not repudiate the role. Binyon continued to pursue his belief in a proper rapprochement between art and the world elsewhere, and the increased scepticism about that possibility may reflect the complicity that characterized much of Oldmeadow's subsequent career before his religious conversion.

None of these three periodicals was able, despite their different positions on the question of art, the artist, the public, and readerships which seemed available, to resolve the question of the audience. But, then, they are not after all so very different. The fact is that both Binyon and Holmes were very close to Ricketts. These are members of the same only slightly extended circle, who, although they have differences of emphasis and ideas, are fundamentally at one when it comes to the problems confronting the modern artist at the end of the nineteenth century. Faced with the difficulty of defining a place for art that was faithful both to the refined appreciation they understood to be its major characteristic and to the fact of its neglect and even renunciation by the public, Ricketts and Binyon, *The Dial* and *The Pageant* and *The Dome*, made similar judgements about the times and the fate of aesthetics and the arts. What differentiates them is not the hope they all had in some mysterious but powerful percolation of art into the fabric of society and the souls of its citizens, not certainly the shared belief—pre-modernist in a sense—in the authority of aesthetic experience to contribute to this process, but their respective decisions to occupy and cultivate the hermetic world of art which Symbolism stands for in Ricketts' thought, or to open their work to the world and to its citizens that motivated Binyon and which found a temporary home in the pages of Oldmeadow's periodical.

⁷⁹ Ibid. 173.

‘THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT’

The Century Guild Hobby Horse (1884–94), *The Evergreen* (1895–7), and *The Acorn* (1905–6)

IMOGEN HART

This chapter aims to explore the relations between three British ‘little magazines’ which ran from 1884 to 1906: *The Century Guild Hobby Horse*, *The Evergreen*, and *The Acorn*. In particular, it aims to investigate their association with the Arts and Crafts movement and the implications this has for a revised understanding of the features of modernity and hence of an emerging modernism.¹ The ‘Arts and Crafts movement’ itself has no tight definition and the label has been applied to a broad range of developments in art and theory between about 1860 and 1920. Generally, it is understood to refer to a socially conscious tendency in art and design concerned with improving the conditions of production while upholding high standards of craftsmanship. In this respect some links have been made with the Socialist Movement, in which many Arts and Crafts figures were also active, especially through the influential examples of John Ruskin and William Morris, perhaps its most important protagonist. The juxtaposition of the two words, ‘Arts’ and ‘Crafts’, is also generally thought to represent the equality and unification of the fine and decorative arts and certainly a renewed attention to the decorative arts in particular is seen as a fundamental aspect of the movement.²

¹ The labelling of these magazines as ‘Arts and Crafts’, and the grouping of them together, is presented as a self-consciously unstable working hypothesis. I am not implying that the denomination is tidy or that these magazines definitively embody the Arts and Crafts movement. Instead, I am exploring to what extent the events collectively seen as the Arts and Crafts movement provide a useful context in which to situate these magazines.

² For more on the Arts and Crafts movement, see, for instance, Gillian Naylor, *The Arts and Crafts Movement: A Study of its Sources, Ideals and Influence on Design Theory* (London: Studio Vista, 1971); Anthea Callen, *Angel in the Studio: Women in the Arts and Crafts Movement, 1870–1914* (London: Astragal Books, 1979); Alan Crawford (ed.), *By Hammer and Hand: The Arts and Crafts Movement*

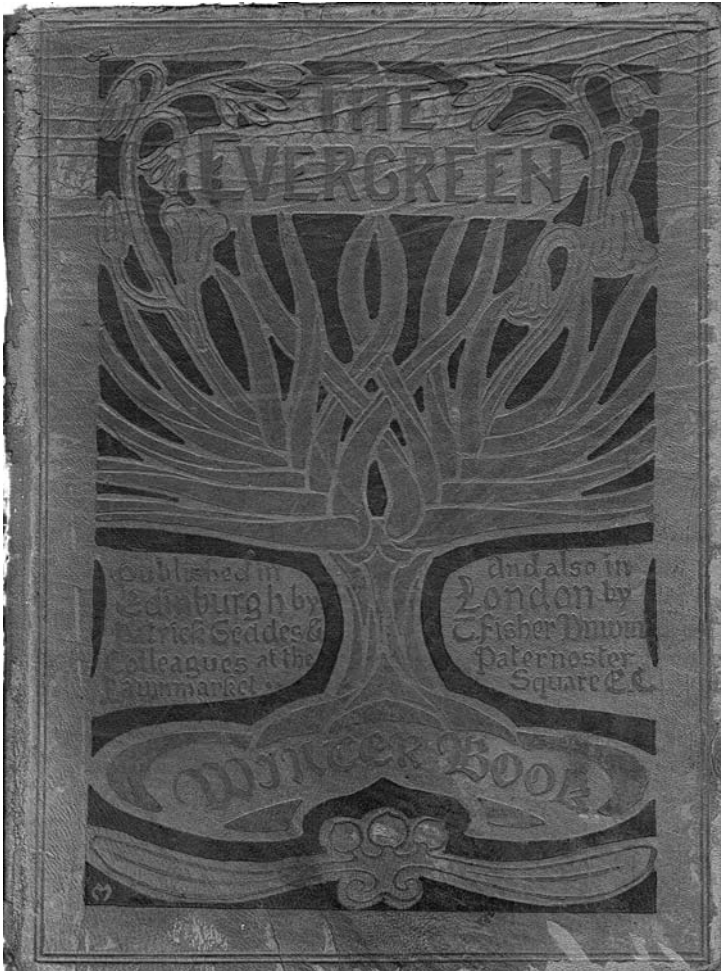


Fig. 11. Cover of *The Evergreen* (Winter, 1896–7)

It would be difficult to identify a single periodical that could be described as a mouthpiece for the Arts and Crafts movement. Two of the more well-known magazines that have previously been linked with it are *The Century Guild Hobby Horse* (henceforth *The CGHH*) and *The Studio: An Illustrated Magazine of Fine and Applied Art*.³ Yet previous accounts have also held back from identifying either

in Birmingham (Birmingham: Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, 1984); Linda Parry, *Textiles of the Arts and Crafts Movement* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988); and Elizabeth Cumming and Wendy Kaplan, *The Arts and Crafts Movement* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991).

³ For more on *The Studio*, see Clive Ashwin, 'The Studio and Modernism: A Periodical's Progress', *Studio International*, 193:983 (1976), 103–12. For more on *The Century Guild Hobby Horse*, see Julie



Fig. 12. Cover of *The Century Guild Hobby Horse* (Apr. 1884)

of these periodicals with the movement too closely.⁴ Each had links to Arts and Crafts, yet each also diverged from the tenets of the movement as it is usually

F. Codell, 'The Century Guild Hobby Horse', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 16 (1983), 43–51; and Peter Frost, 'The Century Guild Hobby Horse and its Founders', *The Book Collector* (Autumn 1978), 348–60.

⁴ Stuart Evans, for instance, writes, 'Straddling as it did the Aesthetic and Arts and Crafts Movements, and displaying characteristics of Art Nouveau a decade or more earlier than they manifested elsewhere, the Guild does not lend itself to neat classification' ('The Century Guild Connection', in John Archer (ed.), *Art and Architecture in Victorian Manchester* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 250). Frost claims that by 1893, the link between *The CGHH* and the Arts and Crafts movement had 'just about vanished' ('The Century Guild Hobby Horse and its Founders', 359).

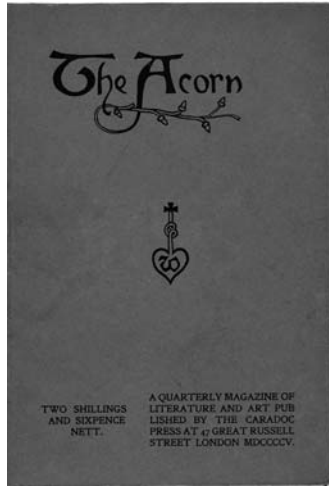



Fig. 13. Front cover of *The Acorn* (1905)

defined. In addition, we would expect 'Arts and Crafts' magazines to be consistent with one another, and with other manifestations of the movement, in terms of their ideology. Yet *The CGHH* and *The Studio* differ from one another, complicating the assumption that there existed a unified Arts and Crafts movement with a coherent agenda. Though less famous than *The CGHH* and *The Studio*, *The Evergreen* and *The Acorn* can also be connected to the movement, as I will demonstrate. Also, *The Studio* is more of a mainstream than a 'little magazine' like the others. For this reason, although *The Studio* has a place in this discussion, it does not take centre stage.

The CGHH was the earliest of the three periodicals. It was first produced in 1884 and the final issue was published in 1892. At the start its editors were A. H. Mackmurdo and Herbert Horne, who also ran the Century Guild, a decorating company or 'club', as Ian Fletcher calls it.⁵ In 1886, Mackmurdo was replaced by Selwyn Image as Horne's co-editor, then during 1892 Mackmurdo returned to the role of editor, but this time took on the role alone. Horne briefly revived the periodical under its new name, *The Hobby Horse*, between 1893 and 1894. *The Evergreen* was published in four issues, between 1895 and 1897, each of which was dedicated to one of the four seasons. It was published by Patrick Geddes on behalf

⁵ Ian Fletcher, *Rediscovering Herbert Horne: Poet, Architect, Typographer, Art Historian* (Greensboro, NC: ELT Press, 1990), indexed under 'Century Guild'. For more on the Century Guild, see Aymer Vallance, 'Mr Arthur H. Mackmurdo and the Century Guild', *The Studio*, 16 (1899), 183–92; Nikolaus Pevsner, 'Arthur H. Mackmurdo', in *idem*, *Studies in Art, Architecture and Design: Victorian and After* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1968), ii. 132–9 (originally published in the *Architectural Review*, 83 (1938)); and Evans, 'The Century Guild Connection'.

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Fig. 14. Cover of *The Studio* (Apr. 1893)

of University Hall, a community of students he had established in Edinburgh,⁶ and edited by William Sharp, who wrote frequently under the pseudonym 'Fiona Macleod', both within the magazine and elsewhere.⁷ (See also Chapter 32.) Only two numbers of *The Acorn* were produced: number 1 in 1905 and number 2 in 1906, both published by H. G. and H. D. Webb, who ran the Caradoc Press in Bedford Park, 'the first garden suburb'.⁸ The evidence relating to the Webbs' involvement in *The Acorn* is inconsistent. Tomkinson's *Select Bibliography of Private Presses*, for example, asserts that 'as Mr Webb was not in any way responsible for the design, it cannot be counted as a Caradoc Press book'.⁹ Yet in the magazine itself we find, in the List of Illustrations, the line 'Initials and Ornaments Designed and Cut on Wood by H. G. Webb'.¹⁰ Beyond such internal detail, the magazines are connected in a number of ways. For instance, W. B. Yeats was associated with all three: as a contributor to *The Acorn*, as an acquaintance of Sharp, and as a friend of Mackmurdo, who welcomed Yeats at his London home on Fitzroy Street.¹¹

Arguably, none of these magazines can be considered a straightforwardly 'Arts and Crafts' periodical, although each gives us a useful insight into the history of the movement. The simple reason, I suggest, why Arts and Crafts did not find a mouthpiece in the form of a magazine was because the movement was not as coherent and internally unified as conventional accounts suggest. In the present context it is also important to consider the relation between the Arts and Crafts movement and modernism and how both concepts can help us to understand these periodicals better. At the same time, we might hope that a close examination of the

⁶ For more on Geddes, see Murdo Macdonald, *Patrick Geddes: A Democratic Intellect* (Dundee University Press, forthcoming) and Marshall Stalley (ed.), *Patrick Geddes: Spokesman for Man and the Environment* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University, 1972).

⁷ Elizabeth A. Sharp, *William Sharp (Fiona Macleod): A Memoir* (London: William Heinemann, 1910), 268. For more on Sharp, see Flavia Alaya, *William Sharp—'Fiona Macleod', 1885–1905* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970).

⁸ Margaret Jones Bosterli, *The Early Community at Bedford Park: 'Corporate Happiness' in the First Garden Suburb* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), 9. For more on Bedford Park, see Walter Hamilton, *The Aesthetic Movement in England*, 2nd edn (London: Reeves and Turner, 1882), 111–23; Moncure Conway, 'Bedford Park', *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 62 (Mar. 1881), 481–90 (reprinted in *Travels in South Kensington* (London: Trubner and Co., 1882), 217–34); G. K. Chesterton, *The Man Who Was Thursday: A Nightmare* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1958); Hermann Muthesius, *The English House*, ed. Dennis Sharp and trans. Janet Seligman, with a Preface by Julius Posener (Oxford: BSP Professional Books, 1987), 30–2; Ian Fletcher, 'Bedford Park: Aesthete's Elysium?' in *idem* (ed.), *Romantic Mythologies* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), 169–207; and Mark Girouard, 'Sweetness and Light': *The Queen Anne Movement 1860–1900* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 160–76.

⁹ G. S. Tomkinson, *A Select Bibliography of the Principal Modern Presses, Public and Private, in Great Britain and Ireland* (London: First Edition Club, 1928), 27.

¹⁰ *The Acorn*, 1 (1905), p. vi.

¹¹ See R. F. Foster, *W. B. Yeats: A Life*; vol. i: *The Apprentice Mage, 1865–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 345, and Fletcher, *Rediscovering Herbert Horne*, 58.

magazines will guide us towards a better understanding of some of the continuities between these two movements.

The magazines and the Arts and Crafts movement

Of these three periodicals, perhaps the one most obviously connected with the Arts and Crafts movement is *The CGHH*. According to Peter Stansky, the Century Guild was one of the movement's most important manifestations.¹² The perceived link between periodical and movement may be partly due to the Century Guild's name, since many other organizations that called themselves 'Guilds', such as the Guild and School of Handicraft and the Art Workers' Guild, were associated with Arts and Crafts.¹³ Also, key Arts and Crafts figures, such as Ruskin and Morris, famously believed that the medieval guilds upheld a principle of collaborative, rewarding craftsmanship. Hence the name 'Century Guild' seems to draw on an Arts and Crafts paradigm of production. In addition, some of the contributors to *The CGHH*, such as Selwyn Image and Heywood Sumner, were also involved in the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society (ACES), which is seen by many as the 'public face' of the movement.¹⁴ Emery Walker, another member of the ACES, was in charge of reproducing the illustrations for the magazine, and thus represents an additional link between *The CGHH* and the Arts and Crafts movement.¹⁵

The CGHH is also often seen as the beginning of a new type of magazine.¹⁶ According to Nikolaus Pevsner, 'There was at that time no journal of artistic distinction in existence. Mackmurdo resolved to start one.'¹⁷ Similarly, Peter Frost

¹² Peter Stansky, *Redesigning the World: William Morris, the 1880s and the Arts and Crafts* (Guildford: Princeton University Press, 1985). The second of Stansky's four chapters is entitled 'The Century Guild'.

¹³ Indeed, Fletcher argues that the *CGHH* was 'the first of the Arts and Crafts Guilds' (*Rediscovering Herbert Horne*, 3). For more on the Guild and School of Handicraft, see C. R. Ashbee, *The Manual of the Guild and School of Handicraft* (London: Cassell & Co., 1892); and Annette Carruthers and Frank Johnston, *The Guild of Handicraft 1888–1988*, exh. cat. (Cheltenham: Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museums, 1988). For more on the Art Workers' Guild, see H. J. L. J. Massé, *The Art Workers' Guild* (Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1935); and Stansky, *Redesigning the World*, 119–70.

¹⁴ Fiona MacCarthy, *William Morris: A Life for Our Time* (London: Faber and Faber, 1994), 593. See also Stansky, *Redesigning the World*, 12, and Wendy Hitchmough, *The Arts and Crafts Home* (London: Pavilion, 2000), 19. For more on Image, see Anon., 'The Work of Mr Selwyn Image', *The Studio*, 14 (1898), 3–10; and A. H. Mackmurdo (ed.), *Selwyn Image Letters* (London: Grant Richards, 1932).

¹⁵ Fletcher, *Rediscovering Herbert Horne*, 59.

¹⁶ See Frost, 'The Century Guild Hobby Horse and its Founders', 352. Fletcher claims that *The Yellow Book*, which began in 1894, 'may be somewhat remotely considered as the successor of the *Hobby Horse*, though a purely commercial rather than partly private venture' (*Rediscovering Herbert Horne*, 81).

¹⁷ Pevsner, *Studies in Art, Architecture and Design*, 136.

argues that 'it was the first magazine to become self-conscious, and to see itself as a work of art.'¹⁸ Frost also suggests that *The Evergreen* was one of the magazines inspired by *The CGHH*.¹⁹ *The Evergreen* certainly does share some of *The CGHH*'s characteristics. For instance, the attention paid to the layout, the wide margins, and the quality of the paper indicate a similar interest in the form of the magazine (see Figs. 15 and 16). This feature of *The Evergreen* was admired by contemporaries, such as one writer in *The Artist*, who declared, 'The paper and the printing are joys of a permanent sort.'²⁰ Similarly, contemporary reviews praised the appearance of *The Acorn*. *The Newcastle Chronicle*, for instance, declared that 'Nothing could be more admirable than the form of the magazine with its clear-cut black type and charming illustrations.'²¹ The production of *The Acorn* has been described too in terms that specifically call to mind Arts and Crafts principles: 'Mr. Webb, being interested in printing and wood engraving, started his Press to put his theories into practice: at the outset he and his wife did the wood engraving, type setting and binding entirely unaided.'²² Even the paper used for *The Acorn* is consistent with Arts and Crafts ideals: Batchelor's handmade Kelmscott paper, first made under William Morris's instructions for the Kelmscott Press.²³

In *The CGHH*, *Evergreen*, and *Acorn*, images are usually given a page to themselves. *The Studio*, by comparison, did not as a general rule give images this kind of space, tending rather to interweave images and text on the same page, with little space in between. The result, as in *The Studio*'s review of the 1893 Arts and Crafts Exhibition, could be a messy, apparently haphazard distribution of images and text. Even in more symmetrical, well laid-out examples from *The Studio*, the images and text seem cramped in comparison with the other magazines discussed here. When ornament and text do appear on the same page in *The CGHH*, *Evergreen*, and *Acorn*, the result is very different, for here the ornament sits separately from the text, creating a more ordered impression (see Figs. 15 and 16).

This not only links these three magazines with one another, but also connects them to the Arts and Crafts movement. As we have seen, a return to the decorative arts is fundamental to the movement. Paying aesthetic attention to the printed page constitutes a concern with the appearance of everyday objects consistent with Arts and Crafts ideals. As early as 1899, Aymer Vallance was arguing, in *The Studio*,

¹⁸ Frost, 'The Century Guild Hobby Horse and its Founders', 360.

¹⁹ Ibid. 359. According to *The Studio*, *The CGHH* also influenced American art magazines such as *The Knight Errant* and *Modern Art*. See 'The Art Magazines of America', *The Studio*, 1 (1893), 143–9. In connection with this, an undated pamphlet on *The CGHH* produced by the Chiswick Press is revealing. Here we find a quotation from an American reader, who observes that 'nothing remotely approaching' *The CGHH*, 'either in aim, realisation, or enlightenment, exists at present in this country' (London, National Art Library, ref. 95.DD Box 1).

²⁰ *The Artist*, 16:187 (July 1895), 270.

²¹ Extract reprinted in no. 2 of *The Acorn*.

²² Tomkinson, *A Select Bibliography*, 23.

²³ Ibid.

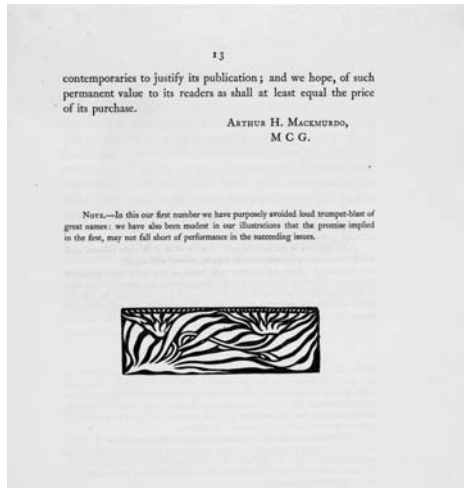


Fig. 15. Page 13 of *The Century Guild Hobby Horse* (April 1884)

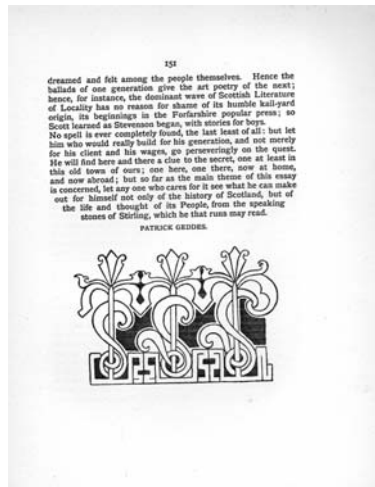


Fig. 16. Page 151 of *The Evergreen* (Winter 1896–7)

that *The CGHH* inspired William Morris to found the Kelmscott Press,²⁴ whose famous treatment of printing as an art is often seen as an important manifestation of the Arts and Crafts movement. This is another reason, therefore, for describing *The CGHH* as an Arts and Crafts magazine. In the case of *The Acorn*, the individual contributors leave their personal mark on the pages in the form of their signatures. In number 1, with only a few exceptions, the names at the end of each article are

²⁴ Vallance, 'Mr Arthur H. Mackmurdo and the Century Guild', 183–92, esp. 187.

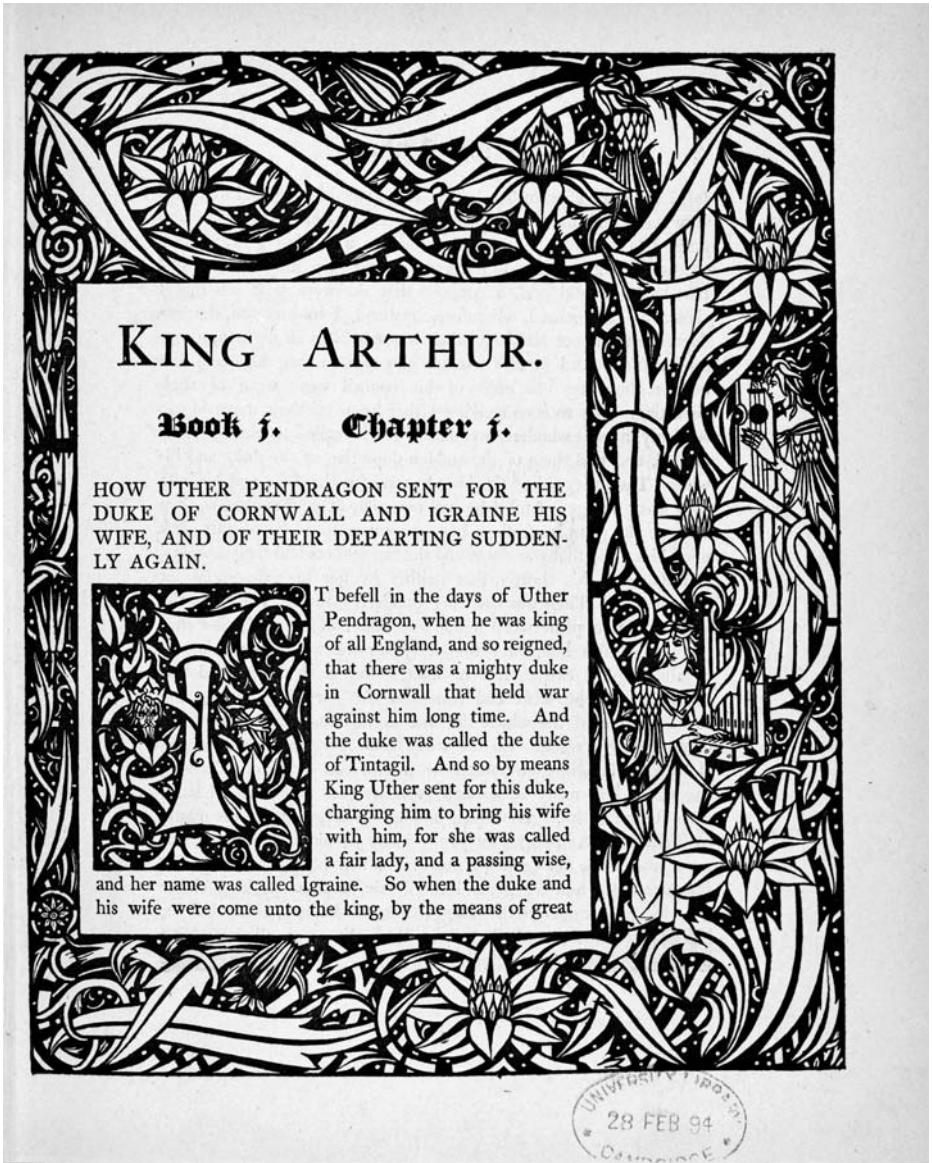


Fig. 17. Design by Aubrey Beardsley for J. M. Dent's Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur* (1893-4)

not typed, but signed, a feature that fits the Arts and Crafts model of expressive creativity, though curiously, this practice is less common in number 2, where only a handful of authors signed their names.

Frost notes that *The CGHH* and *Evergreen* both support the unity of the arts, a principle associated once more with Arts and Crafts.²⁵ Fletcher, for example, writes that the Century Guild was ‘the first of the Arts and Crafts Guilds specifically designed to unite the arts’.²⁶ Like *The CGHH* and *Evergreen*, *The Acorn*, too, welcomed contributions in the form of visual and literary art. Simply by providing a forum for the publication of these two branches of art alongside one another, the three magazines seem to support the unity of the arts. Yet the concept of unity they embody is more complex than this, as I will demonstrate below.

Another respect in which these magazines express Arts and Crafts principles is in their promotion of nature. For example, the covers of *The CGHH* and *Evergreen* (see Figs. 11 and 12) are both based on a tree motif (like the 1893 numbers of *The Studio*; see Fig. 14) while the titles of *The Evergreen* and *Acorn* explicitly refer to nature. The ‘Prefatory Note’ in the Autumn number of *The Evergreen* states that ‘The “Return to Nature” is a rallying call which each age must answer in its own way.’²⁷ Walter Crane, the ACES’s first president, appeared particularly to admire this aspect, commenting that in the periodical’s illustrations, ‘one may see the influences of much fresh inspiration from Nature’.²⁸

The notion of community is a further possible connection between the magazines and the Arts and Crafts movement. *The CGHH* presents the Century Guild as a group of artists united in ‘harmony’, although leaving room for ‘individuality’, a balance that the final section of this chapter explores in more detail.²⁹ *The Evergreen* was produced by members of ‘a little scholastic colony’, in Patrick Geddes’s words, who self-consciously pursued a common life in which work and play were both collective and interconnected.³⁰ The notion of erasing the boundary between work and play is a concept often associated with Arts and Crafts, and is exemplified, for instance, in William Morris’s socialist utopian novel, *News from Nowhere* (1890), in which work is considered a pleasure rather than a burden. There are similar reasons for calling *The Acorn* an Arts and Crafts magazine. As indicated earlier, its editor was based in Bedford Park, London’s first garden suburb from 1875.³¹ *The Acorn* was not the first periodical to emerge from Bedford Park, however. *The Bedford Park Gazette*, edited by H. R. Fox-Bourne, was published at monthly intervals

²⁵ Frost, ‘*The Century Guild Hobby Horse* and its Founders’, 359.

²⁶ Fletcher, *Rediscovering Herbert Horne*, 3.

²⁷ ‘Prefatory Note’, *The Evergreen*, ‘Autumn’ (Sept. 1895), unpaginated.

²⁸ Walter Crane, *Of the Decorative Illustration of Books Old and New* (London/New York, 1896), 227. Cited in Macdonald, ‘Manifestoes in Word and Image’, in *Patrick Geddes: A Democratic Intellect*, 11.

²⁹ A. H. Mackmurdo, ‘The Guild Flag’s Unfurling’, *The Century Guild Hobby Horse*, 1 (Apr. 1884), 3.

³⁰ Sharp, *William Sharp*, 249.

³¹ The editor’s address is given as 1 Priory Gardens, Bedford Park, where the Webbs lived at this time (Chiswick Library, Local History Collection, ‘Chiswick’s Pictures’ file).

for a year, starting in July 1883.³² Bedford Park itself is also often associated with the Arts and Crafts movement.³³ As Fletcher notes, two of the earliest accounts of Bedford Park appear 'at the climax of a volume devoted to arts and crafts', namely Moncure Conway's *Travels in South Kensington* and Walter Hamilton's *The Aesthetic Movement in England*, both of which date from 1882. Part of the reason for the connection is that most of Bedford Park's inhabitants chose William Morris furnishings. Indeed, Conway writes in 1881 that a branch of Morris & Co. 'will probably become necessary in Bedford Park'.³⁴ It seems that the residents of Bedford Park 'preferred the idea of a village or colony' to the word 'suburb', which suggests that they sought to emphasize its cooperative and self-sustaining nature.³⁵ We might therefore see *The CGHH*, *Evergreen*, and *Acorn* as Arts and Crafts magazines simply because they emerged from what were thought to be Arts and Crafts communities.³⁶

The magazines and the Aesthetic movement

Up to a point, then, it seems accurate to call *The CGHH*, *Evergreen*, and *Acorn* Arts and Crafts magazines. Yet, in the same way that we can connect them to the Arts and Crafts movement, we can also link them to the Aesthetic movement. Bedford Park, for instance, is labelled 'The Home of the Aesthetes' in Hamil-

³² Chiswick Library, Local History Collection, ref. 050 Bedford. See Bosterli, *The Early Community at Bedford Park*, especially 13; and Fletcher, 'Bedford Park: Aesthete's Elysium?'

³³ Fletcher, 'Bedford Park: Aesthete's Elysium?', 184.

³⁴ Conway, *Travels in South Kensington*, 223. Fletcher observes that 'journalists failed to distinguish between a liking for Morris papers and a philosophy of conduct', suggesting that Bedford Park was less interwoven with the Arts and Crafts movement than its furnishings might suggest ('Bedford Park: Aesthete's Elysium?', 180).

³⁵ Foster, *W. B. Yeats: A Life*, i. 60. At the same time, in *The Man Who Was Thursday*, Chesterton refers to 'Saffron Park', which is widely agreed to represent Bedford Park, both as a 'suburb' and as 'an artistic colony', suggesting that the two terms were not considered incompatible. Chesterton adds that Saffron Park 'never in any definable way produced any art', inviting us to ask how well known was *The Acorn* and to what extent were its contents considered 'art' (9). Conway also calls Bedford Park a 'suburb' (*Travels in South Kensington*, 230).

³⁶ It should be noted, however, that much of the writing on Bedford Park dates from its early years, rather than from 1905–6, when *The Acorn* was published. For instance, Conway, who lived in Bedford Park from 1879 to 1885, published his article 'Bedford Park' in 1881, and Hamilton's *The Aesthetic Movement in England* dates from 1882. Although at first it had avant-garde associations, it quickly lost them, according to Girouard, who writes that 'in the 1890s it became decidedly passé' (*Sweetness and Light*, 176). This view is upheld by Yeats's comments on Bedford Park. Yeats writes that by the time he moved back to Bedford Park in the late 1880s, 'exaggerated criticism had taken the place of enthusiasm' (*Autobiographies: Memories and Reflections* (London: Macmillan, 1955), 113).

ton's *The Aesthetic Movement in England*,³⁷ and Fletcher observes how, 'In the early 1880s, the London suburb of Bedford Park became associated rather vaguely with that vague movement, Aestheticism'.³⁸ The Bedford Park connection could therefore lead us to see *The Acorn* in terms of the Aesthetic movement and this is confirmed by occasional internal references, such as the following to James McNeill Whistler, a figure more readily associated with Aestheticism than Arts and Crafts.³⁹ Thus, in an article on 'El Djezair', one contributor writes, 'At night, when the moon is up, the dark expanse of wooded hills and the silver gloom of the sea make a Whistler picture.'⁴⁰ In the same issue, Constance Smedley observes that the composer Cyril Scott reminds her of Whistler, since his work 'aims after the pure realisation of beauty for itself, in itself, unencumbered with ethic or religion'.⁴¹

Of course, a perceived link with the Aesthetic movement does not necessarily preclude a connection with the Arts and Crafts movement. Yet many accounts do treat the history of this period as though it consisted of two parallel, and essentially separate, strands. For instance, in *Victorian Interior Design*, Joanna Banham, Sally MacDonald, and Julia Porter argue, 'The simplest way to analyse the two is to regard the Arts and Crafts Movement as an essentially ideological expression and Art Nouveau as a purely aesthetic manifestation. Whereas the Arts and Crafts Movement had its origins in the Gothic Revival, Art Nouveau developed from the Aesthetic Movement.'⁴²

It is common practice to assume in this way not only that the Arts and Crafts and Aesthetic movements represent fundamentally different motivations and ideologies, but also that they are essentially opposed to one another. This dichotomy has perhaps been artificially cemented by the high-profile Whistler–Ruskin trial of 1878, which seemed to pitch the ideals of Aestheticism against those

³⁷ Hamilton, *The Aesthetic Movement in England*, 111–23. There does seem to have been some resistance to claims that Bedford Park was 'aesthetic', however. *The Bedford Park Gazette*, for instance, declares, 'You used to be laughed at as an "aesthetic colony"', but, if there was ever any intention of making Bedford Park a centre of aestheticism, the attempt has fortunately quite failed' (no. 3, Sept. 1883, 30).

³⁸ Fletcher, 'Bedford Park: Aesthete's Elysium?', 169.

³⁹ At the same time, Foster tells us in a chapter covering 1889–91 that some inhabitants of Bedford Park, John Todhunter and Lionel Johnson, 'specifically attacked the doctrine of art for art's sake' (*W. B. Yeats*, i, 109). Similarly, Fletcher highlights the fact that Bedford Park's originator, Jonathan Carr, published a lecture in the first issue of *The Bedford Park Gazette* in July 1883 entitled 'The harm Aestheticism has done to the spread of Art' ('Bedford Park: Aesthete's Elysium?', 182).

⁴⁰ Israfel, 'El Djezair', *The Acorn*, 1 (1905), 55.

⁴¹ Constance Smedley, 'In Defence of Modernity', *ibid.* 117.

⁴² Joanna Banham, Sally MacDonald, and Julia Porter, *Victorian Interior Design* (London: Cassell, 1991), 177.

of Arts and Crafts in a particularly striking way.⁴³ When we discover links with both movements in the same place, therefore, we are brought to rethink those constructions.

Even though the Century Guild and *The CGHH* are often considered inherently Arts and Crafts, they too have links with Aestheticism. For instance, Oscar Wilde, though considered a key representative of the Aesthetic movement, was a member of the circle that gathered at Mackmurdo's house in Fitzroy Street.⁴⁴ Codell notes too, in a similar emphasis, that *The CGHH*'s aesthetics were closer to those of Walter Pater than to those of Ruskin.⁴⁵ In addition, *The CGHH*'s cover has been compared to Aubrey Beardsley's illustrations for *Le Morte d'Arthur* (1893–4).⁴⁶ Beardsley is, of course, associated variously with Aestheticism, Decadence, and Art Nouveau, but not usually considered part of the Arts and Crafts movement. Frost sees *The CGHH* as part of Decadence, describing it as 'the first of a succession of artistic and literary magazines, which were to be, perhaps, the most striking manifestation of the English decadent school in the 1890s'.⁴⁷ There are indeed striking similarities between the cover of *The CGHH* and the illustrations by Beardsley for *Le Morte d'Arthur* (see Figs. 12 and 17). *The Evergreen* also bears similarities to Beardsley's work. According to a contemporary review in *The Artist*, Andrew K. Womrath's illustrations in the Summer issue of *The Evergreen* 'are, perhaps, a little too near that peculiar form of illustration to which Mr Aubrey Beardsley has accustomed us', and it adds that Beardsley was a 'remarkable decadent'.⁴⁸ Visual links, such as these, between *The CGHH*, *The Evergreen*, and Beardsley, challenge the view that the magazines were solely associated with Arts and Crafts, suggesting rather that the boundaries between these movements were blurred. Since the periodicals' similar visual characteristics are an important reason why they are associated with each other and to the Arts and Crafts movement, it would be inconsistent not to take seriously *these* visual links, and their implications in another direction.

The practice of making a periodical aesthetically appealing has implications not only for the producer, but also for the consumer. In her essay 'Production, Reproduction and Pleasure in Victorian Aesthetics and Economics', Regenia Gagnier argues that the aesthetics of the period can be divided into four categories. Two

⁴³ For more on the Whistler vs Ruskin trial, see Robin Spencer, *The Aesthetic Movement: Theory and Practice* (London: Studio Vista, 1972), 78–113; and Linda Merrill, *A Pot of Paint: Aesthetics on Trial in Whistler v. Ruskin* (Washington/London: Smithsonian Institution Press in collaboration with the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1992).

⁴⁴ Fletcher, *Rediscovering Herbert Horne*, 58.

⁴⁵ Codell, 'The Century Guild Hobby Horse', 50.

⁴⁶ Frost, 'The Century Guild Hobby Horse and its Founders', 350.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 348. For more on Decadence, see Ian Fletcher, 'Decadence and the Little Magazines', in *idem* (ed.), *Decadence and the 1890s* (London: Edward Arnold), 173–202.

⁴⁸ Review of *The Evergreen*, *The Artist*, 17:203 (Nov. 1898), 520.

of these are important here: the first, she writes, represented by Aestheticism, displays the aesthetics ‘of taste or consumption’, and the second, by Arts and Crafts, promotes the aesthetics ‘of production’. Elaborating on these positions, Gagnier argues how ‘some were concerned with productive bodies, whose work could be creative or alienated, while others were concerned with pleased bodies, whose tastes established their identities’, thereby acknowledging the overlaps between these two aesthetics while at the same time noting that ‘they were often promoted with very different motivations’.⁴⁹

With this in mind, we can see the formal qualities of these magazines in terms of the aesthetics of consumption. Press opinions of *The Acorn*, for instance, focused more on its appeal to the consumer than on the experience of its producers. ‘A very tasteful publication’, declared the *Oxford Magazine*, while *The Morning Post* observed ‘it is seldom, indeed, that we see a periodical in which so much tasteful attention is given to such matters as paper, print and binding.’⁵⁰ In Gagnier’s account, taste belongs to the aesthetics of consumption, associated with Aestheticism rather than Arts and Crafts.⁵¹ As we can see, once more therefore, the boundaries between Aestheticism and Arts and Crafts become less secure, and the association of the magazines with Arts and Crafts alone appears too limited.

Challenging the ‘Arts and Crafts’ label

Another point of connection between these periodicals and the Arts and Crafts movement was, as we saw earlier, their promotion of the unity of the arts. However, if we look more closely at what is meant by unity in these contexts, this connection too comes to seem more fragile. In relation to the Arts and Crafts movement, claims for the unity of the arts are seen as a move against the conventional hierarchy in which applied art was considered inferior to fine art. In these magazines, however, we find an even broader range of media being brought together, resulting in a far more comprehensive unity.

The CGHH, for instance, sought to ‘restore building, decoration, glass-painting, pottery, wood-carving, and metal-work’ to a place of equality alongside not only sculpture and painting, but also drama, music, and literature.⁵² *The CGHH*’s aims

⁴⁹ Regenia Gagnier, ‘Production, Reproduction and Pleasure in Victorian Aesthetics and Economics’, in Richard Dellamora (ed.), *Victorian Sexual Dissidence* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 130–1.

⁵⁰ Quoted in *The Acorn*, 2 (1906), unpaginated.

⁵¹ Bosterli emphasizes the suburb’s difference from Arts and Crafts when she observes that it actually grew from ‘the very profit motive that thinkers like William Morris and Thomas Carlyle had condemned’ (*The Early Community*, 45).

⁵² *The Century Guild Hobby Horse*, 2:7 (July 1887).

thus seem much broader than those of the Arts and Crafts movement. By bringing drama, music, and literature into the equation, *The CGHH* stepped outside the Arts and Crafts arena. *The Evergreen* goes even further in proposing 'a way of looking at things' that reveals the 'unity of science and literature and art'.⁵³ By including 'science', the magazine placed the focus on 'unity' rather than 'art'. Again, this hints at broader concerns than those associated with Arts and Crafts—perhaps unsurprising in the light of the fact that Geddes, who published *The Evergreen*, was a biologist and botanist as well as a town planner.⁵⁴

We can only conclude that some of the characteristics of these magazines do not quite fit, or exceed, the guiding concept of the Arts and Crafts movement. In addition, some of the things considered fundamental to the movement are missing from the periodicals. For example, a key feature that we would expect to find in Arts and Crafts magazines is a distinct left-wing political thrust. This was partly due to Morris's involvement in the Socialist Movement, though Morris was not the only socialist associated with Arts and Crafts, and many accounts of the period, such as Crane's, blur the histories of the two movements together.⁵⁵ In fact, however, a closer look at *The CGHH* leads us to question either any direct affiliation with the Arts and Crafts movement, or the importance of politics to the movement. The first issue began, for example, with an article entitled 'The Guild Flag's Unfurling' in which Mackmurdo advised that 'we leave the big social issues to the few sociologists of the day', adding that an artist entering social politics can have 'dangerous consequences', offering Morris as an example.⁵⁶ *The CGHH* thus not only denounced the involvement of artists in politics, but also directly criticized Morris's political activity. There is evidence also against seeing *The Acorn* in terms of socialism. Conway, for example, declared that members of Bedford Park would be 'startled, if not scandalised, at any suggestion that he or she belonged to a community largely socialistic'.⁵⁷ As he explains, although 'in some regards' it is a 'socialistic village', the 'entire freedom of the village and of its inhabitants is unqualified by any theory whatever, whether social, political or economic'.⁵⁸

The Arts and Crafts movement is so closely linked with socialism, in most accounts, that it is difficult to accommodate such explicitly apolitical positions within the common understanding of the movement. Moreover, Arts and Crafts is often considered almost synonymous with the name of Morris. By distancing itself from Morris, *The CGHH* takes a further step away from Arts and Crafts. This is

⁵³ 'Envoy', *The Evergreen*, 'Winter' (1896–7), 156.

⁵⁴ See Abbie Ziffren, 'Biography of Patrick Geddes', in Stalley (ed.) *Patrick Geddes*, 3–101.

⁵⁵ See, for example, Walter Crane, *An Artist's Reminiscences* (London: Methuen, 1907), 256–7.

⁵⁶ Mackmurdo, 'The Guild Flag's Unfurling', *The CGHH*, 1 (1884), 11.

⁵⁷ Conway, *Travels in South Kensington*, 230.

⁵⁸ Ibid. 232. See Fletcher, 'Bedford Park: Aesthete's Elysium?', 179, and Bosterli, *The Early Community*, esp. 77.

complicated by the fact that five years later, under Horne and Image's editorship, *The CGHH* adopted a much more Morrisian tone, declaring, 'To take delight in work, to lose all sense of toil in the effort to make things beautifully, that is what an age of Art gives to her craftsmen,'⁵⁹ a comment which echoes one of Morris's most famous lecture titles, 'Useful Work versus Useless Toil' (1884), and corresponds to the sentiment behind his socialism in general.⁶⁰ The magazine thus evidently changes its position with regard to the politics associated, by way of Morris, with the Arts and Crafts movement. Another rupture in the magazine's history, showing how inconsistent all this was, occurs with the change of name and cover in 1893: at which point it can no longer be compared in the same way with Beardsley's illustrations for *Le Morte d'Arthur*.⁶¹

The other key figure associated with Arts and Crafts was John Ruskin, whose concept of 'Savageness' has seemed particularly important for understanding the movement. Ruskin argues in 'The Nature of Gothic' that Gothic buildings express 'certain mental tendencies of the builders', one of which is 'Savageness'.⁶² For Ruskin, the Gothic displays the Christian tendency to recognize 'the individual value of every soul' and to confess 'its imperfection' by 'only bestowing dignity upon the acknowledgement of unworthiness'.⁶³ Dignifying unworthiness does not necessarily mean forsaking high quality, however, for in Ruskin's system, superior performance is rewarded with greater independence. In medieval times, he observes, 'the mind of the inferior workman is recognised, and has full room for action, but is guided and ennobled by the ruling mind. This is the truly Christian and only perfect system.'⁶⁴ Each member of such a 'system' has his or her place in a hierarchy, suggesting how, for Ruskin, a balance must be struck between liberating the worker and maintaining aesthetic standards.

We find Ruskin's model adopted in numerous Arts and Crafts contexts, including Morris's factory at Merton Abbey. Morris is keen to emphasize that although individual workers have a degree of freedom, for instance in the choice of tints, they are always supervised by the company's 'superintendent'.⁶⁵ Since Ruskin is such an important influence for Arts and Crafts, we might expect to find his model of a

⁵⁹ 'Preface', *The Century Guild Hobby Horse*, 4 (1889), 2.

⁶⁰ See May Morris (ed.), *The Collected Works of William Morris*, 1910–15, 24 vols. (London: Routledge/Thoemmes Press, 1992), xxiii.

⁶¹ For more on the shifting nature of *The CGHH*, see Fletcher, *Rediscovering Herbert Horne*, esp. 79, and Codell, 'The Century Guild Hobby Horse', 44.

⁶² John Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*, in E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (eds), *The Works of John Ruskin*, 39 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), x.

⁶³ *Ibid.* 189–90. ⁶⁴ Ruskin, *Stones of Venice*, in *Works*, ix. 291.

⁶⁵ See Aymer Vallance, 'The Revival of Tapestry-Weaving: An Interview with William Morris', *The Studio*, 3 (1894), 98–107, and 'Art, Craft and Life: A Chat with William Morris', *Daily News Chronicle*, 9 October 1893, London, Hammersmith and Fulham Archives, ref. DD/341/319 a-c.

hierarchical system echoed in the so-called 'Arts and Crafts' periodicals. However, the 'Envoy' in the final issue of *The Evergreen* declares that 'without individual or continuous editorship, its artists and writers have been each a law unto themselves'. The 'Envoy' proceeds to explain that underneath the absence of 'mechanical order', there is an 'organic unity' 'not yet manifest in form and substance, but working in life and growth'. *The Evergreen* thus seems to promote a kind of order that emerges naturally rather than one imposed as in the Ruskinian model.⁶⁶ Similarly, *The CGHH* declares in 1884 that authors can express themselves freely in the magazine because there is no publisher in between contributor and reader to 'make a chilling third'.⁶⁷ Horne elaborated on this in an article for *The Art Journal* in 1887. Discussing *The CGHH*, he explains that 'the principle which gives the paper its name' is 'that of "free expression". Each writer is supposed to utter only his sincerest opinions, and such opinions to affect only the writer.' Horne adds, 'There is no disputing about Hobby Horses.'⁶⁸

At first, this might seem consistent with Ruskin's ideal of 'Savageness', wherein individuals are free to express their creativity rather than being required to produce uniformity according to strict rules. Yet the policy promoted by *The CGHH* and *Evergreen* lacks the overseeing eye that, for Ruskin, is necessary to check eccentricity. Instead of individuals working together to create a unified whole, the individuals seem to be free from any prescriptive or restrictive constraints. This non-Ruskinian approach implies a divergence, once more, from an Arts and Crafts ethos, in the same way as *The CGHH*'s opposition to Morris. In this light, Fletcher's claim that 'The allegiances of the magazine were in matters of theory to Ruskin and Morris' appears dubious.⁶⁹

It seems therefore that we must either adjust our understanding of the Arts and Crafts movement or question the appropriateness of exclusively associating these magazines with it. Yet there is a third option: that the Arts and Crafts movement itself may simply have been less cohesive than we are usually led to understand, since what we know as a movement actually consisted of individuals and groups with widely varying motivations and priorities. Horne's declaration that 'there is no disputing about Hobby Horses' supports the idea that *The CGHH*'s aim was not to represent a 'movement', but a variety of individual points of view. When we stop trying to find exclusive links with a closely defined Arts and Crafts movement, we can often see these magazines and the movement itself more clearly.

⁶⁶ 'Envoy', *The Evergreen*, 'Winter' (1896–7), 155.

⁶⁷ Mackmurdo, 'The Guild Flag's Unfurling', 2.

⁶⁸ Herbert Horne, 'The Century Guild', *The Art Journal* (1887), 295–8, esp. 298.

⁶⁹ Fletcher, *Rediscovering Herbert Horne*, 59. For more on the Century Guild's relationship with Ruskin, see Frost, 'The Century Guild Hobby Horse and its Founders', 348–50, and Stansky, *Redesigning the World*, 81.

The magazines and modernity

In *The Acorn* and *Evergreen*, we find the expression of a positive faith in modernity. For instance, in the first number of *The Acorn*, an article entitled 'In Defence of Modernity' declares, 'It is a moment of experiments, but the extraordinary enthusiasm for modernity now sweeping through the continent is not decadence. It is the first breath of a tremendous intellectual virility.'⁷⁰ Writing specifically about music, the article's author, Constance Smedley, laments that 'Humanity clings to the classics as limpets to a rock. Few have the courage to take a headlong plunge into the ocean of futurity.'⁷¹ She observes that modernity has brought 'unity' because 'distance no longer separates', and as a result 'prejudices dwindle'.⁷² Defending modern composers such as Cyril Scott and Percy Grainger, Smedley argues that 'The age which is now on us calls for utterly different methods of expression from those of the past.'⁷³ She urges, 'Let us dare to look forward to the future, instead of clinging timorously to the stone wall of the past.'⁷⁴

Similarly, the final issue of *The Evergreen* observes, 'Be it good or bad, frankly experimental it has been, from cover to cover.'⁷⁵ This enthusiasm for modernity and novelty is combined with respect for the past, which is expressed, for instance, in *The Evergreen's* commitment to revive Celtic traditions.⁷⁶ Elizabeth Sharp writes of Geddes and her husband, William Sharp, that 'To hold to the essential beauty and thought of the past, while going forward to meet the new and ever increasing knowledge, was the desire of both men.'⁷⁷ According to Murdo Macdonald, *The Evergreen* also prefigures much later debates: 'There is also a powerful advocacy of an integration of ecology and religion which looks forward to the social movements of 1960s and 1990s.'⁷⁸ While the article 'In Defence of Modernity' seems to reject the past, we can also view *The Acorn* in terms of this combination of tradition and modernity if we consider other aspects of the magazine. *The Bedford Park Gazette*, for example, declares, 'If we claim to be thus a colony of a new and hopeful sort, we also aspire to a sort of modern revival of the very ancient conception of a village community.'⁷⁹

According to these magazines, therefore, the future is full of promise. In *The Acorn*, this view is combined with a conviction that small efforts have the potential to bring about significant change. This commitment is summed up in the very name of *The Acorn*, whose title page includes the lines,

⁷⁰ Smedley, 'In Defence of Modernity', 114. ⁷¹ Ibid. 112.

⁷² Ibid. 113. ⁷³ Ibid. 122. ⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ 'Envoy', *The Evergreen*, 'Winter' (1896–7), 155.

⁷⁶ Alaya, for instance, calls *The Evergreen* a 'Scoto-Celtic outburst' (*William Sharp—Fiona Macleod*, 126).

⁷⁷ Sharp, *William Sharp*, 249. ⁷⁸ Macdonald, 'Manifestoes in Word and Image', 6.

⁷⁹ *Bedford Park Gazette* (Dec. 1883), 62.

Large streams from little Fountains flow
Tall oaks from little Acorns grow.

Small-scale, ambitious ventures, giving life to myriad magazines, feature frequently in the later periods discussed in the present volume. Michael Levenson's description of a 'micro-sociology of modernist innovation, within which small groups of artists were able to sustain their resolve... to create small flourishing communities'⁸⁰ suggests too, however, that there is something distinctly 'modernist' about the 'colonies' or communities from which magazines such as *The Acorn* and *The Evergreen* emerged.⁸¹ In both cases a balance between respect for the individual and investment in the community is considered the key to progress. As we have seen, too, there is a strong, almost anti-Ruskinian, individualist aspect to *The Acorn* and *The Evergreen*; yet in each case this individualism is situated in the context of a self-conscious drive towards a cooperative model of living. The first issue of *The Bedford Park Gazette*, once more, summarizes this balance: 'In no other suburb of London is so much individuality combined with so much hearty co-operation for the benefit of all.'⁸² In connection with this, Chesterton declares that Bedford Park 'had some elements of a real co-operative and corporate independence'.⁸³

Of course, in considering these magazines in terms of their contemporary contexts, I have derived information from sources outside the magazines themselves. The contents of *The Evergreen* and *Acorn* only reluctantly reveal the contexts from which they emerged. And only *The CGHH* provides what we might call a 'manifesto' statement, presenting the periodical's aims, in 'The Guild Flag's Unfurling' in which a primary concern seems to be to assert the magazine's 'independence'.⁸⁴ Mackmurdo goes so far as to insist that art 'requires of a man heedless intensity of feeling and strong insistence upon self-chosen views'.⁸⁵ This apparent obstinacy is tempered with an allowance that while a given opinion may be 'the only one possible for us', the contributors do not 'presume to think it is the only possibly true one'.⁸⁶ As we saw earlier, the article emphasizes the individual freedom of each contributor. It makes claims at the same time, however, for the Guild's cohesiveness, for a second aim is 'to give expression of our sympathetic relation to one another' since 'unity of sentiment... bands us together'.⁸⁷ This suggestion of a common

⁸⁰ Michael Levenson, 'Introduction', in *idem* (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 6.

⁸¹ Indeed, Bedford Park is sometimes described in 'utopian' terms. See, for instance, Conway, *Travels in South Kensington*, 219; Hamilton, *The Aesthetic Movement in England*, 116; and *The Bedford Park Gazette*, 3 (Sept. 1883), 29–30.

⁸² Cited in Fletcher, 'Bedford Park: Aesthete's Elysium?', 189.

⁸³ G. K. Chesterton, *Autobiography* (London: Arrow Books, 1959), 128. See *The Bedford Park Gazette* (Sept. 1883), and Bosterli, *The Early Community*.

⁸⁴ Mackmurdo, 'The Guild Flag's Unfurling', 12.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* 10.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 4.

aim is consistent with the declaration that ‘it is our intention to invite contributions from those artists outside the Guild, whose views on any particular subject, are such as the Guild shares.’⁸⁸ Here, *The CGHH* comes across as a magazine characterized by rebellion, whose contributors are brought together by their common belief in independence.

While ‘The Guild Flag’s Unfurling’ helpfully provides the reader with an explanation of *The CGHH*’s position, *The Acorn* offers us no editorial, no introduction, and no conclusion.⁸⁹ *The Evergreen* gives up slightly more about its context, in the form of some introductory and concluding lines that provide limited insight into its overall aims. In neither case, however, is the relationship between the magazine and its contributors spelled out. By eschewing any acknowledged aims or influences in this way, *The Evergreen* and *Acorn* do not lend themselves to easy categorization. This is another problem with a straightforward ‘Arts and Crafts’ reading of the magazines.

Rather than seeing this only as an infuriating circumstance, we can ask ourselves whether there might not be a reason for this editorial reticence. There seems to be a sense, that is to say, that *The Acorn* and *Evergreen* are intended to speak for themselves, and this could be seen as one of their most experimental features: to explore what happens when a magazine goes out into the world without extensive explanations as to what it hopes to achieve and who its producers are. The impression *The Acorn* and *Evergreen* make in this way on the reader is not, first and foremost, that of manifestos representing a ‘movement’, whether of Arts and Crafts or any other. By speaking for themselves, the magazines open up the possibility that the arts can impact directly on audiences, rather than needing mediating explanations and frameworks to speak for them. This is an approach we would not normally associate with Arts and Crafts, for which the circumstances of production are paramount when evaluating objects. In the case of *The Acorn* and *Evergreen*, attempts to look past these objects to the circumstances of their production meet with limited success. In the absence, therefore, of substantial information about the contexts of these magazines, we must go back to the periodicals themselves.

The Arts and Crafts concept sheds light, finally, upon many of the similarities between *The CGHH*, *Evergreen*, and *Acorn*. It helps us to identify patterns and to understand some of the political and aesthetic issues their contributors may have been concerned with. Yet, in exploring the magazines’ relationship with Arts and

⁸⁸ Mackmurdo, ‘The Guild’s Flag Unfurling’, 4.

⁸⁹ In this respect it can be compared with other magazines from roughly the same period, such as *The Dial* and *The Dome*. The latter light-heartedly acknowledges this characteristic in a review of itself at the end of its first number: ‘we are a little sorry that the Editor . . . has not condescended to spare half-a-dozen pages for an account of his Aims’ (*The Dome: A Quarterly Containing Examples of All the Arts*, 1 (1897), 101). See this volume, Chapter 4.

Crafts, we discover how we need also to expand the range of interpretations open to us when investigating the movement. Since Arts and Crafts has been ascribed the role of a precursor of modernism by various scholars, from Pevsner to Tillyard, a more nuanced interpretation of Arts and Crafts will benefit our understanding of the latter.⁹⁰ The process of trying to fit these periodicals into the perimeters of a movement highlights the limitations of the broad generalizations we use, including, in particular, the concept of the 'Arts and Crafts movement'. It also demonstrates how important it is that we revisit the periodicals of the period with a fresh perspective in order better to comprehend them and their response to the novel prospect of modernity.

⁹⁰ See Nikolaus Pevsner, *Pioneers of Modern Design from William Morris to Walter Gropius* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960); Naylor, *The Arts and Crafts Movement*; and S. K. Tillyard, *The Impact of Modernism 1900–1920: Early Modernism and the Arts and Crafts Movement in Edwardian England* (London: Routledge, 1988).

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III
EARLY STATEMENTS
(1899–1915)



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INTRODUCTION

Between 1900 and the outbreak of the First World War a number of magazines long recognized by critics as significant for the emergence of modernism appeared: Alfred Orage's editorship of *The New Age* began in 1907; Ford Madox Ford's *English Review* in 1908; John Middleton Murry's *Rhythm* in 1911; and Dora Marsden's *The Freewoman* (to metamorphose into *The New Freewoman*, 1913, and *The Egoist*, 1914). This initial burst of activity was capped by Wyndham Lewis's *BLAST* in 1914. But many other, less familiar, magazines of the 'little' and 'modernist' form also emerged in this period: Gordon Craig's *The Mask* (1908); the Arts and Crafts magazine *The Acorn* (1905); Douglas Goldring's journal of open-air life, *The Tramp* (1910–11), which first published Wyndham Lewis; and the various magazines of the Celtic Revival and the 'New Poetry' discussed in this section. This period saw a continuation of the massive growth in periodical publishing noted in earlier chapters: weekly, monthly, and quarterly publications stood at 643 in 1875, increasing to 1,298 in 1885, 2,081 in 1895, and 2,531 in 1903.¹ In this period appeared a number of other periodicals devoted to literature, of a kind either tied to established publishers and presses, and which were commercially successful, or which had strong financial backing: *The Times* launched what was to become the *TLS* in 1902; *Book Monthly* (1903) and *Mainly About Books* (1907); along with the more downmarket *T.P.'s Weekly* (1902).² However, the separation between these magazines and those normally associated with modernism was never absolute. *T.P.'s Weekly* was designed by the Irish Nationalist T. P. O'Connor as a literary paper for the expanding working class and lower middle classes living in the new suburbs and reached a circulation of around 250,000. Guided by O'Connor's claim that 'We have entered upon the period of Democracy in Literature' it aimed to bring informed knowledge of all literary topics to this new mass audience.³ Although we might expect it to be populated with the work of those authors

¹ Figures taken from Peter Keating, *The Haunted Study: A Social History of the English Novel, 1875–1914* (London: Fontana, 1991), 33. Keating is drawing upon figures from the *Newspaper Press Directory*.

² *Ibid.* 77.

³ *T.P.'s Weekly*, 21 Nov. 1902; cited in Philip Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations: Literary Life in Britain, 1870–1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 88. For more on O'Connor and *T.P.'s Weekly* see Waller, 82–93.

later dismissed by Virginia Woolf as ‘Edwardian’ (Wells and Bennett were indeed published in it), *T.P.’s Weekly* also serialized Conrad’s *Nostramo* in 1904 and in 1913 published Ezra Pound’s ‘How I Began’, his important account of the writing of his Imagist masterpiece, ‘In a Station of the Metro’.⁴ The Fabian Holbrook Jackson, who had edited *The New Age* with Orage from 1907, became editor of *T.P.’s Weekly* in 1911 and eventually re-launched the magazine as *To-day* in 1916. Another instance of the heterogeneous field of magazines at this time was Goldring’s *The Tramp* (1910–11), an odd mixture of *Country Life* and literature, which published the earliest work by Wyndham Lewis as well as the first extracts in English from Marinetti’s ‘Futurist Manifesto’. In this period, then, the division between minority modernist publications and more mass-market magazines is less clear-cut than critics have previously thought: the cultural field of periodical publishing was, in many ways, a very fluid and diverse one.

The fluidity of distinctions between kinds of periodical is matched by the difficulty of the terms employed to categorize the period itself. The period between the *fin de siècle* and the emergence of modernism sometime between 1910 and 1914 has often caused problems for literary history. Some critics have sought to view it as an age in ‘transition’ or as demonstrating a distinctive ‘Edwardian’ frame of mind.⁵ Part of the problem stems from the perceived need to grant a point of origin for literary modernism itself, whether following Virginia Woolf’s classic statement that ‘in or about December 1910 human character changed’ or Wyndham Lewis’s claim that modernism in Britain began with the ‘men of 1914’.⁶ Interestingly both these claims are made retrospectively, Woolf’s first in 1923, and Lewis in 1937, indicating how the search for the origins of modernism only occurs after the event. One reason for returning to literary periodicals in the years prior to 1914 lies in discovering the multiple points of origin for what has later become labelled ‘modernism’. Rather than look for the singular derivation of modernism in Britain in this period, we do better to consider what Michel Foucault terms the ‘profusion of entangled events’ that accompany the emergence of any historical feature.⁷ What seems clear from the textual evidence of magazines in the period is that there was a profound awareness that cultural change was in the air, but what

⁴ Ezra Pound, ‘How I Began’, *T.P.’s Weekly*, 6 June 1913, 707.

⁵ See, for example, the work of the journal *English Literature in Transition, 1880–1920*. Samuel Hynes describes the Edwardian period as that of ‘a time in transition’; see *The Edwardian Turn of Mind* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 5.

⁶ Virginia Woolf, ‘Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown’, in *A Woman’s Essays* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992), 70; Wyndham Lewis, *Blasting and Bombardiering: An Autobiography (1914–1926)* (London: Calder and Boyers, 1967), 9. Many feminist accounts have challenged Lewis’s account; see, for example, Bonnie Kime Scott, *Refiguring Modernism: The Women of 1928* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

⁷ See Michel Foucault, ‘Nietzsche, Genealogy, History’, in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), 89.

that might amount to, or even who would be included as the central protagonists of such developments was remarkably unclear. What we find in the journals of this period, then, are early statements that new forms of literary and artistic expression were needed: the subsequent history of how certain of the figures we find in these periodicals became labelled modernist, and others rejected, should not disguise the fact that the names to be associated with the emergence of the 'new' in this period had not yet become settled. When, in 1923, Woolf distinguished between the modernist 'Georgians' and the outdated 'Edwardians' she was employing a distinction that would not have been recognized by those writing in 1910. Much literary history after this period has broadly followed this kind of gesture, however, and labelled one particular cultural formation (broadly the 'men of 1914' version of Pound, Lewis, Eliot, and Joyce) as that which truly represents modernism, and rejected other competing versions of a modernist cultural practice. Ann Ardis has suggested that we attempt to remap the field of modernist studies by examining material such as that found in periodicals in order to discern what 'other aesthetic and political agendas were either erased from cultural memory or thoroughly discredited as the literary avant-garde achieved cultural legitimacy'.⁸

One example of an aesthetic that has been excluded from the conventional canon of modernism is that of the Georgian poets, discussed in this section in relation to Harold Monro's magazines *The Poetry Review* and *Poetry and Drama*. Early issues of *Poetry Review* indicate that the Georgian movement was clearly part of the 'entangled events' that accompanied the emergence of a new poetic sensibility. The first issue of *The Poetry Review* proudly states that it is 'A New Monthly Periodical devoted to the study and appreciation of Modern Poetry of all countries'.⁹ The use of terms such as 'new' and 'modern' indicates the emerging modernist sensibility here, a feature also found in an interesting advertisement on the back cover of the same issue of *Poetry Review* for another journal: 'RHYTHM: The UNIQUE MAGAZINE OF MODERNIST ART'. A brochure for *Rhythm* in a later issue of *Poetry Review* states that 'a unique attempt will be made to unite within one magazine all the parallel manifestations of modernism in every province of art, education and philosophy'.¹⁰ To a contemporary reader distinctions between the new, the modern, and the modernist would have probably been irrelevant. What these journals seem to share is a commitment to bringing out 'new' work that captures the overwhelming sense of modernity experienced at the time. Monro's sense of the changing times was admirably captured in an editorial in June 1912 for an issue devoted to poets of the 1890s: 'Thus it came about that poetry entered virginal upon the twentieth century, and the poets of to-day find themselves suddenly emerging from a transition period, a strange world about them, a broken

⁸ Ann L. Ardis, *Modernism and Cultural Conflict, 1880–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 7.

⁹ *Poetry Review*, 1:1 (Jan. 1912), inside cover.

¹⁰ *Poetry Review*, 1:4 (Apr. 1912).

tradition behind, and a new one in the future to create.¹¹ The task of the poet for Monro was thus to address the ‘strange world’ they found themselves in now that the period of transition has ended; for this they must create a new idiom rather than employ the ‘broken tradition’ of nineteenth-century verse. It is, of course, much the same language that Pound was to employ about the Imagists and Vorticists.

Hibberd’s account of Monro’s work in *Poetry Review* and *Poetry and Drama* indicates the diverse tendencies within the ‘New Poetry’ (as Rupert Brooke termed it) during the 1910s and the way in which the landscape had not yet ossified into distinctions between pro- and anti-modernists. Although Monro coined the name ‘Georgian’ and published their anthologies, he also gave space and encouragement to Imagists such as Pound, Fletcher, Aldington, Lowell, and Hulme. As the chapter shows, Pound’s proto-Imagist call in his essay ‘Prolegomena’ for poetry to become ‘harder and saner’ with ‘fewer painted adjectives . . . austere, direct, free from emotional slither’ was echoed by many of Monro’s own critical statements upon how contemporary poetry should be written.¹² As Hibberd shows *The Poetry Review* had, in Monro’s words, waged war against ‘flat, heavy blank verse . . . worn-out phrases . . . the futile inversion [and] the stereotyped adjective’, all principles that Pound and Imagism were to espouse in their own work. Even though Hibberd argues that by the start of 1913 a clear schism had appeared between Imagist and Georgian camps, Monro continued to support the former as well as the latter grouping.

While Monro and Pound shared a commitment to the modern and the new in the styling and vocabulary of verse, they differed in the strategies by which such work could be presented to the public. As Hibberd demonstrates, Monro was never one to lay down rules for writing verse or support the idea of a manifesto for the New Poetry. This refusal to espouse an ‘ism’ or a particular cultural formation marks him out from someone like Pound or Lewis at the time. In the years prior to 1914 the adoption of an ism became an almost ritualistic gesture in the emerging modernist cultural field. Douglas Goldring, in a literary memoir of this period, noted that what he recalled most about ‘the crowded years between 1910 and 1914’ were ‘the exciting series of art movements’ in which writers and artists in London got caught up.¹³ Ford, writing a foreword to the *Imagist Anthology* of 1930, recollected that ‘It is a little difficult to disentangle Futurism from Cubism and Vorticism and Imagism . . . and indeed, even from Impressionism and Post

¹¹ Harry Monro, ‘Editorial’, *Poetry Review*, 1:6 (June 1912), 248.

¹² Ezra Pound, ‘Prolegomena’ (‘Things Said in Advance’, ‘Preface’), *Poetry Review*, 1:2 (Feb. 1912), 72–6. Misprinted in *Poetry Review* as ‘Prologomena’.

¹³ Douglas Goldring, *South Lodge: Reminiscences of Violet Hunt, Ford Madox Ford and the English Review Circle* (London: Constable, 1943), 62.

Impressionism and Dadaism and Hyper-realism. At least it isn't now. But in those days it was bewildering.¹⁴

In 1912 Monro devoted an entire issue of *Poetry Review* to Flint's influential account of contemporary French poetry which not only discussed the importance of *vers libre* but also considered the various schools of poetry that had flourished in France in the first years of the century. This article, along with the triumphant marketing of Marinetti's Futurist movement, alerted Pound to the crucial importance of forming a school or 'ism' in order to advance one's name in the cultural marketplace of modernism. Having a magazine that supported a movement was soon to become the next logical step. But it was a step that Monro refused to take, wedded as he was to supporting 'new' good work wherever it might be found. Monro did, however, recognize the importance of another form of cultural institution to the fostering of modernism, that of the independent bookshop, and in January 1913 opened the Poetry Bookshop, in Devonshire Street, London, near to the British Museum. This was to become the venue for many meetings and readings of key figures at the time. Among those who read there were Rupert Brooke, T. S. Eliot, Robert Graves, Harriet Monroe, Pound, and Edith Sitwell. Monro's catholicity of taste continued in his later magazine, *Poetry and Drama*, one issue of which was devoted to an approving analysis of Futurism. Monro's commitment to new poetry of 'all countries' also indicates an internationalism more often associated with modernism rather than the perceived parochialism and 'English' orientation of the Georgian movement. Early issues of *Poetry Review* had focused upon French poetry, American poetry, and the Celtic Twilight.

The magazines founded by Yeats in the early years of the century display one facet of the variety and energy of the Celtic Twilight. While Monro had refused to use the pages of his magazines as the mouthpiece of any particular group, Yeats, who had read at the Poetry Bookshop, demonstrated an early sense that periodicals could become a crucial tool in the dissemination of new ideas to the public. For Yeats, however, it was not a new aestheticism but a nationally based movement for modern drama that he proclaimed in the pages of *Beltaine* and *Sambain* and these magazines were the mouthpieces for what was then called the Irish Literary Theatre, later to become the Abbey Theatre. The relations between modernism and Irish nationalism at this time were very complex, but it is clear that Yeats envisaged the development of a national theatre devoted to modernist drama of the sort familiar on the European stage (Ibsen above all) as a key strategy in Irish cultural politics.

It is important to note that the context for periodical publication in Ireland was quite different from that encountered by Monro in London. The decades following the Great Famine saw a diminution in what had been quite a lively periodical scene

¹⁴ Ford Madox Ford, 'Those Were the Days' in *Imagist Anthology 1930* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1930), p. ix.

at the start of the nineteenth century. It was only towards the end of the nineteenth century that there was anything like a resurgence in the publishing world. As Davis notes, signs of this revival can be seen in the pages of the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society's weekly journal, *The Irish Homestead* (1895–1923), edited by George Russell ('Æ') from 1905 to 1923. Famously Russell secured the publication in 1904 of some stories by Joyce, under the pseudonym 'Stephen Daedalus', that would become the first three stories of *Dubliners*. In Belfast another 'little magazine' published briefly between 1904 and 1905 was *Uladh* which, like Yeats's magazines, was also linked to a theatre group, the Ulster Literary Theatre, and had a similar commitment both to a regional identity (in this case, Ulster) and to the production of modern forms of culture. In design *Uladh* was influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement and was partly edited by Joseph Campbell (Seosamh MacCathmaoil in Irish) and illustrated in Celtic Revival fashion by his brother, John Campbell. Joseph Campbell moved to London and became part of T. E. Hulme's Poets' Club of 1909, the forerunner to the Imagist group.¹⁵ Also published in 1904–5, *Dana* was a Dublin magazine that in its critique of both the Catholic Church and the Gaelic League lived up to its subtitle of 'A Magazine of Independent Thought' and included work by Joyce, Padraic Colum, George Russell, and George Moore.

A common theme in many of the 'little magazines' encountered in this period is the supposed opposition between art and commerce. In Yeats's magazines this theme receives a particular inflexion due to the nationalist politics of Ireland at the time, perhaps summed up in George Moore's claim that 'Art is incompatible with Empire'.¹⁶ Yeats conceived the Irish Literary Theatre as distinct from 'the theatre of commerce' and a number of essays in his magazines continue this argument but overlay it with national distinctions: hence English theatre is 'commercial', 'materialistic', 'imperial', and too 'analytic' in comparison to the 'independence' and 'spirituality' of Irish drama. Davis shows up some of the contradictions in this position by drawing attention to the way in which the 'bibliographic codes' of *Beltaine* and *Samhain* represented the magazines as forms of commodity for collectors. Partly this drew upon Yeats's own fame and status, and is linked to the way in which these magazines became more monologic in tone, becoming vehicles for Yeats's voice alone. Such features, therefore, added to the contradictions in Yeats's plan for the theatre to become a broad-based institution for Irish cultural nationalism, given the limited readership of the relatively expensive magazines such as *Beltaine* and *Samhain*.

¹⁵ For a brief account of Campbell and Imagism see Helen Carr, 'Imagism and Empire', in Howard J. Booth and Nigel Rigby (eds), *Modernism and Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000). For *Uladh* see Marnie Hay, 'Explaining *Uladh*: Cultural Nationalism in Ulster', in E. A. Taylor Fitzsimon and James H. Murphy (eds), *The Irish Revival Reappraised* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004).

¹⁶ George Moore, 'Is the Theatre a Place of Amusement?', *Beltaine*, 2 (Apr. 1900), 8.

For both Yeats and Monro, then, magazines functioned as important cultural institutions within the emergent field of modernism. While Monro eschewed any partisan role for his publications and saw himself as a promoter and conduit for the New Poetry, however conceived, Yeats displayed a keen sense of the role that periodicals could play both within the construction of new cultural forms and within the wider political public sphere.

YEATS AND THE CELTIC REVIVAL

Beltaine (1899–1900), *Samhain* (1901–8), *Dana* (1904–5),
and *The Arrow* (1906–9)

ALEX DAVIS

In his Nobel Prize lecture, ‘The Irish Dramatic Movement’ (delivered in 1923), W. B. Yeats identified the fall of Charles Stewart Parnell in 1890 with the beginnings of ‘[t]he modern literature of Ireland’, the consequence of which, he maintained, was the insurrection of Easter 1916: ‘A disillusioned and embittered Ireland turned from parliamentary politics; an event was conceived; and the race began, as I think, to be troubled by that event’s long gestation.’¹ Yeats’s direct causal connection between the origins of the Irish cultural revival of the late nineteenth century and subsequent revolutionary political activity has been contested as, in effect, self-aggrandisement on the Nobel laureate’s part.² Be that as it may, it is incontestable that from the 1890s to 1916 and, indeed, up until the formation of the Irish Free State in the year preceding Yeats’s lecture to the Swedish Royal Academy in Stockholm, literary and other cultural productivity in Ireland—and in the diaspora—greatly increased. ‘The Irish Dramatic Movement’ points to a number of early indices of this literary and linguistic efflorescence: Douglas Hyde’s establishment of the Gaelic League in 1893; the founding by Yeats and others of the Irish Literary Society in London and the National Literary Society in Dublin in 1892; and, most notably, the creation of the ‘movement’ of the lecture’s title—the Irish Literary Theatre, as it was initially styled, conceived by Yeats, Augusta, Lady Gregory, and Edward Martyn in 1897, and which mounted its first productions in 1899. The performances of Yeats’s *The Countess Cathleen* and Martyn’s *The Heather Field* in the Antient Concert Rooms, Dublin, in May of that year were

¹ W. B. Yeats, *Autobiographies*, ed. William H. O’Donnell and Douglas N. Archibald (New York: Scribner, 1999), 410.

² See R. F. Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch: Connections in Irish and English History* (London: Allen Lane, 1993), 229.

accompanied by the publication of the first issue of *Beltaine*, 'An Occasional Publication', the title page informs its readers, constituting 'THE ORGAN OF THE IRISH LITERARY THEATRE'. Before examining in detail the content and format of this 'organ'—and that of its successors, the theatre pamphlets *Sambain* and *The Arrow*—it is worth considering briefly the periodical situation in Ireland into which *Beltaine* was launched.

Magazines containing literary contributions, whether significant or negligible in proportion to other printed matter, were thin on the Irish ground in the years immediately prior to the 1890s. This was in marked contrast to the quantity and quality of periodicals earlier in the century. The staunchly Unionist *Dublin University Magazine* (1833–77), particularly in the pre-Famine period, published important writings by, among others, Isaac Butt, William Carleton, Samuel Ferguson, Sheridan Le Fanu, and Charles Lever. The *Dublin University Magazine*'s politics find their diametrical opposite in the cultural nationalism of another major Irish Victorian periodical, the *Nation* (founded 1842), in which literary and political work by the Young Irelanders was disseminated to a wide and variegated audience. Provincial magazines, including the *Cork Magazine* (1847–8) and the *Ulster Magazine* (1830–1), though often short-lived, also contributed to a vibrant periodical culture present in the provinces as well as the capital. In the decades following the Great Famine, however, the landscape of literary periodicals became increasingly denuded, to be repopulated only at the end of the century in the course of 'that stir of thought' recalled by Yeats in his Nobel lecture.³

Of the magazines with some claim to literary significance in the 1890s, *Beltaine* is the most important; it was not, however, the first. In the seemingly unlikely pages of the Irish Agricultural Organization Society's weekly journal, *The Irish Homestead* (1895–1923), readers were sure to encounter some of the leading Irish writers of the day. Edited by Æ (the nom de plume of George Russell) from 1897, the magazine published work by Hyde, Edith Somerville and Martin Ross, Katherine Tynan, Alice Milligan,⁴ Yeats, and Æ himself. In the new century, short stories by James Joyce, eventually destined for *Dubliners*, would disturb at least some of its readers. Nevertheless, while paleo-modernist and early modernist texts are a fitful presence in *The Irish Homestead*, *Beltaine*, it has been argued, can lay claim to being the first instance in Ireland of that quintessential modernist publishing venture, the 'little magazine.' In his invaluable study of Irish literary magazines, Tom Clyde advances the argument that *Beltaine* comports with the basic criteria of the 'little magazine': espousing radicalism in art and politics, such periodicals

³ Yeats, *Autobiographies*, 410.

⁴ Milligan co-edited with Anna Johnson ('Ethna Carbery') the Belfast-based magazine, the *Shan Van Vocht* (1896–9), largely comprising political balladry, but including poems by Hyde and Lionel Johnson, as well as work in the Irish language.

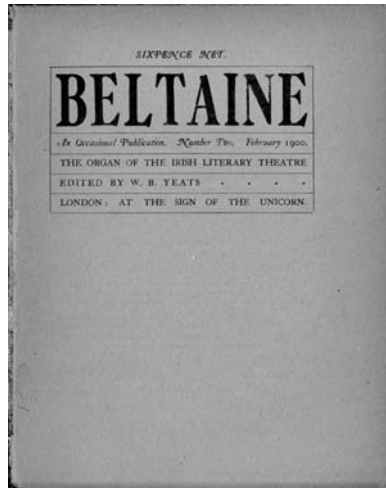


Fig. 18. Cover of *Beltaine* (Feb. 1900)

aimed at a small but relatively homogenous readership, and, in both content and physical format, sought to produce ‘a unified artistic statement’.⁵ Furthermore, Clyde maintains, in contrast to the great Victorian reviews, the ‘little magazine’s’ courting of a select audience indicates a contempt for commercialism of a piece with the avant-garde pretensions entertained by its editor(s) and contributors. As a general description, Clyde’s received account of the ‘little magazine’—and of *Beltaine* as an exemplum of this form—is not without validity, yet it requires significant qualification.

As Mark S. Morrisson has convincingly demonstrated, the modernist ‘little magazine’ of the early twentieth century possesses a complicated relationship with ‘the explosion of mass market print publications and advertising’ which innovations in print-technology and the availability of inexpensive paper at the end of the nineteenth century touched off.⁶ Morrisson contends that interpretations of the avant-garde which depict it as resolutely opposed to the supposed degradations of mass culture, as in Andreas Huyssen’s influential *After the Great Divide*,⁷ fail to note the extent to which certain modernists interacted with and manipulated ‘the

⁵ Tom Clyde, *Irish Literary Magazines: An Outline History and Descriptive Bibliography* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2003), 35. Clyde’s description of the ‘little magazine’ owes much to Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane, ‘Movements, Magazines and Manifestos’, in *idem* (eds), *Modernism 1890–1930* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), 192–205; and Frederick J. Hoffman, Charles Allen, and Carolyn F. Ulrich, *The Little Magazine: A History and Bibliography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946).

⁶ Mark S. Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism: Little Magazines, Audiences, and Reception, 1905–1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), 3.

⁷ See Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1986). See also John Carey’s denunciation of modernism’s apparent

new institutions of culture of the period to create a prominent public role for their art and literature'.⁸ As editors, such modernists, far from showing the kind of 'lack of, and disdain for, commercial sense' attributed to them by Clyde,⁹ seized upon the relative affordability of the periodical medium as a means of, in Morrisson's words, 'making their voices and their art prominent in the vibrant and exciting new print venues of the public sphere that the commercial culture had helped to create and sustain.'¹⁰ *Beltaine* inaugurated Yeats's attempt, at the turn of the century, to employ the medium of the periodical to promote and critically justify the modern dramatic literature of Ireland in a public print forum. In this attempt, as Paige Reynolds has contended persuasively, Yeats faced a conundrum. Seeking to 'assemble a broad Irish audience for national culture', *Beltaine* and the theatre's succeeding periodicals were catering to both 'a small reading public which would support an experimental theater and a large theater audience which would attend their native plays'. In short, Reynolds argues, the magazines exemplify that 'tension between high modernist culture and popular consumer culture' discussed at length by Morrisson, added to which is the volatile ingredient of cultural and political nationalism.¹¹

Beltaine takes its name from the Irish springtime festival of Bealtaine. The title both nods to the month of the first productions of the newly formed theatre and sounds an unequivocally (and, doubtless to some, unpronounceable) national note. The magazine ran for three issues; for while Yeats's correspondence makes clear he envisaged further issues,¹² the journal he edited to accompany the Irish Literary Theatre's October 1901 performances of George Moore and Yeats's *Diarmuid and Grania* and Hyde's Irish-language *Casadh an tSúgáin* bore the seasonally appropriate title *Samhain* (the Irish festival for the commencement of winter). *Beltaine* number 2 was published in February 1900 to coincide with the Irish National Theatre's second season: productions of Martyn's *Maeve*, Milligan's *The Last Feast of the Fianna*, and *The Bending of the Bough*, the last named a rewriting by Moore and Yeats of Martyn's *The Tale of the Town*, the revised play identified as solely Moore's creation. In April 1900, the final issue of the magazine appeared. Sometime in May, all three numbers were re-issued rebound as a single volume, a compilation prompted, according to a note on the

antipathy towards mass consumer culture in his *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880–1939* (London: Faber, 1992).

⁸ Morrisson, *Public Face of Modernism*, 7.

⁹ Clyde, *Irish Literary Magazines*, 35.

¹⁰ Morrisson, *Public Face of Modernism*, 10.

¹¹ Paige Reynolds, 'Reading Publics, Theater Audiences, and the Little Magazines of the Abbey Theatre', *New Hibernia Review*, 7:4 (2003), 66.

¹² See W. B. Yeats, 'To Lady Augusta Gregory', 21 May 1901, *The Collected Letters of W. B. Yeats*, gen. ed. John Kelly, vol. iii, 1901–1904, ed. John Kelly and Ronald Schuchard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 72.

collection's title page, '[i]n response to many requests for BELTAINE in a permanent form'.¹³

In the run-up to the Irish Literary Theatre's first season, Yeats's original intention was to distribute the pamphlet for free at the Antient Concert Rooms; in the event it was priced at 3*d.*¹⁴ This first number of *Beltaine* serves the dual function of programme and manifesto. Dates of performances, details of the cast and the settings of the opening season's two plays, and a list of the theatre's guarantors are succeeded by the text of a poem by Lionel Johnson, 'The May fire once on every dreaming hill', composed by Johnson as a 'Prologue' to be recited at the first performance.¹⁵ The poem is followed by 'Plans and Methods' for the Theatre by the 'Editor of "Beltaine"',¹⁶ short essays on *The Countess Cathleen* and *The Heather Field* by Johnson and Moore, respectively, two lyrics from Yeats's play, an essay on 'The Scandinavian Dramatists' by Charles Harold Herford, and a further piece by Yeats, 'The Theatre'. Both poetry and prose seek to condition the audience's response, aesthetically and politically, to Yeats's and Martyn's plays; and, between them, both reveal a tension in the new theatre over its present and future dramaturgy. Johnson's poem, as has been observed, interprets both plays (and even the pagan festival of Beltaine) in terms of the poet's orthodox religious convictions;¹⁷ yet it also asserts the national origins of both works, punning at its close on the 'play' of emotions such Irish dramatic 'art' brings to the stage:

Now, at this opening of the gentle May,
Watch warring passions at their storm and play;
Wrought with the flaming ecstasy of art,
Sprung from the dreaming of an Irish heart.¹⁸

Johnson's (adopted) Irish cultural nationalism¹⁹ is absent from his brief essay on *The Countess Cathleen*, which argues that '[t]he play, with all its romantic

¹³ On 'THE FIRST ANNUAL VOLUME OF BELTAINE', see W. B. Yeats, 'To Lady Gregory', 1 March 1900 and 'To Lady Gregory', 2 June 1900, *The Collected Letters of W. B. Yeats*, gen. ed. John Kelly, vol. ii, 1896–1900, ed. Warwick Gould, John Kelly, and Deirdre Toomey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 497, 532.

¹⁴ See Yeats, 'To Lady Gregory', 21 April 1899, *Collected Letters*, ii, 398.

¹⁵ It was read by Dorothy Paget, who was originally cast as the Countess Cathleen. Owing to Moore's intervention, the role was played by an older actress, May Whitty. See Yeats, 'To Dorothy Paget', 19 April 1899, *Collected Letters*, ii, 395–6; and George Moore, *Hail and Farewell*, ed. Richard Cave, rev. edn (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1985), 96.

¹⁶ Yeats, of course, whose editorial role is stated on the cover.

¹⁷ See Yeats, *Collected Letters*, ii, 404 n.

¹⁸ Lionel Johnson, 'The May fire once on every dreaming hill', *Beltaine*, 1 (May 1899), 5.

¹⁹ Johnson hailed from Kent. A proud Wykehamist, his Celticism was prompted by friendships with Yeats and other members of the Rhymers' Club. He became a key figure in the Irish Literary Society in London, co-editing, with Eleanor Hull, *The Irish Home Reading Magazine*, founded in 1894.

strangeness, is finely and firmly upon the side of the higher life.'²⁰ Johnson's study implicitly defends Cathleen's action—the offer of her soul to the diabolic tempters of a starving peasantry in exchange for their deliverance from eternal damnation—from the accusations of blasphemy mounted against the play in Frank Hugh O'Donnell's pamphlet, *Souls for Gold! A Pseudo-Celtic Drama in Dublin* (1899), a republication of two letters by O'Donnell that had led Michael, Cardinal Logue to denounce Yeats's play, untroubled by the fact he hadn't read it in advance. O'Donnell's and Logue's charges of blasphemy, however absurd, emphasize as much as Johnson's admiring notice the extent to which Yeats's play is preoccupied with, in Johnson's words, 'the spiritual side of things'.²¹ In this respect, both champion and detractors recognized Yeats's ambitions for the Irish Literary Theatre as at one with his spiritualism and occultism. In his essay on 'The Theatre' in *Beltaine* number 1, Yeats writes that the Irish Literary Theatre intends to produce, in contrast to 'the theatre of commerce', works 'for the most part remote, spiritual, and ideal'.²² In the editorial, 'Plans and Methods', Yeats argues that, though 'they will have as little of a commercial ambition' as performances by the Independent Theatre and the Théâtre Libre, the Irish Literary Theatre's 'plays will differ from those produced by associations of men of letters in London and in Paris, because times have changed, and because the intellect of Ireland is romantic and spiritual rather than scientific and analytical'.²³

Yet this same editorial had begun by praising contemporary Norwegian drama, and such 'scientific and analytical' naturalism informs, in no small part, the Ibsenite work which comprised half of the Irish Literary Theatre's opening double-bill, Martyn's *The Heather Field*. To an extent, Martyn's play, which was to prove the bigger hit with the audience than *The Countess Cathleen*, is an example of the kind of drama contrary to the spiritual poetic drama Yeats extols in 'The Theatre'. Nevertheless, Yeats feels compelled to praise recent Norwegian drama because it provides a concrete example of the kind of *national* literature that his experiment with the Irish Literary Theatre sought to create on the Dublin stage. The most substantial essay in the first issue of *Beltaine*, Herford's appraisal of 'The Scandinavian Dramatists', spells out this connection explicitly, its assertions underpinned by its author's distinguished academic credentials (Chair of English at Aberystwyth) and thorough knowledge of his subject matter (translator of Ibsen's *Brand* (1894)). Herford notes that the 'national revival' in Norway was empowered

²⁰ Lionel Johnson, 'The Countess Cathleen', *Beltaine*, 1 (May 1899), 11.

²¹ *Ibid.* 10.

²² W. B. Yeats, 'The Theatre', *Beltaine*, 1 (May 1899), 21, originally published in *The Dome* (Apr. 1899). It would become part I of the essay of the same title included in *Ideas of Good and Evil* (1903) (part II was drawn from 'The Irish Literary Theatre, 1900' in *Beltaine* 2—also reprinted from *The Dome* (Jan. 1900)). *Ideas* included not only this important early statement of Yeats's dramatic convictions, but his major essay on the esoteric, 'Magic', begun in October 1900 (see Yeats, 'To Lady Gregory', 13 October 1901 *Collected Letters*, ii, 574–5).

²³ W. B. Yeats, 'Plans and Methods', *Beltaine*, 1 (May 1899), 6.

by ‘the wealth and brilliance of the literary heritage it disclosed’, and in this respect, ‘[t]he modern Scandinavian, like the modern Celt . . . was the inheritor of a magnificent original literature.’²⁴ Furthermore, Herford’s adumbration of the mythic and folkloric matter of the Nordic tradition, its gods and fighting men and ‘poetry of rite and custom, of phrase and proverb’²⁵ finds a clear parallel in the Irish tradition, towards the resuscitation of which Yeats committed his energies in the Irish Literary Theatre project.

The second number of *Beltaine* illustrates Yeats’s engagement in cultural retrieval as well as theatrical propaganda. This issue of the magazine is more substantial than the first and its price accordingly had doubled from 3*d.* to 6*d.* (*Beltaine* number 3 would be disappointingly brief, but could be had for a ha’penny.) The journal no longer doubles up as a programme, but is devoted solely to essays largely, though not exclusively, related to the season’s performances. ‘Plans and Methods’ opens the issue, the editor’s identity now prominently advertised on both the title page and table of contents. Of the six other pieces, Yeats has contributed two; the other contributors (Moore, Martyn, Milligan, and Gregory), one apiece. ‘Plans and Methods’ defends the Irish Literary Theatre’s nationalist credentials against attacks levelled at it from, among other quarters, Arthur Griffith and William Rooney’s *United Irishman* and the Gaelic League’s *An Claidheamh Soluis*. Rejecting the idea of ‘sacred races’, Yeats identifies the ‘Celtic’ with ‘a certain native tradition of thought’ that passes orally from generation to generation and ‘in the institutions of life, and in literature, and in the examples of history’. These forces, in time, ‘mould the foreign settler after the national type’.²⁶ By means of such ‘contextual’ criteria, as opposed to an essentialist conception of race, Yeats is in effect denying that the Irish Literary Theatre is the mouthpiece of Anglo-Ireland, as the ultra-nationalists claimed. It is perhaps revealing, in the light of this, that Yeats begins his editorial by interpreting Martyn’s *Maeve* and the collaboratively constructed *The Bending of the Bough* in political terms. Tellingly, Yeats shuns the Ibsenite dimensions to Martyn’s play, choosing instead to concentrate on its symbolism, here construed as ‘Ireland’s choice between English materialism and her own natural idealism’.²⁷ *Maeve* thus comes to resemble structurally *The Bending of the Bough*, which is equally perceived by Yeats as deploying characters and settings as symbols; its theme, according to Yeats’s ‘The Irish Literary Theatre, 1900’, ‘the rejection of a spiritual beauty’,²⁸ though it is better read as a loosely allegorical tale centring on contemporary Irish politics. Yeats thus foregrounds the plays’ engagement with national politics *and* brings the two works into accordance with his own preferred dramatic form: the ‘symbolic’

²⁴ C. H. Herford, ‘The Scandinavian Dramatists,’ *Beltaine*, 1 (May 1899), 14, 15.

²⁵ *Ibid.* 15. ²⁶ W. B. Yeats, ‘Plans and Methods’, *Beltaine*, 2 (Feb. 1900) 4.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 3. ²⁸ W. B. Yeats, ‘The Irish Literary Theatre, 1900’, *Beltaine*, 2 (Apr. 1900), 24.

play of which, in the previous issue, he had stated *The Countess Cathleen* is an instance.²⁹

In *Beltaine* number 1, Yeats had also laboured the centrality of recovering ‘the noble art of oratory’ for poetic drama; the importance of a ‘musical emphasis’ in the speaking of verse.³⁰ Florence Farr, in her role as the poet Aeleel, received good notices for her chant-like performances of Yeats’s lyrics ‘Impetuous heart’ and ‘Who will go drive with Fergus now’ in *The Countess Cathleen*, both poems reprinted in this issue of the magazine. Issue 2’s ‘Plans and Methods’ returns to this topic, and integrates it with the editorial’s preoccupation with Celticism, in its claim that Milligan’s dramatic threnody, *The Last Feast of the Fianna*, harks back to ‘a possible form of old Irish drama’.³¹ The nationalist credentials of the Irish Literary Theatre are implicit in this claim: the (new) theatre is continuous with a ‘possible’ Irish drama of antiquity. And the vitality of contemporary Irish drama, in contrast to the vacuity of the English stage, is the theme of the contributions by Moore and Martyn to this issue and is further developed by Yeats in ‘The Irish Literary Theatre, 1900’. (Gregory’s concluding article buttresses these essays in its collage of favourable notices of the first season’s performances; the content of *Beltaine* number 3, a single article by Yeats, is a comparable overview of the second season.) In an intriguing piece of postcolonial theorizing, Moore argues that ‘Art is incompatible with Empire’; hence England’s empty-headed love affair with musical comedy and the financial difficulty of staging ‘a literary play’ in London. In Dublin, by way of contrast, the ‘national genius’ would be stimulated by productions of Ibsen and Maeterlinck.³² Less nimbly, Martyn’s essay, ‘A Comparison between Irish and English Theatrical Audiences’, castigates the lumpish mentality of the average English theatregoer, and proceeds, deploying a comparison common to the *fin de siècle*, to liken the culture of England in 1900 to that of imperial Rome in its decline: ‘The plays of Terence gave way to the brutish decadence of the arena, just as the great drama of England has given place to brutish and imbecile parade.’ England’s cultural misfortune, naturally, is Ireland’s gain: the ‘ancient genius’ of Ireland, coupled to its ‘virgin soil’ and a receptive people, will nourish the ‘new

²⁹ Yeats, ‘Plans and Methods’, *Beltaine*, 1, 8

³⁰ Yeats, ‘The Theatre’, 22. Yeats’s obsession with verse recitation resulted in his joint project with Florence Farr, actress and general manager for the Irish Literary Theatre in 1899, of performing poetry to the accompaniment of a psaltery: a demonstration lecture took place on 16 February 1901; many public performances ensued over the next decade. (See ‘Speaking to the Psaltery’ (1902), collected in *Ideas of Good and Evil*.) One enthusiast of Yeats’s and Farr’s method was fellow-occultist, Pamela Colman (‘Pixie’) Smith who edited two ‘little magazines’ of this period: *A Broad Sheet* (1902–3), co-edited with Jack B. Yeats, and the *Green Sheaf* (1903–4), which included contributions from Æ, Cecil French, John Todhunter, and Yeats.

³¹ Yeats, ‘Plans and Methods’, *Beltaine*, 2, 4.

³² George Moore, ‘Is the Theatre a Place of Amusement?’, *Beltaine*, 2 (Apr. 1900), 8, 9.

art', the last named drawing its inspiration not from England, but continental Europe.³³

The centrality of Yeats's editorship to *Beltaine* cannot be overestimated. Although Yeats chose not to collect any of his contributions to the magazine in future editions of his prose, *Beltaine*'s mutation into *Samhain* and *The Arrow* would provide him with initial platforms for work that would later compose part of his critical canon. Towards this end, *Beltaine* paved the way. Moreover, looking at the issues of *Beltaine* as the product of a *collaboration* of editor and publisher (as well as contributors) actually reinforces Yeats's prominence in the venture. The foregoing synopsis of *Beltaine* is usefully supplemented by attending to aspects of the magazine's 'bibliographical code', in Jerome J. McGann's terminology.³⁴ *Beltaine* is typical of 'little magazines' in supplementing the revenue generated by its cover price with that brought in by advertising (in the mass-market periodical of this period, advertising rapidly became the chief source of revenue). A range of products, especially cultural ones including books and other magazines, are advertised in the first two issues. In number 1, there are four advertisements which mention Yeats. His *Poems* of 1895 is advertised as one of 'Mr T. Fisher Unwin's Books', alongside Hyde's *A Literary History of Ireland* and George Sigerson's *Bards of the Gael and Gall*, between which it is sandwiched in Fisher Unwin's list. Yeats is further mentioned among a list of contributors to the Dublin *Daily Express*, co-publisher of the first issue of *Beltaine*, and to *The Dome*. There is even advertised a lithograph of Yeats ('A few remain', we are told). In the second issue of *Beltaine*, Yeats's visibility is still higher. Announced as 'just published' is '[a] Song by W. B. YEATS. Set to music by THOS. F. DUNHILL.' The advertisement for sheet music, '[b]oldly printed and full music size', takes up a third of the page; adverts for five other works take up the remaining space on the page. The typographical layout of the advertisement is itself '[b]oldly printed'—firmly distinguishing the sheet music from the works offered for sale below. All these works, including that of Yeats, have been published in 'London: at the sign of the Unicorn', that is, published by Ernest James Oldmeadow, who was also the co-publisher of *Beltaine* number 1 (with *The Express*) and sole publisher of numbers 2 and 3. He was also the publisher of *The Dome*, advertised in both issues, with Yeats's contributions duly flagged. Indeed, Oldmeadow had printed the lithograph of Yeats touted on the last page of the first number. Oldmeadow's advertisements would appear to seize increasingly on the poet's marketability,

³³ Edward Martyn, 'A Comparison between Irish and English Theatrical Audiences', *Beltaine*, 2 (Apr. 1900), 12.

³⁴ As opposed to the purely semantic content of its 'linguistic code'; see Jerome J. McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 48–68, and, following McGann, George Bornstein on the importance of 'examining modernism in its original sites of production and in the continually shifting physicality of its texts and transmissions': George Bornstein, *Material Modernism: The Politics of the Page* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 1.

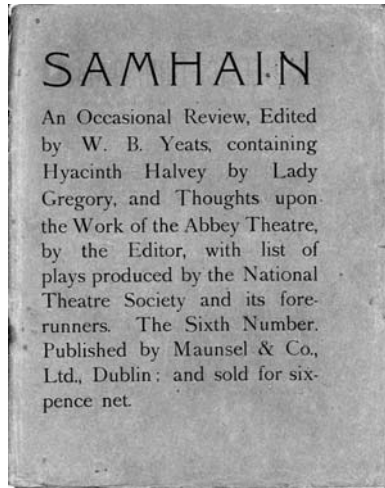


Fig. 19. Cover of *Samhain* (Dec. 1906)

his commodity status enhanced by the growing identification of the magazine with Yeats, through his editorship and strong presence among the magazine's contributors.³⁵

Samhain's bibliographical coding is equally striking to that of *Beltaine*; as Clyde notes, the magazine is noteworthy not only for its important content, but also in its 'stylish cover, and striking typefaces'.³⁶ The publisher and printer responsible for the magazine's high production values was, for numbers 1 to 4, Sealy, Bryers, and Walker of Middle Abbey Street, Dublin (thereafter the magazine was published by the Dublin-based firm of Maunsel and Co., though it continued to be printed by Bryers's firm). Yeats's close attentiveness to the physical format of the magazine can be inferred from a letter to Bryers in which, returning first proofs of the second issue of *Samhain*, he requests a 'a final proof of all set up in pages'.³⁷ Gregory had suggested Bryers's firm to Yeats in the course of arguing that an Irish publisher should be found for what was then still known as *Beltaine*; Yeats concurred.³⁸ The Dublin publication of *Samhain* was a strategic move on the part of Yeats and Gregory in asserting the national identity of the fledgling theatre in the face of ultra-nationalist attacks. So too was the decision to donate the profits from the first issue to the Gaelic League. The inclusion in this number of Hyde's *Casadh an tSúgáin*, accompanied by Gregory's English-language translation

³⁵ Oldmeadow's financial arrangements with Yeats show him to have been a fairly unscrupulous operator; see, for an example, Yeats, 'To Lady Gregory', 9 December 1900, *Collected Letters*, ii. 597–9.

³⁶ Clyde, *Irish Literary Magazines*, 151.

³⁷ Yeats, 'To George Bryers', after 7 October 1902, *Collected Letters*, iii. 234. *Samhain* also had a London co-publisher: T. Fisher Unwin.

³⁸ See *ibid.* Yeats, 'To Lady Augusta Gregory', 25 May 1901, 74 and 74 n.

(*The Twisting of the Rope*),³⁹ further foregrounds both the theatre's—and its accompanying magazine's—'Irishness', the uncial script of Hyde's play in itself emitting a powerful semiotic charge in this respect. *Casadh an tSúgáin* had been successfully staged in Dublin on 21 October 1901 by the Keating Branch of the Gaelic League, and Yeats's opening reflections, 'Windlestraws', in *Samhain* number 1 reflect upon the burgeoning of Irish-language drama. Yeats refers in this context to William Fay's direction of Irish-language drama (Willie Fay would replace a bemused Moore as director of Hyde's play); and William and his brother Frank were to be decisive figures in the formation of the Irish National Theatre Society (with Yeats as its President), which took over where the Irish Literary Theatre left off.⁴⁰ Yeats ends 'Windlestraws' with the comment that 'our Theatre is coming to an end in its present shape';⁴¹ and, despite their contributions to this issue of *Samhain*, Martyn and Moore, for a variety of reasons, were to sever shortly their connections with the dramatic movement.

Martyn's parting piece, 'A Plea for a National Theatre in Ireland', follows the emphasis on Irish-language drama in the first issue of *Samhain* in its call for a school of dramatic art in which Irish-language dramatic instruction would constitute 'a most important branch'.⁴² In a similar vein, Moore's essay 'The Irish Literary Theatre' draws attention to the importance of Hyde's *Casadh an tSúgáin* and refers admiringly to a performance in Irish by the Irish feminist organization, founded by Maud Gonne, Inghinidhe na hÉireann. Yet Moore's enthusiasms also included his, to Yeats's mind, perverse demand for church censorship of the Irish theatre and a call for more plays written by the priesthood; while Martyn, despite his commitment to Irish-language plays, was deeply inhospitable to Hiberno-English on the stage. By way of contrast, the poor reception of *Diarmuid and Grainne*, in part owing to the English company's mangling of Irish names, coupled to the success of Hyde's play in the 1901 season, had convinced Yeats of the necessity of Irish actors with Irish accents for the new theatre, regardless of the language of the production. Yeats's 'Notes' to *Samhain* number 2 refer to the fact that, as of this date, '[t]he Irish Literary Theatre has given place to a company of Irish actors';⁴³ the latter company—W. G. Fay's Irish National Dramatic Company, composed of the brothers' Ormond Drama Company plus actors from the Hermetic Society and Inghinidhe na hÉireann—is praised highly in 'Notes' for its productions,

³⁹ Gregory translated two further plays by Hyde for *Samhain: An Naomb ar Iarraid* (*The Lost Saint*) in number 2 and *Teach na mBocht* (*The Poorhouse*) in number 3. Thereafter, the magazine provided a vehicle for her own plays, including *The Rising of the Moon* (*Samhain*, 4); *Spreading the News* (*Samhain*, 5); *Hyacinth Halvey* (*Samhain*, 6); and *Dervorgilla* (*Samhain*, 7).

⁴⁰ The Irish National Theatre Society was constituted 9 August 1902; it was reconstituted as a cooperative venture in February 1903, once again with Yeats as President.

⁴¹ W. B. Yeats, 'Windlestraws', *Samhain*, 1 (Oct. 1901), 10.

⁴² Edward Martyn, 'A Plea for a National Theatre in Ireland', *Samhain*, 1 (Oct. 1901), 14.

⁴³ W. B. Yeats, 'Notes', *Samhain*, 2 (Oct. 1902), 3.

in April 1902, of Yeats's *Cathleen ni Houliban* and Æ's *Deirdre* (the former play printed in this issue of *Samhain*). In Maud Gonno's performance in the title role of his play, Yeats says there was 'nobility and tragic power'; in the acting of *Deirdre*, he sees dramatic novelty, 'the first performance I had seen . . . in which the actors kept still enough to give poetical writing its full effect upon the stage'.⁴⁴ In a more orotund manner, Æ's contribution to the magazine speaks of the 'drama in its mystical beginning' as 'the vehicle through which divine ideas . . . were expressed', and of the compatibility of the dramatic medium to the representation of the Irish heroic cycles.⁴⁵ Clearly, with Martyn gone, his position as guarantor taken by Annie Horniman, any Ibsenite dimension to the new Irish theatre had been marginalized, if not eradicated. With the formation of the Irish National Theatre Society, on the back of the success of the Fays' productions of Yeats's and Hyde's plays, Yeats fondly envisages a theatre dedicated primarily to 'romantic and historical plays, and plays about the life of artisans and country people'; and, in time, he avers, these 'plays of country life' may give rise to the 'lost art' of 'the poetical play'.⁴⁶

The September 1903 *Samhain*, issue 3, includes a play of country life that, in the words of Yeats's opening 'Notes', is 'written out of a deep knowledge of the life of the people', expressing 'a sorrow that has majesty as in the work of some ancient poet'.⁴⁷ J. M. Synge's *Riders to the Sea* would seem to make good Yeats's hopes for a 'poetical play': its synthetic Hiberno-English, its 'elaboration of the dialects of Kerry and Aran', as Yeats would recall in 'J. M. Synge and the Ireland of His Time' (1911), providing a vehicle for 'thought . . . as full of traditional wisdom and extravagant pictures as that of some Æschylean chorus'.⁴⁸ Yet it is Synge's *In the Shadow of the Glen*, published in the fourth issue of *Samhain* (December 1904), to which he refers in 'Notes' as one of the Irish National Theatre Society's forthcoming winter productions (*Riders* was first performed in February of the following year); and it would be the attack on Synge's 'little country comedy, full of a humour that is at once harsh and beautiful' from, among other quarters, the *United Irishman* that would soon engage his attention and look forward to future clashes of the theatre with nationalist opinion over Synge's drama.⁴⁹ When Yeats came to collect a selection of his pieces from *Samhain* and *The Arrow* for his *Collected Works in Verse and Prose* (1908), he chose to add to the contents of *Samhain* number 3 a revised version of an open letter to the *United Irishman*, 'An Irish National Theatre', in which he had chastised the paper's vilification of

⁴⁴ Ibid. 4.

⁴⁵ Æ, 'The Dramatic Treatment of Heroic Literature', *Samhain*, 2 (Oct. 1902), 12.

⁴⁶ Yeats, 'Notes', *Samhain*, 2, 9–10. ⁴⁷ Yeats, 'Notes', *Samhain*, 3 (Sept. 1903), 7.

⁴⁸ W. B. Yeats, *Early Essays*, ed. Richard J. Finneran and George Bornstein (New York: Scribner, 2007), 242.

⁴⁹ Yeats, 'Notes', *Samhain*, 3, 5.

Synge's play for its apparently belittling representation of Irish femininity in the shape of Nora Burke. Characteristically, Yeats's letter challenges the belief that the theatre should be subservient to a national cause or political programme. Even a nationalist play—he cannily instances *Cathleen ni Houlihan*—should not take its inspiration from communal political conviction if it is to succeed as dramatic art; rather, to be literature, a play must constitute a uniquely personal expression.⁵⁰ In conjoining this piece from the *United Irishman* with his theatrical criticism from *Samhain* number 3 in the *Collected Works*, Yeats was retrospectively looking ahead to the controversy that would be precipitated by Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World*.

In its original form, the third issue of *Samhain* had concluded with a reprinting of part of a glowing review—unattributed in its new context—by *The Times*' drama critic Arthur Walkley, of the Irish National Theatre Society's London performances of five plays at the Queen's Gate Hall, South Kensington, in May 1903. 'The Irish National Theatre' differentiates the Irish venture from the Théâtre Libre by emphasizing the former's function as 'part of a national movement'.⁵¹ Yet the Dublin performances at the Molesworth Hall of Synge's *In the Shadow of the Glen* and Yeats's *The King's Threshold* in October 1903 presented their audiences with plays that refused to idealize any putative national character. The poet in Yeats's play shuns civic responsibility, and, as David R. Clark notes, 'solipsistic passion is shown as the road to true knowledge',⁵² while Synge's entire dramatis personae question the inherent virtue of the Irish rural population. In this fashion, the two plays make good Yeats's claims in the third *Samhain* that the *raison d'être* of dramatic art is the creation of 'beauty and truth...and that their creation is a greater service to our country than writing that compromises either in the seeming service of a cause'.⁵³ In the fourth issue of *Samhain* (December 1904), Yeats's 'First Principles' uses the debate sparked by Synge's play, in particular, as a pretext to dismiss those 'patriots' who expect drama to peddle nationalist propaganda. For Yeats, 'a National literature' is the product of writers 'moulded by influences that are moulding their country, and who write out of so deep a life that they are accepted there in the end'. That wellspring of 'deep life' has its source

⁵⁰ See Yeats, 'To the Editor of the *United Irishman*', 10 October 1903, *Collected Letters*, iii. 439–41; and, for the revised collected version, see W. B. Yeats, *The Irish Dramatic Movement*, ed. Mary FitzGerald and Richard J. Finneran (New York: Scribner, 2003), 32–5. Yeats placed a further open letter to the *United Irishman* as the conclusion to the third issue of *Samhain* as represented in the *Collected Works* of 1908: 'The Theatre, the Pulpit, and the Newspapers'; see Yeats, 'To the Editor of the *United Irishman*', 17 October 1903, *Collected Letters*, iii. 445–9; and Yeats, *Irish Dramatic Movement*, 36–9.

⁵¹ [Arthur Walkley], 'The Irish National Theatre', *Samhain*, 3 (Sept. 1903), 34.

⁵² David R. Clark, with Rosalind Clark, *W. B. Yeats and the Theatre of Desolate Reality*, rev. edn (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1993), 122.

⁵³ W. B. Yeats, 'The Reform of the Theatre', *Samhain*, 3 (Sept. 1903), 9.

in the individual's 'emotions and experiences'. Hence, Synge's refusal to create 'charming and picturesque' images of Irish countrymen and women stems from his determination not to patronize his chosen dramatic subject-matter; faithful to his 'finest emotions,' he is 'truly a National writer'.⁵⁴

Despite the criticisms of Gonne, Griffiths, and others, the patrician hauteur of Yeats's contributions to the 1904 *Sambain* sounds a note of relish in his embattled position. In the preceding issue, Yeats writes seemingly from the sidelines of the Irish dramatic movement, disingenuously claiming that it 'has got beyond me' (despite being President of the company he watches with most interest the Irish National Theatre Society).⁵⁵ But Yeats had reason for confidence in '[o]ur theatre' at the end of 1904.⁵⁶ *Sambain* number 4 was published to coincide with the opening of the Abbey Theatre on Lower Abbey Street and Marlborough Street. The lessee was Yeats's wealthy English admirer Annie Horniman, whom he had first met through their shared membership of the Isis-Urania Temple of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, a London-based occult society founded in 1888. In the current issue of *Sambain* Yeats acknowledges Horniman's generosity in his opening article, 'The Dramatic Movement', and goes on, in 'The Play, the Player, and the Scene', to outline his 'plans and hopes' for the theatre: the plays 'must be literature'; speech must 'cherish the musical lineaments of verse or prose'; movement must be 'decorative and rhythmical'; and scenery must be minimal and non-naturalistic.⁵⁷ Almost defiantly, *Sambain* number 4 prints the text of Synge's offending play, *In the Shadow of the Glen*,⁵⁸ after the final performance of which in the preceding year, Yeats's speech on the need for a national drama uncompromised by narrow nationalist pieties had confirmed Horniman's commitment to the Irish theatre. Her letter proposing leasing the Mechanics' Institute and a neighbouring property, addressed to Yeats, is reproduced in this issue, as is the company's formal acceptance. Putting a seal on the issue's sense of present achievement and future hopes is its concluding advertisement for the Abbey, which 'can be hired for Concerts, Lectures, Entertainments, &c.'

In between the publication of *Sambain* numbers 4 and 5, the Irish National Theatre Society staged at the Abbey, among other productions, Synge's *The Well of the Saints* (February 1905), dutifully arraigned by Griffiths and others in the media. In the November 1905 *Sambain* Yeats defends Synge's 'new kind of sarcasm', while admitting that it 'keeps him, and may long keep him, from general popularity'.⁵⁹ The boldness and originality of Synge's work confirms Yeats in his steadfast

⁵⁴ W. B. Yeats, 'First Principles', *Sambain*, 4 (Dec. 1904), 15, 20, 21.

⁵⁵ Yeats, 'Notes', *Sambain*, 3, 3. ⁵⁶ Yeats, 'First Principles', *Sambain*, 4, 20.

⁵⁷ W. B. Yeats, 'The Play, the Player, and the Scene', *Sambain*, 4 (Dec. 1904), 24, 25, 29, 31.

⁵⁸ Yeats was frustrated at what he took to be the tardiness of Elkin Mathews in bringing out Synge's plays; see Yeats, 'To Charles Elkin Mathews', 17 July 1904, *Collected Letters*, iii. 619.

⁵⁹ W. B. Yeats, 'Notes and Opinions', *Sambain*, 5 (Nov. 1905), 4.

opposition to those who object to the depiction of Irish rural life at the Abbey as slanderous. He goes further and argues that, if the Abbey's repertoire does in fact slander the nation, a nation deserving of a literature should be able to stomach negative representations of its inhabitants: 'imaginative freedom and daring' are crucial to a national literature.⁶⁰ Yeats's celebration of Synge's dogged individualism is at one with the bullishness of these 'Notes and Opinions'. Revealingly, Yeats's usual practice of referring to 'our' theatre is dispensed with towards the close of the piece, as Yeats expresses once again his resistance to subsuming art to a political cause: 'So long as *I* have any control over the National Theatre Society', he writes, 'it will be carried on in this spirit, call it art for art's sake if you will.'⁶¹ The context to these ringing words is Yeats's concerted efforts, during 1905, to turn the Society into a limited liability company, and, in so doing, bring the Abbey under the greater sway of himself and his fellow directors, Gregory and Synge; a change achieved finally in September.⁶²

Samhain's publication run (seven issues, from October 1901 to November 1908) overlaps with that of *The Arrow* (five issues, from October 1906 to August 1909), the latter also edited by Yeats and the contents of which are mainly his own. The first two numbers of *The Arrow* were published ahead of the sixth issue (December 1906) of *Samhain*, on 20 October and 24 November, respectively. Posted to subscribers to the Abbey,⁶³ the first *Arrow* maintained that it was not intended as a 'substitute' for the existing magazine, but would announce future productions, 'interpret or comment on particular plays . . . , and leave general principles to *Samhain*'.⁶⁴ Considerably shorter than *Samhain*, *The Arrow's* notices in the first two issues include such practical information as the introduction of 6*d.* seats, improvements in the theatre's heating system, and a request that patrons be seated prior to the curtain being raised. The December 1906 *Samhain*, by way of contrast, reprints an essay by Yeats from the *Contemporary Review*, in which a number of 'general principles' are laid down. In 'Literature and the Living Voice', Yeats argues for the importance of his theatrical work by claiming that a literature belongs to 'a whole people' when it is experienced 'without the mediation of print and paper'.⁶⁵ Irish literary culture possesses such immediacy to the extent that its poetry and narrative 'were made to be spoken or sung, while English literature, alone of great literatures because the newest of them all, has all but completely shaped itself in the printing press'.⁶⁶ As early as 1889, in a piece for the Boston *Pilot*, Yeats had described Ireland

⁶⁰ Yeats, 'Notes and Opinions', *Beltaine*, 5, 9.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* 13; emphasis added.

⁶² The drastic erosion of the Society's original cooperative nature is apparent from a comparison of its 1903 and 1906 constitutions, reprinted in W. B. Yeats, *The Collected Letters of W. B. Yeats*, gen. ed. John Kelly, vol. iv, 1905–1907, ed. John Kelly and Ronald Schuchard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 891–925.

⁶³ A thousand copies were thus distributed; see Yeats, *Collected Letters*, iv, 515 n.

⁶⁴ W. B. Yeats, 'The Season's Work', *Arrow*, 1 (20 Oct. 1906), 1.

⁶⁵ W. B. Yeats, 'Literature and the Living Voice', *Samhain*, 6 (Dec. 1906), 8.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 6.

as ‘the country where poetry has been a living voice among the people’;⁶⁷ yet, over the course of the 1890s, the artifice and hermeticism of the Symbolist movement increasingly attracted him, as is evident in several essays of this period, most notably ‘The Autumn of the Body’ (1898). In another essay later collected in *Ideas of Good and Evil*, ‘What is “Popular Poetry”?’ (1902), Yeats can be seen attempting to bring together ‘the poetry of the coterie, which presupposes the written tradition’, and ‘the true poetry of the people, which presupposes the unwritten tradition’: ‘[b]oth are alike strange and obscure, and unreal to all who have not understanding’.⁶⁸ By the time of ‘Literature and the Living Voice’, on which he was working in mid-April 1905,⁶⁹ the significance of the ‘unwritten tradition’ to Yeats’s dramaturgy is that it dictates principles of clarity, simplicity, and variety in both composition and performance, rather than imparting an estranging obscurity. Revising his plays, often many times, adds to them a ‘masculine element’, writes Yeats, at marked variance with much modern literature, which is ‘effeminate in its continual insistence upon certain moments of strained lyricism’.⁷⁰

There was a hiatus of nearly two years before the seventh and final issue of *Samhain* in November 1908.⁷¹ The most momentous event in the Abbey’s early history, the riots attending the early performances of *The Playboy of the Western World* in January 1907, occurred in this period, and *The Arrow* recorded and responded to the controversy over Synge’s play. *The Playboy* was an affront to nationalist thinking: accusations that it depicted the rural Irish populace as grossly licentious, libelling Irish womanhood in particular, were simultaneously allegations that the play questioned the right to Irish self-determination. *The Freeman’s Journal* and, less intemperately, the *Irish Independent* both cavilled that, in its representation of the Irish villagers, the play perpetuated a stereotypical image of the Irish as ungovernable by themselves because of their inherently ungoverned nature.⁷² Yeats had been absent in Scotland on the opening night, but on his return had taken to the Abbey’s stage and proffered the rowdy audience an invitation to a public debate on the issues raised by *The Playboy*, which duly took place on 4 February 1907. In the third *Arrow* (23 February 1907), Yeats printed an extract of his opening speech in the debate and an article, ‘The Controversy over the Playboy’. A month earlier, Yeats had written to Gregory, saying he was at his ‘wit’s end to know what

⁶⁷ W. B. Yeats, *Letters to the New Island*, ed. George Bornstein and Hugh Witemeyer (New York: Macmillan, 1989), 11.

⁶⁸ Yeats, *Early Essays*, 8.

⁶⁹ See Yeats, ‘To John Quinn’, 15 April 1905, *Collected Letters*, iv. 76.

⁷⁰ Yeats, ‘Literature and the Living Voice’, 13.

⁷¹ Yeats would continue to employ ‘*Samhain*’ in the titles to a series of fund-raising pamphlets for the Abbey Theatre issued during 1909–10.

⁷² For a concise but richly documented account of *The Playboy* riots, see the entry in the editors’ biographical and historical appendix to Yeats, *Collected Letters*, iv. 862–85; and see also Robert Welch, *The Abbey Theatre 1899–1999: Form and Pressure* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 41–4.

to write';⁷³ in the event, he had copy by the 'loy'-ful. Yeats's article lambastes the 'Puritanism' of those that hated *The Playboy* as indicative of a 'bourgeois dislike of power and reality', a middle-class resistance to the idea that art requires 'freedom' to represent unpalatable truths.⁷⁴ Yeats's denunciation of petit bourgeois morality is reinforced by the inclusion of a collage of unfavourable notices in the nationalist press of productions by the Irish National Theatre Society and the National Theatre Society, Ltd, of works by Synge, William Boyle, and Padraic Colum, under the title, 'Previous Attacks on Irish Writers of Comedy and Society'. Yeats returned to the controversy in the fourth *Arrow* (1 June 1907), in the course of announcing that *The Playboy* was to tour London (it also played at Cambridge and Oxford). To Yeats, the 'failure' of the Dublin audience to 'understand' Synge's play stemmed from the fact that many who attended the performance were not theatregoers at all, 'but members of parties and societies whose main interests are political'.⁷⁵ Again Yeats uses Synge's drama as a pretext for an assertion of the need for free-thought and individual expression in Irish culture, as opposed to the mob-like mentality exhibited by the rioters in January; Gregory's contribution to this issue of *The Arrow*, 'An Explanation', supports Yeats's case, claiming that the riots were premeditated and deliberate occurrences.

Dissention, however, was coming as much from within the Abbey Theatre as from without. In June 1907, Horniman let Yeats know that, at the expiry of her patent in 1910, she would not renew her subsidy (as things turned out, she reneged on the last instalment).⁷⁶ William Fay's increasingly troubled relationship with Horniman and the Abbey's directors led, in January 1908, to him, his wife, the actress Briget O'Dempsey, and his brother, Frank, leaving the company. In the final issue of *Samhain* (November 1908), Yeats reflects on the forthcoming expiration of the Abbey patent, and the theatre's possible sources of funding thereafter, and refers to the departure of Fay in diplomatically cordial terms. He also writes admiringly, if somewhat patronizingly, of the Ulster Literary Theatre, which held occasional performances at the Abbey, as 'the only dramatic society, apart from our own, which is doing serious artistic work'.⁷⁷ There is no little irony in the fact that the dramatic 'work' of the Ulster Literary Theatre had been produced, in large part, owing to the original company's anger with Yeats over his refusal to grant the rights to produce *Cathleen ni Houlihan* in 1903. The company had also published, from November 1904 to September 1905, four issues of a magazine,

⁷³ Yeats, 'To Lady Gregory', 17 January 1907, *Collected Letters*, iv. 599.

⁷⁴ W. B. Yeats, 'The Controversy over the Playboy', *Arrow*, 3 (23 Feb. 1907), 2.

⁷⁵ W. B. Yeats, '[Notes]', *Arrow*, 4 (1 June 1907), 2.

⁷⁶ For a stimulating account of the Abbey's travails, see Adrian Frazier, *Behind the Scenes: Yeats, Horniman, and the Struggle for the Abbey Theatre* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); see also Ann Saddlemyer, ed. *Theatre Business. The Correspondence of the First Abbey Theatre Directors: William Butler Yeats, Lady Gregory and J. M. Synge* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1982).

⁷⁷ W. B. Yeats, 'Events', *Samhain*, 7 (Nov. 1908), 5.

Uladh, which emulated and rivals *Sambhain* in its extremely high production values and stimulating and varied content of plays, essays, and poetry.

The 'artistic work' valued by Yeats in an article on 'First Principles' in the final *Sambhain* is 'personal': 'it is the presence of a personal element alone that can give it [literature] nationality in a fine sense, the nationality of its maker.'⁷⁸ According to this dictum, not only is Synge's *The Playboy*—'so full of the temperament of a unique man'—demonstrably more Irish than the novels of Michael Banim, Gerald Griffin, Charles Kickham, and the stories of William Carleton, but, by the same token, the poetry of the Young Irelanders is actually less Irish than that of Lionel Johnson.⁷⁹ Bedevilling the creation of a national literature in Ireland, Yeats continues, is the pervasive belief that the artist must surrender his personality to a collective cause; and it is precisely that erroneous view of the relationship between art and nationality that has caused difficulties in the theatre. By late 1908, however, Yeats can state that '[o]ur Nationalist pit has grown to understand us'; and that even Unionists are attending plays 'objected to by . . . official Dublin'.⁸⁰ But there would be one more major objection from that quarter, though on moral rather than political grounds. The final issue of *The Arrow*⁸¹ concerns George Bernard Shaw's *The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet*, which Shaw had given the Abbey after having turned down the offer of a directorship in the theatre, the position having fallen vacant due to Synge's premature death in March 1909. Banned in England owing to accusations of blasphemy, the Lord Chamberlain's writ did not extend to Ireland. Refusing to kowtow to Dublin Castle, Yeats and Gregory accepted Shaw's play, which was duly performed on 25 August 1909. Published to coincide with the production, the fifth *Arrow* contains, among other texts, a robust statement by the two remaining directors of the Abbey, asserting the Irish theatre's 'liberty' from censorship by the Lord Lieutenant.⁸²

However libertarian and nonconformist the views expressed by Yeats throughout *Beltaine*, *Sambhain*, and *The Arrow*, the magazines' publication history from, at the latest, *Sambhain* number 4 runs parallel to his, and Gregory's, growing domination of the Abbey. Yeats's looming influence by 1911 over the direction of 'our' theatre is reflected in the dominance of his critical presence in the pamphlets issued by the theatre, particularly in the pages of *Sambhain* and *The Arrow*. (Among major Irish magazines, only Patrick and Peter Kavanagh's splenetic *Kavanagh's Weekly* (12 April–5 July 1952) is less dialogic.) Given Yeats's high investment in the contents of these pamphlets, it is perhaps not surprising that even before *Sambhain* and *The Arrow* ceased publication Yeats contemplated publishing a selection of his

⁷⁸ W. B. Yeats, 'First Principles', *ibid.* 7.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* 8, 7.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 10.

⁸¹ Strictly speaking, one further issue of *The Arrow* was published in the summer of 1939: a 'W. B. Yeats Commemoration Number', edited by Lennox Robinson.

⁸² W. B. Yeats and A. Gregory, '*The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet*: Statement by the Directors', *Arrow*, 5 (25 Aug. 1909), 2.

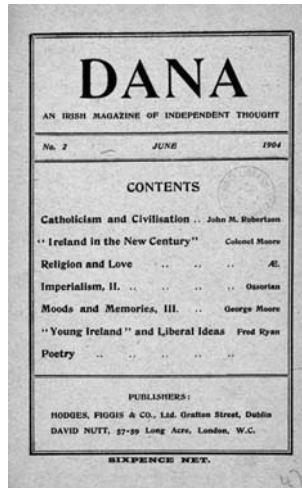


Fig. 20. Cover of *Dana* (June 1904)

contributions in a more permanent form. Correspondence with his publisher, A. H. Bullen, and other interested parties, during 1907–8, shows Yeats actively preparing to integrate his occasional dramatic criticism (with the exception of his contributions to *Beltaine*) into his projected *Collected Works in Verse and Prose*, a handsome multivolume edition that would eventually appear in 1908. Yeats wanted to call the pieces culled from the periodicals *Friends and Enemies*, but he settled on *The Irish Dramatic Movement*, probably at Bullen's request.⁸³ What had been occasional contributions to a communal endeavour was now to be collected as a discrete section (in volume 4) of a canonical body of work by an increasingly lionized author: for the 1908 *Collected Works* represented, to Yeats and many reviewers, the establishment of the poet and dramatist as a major literary presence. As Yeats wrote to John Quinn, the American collector and patron of the arts, 'This collected edition is going to be a beautiful thing. I have seen the first specimen volume and am well content with my share of it and with Bullen's. I think I am better in the mass than in fragments.'⁸⁴

The increasingly monologic nature of the 'little magazines' associated with Yeats and the Abbey—culminating in the 'mass' of *The Irish Dramatic Movement*—can be contrasted with the dialogism of *Dana*, a contemporaneous journal which also championed individualism and contested constricting conceptions of national identity. *Dana* was founded in May 1904, and ran for twelve numbers, the last of

⁸³ See W. B. Yeats, 'To Miss E. M. Lister', 27 March 1908, *The Letters of W. B. Yeats*, ed. Allan Wade (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954), 507.

⁸⁴ Yeats, 'To John Quinn', 27 April 1908, *Letters of W. B. Yeats*, 509. For the critical reception of the 1908 *Collected Works*, see A. Norman Jeffares (ed.), *W. B. Yeats: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), 164–210.

which was published in April 1905. It was edited by Frederick Ryan, playwright, journalist, and socialist, and William Kirkpatrick Magee, an iconoclastic essayist, who wrote under the pseudonym John Eglinton. Both men had close associations with Yeats. In August 1902, Ryan became Secretary of the Irish National Theatre Society, and his play, *The Laying of the Foundations*, which Yeats judged 'a really very astonishing piece of satire',⁸⁵ was performed by the Society in December. Pseudonymously, Ryan had in the previous year supported Yeats's public resistance, in a letter to the Editor of *The Freeman's Journal*, to any censorship of the Irish Literary Theatre; yet his response is indicative of *Dana's* future editorial policy in its rejection of Yeats's claim that literature is 'the principal voice of the conscience', as, in Ryan's view, the issue of morality is irrelevant where 'fine writing' is concerned.⁸⁶ Eglinton too had had differences with Yeats regarding the Irish theatre and aesthetics in general. In the course of a lively series of exchanges in the Dublin *Daily Express* during 1898 (subsequently collected in the pamphlet *Literary Ideals in Ireland* (1899)), Eglinton, Yeats, Æ, and William Larminie had initially argued over the validity on the contemporary stage of Irish mythic and legendary materials, the discussion thence broadening out into a consideration of the social and philosophical function of poetry. Eglinton maintained, contrary to Yeats, that the recasting of myth and legend in modern art is a form of escapism; as a consequence, such art fails to be 'the expression of the age and of [the artist] himself'.⁸⁷ In *Two Essays on the Remnant* (1894) and *Pebbles from a Brook* (1901), Eglinton advocates a Wordsworthian 'wise passiveness' on the part of the artist in the face of the cultural privations of the modern age; he or she effectively exists as an *isolato*, one of 'the remnant' who choose to shun collective causes in favour of individual freedom.⁸⁸

Dana shares with the theatrical magazines associated with Yeats the belief that the cultivation of an indigenous literature is essential to national well being. That said, in the editorial to the first number, Ryan and Eglinton argue that there is 'a certain hollowness in the pretensions of Irish literature', owing to the fact that 'the Irish literary movement', from Thomas Davis and the *Nation* to the

⁸⁵ Yeats, 'To Lady Augusta Gregory', 4 October 1902, *Collected Letters*, iii. 232.

⁸⁶ 'Irial' [Frederick Ryan], 'Censorship and Independence', *The United Irishman*, 23 November 1901, 3. For the letter to which Ryan is responding, see Yeats, 'To the Editor of the *Freeman's Journal*', 14 November 1901, *Collected Letters*, iii. 118–19.

⁸⁷ John Eglinton, 'What Should be the Subjects of a National Drama? [2]', *Daily Express* (Dublin), 8 October 1898, 3.

⁸⁸ Yeats reviewed both books, his second expressing respectful disagreement with many of Eglinton's views; see W. B. Yeats, *Early Articles and Reviews: Uncollected Articles and Reviews Written between 1886 and 1900*, ed. John P. Frayne and Madeline Marchaterre (New York: Scribner, 2004), 259–60; and *idem*, *Later Articles and Reviews: Uncollected Articles, Reviews, and Radio Broadcasts Written after 1900*, ed. Colton Johnson (New York: Scribner, 2000), 53–9. The individualistic creeds of both Yeats and Eglinton were strongly influenced by Nietzsche; an essay by Eglinton on Nietzsche appeared in the sixth number of *Dana*.

present day, has ‘promote[d] an artificial and sentimental unity in Irish life’, thus side-stepping the thorny issue of the diversity and divisiveness of Irish culture.⁸⁹ Subtitled ‘A MAGAZINE OF INDEPENDENT THOUGHT’, *Dana* intends to showcase ‘contributions in prose and in verse which are the expression of the writer’s individuality’, rather than the bellicose dogma of a communal stance.⁹⁰ The humanism advocated in the editorial policy of *Dana* is expanded upon by Eglinton in an essay in *Dana* 1, ‘The Breaking of the Ice’. Taking the work of the Irish novelist Canon Sheehan, author of the highly successful *My New Curate* (1899), among other works, as his cue, Eglinton stresses the importance of the writer confronting modernity without a pietistic recourse to outmoded religiosity: ‘either we must sacrifice reason to sentiment, like [John Henry, Cardinal] Newman, or we must sacrifice sentiment to reason.’⁹¹ The rationalistic humanism of this statement is echoed in the second number of *Dana*, in Ryan’s reply to the *United Irishman*’s notice of the new journal, which had objected to Eglinton and Ryan’s mild critique of Davis and the Young Irelanders. For Ryan, belief in the literal truth of the Bible is as sentimental and ill-considered as an atavistic conception of blood and soil: ‘Nationalism to the majority of people in Ireland means merely the hoisting of the Green Flag in place of the Union Jack over a society resting on a basis of competitive capitalism differing in no vital or essential particular from any other such society or from our own condition now.’⁹² Ryan held unconsidered patriotism, orange *and* green, in equal disdain. Thus, his devastating attack, in the magazine’s fourth issue, on the supposed values of British imperialism, linking ‘the age-long tragedy of Ireland’ to the plight of other territories ‘despotically governed’ under the British crown.⁹³ Apologists for empire, no less than unthinking

⁸⁹ [Frederick Ryan and John Eglinton], ‘Introductory’, *Dana*, 1 (May, 1904), 2. Ryan directly addresses Irish sectarianism in an article included in this issue of *Dana*, arguing that bigotry can only be overcome through ‘a definitely humanist philosophy’; ‘intellectual freedom’, he concludes, is ‘a necessity of a true national ideal’ (‘Political and Intellectual Freedom’, *ibid.* 31).

⁹⁰ [Ryan and Eglinton], ‘Introductory’, *ibid.* 3. Hence the magazine’s frequent critique of religious dogma and church authority: see, for example, ‘Irial’ [Frederick Ryan], ‘The Church and the Future’, *Dana*, 8 (Dec. 1904), 233–8.

⁹¹ John Eglinton, ‘The Breaking of the Ice’, *Dana*, 1 (May 1904), 17. In a subsequent issue of the magazine, Ryan would take Sheehan to task for the latter’s condemnation, in a lecture to the Catholic Truth Society, of the publication in Dublin of ‘cheap rationalist publications’: Frederick Ryan, ‘Criticism and Courage’, *Dana*, 5 (Sept. 1904), 148.

⁹² Frederick Ryan, ‘“Young Ireland” and Liberal Ideas’, *Dana*, 2 (June 1904), 64. It is testimony to the dialogism of *Dana* that this hard-headed commentary is present in the same issue as Æ’s paean to the mystical dimension to physical love, ‘Religion and Love’. *Dana* also found space for an essay on church building in Ireland (*Dana* number 3) by Frank Hugh O’Donnell, author of the 1899 tract charging Yeats’s *The Countess Cathleen* of blasphemy (discussed earlier). ‘Literary Notices’ in the fourth *Dana* pours scorn on O’Donnell’s attempt to rekindle the controversy in his *The Stage Irishman of the Pseudo-Celtic Drama* (1904).

⁹³ Frederick Ryan, ‘Empire and Liberty’, *Dana*, 4 (Aug. 1904), 114.

ultra-nationalists, build their beliefs on irrational foundations, and betray ‘intellectual decadence’.⁹⁴

Such ‘decadence’ of thought is the target of Æ’s ‘Physical Force in Literature’, published in the fifth *Dana*. The essay was prompted by the heated, and often inaccurate, rejoinders made in the Irish media to Sir Horace Plunkett’s *Ireland in the New Century* (1904), criticism of which is also to be found, albeit more temperately, in Colonel Maurice Moore’s review of the book in the second issue of *Dana*. Æ’s bone-of-contention is ‘not the expression of difference of opinion’ between Plunkett and his critics, but ‘the thoughtless savagery of the expression’.⁹⁵ Implicitly contesting the ‘Irish-Ireland’ ideology of the *Leader* and its editor, the formidable D. P. Moran, Æ argues that reasoned dissent is essential in a healthy polity: ‘The life of a country is in its heretics, its doubters of all accepted faiths and formulas, who yet have faith in an ideal.’⁹⁶

A related case of intellectual obscurantism and purported heresy is addressed in Edouard Dujardin’s appraisal, in the first issue of *Dana*, of the Catholic modernism of Abbé Alfred Loisy, as articulated in his controversial *L’Evangile et l’Eglise* (1902). Dujardin voices support for Loisy’s injunction that the Catholic Church must take on board the scientific advances achieved in recent centuries if it is to adapt to the modern world—a view which resulted in Loisy’s book’s being placed on the Index of Forbidden Books and its author excommunicated. This defence of free or independent thought—so typical of *Dana*—is made by a novelist whose experiments in the linguistic rendering of the free associations of consciousness would influence, most famously, Joyce’s development of the interior monologue. Yet Dujardin also influenced the style of another contributor to *Dana*: George Moore, whose ‘Moods and Memories’, serialized in *Dana*, numbers 1 to 6, resembles his contemporaneous novella, *The Lake* (1905; dedicated to the French writer), in appropriating and adapting Dujardin’s introspective narration. In this respect, Moore’s text is unique in *Dana* in its proto-modernist form, and is immeasurably more innovative than the ‘Song’ contributed by Joyce to the fourth issue of *Dana*, the lyric conventionality of which is representative of the poetry published in the magazine. The most interesting poetry in *Dana* is the robust ruralist lyricism of Padraic Colum and the rhythmically haunting work of Seumas O’Sullivan, two poets represented in Æ’s important anthology of the period, *New Songs* (1904), a collection which signalled a break with the Celtic Twilight of the 1890s. Other poetic contributions to *Dana* include the urbane classicism of Oliver St John Gogarty, whose lukewarm review of *New Songs* was printed in the journal’s first issue; work by a number of older poets, Æ, Jane Barlow, Edward Dowden, and T. W. Rolleston; and Roger Casement’s rousing sonnet, ‘To a Lady who Wondered “Why all Irish Poetry was ‘Rebel’”’, printed in the eleventh number.

⁹⁴ Ibid. 116.

⁹⁵ Æ, ‘Physical Force in Literature’, *Dana*, 5 (Sept. 1904), 131.

⁹⁶ Ibid. 133.

Strictly literary essays and reviews are marginally fewer in number in *Dana* than social and cultural ones. In relation to Irish-language literature, the magazine makes a number of significant critical interventions. In the fifth number, Alfred Webb, in the course of questioning the insularity of ‘Irish-Ireland’ thought, lamented the politicization, as he saw it, of the language question. In *Dana* number 7, Eglinton went further: contesting the centrality of the Irish language to the independence movement, he argues that the veneration of a dwindling language was retrograde, a desire to ‘return to mediaevalism, in thought, in literature, in pastimes, in music, and even in dress’.⁹⁷ In effect, Eglinton’s case is based on the same principles as his belief that Irish myth and legend were unfit subjects for a modern theatre: the language of the heroic cycles was as anachronistic as its fabulous protagonists. That said, in ‘The Best Irish Poem’ (*Dana* 10), Eglinton writes admiringly of Brian Merriman’s *Cúirt an Mheanon-Oíche* (*The Midnight Court*), the poem’s libertarianism striking a chord with the free-thinking critic.

Other essays and notices consider English literature—among these are several notices of Swinburne and a long essay on Jane Austen—and, more provocatively, discuss contemporary Irish literature in English. Of the latter, some are critical point-scoring, as in a maliciously amusing consideration of William Fay’s supposedly poor stage management for the Irish National Theatre Society by ‘Paul Rutledge’ (aka George Moore), in *Dana* 5. Some register a keen awareness of cultural developments beyond the capital: witness the growing admiration of the Ulster Theatre Society and its journal, *Uladh*, from a dispirited appraisal in issue 8 to an encouraging notice in number 12. Yeats’s work is recognized as incomparably the finest among that of ‘the new Celtic literature’, but is perceived as weakened by its reactionary recoil from the present day: ‘[m]odernity disgusts [Yeats]’,⁹⁸ writes F. A. Atkinson in *Dana* 10, a comment reinforced, in the succeeding issue, by Eglinton’s argument that the ‘new literary movement, if it would make itself “national”, must engage directly with ‘the central problem of Irish life, the religious situation’.⁹⁹

This imperative for a ‘committed’ literature misunderstands the symbolic nature of Yeats’s work, and a similar misreading is present in *Dana*’s sympathetic treatment of Synge’s proto-modernist theatre. An anonymous review of *The Well of the Saints*, in *Dana* 11, deems the play marred by the incongruity of its plot—the play at odds with Synge’s otherwise ‘realistic’ drama—thus ‘preclud[ing] it . . . from any vital connection with the tendencies . . . of modern life and thought’.¹⁰⁰ Likewise, R. W. Lynd’s essay on ‘The Nation and the Man of Letters’, in the final issue of the magazine, celebrating the achievements of Yeats and Synge, erroneously

⁹⁷ John Eglinton, ‘Is the Gaelic League a Progressive Force?’, *Dana*, 7 (Nov. 1904), 218.

⁹⁸ F. M. Atkinson, ‘A Literary Causerie’, *Dana*, 10 (Feb. 1905), 315.

⁹⁹ John Eglinton, ‘The Weak Point in the Celtic Movement’, *Dana*, 11 (Mar. 1905), 325, 322.

¹⁰⁰ Anon., ‘The Irish National Theatre’, *Dana*, 11 (Mar. 1905), 351.

maintains that Synge's 'method' is 'intensely realistic'.¹⁰¹ As he would later write apropos *The Playboy*, Synge did not view his work as possessing an *engagé* 'purpose' in the fashion demanded of it by its critics, of whatever political stamp.¹⁰² The failure to understand fully the radical nature of Synge's work is indicative of *Dana's* relationship with early modernism. While the magazine prefigures *The Egoist: An Individualist Review* in its courageous demand for freedom of thought and expression, *Dana's* literary content, with the notable exception of Moore's experiments in autobiography, is conventional rather than innovative, accomplished but unexciting. In this regard, *Dana* contrasts sharply with *Beltaine* and *Samhain*, periodicals that showcased and polemicized on behalf of some of the triumphs of an emergent Irish modernism, in particular the drama of Yeats and Synge.

¹⁰¹ R. W. Lynd, 'The Nation and the Man of Letters', *Dana*, 12 (Apr. 1905), 374.

¹⁰² J. M. Synge, 'To the Editor, the *Irish Times*', 30 January 1907, *The Collected Letters of John Millington Synge*, ed. Ann Saddlemyer, vol. i, 1871–1907 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 286.

THE NEW POETRY, GEORGIANS AND OTHERS

The Open Window (1910–11), *The Poetry Review* (1912–15),
Poetry and Drama (1913–14), and *New Numbers* (1914)

DOMINIC HIBBERD

If the ‘New Poetry’, as Rupert Brooke called it in 1913, owed its origins to any one individual, it was to Harold Monro (1879–1932), whose work for the literature of his day deserves more recognition than it has usually received.¹ His first two periodicals in 1911–14 were an unrivalled, invaluable achievement. While still at Cambridge at the start of the century, he and his friend Maurice Browne had resolved to devote their lives to poetry—and poetry for them was a means to an end: poets were to be the heralds, perhaps even the architects, of the new, free society that was surely coming. A few years later, H. G. Wells’s description in *A Modern Utopia* (1905) of an ideal socialist society governed by a voluntary nobility or ‘Samurai’ inspired the two friends to start a Samurai order and a Samurai Press. The order attracted a handful of idealists and soon collapsed, but the Press produced thirty little books from January 1907 until the spring of 1909. There is a direct line of descent from this Utopian enterprise to Monro’s subsequent periodicals, as well as to his Poetry Bookshop and the publication of *Georgian Poetry*—and without his ardour modernist poetry, too, would have established itself in Britain much less easily than it did.

Among the Samurai volumes were several books of poetry, including work by Wilfrid Gibson, John Drinkwater, and Monro himself. Gibson was perhaps the first poet of the century to decide, probably in 1905, that a poet should

¹ Letter, Rupert Brooke to Harold Monro, 11 June 1913 (King’s College, Cambridge). For details of Monro’s life and career see Dominic Hibberd, *Harold Monro: Poet of the New Age* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), and Joy Grant, *Harold Monro and the Poetry Bookshop* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967).

write about real, ordinary, contemporary life, not romantic ‘confectionery’ but ‘bread-and-cheese’.² His two little Samurai Press books, *On the Threshold* and *The Stonefolds*, both printed in the summer of 1907, were collections of miniature dramas, bleak portrayals of the troubles of the rural poor, written in a simple blank verse without the Victorian rhetoric that many poets still considered essential. The plays were not great poetry, but they were genuinely new, and there was some justice in Browne’s later claim that they can be seen as the beginnings of ‘Georgian’ poetry.³

In early 1908 Monro’s marriage broke up and he went abroad for three years, spending some of his time in free-thinking communes where he read widely and absorbed many new ideas. In 1911 he published his manifesto, a book of poems entitled *Before Dawn*, setting out a vision of the society of the future, when men and women would be true to the earth and would shape their own destinies, free from the shackles of religion, sexual taboos, respectability, and conformism. In the autumn of that year, encouraged by the older poet Maurice Hewlett, whom he had met in Italy, Monro returned to England with a young companion, Arundel del Re, determined to ‘do something’ for English poetry. First of all he would start a periodical, through which to find and unite the poets of the future.

The Open Window

Literary magazines had a long history, and some recent ones had already tried to speak with new voices for the new century. One small example was *The Open Window*, a monthly, edited and published by Edward Thomas’s friend Vivian Locke Ellis. According to *The Globe*, *The Open Window* aimed to be ‘the comely vehicle of that which is most new, imaginative and adventurous in the young literary art of the day’.⁴ There were illustrations by Jack B. Yeats and others, and short stories, poems, and a few essays by some well-known writers, including James Stephens, Gilbert Cannan, E. M. Forster, Walter de la Mare, Katherine Mansfield, and Thomas. Its central values seemed to be those of rural life and the countryside, ‘the faun-spirit, instinctive, unselfconscious’, as one contributor put it.⁵ Imagination counted for more than respectability, beauty and true love for more than books or received wisdom. But *The Open Window* had nothing to say about how literature should be written or what it should be for: even its own

² Letter, Wilfrid Gibson to Maurice Browne, 28 April 1907. Quoted in Hibberd, *Monro*, 54.

³ Maurice Browne in *Who’s Who*. Quoted in Hibberd, *Monro*, 54.

⁴ *The Globe*, quoted in advertisement for *The Open Window*, 3 (Dec. 1910), no page number.

⁵ F. Tennyson Jesse, ‘Pan at Covent Garden’, *The Open Window*, 6 (Mar. 1911), 375.

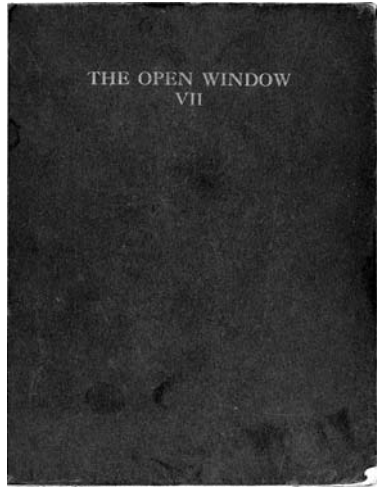


Fig. 21. Cover of *Open Window* (Feb. 1911)

advertisements could only describe the magazine as ‘a dainty bibelot’ and ‘The Perfect Christmas Present’.⁶ It survived for only twelve numbers, from October 1910 to September 1911, and some years later Locke Ellis handed over his stock to Monro’s Poetry Bookshop.

The Poetry Review

One of Monro’s first contacts in London was the Director of the Poetry Society, Galloway Kyle, who had founded the Society in 1909 and was now looking for a way of ‘developing’ its newsletter, the *Poetical Gazette*. It is difficult to be sure how genuine Kyle’s often-declared commitment to poetry really was: he must have contributed to the revival of public interest in poetry that undoubtedly grew during the early years of the Society, but he cared nothing for critical standards or new methods of writing, and he was unscrupulous in profiting from unsuspecting aspirants, publishing their work on commission under the imprint of a non-existent ‘Erskine Macdonald’ (a name no doubt chosen in the hope that it would be confused with that of Elkin Mathews, the most successful poetry publisher of the time).

Monro had no wish to be associated with the *Gazette*, an absurd publication that always flattered work by Society members, but he suggested it could become a supplement—though Kyle refused to allow the word—to a new monthly to be called *The Poetry Review*. The resulting contract gave Monro full editorial and financial control of the *Review*, but the Society retained legal ownership and the

⁶ ‘Select Announcements’, *The Open Window*, 3 (Dec. 1910), no page number.

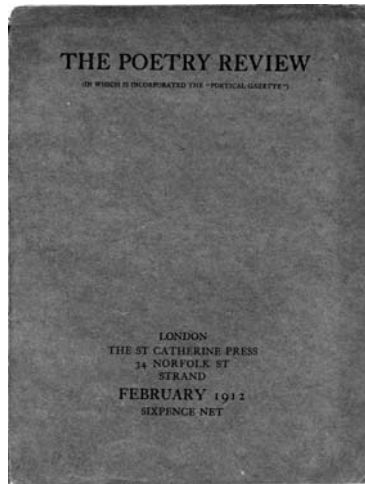


Fig. 22. Cover of *Poetry Review* (Feb. 1912)

right to cancel the agreement after a year. In return, Kyle would pay interest on Monro's capital, and take up to a thousand copies of the new publication each month (the Society seems to have had six or seven hundred members at this stage, and Kyle distributed other copies to bookshops and potential recruits). The bargain was much to Kyle's advantage, but it gave the new editor a year's freedom and the guarantee of a substantial print run.

Monro decided the *Review* should concern itself exclusively with poetry. Its primary aim would be to establish sound critical standards, which could only be found through intensive testing and debate—so the emphasis would be on criticism rather than on new poems. He drew up a prospectus with his usual business-like efficiency: each number would begin with two or more critical articles, to be followed by reviews of modern British and European poetry, and a small section, not more than half-a-dozen pages, of high-quality new poems. The Poetry Society's *Gazette* would come at the end. The *Review* would be 'impartial in thought and international in scope', and it would 'combat the prostitution of art', uphold spontaneous poetic expression, and strive to 'excite an appreciation of existent poetry rather than stimulate the over-production of new verse, already excessive'. Amongst 'the large number of similar publications there is certainly none that can claim to make particular appeal to those interested in Poetry as an art.'⁷ That claim seems to be true: the *Review* was the first periodical of its kind.

Preparations began at once. Del Re worked as editorial assistant and Hewlett occasionally gave advice, but Monro's chief lieutenants at this early stage were

⁷ 'The Poetry Review. Preliminary Prospectus', Typescript with Monro's amendments. Photocopy in the Monro Collection, Texas A&M University.

Arthur Sabin, a poet and printer whom Browne had recruited to be manager of the Samurai Press, and Romney Green, another poet and craftsman, who had belonged to the short-lived Samurai order. The first number of the *Poetry Review*—‘A New Monthly Periodical devoted to the study and appreciation of Modern Poetry of all countries’—appeared in January 1912. Its editor, no doubt with Sabin’s help, had evidently taken a good deal of care over layout and presentation: the magazine was substantial, well designed, and printed on good paper. The editorial struck a confident note. ‘Time is ripe for the forging of a weapon of criticism, and for an emphatic enunciation of literary standards. . . . This periodical will aim not so much at producing poetry as at stimulating the desire for it. . . . Above all we hope we shall never be dull.’⁸ But, in a comment that might have come from *The Open Window*, Monro added that because poetry was ‘the vivid expression of personality’ and ‘never the mere product of literary skill and craftsmanship’, the *Review* believed in personality before books, life before letters, and sincerity before originality. Ezra Pound might have read that with some impatience.

The first of the three main articles in the January *Review* was by Sabin, who attempted to map out a new direction for criticism, but his language was hopelessly vague: the critic should not waste energy on judging according to laws and certainties but try to illuminate ‘the loftier purpose, the intenser meaning and more elusive enchantment of art’.⁹ Monro himself wrote on ‘The Future of Poetry’, calling for an end to poetic ‘jargon’ and illusions of divine inspiration. The modern poet had to learn once again to express life in all its aspects: he would need ‘a clear and sound grasp upon facts, and a stupendous aptitude for assimilation’.¹⁰ Metre had to be welded to meaning again, and poetry ‘must be packed and tense with meaning; no line may be thin, no link may rattle’—until, and here Pound might have grimaced again, life would become greater than literature, and ‘poetry will be the call of spirit to spirit, the very throb of the heart of Nature’.¹¹ The third article, by Browne, was a fulsome appreciation of Gibson, whose work from 1907 onwards had been simple and austere, ‘raw chunks of life’ but ‘incommensurably great’.¹²

The review section included del Re on Masefield’s *Everlasting Mercy*, Monro on Edmund Gosse, and F. S. Flint on Pound’s *Canzoni* (very bookish, Flint thought, but authentic poetry). The other reviewers were Cannan, Green, and James Guthrie. Then came what was to be a regular feature, a list of recent poetry, criticism, and literary biography. The section of new poetry consisted of two long pieces by Gibson. The *Poetical Gazette* followed, printed in two columns; there seemed to be little relationship between it and the *Review*, and its conspicuous page of nearly a hundred Vice Presidents, Patrons, and Honorary Members, including

⁸ ‘Preface’ [unsigned], *Poetry Review*, 1:1 (Jan. 1912), 3–4.

⁹ Arthur Sabin, ‘On Criticism’, *Poetry Review*, 1:1 (Jan. 1912), 8.

¹⁰ Harold Monro, ‘The Future of Poetry’, *Poetry Review*, 1:1 (Jan. 1912), 11.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 13.

¹² Maurice Browne, ‘The Poetry of W. W. Gibson’, *Poetry Review*, 1:1 (Jan. 1912), 18.

a princess, a duchess, some eminent authors, the Dean of Salisbury, and Mrs Mosscockle, seemed curiously at odds with the *Review's* praise of simplicity and austerity. Some readers of this first number, including Edward Marsh, thought it all rather silly.¹³

The January *Review* was inevitably a trial run. Most of the people who wrote for it had been associated with the Samurai Press, but readers' reactions quickly persuaded Monro to find more sophisticated critics. Sabin, Browne, and Green ceased to be leading contributors, and the February number had a more modern tone. Nevertheless even the January number was by no means all written in the cloudy language of Utopia. Like Monro, Pound had returned to London in the previous autumn on a mission to reform English poetry, and Monro must soon have met him, perhaps through Flint, who probably also introduced Monro to T. E. Hulme. There is no knowing how far, if at all, Monro's thinking was influenced by these founders of the kind of English poetry that would become known long afterwards as modernist, but all three shared his hope for a new poetry in which metre would be at one with meaning and every line be 'tense', never rattling with superfluous words. Monro's principles and some of his language are close to Hulme's and Pound's, even though his faith in 'life' as a supreme value may have struck them as a tiresome irrelevance.

He decided to focus each number on a 'Topic of the Month'. The topic for February was lyric poetry, and his editorial hoped the lyric could free itself from the past. Two of the three main articles, by Darrell Figgis and Arthur Lynch, made no mention of contemporary verse, but the third was a famous document, Pound's early manifesto, 'Prolegomena'. He introduced his credo in characteristic style with a page on the ancient poets and the comment that he would rather be playing tennis. Then he set out some of the first criteria for modernist verse. He wanted an 'absolute rhythm' in poetry that would neither imitate nor be imitable, and in an adroit answer to Monro's call for sincerity above originality, he said that the test of a poet's sincerity was technique. Symbols must not intrude, form could be fluid, and experiments were worthwhile. Poetry being an art, not a pastime, poets should be experts, mastering all known forms and metres and trying out new ones. The nineteenth century had been 'a rather blurry, messy sort of a period', but now Yeats had stripped poetry of rhetoric and Robert Bridges, Hewlett, Frederic Manning, and Ford Madox Hueffer [later Ford] were overhauling metre and language. During the coming decade or so, poetry would 'move against poppycock, it will be harder and saner' with 'fewer painted adjectives . . . austere, direct, free from emotional slither'.¹⁴

¹³ Letter, Edward Marsh to Rupert Brooke, 4 February 1912, quoted in Christopher Hassall, *Edward Marsh* (London: Longmans, 1959), 182.

¹⁴ Ezra Pound, 'Prolegomena' ('Things Said in Advance', 'Preface'), *Poetry Review*, 1:2 (Feb. 1912), 72-6. Misprinted in *Poetry Review* as 'Prologomena'.

Austerity had been one of the qualities in Gibson's verse that Browne had singled out for praise, yet one may guess that Pound was not too pleased to find that after 'Prolegomena' and four pages of his own lyrics the next item was a glowing review by Gibson of Lascelles Abercrombie's latest poetry. 'Mr Abercrombie's is the most significant voice of our time,' Gibson declared, 'the authentic challenge to our highest faculties of apprehension and appreciation.'¹⁵ And in another sign of how uncertain critical standards still were, John Gould Fletcher reviewed a book of poems by one Alfred Williams as 'disappointing', whereas the *Poetical Gazette* noted that the same book (published, needless to say, by 'Erskine Macdonald') had been greeted with 'wonder and astonishment' in *The Times*.¹⁶

So, even as early as February 1912, there were signs of schisms to come. Kyle and his Poetry Society were obviously out of step with the *Review*, and readers of the *Review* itself could have wondered who was really 'the most significant voice of our time'. Monro's hopes of getting poets to work together was not going to be realized, but he did all he could to remain both democratic and independent, open to all talents ('chiefly of the younger generation of poets') and tied to no school or faction—very unlike Pound, who preferred to work through a small coterie, scorning lesser intellects than his own. In the same democratic spirit Monro would not tolerate 'log-rolling', the common editorial practice of giving favourable reviews to books by contributors, subscribers or publishers who took advertising space (this honourable policy was to cause dire offence not only to Kyle, who was a champion log-roller, but also to Pound, who should have known better). The contributors to the 1912 *Review* represented an extraordinary range of new writing: there were over sixty of them altogether, including three members of the old Rhymers' Club (Edward Storer, Victor Plarr, and Ernest Rhys); many of the future Georgians; several established poets, such as Henry Newbolt and Thomas Sturge Moore; and four of the future Imagists (Pound, Fletcher, Flint, and Richard Aldington)—and in the summer Hulme gave one of three lectures organized by Monro in the name of the *Review* (the others were by Figgis and Monro himself).

The March topic was dramatic poetry, with leading articles by two verse dramatists, Abercrombie and Gibson. Abercrombie said modern drama was expected to show that 'life is in a bad way, and something must be done about it', but poetic drama should be an adventure, making its audiences astonished and intoxicated to be alive and self-aware.¹⁷ Gibson repeated his opinion that poets should write for

¹⁵ Wilfrid Gibson, review, 'Emblems of Love: Designed in Several Discourses. By Lascelles Abercrombie', *Poetry Review*, 1:2 (Feb. 1912), 82.

¹⁶ John Gould Fletcher, review, 'Poems in Wiltshire. By Alfred Williams', *Poetry Review*, 1:2 (Feb. 1912), 87; *Poetical Gazette*, 103.

¹⁷ *Poetry Review*, 1:3 (Mar. 1912): Lascelles Abercrombie, 'The Function of Poetry in the Drama', 113; Wilfrid Gibson, 'Some Thoughts on the Future of Poetic-Drama'; Harold Monro, 'Maurice Hewlett as Poet', 125; Ezra Pound, 'The Book of the Month: High Germany. By Ford Madox Hueffer', 133; Harold Monro, 'Fires. Book I. Wilfred [*sic*] Wilson Gibson', 134.

their own times in direct language. Monro then introduced a group of poems by Hewlett, praising their 'bare and vivid simplicity'. In a new feature, 'The Book of the Month', Pound reviewed Hueffer's *High Germany*, saying Hueffer was searching for 'a vital something' that poetry had lost. Among the reviews, Gibson's latest book was described by Monro as 'shavings from the block of life'. Another new feature, 'Notices of Verse', offered brief, usually unkind comments on new work. Pound liked these notices and seems to have written some, but Hewlett advised against them and they were soon dropped.

The April number was devoted to 'Modern English Poetry', with articles by various critics on six leading contemporary poets: Bridges, Yeats, Sturge Moore, William Watson, Masfield, and Rudyard Kipling. None of the critics could work up much enthusiasm for their subjects: the poetry of the future was going to have to come from the younger generation. Abercrombie then introduced poems by Drinkwater, who hailed 'the marshalled hosts of morning'—like Monro, though with a lot more rhetoric, Drinkwater was clearly hoping for a new dawn. The book of the month was Rupert Brooke's *Poems*, reviewed at length by Marsh as 'one of the stations of the fiery cross which the Muse now seems to be sending out through England'.¹⁸ Marsh had overcome his initial doubts about the *Review* and had been delighted to be asked to write about Brooke, whom he adored.

Monro had tried to announce each month's topic before he had collected all the contributions, but the system was proving difficult. The May *Review* was supposed to be on women poets, but he was only able to get articles on Christina Rossetti and Alice Meynell, and some poems by Katharine Tynan. He admitted later that the resulting number was 'obviously bad' and that it had not sold well.¹⁹ In June he announced that future themes would not always be advertised in advance. The topic for that month was the Nineties, with a memoir of Lionel Johnson by Plarr, who had known him well. Aldington introduced poems by James Stephens. Monro's editorial commented that poetry was emerging from a broken tradition: John Davidson had been the only recent English poet to have had 'blind faith and dauntless courage', but even he had not found full expression.²⁰ A new tradition had to be created.

Drinkwater was a leading contributor again in July, writing on 'Tradition and Technique', noting that some new poets had abandoned traditional forms but failing to give any examples. Green wrote on William Morris, a craftsman and poet who had believed, as Green himself did, that poetry like everything else could only revive after social revolution. Monro introduced poems by a new discovery,

¹⁸ *Poetry Review*, 1:4 (Apr. 1912): Lascelles Abercrombie, 'John Drinkwater: An Appreciation', 168–70; John Drinkwater, 'The Fires of God', 177; Edward Marsh, 'The Book of the Month: Poems. By Rupert Brooke', 177.

¹⁹ *Poetry and Drama*, 1:1 (Mar. 1913), 10.

²⁰ Editorial [unsigned], 'The 'Nineties', *Poetry Review*, 1:6 (June 1912), 247.

Emilia Lorimer, whose work had struck him as charming and original. This was a bad mistake, revealing the editor's critical standards to be less sound than they should have been. Like Pound, Monro was looking for a new poetic language, but he failed to see that Lorimer's verse, though certainly original, was often laughable ('Holo, beware! | Have we a care | For toppling whale and for swaying bear').²¹ Hewlett told him afterwards that Miss Lorimer had got on his blind side.

Among the numerous July reviews, two had serious repercussions. Del Re, who was half-Italian and a good scholar, damned Pound's new translations from Cavalcanti as slovenly, inaccurate, and lacking in critical judgement. Brooke was equally severe about an 'absurd book', an *Introduction to the Poets* by W. F. Rawnsley, 'a bad book indeed'.²² Pound was furious, suspecting a plot and feeling that the *Review* should have treated one of its contributors more kindly. Kyle was furious, too, protesting to Monro that he could not permit the Poetry Society to be trampled 'under the heels of Rupert Brooke': Rawnsley was one of the Society's keenest supporters and a member of its Council. To add to Monro's troubles, the *Review* had been scornfully attacked in June by *The New Age*. The anonymous critic, who seems not to have distinguished between the *Review* and the *Gazette*, sneered at the 'formless, thoughtless, rhythmless, and rhymeless' new poets and implied they had paid to get themselves into print.²³

Monro responded bravely in August—'We believe that out of indefatigable discussion, unending fearless experiment, the great poet emerges'—and the August *Review* drew applause even from *The New Age*.²⁴ The number consisted almost entirely of Frank Flint's monumental account of contemporary French poetry, the most authoritative study of its subject that had yet appeared on either side of the Channel and still recognized as one of the key documents in the history of modernism.²⁵ The risk of devoting a whole number to a single contribution proved to have been well worth taking, and Monro was delighted. Flint demonstrated the importance of *vers libre* and steered his way with easy mastery through a mass of names, groups, and schools: Symbolisme, Unanimisme, Paroxysme, Impulsionisme, and many more. He ended with the Italian Futurists and a blast of rhetoric by their leader Marinetti: 'We stand upon the summit of the world, and once more we cast our challenge to the stars!'²⁶ Partly inspired by all this, Pound had the idea

²¹ Emilia Lorimer, 'The Lady-Lord to the Child', *Poetry Review*, 1:7 (July 1912), 316.

²² *Poetry Review*, 1:7 (July 1912), Del Re, review, 'Sonnets and Ballate of Guido Cavalcanti. Translated by Ezra Pound', 225–6; Rupert Brooke, review, 'Introductions to the Poets. By W. F. Rawnsley', 338.

²³ *The New Age*, 27 June 1912, 208.

²⁴ Harold Monro, 'Notes and Comments', *Poetry Review*, 1:8 (Aug. 1912), 354.

²⁵ F. S. Flint, 'Contemporary French Poetry', *Poetry Review*, 1:8 (Aug. 1912), 355–414.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 414.

of starting the school of 'Imagisme', and was very soon to label a select handful of poets 'Imagistes' (see also Chapters 8, 11).

On 8 September 1912 Monro wrote to Browne, who was now in America, that he was preparing to open a 'poetry shop' in 'a lovely old house in Bloomsbury'.²⁷ Browne himself was about to open his Little Theatre in Chicago: the two former Samurai had both found new ways of helping to bring about the dawn. The Poetry Bookshop—or 'Poetry House', as Monro sometimes called it—would not only sell and publish books but also provide an editorial office for the *Review*, bedrooms that could be let to poets, and a room for readings. It can have been no coincidence that on 19 September Brooke flippantly suggested to Marsh that there might be a case for an anthology of the best new verse. Marsh thought this worth pursuing, and next day held a lunch party to discuss it. The initial idea for an anthology and even for its title had very probably come from Monro, who had coined the phrase 'Georgian poets' in 1911, the year of George V's coronation.²⁸ He was about to review a disappointing anthology from Elkin Mathews and may well have mentioned to friends that he could perhaps do better. He and his assistant, del Re, were the key guests at Marsh's lunch; Brooke, Gibson, and Drinkwater were also present. Of the four poets among the founder Georgians, Monro, Gibson, and Drinkwater had all published with the Samurai Press, and the Utopian zeal for reform that had fired them five or six years earlier now helped to create *Georgian Poetry*, an anthology to be edited by Marsh and published by *The Poetry Review*.

The September *Review* consisted almost entirely of reviews, some no doubt held over from August. October brought another 'obviously bad' number, as Monro described it later,²⁹ on the topic of modern American poetry, with an article by Harriet Monroe and an advertisement for her new Chicago-based periodical, *Poetry*. Pound contributed a note on William Carlos Williams. A piece by the editor described recent American poetry as vigorous but too often 'inflated and contaminated with rhetoric', with too many capital letters and too much publicity seeking.³⁰ The *Gazette* gave nearly a page to a warm review of the book by Rawnsley that Brooke had deplored in July.

An advertisement on the back of the October number announced that on 1 January 1913 the *Review* would open 'a Bookshop for the sale of poetry', while the magazine itself would be enlarged and published as a quarterly. Meanwhile the August number, with 'Mr Flint's brilliant study of *Contemporary French Poetry*', had almost sold out. In November Monro explained his plans for the Bookshop. Making poetry known to the public was a spiritual or at least an artistic enterprise, not an economic one, so 'a limited amount of loitering' would be tolerated in

²⁷ Letter, Harold Monro to Maurice Browne, 8 September 1912. Quoted in Hibberd, *Monro*, 105.

²⁸ See Hibberd, *Monro*, 106 and 86. ²⁹ *Poetry and Drama*, 1:1 (Mar. 1913), 10.

³⁰ Harold Monro, 'Personal Notes on Some Recent American Poetry', *Poetry Review*, 1:10 (Oct. 1912), 485.

order to draw people in.³¹ There would be a shelf for the latest poetry and a notice board for the use of the Poetry Society. Advertisements on the back cover informed readers that the shop would be open for inspection from 1 December, and on the same day the *Review* would publish an anthology of new verse, *Georgian Poetry 1911–1912*.

During the year, Monro's article continued, the *Review* had been,

waging a just and righteous war against formalism, pose, affectation, inflation, and all kinds of false traditionalism; against the monotonous jingling of the rhymed quatrain, or flat, heavy, blank-verse; against everlasting repetition of worn-out phrases, symbols and images; the futile inversion, the stereotyped adjective, the refuse of tired language, the old lumber stock of the poetaster, in a word *cliché* in all its tedious and detestable forms.³²

But he would not go beyond 'certain general principles' or lay down rules for better writing: that, he said, was a matter for individuals, although the *Review* was certainly against 'big phrases' and 'evil' rhetoric. There could be a temporary escape in 'the tin thunder' of Futurism and 'the light laughter' of Impressionism (a word Hulme had used for modernist poetry in its early stages), but 'Art for Art's Sake' was decaying, swamped by the rising tide of 'Life for Life's Sake'. The *Review* and the 'Poetry House' would 'stand for whatever poetry has meant in the past, whatever it may mean in the future'—and the future would be 'a new age' with 'a new music'. In the House, as in the *Review*, ideas would 'meet and concentrate, become expressed, sifted, and circulated'.³³

Among other items in the November *Review* were five poems by Brooke, including 'The Old Vicarage, Grantchester', and, unusually, three letters, the first of which was also by Brooke, a sharp reply to a sneer at Abercrombie that Pound had made in the October number. If Pound again suspected a plot, he would have been right: Brooke had written the letter at the editor's suggestion, a rare case of Monro compromising his prized neutrality. Like Brooke and almost everyone else, including in the end most of the Imagists, Monro could not get on easily with Pound. When Marsh had reviewed Brooke so enthusiastically in April, Monro had feared that a clique might be forming, but Pound's scarcely concealed contempt for Abercrombie, Gibson, and others seemed divisive and unpleasant.

The Georgians were much less difficult to deal with than Pound, and by the end of 1912 they had come close to dominating the magazine. Without anyone planning it, the split between them and the modernists had established itself, a development that can be traced more clearly in the 1912 *Review* than anywhere else. Monro himself still hoped poets would be judged on their own merits, not

³¹ Harold Monro, 'The Bookshop', *Poetry Review*, 1:11 (Nov. 1912), 498.

³² *Ibid.* 499. ³³ *Ibid.* 500.

GEORGIAN POETRY (An Anthology from publications of the last two years). *3rd Edition.* Crown 8vo, 212 pp. Price **3/6** net.

A BOOK OF POEMS. By JOHN ALFORD. **2/-** net. [*Ready Shortly.*]

GENERAL AND REFERENCE INDEX FOR THE POETRY REVIEW 1912
Price **1/-** net.

THE POETRY BOOKSHOP,
35 Devonshire Street, Theobalds Road, W.C.

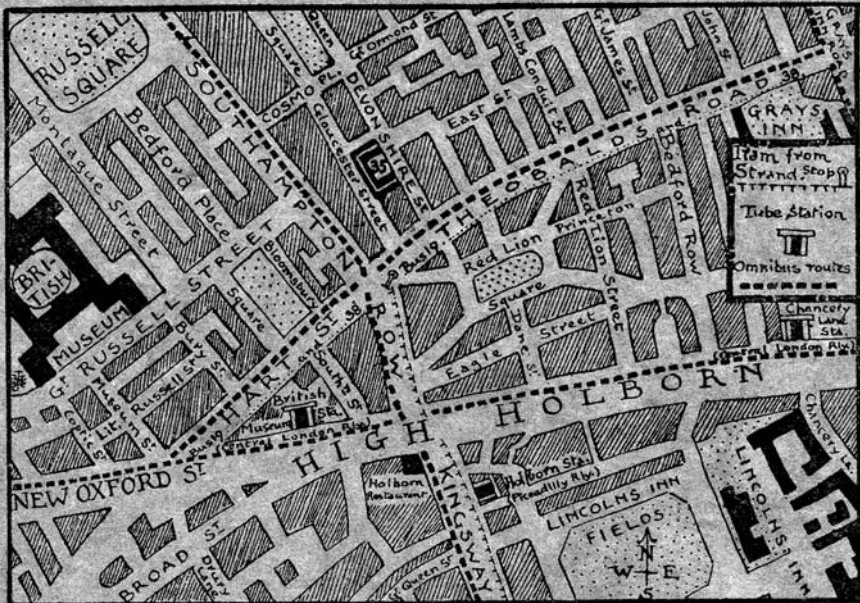


Fig. 23. Advertisement for the Poetry Bookshop from *Poetry and Drama* (Mar. 1913)

as groups: lecturing in Cambridge in November, he said the best hope for poetry lay not with ‘traditionalists’ such as Abercrombie but with ‘Impressionists’ such as Pound, and with Brooke, Gibson, and a few others.³⁴

Monro’s strengths and weaknesses as an editor were by now apparent. He enjoyed business and organizing, readily giving his own time and money to his projects. He was good at making contacts and finding contributors, and many poets already had reason to be grateful to him. His independence was admirable—but it was closely allied to indecisiveness. Every now and then he would admit in a review that he preferred not to make a final judgement, and the oddly dismissive comments about Futurism and Impressionism in his November article are at odds with opinions he expressed elsewhere. He rarely came down in favour of one sort of new poetry rather than another, with the result that he sometimes seemed to care little for any of it. Like most literary critics of his time, he was reluctant to be specific, tending instead to slip into something close to the rhetoric he condemned. His central belief had been set out in his first editorial, that ‘life’ and the future mattered more than books. He must have been pleased by another of the November letters: Herbert Furst, a poet Monro had mentioned favourably in August, protested at attempts to prescribe rules for poetry, insisting that what mattered for the poet was life, ‘the great preacher, the great teacher!’³⁵

The next schism happened very suddenly. Monro had hoped that all his enterprises would be under the unifying umbrella of the *Review*, but on 22 November he received formal notice that the Poetry Society would exercise its right to take control of the magazine at the end of the year. Kyle had waited until the last possible moment to strike, leaving the editor with no time to do more than put a notice on the front cover that his own periodical would become a quarterly entitled *Poetry and Drama*. The rest of the December *Review* had to be printed as planned, but luckily Monro had decided to break his usual limit on new verse by ending the year with nothing else, so no changes were needed (the poems were by Abercrombie, G. K. Chesterton, James Elroy Flecker, Walter de la Mare, Flint, Browne, Drinkwater, Gibson, and others).

The December *Gazette* repeated the information about Monro’s periodical in a wording he had persuaded Kyle to accept, but Kyle went on to declare proudly that ‘The Journal of the Poetry Society’ would from now on be edited by Stephen Phillips, who would write each month on ‘the eternal significance of poetry’.³⁶ A ‘brilliant list of contributors has been secured, | Including all the principal leaders of modern life and thought and criticism who are associated with Poetry’. The

³⁴ See *Cambridge Magazine* (23 Nov. 1912). Lecture text at Department of Special Collections, University Research Library, University of California at Los Angeles.

³⁵ Herbert Furst, letter to the Editor, *Poetry Review*, 1:11 (Nov. 1912), 522.

³⁶ ‘Poetical Gazette’, *Poetry Review*, 1:12 (Dec. 1912), 563.

reality was to be rather different. Phillips had caused excitement earlier in the century with his verse plays, but his reputation had long since faded; when he died in 1916, Kyle took over as editor, soon discovering that he could do very well out of the wartime market for work by 'soldier-poets'. 'Erskine Macdonald' was exposed as a racket after the war, but Kyle continued to edit the *Review* until his retirement in 1947, regularly taking payments from hopeful versifiers. Of the 'brilliant list of contributors' there was never much sign. 'Let the singing be full-throated and from any bush,' Phillips said in his first editorial: most of the singers he and his successor published were as unknown then as they are now.³⁷

Monro was bitter at the loss of the *Review*, but it was a relief to be rid of the Poetry Society. The new periodical would be completely independent, he would be able to pursue his lifelong interest in drama as well as poetry, and many of the best writers would remain loyal, knowing he had been very badly treated. He succeeded in opening his new premises on schedule, but *Georgian Poetry* was delayed until just before Christmas, probably because the imprint had to be changed from The Poetry Review to The Poetry Bookshop. The book was an extraordinary success, hailed as proof that English poetry really was alive again and putting on new strength. The link with the 1912 *Review* was obvious, though not stated: the *Review* had published poems by eleven of the anthology's seventeen contributors. None of the seventeen would now be described as modernists, except perhaps D. H. Lawrence, and their work, much of it based on values of 'life', the earth, and the countryside, was not revolutionary. Nevertheless, although the 'Georgians' were never a school with agreed aims or rules, they were seen—and saw themselves—as innovators, rebels against Victorianism, writing in a style that was, to borrow Pound's phrasing, 'austere, direct, free from emotional slither'.

The success of the first *Georgian Poetry* was a triumphant start for the Bookshop, and it was perhaps inevitable that the shop became thought of as some kind of Georgian headquarters. Despite everything Monro could do to counter this misapprehension, the myth persists to this day, partly because Pound liked to repeat it. But Monro published Pound's anthology, *Des Imagistes*, in April 1914, as well as books by Flint, Aldington, and Hueffer. The Bookshop was never a Georgian preserve. And Monro's comprehensively 'just and righteous war' against 'all kinds of false traditionalism'—flatness, tiredness, empty repetition and inversion, stereotypical phrasing, stock devices, and the rest—'in a word *cliché* in all its tedious and detestable forms'—brings Monro closer to the modernism of Pound and the Imagists than has previously been noted.

³⁷ The Editor [Stephen Phillips], 'The Poetry Review', *Poetry Review*, 2:1 (Jan. 1913), 1.

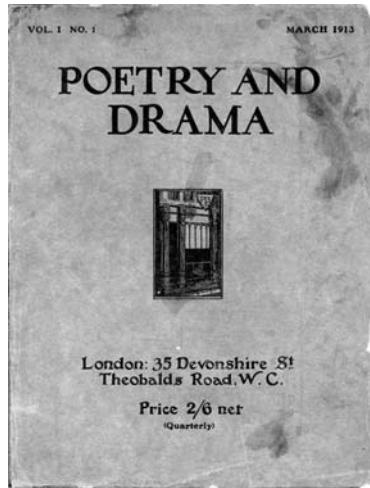


Fig. 24. Cover of *Poetry and Drama* (Mar. 1913)

Poetry and Drama

The first of the eight numbers of *Poetry and Drama* came out in March 1913. Published by the Bookshop, it had a woodcut of the building on the front cover and, on the back, an advertisement for the shop's publications and a map of the locality (see Figs. 23 and 24). Each number contained a ticket giving free admission to the poetry readings held twice a week at the shop. Production was to a high standard, in a similar format to the *Review*, though being a quarterly at over 120 pages *Poetry and Drama* was considerably thicker than its predecessor, and by the end of the year Monro was getting complaints about its 'bewildering bulk'.³⁸ There were more advertisements than in the *Review*, but many of them were for foreign periodicals, probably accepted in mutual, unpaid exchange: a note by the editor pointed out that from now on the magazine's survival would depend on its readers alone. Circulation figures are not recorded, but Monro was anxiously aware that he had lost the *Review's* large, regular sale to the Poetry Society.

Continuity from the *Review* was made clear from the start. The first *Poetry and Drama* began with the familiar list of new books (in subsequent numbers it was moved to the end). The *Review* had offered a prize for the best poem in its pages, and the result was now announced: six judges—Henry Newbolt, Edward Thomas, Rhys, Plarr, Marsh, Hulme, and the editor—had chosen 'The Old Vicarage, Grantchester'. The six names were in themselves evidence that *Poetry and Drama* was more likely than Phillips's *Review* to have a 'brilliant' list of contributors. Newbolt had recently become a life member of the Poetry Society

³⁸ Harold Monro, 'Notes and Announcements', *Poetry and Drama*, 1:4 (Dec. 1913), 392.

and could hardly withdraw from that, but he had demonstrated his support for Monro by formally opening the Bookshop in January and writing a long, approving review of *Georgian Poetry*. The most valuable new recruit was Thomas, well-known and highly regarded as a critic; he had kept out of the *Review*, probably because he detested the Poetry Society, but now he became Monro's principal adviser, contributing articles and/or reviews to every number.

There was never any full statement of editorial policy in *Poetry and Drama*, but Monro's aims can be traced throughout the eight issues. The periodical was 'eclectic and non-partisan'.³⁹ It hoped to make poetry more popular, and it strongly opposed the modernist tendency to move poetry 'into the study'.⁴⁰ Monro gave publicity to the broadsides ('rhyme sheets') and chapbooks that he began publishing from the Bookshop, and to the readings: he always believed that it was immensely important to hear poetry read aloud. He hoped there would be poetry bookshops and readings in many towns.⁴¹ In March 1914 he said his periodical existed 'chiefly as a centre of experiment, a testing-shop for the poetry of the present, and a medium for the discussion of tendencies which may combine to make the poetry of the future', aims that might have been approved by any modernist. Critical standards were soon likely to change radically, and the poetry of the mid-century could still only be dimly foreseen.⁴²

These aims and expectations were not altogether obvious in the first number. The six main articles, though well-written and interesting, were on oddly assorted subjects, ranging from Romney Green on 'The Greek Genius' to John Rodker on drama in Whitechapel. Brooke wrote with lively scholarship on Webster, Thomas with entertaining irony on Ella Wheeler Wilcox. Nine reviews followed, led by Newbolt on *Georgian Poetry*, a book that could not 'fail to astonish': the poems revealed poetic imagination, constructive power, and truth of diction (the 'new English is to be one with life itself').⁴³ Thomas reviewed Yeats, Brooke praised Gibson's 'almost terrifying severity', del Re discussed Tagore, and Flint reviewed Pound's *Ripostes*, recalling meetings with him, Hulme, Storer, and others some years earlier.⁴⁴ The next section consisted of 'Chronicles', surveys of new work: Richard Buxton on anthologies, Gilbert Cannan on current theatre, and Flint on French poetry. Cannan and Flint, talented reporters and exceptionally well informed, were to be regular 'chroniclers'; Monro was keen on this kind of

³⁹ 'Varia: A Futurist Number of Poetry and Drama', *Poetry and Drama*, 1:2 (June 1913), 136.

⁴⁰ 'Varia: Broad-sides and Chap-Books', *Poetry and Drama*, 1:3 (Sept. 1913), 265.

⁴¹ 'Varia: The Bookshop', *Poetry and Drama*, 1:4 (Dec. 1913), 387. On this see Mark Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 2001), ch. 2.

⁴² Harold Monro, 'New Books: English Poetry', *Poetry and Drama*, 2:1 (Mar. 1914), 62.

⁴³ Henry Newbolt, review, '*Georgian Poetry 1911-12*. Edited by E. M.', *Poetry and Drama*, 1:1 (Mar. 1913), 46, 52.

⁴⁴ Rupert Brooke, review, 'Fires: Books I, II and III. By Wilfrid Wilson Gibson', *Poetry and Drama*, 1:1 (Mar. 1913), 58.

reviewing, and the section was to grow considerably. The first number ended with new verse: a long poem by Hewlett, James Elroy Flecker's 'The Golden Journey to Samarcand', and a verse play by Abercrombie, 'The Adder'.

The June number shows *Poetry and Drama* settling down into what was to be its regular shape. Instead of an editorial, each number began with 'Varia', paragraphs on whatever subjects Monro thought appropriate. He reported on the 'Imagistes' in June ('a new school . . . , still at present very small, and under the formidable dictatorship of Ezra Pound'), quoting Flint's three rules and saluting the group's 'conviction and courage'; Pound was 'a stern dictator' but 'a purging influence in our world', and his definition of the image was 'excellent and accurate'.⁴⁵ Other 'Varia' topics included the misdoings of the Poetry Society and the need for a National Theatre. When the post of Poet Laureate became vacant, Monro hoped it might be abolished, fearing it might go to Kipling, but as soon as it went to Robert Bridges friendly relations were established, and Bridges gave *Poetry and Drama* his first poem as Laureate, 'Flycatchers'.

The magazine published far more verse than the *Review* had done. Monro kept an admirable balance between the various groups, giving due weight not only to Imagists, Futurists, and Georgians but also to women poets and much new talent. New poems came from Hardy, Hewlett, Emile Verhaeren, Tagore, Plarr, and Robert Frost; Brooke, de la Mare, W. H. Davies, Flecker, Abercrombie, and Drinkwater; Pound, Flint, Aldington, Fletcher, Amy Lowell, and D. H. Lawrence; Anna Wickham, Rose Macaulay, Frances Cornford, and Iris Barry; Godfrey Elton, Francis Macnamara, Douglas Goldring, Edward Shanks, Monro himself, and plenty more. A recent critic has said that 'subscribers to *Poetry and Drama* (who included Thomas Hardy) would probably have been better informed about new movements in European modernism than anyone else in the country, as well as thoroughly familiar with the Georgian poets.'⁴⁶

The articles—'Studies and Appreciations'—in *Poetry and Drama* included Edward Thomas on Hardy, 'Reviewing: an unskilled labour', and war poetry, the first serious study of that subject and still one of the best.⁴⁷ Brooke was abroad for much of 1913, but he wrote admirably on Donne as well as on Webster. Hueffer contributed two fascinating articles on prose 'Impressionism', J. C. Squire was splendidly funny on a ridiculous new anthology, and Abercrombie wrote on

⁴⁵ 'Varia: The Imagistes' and 'A Censorship on Poetasters', *Poetry and Drama*, 1:2 (June 1913), 127–9.

⁴⁶ Peter Howarth, *British Poetry in the Age of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 28.

⁴⁷ Edward Thomas, 'Thomas Hardy of Dorchester', *Poetry and Drama*, 1:2 (June 1913), 180–4; 'Reviewing: An Unskilled Labour', *Poetry and Drama*, 2:1 (Mar. 1914), 37–41; 'War Poetry', *Poetry and Drama*, 2:4 (Dec. 1914), 341–5.

Bridges.⁴⁸ Articles on the drama included John Cournos on Gordon Craig, and Basil Dean and William Archer on the new repertory movement.

Monro was never convinced that reviewing was best done by many different critics. The second number contained fourteen reviews, eight of which had to be farmed out to young supporters who were not really experienced enough. Two went to Arundel del Re and four to John Alford, who was soon to replace del Re as Monro's chief assistant; others went to Edward Shanks, who was as yet unknown as a poet and critic, and to Basil Watt. At the end of 1913 Monro announced that short reviews would be replaced by chronicles, backed by substantial extracts from whatever new work the chroniclers might choose to discuss. He had already tried out Rhys and Dixon Scott as chroniclers of current English poetry and had written one such piece himself, but from now on he would be the regular reporter. Explaining that he was well qualified because he had to read every new book that came into the shop, he said he would give 'a desultory record of my impressions of modern poetry' and try to find 'the atmosphere of the quarter'.⁴⁹

Monro was perhaps unwise to sound so casual and to give himself so much space, although he did reduce his presence in 'Varia' by inviting other people to contribute paragraphs. The chronicle idea was an interesting one, all the same, and it may have been worked out in discussions with Thomas. By the end of 1914 the 'Criticism and Chronicles' section contained no fewer than ten items: Monro on recent English poetry, Thomas on reprints and anthologies, Storer on translations, Abercrombie on chapbooks and broadsides, Flint, del Re, and Alford on chronicles of new French, Italian, and American poetry, Cannan on drama, and Ashley Dukes, the noted drama critic, with two articles on repertory theatres and printed plays. Among the more significant chronicles in other numbers was one by Hulme on German poetry.⁵⁰

The September 1913 number was mainly devoted to Futurism, again an editorial choice that might adjust the standard view of Monro as an anti-modernist, with translations by Monro of poems by Marinetti and others, and by del Re of Marinetti's 'New Futurist Manifesto'. Monro approved of the Futurists partly because they were trying to take poetry to the people, but he distanced himself a little in 'Varia' by saying that his own faith in the future had taken root before he

⁴⁸ Rupert Brooke, 'John Donne', *Poetry and Drama*, 1:2 (June 1913), 185-8; Ford Madox Hueffer, 'On Impressionism', 2:2 (June 1914), 167-75, and 2:4 (Dec. 1914), 323-34; J. C. Squire, 'A Model Anthology', 1:2 (June 1913), 197-200; Lascelles Abercrombie, 'Robert Bridges', 1:3 (Sept. 1913), 313-18; John Cournos, 'Gordon Craig and the Theatre of the Future', 1:3 (Sept. 1913), 334-40; Basil Dean, 'The Problem of the Repertory Theatre', 1:4, 444-51; William Archer, 'The Repertory Theatre', 2:5 (Mar. 1914), 31-6.

⁴⁹ Harold Monro, 'Notes and Announcements', *Poetry and Drama*, 1:4 (Dec. 1913), 391-2, and 'New Books', 52-3.

⁵⁰ T. E. Hulme, 'German Chronicle', *Poetry and Drama*, 2:2 (June 1914), 221-8.

had ever heard of Futurism: he believed that one should forget notions of God and immortality, remember the earth, and always look forward.

Most of the December number, like the *Review* a year before, consisted of new poems. In 'Varia' Monro recalled the adventure of launching the *Review*: the first week had produced little more than 'copious illegible notes and lists, estimates, dozens of vain addresses on blotting paper and the backs of letters, and a prospectus'. Now, however, after a long apprenticeship, 'at last, O public, we stare you boldly in the eyes and challenge you not to overlook our existence.'⁵¹ Brave words—but *Poetry and Drama* was heading for financial trouble, even though Monro was almost certainly subsidizing it out of his own limited resources. He sent out appeals in 1914, and held crisis meetings in June and again in July, when Brooke, Pound, and others attended. Pound suggested a system already used by Harriet Monroe's *Poetry*: each contributor should give ten pounds a year, either in cash or as articles or poems. Monro must have been uncomfortable about that, having always insisted that authors should be paid for their labours, but he seems to have accepted the idea.

New Numbers

There had been no competition when the *Review* began, but by mid-1914 several new magazines seemed more 'modern' than *Poetry and Drama*. Four of the leading Georgians were publishing their own poems in *New Numbers*, the Imagists had been publishing all year in *The Egoist*, Pound was recruiting verse for *Poetry*, and the newly formed Vorticists had just launched *BLAST*. Monro was paying the price for his neutrality: the various factions wanted periodicals of their own. He had been especially hurt not to be asked to publish *New Numbers*, but Abercrombie, Gibson, Brooke, and Drinkwater had apparently never even thought of him (their project had been inspired by Elkin Mathews's Shilling Garland series). They published their quarterly themselves from Abercrombie's cottage in rural Gloucestershire, with his wife, Catherine, doing much of the work. There were only four issues in the end, nominally dated February, April, August, and December 1914 but actually all published late, in early March, mid-May, early October 1914, and late February 1915. Each poet selected his own poems, so there was no editor and no editorial matter. Reviews, by Thomas, de la Mare, and others, were very favourable, and by the second issue well over five-hundred subscribers had signed up, so there was an assured sale for most of the thousand copies printed each time.⁵²

⁵¹ 'Varia: Retrospect', *Poetry and Drama*, 1:4 (Dec. 1913), 386.

⁵² See Jeff Cooper, 'New Numbers: The Story of a Periodical', *Dymock Poets and Friends: Journal of the Friends of the Dymock Poets*, 6 (2007), 56–66.

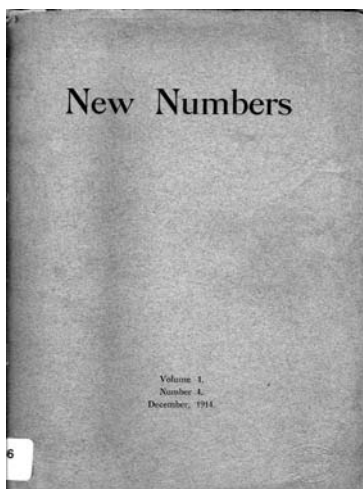


Fig. 25. Cover of *New Numbers* (Dec. 1914)

War came to the four poets as a complete surprise. They decided the ‘December’ number would have to be the last, and when it appeared in February 1915 it rapidly became by far the most famous, because it contained Brooke’s five ‘1914’ sonnets.⁵³ In spirit as in language, the sonnets were not typically Georgian—they were, for instance, completely unlike the little vignettes of front-line suffering that Gibson had been writing at least since October—but by the time of Brooke’s death in April they were already well on the way to becoming the most celebrated poems of the war.

Monro discussed *New Numbers* in his account of current poetry in June 1914, saying that Abercrombie, Brooke, and Gibson were introducing a new way of writing, although Gibson was becoming ever more commonplace and sentimental. Anyone who read *New Numbers* and *Des Imagistes* together would ‘have a fair chance of estimating for themselves the two newest and most forward movements in English poetry’. The Georgians were enlarging the scope of poetic language, Monro said, whereas the Imagists were narrowing it. Even so, his own preference seemed to be for the Imagists, whose work was technically ‘of immense interest and importance, aesthetically of great delight’, even though ‘the general public is only admitted by favour’.⁵⁴

⁵³ Rupert Brooke, ‘I: Peace’, ‘II: Safety’, ‘III: The Dead’, ‘IV: The Dead’, ‘V: The Soldier’, *New Numbers*, 1:4 (Dec. 1914 [actually Feb. 1915]), 165–9.

⁵⁴ Harold Monro, ‘New Books: English Poetry’, *Poetry and Drama*, 2:2 (June 1914), 179–80.

Poetry and Drama in wartime

When war broke out, Monro at first decided to suspend his periodical for the duration. Then Hewlett persuaded him that the arts of peace ought to be maintained, so the 'September' number came out after all, very late and obviously put together in a hurry. The main article was a 1909 paper by Bridges on prosody. The poetry section included seven short pieces by Amy Lowell, a poem on the war by Shanks, and another, anonymously, by Monro. Monro, Flint, and Cannan contributed their usual chronicles, and, despite recent editorial policy, there were two short reviews by Squire. At seventy-two pages, this was by far the shortest number of *Poetry and Drama*, and Monro could only apologize for it.

'War monopolises the brain,' he said in his commentary on recent poetry; new books, planned in peace time, were 'the last frayed edges of something that has been hacked apart in its growth'. He then made a remarkable prophecy: most war poems so far had been like music hall songs or rhymed leading articles, but there would soon be an increase in 'the natural tendency of pre-war poets to strip verse of romantic ornament and sentimental detail, and to expose the raw material of thought, and the elementary facts of experience'. The poet would once again be the 'ultimate chronicler of events and seer of their primary significance', shedding the 'disagreeable egotism and vanity conspicuous lately in minor experimental verse' (this was a dig at Pound, whose self-absorption at such a moment in history seemed inexcusable). Meanwhile the best language could be found in the stark simplicity of official despatches, which 'lay bare to us, in direct terms, the plain facts of the human psychology of the moment'.⁵⁵ These comments set the standard for much of the best war poetry to follow, by Monro himself and Gibson first of all and later by Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfred Owen, Robert Graves, and others.

In the December number Monro announced that with great reluctance he had after all decided to suspend his periodical for a year, by which time he, like many other people, assumed the war would be over. This last *Poetry and Drama* was also the most distinguished. It contained new poems by no fewer than twenty-one poets, with extracts from ten more; ten chronicles; Hueffer's second article; Remy de Gourmont on 'French Literature and the War' and Thomas on 'War Poetry'; and, as always, a long list of new publications. Monro promised that the Bookshop would remain open throughout the war, as indeed it did. As things turned out, though, he was never able to revive *Poetry and Drama*: the twenties were so different from the pre-war world that he had to found an entirely new periodical, *The Chapbook*, designed to be more in keeping with the times (see Chapter 17).

⁵⁵ 'Varia: Notes: News', *Poetry and Drama*, 2:3 (Sept. 1914), 250–2.

IV
TRANSITIONS



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INTRODUCTION

If human character famously changed in 1910, 1908 was the year of arrival in the metropolis where this change was observed. London was ‘the place for poesy’, as Ezra Pound put it, advising William Carlos Williams to ‘come across and broaden your mind’ in what he was soon to term ‘The Vortex’.¹ Wyndham Lewis, Katherine Mansfield, John Cournos, Frida Strindberg, and Pound himself arrived in the city this year. They came from New Zealand, the USA, and Europe while T. E. Hulme returned in the same year from Canada. They found an Edwardian society in the midst of change. The previous year had seen the first mass demonstration of 3,000 women for female suffrage and further meetings and demonstrations and a campaign of increasingly militant disruption were to follow. The motor car was replacing the use of horses. The first electric Tube line had opened in 1890 and five new lines were introduced between 1900 and 1909 to help cater for a new commuter population expanding into the suburbs. Selfridges, the first major department store, was to open the following year. The music hall still thrived but was rivalled by the new cinemas (of which there were ninety in London by 1909). The new arrivals shifted in this vibrant world between the British Museum Reading Room and the Vienna Café nearby, Elkin Mathews’s bookshop in Vigo Street, upper middle-class salons, the Café Royal, and the newer Lyons and ABC teashops.

The New Age under A. R. Orage began in May 1907 and Ford Madox Hueffer’s (Ford’s) monthly *English Review* began in December 1908. The editorial group of *The New Age* met either in the ABC restaurant in Chancery Lane, off Cursitor Street, where Orage had his small editorial office, or at his table at the Café Royal. Mansfield, Pound, and Hulme found employment as contributors. The journal tracked the development of the new abstract art and was to include major pieces by Lewis and Gaudier-Brzeska. Meanwhile, Lewis had his first story, ‘The Pole’, published in *The English Review* in May 1909. Five years later Ford was to appear in Lewis’s *BLAST* 1—though Lewis did not hesitate to tell Ford that he and his ilk were ‘*Foûtou!* Finished! Exploded! Done for! Blasted in fact’ and belonged to

¹ *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound, 1907–1941*, ed. D. D. Paige (New York: New Directions, 1971), 7, 28.

a bygone generation.² This was merely one sign of the sharply felt transitions in a period that was soon to suffer the devastating jolt and aftershock of the First World War.

Ford was to edit *The English Review* for only one year but, as Wulfman shows, he succeeded in this short time in making his mark as an editor and in providing an opening for 'les jeunes', as he called this new generation, while mounting a magazine which would encourage a mature 'critical attitude'. Orage, for his part, administered to new developments in the arts throughout this decade. As the following chapters show, however, both men were operating to a wider brief: initially *The New Age* carried the masthead 'An Independent Socialist Review of Politics, Literature and Art' and this continued to suggest its range and order of priorities. *The English Review* under Ford is remembered as primarily a literary magazine and appears therefore as an example of the specialization which had emerged in late nineteenth-century print culture, discussed earlier in Chapters 1 and 3. But Ford was attuned to movements in the book and magazine market and sought to found a review which compensated for the splintering of reading publics across the dailies, weeklies, and monthlies, as well as the much larger and expensive extant quarterlies. As Mark Morrisson has explained, Ford was competing essentially with monthlies like the *Cornhill* and particularly *The Fortnightly Review* (only briefly a fortnightly publication) which sought to unify readerships across political and social views in a wide coverage of national and world affairs as well as science, art, and a literary content of reviews, fiction, and poetry. The model which Ford had mostly in mind, however, was the broad-based *Mercur de France*, whose authoritative coverage of politics and letters gave it a place where it could address and help reinforce a unified public culture. Ford wanted to establish something similar on English cultural soil, which would occupy a middle position between the mass-market readership for newspapers or the popular *Strand* magazine and a select coterie.³ Even in the somewhat more modest and more literary version of this ideal which resulted, *The English Review's* contents straddled the work of Ford's admired earlier masters Hardy, James, and Conrad along with the new young turks, Lawrence, Lewis, and Pound.

Ford's fidelity to a select prose tradition and his openness to the new remained a consistent feature of his extensive critical works and the *Transatlantic Review*, which he was to edit in the mid-1920s.⁴ In this way he endeavoured to maintain a central role for a vital literary culture which offered the stability of a valued

² An opinion recorded by Ford himself. See Ford Madox Ford, *Return to Yesterday* (New York: Liveright, 1932), 400, where Ford refers to Lewis as 'Mr D. Z.' He reports the same opinion in *Thus to Revisit* (London: Chapman Hall, 1921), 140. Here Lewis is 'This Genius'.

³ Mark S. Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), 32–9.

⁴ To be discussed in Volume 2 of *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*.

tradition in the same publication as the provocative experiments of the young. Such was the 'mature' publication, as Wulfman explains below, which Ford hoped to establish. Pound admired Ford's aims and achievements, but not all 'modernists' were so reconciled to this combination and certainly the *Review's* readership was often affronted by Ford's concession to the new. The *Review* was well received but its circulation never rose much above 1,000 per month. Ford was not a good businessman (he paid too much to authors and for the magazine's production) and in 1910 he was replaced as editor with Austin Harrison, a move prompted by the magazine's new owner, the Liberal politician Sir Alfred Mond. The magazine's commercial failure under Ford resulted not simply from his mismanagement, however, but from a failure to judge and find a way of guiding a readership which turned out to want *either* a literary review *or* a political journal along familiar lines, but not both, and certainly did not want the eccentric new art. Ford's intended hybrid magazine which spanned genres, generations, and readerships didn't sufficiently cohere. Harrison conformed to middlebrow expectations, including a party political stance on behalf of the Liberals. He cut the price in 1912, undercutting other monthlies and, though he included work by Yeats, May Sinclair, Katherine Mansfield, Richard Aldington, and Gorky and Chekhov, he did not venture further on poetry than the Georgians. Moreover, the 'grown-up mind' of those for whom the *Review* was intended, and which was linked, for Ford, with the cultivation of a mature 'critical attitude', became under Harrison the more dubious 'adult-mind' tolerant of 'forbidden subjects'—'which meant the frankly sexual', says Wulfman, and implied a ready 'embrace of the advertising adage that sex sells'. One way or another, Harrison made a commercial success of the magazine.

Neither *The English Review* nor *The New Age* were strictly 'little magazines' (neither is included in Hoffman et al., *The Little Magazine*). And like *The English Review*, *The New Age* bore some relation to the genre of the miscellaneous literary review and political journal whose English examples were derived from the standard set in the eighteenth century, notably by *The Spectator*. Orage was the more capable editor and not only kept the journal afloat through the war years and into the 1920s, but supported his contributors financially in a way other magazines could not.

Orage and Holbrook Jackson had established the Leeds Art Club in 1903 and went on to purchase *The New Age* in 1907 with financial backing from George Bernard Shaw and Lewis Wallace. Their background throws some light on the nature of metropolitan culture, which in their experience presented itself less as the centre of innovation than as an opportunity to intervene from the outside and turn its essentially conservative public realm and burgeoning commercial culture in a progressive direction. As Tom Steele has suggested, Orage was therefore something of a new type of English provincial intellectual (one thinks of T. E. Hulme, Storm

Jameson, or D. H. Lawrence) who brought radical ideas developed in the regions to the metropolitan centre.⁵

Ann Ardis, below, explains *The New Age's* miscellaneous contents and intellectual provenance as a mixture of socialism, Nietzscheanism, and mysticism, and draws our attention to what George Bornstein's terms the 'bibliographic and contextual codes' by which this and other magazines operated.⁶ She shows how Orage was acutely aware of a network of contemporary publications and situated the magazine in a forum of discussion and debate on contemporary issues from an undogmatic socialist—or indeed, under the influence of Beatrice Hastings, for several years the magazine's virtual co-editor—a feminist perspective. Thus the magazine conducted a 'meta-commentary' on the press coverage of the news which stretched to the United States, France, Germany, and beyond, while at the same time positioning itself within 'periodical communities' which included, amongst other publications, *The New Statesman*, *Votes for Women*, *The New Freewoman*, *The Blue Review*, *Poetry and Drama*, and *The English Review*.

The first half of each issue of *The New Age* featured political commentary, and this 'political debate', Ardis points out, 'always frames the discussion of aesthetic matters'. It is this clear emphasis which makes *The New Age* less a 'modernist magazine' *tout court* than a magazine keen to encourage a productive relationship between politics, economics, and literature in the shaping of a new society. It therefore sought a dialogic relation with experimental tendencies in the arts, and with the associated community of 'little magazines', as with other spheres. While Orage opened the pages of *The New Age* to Hulme or Lewis or Pound, or to the futurist provocateur, Filippo Marinetti, he, or fellow contributors to the journal, also felt free to expose and satirize modernist pretensions and aesthetic detachment. For while, as Ardis comments, *The New Age* was for some years 'perhaps even *the* venue of avant-garde publication', it nevertheless exhorted the arts to do more. Thus, symptomatically, Orage commented in reviewing Lewis's *BLAST* 1 that it 'will, of course, be amusing for an issue or two' but asks 'will it encourage discussion, the one thing needed?'⁷

What determined this perspective and thus the readership of the magazine were, once again, the class and regional politics Orage's editorship brought to it. This readership, as Ardis reports, included leading literary and political figures along with the socialist autodidacts and left-leaning graduates of Mechanics

⁵ Tom Steele, *Alfred Orage and the Leeds Arts Club, 1893–192* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1990), 'Introduction', 1–22. The early part of Storm Jameson's autobiography, *Journey From the North* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), gives a fascinating account of the intellectual environment in Leeds and the excitement of moving to London and becoming published in the 'Bible' (67) that was *The New Age*.

⁶ George Bornstein, *Material Modernism: The Politics of the Page* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). See General Introduction for further discussion of this topic.

⁷ 'R. H. C.' [Orage], 'Readers and Writers', *New Age*, 14:10 (8 Jan. 1914), 307.

Institutes, working-men's colleges, teacher-training colleges, extension lecture programmes, and provincial universities. In the event, however, the different parts of the magazine were less united than Orage had wished, in terms of both the attitudes and priorities of its contributors and readers. A price rise in 1909 meant also that it found its readers in a rising middle-class readership rather than the ideal of 'Board-school-educated teachers, lower-middle-class office workers, and socialist autodidacts'.⁸ Ford too had wanted to address a unified public sphere and similarly encountered an actual separation which ran athwart this ambition. He perhaps was confirmed in his view of irreconcilable audiences. Orage's hope and commitment meant that he appealed, paradoxically, to some neutral and all-inclusive public space of reasoned exchange. The question here, as Ardis notes, was how had Orage hoped 'to achieve an eighteenth-century ideal of face-to-face communicative interaction in the hyper-mediated environment of a mass society? How, exactly, is "a critical-rational conversation" to be held among such a diverse audience?'

It is a question which goes to the heart of the advent of mass publishing, newly diversified readerships, and an accompanying belief in the shaping influence of ideas and the arts upon the whole culture. We meet different claims upon the public sphere as well as aggrieved jeremiads from the margins in the 1920s and 1930s (summed up by the names T. S. Eliot, John Lehmann, and Wyndham Lewis) but already in the immediate post-war period there was a striking response to these altered circumstances in the editorial stance taken by J. C. Squire at *The London Mercury*.

The genre of the periodical was the means, wrote Squire, to carry the 'torch of culture and creative activity' to the next generation and his own periodical was uniquely fitted to do this. His first 'Editorial Notes', singled out by Huculak in Chapter 10 below, declared 'there has never been in this country a paper with the scope of the LONDON MERCURY'.⁹ As Huculak explains, this was as much a matter of coverage as of quality. Squire, like Ford and Orage, was very aware of the range of contemporary publications in a changed and expanded literary culture in the early twentieth century. There were reviews, magazines of criticism, and magazines devoted to original creative work in verse and prose, as well as the dailies and weeklies. Squire pitched his magazine at neither the top nor bottom of the cultural scale, and neither, as Ford or Orage had attempted, across generations and topics, but at a wide middle range of content and readers. The emergence after the First World War of 'middlebrow' taste reinforced the picture of cultural stratification, but in Squire's hands it functioned as an inclusive category for a

⁸ Ardis draws for this information on John Carswell, *Lives and Letters: A. R. Orage, Beatrice Hastings, Katherine Mansfield, John Middleton Murray, S. S. Kotliansky: 1906-1957* (New York: New Directions, 1978), 31.

⁹ J. C. Squire, 'Editorial Notes', *London Mercury*, 1 (1919), 1.

new expanded middle-class readership—one which was paradoxically dependent on the intuition and personal taste of one man, Squire himself as editor.¹⁰ As such, *The London Mercury* was the vehicle not of ‘modernism’ but of the ‘modern’; its editorial policy capacious and alert enough to embrace the new and experimental (as long as it wasn’t propagandist or merely a matter of technique), the familiar mainstream, and the new mainstream (the ‘movies’ and the ‘wireless’).

Huculak’s argument is that the designations ‘modern’ and ‘modernist’ were ‘up for grabs’, a matter of more open contention than has been hitherto supposed by criticism. The battlelines and struggle for readers and cultural influence were drawn between Squire and, in their own eyes, Eliot at *The Criterion* and J. M. Murry in *The Athenaeum*. The periodical, indeed, was the cultural field upon which this struggle for a public role for ‘criticism’ and ‘literature’ as the champion of culture as a whole was played out. The stakes, one might think, were not merely for a ‘neo-Georgian’ or ‘modernist’ aesthetic, but for an accompanying set of values, and, in Squire’s word, the ‘scope’ of a shifting cultural identity. Huculak’s point is reinforced, moreover, by the changing identities of *The London Mercury* itself: a middlebrow success under Squire in its first period from 1919 to 1931, followed by his own and the magazine’s decline over the next three years, and the change from 1934 until its closure in 1939 when it assumed a more avant-gardist character under R. A. Scott-James. ‘Modernism’ appears in this particular history and, more generally in these examples, in a more uneven and variegated history than is usual, and in the company of perhaps unexpected friends and opponents. The magazines open onto a wider context where questions of artistic form and the role of the artist are joined in a debate on cultural function, the ramifications of contemporary modernization, and social and political modernity. As Ardis confirms, following Suzanne W. Churchill, this adds up to a picture of the complex and instructive ‘muddle of modernism’.¹¹

¹⁰ The *OED* first records the use of ‘middlebrow’ from 1925, and it is mainly thought of in relation to the 1930s, although the phenomenon arguably existed prior to this. See Ann Ardis, *Modernism and Cultural Conflict, 1880–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 116.

¹¹ Suzanne W. Churchill, *The Little Magazine Others and the Renovation of American Poetry* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 222.

DEMOCRACY AND MODERNISM

The New Age under A. R. Orage (1907–22)

ANN L. ARDIS

As an editor, [A. R.] Orage deliberately attempted to make *The New Age* a . . . periodical which would mediate between specialized fields of knowledge and public understanding, and encourage a vital relationship between literary experimentation and the literary tradition. As a result of the editorial genius he brought to this task, *The New Age* provides a comprehensive record of the emergence of modern culture from its Victorian and Edwardian antecedents.

Wallace Martin, *The New Age under Orage*¹

The greatest appeal of such a farraginous chronicle was to people like Orage, provincial intellectuals in search of a faith, and it is not surprising that such people made up a substantial number of both [*The New Age*'s] contributors and its readers. The regular writers . . . were mostly, like Orage himself, poor intellectual outsiders. And the subscribers included people like young D. H. Lawrence, who shared the paper with the Eastwood intelligentsia and liked it more for its literature than its politics. One may guess that it was far better read in Eastwood than in Westminster, because it meant more there; it was the voice of rebellion and liberation, not clear, perhaps, but loud.

This point of authorship and audience may in part account for the fact that *The New Age*, for all its vigour and occasional distinction, seems to have had little impact on the direction of English thought in its time.

. . . *The New Age* was not primarily a literary paper and the centre of its interest and importance cannot be reached through the conventional categories of modern literary history. Professor Martin has contrived an

¹ Wallace Martin, *The New Age under Orage: Chapters in Cultural History* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967), 3.

approach that is simply too orthodox for so queer a journal as *The New Age*, and one must conclude that he has captured more of English cultural history than he has of his particular subject. His book will be valuable to the historian, but the true biography of Orage's odd offspring [*The New Age*] remains to be written . . . That biography, if it is ever written, will also be a biography of the Orage-type, the English provincial intellectual in the twentieth century.

Unsigned review, *The Times Literary Supplement*, April 25, 1968²

Does the *New Age* under A. R. Orage's editorship (1907–22) provide 'a comprehensive record of the emergence of modern culture from its Victorian and Edwardian antecedents', as Wallace Martin argued in 1968 in the only book-length study of this British magazine written to date? Or did it offer such an 'untidy mixture of socialism, Nietzscheanism, and mysticism' that it 'had little impact on the direction of English thought in its time' and was 'far better read in Eastwood than in Westminster', as the *TLS* claimed in the unsigned review of Martin's book later that same year? Between these two extremes lies the work of this essay, and one of my goals is to expose the 'machinery of selective tradition' powering such arguments about this magazine's place in British literary and cultural history.³

When Orage and Holbrook Jackson assumed the editorship of a failing Christian Socialist weekly in 1907, their goal was to re-imagine *The New Age* as a 'modern' review: innovative in format and market appeal; committed to an ideal of comprehensiveness in addressing the issues of the day; committed as well to bringing 'the Art of Letters in England' back into 'contact with the life of the people'.⁴ Thus it shared with 'little magazines' such as *BLAST* and *The Egoist* 'the optimism about entering the public sphere' 'characteristic of early modernism'.⁵ Yet it also differed significantly in material format, editorial policy, and circulation from non-commercial magazines devoted to the publication of experimental writing.⁶ As

² 'The New Age', *The Times Literary Supplement*, April 25, 1968, 437.

³ Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists* (London/New York: Verso, 1989), 32.

⁴ Mark Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism: Little Magazines, Audiences, and Reception 1905–1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), 33.

⁵ *Ibid.* 22.

⁶ *The New Age's* circulation peaked at 22,000 in 1908, thanks mainly to the debates about socialism Orage staged in early volumes. More typically, its circulation hovered between 3,000 and 4,000. *The New Age* raised its price per issue from 1*d.* to 3*d.* in 1909; then to 6*d.* in November 1913; and finally to 7*d.* in May 1919. Early in Orage's editorship, it published quite a range of 'down-market' advertisements for commercial products such as Hovis bread and Red White & Blue coffee (ads for which appear on the masthead of the first issue of the first volume in 1907; see Fig. 27) as well as for printing services, lectures, fellowship meetings, pamphlets, and books geared explicitly for a socialist readership. By the early 1910s, rather than appearing on the masthead as well as

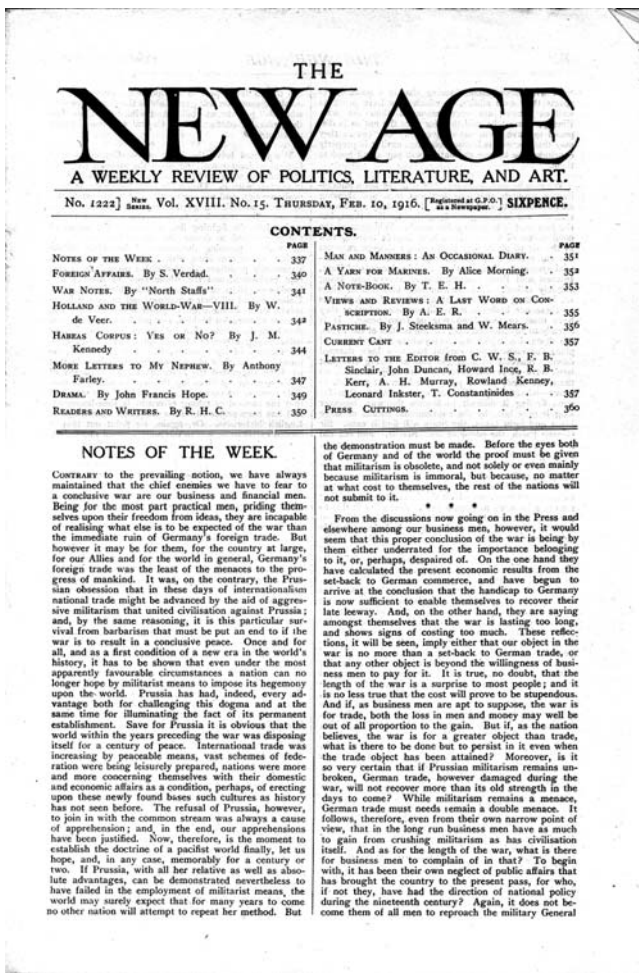


Fig. 26. Cover of *The New Age* (Feb. 1916)

scholarship on the early material history of modernism expands beyond the 'little magazines' and begins to encompass the far more diverse spectrum of periodicals in which modernist work first appeared, it is important to attend carefully to the 'bibliographic and contextual codes' of periodicals like *The New Age*, *Crisis*, *The*

throughout the magazine, advertisements were placed only on the last few page(s) of an issue. For several months after its re-pricing to 6d., down-market advertising for commodities like Fry's Cocoa continued to appear. No advertising appeared other than for its own subscription, however, in vols 15 (May–Oct. 1914) through 30 and no. 24 (May 13, 1922). The last two issues of vol. 30 print a single full-page advertisement for publishing companies (Chatto and Windus, George Allen and Unwin).

Freewoman, *The New Freewoman*, *Smart Set*, *Vanity Fair*, *The Adelphi* and *Vogue*.⁷ I do so here as I consider *The New Age*'s self-positioning in both a socialist counter public sphere and the 'more generally antibourgeois oppositional public sphere' in which magazines like *The Freewoman* operated in the early 1910s.⁸

Orage and Jackson established *The New Age* as an 'Independent Socialist Review of Politics, Literature, and Art'.⁹ Although 'Socialist' dropped off its masthead at the start of the second volume (as did Jackson; see Figs. 26 and 27), *The New Age* retained its commitment to handling contemporary literature and art 'not, as in the ordinary Press, from vague, unspecified standpoints, but from a definitely Socialist position' throughout most of Orage's editorship.¹⁰ Although the editorial staff's stance toward specific socialisms changed substantially between 1907 and 1919, it is nonetheless fair to say that many of its contributors addressed politics, literature, and art from left-of-center political perspectives—at least until Orage's disappointment with political trends post-World War I led him from National Guild Socialism to Social Credit, psychoanalysis, and Gurdjieffian mysticism.¹¹ Moreover, political debate always frames the discussion of aesthetic matters in this magazine: literally, because political commentary is featured in the first half of any given issue, and because Orage demanded that his readers draw connections between the political and cultural materials it featured. '[Ev]ery part of THE NEW

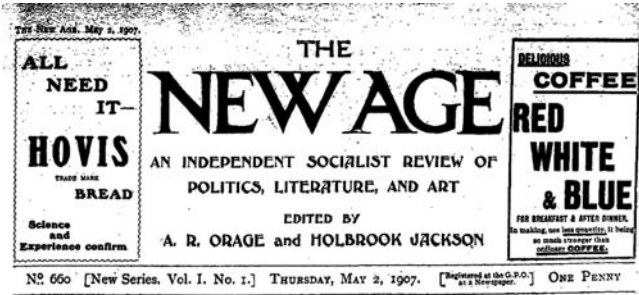
⁷ George Bornstein's terms, as developed in *Material Modernism: The Politics of the Page* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). For recent work on these other periodicals, see Anne E. Carroll, 'Protest and Affirmation: Composite Texts in the *Crisis*', *American Literature*, 76:1 (Mar. 2004), 89–116, and *Word, Image and the New Negro: Representation and Identity in the Harlem Renaissance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005); Russ Castronovo, 'Beauty along the Color Line: Lynching, Aesthetics, and the *Crisis*', *PMLA*, 121:5 (Oct. 2006), 1443–59; Helen McNeil, 'Vortex Modernism: A Little Magazine and the Making of Modernity', in Kate Campbell (ed.), *Journalism, Literature and Modernity: From Hazlitt to Modernism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 141–69; David Earle, *Re-covering Modernism: Pulp Modern and the Prejudice of Form* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009); Sharon Hamilton, 'The First *New Yorker*? The *Smart Set* Magazine, 1900–1924', *The Serials Librarian*, 37:2 (1999), 89–104; Jane Garrity, 'Selling Culture to the "Civilized": Bloomsbury, British *Vogue* and the Marketing of National Identity', *Modernism/Modernity* 6:2 (Apr. 1999), 29–58; and Leslie Hankins, 'Iris Barry, Writer and Cinéaste, Forming Film Culture in London 1924–1926: The *Adelphi*, the *Spectator*, the Film Society and the British *Vogue*', *Modernism/Modernity*, 11:3 (Sept. 2004), 488–515.

⁸ Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism*, 92.

⁹ *The New Age*, 1:1 (May 2, 1907), 1. See also Sean Latham, 'Introduction to Volume One (May 2–October 24, 1907)'. Accessed Feb. 20, 2007. Available at <<http://dl.lib.brown.edu:8080/exist/mjp/display.xq?docid=mjp.2005.00.002>>; and Carol DeBoer-Langworthy, 'Introduction to Volume Two (31 October 1907–25 April 1908)'. Accessed Feb. 20, 2007. Available at <<http://dl.lib.brown.edu:8080/exist/mjp/display.xq?docid=mjp.2005.00.003>>.

¹⁰ H. G. Wells, 'Letters from the Front', *The New Age*, 1:1 (May 2, 1907), 3.

¹¹ Martin, *The New Age*, 266–304. See also the Modernist Journals Project introductions to vols 25 (1 May–30 October 1919) through 30 (3 Nov. 1921–27 Apr. 1922). Accessed Feb. 20, 2007. Available at <http://dl.lib.brown.edu:8080/exist/mjp/mjp_essays.xq>.



THE OUTLOOK.
Planning an Empire.

Now that the incidental festivities, dinners, speeches, and entertainments by rival political organisations, which the newspapers appear to regard as the most striking features of the Colonial Conference, are drawing to a close, it may be well to consider how far that Conference has gone towards doing what it was intended to do. The task before the Conference, the task implicitly before us all, is nothing less than the creation of a British Empire. At present, of course, no such Empire exists. All that exists, either legally or actually, is "the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and its Colonies and Dependencies." Of these Colonies and Dependencies some are ruled bureaucratically from Downing Street, others are self-governing, and are bound together only by a common allegiance to the Crown, by a faint and ill-defined suzerainty exercised over them by the Parliament in which they are not represented, and by a certain sentiment of unity, which a common tradition and (in most cases) a common language bring to them. We do not wish to underrate the importance of this sentiment, without which indeed permanent union would be impossible. But a sentiment too weak to find expression in concrete organisation is not likely to be strong enough to outlast the wear and tear of centuries. It seems clear that, if the Empire is not to go to pieces in the course of the next hundred years or so, means must be found to bring its parts into closer relation with one another. This is a problem worthy of far closer attention from Socialists than it has yet received. For us the barren negation of the old Radical Little-Englandism is impossible. If we accept it we are false to all our traditions. If Imperial Federation is impracticable, the Federation of the World of which Marx and Lassalle dreamed must be even more impracticable. If we cannot have a Parliament of the Empire, how can we hope for a Parliament of Man? If a man love not his brother whom he has seen, how shall he love Humanity which he has not seen? Moreover the predatory Internationalism of Capital will force us into Imperialism, as it forced the older Socialists into Internationalism. How helpless would a host of small and romantic Nationalities prove when confronted with all the powers and principalities of cosmopolitan finance! Only a Socialist Federation—a Socialist Empire—could face them without finching.

A Briton Budget.

Seldom has there been a measure so characteristic of its author as Mr. Asquith's Budget. It is an undeniably clever performance, as safe, astute, and diplomatic as utter lack of sympathy and imagination can make it. It is carefully designed to please as many sections of the community as possible without exciting the apprehensions of any. For "the City" there is the reduction of the National Debt, with its

promise of an improvement in the price of Consols. For the middle-classes, whose "bitter cry" the Opposition was bent on exploiting, there is the discrimination of the Income Tax, with its relief for the smaller earned incomes. Yet this discrimination has been so contrived as not to scare wealthy Liberals, whose secession would deplete the war-chest of the party; for the discrimination is effected by taking off and not by putting on, so that the immense tribute of rent and interest will continue to be appropriated without diminution for the private use of a class. At the same time the conditions of payment are to be made more stringent and harder of evasion, so that the Chancellor may hope to gain by stricter enforcement almost as much as he will lose by his small but well-advertised mercies. Meanwhile the working class, unrelieved of the "taxes on the people's food," at which the Liberals was so indignant when other people propose them, are to be placated by a promise of Old Age Pensions—in the distant future. And Mr. Asquith sets aside £1,000,000 to provide a "nucleus" for the purpose and to prove the sincerity of Liberal intentions. We are disposed to regard this "nucleus" as the cleverest thing in the Budget. That the Liberals have the remotest intention of granting pensions to the veterans of industry we do not for a moment believe. The dodge is both cleverer and more economical than that. We take it that Mr. Asquith will continue to dole out additions to the "nucleus" at the rate of a million a year until such time as the party is prepared to face a General Election, and that the Government will then go to the country with the cry that, if the people want pensions, they must not interrupt the good work and must send Codlin, not Short, back to power to complete it.

Broadening the Basis.

But what will the Tories be doing the while? They will hardly, we imagine, tamely suffer the issue to be shifted from a number of questions on which they are quite likely to win, to a single question on which they would be almost certain to lose. They will doubtless pledge themselves, not only to continue Mr. Asquith's policy in this matter, but to give it a new impetus by "broadening the basis of taxation" and so accelerating the day when the "nucleus" shall grow to practicable proportions. And, in doing this, they will be laying a finger on the weak point in Mr. Asquith's policy. For the Liberals have no new sources of taxation to fall back upon. They dare not attack property; they cannot, in common decency, impose fresh import duties. Even in a fat year like the present they cannot put their hands upon no new source of revenue. What are they to do when the lean years come? They will then be faced with a revived agitation in favour of Tariff Reform as a means of raising revenue, strengthened by their failure to take off the existing food taxes. How many years' purchase would they give to Free Trade under those conditions? All this only emphasises the importance of keeping the Socialist fiscal

Fig. 27. Cover of *The New Age* (May 1907)

AGE hangs together . . . the literature we despise is associated with the economics we hate as the literature we love is associated with the form of society we would assist in creating,' he writes in 1913, defying a magazine reader's ability to browse selectively.¹²

Because *The New Age* refused to view politics, literature, and art as discrete, non-contiguous categories of cultural phenomena, the binary in my title—democracy

¹² 'R. H. C.', 'Readers and Writers', *The New Age*, 14:2 (Nov. 13, 1913), 51. Although Wallace Martin attributes this pseudonym exclusively to Orage (*The New Age*, 236), Beatrice Hastings argues in her 1936 memoir that it was used by Orage, herself, and several other regular contributors to the magazine. See *The Old 'New Age': Orage—and Others* (London: Blue Moon Press, 1937), 17.

and modernism—is a very vexed pairing, albeit one absolutely central to any discussion of Orage's editorship. This binary is fraught with all the new complexities of British politics after the return of the Liberal Party to ascendancy in the House of Commons and a substantial increase in Labour representation.¹³ It is inflected by the issues related to disciplinary specialization that Martin invokes in the first epigraph above. It is marked as well by the class and regional/metropolitan politics that resonate through the *TLS* reviewer's derogatory assessment of 'English provincial intellectual[s]' and his criticisms of a young American academic's 'too orthodox' deployment of 'conventional categories of modern literary history'.

Class and regional politics also need to be taken into account in analyzing *The New Age's* readership during Orage's editorship, a readership that included both 'the leading literary and political figures of the day' and the socialist autodidacts and left-leaning graduates of Mechanics Institutes, working men's colleges, teacher-training colleges, extension lecture programs, and provincial universities who constituted its rank-and-file readership.¹⁴ The latter read it faithfully, and show up regularly in this magazine's extensive 'Letters to the Editor' columns alongside contributors whose names we still recognize. As Joseph McAleer and others have noted, many intellectuals and artists at the turn of the twentieth century blamed a newly universal primary education requirement and language-through-literature training in a vastly expanded state education system for producing a semi-literate populace.¹⁵ Orage, however, viewed quite optimistically the rapid expansion of print media and literacy rates at the turn of the twentieth century. When he and Jackson founded the Fabian Arts Group in 1906 and then began their editorship of *The New Age*, they were determined to reach 'a generation rising that finds *Tit-Bits* useless and *T.P.'s* [*Weekly*] unsatisfactory'.¹⁶ Their commitment to engaging a socially diverse readership in serious public discussions of politics, literature, and the arts informs the treatment of the modernist avant-garde in *The New Age's* pages, especially during the pre-war period—as will be discussed in the final section of this chapter. First, though, I wish to provide some biographical information about Orage and review the magazine's editorial practices and self-positioning in the media marketplace at the outset of Orage's tenure as editor.

¹³ See Latham, 'Introduction to Volume One'; and Rachel Potter, *Modernism and Democracy: Literary Culture 1900–1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 28–30.

¹⁴ Robert Scholes and staff of the Modernist Journals Project, 'General Introduction to *The New Age* 1907–1922'. Accessed Feb. 18, 2007. Available at <<http://dl.lib.brown.edu:8080/exist/mjp/display.xq?docid=mjp.2005.00.001>>

¹⁵ Joseph McAleer, *Popular Reading and Publishing in Britain, 1914–1950* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

¹⁶ A. R. Orage, 'Unedited Opinions. IV. Concerning THE NEW AGE', *The New Age*, 4:14 (Jan. 28, 1909), 280.

Enter stage left: A penny weekly determined to rival the six-penny reviews

In view of the gradual emergence from the tangle of sociological theory of a distinctly Socialist conception of Society, the time seems ripe for the appearance of a weekly Review devoted to the intelligent discussion and criticism, both of existing institutions and of plans and organizations for their reform.

... Far from confining the pages of the Review to dogmatic statements of a too hastily formulated Socialism, [the new editors of *The New Age*] will maintain the right of intelligence to challenge and revise any existing formulation.

‘The Future of the “New Age”’, *The New Age*, May 2, 1907¹⁷

Socialism in England has long stood in need of what you propose to give it— a Review which, without being official, shall be representative, and which shall direct itself primarily not at propaganda nor to politics, but to the development of Socialist thought. Particularly attractive, I think, should be your handling of contemporary literature and art, not, as in the ordinary Press, from vague, unspecified standpoints, but from a definitely Socialist position.

H. G. Wells, ‘Letters from the Front’, *The New Age*, May 2, 1907¹⁸

A. R. Orage was thirty-four when he began editing *The New Age*. Born just north of Leeds, the son of a schoolteacher who died in Orage’s childhood, leaving his family nearly destitute, Orage began his career in 1893 as a teacher with the Leeds Board School, which was then the second largest in the country and one of the most progressive.¹⁹ Joining the Independent Labour Party (ILP) in 1894, he wrote a popular political column, ‘A Bookish Causerie’, for the ILP weekly, the *Labour Leader*, from 1895 to 1897, and edited an ILP propaganda sheet called *Forward* with a print run of 50,000 per month distributed free of charge in Leeds. Introduced by his wife to the Theosophical Society in 1896, his growing interests in eastern mysticism and Edward Carpenter’s utopianism have been described as part of a general cultural trend toward ‘evolutionary optimism’ during the late 1890s.²⁰ Introduced by Holbrook Jackson to Friedrich Nietzsche’s work in 1900, the German philosopher’s work and Jackson’s friendship were decisive influences in his career, leading to Orage’s partnership with Jackson in the establishment of the Leeds Arts Club in 1903, then to their involvement in the establishment of the Fabian Arts Group, and finally to their purchase, with financial backing from George Bernard Shaw and Lewis Wallace, of *The New Age*.

¹⁷ ‘The Future of the “New Age”’, *The New Age*, 1:1 (May 2, 1907), 8.

¹⁸ Wells, ‘Letters from the Front’, 3.

¹⁹ Tom Steele, *Alfred Orage and the Leeds Arts Club 1893–1923* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1990), 28.

²⁰ Stanley Pierson, *British Socialists: The Journey from Fantasy to Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 193.

The conclusion that Tom Steele draws from telling this half of Orage's life story in *Alfred Orage and the Leeds Arts Club, 1893–1923* is crucial to my argument here. 'While it is a familiar metropolitan assumption that new ideas and avant-garde practices distil at the centre and then percolate to the "provinces," this is clearly not the whole story in Orage's case, Steele notes. Contrary to common perceptions, metropolitan culture may in fact depend on 'the energy of regional and colonial immigration... for its "vitality": may be "rejuvenated" by "news from nowhere" rather than always or necessarily taking the lead'.²¹ Steele's point is well taken: rather than being an entirely new venture for Orage and Jackson, *The New Age* was a new venue, in a new metropolitan setting, for the projects of social uplift these 'provincial intellectuals' first undertook in Leeds in the 1890s. Their ambitions for *The New Age* were informed by those earlier commitments, enterprises, and intellectual influences as well as by their belief in the educational ideal of Victorian journalism.²²

Writing for the *Labour Leader* in 1897, Orage complained about contemporary socialist periodicals' 'lack of method' and their 'shapeless mass of opinion, principles, and statistics'.²³ Writing subsequently for *The New Age*, his criticism of other socialist magazines is more precise. Although the political weeklies are 'excellent allies of Socialism' in their 'respective chosen fields', their association with specific political parties or organizations, together with their focus on a few specific issues, limits their horizon of interests too narrowly, *The New Age* announces in an unsigned editorial, 'The Future of THE NEW AGE', which appeared in the first issue of the first volume under Orage and Jackson's editorship. Defining socialism 'in its largest sense' as 'the will of Society to perfect itself', the editors argue that socialism's goal should be the creation of a society that functions as 'a commonwealth of free and responsible individuals'. Rather than 'confining' *The New Age* to 'dogmatic statements of a too hastily formulated Socialism', its new editors seek 'to maintain the right of intelligence to challenge and revise any existing formulation'. Believing that the 'object and purpose of the universal will of life is the creation of a race of supremely and progressively intelligent beings', they assign

²¹ Steele, *Alfred Orage*, 9.

²² Mark Hampton notes that Victorian newspapers could fulfill 'two related and overlapping educational functions. First, they could "influence," "inform," or "elevate" readers, bringing them into possession of certain supposedly established truths, such as the scientific basis of political economy and the wonders of the British constitution.' Second, 'in the most idealized version, newspapers were seen as creating an arena for public discussion on the "questions of the day"' (*Visions of the Press in Britain, 1850–1950* (Urbana/Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 9). This educational ideal, Hampton argues, 'held sway from the 1850 to the 1880s' but receded in prominence subsequently with the development of mass media (10). Faith in journalism's educational mission is central to *The New Age's* identity, as will be discussed further below.

²³ As quoted by Deian Hopkin, 'The Socialist Press in Britain 1890–1910', in George Boyce, James Curran, and Pauline Wingate (eds), *Newspaper History from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1978), 299.

The New Age the task of 'co-ordinating both the ideal and the reforming efforts of men', and 'bending' them toward the 'will of life' to create 'supremely intelligent beings'.²⁴

Note the radically democratic casting of *The New Age's* educational mission in this early editorial. Supreme intelligence is achievable by anyone whose life circumstances enable the development of a capacity for reason and an appreciation for art as humanity's highest form of expression. In other words, *The New Age's* endorsement of individualism's compatibility with socialism is marked as strongly by Oscar Wilde's arguments in 'The Soul of Man under Socialism' as it is by Nietzsche's notion of the *übermensch*.²⁵ Even after *The New Age* raised its price per issue from 1d. to 3d. in November 1909 and then again from 3d. to 6d. in November 1913, that is, even after it priced itself beyond the reach of a strictly working-class audience and gained 'the confidence and support' of a rising middle-class readership, the 'audience of kings' it sought to address is neither a social nor an educational elite.²⁶ Instead, 'the highest public in these islands' that it envisions, 'the one . . . destined most profoundly to influence the future',²⁷ is the 'large and socially unprecedented category' of Board-school-educated teachers, lower-middle-class office workers, and socialist autodidacts who constituted 'a public for progressive journalism on a scale never before known'.²⁸

But I'm getting ahead of myself here. We need to recognize how *The New Age* shifted from one 'discursive arena'²⁹ to another as it doubled its price per issue not once but twice during Orage's editorship and radically revised its advertising strategies, marketing itself ultimately to a rising middle-class readership that bought books, stayed abreast of current happenings in the arts, but typically rented rather than owned their homes.³⁰ We also need to recognize, though, how it initially presented itself in contrast to late-Victorian socialist weeklies such as Robert Blatchford's *Clarion*, the Social Democratic Federation's *Justice*, and the ILP's *Labour Leader*. Priced competitively initially at a penny an issue, *The New Age* set itself apart from these magazines in at least four important ways. First, it refused to

²⁴ 'The Future of THE NEW AGE', 1:1 (May 2, 1907), 8.

²⁵ Oscar Wilde, 'The Soul of Man under Socialism', in Robert Ross (ed.), *The Collected Works of Oscar Wilde*, 14 vols. (1908) (London: Routledge/Thoemmes, 1993), viii. 273–334.

²⁶ 'Our New Avatar', *The New Age*, 6:14 (Feb. 3, 1910), 317. ²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ John Carswell, *Lives and Letters: A. R. Orage, Beatrice Hastings, Katherine Mansfield, John Middleton Murry, S. S. Kotliansky: 1906–1957* (New York: New Directions, 1978), 31.

²⁹ Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism*, 104.

³⁰ Because *The New Age's* archives were lost when its editorial offices were bombed during World War II, documents like subscription lists, shareholder lists, and correspondence related to advertisements have not survived. Morrisson's careful analysis of such archival resources for *The Freewoman* and *New Freewoman* can, however, help us understand how *The New Age's* positioning in the periodical press marketplace changed as its pricing per issue increased from 1d. to 7d., and also the class standing of its readership. See Morrisson, *Public Face of Modernism*, 236–7 nn.

affiliate with any given socialist movement or political party—a rather tricky position to take initially, given George Bernard Shaw’s financial backing and the Fabian Arts Group’s endorsement of the new journal. Second, it granted itself ‘the right of intelligence’ to challenge ‘all existing formulation[s] of socialism’, a right that Orage states more negatively in 1910 when he complains that socialism is becoming entangled with ‘doctrinaires and fanatics’.³¹ Third, it chose to treat literature and the arts as serious content, rather than either excluding cultural matters entirely from its pages or including them only in response to/anticipation of public demand for lighter fare. And fourth, it set itself the task of sustaining a dialogue with ‘the magazines of its day’, not just with other socialist periodicals.³² The first two of these features are self-explanatory. The last two require further consideration, which I begin through discussion of *The Clarion*, one of *The New Age*’s key precursors and early rivals.

When Blatchford first established *The Clarion* in 1891, its full title was *The Clarion. Edited by ‘Nunquam.’ An Illustrated Weekly Journal of Literature, Politics, Fiction, Philosophy, Poetry, Theatricals, Criticisms, etc.* Subsequently, it was retitled *An Illustrated Weekly Magazine of Progressive Literature, Whimsical Fiction, Poetry, Theatricals, Cycling, Cricket, and Everything Else*.³³ As Orage was very aware, the Clarion Movement’s substantial commitments to cultural programming set it apart from Fabian Socialism, the Social Democratic Federation, and the ILP. But if *The Clarion* and *The New Age* shared an interest in expanding socialism’s focus beyond economic analysis and parliamentary activism, they diverged considerably in their characterizations of the role that the arts can or should play in the process of social evolution. *The Clarion* emphasized how the arts (music in particular) provide opportunities for socialist fellowship—and hence an uplifting alternative to the consumerism luring the working classes away from radical politics at the turn of the twentieth century.³⁴ If *The New Age* endorsed *The Clarion*’s campaign on behalf of ‘rational leisure’ in certain respects, especially during the earliest years of Orage’s editorship, its neo-Nietzschean view of art and philosophy as vital evolutionary forces contrasts sharply with the elements of whimsy and down-market entertainment value that *The Clarion*’s re-titling underscores. Although politics is always listed as the first term in the masthead triumvirate of ‘Politics, Literature, and Art’, *The New Age* very pointedly refused to downgrade the importance of its coverage

³¹ ‘Notes of the Week’, *The New Age*, 6:22 (Mar. 31, 1910), 506.

³² A. R. Orage, ‘A Bookish Causerie’, *The Labour Leader*, June 12, 1897, 194.

³³ Hampton, *Visions of the Press*, 87.

³⁴ See Chris Waters, *British Socialists and the Politics of Popular Culture, 1880–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990). For a more positive view of *The Clarion*’s engagements with commodity capitalism, see Barbara Green, ‘The New Woman’s Appetite for “Riotous Living”’: Rebecca West, Modernist Feminism, and the Everyday’, in Ann Ardis and Leslie W. Lewis (eds), *Women’s Experience of Modernity, 1875–1945* (Baltimore/London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 221–36.

of literature and art. Rejecting a classic Marxist modeling of the relationship between a society's economic base and its cultural superstructure and endorsing instead the organic conceptualization of culture Orage and Jackson inherited from Victorian sages such as John Ruskin, it staked unique claims on the seriousness of *all* the subjects treated in its pages. Moreover, unlike *The English Review* under Ford's editorship, it refused to be disheartened by the public's reluctance to form meaningful links between the 'purely' literary articles it featured and its political and more broadly cultural articles.³⁵

Orage's August 7, 1913 editorial, 'Journals Insurgent', is a key statement of these commitments. One of the 'revolutionary journal's' main challenges, Orage writes, is getting readers to recognize 'that life is not composed of water-tight compartments'. Many 'so-called revolutionary journals' assume that they need not concern themselves with 'the canons that govern the writing of books, the painting of pictures, the preaching of sermons, and even the fabric and texture of religion'. *The New Age*, however, has 'no such delusions': it understands that 'the literary work' of a revolutionary journal should function as the forward guard of a campaign for social change. 'It is our experience,' Orage states, that 'reviews and critiques' of literature and art 'hurt far more'—that is, disrupt the status quo far more effectively—'than our analysis of the wage-system, our attacks on the political parties or our advocacy of labour monopoly'.³⁶

The fourth distinctive feature of *The New Age*, its commitment to what we might now term Bakhtinian dialogism in the public sphere, pertains to the journal as a whole, not simply to its coverage of literature and art, though it is hinted at in Orage's emphasis above on the political efficacy of literary reviews and critiques.³⁷ What I mean by dialogism is a 'faith in the public sphere as a rational forum'³⁸ that encompasses a commitment to featuring opposing points of view in its pages as well as a sense of responsibility,³⁹ as a periodical, for knowing what other periodicals are publishing, and challenging any and all un-truths it sees being promulgated either in its own pages or elsewhere. 'If a magazine is to be of any value, it must keep in touch with the magazines of its day, testing itself by them, comparing notes with them, picking up hints from them, and generally profiting by the experience of magazines in circumstances like its own,' Orage wrote in the *Labour Leader*.⁴⁰ *The New Age* rises to this challenge by giving its editorial staff, regular contributors, and

³⁵ Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism*, 51.

³⁶ 'Journals Insurgent', *The New Age*, 13:15 (Aug. 7, 1913), 414–15, 415.

³⁷ M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).

³⁸ Patrick Collier, *Modernism on Fleet Street* (Aldershot/Burlington: Ashgate, 2006), 19.

³⁹ Orage characterizes *The New Age* as an 'organ of free speech' because of its willingness to feature opposing points of view in 'Our New Avatar', 317.

⁴⁰ Orage, 'A Bookish Causerie', 194.

readers numerous opportunities to make 'the magazines of its day' their subject-matter.

Historians of the British press often identify an increased emphasis on gathering facts or news as a distinguishing trait of the New Journalism.⁴¹ One of the distinguishing features of *The New Age*, however, is its meta-commentary on press coverage of the news. It rarely simply 'covers' current events: instead, it talks about how other periodicals talk about current events, whether the news at hand is a political event, a book's publication, or a lecture or exhibit at an art gallery. Columns such as 'Current Cant' and 'Press Cuttings' are a distinctive means of staging this kind of dialogism, though they are by no means the only forums for it in this magazine. As I argued in *Modernism and Cultural Conflict*, *The New Age* is an excellent source of information about the British newspaper industry in the early twentieth century because its range of references to dailies, weeklies, and monthly periodicals across the political and literary spectrum is truly extraordinary.⁴² *The New Age's* threads of dialogue with other periodicals also stretch far beyond the British newspaper industry, extending mainly to the United States, France, and Germany, though occasionally reaching still further beyond an English-language publishing ecosystem.

The other point to emphasize here is that such citations routinely defy hierarchies of status in the periodical press. *The New Age* never lets a periodical's prestige insulate it from criticism. Instead, as in the 'Current Cant' column for November 27, 1913, passages from *The Times* and *Tit-Bits* make cameo appearances alongside each other, together with snippets from *The Pall Mall Gazette*, *The Star*, *The Daily Express*, *The Daily Mail*, and *The Standard*, and quotations from Sir Thomas Lipton, Arnold White, Lena Ashwell, Harold Begbie, Father J. Hayes, Sir John Cockburn, the Mayor of Finsbury, A. C. Castlelaw, A. C. Benson, and the Revd Bernard Henry Bernlyn. All of these are cited entirely without introduction or contextualization, making the point of these comments' inclusion (whether for praise or parody) apparent only if readers are following *The New Age's* running commentary on contemporary affairs week after week, issue after issue.⁴³ Staging a public sphere that was ambitiously international, but less centered in metropolitan culture than contemporary scholarship on modernism tends to recognize, the *New Age* deliberately contravenes mainstream frames of reference and value.

Reflecting in April 1908 on the journal's inaugural year of publication under his editorship, Orage writes of its successes in the following terms:

The experiment of running a penny Socialist review that should not merely compare favourably with other penny papers, but boldly challenge comparison

⁴¹ Hampton, *Visions of the Press*, 94.

⁴² Ann Ardis, *Modernism and Cultural Conflict, 1880–1922* (New York/London: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 144.

⁴³ 'Current Cant', *The New Age*, 14:4 (Nov. 27, 1913), 100.

with the best sixpenny reviews, was in some respects a rash enterprise. Yet in view of the manifest necessity of lifting the discussion of Socialism out of the region of party and doctrinaire squabbles into the more invigorating air of intellectual discussion, the experiment seemed worth making as much on account of Socialism itself as on account of public discussion generally.⁴⁴

Because ‘friend and enemy of Socialism alike will find the need more and more insistent of some neutral ground where intelligences may meet on equal terms’, he then rededicates the magazine to its policy of intellectual freedom, noting with pride how *The New Age* stands at ‘the very forefront of modern journalism’ because of its willingness ‘to invite and welcome discussion even when, as sometimes happens, our own cherished convictions are the first to be challenged’.⁴⁵ These claims—that *The New Age* functions as a ‘neutral ground where intelligences may meet on equal terms’ and that it stands at ‘the very forefront of modern journalism’ because of its commitment to open-ended intellectual debate—need to be unpacked with some care. I do so by invoking both Lucy Delap’s archival research on periodical communities and Nancy Fraser’s revisionary work on public sphere theory.

Historians, Delap notes, ‘have found it helpful to read periodicals not as single entities but as participants in one or several “periodical communities.”’⁴⁶ Within such communities, journals ‘identify each other as important players, promote debate and controversy between each other, exchange material, share contributors and generally inhabit the same intellectual milieu’.⁴⁷ Such communities are ‘structured by fluid ideological affiliation, financial necessity, and close interdependence within personal networks’.⁴⁸ In the process of demonstrating how *The New Age* situated itself within a community of ‘modern’ periodicals that included *The English Review*, *The New Witness*, *The New Statesman*, *The New Freewoman*, *The Blue Review*, *Poetry and Drama*, and *Everyman*,⁴⁹ Delap also shows how Beatrice

⁴⁴ ‘To Our Readers’, *The New Age*, 2:26 (Apr. 25, 1908), 503. ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Lucy Delap, ‘Feminist and Anti-feminist Encounters in Edwardian Britain’, *Historical Research*, 78:201 (Aug. 2005), 388.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Lucy Delap, ‘*The Freewoman*, Periodical Communities, and the Feminist Reading Public’, *Princeton University Library Chronicle*, 61 (2000), 265.

⁴⁹ Delap, ‘Feminist and Anti-feminist Encounters’, 393–8. In defining *The New Age*’s ‘modern’ periodical community in this manner, Delap takes her cues from Orage himself. His ‘Readers and Writers’ column for May 29, 1913 ends with a discussion of ‘new magazines now being hatched’ for which ‘THE NEW AGE set the fashion’ (*The New Age*, 13:5 (May 29, 1913), 118). In addition to the magazines mentioned above, this self-styled ‘modern’ periodical community included the *Patrician* (whose appearance on the newsstand provided Orage with the occasion for this editorial) and ‘half a score of others’ Orage does not identify more specifically (‘Readers and Writers’, 119). As Delap notes, relationships within a periodical community can change radically over time, as is the case with *The English Review*—praised early on by *The New Age* as ‘the enemy of Toryism, Protectionism, the

Hastings, Orage's lover and the magazine's virtual co-editor from 1907 to 1914, brought suffrage journals like *Votes for Women* and *The Englishwoman* into *The New Age* community. Hastings's 'prolific contributions' to the magazine 'placed the women's movement centre-stage within that journal, and ensured continued readership amongst the feminists and suffragists, despite... [its] strong anti-feminist tendencies'.⁵⁰

Delap's extraordinarily careful archival scholarship is a model of the kind of attention to the 'complexities of periodical culture' required by the 'reassessment of modernism, media technology, and print culture which has been facilitated by the cultural turn of the humanities'.⁵¹ I wonder, though, whether her notion of *The New Age*'s 'modern' periodical community does full justice to Orage's boldest—and perhaps most audaciously futile—claims about why *The New Age* stands 'at the forefront of modern journalism'.

In one sense, even though Delap's own work focuses on *The New Age*'s 'modern' periodical community, her modeling of how periodical communities function allows me simply to extend her analysis of *The New Age* by recognizing its participation in at least three overlapping but nonetheless distinct periodical communities: the socialist periodical community discussed earlier; the community of 'modern', non-party-affiliated reviews exploring the 'peripheries of the political spectrum' that Delap discusses;⁵² and the transatlantic community of modernist 'little magazines' that began to constitute itself in 1912 with the establishment of *Poetry*.⁵³ *The New Age*'s socialist periodical community includes not only 'modern' periodicals like *The New Statesman* (established in 1913) but also, as noted earlier, late-Victorian magazines such as *Justice*, *The Labour Leader*, and *The Clarion*; moreover, it includes regional periodicals like the *Bristol Venture*, not just periodicals reaching

hereditary principle, all crankiness, and bad writing," but mocked in 1913 by *The New Age* as "a little cave of retreat for... youngish old men" ('Feminist and Anti-feminist Encounters', 388).

⁵⁰ Ibid. 393. For further discussion of Hastings's use of multiple pseudonyms in staging lively feminist and anti-feminist exchanges in *The New Age*, see Ann Ardis, 'Debating Feminism, Modernism, and Socialism: Beatrice Hastings' Voices in the *New Age*', in Bonnie Kime Scott (ed.), *The Gender Complex of Modernism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 310–59.

⁵¹ Sean Latham, 'Magazine Modernism', unpublished manuscript.

⁵² Delap, 'The Freewoman', 234.

⁵³ Suzanne W. Churchill and Adam McKible define 'little magazines' as 'non-commercial enterprises founded by individuals or small groups intent upon publishing experimental works or radical opinions of untried, unpopular, or under-represented writers' (Churchill, *The Little Magazine Others and the Renovation of Modern American Poetry* (Aldershot/Burlington: Ashgate, 2006), 8). The fact that current research on 'little magazines' by Churchill, McKible, and others is emphasizing 'the undecided, heterodox character of the avant-garde before it was simultaneously reduced to and aggrandized as "Modernism"' is obviously relevant to this discussion of *The New Age* (Churchill, *The Little Magazine Others*, 8). For reasons to be discussed further below, though, it is important to register how *The New Age* differs in format and focus from modernist literary 'little magazines', even though it is complexly imbedded in this periodical community in the 1910s.

metropolitan and/or international audiences. Its 'modern' periodical community includes literary reviews like *Poetry and Drama* and *The Blue Review* as well as 'intellectual-political-literary journals' like *The New Statesman* and *The New Witness*.⁵⁴ The latter, however, are not part of the transatlantic community of the modernist 'little magazines' with whom *The New Age* shared contributors such as T. E. Hulme, Wyndham Lewis, and Ezra Pound and about whom it provided extensive commentary—albeit not always laudatory, as exemplified by a 'Readers and Writers' column on the imminent publication of *BLAST*. 'I hear that a magazine, to be named "Blast," will shortly appear under the editorship of Mr Wyndham Lewis to provide a platform for the discussion of Cubism and other aesthetic phenomena,' 'R. H. C.' notes in January 1914.⁵⁵ But the editorial's quick turn to criticism in the very next sentence makes what might initially read like a promotional notice function as a critique rather than an endorsement: '[*BLAST*] will, of course, be amusing for an issue or two, and connoisseurs will purchase early numbers as an investment for their old age. *But will it encourage discussion, the one thing needed?*' (emphasis added). 'My own experience', 'R. H. C.' goes on to note, 'is that effective discussion can take place only in an independent arena. Arguments must meet on common ground. But the conductors of "Blast" will naturally be more concerned to propagate their ideas than to defend them.'⁵⁶

This criticism of *BLAST* begins to suggest why the very idea of periodical communities is somewhat misleading when applied to *The New Age*, for its dialogism with other magazines refuses containment within recognizable periodical communities and instead models an even more open-ended and unbounded ideal of debate in the public sphere. As Nancy Fraser writes in discussing recent efforts to revise and refine Jürgen Habermas's theory of the public sphere, 'community suggests a bounded and fairly homogeneous group, and it often connotes consensus'. 'Public', by contrast, 'emphasizes discursive interaction that is in principle unbounded and open-ended, and this in turn implies a plurality of perspectives.'⁵⁷ The idea of a public, she goes on to note, 'can accommodate internal differences, antagonisms, and debates better than the idea of a community'.⁵⁸ Invoking Geoff Eley's characterization of the public sphere as 'the structured setting where cultural and ideological contest or negotiation among a variety of publics takes place',⁵⁹ Fraser offers a definition of 'subaltern public spheres' that can help us appreciate

⁵⁴ Delap, 'The Freewoman', 234.

⁵⁵ 'R. H. C.', 'Readers and Writers', *The New Age*, 14:10 (Jan. 8, 1914), 307.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Nancy Fraser, 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy', in Craig Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA/London: MIT Press, 1997), 141.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid. 125, citing Geoff Eley, 'Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century', in Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, 306.

The New Age's self-positioning in relation to 'the magazines of its day'—not simply self-styled 'modern' periodicals, or socialist periodicals, or modernist 'little magazines', but 'the magazines of its day'.

Subaltern publics, Fraser argues, are 'parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs'.⁶⁰ If they 'function as spaces of withdrawal and regroupment', they also 'function as bases and training grounds for agitational activities directed toward wider publics'.⁶¹ The 'emancipatory potential' of a counter public sphere lies in 'the dialectic between these two functions,' Fraser suggests. Such a dialectic 'enables subaltern counter-publics partially to offset, though not wholly to eradicate, the unjust participatory privileges enjoyed by members of dominant social groups in stratified societies'.⁶² Fraser's concern whether members of different publics 'share enough in the way of values, expressive norms, and . . . protocols of persuasion' to 'engage productively in conversations aimed at achieving agreement through rational argument'⁶³ subsequently finds expression through her distinction between 'intrapublic' and 'interpublic' relations. 'Intrapublic relations' refers to the character and quality of discursive interactions within a given public sphere; 'interpublic relations' refers to the character of interactions among different publics.⁶⁴

Fraser's modeling of intra- and interpublic relations in a post-bourgeois public sphere can help us understand *The New Age's* unwillingness to identify exclusively with any given periodical community, its outreach, always, to an all-inclusive public, and its faith in the principle of 'unbounded and open-ended' discursive interaction.⁶⁵ When *The New Age* prints advertisements for portraits of Robert Blatchford and George Bernard Shaw (see Fig. 28), the 1909 *Socialist Annual*, and the red flag butterscotch that members of the Leeds Branches of the Social Democratic Party are selling ('All profits to the Socialist Movement') in its December 10, 1908 issue, it demonstrates its intrapublic engagements with the Clarion Movement, Fabian Socialism, and the Social Democratic Party and its immersion in what might be termed a socialist commodity culture.⁶⁶ But when it subsequently takes *The Clarion* to task for failing to cover the full range of developments within British socialism at the turn of the century;⁶⁷ or criticizes Fabian Socialists for their 'decadent' fascination with the bureaucrat machinery of the emerging welfare state, while also

⁶⁰ Fraser, 'Rethinking the Public Sphere', 123.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* 124.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.* 126.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 121–2.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 141.

⁶⁶ *The New Age*, 4:7 (Dec. 10, 1908), 139, 149, 128. In suggesting how fruitful further analysis of the world of *things* advertised in *The New Age* would be, I take a cue from Latham and Scholes's recent work on advertising and modern periodical studies and Barbara Green's work on suffrage collectibles during the British suffrage campaign. See Sean Latham and Robert Scholes, 'The Rise of Periodical Studies', *PMLA*, 121:2 (2006), 517–31; and Barbara Green, 'Things' in Ann Ardis and Patrick Collier (eds), *Transatlantic Print Culture, 1880–1940*. (London/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

⁶⁷ Geo. Brimelow, 'The Clarion', *The New Age*, 13:26 (Oct. 23, 1913), 773.

DECEMBER 10, 1908

THE NEW AGE

139

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Fig. 28. Advertisement from *The New Age* (Dec. 1908)

accusing both Fabians and the ILP for being out of touch with common wage-earners,⁶⁸ *The New Age* is challenging its socialist periodical community to engage differently in interpublic relations, function more strategically, more effectively, in relation to a larger public sphere. Similar dynamics obtain in *The New Age*'s dialogical engagements with its communities of 'modern' reviews and modernist literary magazines. Even though *The New Age* shared many contributors and freelist arrangements with magazines such as *The English Review*, *The Freewoman*, *BLAST*, and *The Egoist*, it never simply values its 'modern' and modernist periodical communities as spaces of withdrawal and regroupment but instead exhorts them to

⁶⁸ 'The Death of an Idea', *The New Age*, 13:11 (July 10, 1913), 287.

re-orient themselves toward a wider public and an ideal of open-ended intellectual exchange.

Consider briefly again 'R. H. C.'s biting criticisms of *BLAST* in the January 1914 'Readers and Writers' column about its first issue. What drives this critique is not so much a concern for *BLAST*'s potential interest to 'patron-investors',⁶⁹ though *The New Age* certainly recognizes how the economies of connoisseurship and patronage are supporting the modernist avant-garde. Rather, *The New Age*'s sharpest criticisms of *BLAST* concern its failure to provide a 'common ground' and an 'independent arena' for argument. What is meant by this? Wallace Martin's discussion of Orage's admiration for Addison and Steele's *Spectator*⁷⁰ sheds some light on this question by identifying the eighteenth-century source of 'the classical free speech model of civil society'⁷¹ that *The New Age* sought to reclaim for the twentieth century. Recent revisionary work on Habermas's theory of the public sphere, however, invites us to view quite critically Orage's ambitions for *The New Age* in this regard, given its existence not simply in a post-bourgeois public sphere but in an increasingly crowded media marketplace. Between 1890 and 1900, both the number and the circulation of newspapers increased hugely in Great Britain, peaking in 1900 with the publication of 172 daily newspapers.⁷² In 1922, the *annus mirabilis* of modernism and the last year of Orage's editorship of *The New Age*, more than 50,000 periodicals were published in Great Britain, and there were more than ten national daily newspapers, 'catering to millions of readers widely varying in class, political interest, and reading ability.'⁷³ We thus might ask: how did Orage hope to achieve an eighteenth-century ideal of face-to-face communicative interaction in the hyper-mediated environment of a mass society? How, exactly, is 'a critical-rational conversation' to be held among such a diverse audience?⁷⁴

Such questions take us back to this chapter's epigraphs: to Martin's suggestion that Orage wanted *The New Age* to mediate between specialized fields of knowledge

⁶⁹ Lawrence Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1998), 39.

⁷⁰ Martin, *The New Age*, 98.

⁷¹ Collier, *Modernism on Fleet Street*, 202.

⁷² Alan J. Lee, *The Origins of the Popular Press in England 1855–1914* (London: Croom Helm; Totowa, NJ: Rowan and Littlefield, 1978), 131.

⁷³ Collier, *Modernism on Fleet Street*, 202.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* 203. As Collier notes, the confidence in an ideal of face-to-face communication that Orage professes here was widely shared in the early twentieth century. Very few participants in wide-ranging public discussions of democracy and the media 'seemed to recognize that the classical free speech model of civil society, which structured almost all discussions of these issues, had never been adapted to the hyper-mediated nature of *fin de siècle* and early twentieth century capitalist societies' (*ibid.* 202). The early optimism about mass publishing that lends such confidence to the efforts of editors like Ford Madox Hueffer, Orage, and Dora Marsden in the pre-war period 'disappeared entirely in the years of modernism's maturity—the 1920s and 1930s—which were marked by pervasive cultural pessimism about reading, publishing, and the public sphere' (*ibid.* 204).

and public understanding, and the *TLS* reviewer's contemptuous characterization of it as a farraginous chronicle. *The New Age* was indeed a farraginous chronicle: 'miscellaneous, indiscriminate, a hotch-potch'.⁷⁵ And it was deliberately so, because it positioned itself within multiple periodical communities, yet refused either to contain its activities within any given counter public sphere or to conform to the generic expectations of either one-penny political weeklies or up-market (at 3d., 6d., or 7d./issue) 'little magazines' devoted to the arts. In upholding the nineteenth-century educational ideal of journalism as well as the classical free speech model of civil society, it sought to engage its socially diverse readership—an audience that was 'not Bloomsbury', not 'a creature of the great traditional universities and public schools'—in serious discussions of serious matters.⁷⁶ If it posthumously earns the contempt of an anonymous *TLS* reviewer for reaching out to 'a generation rising' that 'finds *Tit-Bits* useless and *T.P.'s* [*Weekly*] unsatisfactory', we might well wonder about the professional, institutional, and class politics lacing this reviewer's remarks with disdain so transparently. As for the *TLS* reviewer's argument that Martin 'contrived an approach that is simply too orthodox for so queer a journal as *The New Age*', I would note instead that the story Martin tells about the history of literary forms in the twentieth century is *the* story of modernism's rise to cultural prominence and institutionalization as a subject of academic study. That Martin's history of *The New Age* is imbricated with the professional orthodoxies of English language and literature studies in the 1960s should not be held against him, as the *TLS* reviewer seems to do in criticizing his deployment of 'conventional categories of modern literary history'. Rather, we need to historicize these conventions as we also attempt to distinguish 'historical modernism'—the work of the modernist avant-garde, as published in its original material historical context(s)—from the interpretative and evaluative paradigms through which the study of early twentieth-century literature and art was institutionalized in the 1920s, 1930s, and beyond.⁷⁷

Thickening the muddle of modernism

Twinkle, twinkle, Ezra Pound,
 Like a candle underground.
 Cubes, potatoes, prunes, and prisms
 Summarise your witticisms . . .
 Twinkle, twinkle my NEW AGE

⁷⁵ *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 964.

⁷⁶ Scholes et al., 'General Introduction', 15.

⁷⁷ 'Historical modernism' is Aaron Jaffe's term, as used in *Modernism and the Culture of Celebrity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 12.

Star shells burst on every page,
 By whose light you boldly tilt
 At the mills of England's guilt.

L'Hibou, *The New Age*, July 15, 1915

The *New Age* was an important venue of avant-garde publication in London during the pre-war period, perhaps even *the* venue of avant-garde publication after Ford's editorship of *The English Review* ended in November 1909 and before the establishment of, respectively, *Rhythm*, *BLAST*, and *The Egoist*. It published a multiplicity of works by writers such as F. T. Marinetti, T. E. Hulme, Wyndham Lewis, and Ezra Pound during this period, and provided extensive commentary on magazines such as *BLAST*, *Glebe*, *Rhythm*, *The Egoist*, and *The Little Review* throughout Orage's editorship. Unlike the modernist 'little magazines' with whom it shared so many contributors, however, it never simply promoted experimental art and literature. Instead, as the epigraph to this section suggests, it presented such work *and* subjected it to intense criticism.⁷⁸ Sometimes, as here, such criticism took the form of parody. Sometimes it was expressed seriously in feature articles by the editor or other regular contributors; sometimes it was sustained through letters to the editor that continued debate about such concerns from one issue of the magazine to the next. Always, however, these criticisms are colored, albeit in different ways at different points in time, by the liveliness of open-ended intellectual exchange in counter public spheres where 'anarchism and authoritarianism rubbed shoulders, and politics mixed with art more deeply than in other places'.⁷⁹

When Pound writes about *The New Age* in his 1930 retrospective on 'small magazines' for *The English Journal*, he describes it as 'a durable London weekly devoted to guild socialism' that 'allot[ed] a few pages of each issue to art and letters regardless of their economic bearing and indifferent to their capacity to please the British *universitaire* taste'.⁸⁰ That is, he oversimplifies its political affiliations (which changed over time rather than either starting or remaining exclusively focused on Guild Socialism); under-represents the amount of space dedicated to literature and art in any given issue; neglects entirely to mention any of the topics it featured prominently in the closing years of Orage's editorship, such as C. H. Douglas's theory of Social Credit, Freudian psychoanalysis, and Gurdjieffian mysticism; and emphasizes its refusal to kowtow to academia on matters of taste. He assigns it a bit part in the material history of Anglo-American modernism when he claims

⁷⁸ For further discussion of these issues, see Ann Ardis, 'The Dialogics of Modernism(s) in the *New Age*', *Modernism/Modernity*, 14:3 (Sept. 2007); and Ardis, *Modernism and Cultural Conflict*, 143–72.

⁷⁹ Scholes et al., 'General Introduction', 15.

⁸⁰ Ezra Pound, 'Small Magazines', *The English Journal*, 19:9 (Nov. 1930), 693.

that 'the *Egoist* took on what the *New Age* would not print'.⁸¹ In doing so, he also fails to acknowledge either its role in the earliest part of his own career in London or the education in Social Credit he gained from it in the late 1910s and early twenties.

In concluding her recent study of the 'little magazine' *Others*, Suzanne Churchill notes that current scholarship on the 'little magazines' is 'remind[ing] us of the necessity of remaining embedded in the muddle of modernism, even as we continue to seek more expansive and inclusive paradigms'.⁸² The muddle of modernism, I would suggest, only becomes thicker, and productively so, as material historical research on Anglo-American modernism's first emergence in the public sphere expands beyond the 'little magazines'. In a magazine like *The New Age*, not only do 'various versions of modernism...engage one another in a version of Socratic dialectic'.⁸³ The dialogics of modernism in its pages are more inclusive still, encompassing outright attacks on modernist aesthetics and expositions of explicitly non- and anti-modernist agendas for the arts. As we continue trying to understand the 'mediamorphosis' of print at the turn of the twentieth century,⁸⁴ we need to develop 'historically based models' for considering 'how the shaping of taste by magazines is a collective project, not a matter of the atomized influence of single publications'.⁸⁵ The richness of *The New Age's* interpublic relations with other periodicals, and the availability of new digital resources to facilitate its study, make this magazine an unusually good place to continue such work.

⁸¹ Ibid. I discuss *The New Age's* importance to Pound as a venue of publication in the pre-war period in more detail in 'The Dialogics of Modernism(s)'. It is worth noting here that Pound's treatment of *The New Age* in 'Small Magazines' parallels his treatment of Harriet Munroe's *Poetry*: although they played key roles in his career before World War I, they are scripted into the margins of the history he is crafting for posterity in 1930.

⁸² Churchill, *The Little Magazine Others*, 222.

⁸³ Scholes et al., 'General Introduction', 13. See also Robert Scholes, *Paradoxy of Modernism* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2006), 33–94.

⁸⁴ Andrew King and John Plunkett (eds), *Victorian Print Media* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁸⁵ Alan C. Golding, 'The *Dial*, the *Little Review*, and the Dialogics of Modernism', *American Periodicals*, 15:1 (2005), 43.

FORD MADOX FORD AND *THE ENGLISH REVIEW* (1908–37)

CLIFF WULFMAN

The English Review is one of the most celebrated of the ‘little magazines’, though with its plain blue covers and generous girth it hardly resembled one, so much so that Hoffman, Allen, and Ulrich do not include it in either portion of their foundational *The Little Magazine: A History and a Bibliography*. Writing in 1930, Ezra Pound, one of its many luminary contributors, had this to say about it:

The term ‘Little Magazines’ might seem to exclude the *English Review* as it was in 1908 and 1909 to 1910. It had the format of an old established review. It professed vainly to take its place with other permanent periodicals. It failed into obscure glory. It committed the error of not dying in its own name. It was denatured and voided of significance. Nevertheless, it might be taken as paradigm. It was, under Ford Madox Hueffer (Ford), the most brilliant piece of editing I have known. In its first year and a half it printed not only the work of Hardy, Swinburne, Henry James, Anatole France, various other monuments, various other writers of extensive reputation (Wells, Galsworthy, Bennett, etc.), but it also printed the work of, I think, all the first-rate and second-rate (as distinct from third-, fourth-, and fifth-rate) writers then in London: Wyndham Lewis, D. H. Lawrence (his earliest printed work), myself, Cannan, Walpole, etc. Eliot had not then reached London. Joyce’s *Dubliners* was not then written, or at any rate the manuscripts were not submitted.¹

This posthumous assessment of the unique importance of *The English Review* under Ford Madox Ford was shared by others who had taken a part in it. Douglas Goldring, the poet, novelist, essayist, and editor of *The Tramp* who for a year served as Ford’s sub-editor, echoed Pound’s assessment of the *Review*’s importance and Ford’s genius as an editor:

¹ Ezra Pound, ‘Small Magazines’, *The English Journal*, 19:9 (Nov. 1930), 693.

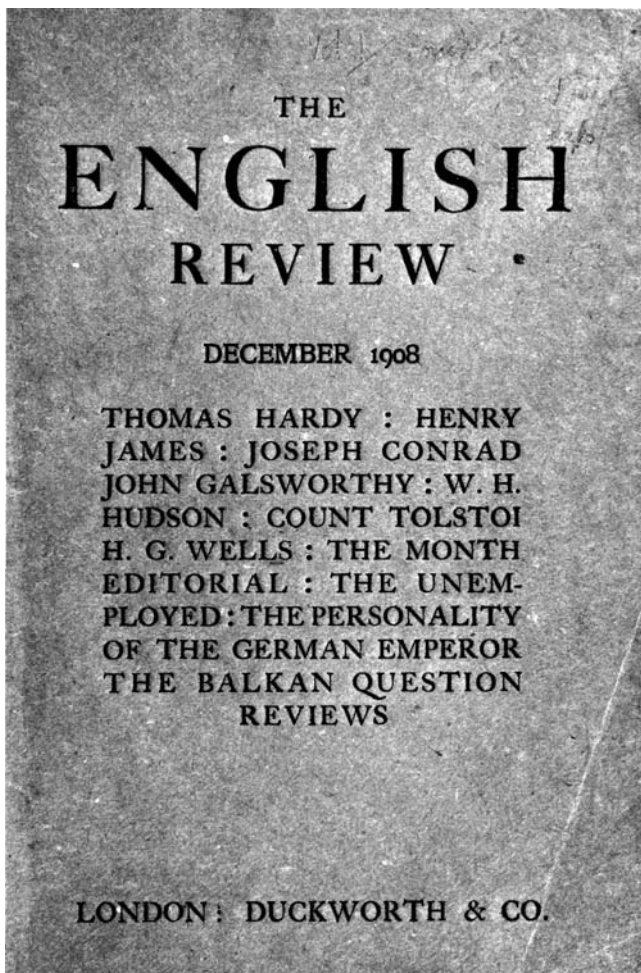


Fig. 29. Cover of *The English Review* (Dec. 1908)

Beside me on my desk, as I write, are the twelve issues for which Ford was responsible. As a rule, nothing could be duller than a run of back numbers of a thirty-year-old periodical. It is proof of Ford's genius as an editor—no other word than genius is adequate, for there has been nothing like it before or since, in England or, so far as I am aware, in any other country—that they are as excitingly alive today as they were when they appeared.²

The English Review is often perceived as a fountainhead of modernism, yet its source is firmly located in the Edwardian period. In its first year, at least, its concerns

² Douglas Goldring, *South Lodge: Reminiscences of Violet Hunt, Ford Madox Ford and the English Review Circle* (London: Constable, 1943), 54.

were Edwardian concerns, and, as Pound says, under Ford's editorship its writers were overwhelmingly those 'monuments' and 'writers of extensive reputation' who preceded the iconoclastic modernists. Nevertheless, it is for its publication of young, unknown writers—'les jeunes', as Ford called them—that the magazine is most remembered. Its history illuminates a cultural tension about the meaning of maturity and the role of periodicals in defining and promulgating it.

The founding of *The English Review* is shrouded in myth, as are so many things Ford Madox Ford did. The principal legend is that Ford founded *The English Review* in order to print a scandalous poem by Thomas Hardy about a botched abortion. In *Return to Yesterday*, Ford tells how his friend Arthur Marwood (the mathematician and Tory gentleman on whom Ford modeled Christopher Tietjens), in a great state of agitation, had shown him a paragraph in a newspaper stating that *The Cornhill Magazine* had refused to print this poem on the score of its immorality: 'All the other heavy and semi-heavy monthlies, all the weeklies, all the daily papers in England had similarly refused. Marwood said: "You must print it. We can't have the country made a laughing stock."' ³

This is the story most often cited, but Ford himself contradicts it in the same volume, saying, 'My own most urgent motive was to provide some money for Conrad by printing *A Personal Record* and other things which I extracted from him.'⁴ Douglas Goldring thought Ford was impelled in his desire to 'assert himself in an editorial capacity' by his dismissal from the staff of *Books*, a supplement to Northcliffe's *Daily Mail*.⁵ Ford had published a series of 'Literary Portraits' in *Books* between April and July of 1907; after the demise of *Books* he continued the series in the *Tribune* from July 1907 to January 1908.⁶ In these essays, Ford articulated an exasperation with the state of literature in England and an emphasis on literary technique. He had expressed these same concerns as early as 1901, when he wrote to Edward Garnett about a literary companion to the Library of Art:

The idea keeps booming in my head: Why shouldn't there be a popular Library of Literature on the lines of yr. Library of Art?—conceived on the broad general idea of making manifest, to the most unintelligent, how great writers *get their effects*. As distinct from the general line of tub-thumping about moral purposes, the number of feet in a verse, or the amiable & noble ideas entertained, by said Great Writers, of elevating & making the world a better place.⁷

³ Ford Madox Ford, *Return to Yesterday* (London: Gollancz, 1931), 370.

⁴ *Ibid.* 191.

⁵ Douglas Goldring, *Trained for Genius: The Life and Writings of Ford Madox Ford* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1949), 139.

⁶ Ralph Herman Ruedy, *Ford Madox Ford and The English Review*, unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Duke University, 1976, 45.

⁷ Ford Madox Ford, 'Letter to Edward Garnett', 1901? in *Letters of Ford Madox Ford*, ed. Richard M. Ludwig (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965), 15.

In an unpublished dissertation which is still the most comprehensive account of *The English Review*, Ralph Ruedy gives the third and most plausible account of the magazine's founding. In 1908 Ford, Conrad, and H. G. Wells were all living in the same neighborhood in Winchelsea. Wells was concerned that his new novel *Tono-Bungay* was unlikely to yield much recognition or remuneration in the hands of a commercial publisher, and it appears that Ford persuaded Wells to serialize it in a new monthly which they would jointly edit. Wells initially agreed to cover half the start-up cost as well (Ford was to put up the other half), but soon backed out of both obligations (indeed, although *Tono-Bungay* was serialized in the first volume of *The English Review*, disagreements over payment for the installments ended their friendship).⁸ In August of 1908, Marwood offered to back the endeavor for four issues, Hardy agreed to contribute his poem, and *The English Review* was off and running.

Ford began soliciting contributions. In August, Conrad dictated at least one and a half installments of reminiscences to Ford while the latter stayed with the Conrads in Aldington. Constance Garnett offered her translation of a story by Tolstoy, and appeals to Henry James yielded 'The Jolly Corner'. Douglas Goldring was retained as sub-editor (without pay); Goldring hired Olive Thomas (who later became secretary to Lloyd George) as secretary. In November, Ford appointed the young novelist Stephen Reynolds to be business manager, but Reynolds lasted only two months, and the business affairs of *The English Review* devolved (disastrously) to Ford. To his contributors Ford offered a novel profit-sharing option: get a flat rate of £2 per thousand words for their work or 'take a sporting risk which might be estimated as a two to one chance against you, as a shareholder'.⁹ Ford acknowledged the impracticality of this scheme but professed himself an idealist. 'My ideal', he wrote to Edward Garnett, 'is to run the "English Review" as far as possible as a socialistic undertaking. The kicks I shall get will be the price I pay for indulging my idealism and these I trust to bear with equanimity.'¹⁰ There were to be kicks aplenty.

Ford circulated an editorial prospectus soliciting contributions and declaring the aims of the new periodical:

The only qualification for admission to the pages of the Review will be—in the view of the Editors—either distinction of individuality or force of conviction, either literary gifts or earnestness of purpose whatever the purpose may be—the criterion of inclusion being the clarity of diction, the force or the illuminative value of the views expressed. What will be avoided will be superficiality of the specially modern kind which is the inevitable consequence when nothing but

⁸ Max Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 258.

⁹ Ford to Edward Garnett, quoted *ibid.* 243.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

brevity of statement is aimed at. *The English Review* will treat its readers, not as spoiled children who must be amused by a variety of games, but with the respectful consideration due to grown-up minds whose leisure can be interested by something else than the crispness and glitter of a popular statement.¹¹

The appeal to grown-up minds was noted approvingly by Arnold Bennett who, writing as 'Jacob Tonson' in the 'Books and Persons' section of *The New Age*, anticipates a critical earnestness and an unusual level of maturity from the new review and its young editor:

I think it may even accomplish what no review has ever done before—namely, the absolute exclusion from its pages of articles written not by an essayist who wanted to say something in particular, but by an essayist who wanted to fill up spare time by doing something—anything of a harmless nature for a review.¹²

This prospectus is worth examining in some detail, because it is a type of contradiction, a 'speaking against' contemporary print culture that also contradicts itself. 'In Ford's attempt to promote *The English Review* as a disinterested centrist forum that could accommodate a wide range of heterodoxy,' Morrisson writes, 'he tried to redraw the boundaries of the genre by which it was interpreted.'¹³ The genre to which Morrisson refers is the literary periodical in its various forms, from the daily papers like *The Daily News*, *The Daily Mail*, or *The Pall Mall Gazette*, to weeklies like *The New Age*, *The Athenaeum*, *The Academy*, *The Spectator*, and *The Saturday Review*, to the quarterlies like *The Edinburgh* and *The Quarterly*, but especially to the 'serious' monthly reviews like *The Fortnightly*, *Contemporary*, *Nineteenth Century and After*, *National*, *Blackwood's*, and the *Westminster*. 'While Ford's *English Review* has been widely lauded as the great literary magazine of its day,' writes Morrisson, 'its cultural position and reception must be understood against the background of the genre of journal whose founder and greatest surviving member was the *Fortnightly*.'¹⁴

But Ford's prospectus suggests he was also trying to situate *The English Review* within the larger realm of mass magazines like *The Strand*, *Collier's*, *Century*, and *The Saturday Evening Post*. The terms by which Ford defines *The English Review*—'clarity', 'force', 'illumination'—connote the Enlightenment ideals of disinterested public engagement Morrisson identifies with the Edwardian 'myth of the whole', but these qualities were advocated (if not always realized) by most of the literary periodicals. By explicitly contrasting the inclusive criteria of *The English Review* with the 'superficiality', 'brevity', 'crispness', and 'glitter' of 'the specially modern

¹¹ Quoted in Violet Hunt, *The Flurried Years* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1926), 27–8.

¹² *The New Age*, 4:4 (Nov. 19, 1908), 72.

¹³ Mark Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism: Little Magazines, Audiences, and Reception 1905–1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), 39.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 46.

kind', Ford identifies another genre, the mass-market magazine, against which the forthcoming periodical was to be defined. Such an opposition is meaningful only if it draws a real distinction; by choosing to articulate it Ford shows that he is trying to identify, if not invent, a readership familiar with both serious literary reviews and popular magazines.

Ford appeals to this readership through the trope of maturity. Those who are drawn to mass-market magazines are 'children' whose critical sensibilities have been 'spoiled' by excessive exposure to glittering superficiality; they cannot be engaged or instructed, only 'amused'. The imagined readership of *The English Review* has outgrown amusements; the 'grown-up mind' has a class-marked 'leisure' that can be 'interested' and which has earned the respectful consideration of Ford Madox Hueffer and his earnest writers. Though inflected by class, the contrast is nevertheless progressive; it suggests that the modern reader, though perhaps spoiled by mass media sweets, can still grow up, can still aspire to the mythic whole—by reading and subscribing to *The English Review*.

Amusements are not so easily abandoned, however. The games to which Ford refers are, it seems clear, the puzzles, contests, trading cards, and other distractions that were features of advertisements in popular magazines. Yet as Ellen Gruber Garvey points out, these games, while aimed squarely at engaging the reader's interest in particular products, nevertheless served a pedagogical purpose: they taught readers to pay close attention to words, to look for connections across texts, and to gather and collate evidence.¹⁵ In short, they taught the close reading skills required by the disinterested grown-up mind. Thus Ford's prospectus for *The English Review* is a contradiction: while speaking against the superficiality of contemporary mass print culture and defining the new review against it, Ford also seeks the attention of the mass print audience and appeals to its desire for maturity by exercising reading habits inculcated by mass-market juvenilia. We can, then, characterize the readership Ford sought as intellectually transitional—what we now call adolescent.

The first number of *The English Review* was published in December 1908 at a price of half a crown, and its contents are legendary. It begins with Hardy's 'A Sunday Morning Tragedy' (all the numbers under Ford would begin with poetry), and is followed by Henry James's 'The Jolly Corner'; an installment of Conrad's *Reminiscences*; a translation of Tolstoy's 'The Raid' by Constance Garnett; the first installment of H. G. Wells's *Tono-Bungay*; and contributions by John Galsworthy and W. H. Hudson. It concludes with an editorial section ('The Month'), which contains editorials by Ford, R. B. Cunninghame Graham, W. H. Davies, Arthur Marwood, and Henry Nevinson, and reviews by Conrad and Levin Schucking.

¹⁵ Ellen Gruber Garvey, *The Adman in the Parlor: Magazines and the Gendering of Consumer Culture, 1880s to 1910s* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), chapter 2.

What to Read?

IT is always a difficult little problem, but you can solve it by getting "THE BOOK MONTHLY," which appears at the beginning of each month and costs only 6d. net.

¶ This magazine gives every information about the books of the hour—those that are out and those just coming out; it has special literary articles, fresh literary gossip, and it is beautifully illustrated. If you master the contents of "THE BOOK MONTHLY"—and it is always pleasant reading—you will be able to hold your own in dinner-table talk, which, when the weather and kindred topics have been exhausted, generally passes to books.

¶ You can order "THE BOOK MONTHLY" through any bookseller, bookstall or newsagent; or you may send eight shillings for a year's post-paid subscription to the publishers, Simpkin, Marshall & Co., Stationers' Hall Court, London, who, on application, will forward a specimen copy free.

Fig. 30. Advertisement, 'What to Read', from *English Review* (Dec. 1908)

Once again, legend distorts the facts; the first pages after its plain blue cover contain, not Hardy's poem, but sixteen pages of publisher's advertisements, interspersed with advertisements for pharmaceuticals and reflex cameras. One of these advertisements, for 'The Book Monthly', addresses the question 'What to Read?' (see Fig. 30). It promises to solve this 'difficult little problem' by providing 'every information about the books of the hour'. 'If you master the contents of "THE BOOK MONTHLY"—and it is always pleasant reading—you will be able to hold your own in dinner-table talk, which, when weather and kindred topics have been exhausted, generally passes to books.'¹⁶ While Ford's prospectus aims his review at 'grown-up minds' and Bennett anticipates its critical seriousness, the advertisers are aiming at a different readership: a middle-class readership anxious to appear well read in social settings. The subscriber need not actually read books; he (and

¹⁶ 'The Book Monthly' (Advertisement), *The English Review*, 1:1 (Dec. 1908), p. vii.

it is clearly he) has only to read a magazine about books and the literary world ('The Book Monthly' contains 'special literary articles, fresh literary gossip, and it is beautifully illustrated') to be sophisticated. The rigor of engagement with the grown-up ideas (of the sort being expressed in the pages of *The English Review*) is acknowledged, but it is palliated through displacement onto 'mastery' of its substitute, which promises a blandness ('and it is always pleasant reading') that will not threaten sensibilities.¹⁷

Ford's *Review* was eagerly anticipated and mostly well received, and for the next fourteen months it was a cornucopia. Each issue was divided into three sections: a few pages of poetry (headed 'Modern Poetry' starting with the third issue), followed by a long section of *belles-lettres*, and concluding with a section titled 'The Month', which contained reviews, criticism, and miscellaneous items. Unlike many of his contemporaries, who were eager to escape the shadow of the nineteenth century, Ford revered his Victorian forbears, whom he called 'Ancient Lights', and he went to considerable trouble to publish works by them, though he obtained very few.¹⁸ Hardy's poem, already discussed, appeared in the first issue; in the second, Ford published a long, humorous poem by Dante Gabriel Rossetti from 1882, 'The Ballad of Jan Van Hunks', which he obtained from Theodore Watts-Dunton; an essay by Watts-Dunton and a letter by Meredith appear in the same issue. Watts-Dunton also provided Ford with a review article by Swinburne, though it did not appear until May 1910, after Ford lost control of the magazine.¹⁹

The lasting reputation of *The English Review* under Ford's editorship, however, rests on the 'discoveries' he made and the top-drawer poets, novelists, and essayists he published. Ralph Ruedy notes that of the more than one hundred writers published during Ford's tenure, over half were well known enough to have been mentioned in the 1909 edition of *Who's Who*. This list included William Butler Yeats, T. Sturge Moore, W. W. Gibson, Walter de la Mare, Rupert Brooke, and F. S. Flint, along with a number of poets who are unremarked today; the novelists Henry James, Joseph Conrad, Bennett, and Galsworthy (who also published poems in the *Review*), and numerous essayists.²⁰

Most of all, the year under Ford is remembered for his publication of three unknown writers who were to go on to become major voices in modernism. In *South Lodge*, Douglas Goldring tells one version (there are at least three) of

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Once again the trope of maturity figures in the language of *The English Review*. This time Ford's contrasting terms 'ancient lights' and 'les jeunes' connote a comparison of the enlightened wisdom of eminent Victorians with the vigor and originality of the moderns. Arthur Mizener suggests Ford felt himself lost in the generation gap, identifying with and accepted by neither (Arthur Mizener, *The Saddest Story: A Biography of Ford Madox Ford* (New York/Cleveland: World Publishing, 1971), 246–7).

¹⁹ Goldring, *South Lodge*, 51.

²⁰ Ruedy, *Ford Madox Ford and The English Review*, 64

how Wyndham Lewis submitted his manuscript for Ford's consideration after discovering the editor taking a bath:

Disregarding any unconventionality in his surroundings, the 'Enemy' at once proceeded to business. After announcing in the most matter-of-fact way that he was a man of genius and that he had a manuscript for publication, he asked if he might read it. 'Go ahead', Ford murmured, continuing to use his sponge. Lewis then unbuttoned his coat, produced 'The Pole' and read it through. At the end, Ford observed 'Well, that's all right. If you'll leave it behind, we'll certainly print it.'²¹

The interview then terminated. 'I cannot vouch for the accuracy of this, or indeed any of Ford's anecdotes,' Goldring concludes, 'but if it didn't happen it ought to have done.'²² 'The Pole' was published in the May 1909 issue; two other character sketches, 'Some Innkeepers and Bestre' and 'Les Saltimbanques', were published in issues 7 and 9.

Ford made the acquaintance of Ezra Pound sometime in 1909 (Goldring and Brita Lindberg-Seyersted say they were introduced by May Sinclair)²³ and Pound became a regular member of the circle of 'les jeunes' that gathered at 84 Holland Park Avenue and later at South Lodge. They remained friends for thirty years. Ford published Pound's 'Sestina: Altaforte' in the June 1909 issue; it was the first time Pound had appeared in a notable English magazine.²⁴ In October, *The English Review* published the 'Ballad of the Goodly Fere', and two other poems; three canzoni appeared in the January 1910 issue, and other work was published after Ford left the magazine. Pound's remarks on Ford and *The English Review* in 'Small Magazines' are only one of numerous occasions in which he praised the magazine and its editor, whom he credited with '[doing] the work for English writing'²⁵ and teaching him much about the theory and practice of poetry. 'I would rather talk about poetry with Ford Madox Hueffer,' Pound wrote in *Poetry*, 'than with any man in London.'²⁶

D. H. Lawrence was a teacher in the Midlands when the first issues of *The English Review* began to appear. Jessie Chambers recollected its importance:

The coming of the *English Review* into our lives was an event, one of the few really first-rate things that happen now and again in a lifetime. I remember what a joy it

²¹ Goldring, *South Lodge*, 40. ²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.* 39; Ezra Pound and Ford Madox Ford, *Pound/Ford, the Story of a Literary Friendship: The Correspondence between Ezra Pound and Ford Madox Ford and Their Writings about Each Other*, ed. Brita Lindberg-Seyersted (London: Faber and Faber, 1982), 4.

²⁴ See Pound and Ford, *Pound/Ford, the Story of a Literary Friendship*, 5.

²⁵ Ezra Pound to Michael Roberts, July 1937, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound, 1907–1941*, ed. D. D. Paige (New York: New Directions, 1971), 296.

²⁶ Ezra Pound, 'Status Rerum', *Poetry* (Jan. 1913), 125.

was to get the solid, handsome journal from our local newsagent, and feel it was a link with the world of literature.²⁷

In the summer of 1909, Chambers persuaded Lawrence to submit some poems, and in November, Ford published a sequence called 'A Still Afternoon', Lawrence's first significant appearance in print. 'Goose Fair', a short story, was published in the February 1910 issue, Ford's last, but he had already accepted Lawrence's 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' (it appeared in the June 1911 issue).

Critical opinion has concurred with Pound's assessment that Ford 'did the *work* for English writing'. With his focus on 'imaginative literature' and the critical attitude, Ford's work was both centrifugal and centripetal. 'He [Ford] not only gathered together all the great talents of early English modernism,' Max Saunders writes, 'by constellating them he created a coherent impression not of a movement so much as of a literary moment—and of the qualities of writing to be prized at that moment.'²⁸ Frank MacShane goes further, suggesting that:

with Lawrence and Pound and Lewis and Canaan, the *English Review* really became the center of a revival in English letters. While consolidating and confirming the reputations of older writers, it also inspired new movements among the younger writers and was ultimately responsible for Imagism and Vorticism.²⁹

Unfortunately, Ford's brilliance as an editor was not matched by fiscal acumen. By the spring of 1909 the *Review* was already in financial distress. Ford later estimated that he and Marwood started the *Review* with £5,000, two-fifths contributed by Marwood and the remaining three-fifths by Ford himself, enough for four issues. But despite the high acclaim accorded *The English Review*, its circulation never rose above about 1,000 copies a month³⁰—far lower than the 5,000 copies anticipated in the first print run³¹—and the seed money was soon spent. Ford's personal life also contributed to the crisis. He had quarreled with many of his friends and contributors: he had fought with Wells over installments of *Tono-Bungay*, and his once-intimate relationship with Conrad had turned poisonous. Even his friendship with Marwood soured under allegations that the latter had made improper advances on Elsie Hueffer. Most disastrously of all, Ford had taken up with Violet Hunt, and their affair became the source of very public scandal and gossip. Ford was shunned in many respectable circles and support for his journal cooled.

Ford began to look for a buyer and found a potential one in May in his brother-in-law, David Soskice, a Socialist journalist who had contributed to the *Review*'s second issue. Under the 'Soskice scheme', Soskice would form a group to take over

²⁷ Jessie Chambers, *D. H. Lawrence: A Personal Record* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1935), 156.

²⁸ Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life*, 249.

²⁹ Frank MacShane, 'The English Review', *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 60:1 (1961), 316.

³⁰ Mizener, *The Saddest Story*, 160; MacShane, 'The English Review', 87.

³¹ Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life*, p. 252.

the *Review*, assuming control of its political content while leaving Ford in place as editor. On May 16, 1909, Ford and Soskice established an 'interim arrangement' under which Soskice became business manager and Ford remained editor while Soskice and his group attempted to find the money to buy the *Review*.

The problem with the Soskice scheme was that Soskice's radical Russian revolutionary politics were at odds with Ford's sentimental Toryism, and Ford resented the encroachment of articles promoting a Liberal party agenda into the space he had used for literature. The groups quarreled endlessly, and even as the 'Soskice syndicate' struggled to get money, Ford began to look for other sources. He had met the legendary American publisher S. S. McClure in 1906 and 1908, and now thought to interest him in *The English Review* via Willa Cather, who was in England on assignment for *McClure's* in the spring of 1909. Ford thought an introduction to Conrad would impress Cather, but Conrad refused to participate, warning Ford that 'even the rumour' of a coalition with McClure 'would be like a hint of failure'. 'The ER may have to stop,' Conrad wrote, 'but it mustn't fail.'³²

The Soskice plan fell apart in December, but by then Violet Hunt had found a savior in the form of industrialist and Liberal MP Alfred Mond. Hunt was on friendly terms with the Monds, and she persuaded Lady Mond to buy the magazine, but for Ford, the plan backfired: the Monds' Liberalism was no more in tune with his Tory position than Soskice's radicalism, and the Monds promptly dismissed Ford as editor and installed Austin Harrison, son of the Victorian positivist Frederic Harrison, in his place. Ford stayed on to see the February 1910 issue published, but the legendary first phase of *The English Review* had come to an end. Writing in *The New Age*, Arnold Bennett (again as Jacob Tonson) wrote that 'in fifteen months Mr. Hueffer has managed to publish more genuine literature than was ever, I think, got into fifteen number of a monthly review before. . . . As a haven for literature the 'English Review' has been unique, absolutely.'³³ 'Looking back,' Goldring reminisced, 'it seems amazing to me that so much could have happened in so short a time. It was only a year: but *what* a year!'³⁴

The English Review did not fail, nor did it stop, but it did change. Little has been written about the post-Ford years, and most of that is negative. *The English Review* continued until 1937, when it amalgamated with the Conservative *National Review*, and by then it had long ceased to have any literary significance. Nevertheless, under Harrison, at least, the journal continued to publish notable work by its former contributors (some of which, it seems clear, had already been accepted by Ford), including pieces by Wells (*The New Machiavelli*), Conrad (*Under Western Eyes* and others), and Lawrence (twelve pieces, including 'The Odour of Crysanthemums'), as well as essays, stories, and poems by Pound, Yeats,

³² Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life*, 243.

³³ Arnold Bennett ('Jacob Tonson'), *New Age* 6:13 (Jan. 27, 1910), 305.

³⁴ Goldring, *South Lodge*, 40.

Cunninghame Graham, Norman Douglas (who worked as Harrison's assistant from 1912 to 1916), Galsworthy, Hudson, Tomlinson, and Ford himself. Besides these early contributors, Harrison also published notable writers like Bertrand Russell, Richard Aldington, Michael Arlen, May Sinclair, George Moore, Julian and Aldous Huxley, and Major C. H. Douglas, amongst others.

But Harrison's concerns and methods differed from Ford's, and under Harrison and Mond *The English Review's* focus shifted from *belles-lettres* to politics. There were, Harrison said, 'quite specific tasks which required tackling, the chief of which was not the Hueffer "critical" attitude, but an "adult" attitude towards the arts and matters generally.'³⁵ The choice to publish material on what he called 'forbidden subjects' and to focus on the 'adult' (which meant the frankly sexual) at the expense of the 'grown-up' (the 'critical') reveals his embrace of the advertising adage that sex sells, most clearly in his publication of works by John Masefield and Frank Harris.

This relationship, discussed earlier, of content to advertising, of the grown-up to the juvenile or the highbrow to the middlebrow, is curiously inverted a little more than a year later, when, in the June 1911 issue of *The English Review*, Harrison published an article by Harris entitled 'Thoughts on Morals'. Its subject was prostitution, and it provoked an outcry in the conservative *Spectator*, which announced its refusal to print any notices of *The English Review* in its pages. It declared:

We would not attempt to suppress stuff of this kind by law, but as we happen to hold that the propagation of such views is harmful to the State in the highest degree—to put the matter at its very lowest—we absolutely refuse to be forced by any canting talk about a censorship into aiding the *English Review* to find readers and disciples for these gross and blear-eyed sophistries.³⁶

Harrison published a lengthy reply to *The Spectator's* attack in the next number, and the cause was taken up in the pages of *The New Age*, which published a letter of protest signed by a long list of luminaries, including Hardy, Shaw, Bennett, Wells, Galsworthy, Yeats, and Ford.

This kerfuffle was less about content than about advertising, and the theme of advertising is entangled with the trope of maturity: *The English Review* had, in its own advertising, billed itself as 'The Great Adult Review'; *The Spectator*, like a scolding parent, proposed to punish *The English Review* by refusing to promote it 'unless the tone of the magazine becomes very different from what it has been of late'.³⁷ For Arnold Bennett, 'The point lies in the fact that the "Spectator"

³⁵ Austin Harrison, 'The Old "English"', *The English Review*, 36 (June 1923), 512–13, quoted, Ruedy, *Ford Madox Ford and The English Review*, 308.

³⁶ 'The Great Adult Review', *Spectator* 106 (June 10, 1911), 875–6; quoted, Ruedy, *Ford Madox Ford and The English Review*, 309–10.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

accused the “English Review” of employing the methods of the merchant of pornography. . . . This was the only part of the “Spectator’s” attack which in the slightest degree mattered.’³⁸ In other words, the slight is not about sex but about pandering. Whether Harrison’s ‘adult attitude’ toward the matters of the day is in any way equivalent to the ‘critical attitude’ fostered by Ford is not at issue; what is important is that *The English Review* has been accused of a distasteful commercial practice. The ‘grown-up mind’ for which *The English Review* is (or was) intended is being sold by means of an appeal to an ‘adult mind’ that is a far cry from the anxious middlebrow intellect whose sensibilities were being nursed in the *Book Monthly* advertisement in *The English Review*’s first issue.

Bennett thought ‘[t]he *Spectator* would do well to apologise for the sentences which I have quoted’;³⁹ C. H. Norman, writing in the same issue of *The New Age*, also condemns *The Spectator* but does not disagree with its assessment. He is at pains to distinguish between ‘the method of advertising “The English Review” and the articles contained within its covers’.⁴⁰ Norman concedes that the “advertisement pamphlet” quoted in the article [in *The Spectator*] is in gross taste and exceedingly offensive.’ ‘Still,’ he writes, ‘it must be remembered that business and literature are not in artistic harmony, and that touch of Oriental vulgarity, which makes the whole world kin, in some eyes, is not confined to “The English Review” management, but is a common and regrettable feature of most plutocratic organisations.’⁴¹

In a letter to the editor on June 22, Cyril Mandell disdains *The Spectator*’s reaction, Harris’s article, and *The English Review* in general:

In its younger days it was possible to regard ‘The English Review’ with some measure of seriousness; but since it has become an adult and noisily proclaimed its attainment of the years of discretion its rate of development has been so rapid that it already begins to show signs of senile decay; as its own advertisement emphatically declares, its standard is not that of the ‘young person,’ either the callow lad or raw school-girl; so that to treat its pages with contempt rather than an amused tolerance, is to expend upon it more energy and vitality than it deserves.⁴²

Harrison edited the magazine for almost thirteen years. By the time he sold his controlling interest in the spring of 1923, the magazine was in sharp decline. The forbidden subjects that had made the magazine notorious and profitable were passé in the twenties, and the propaganda with which Harrison filled its pages during the war was irrelevant. His successor, Ernest Remnant, reversed *The English Review*’s

³⁸ Arnold Bennett (‘Jacob Tonson’), ‘Books and Persons’, *The New Age*, 9:10 (July 6, 1911), 235.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ C. H. Norman, ‘The “Spectator” and the “English Review”’, *The New Age*, 9:10 (July 6, 1911), 237–8.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Cyril Mandell, *The New Age* (June 22, 1911), 190–1.

politics and gave it an intensely Conservative slant; its circulation soared but it contained almost nothing of literary interest.

Remnant was succeeded in 1931 by Douglas Jerrold, also aligned with the Conservative Party but more literary than his predecessor. Jerrold published some poems and stories by Hilaire Belloc, Galsworthy, Wyndham Lewis, and Ford, but emphasized book reviews by the likes of T. S. Eliot, Bonamy Dobrée, H. W. Nevinson, Sir Charles Petrie, Eric Partridge, Belloc, and Malcolm Muggeridge. The re-emphasis on the 'grown-up mind' put off its partisan readers and circulation once again declined. Jerrold was replaced in 1936 by Derek Walker-Smith, under whose editorship *The English Review* became an extreme right-wing organ, with few readers; the magazine failed at last in July 1937, when it was absorbed into *The National Review*.

The oscillation between youth and maturity, the modern and the traditional, and the compounded senses of the grown-up mind represented in its pages seem particularly suited to the transitional Edwardian moment in which *The English Review* appeared. While critical opinion is divided on the value of the journal under Harrison, there can be no doubt that under Ford's editorship it was a watershed in the history of English letters and a contribution to the making of modernism, articulating with astonishing freshness the continental 'critical attitude' and launching the careers of some of the twentieth century's most celebrated writers in English. In Hugh Walpole's opinion, 'May England never forget that the first two years of that paper (the *English Review*) under Hueffer's editorship was a magnificent renaissance of wonder! There never was anything else in English periodicals so good.'⁴³

⁴³ *Books*, New York, June 22, 1930, 9. Cited in Walter James Graham, *English Literary Periodicals* (New York: T. Nelson and Sons, 1930).

THE LONDON MERCURY (1919–39) AND OTHER MODERNS

J. MATTHEW HUCULAK

Few literary journals of the early twentieth century can claim the editorial scope, critical influence, and historical scorn of *The London Mercury* and its exclusion from the canon is a mysterious and gaping hole in the archive of literary modernism.¹ The journal's content challenges received critical assumptions of a singular modernist aesthetic and allows for the recovery of the conflicts and multiple engagements with modernity by the participants of literary production during the first forty years of the twentieth century. From its inception in 1919 to the mid-1930s, *The London Mercury* was synonymous with its editor, John Collings (J. C.) Squire (1884–1958), the head of what was derisively referred to as the 'Squirearchy',² since Squire and his like-minded neo-Georgian contemporaries held great cultural influence over most of the London literary reviews and were the bane of avant-garde producers.

Squire's authority was a source of distress discussed by T. S. Eliot in a 1920 letter to John Quinn: '[Squire's] influence controls or affects the literary contents and criticism of five or six periodicals already. *The Times* always more or less apart, *The Athenaeum* (and, of less influence, *Art and Letters*) are the only important reviews outside of the Squire influence.'³ Eliot's fear of Squire's clout was not misplaced; in a 1923 review of *The Waste Land*, Squire calls Eliot's work 'hardly

¹ This chapter is undertaken in the spirit of the 'New Modernist Studies', which challenges the reductive definition of 'modernism' primarily seen as an avant-garde movement; rather, it seeks to map the shifting geographies of an often contentious, ideological battleground. This chapter seeks to recover just one of these areas of conflict. For further reference, see Robert Scholes's *The Paradox of Modernism* (2006) and Ann Ardis's *Modernism and Cultural Conflict* (2002).

² The term appears to be first used by Osbert Sitwell, in *Who Killed Cock-Robin?* (London: C. W. Daniel, 1921).

³ T. S. Eliot, 'To John Quinn', *The Letters of T. S. Eliot, vol. i: 1898–1922* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988), 358.

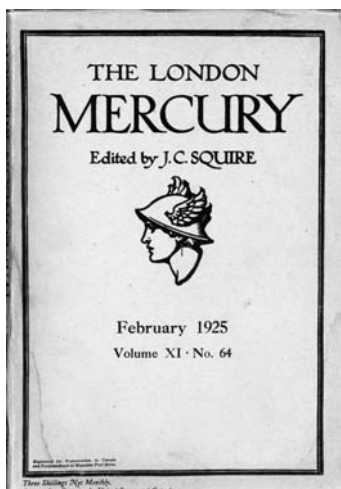


Fig. 31. Cover of *The London Mercury* (Feb. 1925)

worthy of the Hogarth Press'.⁴ This was the gauntlet thrown down between two influential editors and there was a distinct and overt belief among the literati that whoever controlled London's periodicals would direct the future paths of British literature. This is nowhere more apparent than in a letter written in 1919, the year of *The London Mercury's* inception, by John Middleton Murry to his wife, Katherine Mansfield:

The anti-*Athenaeums*—Munro [*sic*], Jack Squire etc—present in force. There's no doubt it's a fight to finish between us & Them—they is the 'Georgians' *en masse*. It's a queer feeling I begin to have now: that we're making literary history. But I believe we are going to. More than that, in spite of the *London Mercury* and all its money and réclame, I believe we've got them on the run. They're afraid.⁵

Murry was correct in identifying this struggle between the neo-Georgians and a nascent avant-garde movement, less organized than its 'anti-*Athenaeum*' counterparts. What this passage also reveals is that the definition of 'modern' literature after World War I was up for grabs—that no one group or aesthetic could lay claim to literary authority. What periodicals such as *The London Mercury* show is that there was never a monolithic understanding of modernism as solely an avant-garde movement; rather, post-war London was composed of groups with competing artistic convictions battling each other on the pages of periodicals—and the conservative *London Mercury* was among the most potent forces vying

⁴ J. C. Squire, 'Poetry', *The London Mercury*, 8 (Oct. 1923), 656.

⁵ John Middleton Murry, *The Letters of John Middleton Murry to Katherine Mansfield* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1983), 199 n. 2.

for dominance in the periodical field as it engaged with modernity. Its authority lasted well into the 1920s and waned as Squire began to lose control over his personal affairs, particularly his struggle with alcoholism. The magazine was able to weather numerous downturns in the British economy, general strikes, and rising postal rates, but it was unable to maintain its excellence and sense of calling once its editor began to falter. In 1934, the publishers of the *Mercury* could no longer tolerate Squire's editorship, and they quickly and quietly replaced him with Rolfe Arnold Scott-James (R. A. Scott-James), who attempted to revive the past glory of a moribund magazine through a philosophy more attuned to artistic experiment across Europe and tended to look toward the future.

The magazine experienced three phases in its twenty-year history. The first lasted from 1919 to 1931, when Squire maintained firm editorial control and adroitly defended his positions on art and neo-Georgian values. The second was from 1931 to 1934, as the magazine experienced a marked deterioration in editorial quality, ending with Squire's being ousted from his post. The third and final incarnation occurred from 1934 to 1939 under the energetic editorship of Scott-James, who made the magazine look like something recognizably and, by this time, even traditionally 'modernist', but would be unable to save this London institution from the 'grand slaughter of magazines'⁶ precipitated by World War II. The longevity of *The London Mercury* on the British literary scene, compared to the more famous and scintillating 'little magazines', confirms its place as an important site of literary production between 1919 and 1939. The traditional narrative handed down by years of modernist scholarship that depicted the Squirearchy as trying to squelch the modernist movement through the conservative, market-driven, middlebrow organ of *The London Mercury* falls apart upon close examination. In its pages there was a vast cross-pollination of ideas, advertisements, and authors that spanned not only the British Isles but also the United States. Its often-ignored pages reveal a network of interdependent practices inherent to the periodical form and shared by all levels, or brows, of cultural production in the early twentieth century.

Following the first wave of periodical activity that hit Britain around 1910, London saw a second wave of periodical activity in 1919 following World War I, which had choked-off paper supplies, equipment, and even literary talent. Murry took over the editorship at *The Athenaeum*⁷ (1919–21) while D. L. Kelleher's *Aengus* (Dublin, 1919), Chaman Lall's *Coterie* (1919–21), Harold Monro's *The Monthly Chapbook* (1919–25), Robert Graves's *The Owl* (1919–23), Thomas Moul's *Voices* (1919–21), and N. A. Beechman's *The Oxford Outlook* (1919–32) all sprang up out of the war's mire—at the same moment that Dora Marsden and Harriet Shaw

⁶ Robert Hewison, *Under Siege: Literary Life in London 1939–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 11.

⁷ John Middleton Murry had already launched and edited the proto-modernist publications *Rhythm* (1911) and *The Blue Review* (1913).

Weaver's *The Egoist* (1914–19), a representative of the first wave of magazine culture, ceased publication. Previously, when Squire was editor at *The New Statesman* in 1918, Robert Graves wrote to him to describe his plan to start *The Owl*, 'whose aims would be good work, healthy minds and good fun, with no politics or war theories that could possibly be avoided'.⁸ This letter underscores the war fatigue pervading literary production and the need to seek refuge in art (see also Chapter 19). This is the periodical pool from which *The London Mercury* evolved; however, it sought to confront culture head-on with idiosyncratic tastes cultivated by Squire, who by this time had made his name as a regular contributor to A. R. Orage's *The New Age*, and as the literary editor of *The New Statesman*, where he wrote under the allonyms of 'Solomon Eagle' and 'Affable Hawk'. Thus, in November 1919, the first issue of *The London Mercury* appeared with the strong backing of a large subscriber base in the thousands.⁹

The first issue of *The London Mercury*, identifiable by its bright-orange cover framing a centered head of the Roman god Mercury, was over 140 pages in length, including 24 pages of advertisements and poetry by Thomas Hardy, Rupert Brooke, W. J. Turner, Siegfried Sassoon, Edward Shanks, John Freeman, W. H. Davies, Laurene Binyon, and Walter de la Mare—many of whom were also contributing to Graves's *Owl*. Essays appeared in this issue on George Eliot by Edmund Gosse and Horace Walpole by Robert Lynd. It also set a template that would last the full twenty years of publication: sections titled 'Bibliographical Notes', 'Correspondence', 'Books of the Month', 'Learned Societies, &c.', 'The Drama', 'The Fine Arts', 'Music', 'Bibliographies of Modern Authors', and 'A Letter from France'¹⁰ by Albert Thibaudet, as well as the staple of *The London Mercury*, Squire's 'Editorial Notes', which would set the editorial tone and founding principles of the magazine:

With these notes we introduce the first number of the LONDON MERCURY. It might, beyond denial, appear in more tranquil and comfortable days. We have just been through a crisis which has brought us within sight of the basic realities of life—food, clothing, housing, security against violence. As soon as the paper was projected we were forced to visualize the likelihood of a time in which paper would be almost unprocurable, printing impossible (save in an amateur way at home), and the distribution of literature a matter of passing sheets from hand to hand. We have had a glimpse into the abyss of disorganization, and, for the time being at all events, we have managed to keep on the solid ground. But, having conceived this journal, its conductors would have been reluctant to abandon their plans whatever confusion might have supervened. They may fairly claim to have formulated a

⁸ Patrick Howarth, *Squire: 'Most Generous of Men'* (London: Hutchinson, 1963), 122.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ The 'Letters from' section would include Moscow, The Low Countries, Scotland, New Zealand, Italy, and Germany among many others.

scheme which, when it is perfectly executed, will meet all the demands of the public which reads old or new books, and of that other and smaller public which is chiefly concerned with the production of new works of the imagination. The more intense the troubles of society, the more uncertain and dark the future, the more obvious is the necessity for periodicals which hand on the torch of culture and creative activity.¹¹

In these words we find the ethos that would generate scorn in the eyes of other ‘moderns’ during this period.

Squire is perfectly sincere, and, at times imperfectly, attempted to create a journal that could speak to two groups simultaneously: an avant-garde public attuned to experimental movements and the general public-at-large accustomed to Edwardian and Georgian literary production. In other words, *The London Mercury* sought to become the arbiter of high- and middlebrow culture. Rather than approaching the middlebrow through the mutually reinforcing terms ‘high’ and ‘low’ moderns, *The London Mercury* offers a new way of looking at the cultural divide as a mediator in a complex field of periodical cultural production.¹² Squire designates the *periodical*, not the book or newspaper, as carrying the ‘torch of culture and creative activity’ to the next generation—and that is what we find in 1919: a literary public that knows change is afoot but has no idea how literature will evolve. Periodicals that sought a middlebrow sensibility, such as *The London Mercury*, became the ground on which these ideologies would meet, mix, and eventually succeed or fail. Squire is not off the mark when boasting in his first ‘Editorial Notes’ that ‘there has never been in this country a paper with the scope of the LONDON MERCURY’.¹³ He writes that there have been journals of great critical import, such as *The Edinburgh Review*, and works that publish ‘creative work’ such as *Cornhill*. He also includes *The Times Literary Supplement*, ‘which reviews, with the utmost approximation of completeness, the literary “output” of the time’, weekly papers that publish original ‘verse and prose’, and monthlies that publish critical essays; however, until *The London Mercury*, he asserts all these modes of literary output were not housed ‘within a single cover’. Thus, Squire’s initial plans point to a new understanding of culture made quite plain by the war: literary production cannot be separated from the sprawling web of cultural production as a whole. Squire later expanded the back sections of his magazine to accommodate newer forms of mass culture, including literary reviews of ‘Movies’ (November 1925), ‘Wireless’ broadcasts (May 1927), ‘Aeronautics’ (May 1931), and books on cookery such as a newly released translation of Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin’s *The*

¹¹ J. C. Squire, ‘Editorial Notes’, *The London Mercury*, 1 (Nov. 1919), 1.

¹² Lawrence Rainey argues that the term ‘middlebrow’ not only points to increased stratification of the cultural field, but also to ‘increasing interchanges among different cultural sectors’. *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 3.

¹³ Squire, ‘Editorial Notes’, 1.

Physiology of Taste (January 1926)—all of which all testified to a broad cultural approach to literary London and attested to a belief that cultural practices, high or low, affect each other in unpredictable ways.

Recent critical work has shifted its focus away from reinforcing the ‘Great Divide’ in modernist studies. Lawrence Rainey argues that ‘high’ modernists sought to probe ‘the interstices dividing that variegated field and to forge within it a strange and unprecedented space for cultural production, one that indeed entails a certain retreat from the domain of public culture, but one that also continued to overlap and intersect with the public realm in a variety of contradictory ways’.¹⁴ *The London Mercury*, although traditionally scorned by high moderns, provided one such venue since its founding mission and its ‘Table of Contents’ explored such interstices in public culture. Moreover, Squire was suspicious of what he deemed to be attempts to pigeonhole literature into an ‘ism’. Continuing his introduction in the first volume, he writes:

It is not a matter of attempting to make universal the shibboleths of some coterie or school, or of carrying some technical ‘stunt’ through the country as though it were a fiery cross. We do not propose to maintain. . . . that literature *should* be didactic or that it *should* be a-moral. We are not interested in urging that the couplet is exhausted, that the sonnet should be revived, that plays should have four or three acts, that rhyme is essential or that it is outworn, that lines should or should not be of regular lengths. . . . As convenient descriptions we do not object (save sometimes on grounds of euphony) to the terms Futurist, Vorticist, Expressionist, post-Impressionist, Cubist, Unanimist, Imagist: but we suspect them as banners and battle-cries, for where they are used as such it is probable that fundamentals are being forgotten.¹⁵

Squire’s rationale for art exhibits itself in his criticism: he believes that certain fundamentals direct the work of art, such as ‘fundamental brainwork’, ‘emotion recollected in tranquillity’, ‘the rhythmical creation of beauty’, and ‘the eye on the object’.¹⁶ Squire looked to a pre-war ideology where some artistic coherence could reinvigorate a broken culture nearly destroyed by war—his injunction is not to ‘make it new’ but rather to make it whole. Rather than with a manifesto, *The London Mercury* was instead launched ‘with the expression of the personal tastes of an individual’ and with the understanding that ‘the criticism by which work would be judged would be simply whether or not Squire liked it or approved it’.¹⁷ These quotations indicate why, in the beginning, *The London Mercury* ‘was so peculiarly the creation of one man’.¹⁸

Squire sets himself apart from other editors in his willingness to explore all facets of cultural production, and he suggests that the so-called ‘high’ modernist

¹⁴ Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism*, 3.

¹⁵ Squire, ‘Editorial Notes’, 2–3.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 3.

¹⁷ Howarth, *Squire: ‘Most Generous of Men’*, 126.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

writers are, in fact, guilty of participating in cheap, mass-marketing techniques for attention:

We have had in the last few years art, so called, which sprang from every sort of impulse but the right one, and was governed by every sort of conceptions but the right ones. We have had 'styles' which were mere protests and revulsions against other styles; 'styles' which were no more than flamboyant attempts at advertisement akin to the shifting lights of the electric night signs.¹⁹

Squire claims many of the avant-gardists are driven by market forces seeking to capitalize on the symbolic capital available in a market system looking for change and the latest style. If anything, *The London Mercury* was an experiment undertaken to solidify a common sense of cultural unity and to provide a universally understood touchstone of taste.

The magazine's second issue took full advantage of the instant success of the initial launch—both in the press and with its readership. Squire writes that it is uncommon for editors to discuss the economic status of their journal, but finds it significant that the *Mercury* inspired an 'Original Subscriber' base in the thousands before it was actually printed. He assured his large audience that because of the sound financial footing of the journal he would feel no need to 'experiment hastily'²⁰ with new developments in writing—a relief for more traditional readerships and a bane to the younger avant-garde generation. Squire also took the opportunity to set the record straight on the naming of the journal, which was reported to have been borrowed from the famous *Mercur de France* in Paris. He wrote that this was mere happy coincidence and that he had chosen the name from the seventeenth-century Mercuries that 'were the earliest products of the English periodical Press'; furthermore, he reiterated the fiercely independent nature of *The London Mercury*, which will be 'indebted to no paper, British or foreign'.²¹

The second issue became a hallmark for all other volumes of the *Mercury* to follow. Squire introduced the widely popular and enduring 'Literary Intelligence', in which all news and developments pertaining to arts and letters were discussed—including information from competing journals, authors, and movements. He also took up his second favorite cause: literary relations with the United States. Squire dedicated many issues to 'the economies of authorship' for the British writer, with 'special reference to the question of American copyright', which, since the American copyright law of 1909, had created an 'immoral and unjust' situation for British authors seeking publication and copyright in the United States.²² Squire thanked the American publishers who were too honest to take advantage of the thirty-day window the law provided for British authors to publish a book in the

¹⁹ Squire, 'Editorial Notes', 3.

²⁰ J. C. Squire, 'Editorial Notes', *The London Mercury*, 1 (Dec. 1919), 130.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid. 131–2.

United States after its original publication in England. He called such publishers 'more just and generous' than the American law, which was 'unworthy of a great nation', and warned that this situation could not last and that British authors could not continue to depend on the largesse of a few major companies. Squire called upon the American government to take action and devoted the next few years to keeping British authors abreast of the latest copyright news out of the United States.

The second issue also contained the artistic creed of the neo-Georgian movement in the 'Poetry Review' of the newly printed *Georgian Poetry, 1918–1919*, in which many of the contributors to *The London Mercury* appeared. The neo-Georgian movement was defined as 'a movement that began before the war' and continued to grow towards 'a community of spirit and attitude' in representing 'realism, sometimes informed with a conscious brutality'.²³ Much like his contemporary, Walter Sickert, Squire believed that all modern subjects were worthy of poetic attention—even cricket games, about which he would later famously write poems—however, he maintained a conservatism on the formal level that eschewed the syntactic experimentation of Eliot and others.²⁴ Previously, as the editor at *The New Statesman*, Squire praised Ezra Pound's early *Canzoni*, noting '[h]ow excellent is Mr. Pound's artistry within the limits that he has imposed upon himself', but would disparage Pound's later writing.²⁵

Between 1919 and 1926, Squire excelled as an editor, publishing the poetry and prose of W. B. Yeats, Robert Graves, Virginia Woolf,²⁶ Katherine Mansfield, a young Dorothy Sayers, and poets from the neo-Georgian anthologies. Growing interest in the magazine caused the subscription base to increase to over 12,000 people.²⁷ A brilliant essay on 'Photography and Art' appeared in January 1920, where the evolution of the visual arts from realism to abstract impressionism is discussed in relation to the invention of the camera. Squire was plainly willing to tolerate the rapid changes occurring in the visual arts but remained suspicious of the changes occurring on the modern poet's page. In February 1920, he wrote:

Just before the war that vivacious Southerner, Signor Marinetti, introduced us to the type-page, which consisted of capital letters and notes of exclamation tumbled about in apparent confusion. The first large English enterprise of the Futurist-Vorticist-Cubist kind was (though it contained normal patches) the magenta magazine *Blast*. It succumbed shortly after a hostile critic, consulting his Webster,

²³ J. C. Squire, 'Poetry', *ibid.* 201.

²⁴ For a fictional rendering of Squire, cricket, and *The London Mercury*, see A. G. MacDonall's *England, Their England* (London: Macmillan, 1933), which is dedicated to Squire.

²⁵ Howarth, *Squire: 'Most Generous of Men'*, 72–3.

²⁶ Virginia Woolf, 'An Unwritten Novel', *The London Mercury*, 2 (July 1920), 273–80 and 'The Lives of the Obscure', *The London Mercury* (Jan. 1924), 261–86.

²⁷ Howarth, *Squire: 'Most Generous of Men'*, 136.

had discovered the definition: 'Blast:—a flatulent disease of sheep.' But it died to give place to countless smaller magazines and books containing bewildering designs and extraordinary poems.²⁸

Notwithstanding Squire's upturned nose, he did print news about avant-garde poetry movements. Squire included all news pertaining to the birth, death, and notable dates of periodicals sent to his office—at first in 'Literary Intelligence' and then in a separate 'New and Recent Periodicals' column. In February 1921, Squire mischievously announced the publication of the Dadaist magazine *391*, noting that the magazine costs 'two francs, but this figure may possibly be one of the poems'.²⁹ *The Little Review*, *Coterie*, *Oxford Outlook*, *Wheels*, and *The Monthly Chapbook* were just a handful of the hundreds of magazines Squire reviewed before 1934. He became a champion of periodical rights in the early twenties as he battled the Post Office concerning the unfair mailing rates monthly and quarterly periodicals had to pay, which he described as a tax on the intellect.³⁰ Squire helped win this fight and secure cheap mailing rates for all literary magazines, no matter what their periodicity.

The advertisements in *The London Mercury* varied as much as its editorial content. Squire had a strong sense of professionalism in literature evident in his interest in copyright reform and this is echoed in the range of advertisements for fountain pens, university presses, and publishing houses to journalism schools. Whiskeys are advertised as having 'literary tastes', and Waterman used famous novelists to sell pens, lending an aura of artistry to the tools of the professional. Advertisements ranged from four to forty pages, depending on the issue, suggesting Squire had solidified a reputation as the purveyor of literary tastes to a large audience, as well as acting as a buffer against the vicissitudes of publishing a magazine. In August of 1921, a coal strike effectively shut down the post office and rail lines; Squire apologized to his subscribers because the issues were not delivered, but also announced that *The London Mercury* had been able to purchase itself, forming the London Mercury Company, which grew into a large publishing firm in its own right.

Another significant development during these early years was Squire's cultivation of American authors. He frequently published poems by Vachel Lindsay and was instrumental in bringing him to England as he told a friend at Cambridge:

Get [Lindsay] an audience for that night in your rooms, but get in as many people as you can possibly crowd into them. . . . It is imperative that he should have a closely-packed crowd because he goes in for spell-binding, like an evangelist, and makes them sing the choruses.³¹

²⁸ J. C. Squire, 'Editorial Notes', *The London Mercury*, 1 (Feb. 1920), 386–7.

²⁹ J. C. Squire, 'New and Recent Periodicals', *The London Mercury*, 3 (Feb. 1921), 359.

³⁰ J. C. Squire, 'Editorial Notes', *The London Mercury*, 2 (July 1920), 257.

³¹ Howarth, *Squire: 'Most Generous of Men'*, 140.

In November 1922, Squire wrote to W. Van R. Whittall to say, 'I hope our efforts to make American authors better known here are being appreciated; we scarcely publish a number without one or more American thing in it.'³² Squire sailed to America in 1921, with Edmund Gosse, to encourage cross-Atlantic relationships and to find publishers for his own work. He was met by representatives of Alfred A. Knopf, who had already brought some of his poetry and criticism, and who would become the publisher for H. L. Mencken's *American Mercury*. The trip precipitated a visit to Chicago, an event which Squire would capture in 'The Stockyards', a realistic portrayal of slaughterhouses in the USA.³³ His promotional abilities greatly enhanced his status as a literary editor in the United States—something he seemed to have enjoyed as early as 1920. In a letter dated March 26, 1920, T. S. Eliot, who was establishing himself as a literary editor in his own right in London, wrote to John Quinn about publishing in the *Mercury*; he calls it 'a despicable volume, but it is well arranged and its appearance is attractive. I warned [Scofield] Thayer against taking the *Mercury* seriously, or entering into close relations with it. That would damage the *Dial* in the eyes of the better English writers.'³⁴ The middlebrow reputation of the *Mercury* among the Eliot group had not yet made the transatlantic voyage, and Squire's status as a serious editor is evident in the press coverage of the 1923 launch of Mencken's *American Mercury*.

In 1923, *Time Magazine*, in announcing the publication of Mencken and George Jean Nathan's *American Mercury*, conflated the American magazine with its British namesake: 'Those who are acquainted with *The London Mercury*, so ably conducted by the poet and parodist, J. C. Squire, will hardly expect the new *Mercury* to be a prototype of the old.'³⁵ This passage suggests that *The London Mercury* earned symbolic capital and name recognition in the United States as an international publication (the *American Mercury* would be focused on primarily American issues, including politics). Mencken was aware of possible confusion with Squire's journal and was absolutely opposed to using the word 'Mercury', fearing his work would be seen as derivative, but Knopf and Nathan both outvoted Mencken.³⁶ The two journals were completely unrelated in form and content, but it was difficult to separate them in the popular opinion in the United States. During the run of both publications, Squire and Mencken capitalized on their nomenclature and offered dual subscriptions for each other's magazines. The August 1926 issue of *The London Mercury* advertised both magazines with this introduction: 'To English readers who are interested in contemporary thought and literature in America no medium will

³² Ibid. 173–4. ³³ Ibid. 151–3.

³⁴ T. S. Eliot, 'To John Quinn', *The Letters of T. S. Eliot, vol. i: 1898–1922* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988), 378.

³⁵ 'The American Mercury', *Time Magazine*, 1 (Aug. 27, 1923), 21.

³⁶ Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines, vol. v: 1905–1930* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1968), 4.

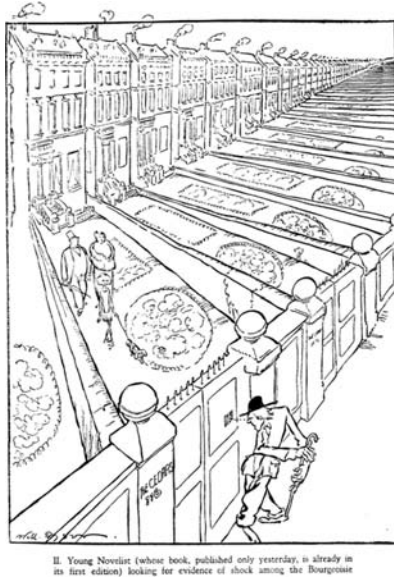


Fig. 32. Cartoon by Will Dyson, *London Mercury*, 1923

be found more interesting or comprehensive than the *American Mercury*, edited by H. L. Mencken. Its progress, since its inception nearly three years ago, has been remarkable.³⁷ English readers could save sixteen shillings off both magazines' cover price if they were willing to pay fifty shillings for a dual annual subscription. Notwithstanding Squire's desire that *The London Mercury* be the purveyor of American literature to the British audience, there were distinct advantages for him to ally himself with Mencken since after only one year of publication, the *American Mercury* had reached a print run of 55,000 (by 1926, that figure had risen to 75,000), a number almost unimaginable in the British literary market.³⁸ Squire's courting of the American market continued, and in November 1925, he began publishing a section on 'Contemporary American Authors', which begins with a discussion of Edith Wharton. Other Americans, such as Willa Cather, Sinclair Lewis, and Sherwood Anderson, all received prominent space in the pages of the *Mercury*.

In 1923, *The London Mercury* was at the height of its popularity as Squire continued to expand the editorial material of the magazine to include cartoons by Will Dyson, who trenchantly parodied the elite London literary market. In one, a young bohemian writer walks down a manicured, tree-lined street as well-dressed families start their afternoon walks (see Fig. 32). The caption reads: 'Young Novelist (whose book, published only yesterday, is already in its first edition)

³⁷ *The London Mercury*, 14 (Aug. 1926), back flap.

³⁸ Mott, *A History of American Magazines*, v. 4.



III. incorruptibly unpopular novelists exhibiting a proper austerity towards a less fortunate brother whose new book has run into its three thousands.

Fig. 33. Cartoon by Will Dyson, *London Mercury*, 1923

looking for evidence of shock among the Bourgeoisie.³⁹ In another, a group of snobbish authors look embarrassingly to the left (see Fig. 33); the caption reads: '[i]ncorruptibly unpopular novelists exhibiting a proper austerity towards a less fortunate brother whose new book has run into its three thousands.'⁴⁰ These cartoons amplify the stubborn stance Squire assumed concerning the *soi-dites* elites of modern literature personified by D. H. Lawrence and T. S. Eliot. Lawrence's 'Snake' was published in October 1921, but his literary presence was usually confined to the review sections where Squire and Shanks generally attacked him. In May 1923, Shanks writes that 'Mr. D. H. Lawrence lives at the bottom of a dark pit. He is always trying to clamber out of it; and sometimes he think that he has succeeded. . . . He believes, too, that the whole of the human race is living at the bottom of the same pit.'⁴¹ This type of complaint is begrudgingly tempered by the recognition that 'out of his error comes a flame of poetry, smoky, strange and disconcerting as it may be, which is at least genuine and which is hardly paralleled by any of the novelists of his generation.'⁴² As a writer, Eliot did not manage to garner even a modicum of positive recognition by Squire.⁴³ The only mention of

³⁹ Will Dyson, 'Four Cartoons: II', *The London Mercury*, 8 (Oct. 1923), 575.

⁴⁰ Will Dyson, 'Four Cartoons: On Novelists and their Readers: IIP', *The London Mercury*, 9 (Nov. 1923), 18.

⁴¹ Edward Shanks, 'Mr. D. H. Lawrence: Some Characteristics', *The London Mercury*, 8 (May 1923), 64.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 75.

⁴³ For a sustained discussion on Squire's uneasy relationship with modernist writers, see Leonard Diepeveen's *The Difficulties of Modernism* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 9–38.

The Waste Land's publication in 1922 came in the form of Squire's 'New and Recent Periodicals' when he reviewed the first issue of *The Criterion*. After describing the contents, Squire mentions that there is 'a long poem by Mr. T. S. Eliot'.⁴⁴ When the official review came out in October 1923, Squire wrote:

I read Mr. Eliot's poem several times when it first appeared; I have now read it several times more; I am still unable to make head or tail of it. Passages might easily be extracted from it which would make it look like one of those wantonly affected productions which are written by persons whose one hope of imposing on the credulous lies in the cultivation of a deliberate singularity. . . . it leave[s] the impression . . . that Mr. Eliot does mean something by it. . . . Conceivably, what is attempted here is a faithful transcript, after Mr. Joyce's obscurer manner, of the poet's wandering thoughts when in a state of erudite depression. A grunt would serve equally well; what is language but communication, or art but selection and arrangement? I give it up.⁴⁵

The rest of the 1920s saw the solidification of Squire's pursuit of realist literature in the face of the growing influence of critics like Eliot. In 1926, Williams and Norgate Ltd published *The Mercury Book*, a collection of some of the best writing in *The London Mercury*. As the decade progressed, however, Squire became increasingly interested in non-literary matters and created societies to preserve older architecture in London from modernization as well as spearheading an effort to restore Stonehenge to its past glory (an airfield had been built near the site during World War I).

Squire released a blue 'Special Printing Number' in March 1931, which, as a specimen of periodical printing techniques, is unparalleled in its form and beauty. The issue contained numerous watercolor plates, as well as examples of the newest printing technologies. This was shortly followed by the all-black 'Book Printing Number' in November 1931, which exhibited to the public the technological transformations occurring in book printing. These two issues offer an unequalled look into print practices of the early 1930s. Nevertheless, the success *The London Mercury* enjoyed in its printing techniques was not matched by its editorial content or its financial stability. The 'World Slump' of 1931 left an indelible mark on the financial condition of the *Mercury*.⁴⁶ In August 1932, in an attempt to broaden the magazine's readership, Squire announced that the cover price would drop from three shillings to a shilling to offset the massive loss of subscriptions from America and Britain. For the first time, *The London Mercury* was financed by advertisements to offset the financial loss created by the price drop. This strategy seems to have worked for a few issues: from October to December 1931, the advertising section

⁴⁴ J. C. Squire, 'New and Recent Periodicals', *The London Mercury*, 7 (Nov. 1922), 6.

⁴⁵ J. C. Squire, 'Poetry', *The London Mercury*, 8 (Oct. 1923), 655–6.

⁴⁶ J. C. Squire, 'Editorial Notes', *The London Mercury*, 26 (Aug. 1932), 289.

jumped to over forty pages, though this number dropped precipitously in January 1932, when only four pages of ads remained. The title of Graham Greene's story 'The End of the Party', published in the same issue, reads as an inopportune coincidence in terms of the future solvency of the *Mercury*. When the specially colored (bright-red) October 1932 *Mercury-for-a-shilling* arrived, its bite had no teeth. The fiction review section, usually written by Shanks or Squire as a platform to inveigh against the works of Eliot or D. H. Lawrence, had become a mere attempt of reasoned reviewing. Helen Moran starts off with a review of *The Cat Who Saw God* by Anna Gordon Keown, a novel about the spirit of the Roman Emperor Nero who decides to possess a cat and live with an English spinster. Moran writes, 'People who dislike cats can enjoy it quite as well as those who like them. . . . Miss Keown writes as though she knows exactly what she is doing, and why.'⁴⁷ Only two articles stand out as examples of Squire's glory years: G. K. Chesterton's 'The End of the Moderns',⁴⁸ and Wynyard Browne's 'The Culture Brokers', the latter an article that examines F. R. Leavis's *Scrutiny* and 'parasitic' elitism in literary criticism.⁴⁹

In 1933, Squire's success as a parodist, author, and editor was recognized by the British Empire when he was given the honor of British Knighthood (Knight Bachelor) 'for services to literature' by George V on the occasion of 'His Majesty's Birthday'.⁵⁰ This public acknowledgment of success could do little to salvage the turmoil created by his alcoholism or the disorganization and loss of quality that now plagued *The London Mercury*. In the September 1934 issue, Squire's name was conspicuously absent from the masthead, though it still adorned the 'Editorial Notes', which may have been compiled by an assistant editor using Squire's notes since there was no mention of his imminent departure from the magazine in this section. The October issue declared that R. A. Scott-James had taken over, and a brief look at the table of contents revealed that a sea change had occurred at the *Mercury* offices: E. M. Forster had an article on Roger Fry; C. K. Munro writes 'A Portrait of a Dream'; and, most notably, Wyndham Lewis contributed the essay 'A Study of Laughter' and pen drawings called 'Two Dictators', which he continued to sketch for various issues of the magazine. G. K. Chesterton, H. W. Nevinson, Leonard Woolf, and Edith Shackleton, among many others, were added as reviewers. Surprisingly, there was no reason given for Squire's departure, other than 'And now that Sir John Squire has decided to withdraw from the editorial fray and devote himself more exclusively to writing work, he takes with him—though perhaps it is absurd to go through the form of telling him what he knows

⁴⁷ Helen Moran, 'Fiction', *The London Mercury*, 26 (Oct. 1932), 565.

⁴⁸ *The London Mercury*, 27 (Jan. 1933), 228–33.

⁴⁹ *The London Mercury*, 28 (Sept. 1933), 436–45.

⁵⁰ *Supplement to the London Gazette* (June 3, 1933), 3800.

so well—the affectionate good wishes of innumerable friends and admirers.⁵¹ This explanation of Squire's departure, however, is challenged by a letter Squire wrote to Edward Davison in November of that year:

I loathed letting the *Mercury* go—but it had ruined me financially. I hadn't taken a penny for many years, and with my eyes troubling me as well as my creditors I *had* to fade out. I'm sorry I wasn't given by the chief debenture holder a chance of passing it on to Shanks or somebody else who would have continued my tradition. The *Mercury* is dead and something else is bearing its name. I didn't mind writing my books and poems by proxy: I never wanted fame and was content if I could but leave (as I shall) a few good poems behind me.⁵²

Shanks had been with Squire from the beginning of his tenure, mostly as his assistant editor, and had the financiers of the enterprise wanted to carry on Squire's tradition and critical model, he would have been the logical replacement. Scott-James's appointment suggests that the board wanted new life and a new approach for the magazine and the conservative Squire ended up on the wrong side of history—and of T. S. Eliot.

Scott-James had made a name for himself as an editor and critic. In 1913, he wrote *The Influence of the Press*, which examined the role that periodicals and the press have in shaping public opinion. He had been the editor of the *New Weekly* and a lead writer for the *Daily Chronicle*, *Spectator*, and the *Christian Science Monitor*. His greatest work, however, would be to revive *The London Mercury* from the critical doldrums into which Squire had steered it during the last few years of his editorship. He initially faced the difficult task of placating the ebbing subscriber base that Squire had built up over the years, while simultaneously changing the direction of the *Mercury* by including new writers distinct from the magazine's traditional neo-Georgian fare. Scott-James wrote that he hoped to 'be fortunate enough to retain the services of the wise and experienced elders and to enlist those of men who are trying to blaze new trails'. He makes it clear, though, that the *Mercury* 'cannot be content' with just the 'accepted problems of literature' and must now turn to 'practical matters', whether they 'proceed from sophists, bards, or statesmen'.⁵³

While Squire kept *The London Mercury* from delving too deeply into political matters, world events before World War II, which was looming on the horizon, were too chaotic to ignore and it certainly comprised 'stuff for the artist to handle'.⁵⁴ The political situation began to diffuse slowly into the editorial content at first, particularly in Wyndham Lewis's reviews and drawings (notably with his 'Dictator' series, which in November of 1934, featured T. S. Eliot and

⁵¹ R. A. Scott-James, 'Editorial Notes', *The London Mercury*, 30 (Oct. 1934), 481.

⁵² Howarth, *Squire: 'Most Generous of Men'*, 233.

⁵³ Scott-James, 'Editorial Notes', 483–4. ⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 484.

Sylvia Lynd) and then with a rush in the December 1934 issue when Stephen Spender wrote 'A Modern Writer in Search of a Moral Subject'. Spender declares, 'what a writer writes about is at every moment related to what he believes.'⁵⁵ This new vision of the political writer is expanded into a contemporary ethos of literature:

The question for a writer of our time, which is at the back of all the discussed questions of belief and of the contemporary sensibility, is 'What is the modern subject?' A subject large enough to enable the poet to write long poems . . . to free the novel from mere rapportage [*sic*], the burden of description and case history, and yet to relate it fundamentally to the political life, the morality and the manners of our time.⁵⁶

For the first time in *The London Mercury's* history, T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* is defended as a work of art featuring the 'sense of our decadent position in the history of our civilization and of that civilization's past as our vast background'.⁵⁷

The torch of political belief was deftly carried by E. M. Forster the following year, when he began a series of articles on liberty, democracy, and art. In 'Liberty in England', Forster railed against the hypocrisy of the Englishman who maintains his own personal freedom, while refusing to liberate the 'subject-races of his Empire'.⁵⁸ Moreover, the prejudice against races on distant shores was echoed in class relations back home, where liberty is a 'fad of the upper-classes' and 'freedom . . . is only enjoyed by people who are fairly well off'.⁵⁹ If this was not enough to jar the neo-Georgian sensibilities of the Squire legacy, Forster further declares the English artists are, at best, stifled because of governmental censorship and public tastes concerning art: 'In England, more than else-where, their creative work is hampered because they can't write freely about sex.'⁶⁰ In a similar fashion, the control that has limited discourse in the arts had also hindered freedom of expression for all but the upper classes. Forster called for a 'general campaign' so 'all classes and races can enjoy what has hitherto been confined to a few wealthy and white-coloured people'—free public and artistic discourse. Giving voice to the new social responsibility of the artist who does not write in a vacuum, he concludes, 'If a writer is courageous and sensitive he has to my mind fulfilled his public calling. He has helped to rally humanity in the presence of catastrophe.'⁶¹ The drumbeats of the next European catastrophe were all too near, so Forster's call for the artist

⁵⁵ Stephen Spender, 'A Modern Writer in Search of a Moral Subject', *The London Mercury* 31 (Dec. 1934), 128.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ E. M. Forster, 'Liberty in England: An Address Delivered at the *Congr s International des Ecrivains at Paris* on June 21st, 1935', *The London Mercury*, 32 (Aug. 1935), 327.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* ⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 330. ⁶¹ *Ibid.* 331.

to assume a public role was new to the pages of the *Mercury*, and it had an effect on its readership. In November 1935, Scott-James begins his 'Editorial Notes' by sharing an 'indignant letter from a lady living in Italy' who threatened to end her subscription to the *Mercury* as long as England 'pursue[d] its present policy towards Italy'.⁶² Scott-James reiterated his commitment to keep the *Mercury* from becoming a 'political journal', but playfully managed to claim that the lady is being ungrateful to Lord Beaverbrook, who 'is doing his best for a fellow dictator' by using his Fleet Street empire as a pro-Mussolini political machine.⁶³ For the most part, Scott-James succeeded in keeping the magazine away from the inflammatory issues of interwar Britain and added to the visual layout of the journal by including high-quality plates. During this period, Edwin Muir, Paul Nash, W. B. Yeats, Stella Gibbons, Stephen Spender, and Seán O'Faoláin became frequent contributors. Scott-James made his mark most clearly with his addition of fine woodcut prints and other illustrations from Pablo Picasso, Camille Pissarro, Jack B. Yeats, and Walter Sickert.

The most notable change to the layout of the magazine occurred in January 1935, when *The Bookman*, a long-running tradition in British letters since 1891, was amalgamated into *The London Mercury*, creating *The London Mercury with which is Incorporated The Bookman*. Scott-James hoped that the combination of the two periodicals would allow for the reconciliation of 'Romanticism and Classicism' in modern letters, and the alliance permitted him to rue the demise of yet another literary journal on the London market. He regretted that he could not keep all the contributors from *The Bookman* but felt that the merger, unlike that of *The Nation* and *Athenaeum* with their antipodal subject matter, would be much 'happier' since both journals shared similar 'interests and scope'.⁶⁴ Though the transition seems to have gone smoothly for the journal, Scott-James still had to convince his subscribers that the changes were of merit. He wrote:

I have been inundated with letters from readers on the so-called 'new schools of poetry,' some congratulating the *LONDON MERCURY* for breaking away from the merely pretty, sentimental and imitative, others angrily denouncing the obscurity and uncouthness which the writers discover in the work of the younger poets. I am not surprised at the discomfort of those who, having long habituated themselves to a certain order of thought and feeling, now find themselves invited by the very young to go to school again. . . . But putting that aside, we are bound to recognize that all this thinking about the new world in and around us, this experimenting with the means of revealing its character and significance, are absolutely indispensable if culture is to do its work of grappling with contemporary life, not

⁶² R. A. Scott-James, 'Editorial Notes', *The London Mercury*, 33 (Nov. 1935), 1.

⁶⁴ R. A. Scott-James, 'Editorial Notes', *The London Mercury*, 31 (Jan. 1935), 217.

⁶³ Ibid.

only explaining it scientifically, but revealing and transmuting it in terms of feeling and perception.⁶⁵

Though Scott-James now had a wider range of literary and artistic interests for the *Mercury*, this passage reveals how he shared Squire's catholic approach to cultural phenomena, in that every aspect of 'contemporary life' was deemed open to poetic discourse and worthy of study.

The next few years of Scott-James's tenure saw a steady increase of printing quality and the illustrations he includes mix the modern with past masters, including Francisco Goya, Peter Breughel, Hans Baldung Grien, and Jean-Honoré Fragonard, all of whom appeared next to Edouard Vuillard, Horace Brodzky, Henri Matisse, and Picasso. Scott-James did away with many of the other review sections, such as analyses of radio programs; however, he did continue the Theatre, Music, and Film sections, using the extra space for the expanded plates and illustrations. The book-review section also became truncated. Reviews of new literature were given barely a paragraph—prompting one reader to complain that the book reviews are 'short enough to require telegram technique',⁶⁶—and a classified section appeared intermittently.

In September of 1936, Scott-James announced that *The London Mercury* had moved and would be published by *The New Statesman and Nation*. He took this opportunity to redesign the logo the following month after an illustration by Leon Underwood. There was a general trend that began at this time to make *The London Mercury* a journal of international consequence with serious issues raised by its editors and authors as England and the rest of Europe moved toward a second conflagration. An article by William Nutall, for instance, on the class-conscious working reader and the future of proletarian literature, stirred a lively debate in the correspondence section. As Europe became increasingly polarized around political ideologies, Scott-James located the *Mercury* squarely on the side of internationalism, a subject he addressed in the 'Editorial Notes' of March 1936, after a writer for the *Rand Daily Mail* in Johannesburg 'comments on the appearance of Scottish poems in the "very English pages of THE LONDON MERCURY."' ⁶⁷ Scott-James took great offense at this and replied:

As for our own Mercury, it should be thought of . . . [as a] herald and ambassador. He cannot be thought of as closely restricted by national borders. To convince the *Rand Daily Mail* that we are not jealously English I may remind it that, in addition to Scots, Welsh, Irish and Dominion writers, our recent contributors have included authors from the United States, Germany, Sweden, Russia, India, China, Japan and other foreign countries.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ R. A. Scott-James, 'Editorial Notes', *The London Mercury*, 31 (Apr. 1935), 522–3.

⁶⁶ R. A. Scott-James, 'Editorial Notes', *The London Mercury*, 33 (Jan. 1936), 271.

⁶⁷ R. A. Scott-James, 'Editorial Notes', *The London Mercury*, 33 (Mar. 1936), 473.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

These words would be all the more important after July and the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, which was alluded to, but not named, by Scott-James in October:

I do not apologize for saying these words about ourselves; for it seems to me necessary that *The London Mercury* and those whose interests it seeks to assert should be, in a certain sense, self-conscious about themselves and the part they have to play in this turbid world. Such persons will not wish to keep the arts too detached from the rest of life. . . . We find that some of our least turbulent novelists and poets are at this moment preparing to take a part in international politics as defenders of freedom, and that others are charging themselves with a mission on behalf of some political or economic cause. We could not wish it otherwise; we could not wish that the violent transformation of the world which is taking place before our eyes should be guided only by those who have little imaginative understanding.⁶⁹

It would appear that the era of the apolitical *Mercury* had ended and that art and politics could no longer be arbitrarily separated. This would be a recurring theme for Scott-James as he maintained a sense of 'international culture' free of nationalist jingoism. The only brush with any sense of national pride was reflected in E. M. Forster's 'Credo' in September 1938, in which he wrote how 'Democracy has another merit. It allows criticism, and if there is not public criticism there are bound to be hushed-up scandals. That is why I believe in the Press, despite all its lies and vulgarity.'⁷⁰

By January 1938, the magazine's circulation had risen to 6,000 from a fragile 4,000 when Squire left the editorship four years earlier.⁷¹ Yet, Scott-James could no longer afford to sell the magazine at one shilling (which suggests he was unable to attract the advertising funds that would subsidize a lower cover price—a practice common among popular magazines), so in January 1938, he took advantage of the higher circulation figures and raised the price to two shillings to offset the financial burdens caused by the cheaper cover price instituted by Squire. But Scott-James's gamble with the magazine's cost ended in failure the following year.

The final years of *The London Mercury* provide a noteworthy picture of late, interwar Britain, as well as a sampling of some of the best prose available. Elizabeth Bowen published 'The Easter Egg Party', and W. B. Yeats contributed his memoirs in *Dramatic Personae*. The final issue appeared in April 1939, in which Scott-James announced that the *Mercury* had 'been acquired by the proprietors of *Life and Letters To-Day*'.⁷² No reason is given for the magazine's demise, except for the fact

⁶⁹ R. A. Scott-James, 'Editorial Notes', *The London Mercury*, 34 (Oct. 1936), 480.

⁷⁰ E. M. Forster, 'Credo', *The London Mercury*, 38 (Sept. 1938), 399.

⁷¹ 'Literary Life', *Time Magazine*, 33 (Apr. 24, 1939), 91.

⁷² R. A. Scott-James, 'Editorial Notes', *The London Mercury*, 39 (Apr. 1939), 573.

that it was sold too long for only a shilling and, with the impending war crisis, economics ‘cannot afford to wait for more peaceful times’.⁷³ Scott-James cites the words of T. S. Eliot, who had recently relinquished *The Criterion* and who believed the slackening of literary production signaled the ‘literary symptoms of decline’ and that culture was in ‘danger’, so that its ‘continuity would have to be maintained by a very small number of people indeed’.⁷⁴ Scott-James gave two other reasons for the decline of culture: the waste produced by war, which forced artists to concentrate only on survival, and ‘the democratization of culture and the mass-production of books, papers, films, etc., which stimulate or drug the popular mind’.⁷⁵ His rhetoric of decline placed the magazine squarely on the side of higher-brow publications experiencing the same financial crises caused by declining literary readerships—and testifies to the *Mercury*’s quixotic abilities to span multiple readerships. Although Scott-James ended his editorship on this ominous note, he could claim one final coup for literature: W. H. Auden’s ‘In Memory of W. B. Yeats’ bookends twenty years of *The London Mercury*’s history.

The London Mercury continued as a subtitle only until 1950. The only feature of the *Mercury* to remain in the newly combined *Life and Letters To-Day incorporating The London Mercury and Bookman* was the popular ‘Literary Intelligence’, since the illustrations, ‘a distinguished characteristic of the old magazine’, were too expensive for *Life and Letters* to continue.⁷⁶ This was a fitting continuation of the *Mercury* since the ‘Literary Intelligence’ is a treasure trove of periodical and literary production in Britain between 1919 and 1939—the lasting legacy of Squire’s editorship. In all of its incarnations and both its editorships, *The London Mercury* proved to be a resilient and surprising site of literary creation and documentation of interwar Britain, as the *other* modern magazine that provided a steady, holistic look at the rapidly changing structures of cultural production and the periodical press.

⁷³ Ibid. 574.

⁷⁴ Ibid. 575.

⁷⁵ Ibid. 576.

⁷⁶ ‘News Reel’, *Life and Letters To-Day incorporating The London Mercury and Bookman* 21 (May 1939), 1.

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V
INTERVENTIONS



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INTRODUCTION

The three main journals discussed in the following section spanned the 1910s and gave a particularly strong, and in two cases, lasting character to the idea of English modernism prior to its consolidation in the next decade. In fact, two of these magazines, *Rhythm* and *The Freewoman*, had, in a very early usage, already used the term ‘modernism’ in 1911, though the provenance of the term was quite different in each case and distinct from later usages.¹ For John Middleton Murry, the editor of *Rhythm*, ‘modernism’ meant bluntly ‘Bergsonism in philosophy’. For the artist, this meant a quest for ‘the rhythms that lie at the heart of things’ for the ‘primitive harmonies of the world’ beneath ‘the outward surface’. The result was ‘post-Impressionism’, as Murry understood it.² *The Freewoman*, for its part, used the term ‘modernism’ not in relation to the arts nor, directly, in relation to the modern political question of female suffrage but in relation to sexual mores. Rabaté’s chapter argues that it was indeed its intervention in this field that signified the magazine as modernist in debates on questions of prostitution, frigidity, double standards, the marriage contract, and divorce, rather than its activist political stance, that made it ‘perhaps the first self-conscious “Modernist” review’. *BLAST* did not of course use the term modernism, though Lewis’s Vorticism was conceived, with some help from others, as a distinctively avant-garde aesthetic. Up to the month previous to its publication it was being advertised as a magazine of all the ‘vital’ arts, open to Fauvism, Expressionism, Cubism, and Futurism. In the event *BLAST* is best understood, as Gasiorek argues here, as entering a combative dialogue with these other largely European modernisms. Lewis propounded not simply a rival visual aesthetic but a cultural aesthetic, alive to the contradictions and affinities across national identities and temperaments, which sought nonetheless to express a specifically British or ‘Northern’ European identity.

Rhythm evolved into the predominantly Georgian *Blue Review*, commonly viewed as the tame and non-experimental ‘other’ to the proponents of a new art. Its more experimental ‘modernist’ aspect, Brooker argues, had been associated from

¹ *Rhythm* was advertised at the time as ‘RHYTHM: The UNIQUE MAGAZINE OF MODERNIST ART’, *The Poetry Review*, 1 (Jan. 1912), back pages.

² J. Middleton Murry, Letter to P. Landon, 30 March 1911, quoted in F. A. Lea, *The Life of John Middleton Murry* (London: Methuen, 1959), 24.

the beginning with the visual arts, in particular with Fauvism, and by association, with dance, and this was diluted and then disappeared from *The Blue Review* and the even more reduced *Signature*. *The Freewoman*, meanwhile, evolved first into *The New Freewoman* and then the adventurous, predominantly literary magazine, *The Egoist*. The subtitle changed significantly: from 'A Weekly Feminist Review' to 'A Weekly Humanist Review' and then in June 1913 to 'An Individualist Review', the subtitle borne then by *The Egoist* from the following year until 1919. As such, the magazine was to serve, alongside the Egoist Press, as a main vehicle for precisely those figures (Lewis, Joyce, Pound, and Eliot) who were to emerge as the familiar male modernist literary canon. What, at the same time, accompanied this change, and what in particular Rabaté draws our attention to, was a change in its editorial position which saw Dora Marsden's philosophical anarchism come to dominate the paper's earlier brand of militant feminism. *BLAST* changed too—but more by external than internal circumstances. As Gasiorek details, *BLAST* 2 was generally a more sober production: in its contents, illustrations, and even its typography and layout. 'The impact of the war', Gasiorek writes, 'was visible everywhere.' When they were not shocked or bewildered by it all, contemporaries enjoyed the outrageousness and publicity of Vorticism and *BLAST*; some, like Edgar Jepson, thinking there was nothing to it but a bit of fun. Lewis himself, chastened by the war, was arguably less sure, as Gasiorek notes, of the merits of the avant-garde project and, after an abortive attempt to restage Vorticism, was to embark on a course of sustained satirical critique by which he sought to understand the post-war modern world and the role art might have in it. *BLAST* had been planned as a quarterly though no further issues appeared. In themselves, however, *BLAST* 1 and 2 made and continue to have a resounding impact upon the idea of an avant-garde magazine.

To return to these magazines, therefore, is to appreciate something of the pre-history of the emergence of modernism—in the case of *BLAST* in one of its most dynamic expressions—but also to appreciate the mixed company the modernism of the 'men of 1914' kept in the literary and artistic currents, and miscellaneous philosophical, social, and political ideas of the time. We are alerted in this way to other names and achievements: to Rebecca West's role in *The New Freewoman*; Harriet Shaw Weaver's indispensable sponsorship of magazines and authors, as simultaneously co-editor of *The Egoist* and founder of the Egoist Press; to the other, somewhat forgotten, contributors to *BLAST* who helped make Vorticism a movement (Jessica Dismorr and Helen Saunders, for example), and the role of figures such as J. D. Fergusson, Anne Estelle Rice, Michael Sadle(i)r, and W. J. Gibson, as well as Murry, Katherine Mansfield, and Edward Marsh in the story of *Rhythm* and *The Blue Review*.

The life of these magazines was also clearly sustained by a criss-crossing network of contributors and associates. Thus West gave Imagism early enthusiastic support in *The New Freewoman* while her story 'Indissoluble Matrimony' was the sole

contribution by a woman to *BLAST* 1. Pound and Lewis forged an active link between *BLAST* and *The Egoist*.³ Both had important earlier works published in *The Egoist* and by Harriet Shaw Weaver's Egoist Press, which also published Lewis's later magazine, *The Tyro*, and most notably, James Joyce's *Portrait* (also serialized in *The Egoist*) and the first British edition of *Ulysses* in October 1922. Most surprisingly, perhaps, T. S. Eliot also played a part in both magazines. He was editorial assistant on *The Egoist* between 1917 and 1919, his *Prufrock and Other Observations* was published by the Egoist Press, and he appeared, uniquely, not only in *BLAST* 1 but in all the magazines Lewis edited: *BLAST* 2 and *Tyro* (1920–1) and *The Enemy* (1927–9).⁴

Some other broader ideas and events also come into view in *The Egoist*: the concerns and varieties of feminism; socialism, syndicalism, and the philosophy of individualism; the broad sweep of post-Impressionist arts. The result was some tension and in-fighting but this current of ideas also produced some surprising affinities. Thus, as Marsden pursued the implications of Max Stirner's *The Ego and His Own* ('one of the profoundest of human documents', she said) to the position of an anarchistic individualism critical of causes and abstractions of 'a class, a sex, or a "movement"', she found support on the literary side of the newly named *Egoist* from its writers, including the Imagists Pound and Aldington, who welcomed the statement 'of the individualist principle in every department of life'.⁵ Meanwhile, Lewis loudly declared that *BLAST* too appealed 'TO THE INDIVIDUAL' and that its purpose was 'to make individuals', above class and creed.⁶

Of these three magazines *Rhythm* would appear to have led a comparatively separated life. Mansfield's first stories had appeared in *The New Age* but there was more acrimony than creative exchange between this and Murry's magazines. *Rhythm* was started in 1911 and had ended its short life in 1913 before *The Egoist* and *BLAST* appeared. *The Blue Review*, which followed in 1913, mainly supported Georgian poetry rather than work by the Imagists and Vorticists, and *The Signature* (1915) was primarily a vehicle for Lawrence's essay 'The Crown' and Mansfield's stories once more. Mansfield, too, appeared to share Virginia Woolf's distaste for the emerging generation of male modernists. Both male and female personnel did nevertheless shift between the *Rhythm* and Vorticist formations. Gaudier-Brzeska had made a fleeting appearance in *Rhythm* and the artist Jessica Dismorr, who was a regular contributor to *Rhythm*, became a signatory of the Vorticist manifesto in *BLAST* 1 and contributed illustrations and 'Poems and Notes' to *BLAST* 2

³ The two magazines advertised each another, presumably at no cost. Thus *BLAST* 1 contains an advert for *The Egoist*, noting that it was 'The only fortnightly in England that an intelligent man can read for three months running.' See *BLAST* 1 (1914; rpt. Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1997), 160.

⁴ For discussion of *The Tyro* and *Enemy* magazines, see Chapter 23 below.

⁵ Letter, *New Freewoman*, 15 Dec. 1913, 244.

⁶ 'Wyndham Lewis, 'Long Live the Vortex!', *BLAST* 1 (1914), n.p.

as well as prose pieces to *The Tyro*. O. Raymond Drey, similarly, a critic on *Rhythm* and *The Blue Review*, and husband of Anne Estelle Rice, contributed to both issues of *The Tyro*. Otherwise, Murry and Mansfield—if not always their contributors, or *Rhythm*'s art editor, J. D. Fergusson—were associates, but little more, of Bloomsbury and the Georgians.

These different alignments and tensions, affinities and animosities, were, as Brooker's chapter concludes, an integral part of the cultural texture of the times. It was indeed from within these shifting and sometimes overlapping networks that individual positions came to light and it was the latter which gave journals their polemical edge, evident, as here, in their self-conscious naming and claims to be new or modern. For *Rhythm* this amounted to a rejection of aestheticism for Bergsonian vigour. For Lewis it meant a rejection of prevailing new movements, including Bergsonism (Bergson was amongst those 'blasted' in *BLAST* 1). For Marsden the 'newness' of egoism meant a rejection of the woman-centred campaigns of suffrage of which she had once been a proponent in favour of 'the empowering of individuals, men and women' and 'to set free life impulses'.⁷ All three publications expressed a will to change, characteristic of the dynamic 'little magazine'. A sign of this was their adoption of the form of the manifesto, openly in the case of *BLAST* and in *Rhythm*'s unsigned 'Aims and Ideals', but also in Marsden's 'anti-manifesto' in *The New Freewoman* which denounced any credo: 'Dear Friends and readers, The NEW FREEWOMAN has no Cause. The nearest approach to a Cause it desires to attain, is to destroy Causes.'⁸

Sometimes this position-taking, or anti-position-taking, was a response to wider movements and events comprising the broader conditions of modernity, affecting the position of women, patterns of consumption and advertising, as well as the technologies of communication and reproduction, including the advent of the mass press. The periodical codes of *The Egoist*, in its size and use of newspaper-style columns of small print, set its face against the possibilities of new typographies while *BLAST* exploited them in a way that, as Mark Morrisson has shown, borrowed from contemporary popular papers and advertising.⁹ On the other hand, *The Egoist* did utilize the strategies of the commercial press, printing circulars and posters to advertise the magazines, and in May 1914 employed two sandwichboard men to walk the London streets promoting the paper.¹⁰

Often economic factors, such as the need for financial support and a loyal, if inevitably small, readership, were crucial to a magazine's survival and a constraint on their ambitions to be new or experimental. In this case two of the magazines were directly affected. *The Freewoman* collapsed under the weight of

⁷ Dora Marsden, 'Views and Comments', *New Freewoman* (July 1, 1913), 25.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Mark S. Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism: Little Magazines, Audiences, and Reception 1905–1920* (Madison: Wisconsin University Press, 2001), 117–19.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 102.

economic realities in 1912 following a boycott by W. H. Smith, only to be revived and renamed. Readers nonetheless dropped away and, re-launched once again as *The Egoist*, it was maintained only by subscriptions and by Harriet Shaw Weaver's personal financial support.¹¹ For their part, Murry and Mansfield experienced one financial crisis after another: debts, bankruptcy, the financial support of Eddie Marsh, and the stability of Martin Secker as the eventual publisher of *The Blue Review* can be seen as underlying, if not enforcing, an internal change from the Fauvist and Bergsonian beginnings of the highly illustrated *Rhythm* to the sparsely illustrated literary magazine and vehicle for Georgian poetry that it became. Mansfield's regret later at how far they had moved from 'the *Blood & Guts* idea' expressed her frustration at the loss of original impetus and energy.¹²

The other profound but external change affecting modern consciousness and these magazines and their associated personnel was the First World War. *BLAST* 2 was a 'War Number' and contained several items directly related to the conflict, including Gaudier-Brzeska's posthumous 'Vortex (written from the trenches)'. Arguably too, the war persuaded Lewis that abstraction in art was not the answer to the ills of modern civilization. Wassily Kandinsky, praised in *BLAST* 1, was now seen as the exemplar of a purely abstract art, insufficiently engaged with the content of everyday life. The 'material and solid universe', as Gasiorek argues, was of prime importance to Lewis. With this emphasis newly established, his thinking about art and modernity took on broader, more explicitly social and political contours.

For Murry and Mansfield the war resulted in the ill-fated experiment of *The Signature*, in the main the idea of D. H. Lawrence: 'we must do something', Lawrence had said in response to the destruction of the war, 'so we are taking the responsibility of this little journal on ourselves, Murry and I.'¹³ In reality a magazine at this time could do nothing. The emphatically 'little magazine'—short lived, experimental, provocative, and financially unstable—was in these circumstances simply dwarfed by events.

This is not to say at all that these magazines failed. In their different ways the very course they took only mirrored a period of especially profound change. Some contributors fell away, some continued in another register, some have left a permanent mark. Lewis and Murry were to edit successful magazines in the 1920s and Murry, though probably the more forgotten figure, was the most conventionally successful.

¹¹ For example, between 1916 and 1919 *The Egoist* sold on average only 200 copies.

¹² Mansfield, quoted in Angela Smith, *Katherine Mansfield: A Literary Life* (London: Palgrave, 2000), 100.

¹³ Lawrence's comment appears in a letter to William Hopkin at a time when he was seeking subscribers for the magazine (*Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, vol. ii: 1913–16, ed. George J. Zytaruk and James T. Boulton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 391). Later he was to attribute this motivation to Murry, commenting, 'In a great issue like the war, there was nothing to be "done" in Murry's sense'; see D. H. Lawrence, *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays*, ed. Michael Herbert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 249.

Along with their pronounced individualism they had stood also for a model of internationalism that became more pronounced as the 1920s and 30s progressed. Lewis, though on a trajectory towards greater isolation, sought paradoxically to recover this in reinvigorated form in his two magazines of the 1920s and 1930s. Some other figures have fallen from prominence and into unjustified neglect. Marsden is one such. Rabaté argues that her thinking reaches beyond her own time to speak pertinently to a ‘deconstruction of political discourse and everyday language’ in an ongoing modern project. His reading reminds us of how we, responding to the altered agendas of our own times, are brought to reassess the contribution of figures who were more, or less, esteemed in their times. Thus, in relation to changes in intellectual culture, feminism and the role of women, and questions of national cultural identity, we might now see the examples of Marsden or Harriet Shaw Weaver, or, say, Jessica Dismorr and Helen Saunders or J. D. Fergusson and Anne Estelle Rice differently.¹⁴ The context and meaning of the ‘modern’ changes and so, in this very process, do our conceptions of modernism.

¹⁴ For a reevaluation of the contribution of Dismorr and Saunders to *BLAST* and to Vorticism, see Jane Beckett and Deborah Cherry, ‘Reconceptualising Vorticism: Women, Modernity, Modernism’, in Paul Edwards (ed.), *Blast: Vorticism 1914–1918* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 59–72.

GENDER AND MODERNISM

The Freewoman (1911–12), *The New Freewoman* (1913),
and *The Egoist* (1914–19)

JEAN-MICHEL RABATÉ

The three magazines called successively *The Freewoman*, *New Freewoman*, and *The Egoist* were united by the personality of their founder and editor Dora Marsden, who was working in tandem with Harriet Weaver. They show the exceptional success of a militant feminist turned anarchist review with publishing innovative and experimental literature. Marsden began as a militant suffragette and today, of course, she is known more for her contribution to high modernism, for having crucially helped the public recognition of writers like Pound, H. D. (Hilda Doolittle), Aldington, Joyce, and Wyndham Lewis. Bruce Clarke's *Dora Marsden and Early Modernism* has shed light on the rationale of an evolution that metamorphosed a small feminist magazine into a very active organ of high modernism.¹ The change was not sudden, and can be explained by Marsden's personal evolution.

A sympathetic portrait of Dora Marsden was given by Rebecca West:

The paper was the creation of Dora Marsden, who was one of the most marvelous personalities that the nation has ever produced. She had, to begin with, the most exquisite beauty of person. She was hardly taller than a child, but she was not just a small woman, she was a perfectly proportioned fairy. She was the only person I have ever met who could so accurately have been described as flower-like that one could have put it down on her passport.²

¹ Bruce Clarke, *Dora Marsden and Early Modernism: Gender, Individualism, Science* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996).

² Rebecca West wrote this homage in 1926 for *Time and Tide*, another feminist magazine that she had helped to found (see Chapter 22). Quoted in the Editor's Introduction to *The Young Rebecca: Writings of Rebecca West 1911–1917*, ed. Jane Marcus (London: Virago, 1983), 4.

Marsden had been a classmate of Christabel Pankhurst in 1900 at the Manchester Victoria University, after which she remained associated with suffragism. An activist in the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), Marsden was one of the keynote speakers at a huge suffragist rally that took place in June 1908 in Manchester, a meeting that drew 150,000 people. By 1908 she was a salaried organizer of the movement. She drew public attention by her spectacular harassment of Winston Churchill at the Southport Empire Theatre in December 1909: she shouted insults and propaganda from a skylight in the dome and would have fallen to her death if the police hadn't caught her. She was repeatedly jailed and force-fed through the nose like many other militant suffragettes. After 'Black Friday' in November 1910, when two women died as a result of police brutality, Dora Marsden was thought to be too radical, which led to her being denounced and condemned by the Pankhursts.

She adopted a less militant attitude in 1911 and decided to devote her free time to the study of philosophy and her energy to activist journalism. As Rebecca West puts it, Marsden found suffragism too limited; and she wanted to 'stand aside and ponder the profounder aspects of feminism'.³ She resigned from the WSPU, and moved to London accompanied by her friend Grace Jardine who served at first as a co-editor. She also enlisted the assistance of Harriet Shaw Weaver, a committed suffragist, a discerning critic, and an avid reader, whose family was well-off and who would inherit a fortune on the death of father in 1913. All three founded *The Freewoman: A Weekly Feminist Review*, which lasted from November 1911 to October 1912. *The Freewoman* was a unique forum for suffragists, feminists, anarchists, and socialists. Its discussions also included contributions from spiritualists, sinologists, money-reformers, translators, poets, and aesthetes. It went bankrupt in 1912, to be resuscitated under the name of *The New Freewoman: An Individualist Review* in June 1913. Dora Marsden and Harriet Shaw Weaver (who was still financing the journal) opened its columns to a young writer such as Rebecca West, who actively promoted young poets whom she admired like Ezra Pound and Richard Aldington. Rebecca West too had been a staunch suffragette, and when in 1911 she joined the staff of *The Freewoman*, it was because she agreed with Marsden that the original movement led by the Pankhurst sisters was getting increasingly shrill, thus losing credibility: feminism needed to broaden its audience and its scope. For instance, in the Pankhurst-dominated movement, there had been an increased tendency to avoid sexual issues or to denigrate sexuality altogether. Unlike the Pankhursts, who tended to reject men as so many agents of venereal disease, Marsden and West made a point of being explicit about sexuality, and published very frank discussions of prostitution, frigidity, double standards, infidelity, divorce, the equivalent of which could not have been found in any periodical printed in English at the time. For instance, a series of lead articles by

³ West, in *The Young Rebecca*, 5.

Dora Marsden was headed 'Interpretations of Sex' (from No. 24, May 2, to No. 27, May 23, 1912) and opposed 'lust' to 'passion' but also developed ideas about free love, marriage as legal prostitution, same-sex attachment, and the like. In a revealing admission in that series, by No. 26 (May 16), Marsden had reached the point of view that 'All altruism is developed egoism' (502), thus sounding in advance the dominant theme of her egoist philosophy subsequently expounded at some length in the pages of *The Egoist*.

From *The Freewoman* to *The New Freewoman*

All of the technical features of *The Egoist* were discernible in the original layout of *The Freewoman*: the large format, the neat small font, and the style of the advertisements were never modified between 1911 and 1919. The evolution that led to the progressive erasure of feminism in favor of individualism started early, and it became more obvious in 1912. With issue 23, *The Freewoman*'s subtitle changed from 'A weekly feminist review' to a 'A weekly humanist review'. The explanation provided was a little embarrassed: Marsden, who did not sign them yet, explained that the growing number of subscribers implied a broader basis that could not be limited to a feminist point of view. The choice of 'humanism', she added, should not be confused with traditional 'masculinist humanism'.⁴ Thanks to West's developing involvement with H. G. Wells (they met in 1911 and had a son in 1914), issue 18 of March 21, 1912, published on the front page a mild attack by Wells, 'Woman Endowed',⁵ in which Wells pointed out numerous political inconsistencies in the review's direction. This was followed by Marsden's spirited response: 'Mr. Wells thinks that we owe our readers a description of the Freewoman's utopia.'⁶ Stung by the criticism, Marsden attempted to flesh out this utopia in the following issues. Meanwhile Rebecca West could sting as well. In the issue of September 19, 1912, she reviewed *Marriage* by H. G. Wells and wrote: 'Mr. Wells' mannerisms are more infuriating than ever in "Marriage",⁷ adding that he was in the habit of merely 'spluttering' at his enemies. This review attracted the attention of Wells, who then started courting the young writer. Like Wells, Upton Sinclair was asked to give his frank opinion of the magazine's political line, and he complied on July 4, 1912, with his 'Impressions of English Suffragism',⁸ in which he considered that this splinter group of feminists should become socialist and join the united workers. The only political solution for the current crisis was, according to him, a call for a general strike. This revolutionary position was rejected by Dora Marsden, who ended up

⁴ *The Freewoman*, 2:27 (May 23, 1912), 17.

⁵ *The Freewoman*, 2:18 (Mar. 21, 1912), 341-2.

⁶ *Ibid.* 342.

⁷ *The Freewoman*, 2:44 (Sept. 19, 1912), 346.

⁸ *The Freewoman*, 2:33 (July 4, 1912), 125-6.

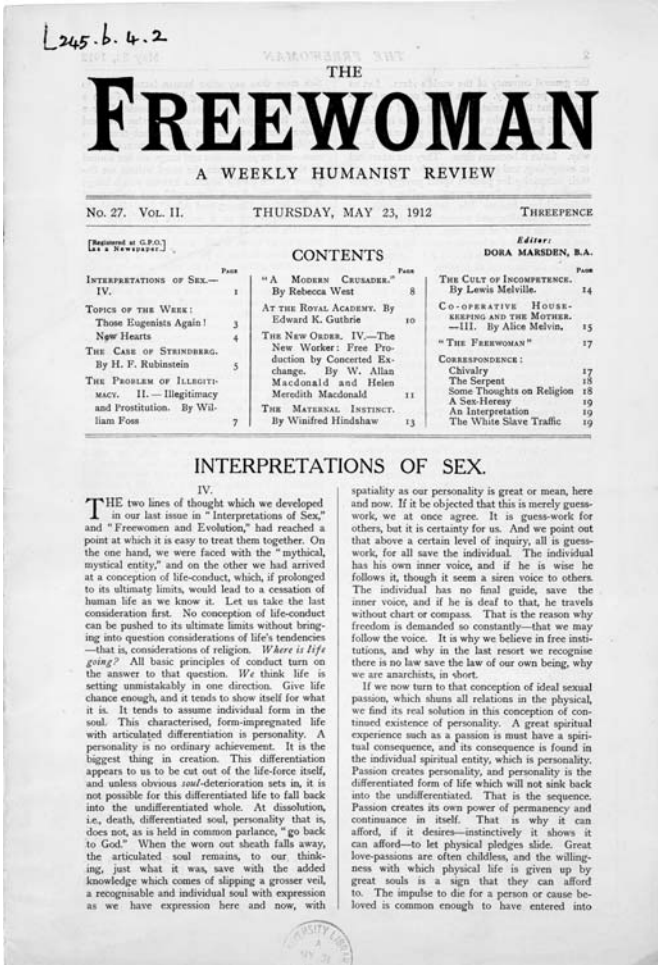


Fig. 34. Cover of *The Freewoman* (May 1912)

choosing her variant of mysticism, whereas it was her friend Harriet Shaw Weaver who would finally endorse communism.

The Freewoman can be taken to exemplify early modernism because it was political but not in the activist sense: politics had to be filtered by a reflexive attitude that included the issues of language, culture, and history. In that sense, it was perhaps the first self-conscious 'modernist' review, a term which it employed regularly. It was first used in the context of sexual discussions as in Julian Wardé's 'The Immorality of the Marriage Contract'.⁹ There Wardé wrote, 'Freedom in marriage is the commonest of the shibboleths of the modern movement. That is

⁹ *The Freewoman*, 2:31 (June 20, 1912), 81–3.

because the modernists have been at no pains to understand their own position.¹⁰ He compared marriage with legal prostitution, and ended with dark forebodings: 'It is small wonder, therefore, that marriage is one of the institutions whose dissolution is already at hand.'¹¹ The same issue had an article on 'Modernism in Morality: The Ethics of Sexual Relationships', also by Warde, who then followed suit in the next issue. There he revealed himself to be more traditional, as when he wrote, 'The instinctive desire of every woman is for motherhood. The woman who does not desire motherhood is not normal.'¹² On the whole, the review initiated a frank debate with divergent opinions on issues such as divorce, the legalization of prostitution, the recurrence of sexual oppression, the limits of self-abuse and whether this causes insanity, and what to do with unmarried mothers (who were treated as insane or criminal by politicians like Winston Churchill).

Another meaning of 'modernism' was to be found in the theological sense. The issue of August 15, 1912, had an advertisement for Modernists, 'TO MODERNISTS',¹³ announcing an issue of *The Oxford and Cambridge Review* devoted to the Christian orthodoxy controversy. Meanwhile, most issues of *The Freewoman* would run advertisements for feminine fashion, like 'ADOLPHE | LADIES' TAILOR | Special sale of PARIS made BLOUSES | At greatly reduced prices'. They soon disappeared from *The New Freewoman* and *The Egoist*. A dominant voice in *The Freewoman* was that of Rebecca West whose wit shone in all these issues, while Marsden's style felt either muted or stilted. In July 1912 she reviewed *English Literature 1880-1905* by J. M. Kennedy, and attacked him frankly: 'Mr. J. M. Kennedy is a bishop manqué. He writes in the solemn yet hiccuppy style peculiar to bishops, with a "however", or "indeed" or "of course" interrupting every sentence. . . . Perhaps Mr Kennedy is a bishop in some secret church of the Nietzscheans.'¹⁴ In her conclusion, West gives vent to pure hilarity: 'I must confess that the passage which gives me the most tranquil pleasure is an entry in the index: "Sex, The importance of, p. 224" That is Napoleonic. One yearns to grovel, just a little.'¹⁵

In a perceptive review of Remy de Gourmont's *A Night in the Luxemburg*, a Parisian fantasy in which gods speak like Bergson and goddesses dress almost as well as 'Parisiennes', West denounces the submerged chauvinism of the book. Unimpressed by the prestige of the French writer, she traces the novel's vulgarity to male arrogance, a failing when measured by lofty Nietzschean critique. She concludes with a lighter touch:

But consider the grace of the book! If a German had become infatuated with these deities, what an affliction the book would have been! Instead of wandering in the

¹⁰ Ibid. 81. ¹¹ Ibid. 83. ¹² Ibid. III.

¹³ *The Freewoman*, 2:39 (Aug. 15, 1912), 255.

¹⁴ *The Freewoman*, 2:36 (July 23, 1912), 187. Also in *The Young Rebecca*, 49

¹⁵ *The Freewoman*, 2:36 (July 23, 1912), 188. Also in *The Young Rebecca*, 52.

magic Luxembourg they would have galumphed down Unter den Linden. And the god would have been a shocking bore. As it is, he is a quaint fellow, not quite a gentleman, and not much of a philosopher, but the delightful friend of a night¹⁶

By contrast, the weakness of the review was in the quality of the poetry published in its pages. For instance, in *The Freewoman* of July 11, 1912, one finds side by side two very bad poems by Amy Skovgaard-Pedersen, 'To Auguste Strindberg', and by O. S. Parker, 'Maid's Murder'.¹⁷ This tended to mark the review as a late Victorian publication, and it was the aspect that West and Marsden were eager to change. Marsden's radicalization was triggered by her discovery of the works of Max Stirner. She documented this crucial encounter in 'The Growing Ego',¹⁸ an editorial signed 'Dora Marsden' although it still displayed the editorial 'we': 'We have just laid aside one of the profoundest of human documents, Max Stirner's "The Ego and his Own".'¹⁹ Marsden went on: 'Morality, religion, God, and man are all brought low. They no longer rule as external powers influencing the Ego. . . . The Ego is supreme and reigns in his lonely kingdom. His joy lies in self-enjoyment, he reigns over himself; his business is to "use himself up."²⁰ What followed was a long and passionate summary of Stirner's theses as developed in *The Ego and His Own*.

Philosophical anarchism thus became a theoretical basis for a general attitude encompassing politics, ethics, religion, and everyday behavior. The following issues systematized the outlook to the point that in September, *The Freewoman* developed a full credo entitled "The Policy of "The Freewoman"'.²¹ Here, Marsden finally answered to Wells's and Upton Sinclair's strictures, refuting Wells's claim that British feminists had 'no constructive theories'. Marsden tabulated her opposition to Fabian socialism in the name of Stirner's individualistic anarchism. Here is how the double column started:

SYNDICALISM

Individualistic
 Insurrectionistic
 Propertied
 Free
 Direct
 Receiving products of individual industry
 Anti organicistic
 Self-defended
 Independent
 Religious
 Cultured

SOCIALISM

Communist
 Revolutionary
 Propertyless
 Governed
 Bureaucratic
 Salaried
 Mechanised, ie organized
 Protected
 Obedient
 Materialistic
 Intellectual²²

¹⁶ *The Freewoman*, 2:31 (June 20, 1912), 90.

¹⁸ *The Freewoman*, 2:38 (Aug. 8, 1912), 221–2.

²¹ *The Freewoman*, 2:42 (Sept. 5, 1912), 301.

¹⁷ *The Freewoman*, 2:34 (July 11, 1912), 152–3.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 221.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 222.

²² *Ibid.* 304.

This program, part of the editorial, was perhaps too clear. For despite this effort at producing a consistent body of doctrine, or perhaps because of this effort, sales were dropping: the feminists were dissatisfied, the anarcho-syndicalists would look down on a feminine weekly, and the more serious socialist discussions would look for other tribunes like *The New Age*. Finally, the distributor's boycott forced Marsden and her friends to close the weekly. The last *Freewoman* issue of October 10, 1912, was called by Dora Marsden and Grace Jardine (who was the sub-editor) 'OUR LAST ISSUE'. In this very short issue, they explained the review's demise as being purely financial and moreover temporary and requested further support from their group of readers in these terms:

The FREEWOMAN has a creed. It exists because of its creed, and has no excuse for existence except in so far as it lifts up its view of life and battles for its acceptance. It splits up the equanimity of the people whose tendency in life is as aimless as that of a person lost in a maze . . . There are those who are in tune with its special creed; who find in its essential doctrine an expression of something in themselves which has been waiting for expression. These form the handful who stand for its 'Cause'.²³

In such words they were sowing the seeds of later divisions and inner debates.

From *The New Freewoman* to *The Egoist*

It was with the word 'cause' that the new magazine took issue as soon as it reappeared. The editorial of the first issue of *The New Freewoman* did not disguise its anarchist tone, but anarchism was offered as 'individualism' (the full name of the magazine, now a bi-monthly, was *The New Freewoman, An Individualist Review*). Thus Marsden started her first leading article with an attack on the notion of 'Cause' (by which she meant feminism):

This is the epoch of the gadding mind. The mind 'not at home' but given to something else, occupied with alien 'causes' is the normal order and as such must be held accountable for that contemning [*sic*] of the lonely occupant of the home—the Self—which is the characteristic of the common mind. . . . Hence the popularity of the 'Cause' which provides the Idol to which the desired self-sacrifice can be offered. The greater the sacrifice the Idol can accept the greater is it as a 'Cause', whether it be liberty, equality, fraternity or what not.²⁴

²³ *The Freewoman*, 2:47 (Oct. 10, 1912), 400.

²⁴ *The New Freewoman, an Individualist Review*, 1:1 (June 15, 1913), 1. I am using the Kraus Reprint publication in one volume (New York: Kraus, 1967).



Fig. 35. Cover of *The New Freewoman* (June 1913)

This attack on 'causes' was in line with the opening statement of Max Stirner's *The Ego and His Own*, which had been translated into English in 1907 by Benjamin Tucker, also a regular contributor to *The New Freewoman*. There, Stirner developed the idea that he, for one, would reject any cause that was not his own. He meant his rejection to be radical. Not wishing to stop at a critique of religion as the other left-Hegelians had done, Stirner aimed at destroying 'the cause of mankind' or of the 'mind' (meaning Hegelianism) as well. Nothing was to be spared; one had to get rid of all the 'causes' such as truth, love, freedom, humanity, and justice.

What is not supposed to be my concern! First and foremost the good cause, then God's cause, the cause of mankind, of truth, of freedom, of humanity, of justice;

further, the cause of my people, my prince, my fatherland; finally, even the cause of mind and a thousand other causes. Only *my* cause is not supposed to be my concern. 'Shame on the egoist who thinks only of himself!'²⁵

Stirner concluded this overture with a rhapsody harping on the self's uniqueness: 'My concern is neither the divine nor the human, not the true, good, just, free, etc., but solely what is *mine* and it is not a general one, but is—*unique*, as I am unique. Nothing is more to me than myself!'²⁶

Elaborating a sort of pastiche of Stirner's florid prose style, Marsden was at the same time repudiating the cause of suffragism along with all the old metaphysical illusions. Egoism became a keyword: in the name of uniqueness and egoism, one should refuse to die for a movement hinged around an abstract concept like 'Woman'. The Pankhursts believed that it was right for a militant suffragette to sacrifice her life for the cause and deployed a rhetoric of martyrdom denounced as a trap by Marsden. 'Mrs. Pankhurst may die and great is the Cause. What Cause? The Cause of the empty concept—the fount of all insincerity: the Cause of the Symbol—the Nothing worked upon by the Dithyramb.'²⁷ This led Marsden to a sweeping rejection of any form of authority:

Accurately speaking, there is no 'Woman movement', 'Woman' is doing nothing—she has, indeed, no existence. A very limited number of individual women are emphasizing the fact that the first thing to be taken into account with regard to them is that they *are* individuals and can not be lumped together into a class, a sex; or a 'movement'. They—this small number—regard themselves neither as wives, mothers, spinsters, women, nor men.²⁸

Such a principle of individuation resisting all abstract categories and classifications would entail a systematic critique of language in so far as these terms are primarily linguistic pigeonholes. Language was power, Marsden claimed, and such power had to be undone at the source:

If primarily women are to regard themselves as Woman or as the Mother, their satisfactions as individuals would be subordinated to an external authority: the requirements of the development of Woman or Mother *as such*—Empty concepts again. . . . The few individual women before mentioned maintain that their only fitting description is that of Individual: Ends-in-themselves. They are Egoists. They are Autocrats, and government in their autocracy is vested in the Self which holds the reins in the kingdom of varying wants and desires, and which defines the resultant of these different forces as the Satisfaction of Itself. The intensive satisfaction of Self is for the individual the one goal in life.²⁹

²⁵ Max Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*, ed. David Leopold (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 5.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 7.

²⁷ *The New Freewoman*, 1:1 (June 15, 1913), 3.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 5.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

This first manifesto announced the dominant theme of *The New Freewoman*. From the outset, anarchism was seen clashing with feminism, or, more precisely, it had both replaced and encompassed feminism:

Dear Friends and readers, The NEW FREEWOMAN has no Cause. The nearest approach to a Cause it desires to attain, is to destroy Causes... The NEW FREEWOMAN is not for the advancement of Woman, but for the empowering of individuals—men and women... not to create thoughts but to set free life impulses.³⁰

This surprising lack of any credo or ideological basis was best fitted to promote dialogue: ‘In the clash of opinions we shall expect to find our values.’³¹

Soon after, and almost inevitably, Marsden’s critique of language, which she called her new ‘semantics’, would clash with anarchism too. In a dialogue with Tucker, who was combining Stirner and Proudhon, in November 1913, Marsden asked: ‘We frankly do not understand why Mr. Tucker, an egoist, and Stirner’s English publisher, does not see the necessity of clearing current language of padding as a preliminary of egoistic investigation.’³² After all, Stirner himself ‘worked like a navy at the job’.³³ And Marsden lashed out at Proudhon, Tucker’s other ‘master thinker’, comparing him with a telephone, that was ‘lucid and clear for respectable intervals, then a buzz which churns into one’s head for quite long spells until one is tempted to put up the receiver—or close the book’.³⁴ No doubt Marsden could make enemies easily! Anarchism was not enough, as Laura Riding would later write,³⁵ if it did not begin with a critical revision of the language we use—otherwise we run the risk of being carried away by propaganda and distorted ideologies like nationalism or the ‘sham’ of representational democracy.

There is no wonder then that the last page of the last issue of *The New Freewoman* dated 15 December 1913 should print side by side an advertisement for *The Divine Mystery* by Allen Upward, who had been praised by Pound as the best anthropologist of religious rituals, and an advertisement for Stirner’s *The Ego and His Own*, introduced with the caption ‘The most powerful work that has ever emerged from a single human mind.’³⁶ Three titles follow: *Anarchism*, by Paul Eltzbacher; *State Socialism and Anarchism*, by Ben Tucker; and *The Seven That Were Hanged*, by Leonid Andreieff. But in the pages of the review themselves, Upward’s presence was felt more, especially when he presented Confucius to the readers. In ‘Sayings of K’ung the Master’, Upward was instilling something like an antidote to the Germanic and post-Hegelian cult of anarchist Egoism: ‘There were four things

³⁰ *The New Freewoman*, 1:2 (July 1, 1913), 25.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *The New Freewoman*, 1:11 (Nov. 15, 1913), 204.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.* 205.

³⁵ Laura Riding, *Anarchism is Not Enough* (1928), ed. Lisa Samuels (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

³⁶ *The New Freewoman*, 1:13 (Dec. 15, 1913), 258.

from which the Master was entirely free. He had no foregone conclusions, no arbitrary decisions, no obstinacy, and no egoism.³⁷ He was also paving the way for Pound's subsequent infatuation with Master Kung.

Again, as with *The Freewoman*, the verve of Rebecca West's style dominates the first issues. The second issue of *The New Freewoman* featured a story entitled 'Nana' in which West narrated her visit to a low-class striptease club in Seville. The woman whom she calls 'Nana', by reference to Zola, strips naked and sings, to the unashamed delight of the narrator:

This was inspired nakedness. As the gaslight glowed off her body, whose wholesomeness immediately frustrated her attempts at indecency, and the lines of her trembled because she continued to sing deeply from the chest, I remembered how I once saw the sun beating on the great marbled loins and furrowed back of a grey Clydesdale and watched the backward thrust of its thigh twitch with power.³⁸

The comparison with a Scottish horse was not meant to be demeaning—it would had it been written by Wyndham Lewis—since West wanted to convey her discovery of the fact that women were mostly flesh and blood, a 'refreshing' gift allowing her to leave behind the intellect. West, a brilliant stylist, was also an untiring feminist propagandist who chose the camp of modernism.

West did all she could to promote Pound and his friends. Thus in August 1913 she introduced Imagisme by quoting liberally from Pound's famous *Poetry* manifesto on the 'direct treatment of the thing', the refusal of padding and the idea that rhythm should be musical and not mechanical. Nevertheless, West expressed some misgivings, and contrasted Imagisme with post-Impressionism and Futurism. According to her, Imagisme was not meant to be 'revolutionary' as its main promoters seemed in love with the past. Yet such an apparent passé-ism was prospective and opened new vistas on the future: 'Just as Taylor and Gillbreth want to introduce scientific management into industry so the *imagistes* want to discover the most puissant way of whirling the scattered star dust of words into a new star of passion.'³⁹ This reluctance to adopt an ideology of professionalism did not prevent her from letting Pound express his theories. This issue features Pound's 'Tenzone', 'The Garret', 'The Garden', 'Dance Figure', 'Salutation', 'Salutation the Second', and finally, the famous haiku 'In a Station of the Metro', which faithfully respects the original lay out and punctuation:

IN A STATION OF THE METRO

The apparition of these faces in the crowd:
Petals on a wet, black bough.⁴⁰

³⁷ *The New Freewoman*, 1:11 (Nov. 15, 1913), 205.

³⁸ *The New Freewoman*, 1:2 (July 1, 1913), 27.

³⁹ *The New Freewoman*, 1:5 (Aug. 15, 1913), 86.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 88.

Then in September 1913, the whole group with H.D., Aldington, William Carlos Williams, Flint, and Amy Lowell is gathered under the heading of 'The Newer School'. In the same issue, Pound publishes a review of poems by Lawrence and Frost. As if to confirm West's remark on the 'Taylorization' of poetry, Pound began, on October 15, 1913, the installments of 'The Serious Artist', an essay that was the lead article. Perhaps fearing that he would appear to be everywhere in the issue, Pound printed his 'credo' on religious issues, 'Religio', anonymously in this issue.⁴¹ Meanwhile, Rebecca West had left, feeling displaced by the massive import of the Pound group; and her last contribution was to the previous issue. West also objected to the magazine's mixture of heady philosophy (Bergson appears in issue 1:13 on 'The Philosophy of Ideas') and the more and more frequent discussions of experimental art, as the article on Cubism by John Cournos,⁴² or the critical review of Futurism by Richard Aldington in issue 1:12.⁴³ It was less that a male-centered modernism was replacing an older suffragism than a political review being slowly turned into a literary magazine. Indeed, in these issues, the inclusion of a text by 'A Fabian on Banking Reform'⁴⁴ seems almost out of place. Rachel Blau DuPlessis and other feminists have denounced Marsden's evolution as a betrayal of feminism.⁴⁵ While Marsden's high-strung disaffection is undeniable, Clarke showed that her hand had not been forced by Pound and his friends. Rather, she deliberately used the aesthetic component of her magazine to bring about another change of name, to the point that she solicited an official letter from the 'men of letters' who complied, echoing Marsden's evolution from committed early feminism to high modernism via philosophical anarchism.

This momentous move from post-suffragist feminism to post-feminist literary anarchism left Marsden freer to develop an original philosophical deconstruction of political discourse and of everyday language. The last issue of *The New Freewoman* contained a note explaining why it should change its name to *The Egoist* as of January 1914. An open letter was signed by Upward, Pound, Carter, Kauffmann, and Aldington, who thanked Marsden for her constant efforts in 'establishing an organ in which men and women of intelligence can express themselves without regard to the public'. The current title would expose the review 'to be confounded with organs devoted solely to the advocacy of an unimportant reform in an obsolete political institution'. The request was to consider 'adopting another title which will mark the character of your paper as an organ of individualists of both sexes, and of the individualist principle in every department of life.'⁴⁶ The new title,

⁴¹ 'Religio, Or the Child's Guide to Knowledge', *The New Freewoman*, 1:9 (Oct. 15, 1913), 173.

⁴² 'The Battle of the Cubes', *The New Freewoman*, 1:11 (Nov. 15, 1913), 214–15.

⁴³ 'Mr. Marinetti's Lectures', *The New Freewoman*, 1:12 (Dec. 1, 1913), 226.

⁴⁴ By Henry Meulen, *The New Freewoman*, 1:11 (Nov. 15, 1913), 218–19.

⁴⁵ Rachel Blau DuPlessis, *The Pink Guitar: Writing as Feminist Practice* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 44–5.

⁴⁶ *The New Freewoman*, 1:13 (Dec. 15, 1913), 244.

The Egoist, was to be more 'neutral' at a time when women were tired of strife and aspired to social recognition. Here again, the semantic hedging that became typical of Marsden's later work is perceptible in the quotes that surround important words:

The time has arrived when mentally-honest women feel that they have no use for the springing-board of large promises of powers redeemable in a distant future. Just as they feel they can be as 'free' now as they have the power to be, they know that their works can give evidence now of whatever quality they are capable of giving to them. To attempt to be 'freer' than their own power warrants means that curious thing—'protected freedom' and their ability, allowed credit because it is women's, is a 'protected' ability. 'Freedom' and ability 'recognized' by permission, are privileges which they find can serve no useful purpose.⁴⁷

The linguistics of suspicion implied by Marsden deploys an ethics of autonomy (with the attendant notions of honesty, freedom, individuality, and usefulness) allied with a new aesthetic sense, geared to the direct and immediate expression of true emotions and the rejection of abstract concepts. In his Imagist manifesto Pound had urged the 'direct treatment of the "thing", whether subjective or objective', and had instructed his disciples to 'go in fear of abstractions'. This fitted Marsden's political and philosophical program perfectly: she too was destroying flabby generalities like the 'Cause' and all the connected ideological constructions. She would spend another decade debunking the abstract words that perpetuate oppression. These had to be deconstructed one by one, as Fritz Mauthner was doing in his monumental *Critique of Language* and his 1910–11 *Vocabulary of Philosophy*, and as Karl Kraus was doing in every issue of *Die Fackel*, the satirical review of Vienna of which he was, from 1911 to his death in 1936, the sole editor and contributor. Though their reputation lags still behind theirs, it is undeniable that Dora Marsden and Harriet Shaw Weaver belong to this distinguished group.

***Egoist* editors: Marsden or Eliot?**

The global results of Marsden's collaboration with Harriet Shaw Weaver are more than impressive: to have serialized in succession Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (from 1:3, dated from February 2, 1914, in homage to Joyce's birthday, to 2:9, September 1, 1915), Wyndham Lewis's *Tarr* (from 3:4, an issue dated April 1, 1916, to 4:10, November 1917), a translation of Ducasse's *Songs of Maldoror* (from 1:19, October 1, 1914, to 1:22, November 16, 1914, and then in 2:1, January 1, 1915), and then chapters 2, 3, 6, and 10 of *Ulysses* in 1919, and many important translations of Remy de Gourmont, German poets, and Chinese philosophers is no small achievement. It is true that the 'discovery' of James Joyce's genius seems to have

⁴⁷ Ibid.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE.		PAGE.		PAGE.
THE NATURE OF HONOUR. By Dora Marsden	411	THE SONS OF MALDEN. By the Editors	425	FIGHTING PARIS. By Malcolm Cowley	428
MEMORANDUMS	420	MORE WAR POETRY. By John Gould Fletcher	424	ART AND DREAMS. By Hasty Carter	430
VIEW AND COMMENT	422	CHINA. By F. T. S.	426	CORRESPONDENCE	431
TWO POETS. By Richard Aldington	422				

THE NATURE OF HONOUR.

By DORA MARSDEN.

THAT an inquiry into the nature of Honour resolves itself, in the main, into a dissertation on the nature of Morals naturally results from the intimate relation which exists between the two. The question of Honour is involved in the question of Morals, of which it is a special case, Honour being the attempt to incorporate within the sphere of the Moral something of the lure and distinction which belongs to the Immoral. Morals are the modes of conduct common to a community at any given period of its history: they are customs pure and simple, changing as customs will from time to time, but only in obedience to impulses operating through the entire community. Every man falls in with the customs of his age the greater part of his active life. Even the least conventional is dominated by them: In what we eat, buy, wear, strive after, praise, blame, reject and welcome, members of a community—distinguished or insignificant—are alike or tending to make themselves so. Therefore, to set claim to being moral is as if one were to lay claim to being a water-consumer; to being immoral; an anti-water-consumer. One consumes water so often and in so many forms, voluntarily and involuntarily, that it is absurd to set store by any cut-and-dried attitude of mind in regard to its use. It is useful, if not exhilarating, and moral conduct is the same. It means a vast saving in mental energy and makes available without the pains of specific acquirement the consolidated experiences of masses of people throughout long periods of time. No one praises moral conduct greatly; and none but a word-intoxicated simpleton plumes himself on acting immorally. When a man hears himself called moral he knows that he is being accorded that minimum of praise which almost suggests blame. Nor would he feel himself made more comfortable by hearing himself called immoral. Quite the contrary. The situation, as presumably it exists, is one which neither moral nor immoral will meet, and it is to answer this subtle requirement

that "honour" is born. Honour is a device of the moralists to escape the consequences of morality: from sameness, monotony, mediocrity, being the name given to estimates of actions conducted in the conventional sphere, but conducted with such a degree of intensity as to constitute a distinction which is conferred on the sphere itself. Moral conduct being customary conduct, it is in its very intention destined to be mediocre. It is the "usual thing," and honour is conferred when the "usual thing" is done with such an intensity of energy as to sublimate its non-distinctiveness into distinction. Such conduct intensifies the degree to such an extent that it appears to create a difference in kind. It embellishes the normal to the height of the exceptional and its reward is "Honour." One could illustrate by the analogy of fashions in dress. The leader of fashions is one who, by the definition as it were, sets great store by fashion; but in order to be distinguished in the realm of fashion a leader must persevere intensely every fashion before she is accorded distinctive honours in her line. And as a leader of fashion is to the ordinarily fashionable, so is the "man of honour" to the ordinarily moral. In dress it would involve a good deal of thought and no little inconvenience to avoid being fairly in the fashion. Fashionable clothes must be bought because the wares most easy to come by are just those in fashion. One falls an easy and acquiring victim to the dead weight of environment—and finds oneself in the fashion. But the superlatively fashionable must do quite differently from that. Much thought, time and comfort must be sacrificed before one can attain the dizzy pinnacle at which one is adjudged a leader and an adornment of fashion. A reputation of fashion is not won without some toil and exercise of pains. Nor is Honour. In both cases the efforts expended by the purchasers are the equivalents they are prepared to offer in exchange for—public repute and applause.

Fig. 36. Cover of *The Egoist* (Nov. 1914)

been due mostly to Harriet Shaw Weaver's flair: almost immediately, she became his staunch supporter and then a very generous and, at first, quite anonymous, benefactor.

Certain issues present almost perfect units, like 5:1 of January 1918, devoted to a commemoration of Henry James with important articles by Pound and Eliot, or the second Imagist (without an 'e' this time) number (2:5, May 1, 1916) which consecrated the second Imagist wave dominated not by Pound but by Amy Lowell; with essays by Flint, Aldington, Olivia Shakespear, and John Gould Fletcher, and poems by Aldington, Fletcher, Flint, Lawrence, Amy Lowell, Marianne Moore, and May Sinclair. These are 'serious' numbers, exactly as Pound could speak of the 'serious' artist, and their increased professionalization corresponded to the rise to power of two assistant editors, first Richard Aldington, installed by Pound but

who soon distanced himself from his mentor, and T. S. Eliot. One may even say that in the last two years, *The Egoist* offered the curious spectacle of a superb literary review edited by Eliot as both an assistant and a contributing editor, in which massive chunks of philosophy churned out by Marsden figured as intricate editorials with longer and longer titles like ‘Philosophy: The Science of Signs. XVII. Truth (continued). IV. The Measure of Authority which Egoism allows to the science of External nature’,⁴⁸ apparently without any connection with the rest. At least this is the thesis put forward by Eliot, and I will try to qualify it by focusing on ‘Tradition and the Individual Talent’.

It is important to understand the genesis of this well-known essay so as to avoid being surprised by its insertion in *The Egoist* context, as Bruce Clarke was when he wrote that it was curious to see Eliot’s piece published there. Clarke writes: ‘It is wonderfully ironic that “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” the ur-manifesto of hegemonic modernism, was first published in the last two numbers of the *Egoist*, alongside Dora Marsden’s egoistic apocalypse, her concluding chapters to the *Science of Signs*.’⁴⁹ Indeed, the first explicit statement of the poetics of impersonality that became a signature of high modernism was published in two successive issues of *The Egoist*. In fact, there is less of a clash between Dora Marsden’s philosophy of egoism and Eliot’s impersonality than one might believe at first glance. One might even say that Eliot was responding to the theses put forward by *The Egoist*. When, in May 1917, Eliot announced to his mother both that *The Egoist* was publishing his first collection of poetry, *Prufrock and Other Observations*, and that he was about to be named ‘contributing editor’ to the review, with a salary of one pound a month, he simply alluded to a magazine run by ‘mostly old maids’ and believed that he would exert a ‘beneficial influence’ on it, well aware that this would add to his notoriety.⁵⁰ All this, he acknowledged, was owed to Pound’s tireless efforts on his behalf.

In fact, like Pound, Eliot took his contributions to *The Egoist* very seriously. Two years later, in 1919, his tone became more bitter, but at the moment when Miss Weaver decided to halt the publication of the review to use all her money to publish books like *Ulysses*. Eliot, always respectful of Harriet Shaw Weaver, was then hostile to Dora Marsden. He wrote:

I have only met Miss Marsden once, and then (in strict confidence) frothed at the mouth with antipathy. The fact that the paper was primarily a means for getting her philosophical articles into print, and that its appearance was at irregular intervals owing to the length of time it took her to write them, I think militated against the success of the paper with many people who did not want to read them.⁵¹

⁴⁸ This is the title of Marsden’s lead article for *The Egoist*, 6:3 (July 1919), 33.

⁴⁹ Clarke, *Dora Marsden and Early Modernism*, 7.

⁵⁰ *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, vol. i, ed. Valerie Eliot (London: Faber, 1988), 179.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* 315.

Despite this criticism, most of the impetus for the essay on tradition derives from a productive dialogue with Marsden's main ideas. In the first lines, Eliot opposes a 'French' position to a 'British' one, in conformity with the magazine, which was often flaunting its francophilia. In particular, one issue had featured Remy de Gourmont's remarks on 'Tradition and other things'.⁵² There, de Gourmont distinguished usefully between a 'continuous tradition' and a 'renewed tradition'.⁵³ He stated that if tradition was everywhere, 'Tradition—I find it everywhere. All the past can be a part of tradition. Why this and not that?'⁵⁴ one individual could embody tradition: 'Deny bravely what your taste does not relish. Affirm valiantly what you like. You are, then you are also a tradition.'⁵⁵ Conscious of his debts to a purely French genealogy, with Stendhal and Flaubert as heroes, he viewed the 'Mystical Latin' of the Middle Ages as a horizon of past culture, while admitting that his tradition was 'not only French', but 'European'.⁵⁶ It included Dante, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Swift, Byron, Goethe, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche. Within this pantheon, de Gourmont delineated the contradictory need to make choices ('As soon as we chose we commit an act of arbitrary criticism,')⁵⁷ and not to choose, in order to let tradition follow its course and proliferate organically: 'The true masters of tradition are those who, like Sainte-Beuve, have despised nothing, have wished to understand everything.'⁵⁸

This typical paradox helps us understand how Eliot begins:

In English writing we seldom speak of tradition, though we occasionally apply its name in deploring its absence. We cannot refer to 'the tradition' or to 'a tradition'; at most, we employ the adjective in saying that the poetry of So-and-so is 'traditional' or even 'too traditional.' . . . You can hardly make the word agreeable to English ears without this comfortable reference to the reassuring science of archæology.⁵⁹

The dichotomy between a French and a British 'culture of ideas' (to quote de Gourmont) echoes Pound's habitual attacks on British provincialism. Eliot's 'we' represents as much the point of view as an American recently initiated into European customs as that of the group of modernist writers who were striving to reach universal visibility and validity:

We know, or think we know, from the enormous mass of critical writing that has appeared in the French language the critical method or habit of the French; we only conclude (we are such unconscious people) that the French are 'more critical' than we, and sometimes even plume ourselves a little with the fact, as if the French were the less spontaneous. Perhaps they are; but we might remind ourselves that

⁵² *The Egoist*, 1:14 (July 15, 1914), 261–2.

⁵³ *Ibid.* 261.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 262.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 261.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ T. S. Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (I), *The Egoist*, 6:4 (Sept. 1919), 54.

criticism is as inevitable as breathing, and that we should be none the worse for articulating what passes in our minds when we read a book and feel an emotion about it, for criticizing our own minds in their work of criticism.⁶⁰

I can only briefly rehearse here the series of paradoxes posited by Eliot: the true originality of a poet consists in being traditional; otherwise he will become sterile or flat once adolescent enthusiasm has been left behind. In order to be a good traditionalist, one needs to understand the 'historical sense' which is not just a sense of the past, but a sense of the presentness of the past; this can only be given by a perception of values that are eternal; this perception entails a subjective participation to the ideal order of universal culture, an order which may be compared with a living system or an organism. A consequence of this organicity is that each time a masterpiece is being produced, the whole system gets readjusted and modified. No one can inherit tradition, it is acquired by a long and patient exercise. The two myths that must be debunked are those that deny this patient labor: the Romantic belief in inspiration, the classical metaphysical belief in the substantiality of the soul. To be traditional, one must learn to become impersonal, but in order to be impersonal, one needs to be endowed with true personality.

The first half of the essay was published in *The Egoist* (6:4) of September 1919, the second in December 1919 (6:5). In conclusion of the first part Eliot asks his readers to consider what happens when platinum, oxygen, and sulfur dioxide are put together. He answers his own question three months later: this is the phenomenon of catalysis. The mind of the poet functions thanks to catalysts like platinum: all the emotions and sensations of a day or a whole life will coalesce in a new verbal precipitate. The scientific analogy is prolonged by a series of philosophical considerations that call up the tone of Marsden's semantic qualifications:

The point of view which I am struggling to attack is perhaps related to the metaphysical theory of the substantial unity of the soul: for my meaning is, that the poet has, not a 'personality' to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality, in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways. . . . Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things.⁶¹

Most commentators go back to Bradley's philosophy, more precisely to Eliot's critical discussion in *Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley*, his dissertation completed in 1916 and never defended at Harvard. Eliot concludes that Bradley can never bridge the gap between a Hegelian Absolute and the finite centres

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ T. S. Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (II), *The Egoist*, 6:5 (Dec. 1919), 72.

of individual consciousnesses. However, the main theses of 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' do not derive from the discussion with Bradley but from a dialogue with Dora Marsden's concepts.

Marsden used the editorials of *The Egoist* to expound more and more ambitious theories, a philosophy whose scope aimed at rivaling both that of Bradley (representing Oxford's later Hegelianism) and that of Bertrand Russell (standing for the logical analysis put forward at Cambridge). Her egoist semantics had transformed the initial intuitions derived from Stirner into a theory of knowledge based upon a new 'science of signs'. When she recapitulates her headlong progression in December 1918, she includes within the 'power of signs' that she has critically examined notions such as 'life, feeling, the ego, the universe, time, space, substance, mind, knowledge, memory, reality, cause, will and destiny'.⁶² In a sense, Marsden was more 'advanced' philosophically speaking than Eliot in 1916, for she had already rejected Hegelian dialectics even when radically transformed by Stirner's cult of uniqueness, and taken into account the epistemological revolution that had begun in Cambridge with G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell. Ann Banfield has mapped this paradigm shift in her remarkable book *The Phantom Table*,⁶³ in which she takes the Bloomsbury group and Virginia Woolf as a focus. One could attempt a similar analysis with Dora Marsden, one of the first British philosophers who insisted on careful linguistic analysis of the 'language games' in which political and moral authority is vested. As we saw in the previous list, the political notion of a 'cause' is only one of the concepts that she deconstructs, and the list could be infinite. She writes in April 1917, 'Consonant with this theory of words, the origin of imagination and mind is one with the origin of language, and the tale of it would therefore seem a task for philology rather than for philosophy.'⁶⁴

In February 1917, Marsden attacked all philosophical dualisms since Descartes. In April 1917, she borrowed from William James the idea of an organic or bodily thought. That same month, she published a letter by William Carlos Williams who denounced her philosophizing as betraying a partial and purely feminine point of view. 'For the first time, here is philosophy from the female stand point: militant female psychology,'⁶⁵ but Williams added that it boiled down to a destruction of male psychology. Marsden, visibly glad to have an opportunity to explain herself, commented: 'Mr. Williams's "criticism" will be more helpful when he makes clearer what the distinction is which he draws between male and female psychology. Is it anything beyond the fact that the one is written by a man, the other by a woman? If not, most of us will feel we have not been helped very far.'⁶⁶ Her philosophy aimed at a generalized semiotics that should work for men and women

⁶² *The Egoist*, 5:10 (Nov.–Dec. 1918), 125.

⁶³ Ann Banfield, *The Phantom Table: Woolf, Fry, Russell and the Epistemology of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁶⁴ *The Egoist*, 4:4 (Apr. 1917), 35.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 46.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

alike. Fundamentally, she added to William James's psychology the point of view of language. Language consisted both of a 'predicative grammar' and a repertory of mental images sending us back to infancy, to a time when we projected magical properties on objects. Language is also intensely physical: 'Our war is with words and in their every aspect: grammar, accident, syntax: body, blood, and bone.'⁶⁷

Like Eliot, Marsden hoped that her theory would overcome all dualisms and go beyond the divide between materialism and idealism. She came as close as possible to Berkeley's *esse est percipi* when she questioned the meaning of 'to be' and 'being'. Finally, for her, the ego had to become identical with the universe: 'Therefore from the "Ego" nothing can be discriminated as distinct or separate. It is the Universe in which "All" is comprehended and unified.'⁶⁸ One curious consequence of this principle is that individual death does not exist in her system, since there is only an immense and constant transformation. 'We accordingly arrive at this position: worlds are sustained by the desire of organisms to maintain their streams in perpetuity.'⁶⁹ The universe being nothing but the sum of the experiences of all the 'Ego's' who live or have lived, the death of one organism is nothing, for in this constant organic rearrangement, death is transformed into a heritage which is perpetually modified and turned toward the future: 'The physical organization of life being cumulative and transmissible, the character of the world is likewise cumulative and transmissible. . . . The unbroken physical development which the individual organism trails behind itself is matched—and necessarily so—by an unbroken accumulation of the items of the external world.'⁷⁰ This passage seems to announce Eliot's idea of culture seen as an organic inheritance, a pre-discursive synthesis of bodily sensations underpinning our mental and affective lives. Eliot and Marsden shared a view of a vitalist and linguistic unconscious that was not really Freudian but more a prefiguration of a Lacanian unconscious 'structured like a language'. It would offer a synthesis of memory and desire, of archaic reminiscence and future strivings in a medium material and intellectual at once since it is made up of language. Language itself shapes our perception of time:

Thus by a simple application of symbols: by their bare enunciation: these ghostly forms of a resurrected experience sweep over the bodily tissues, crowd in thickly upon it and constitute one form of its actual *present* experience. But while these creations are undoubtedly in and of the present, the manner of their origin invests them with a peculiarity uniquely their own. They are so essentially word-born and word-dependent, while their form is of necessity modelled on the lines of forms which *have* found it convenient to label them with a distinguishing label. They

⁶⁷ 'I Am', *The Egoist*, 2:1 (Jan. 1, 1915), 1.

⁶⁸ 'The "I" and the "Ego": A Differentiation', *The Egoist*, 3:9 (Sept. 1916), 130.

⁶⁹ 'The Constitution of the World and the Character of our Scientific Knowledge', *The Egoist*, 5:3 (Mar. 1918), 37.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

term them the *past*. The *past*, therefore, is a particular species of the *present*, and its characteristic is that its existence is possible only by virtue of the sure and ready genius in symbols to resurrect the 'shades' of sensory movements whose traces are already stored up in the flesh.⁷¹

The convergence with Eliot's thesis is obvious, even if Eliot's greater clarity of expression makes his statements much more memorable. Eliot's disappointment when Marsden and Weaver decided to close *The Egoist* as a periodical was immense; he would draw the lessons of his experience as an editor and would try to do better with *The Criterion*.

Unlike Mauthner or Karl Kraus, Marsden could not capitalize on her writings when she published them. She could not draw the lessons from her editorial experience, perhaps because Harriet Weaver, who kept silent, had been a more active editor than Marsden. Among the reasons adduced when the review was halted was the idea that Marsden would need time to gather her rambling philosophical meditations into a book:

the *Science of Signs* series, which has been running through the paper for three and a half years, requires considerable remodeling to fit it for permanent statement in book form, and the author considers that the work entailed will be too exacting to permit of her contribution at the same time the new series which was announced some months ago.⁷²

The editor would not become an author without killing her review! Alas, when she finally produced the synthesis, Marsden's difficult and demanding work met only indifference. Nobody spared her, not even the modernists whom she had sponsored, not even those who had a strong philosophical background like T. S. Eliot. Eliot deplored that *The Egoist* suspended publication because of the publication of Marsden's 'philosophical articles into print' since he thought that most readers were baffled by them.⁷³ Should we trust Eliot? His animus comes from his disappointment at having been stymied as an assistant editor who could have taken over the review. One can see the editor of *The Criterion* lurking behind the sub-editor of *The Egoist*: a concern for the orthopaedic function of sane criticism and the establishment of a rigorous tradition in the humanities dominates in both magazines.

After the definitive closing of the review, Marsden isolated herself in a cottage in the Lake District and went on with her philosophical investigations, more and more concerned with the issue of belief and divinity. Unhappily, the two huge and opaque volumes, *The Definition of the Godhead* and *Mysteries of Christianity*, published in 1928 and 1930 by the Egoist Press, which had been revived by Harriet

⁷¹ *The Egoist*, 5:6 (June–July, 1918), 78.

⁷² *The Egoist*, 6:5 (Dec. 1919), 70.

⁷³ T. S. Eliot, *Letters*, i, 315.

Weaver for the occasion, do not return to her editorial essays. They do not develop an 'egoist semantics' or promote a critical 'science of signs'. Instead, they engage with an all too vast project, the mapping of Western philosophy in its contradistinction from religion. It was inevitable that such heady and over-ambitious treatises should remain ignored. The lack of any interest from critics or reviewers put Marsden into a deep depression. From 1935 to 1960, she spent the rest of her life hospitalized in the psychiatric ward of the Crichton Royal Hospital in Dumfries, Scotland. She did not know that a young Jewish woman named Alisa Rosenbaum had left Russia and landed in New York in 1926, and that she would soon make her way to Hollywood. Her first novel, *We the Living*, would be published just after Marsden was hospitalized. Rosenbaum would become famous under the name of Ayn Rand when she developed a new and idiosyncratic philosophy of egoism. It contained very little feminism but aimed, as Marsden had done, at a global critique of both capitalism and socialism.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ I have compared Dora Marsden, Ayn Rand, and James Joyce in *James Joyce and the Politics of Egoism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 13–18 and 45–53.

THE ‘LITTLE MAGAZINE’ AS WEAPON

BLAST (1914–15)

ANDRZEJ GASIOREK

From the moment of its first appearance in early July 1914, *BLAST* divided its readers. It has done so ever since. If some of those who first encountered *BLAST* welcomed it as a vibrant contribution to avant-garde painting and writing, then others derided it for what they saw as its vacuous high jinks. Richard Aldington, who signed the opening manifesto but had no part in the creation of *BLAST*, described it as ‘the most amazing, energised, stimulating production I have ever seen’.¹ But the conservative J. C. Squire (writing as ‘Solomon Eagle’) dismissed *BLAST* and everything it represented:

We haven’t a movement here, not even a mistaken one; all we have is a heterogeneous mob suffering from juvenile decay tottering along (accompanied by the absent-minded Mr. Hueffer in a tail-coat) in reach-me-down fancy-dress uniforms (some of them extremely old-fashioned), trying to discover as they go what their common destination is to be.²

Was *BLAST* an original, revivifying, and challenging production or was it an immature, confused, and belated imitation? Readers at the time weren’t sure, anymore than they are now.

The years leading up to the First World War witnessed a huge amount of interest in modern art and writing. Writers and artists met, mingled, collaborated and quarrelled, forged alliances and broke them, elaborated aesthetic positions and literary theories, vied for prestige, and generally struggled to gain audiences

¹ Richard Aldington, *The Egoist*, 1:13 (1 July 1914), 248.

² ‘Solomon Eagle’ [J. C. Squire], ‘Books in General’, *The New Statesman*, 111:65 (4 July 1914), 406. Squire was later to edit *The London Mercury*, see Chapter 10.



Fig. 37. Cover of *BLAST* 1 (1914)

and readerships for their work.³ The period during which *BLAST* emerged was characterized by intense artistic activity, diverse movements, loosely affiliated groups, discussions in salons, cafés, and restaurants; art shows, balls, dances, dinners, and lectures; and wide coverage in the press. Roger Fry, T. E. Hulme, Wyndham Lewis, and Ezra Pound (T. S. Eliot did not arrive in England until 1914) were significant personalities in these years. Fry had begun to show an interest in painters who became known as 'post-Impressionists' in 1909, and he organized the controversial 'Manet and the Post-Impressionists' exhibition in 1910, the 'Quelques artistes indépendants anglais' exhibition in Paris in 1912—at which Frederick Etchells, Lewis, and Helen Saunders showed—and the 'Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition' in London, also in 1912. Lewis was briefly involved in Fry's Omega Workshops enterprise, before the now infamous quarrel over a commission for the Ideal Home exhibition led him to break with Fry in October 1913.⁴ Kate Lechmere invited Lewis to run a rival *atelier*, and the 'Rebel Art Centre' opened in March 1914, at a time when preparations for *BLAST* were already under way. Others involved in the centre were Jessica Dismorr, Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, Helen Saunders, and William Roberts, all of whom would feature in *BLAST* 1 (although Dismorr and

³ For a nuanced account of these changing affiliations, see Peter Brooker, *Bohemia in London: The Social Scene of Early Modernism* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

⁴ Lewis was accompanied by Edward Wadsworth, Frederick Etchells, and Cuthbert Hamilton when he walked out of Omega. For discussions of the quarrel, see Judith Collins, *The Omega Workshops* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1984), 54–61; Paul O'Keeffe, *Some Sort of Genius: A Life of Wyndham Lewis* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2000), 130–7; and Brooker, *Bohemia in London*, 165–8. See Brigid Peppin, *Helen Saunders, 1885–1963* (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum; Sheffield: The Graves Art Gallery, 1996), 10.

Saunders were only signatories to the first manifesto and had to wait till *BLAST* 2 for their work to be included). Ford Madox Hueffer, who contributed the opening of *The Good Soldier* (then titled ‘The Saddest Story’) to *BLAST* 1, lectured at the Rebel Art Centre, as did the leader of the Italian Futurists, F. T. Marinetti. The Rebel Centre didn’t last long, however, and closed by July 1914, following vitriolic arguments between Lechmere and Lewis. Its address at Great Ormond Street was printed inside *BLAST* 1, but by the end of July 1914 nobody connected with *BLAST* was there any longer.

Before Lewis’s quarrel with her, Lechmere had put money towards the publication of the magazine on which Lewis, with C. R. W. Nevinson and Edward Wadsworth (Pound joined later), had begun to work in late 1913. It seems that Nevinson came up with its explosive title early on, but that it was not originally intended to be an overtly propagandist magazine but rather a discursive one devoted to reviewing the modern arts. There is of course a wider context here. In Germany magazines such as *Der Sturm* and *Die Aktion* (both founded in 1910) rejected ‘the artistic refinement and elegance’ of earlier journals like *Pan* and *Das Überbrettel*, and, alongside Italian publications like *Demolizione* and *Lacerba*, introduced a polemical and aggressive style.⁵ It is also worth bearing in mind that in the years just before the First World War several ‘advanced’ magazines appeared in England: Ford’s *English Review* in 1908; Dora Marsden’s and Mary Gawthorpe’s *Freewoman* in 1911; and Middleton Murry’s and Michael Sadler’s Bergsonian and pro-Fauvist *Rhythm* (later *The Blue Review*) in 1911. (See Chapters 9, 11, and 13.) After Lewis’s dispute with Fry and the secession from Omega of a group of artists loosely associated with him, Bloomsbury post-Impressionism was never going to feature prominently in any magazine edited by Lewis, but Cubism, Expressionism, Futurism, and Impressionism all fell within its remit.⁶ Douglas Goldring organized the printers (Leveridge and Co.) and John Lane agreed to act as the publisher, thereby lending the enterprise a certain *cachet*, although William Wees notes that Lane mainly provided ‘the machinery for advertising and distribution’.⁷

Nevinson’s involvement ceased in early 1914 (though his painting *On The Way to the Trenches* was included in *BLAST* 2), mainly because he was becoming too

⁵ Richard Samuel and R. Hinton Thomas, *Expressionism in German Life, Literature and the Theatre (1910–1924)* (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, 1939), 2. It’s possible that Kandinsky and Marc’s *Blaue Reiter* almanac was an influence. Although not as polemical as *BLAST*, the range of its contents make it a European forerunner of *BLAST*.

⁶ It has been assumed that Fry was the target when the ‘amateur sciolist art-pimp journalist’ was blasted and the artist was told to beware of getting his nose ‘nipped off . . . by some Pecksniff-shark’. See *BLAST* 1 [1914], ed. Wyndham Lewis (Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press, 1981), 16 and 134. On this dispute see Andrew Wilson, ‘Rebels and Vorticists: “Our Little Gang”’, in Paul Edwards (ed.), *Blast: Vorticism 1914–1918* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 25.

⁷ William Wees, *Vorticism and the English Avant-Garde* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1972), 158–9.

closely linked with Marinetti and Futurism. When he and Marinetti published their 'Vital English Art, Futurist Manifesto' in *The Observer* on 7 June 1914, and cheekily suggested that Lewis and several others were Futurists, another row took place. Lewis might have been sympathetic to Marinetti's avant-garde provocations, but he was not a Futurist, and he was far too ambitious to settle for recruitment under another man's aesthetic banner. A letter repudiating Marinetti's and Nevinson's claims was sent to the press, and a lecture given by the two Futurists at the Doré Gallery was disrupted by a group of heckling Vorticists. The rivalry between the two movements resulted in the addition to *BLAST* of a new pro-Vorticist manifesto and two 'Vortex' statements by Pound and Gaudier-Brzeska.⁸ The material added after the Vorticists had repudiated Futurism gave it more of a focus than it might otherwise have had. Subtitled 'Review of the Great English Vortex', *BLAST* presented itself as a programmatic showcase for Vorticist painting and writing. But the first announcement of *BLAST* (in *The New Age* in January 1914) had described it as 'a platform for the discussion of Cubism and other aesthetic phenomena'; in April, Pound saw it as 'a new Futurist, Cubist, Imagiste Quarterly'; and an advertisement in *The Egoist* for 1 April claimed that it would discuss 'Cubism, Futurism, Imagisme and all Vital Forms of Modern Art'. The word 'Vorticism' did not make a public appearance until after the row with Marinetti and Nevinson. It appeared first in John Lane's advertisement for *BLAST* in *The Times* (12 June), where it is described as 'the English parallel movement to Cubism and Expressionism' and as a 'Death blow to Impressionism and Futurism' (note the martial rhetoric) and a day later a 'Manifesto of the Vorticists' was announced in *The Spectator*. *BLAST* was very much an evolving project, and those sections of it which proclaimed Vorticism as a clear alternative to Cubism, Futurism, and Impressionism were in fact late additions to the magazine.

Lewis had hoped *BLAST* would appear in April 1914, but it was eventually published in early July (although dated 20 June 1914); a last delay was caused by Lane's decision to black out three offending lines of Pound's poem 'Fratres Minores'. (Had it appeared in April, it would have been a markedly different magazine, for the opening manifesto and the two 'Vortex' statements offered by Pound and Gaudier would not have been included.) The print run of the magazine is not known. Wees suggests that a thousand copies were planned for London, five hundred for the USA, and one hundred each for Cambridge and Oxford. Where else distribution took place is a mystery, but anecdotal evidence suggests that it centred mainly on London, with various Vorticists and their allies wandering around with copies for sale tucked under their arms or deposited under restaurant seats on the off-chance that someone might show an interest. We can

⁸ For the genesis of *BLAST* see Wees, *Vorticism*, and Paul O'Keeffe's, 'The Troubled Birth of Blast': December 1913–June 1914', *International Centrum Voor Structuuranalyse En Constructivisme Cahier 8/9: Vorticism* (Brussels: Oplage, 1988), 43–57.

only speculate about its intended audience, which was probably ‘advanced’ writers and artists, as well as those sympathetic to radical developments in the arts; but in light of *BLAST*’s claim that it sought to communicate with a wider public, perhaps its aims were more ambitious than that.⁹ How realistic such aims were is a moot point. When Dorothy Shakespear (Pound) displayed *BLAST* in public, two urchins apparently ‘looked in amazement at the magazine, at the lady, and then at one another, saying: “Blawst? *Blawst?*?”’ while the editor of the staid *Quarterly Review* refused to publish Ezra Pound’s work, on the grounds that association with ‘such a publication as *Blast* . . . stamps a man too disadvantageously’.¹⁰

BLAST 1 was a large rectangular magazine, twelve inches high and nine inches wide. One hundred and sixty pages thick, it consisted of an opening manifesto (‘Long Live the Vortex’); two further manifestos, the first structured around the famous ‘blasts’ and ‘blesses’, which were inspired by Apollinaire’s ‘Futurist Anti-Tradition Manifesto’ (published in *Lacerba*), and the second divided into seven sections, each of which was further sub-divided into terse bullet points; poems by Pound; Lewis’s experimental play *Enemy of the Stars*; Ford’s story, ‘The Saddest Story’; Rebecca West’s story ‘Indissoluble Matrimony’, which had been rejected by Austin Harrison’s *English Review* and allegedly found by Lewis in a drawer at South Lodge; a brief review by Wadsworth of Kandinsky’s *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, under the title ‘Inner Necessity’; twelve ‘Vortices and Notes’ by Lewis; a tribute to Frederick Spencer Gore, also by Lewis; a tongue-in-cheek address ‘To Suffragettes’; two further Vortices, one by Pound, the other by Gaudier-Brzeska; illustrations of work by Wadsworth, Lewis, Etchells, Roberts, Epstein, Gaudier, Hamilton, and Gore; and full-page advertisements for *Poetry* (Chicago) and various Lane publications, among them, thirteen-volume sets of *The Yellow Book*. This last advertisement nicely brings out the pragmatic aspects to a publication such as *BLAST*. Lane had made his reputation publishing the *Aesthetes* in the 1890s, and *The Yellow Book* was of course its leading magazine; now he was not only publishing *BLAST*, a magazine that had Aestheticism firmly in its sights (‘CURSE | WITH EXPLETIVE OF WHIRLWIND | THE BRITANNIC AESTHETE’) but also offering for sale a leading example of the very thing the Vorticists were damning to hell. Lewis’s work in *BLAST* 1 outweighs that of any other contributor, and his editorial presence is in evidence in the manifestos (most of which he wrote) and in the twelve ‘Vortices and Notes’. But inasmuch as the magazine was his project and *Enemy of the Stars* its most original piece of modernist writing, Vorticism and

⁹ See Wees, *Vorticism*, 159–60. Paige Reynolds considers that the Vorticists sought to cultivate only ‘a small public’: Paige Reynolds, “‘Chaos Invading Concept’: *Blast* as a Native Theory of Promotional Culture”, *Twentieth Century Literature* (Summer 2000), 238–68, esp. 259–60. This overstates the case. *BLAST* was hostile to clichéd abstractions such as ‘the People’ or ‘the Rich’ but aimed to appeal to all individuals and sought a wide public. See *BLAST* 1, ‘Long Live the Vortex!’, unpaginated.

¹⁰ Both incidents are recounted in Noel Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), 203.



Fig. 38. Cover of *BLAST* 2 (1915)

BLAST were group phenomena, and accounts that focus only on Lewis conceal their complex origins and varied practices. Many individuals helped to create *BLAST*, and their contributions to it should not be slighted.

BLAST 2 differed in significant respects from *BLAST* 1; although I will focus mainly on the first issue, the second one is important for a variety of reasons. *BLAST* had been planned as a quarterly publication, and yearly subscriptions were confidently offered in the first issue. In the event, war broke out in August 1914 and *BLAST* 2, 'surrounded by a multitude of other Blasts', did not appear until August 1915.¹¹ With its pale brown ochre colour, and plain

¹¹ *Blast* 2 [1915], ed. Wyndham Lewis (Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press, 1981), 5.

title ('WAR NUMBER'), it was an altogether more sober work. Gone were the 'larks' that Ford associated with the first issue.¹² The 'blasts' and 'blesses' were relegated to the back of the magazine, which opened with an editorial about the future of culture amid current Germanophobia and five 'War Notes' written by Lewis. Dismorr, Eliot, Ford, Pound, and Saunders contributed poems; Lewis wrote a number of prose pieces, 'A Review of Contemporary Art', and the first part of 'The Crowd-Master', Gaudier offered a 'Vortex (written from the Trenches)' in which he asserted both that the 'WAR IS A GREAT REMEDY' and that his 'VIEWS ON SCULPTURE REMAIN ABSOLUTELY THE SAME'; and pictures by Dismorr, Etchells, Kramer, Nevinson, Roberts, Saunders, Shakespear, Wadsworth, and Lewis were included. It ran to seventy-five pages, half the length of the first issue. The impact of the war was visible everywhere: in discussions of its effect on the arts; in its illustrations (especially Roberts's *Combat*, Wadsworth's *War Engine*, and Nevinson's *On the Way to the Trenches*); in Saunders's 'Vision of Mud', which inevitably recalled the trenches; in Gaudier's despatch from the front-line; in Lewis's 'The Crowd-Master', which described war coming 'heavily on with a resolution no one had ever credited it with'; and in the announcement of Gaudier's death—'MORT POUR LA PATRIE'. *BLAST* 2 was more discursive than *BLAST* 1, less experimental in typography and layout, calmer in tone, and arguably less sure of its avant-gardism. The war had not only diminished the whole project's impact but also undermined its aggressive rhetorical stance. Ford observed in his notice of the second issue that 'the pressure of these times leaves its solemn traces' on *BLAST* 2, while Lewis later saw it as making 'a dream and a lullaby of those dark happenings, which plunged us like a school of pet gold fish, out of our immaculate "pre-war" tank, into the raging ocean'.¹³

A creation of this pre-war world, *BLAST* 1 was full of swagger. The word 'BLAST' was written diagonally in large black capitals from top left to bottom right on its pink cover. The contrast between title and background is striking. The magazine proclaims its avant-garde credentials by choosing a provocative title, and writing it at an unusual angle, using a brash colour for its cover, and echoing the tone of European avant-garde magazines. On the inside, the word 'BLAST' was printed horizontally in smaller black capitals, and the editor's name was given as 'Wyndham Lewis'. The price was 2/6 (two shillings and sixpence) but a yearly subscription for 10/6 (ten shillings and sixpence) was also offered. *BLAST*'s experiments with typography, layout, and style ensured that it stood out from all previous English magazines, none of which had ever adopted its visual radicalism. Richard Aldington noted its 'hard, telegraphic sort of writing', which

¹² Ford Madox Ford, *Critical Essays*, ed. Max Saunders and Richard Stang (Manchester: Carcanet, 2002), 182.

¹³ *Blast* 2, 5 and 33; Ford, *Critical Essays*, 182; *Blast* 2, 98 and 34; Ford, *Critical Essays*, 183; Wyndham Lewis, *Blasting and Bombardiering* [1937] (London: John Calder, 1982), 65.

has elsewhere been described as 'typography's closest approximation to dynamite'.¹⁴ *BLAST* attacked accepted writing modes, utilizing an abrupt and aggressive style in their place. Each manifesto was sub-divided either into short paragraphs or into numbered bullet points, thereby instantiating a phrasal strategy and producing what Hugh Kenner sees as 'the galvanic absolutism of [Lewis's] prose syntax' and Marjorie Perloff describes as 'rhythm units that are hardly sentences'.¹⁵ The manifestos are also internally unstable: they play with paradoxes and invert their own assertions. This dyadic and dialogic structure doesn't embrace contradiction for the sake of it but follows the logic of the Vortex symbol: the positions laid out in the manifestos double back upon themselves just like the current in an eddy. The end result is a constant dynamic of destruction—creation, by way of which various viewpoints are renegotiated, if not necessarily reconciled.¹⁶ The use of different size fonts, screaming headlines, and unusual page layouts mimics the techniques of newspapers, poster art, and advertisements, turning each page into a geometrically designed space.¹⁷ Given the high profile that the avant-garde enjoyed in the press before the war, it is no surprise that they borrowed its techniques. Suggesting that *BLAST* tried to outdo the press with 'headlines bigger and bolder than the newspapers dared print', Wees claims that, considered as an artefact, *BLAST* was 'perhaps the most successful of all Vorticist works of art', while Edward Bishop declares that reading *BLAST* 'is a kinetic experience' because 'it does not just espouse vorticism, it becomes a vortex'.¹⁸

But *BLAST* was also a comic and theatrical textual *performance*, which was motivated by a satiric impulse. If it sought to provoke the bourgeoisie's generally placid 'apes', then it did so in the spirit of knock-about comedy. It laughed at its own pretensions to seriousness, referring to a Vorticist king and a vortex-driven prime minister; contradicted its own assertions; celebrated boxers and music-hall performers;

¹⁴ Richard Aldington, 'Blast', *The Egoist*, 1:14 (15 July 1914), 272–3, 272 and 273; Frederick J. Hoffman, Charles Allen, and Carolyn F. Ulrich, *The Little Magazine: A History and a Bibliography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), 244.

¹⁵ Hugh Kenner, *Wyndham Lewis* (New York: New Directions, 1954), 6; Marjorie Perloff, *The Futurist Moment: Avant-Garde, Avant Guerre, and the Language of Rupture* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 181.

¹⁶ For valuable discussions of this dialogic feature of *BLAST*, and Vorticism more generally, see Paul Edwards, "'You Must Speak with Two Tongues": Wyndham Lewis's Vorticist Aesthetics and Literature', in Edwards, *Blast: Vorticism, 1914–1918*, 113–20; Philip Head, *Engaging the Enemy: The Gentle Art of Contradiction in the Work of Wyndham Lewis* (Borough Green, Kent: Green Knight, 2001); and Alan Munton, 'Vorticism', in David Bradshaw and Kevin J. H. Dettmar (eds), *A Companion to Modernist Literature and Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 176–82.

¹⁷ On the importance of drawing on the techniques of advertising, see Perloff, *The Futurist Moment*, 181, and Reynolds, "'Chaos Invading Concept"', 238–68.

¹⁸ Wees, *Vorticism*, 40 and 192; Edward Bishop, 'Re:covering Modernism—Format and Function in the Little Magazines', in Ian Willison, Warwick Gould, and Warren Chernaik (eds), *Modernist Writers and the Marketplace* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), 317.

praised friends and savaged enemies; presented its ambitions in mock-heroic language; and of course blessed humour itself as a 'great barbarous weapon'.¹⁹ Douglas Goldring recalled the sheer high jinks of it all, as did Ford when he gleefully imagined himself and his generation being blown up by the Vorticist *jeunes*. Some, such as Edgar Jepson, even thought that the *only* value it had lay in its humour: 'Vorticism was good fun in its day and made a good noise, but like Futurism, which produced nothing but manifestos, and the cubist stunt, if you except the novels of Ford and some of the sculpture of Gaudier Brzeska [*sic*], it has left nothing.'²⁰

Aggressive humour and sharp polemic characterize *BLAST*. Every manifesto proclaims its avant-garde credentials. The style, spatial structure, and content of the manifestos embody Vorticism's critical and interventionist aesthetic. It is the word 'aesthetic' that must be stressed. Vorticism did not seek to bring about political change but to transform the arts, thereby challenging stultified habits of perception and entrenched cultural values. Vorticism emphasized the creative work of the artist and rejected all forms of art that aimed to imitate the external world: 'Intrinsic beauty is in the Interpreter and Seer, not in the object or content' declared one manifesto, and mimetic artists were openly mocked. Because conventional education 'tends to destroy the creative instinct' *BLAST* set out to 'make the rich of the community shed their education skin, to destroy politeness, standardization and academic, that is civilized, vision' so that it could be a conduit 'for all those vivid and violent ideas that could reach the Public in no other way'. Its avowed goal was to present 'an art of Individuals' and to 'make individuals, wherever found'.²¹

The required programme of destruction was a wholesale one. England was 'blasted' for its flabbiness, mildness, laziness, torpor, passivity, snobbery, inferiority complex, and animal stupidity. The legacy of the Victorian period was a notable *bête noire*, as was the English humour that evaded realities instead of addressing them. Emphasis was placed on humour that was confrontational (satiric and critical) and on a French spirit of hardness, vitality, and combativeness. The English spirit of adventure was favoured when its maritime industry—ports, ships, and seafaring tradition—was 'blessed' as a sign of movement, exploration, and interchange. The point was to lambaste one aspect of the national culture (broadly speaking, its bourgeois philistinism) while promoting an alternative. And the manifestos suggested that this Vorticist alternative was likely to burst forth in England precisely because years of artistic inactivity had produced an enormous pressure for change. The idea of 'England', however, was subsumed under a wider concept of 'Northern' culture, which was opposed to a 'Southern' one. This rhetorical strategy was at once playful and serious. It participated in the ongoing game of avant-garde in-fighting (our Vorticism trumps your Futurism) while trying to envisage what

¹⁹ *BLAST* I, 31 and 26.

²⁰ Edgar Jepson, *Memories of an Edwardian and Neo-Georgian* (London: Richards, 1937), 151.

²¹ *BLAST* I, 'Long Live the Vortex!'

might be the differences between national art movements. Vorticism drew on Worringerian ideas when it associated 'Northern' art with mysticism, satire, and universality and 'Southern' art with passion for life.²² The English expression of this Northern tendency was linked to 'the vast planetary abstraction of the ocean', a significant statement because it was claimed that the 'English Character is based on the Sea' and that this produces the 'unexpected universality' 'found in the completest English artists'.²³

The key point is that abstraction and universality are intimately connected in *BLAST* and that the seafaring spirit is said to result in forms of interchange that are conceptual: 'BLESS ALL SEAFARERS. THEY exchange not one LAND for another, but one ELEMENT for ANOTHER. The MORE against the LESS ABSTRACT.' Vorticist art was not to exist in isolation (links between France, England, and Germany were praised, and in *BLAST* 2 'unofficial' German culture is said to have 'done more' for Vorticism 'than any other country') and was not be stridently nationalistic: 'there is nothing Chauvinistic or picturesquely patriotic about our contentions.'²⁴ English art was simply to be inflected in a different way. As Ian Patterson puts it, Lewis was 'arguing against the pastiche that necessarily follows from the adoption of a style that is not rooted in and adapted to the climatic conditions (in the broadest sense, as well as the most literal) of its production', and one might add that he was also mocking English self-abasement before continental avant-gardism.²⁵ Vorticism is figured as an English corrective to the Futurist idealization of modernity and the Cubist production of domesticated *nature-mortes*: it accepts the industrialized world, positing the need for a new art to interpret it, but sees this art as an analytical/conceptual tool that abstracts what is most essential from contemporary reality. And although there is a nativist element to *BLAST*'s promotion of Vorticism, we should remember that its tone was gamesome, that cultural exchange was a key feature of the Vorticist programme, that abstraction and universality were seen as the prerequisites of a genuinely national art, and that in *BLAST* 2 (a year into the war) Lewis stated, 'All Nationality is a congealing and conventionalizing, a necessary and delightful rest for the many.'²⁶

BLAST's targets were Futurism, Impressionism, and Naturalism; Victorianism; and simple-minded valorizations of 'life'. *BLAST*'s sexual politics are harder

²² A similar distinction between 'Northern' and 'Southern' artistic traditions was operative in debates about Expressionism in Germany around 1911–12. See Rose-Carol Washton Long (ed.), *German Expressionism: Documents from the End of the Wilhelmine Empire to the Rise of National Socialism* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 4–6. Lewis's awareness of the work of groups such as *Die Brücke*, *Der Blaue Reiter* and others led him to declare his support for the culture of 'unofficial Germany' in *BLAST* 2, 5.

²³ *BLAST* 1, 22 and 35.

²⁴ *Ibid.* 22, 37, and 34; *BLAST* 2, 5.

²⁵ Ian Patterson, 'Anarcho-imperialism, Modernism, Mystification and Muddle', *The Cambridge Quarterly*, 30:2 (2001), 186; *BLAST* 1, 34.

²⁶ *BLAST* 2, 72.

to decode. It made some misogynist moves: aestheticism was associated with snobbery and the latter was seen as a 'disease of femininity'; 'nature' was feminized and depicted as an opponent of creative thought; the Borrovian gipsy cult was mocked for 'bowing the knee to wild Mother Nature, her feminine contours, Unimaginative insult to Man'; the hairdresser was praised for putting nature in its place by 'correcting the grotesque anachronisms of our physique', and there was also an air of masculine bragadoccio about much of the writing.²⁷ Masculine identity functioned at such moments as the means by which the values of 'art' could be opposed to those of 'nature' or 'life', which were coded female. But blessings were vouchsafed to ports, the 'RESTLESS MACHINES' of a 'womanly town', to the 'hysterical WALL built round the EGO', to France's 'FEMALE QUALITIES', and qualified support was given to the suffragette movement in a brief piece at the end of *BLAST* 1, which, as Peter Brooker remarks, 'for all its patronising tone, suggests an affinity between suffrage militancy and Vorticist tactics'.²⁸ This short address picks up on themes raised in a longer essay published by Pound on 1 July 1914. In this, no less patronizing, article Pound supported female suffrage but argued that the vote was no use to anybody; he deplored the suffragettes' tactics and suggested that they should only attack 'national property', thus making the same point as *BLAST* when it warned suffragettes away from art lest they accidentally destroyed a decent painting.²⁹

Lisa Tickner has suggested that Lewis's 'promise of radical aesthetic endeavour' is 'couched in terms of heterosexual masculine supremacy because it's also a bid for dominance in a highly competitive (increasingly proletarianised and feminised) field', and several critics broadly concur with this reading.³⁰ It has been noted that women Vorticists such as Dismorr, Lechmere, and Saunders were often patronized and asked to perform menial tasks traditionally associated with women. This is true, yet those who have studied these women's contributions to Vorticism note that its gender politics are ambiguous. Jane Beckett and Deborah Cherry point out that for 'women artists Vorticism's appeal undoubtedly lay in its visual and literary engagement with metropolitan culture'.³¹ Several women were keenly involved in the Vorticist enterprise and contributed in various ways to *BLAST*. Lechmere provided

²⁷ *BLAST* 1, 15, 19, and 25.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 23, 26, 27; Brooker, *Bohemia*, 21. Brooker usefully points out that when Lewis added the word 'suffragette' to a later version of 'Candleman's Spring Mate', he wrote, "I've just put this in. The editor of *Blast* would never have admitted that he was a suffragette" (cited in Brooker, *Bohemia*, 21).

²⁹ 'Bastien von Helmholtz' [Ezra Pound] 'The Suffragettes', *The Egoist*, 1:13 (1 July 1914), 254–6.

³⁰ Lisa Tickner, 'English Modernism in the Cultural Field', in David Peters Corbett and Lara Perry (eds), *English Art 1860–1914: Modern Artists and Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 24.

³¹ Jane Beckett and Deborah Cherry, 'Reconceptualizing Vorticism: Women, Modernity, Modernism', in Edwards (ed.), *Blast: Vorticism 1914–1918*, 61.

the funds for the Rebel Art Centre and co-organized it; Saunders (with Lewis) decorated part of the Eiffel Tower restaurant; Dismorr and Saunders were signatories of the first *BLAST* manifesto; and Dismorr, Saunders, and Shakespear contributed work to *BLAST* 2. This work was varied and did not conform to a single style, a point made in later years by Helen Saunders when she described the Vorticists as 'a group of very disparate artists each working out his [sic] own ideas under the aegis of the Group and its very able leader and publicist Wyndham Lewis'.³² Vorticism, Beckett and Cherry suggest, offered:

a visual economy not founded on the trade in woman as sign, and in which bodily forms were not necessarily coded for sexual difference . . . In the hands of women artists, Vorticism's visual language of abstraction could shift the ground away from an engagement with 'sex-antagonism' and sexual difference for an art which could play with . . . the fragmented forms of the modern city, the scattered/shattered perceptions of modern urban environment and new visions of the body.³³

Vorticism comprised a diverse set of practices and was not a tight-knit movement. It was also international, bringing together contributors from several countries and drawing on various European movements. Futurism taught Vorticism the most about artistic warfare. The techniques of publicity-making and self-advertisement were a central feature of the struggle to get a hearing for new art, and nobody was more versed in these techniques than Marinetti, whose trips to England between 1910 and 1914 had such a telling impact not just on the development of Vorticism but on the cultural life of the capital as well. Lewis and Pound, would-be avant-garde leaders both, learned much from Marinetti about putting the public in its place while making it sit up and pay attention. The advertisement for *BLAST* that appeared in *The Egoist* in April 1914 gave basic information about its proposed contents but then suddenly proclaimed:

Putrification of Guffaws Slain by Appearance of

BLAST.

NO Pornography. NO Old Pulp.

END OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA.³⁴

It is probable that Pound was responsible for the wording here, and that Lewis was less than pleased about the millennial declaration. But a key difference between the

³² Cited in Peppin, *Helen Saunders*, 12–13 (italics in original).

³³ Beckett and Cherry, 'Reconceptualizing Vorticism', 72. For a similar view, see Edwards, 'You Must Speak with Two Tongues', 118.

³⁴ *The Egoist*, 1:7 (1 Apr. 1914), 140.

two men at this time is that Lewis was primarily concerned to promote the new art, whereas Pound had embarked on a pugnacious campaign against the public. ‘The New Sculpture’ (February 1914) set the tone, and four months later, having claimed that ‘the man in the street’ would not grasp Lewis’s *Timon of Athens*, he burst out: ‘Damn the man in the street, once and for all, damn the man in the street who is only in the street because he hasn’t intelligence enough to be let in to anywhere else.’³⁵

BLAST allegedly set out to be a vehicle for Vorticist ideas. But its contributors did not agree about what these were. Apart from Lewis, only Gaudier-Brzeska and Pound had anything to say about them. Ford’s ‘The Saddest Story’ developed the impressionist manner he had been evolving for a decade and was hardly an example of Vorticist prose. West’s ‘Indissoluble Matrimony’ was a pastiche of popular romantic writing, and its writer wasn’t involved in the creation of *BLAST* and claimed to know nothing about Vorticism.³⁶ ‘VORTEX. GAUDIER BRZESKA’ offered a personal history of sculpture from the paleolithic period to the present day. For Gaudier, the concept of ‘the vortex’ was a flexible one. It referred mainly to different sources of creative energy, thus enabling Gaudier to identify a series of vortices—hamitic, semitic, gothic, Chinese, Mexican, and African—and to associate these with forms of energy: the destructive, the fecund, and the fearful. Insisting on the individual visions of sculptors such as Archipenko, Brancusi, Epstein, Modigliani, and himself, Gaudier simply noted that all of them, ‘through the incessant struggle in the complex city, have likewise to spend much energy’.³⁷ This was vague, and wasn’t helped much when Gaudier concluded that will and consciousness made up the sculptors’ particular vortex.

And what about Pound? Until Amy Lowell ousted him from the Imagist movement in July 1914, he had been a vocal proselytizer on its behalf, and most of his energy had been devoted to the elaboration of Imagist doctrine. But in the months leading up to the publication of *BLAST* he had also been spending time with Lewis and was trying to align Vorticism with Imagism. Timothy Materer points out that he ‘changed the title of an article he was writing in 1914 from “Imagism” to “Vorticism” once he decided the earlier movement no longer served his purpose’; for Materer, Pound’s Vorticism ‘was simply an improved version of imagism’.³⁸ Yet Lewis and Pound were only in general agreement as to the form their Vorticist revolution should take, and their respective conceptions of it were

³⁵ Ezra Pound, ‘The New Sculpture’, *The Egoist*, 1:4 (16 Feb. 1914), 68; *idem*, ‘Wyndham Lewis’, *The Egoist*, 1:12 (15 June 1914), 233.

³⁶ See Rebecca West, *Selected Letters of Rebecca West*, ed. Bonnie Kime Scott (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2000), 119–20.

³⁷ Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, ‘VORTEX, GAUDIER BRZESKA’, *BLAST* 1, 158.

³⁸ Timothy Materer, ‘Make It Sell! Ezra Pound Advertises Modernism’, in Kevin J. H. Dettmar and Stephen Watt (eds), *Marketing Modernisms: Self-Promotion, Canonization, and Rereading* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 19, 20.

changing even as events unfolded. It wasn't clear how well, if at all, Pound's ideas about poetry dovetailed with Lewis's thinking about painting. Pound's focus on precision, directness, brevity, and limpidity did not have much in common with Lewis's desire to engage visually with industrial modernity, which led him to a geometric art that refused naturalist modes of representation. With the exception of 'The Game of Chess', Pound's poems in *BLAST* aren't Vorticist at all. In his writings on Vorticism, Pound tried to get round this problem by presenting it as a loose label that merely indicated a general agreement as to aesthetic aims; Lewis, in contrast, disappointed by most of the writing in *BLAST*, tended to claim that Vorticism had really been a movement for painters, and that the writers had let the whole show down.³⁹

Pound and Lewis came to Vorticism with different preoccupations. Frustrated by what he saw as an etiolation of Imagism, Pound was looking for an alternative 'movement' through which to promote his ideas, especially his interest in direct apprehension by way of the 'primary pigment'. His task was to find a means of expressing the poet's initial, and most powerfully felt, perceptions and experiences, thus enabling him to become a 'donative' rather than a 'symptomatic' writer. All else was the 'expression of second intensities, of dispersedness', which belonged 'to the secondary sort of artist'.⁴⁰ For Pound the image was 'a radiant node or cluster . . . a VORTEX, from which, and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing.'⁴¹ But some, John Gould Fletcher among them, were sceptical about Pound's view of Vorticism as a development of Imagism: 'How Ezra reconciled this fairly concrete notion with the geometrical abstractions and fragmentary disassociations of Lewis's own cubism, I know not.'⁴² Lewis's interests may be gauged from his essay in the catalogue to the 'English post-Impressionists, Cubists and Others' exhibition (1913–14). He argued that a radically altered physical environment should give rise to a new kind of vision: 'All revolutionary painting to-day has in common the rigid reflections of steel and stone in the spirit of the artist . . . People are invited, in short, to change entirely their idea of the painter's mission, and penetrate, deferentially, with him into a transposed universe as abstract as, though different from, the musicians [*sic*].'⁴³ This was *not* a reflectionist position. Lewis wasn't asking the artist to mirror technological reality but insisting that the avant-garde painter's perceptual apparatus (the 'spirit of the artist') had

³⁹ Wyndham Lewis, *The Letters of Wyndham Lewis*, ed. W. K. Rose (Norfolk, CT: New Directions, 1963), 491–2.

⁴⁰ Pound, *BLAST* 1, 154.

⁴¹ Ezra Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (New York: New Directions, 1970), 92.

⁴² John Gould Fletcher, *Life Is My Song* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1937), 137. A. R. Orage was no less sceptical about Pound's attempts to link Imagism and Vorticism. See R. H. C. [Alfred Orage], 'Readers and Writers', *The New Age*, 15:19 (10 Sept. 1914), 449.

⁴³ Wyndham Lewis, 'The Cubist Room', *The Egoist* (1 Jan. 1914), 9.

been decisively altered by an industrialized world and that this fact necessarily led to a new conception of art.

This new art drew on Cubism, Expressionism, and Futurism but forged a distinctive style out of these elements. Cubism broke with figuration, representing objects as distorted, geometrical shapes, disrupted the single-point perspective, and structured paintings through conceptual schema. Expressionism stressed the artist's private vision, in which abstraction, distortion, and defamiliarization played an important role. The Expressionist influence is clear in Lewis's hybrid prose-play *Enemy of the Stars*, but it is felt throughout *BLAST*, and Ulrich Weisstein has suggested that the 'preliminary Vortices are patently Expressionist in tone, just as the "Blasts and Blesses" attached to them are Expressionist in typography'.⁴⁴ Futurism, finally, engaged with an urban and technological modernity, drawing on primitivist rhetoric to exalt its dynamism in paintings full of whirling motion and kaleidoscopic shapes. Despite its desire to distance itself from Futurism, *BLAST* is pervaded by it. 'WE ONLY WANT THE WORLD TO LIVE, and to feel it's [*sic*] crude energy flowing through us' declares its opening statement, and such invocations of vitalism sit uncomfortably with its criticisms of 'life' in pieces such as 'LIFE IS THE IMPORTANT THING!' or 'FUTURISM, MAGIC AND LIFE'.⁴⁵

Nonetheless, there are important differences between Vorticism and these competitor movements. Lewis regarded Cubism as insufficiently motivated by a desire to engage with contemporary life, and he was consistently critical of its *nature-morte* paintings, claiming that much of Picasso's work lacked vitality and could scarcely justify its artistic existence.⁴⁶ With regard to Expressionism he was especially critical of Kandinsky (an issue to which I return below). Futurism, in turn, the most obvious rival to Vorticism in terms of its public profile, was the subject of an ongoing critique from January 1914. Although it was only after the 'Vital English Art' *contretemps* that Marinetti and his followers were repudiated and Vorticism was announced, Lewis had been developing a distinctive position for some time before that, as Paul O'Keeffe has shown.⁴⁷ Vorticism sought to harness energy

⁴⁴ Ulrich Weisstein, 'Vorticism: Expressionist English Style', in *idem* (ed.), *Expressionism as an International Literary Phenomenon* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiado, 1973), 168. Weisstein exaggerates this influence when he describes Vorticism as an 'Anglo-Saxon offshoot' of Expressionism (167). Jonathan Black has also pointed out that Frank Rutter 'was among the first to correctly surmise that Vorticism had "undoubtedly, been influenced by Kandinsky, the pioneer of Expressionism" and therefore could claim a wider European lineage beyond Italian Futurism'. See Jonathan Black, 'Taking Heaven by Violence: Futurism and Vorticism as Seen by the British Press c. 1912–20', in *Blasting the Future: Vorticism in Britain 1910–1920* (London: Philip Wilson, 2004), 35.

⁴⁵ 'Long Live the Vortex!', *BLAST* 1.

⁴⁶ Wyndham Lewis, 'Relativism and Picasso's Latest Work', *BLAST* 1, 139–40. He developed his criticism of Picasso in *The Caliph's Design* (1919).

⁴⁷ See O'Keeffe, "The Troubled Birth", 53.

within its paintings, controlling it through geometric patterns and designs, not to release energy through the depiction of gyrating forms and bursts of colour. It also rejected what it saw as Futurism's naïve exaltation of modern life and resisted its celebration of dynamism. For Vorticism, human or technological activity was of little interest in itself; it had to be ordered and given meaning. The fusing of shapes and colours in Futurist art was replaced by angular forms and structures. Andrew Wilson suggests that Vorticism 'equated the inadvisability of the merging of art and life with the loss of identity' and that it 'can be identified as vitalism controlled and stilled', exactly the point Lewis made when he described Vorticism, in contrast to Futurism, as 'electric with a more mastered, vivid vitality'.⁴⁸

That said, the word 'vitality' denoted a major site of avant-garde contestation. In *BLAST* 'vivid and violent ideas' were placed centre-stage; the 'primary pigment' was equated to 'the most highly energized statement, the statement that has not yet SPENT itself; and the Vorticist painter, implicitly a virile male, discharged energy upon a quiescent world.⁴⁹ But Vorticism saw itself as a movement that 'does not deal in reactive Action only, nor identify the Present with numbing displays of vitality' but rather 'plunges to the heart of the Present' so as to 'produce a New Living Abstraction'.⁵⁰ Vitality alone offered superficial representations of modernity, according to Vorticist doctrine (Futurism's 'accelerated Impressionism' and Bergsonian vitalism were the targets here), but when vitality was transformed by a *Kunstwollen*—a concept that Wilhelm Worringer took from Alois Riegl—it could strip away the surface of modern life and disclose a profounder understanding of it. Geometric art refused the pulsions of Futurist art in favour of anti-naturalism. It depended 'on the element of strangeness, and surprise and primitive detachment', owing to a basic conviction: 'Dehumanization is the chief diagnostic of the Modern World.'⁵¹

None of the works included in both issues of *BLAST* are fully abstract, and none come close to the sort of work Kandinsky was producing at this time. Wadsworth's *Cape of Good Hope*, *A Short Flight*, and *March*; Lewis's *Plan of War*, *Timon of Athens*, and *Slow Attack*; Roberts's *Dancers*; and Hamilton's *Group* (in *BLAST* 1) stress internal design and deploy interlocking geometrical structures and shapes, whereas Etchells's two versions of *Head* (also in *BLAST* 1), though geometrized, are still representational works, as is Lewis's *Design for Programme Cover—Kermesse* in *BLAST* 2. In *BLAST* 2 Dismorr's *The Engine* and her *Design*, as well as Dorothy

⁴⁸ Wilson, 'Rebels and Vorticists', 26; Lewis, *BLAST* 2, 38. For a different view, which considers that Balla's *Vortic* series was more of an influence on Lewis, see Perloff, *The Futurist Moment*, 175–6. Be this as it may, Lewis didn't see Balla as a Futurist in the Marinettian sense but as 'a rather violent and geometric sort of Expressionist' (*BLAST* 1, 144).

⁴⁹ *BLAST* 1, 140, 153, and 147.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 147. Hence the claim: 'Beyond Action and Reaction we would establish ourselves' (*BLAST* 1, 30).

⁵¹ *Ibid.* 141.

Shakespear's *Snow Scene*, are abstract works, whereas Roberts's *Combat*, Saunders's *Atlantic City*, Wadsworth's *Rotterdam* and *War Engine*, and Lewis's *Design for 'Red Duet'* are stiff, angular, mechanized, and non-realist works. Whatever the differences between these various pictures (and there are many), all of them as a group are utterly different from the Spencer Gore paintings (*Brighton Pier* and *Richmond Houses*) included in *BLAST* 1. The Vorticist works attempt 'a geometrical and condensed translation of the perceived world', as Richard Humphreys puts it, while for Christopher Adams it is their 'formal qualities—precision, hard-edged forcefulness, clean lines, geometrical severity' that are 'inherently expressive of mechanical values, quite independently of any figurative associations'.⁵² Lewis later claimed that 'visual Vorticism . . . was dogmatically anti-real' and that his final aim had been 'to build up a visual language as abstract as music', but in *BLAST* 1 he actually insisted that the 'finest Art is not pure Abstraction' and in *BLAST* 2 argued that the artist 'must constantly strive to ENRICH abstraction till it is almost plain life'.⁵³

One of *BLAST*'s central tenets was that artists should engage with contemporary reality, accepting its often alienating effects as a brute datum. Bloomsbury decorativeness was ruled out of hand, for if dehumanization was the world's 'chief diagnostic', then it followed that the modern artist should discover stimuli in 'a chaos of imperfection, discord, etc.' and accept that the 'enormous, jangling, journalistic, fairy desert of modern life serves him as Nature did more technically primitive man'.⁵⁴ *BLAST* insisted that artists should explore the urban 'jungle' by which they were surrounded 'in the forms of machinery, Factories, new and vaster buildings, bridges and works'. Yet the Vorticist experienced this environment as an opportunity, not as a threat. In 'The New Egos' Vorticists are contrasted with the 'civilized savage, in a desert-city' whose art is a weapon because he 'cannot allow his personality to venture forth or amplify itself, for it would dissolve in vagueness of space'.⁵⁵ This sounds like a Worringerian account of a space-shy geometric aesthetic. But 'The New Egos' contrasted 'primitive' fear with Vorticist confidence: the latter was to accept and dominate the mechanized environment, for the 'modern town-dweller of our civilization' sees not only 'everywhere fraternal moulds for his spirit, and interstices of a human world' but also 'multitude, and infinite variety of means of life, a world and elements he controls.' The Vorticist tendency to abstraction, in short, did not derive from a sense of anxiety about the external environment but originated in the belief that only by means of a geometric aesthetic could modern realities be evoked.⁵⁶

⁵² Richard Humphreys, *Futurism* (London: Tate Gallery, 2003), 56; Christopher Adams, 'Futurism and the British Avant-Garde', in *Blasting the Future*, 14.

⁵³ Wyndham Lewis, *Wyndham Lewis and Vorticism* (London: Tate Gallery, 1956), 3; *BLAST* 1, 134; *BLAST* 2, 140.

⁵⁴ *BLAST* 1, 33.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 40, 141.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 141.

By the time *BLAST* 2 appeared, some of these certainties had been eroded. The planning of the second issue was delayed, and it is clear that after the outbreak of war everyone involved in it had other things to think about. References to the second issue of *BLAST* in Lewis's letters are desultory and half-hearted. He joked with Pound about some obscene verse of Eliot's, stating that he wouldn't print any poems ending '-Uck, -Unt, and -Ugger'; casually asked Pound if he could think of anything in particular that needed blasting or blessing; and admitted to his insolvency and thus his inability to pay his debt to Lechmere.⁵⁷ When *BLAST* 2 was published in July 1915, it was a more haphazard affair than *BLAST* 1, and lacked the latter's evident brio. The second issue announced that a third would appear, but no more numbers were published. It seems fair to conclude, as most critics have done, that the war not only dispersed those who were responsible for *BLAST* but also raised questions about the possible complicity between avant-garde movements such as Vorticism and war itself.⁵⁸

An immediately discernible difference between the two issues of *BLAST* was visible on their respective front covers. *BLAST* 1 consisted of the much commented-upon pink cover and the single word BLAST. *BLAST* 2, in contrast, eschewed this artistic minimalism and gave more textual information. Whereas the first cover announced the magazine's avant-garde aspirations in a single stroke, the second cover was an altogether more studied affair. Its sombre, bleached-out brown background contrasted with the bold pink of the first issue. The title was printed horizontally in the top left corner, above Lewis's picture *Before Antwerp*. Richard Cork writes of *Before Antwerp* that despite the 'men's determination' in it, they 'seem dominated by the inflexible might of their surroundings', and this is a fitting description of how *BLAST* 2 is generally dominated by the world events surrounding it.⁵⁹ *BLAST*'s former optimism and aggressiveness were now contained and diminished. Still capitalized, the title was printed in a typeface smaller than that used for the inaugural issue and was held in place by two vertical black columns emerging from the cover illustration. The words 'WAR NUMBER' were printed in the top right corner, while the date 'JULY 1915' appeared at bottom right. Lewis's name appeared centrally in the lower section of *Before Antwerp*, but it too seemed to be trapped by the surrounding design.

The four bits of text on the front cover of *BLAST* 2 mark it out from *BLAST* 1 in other ways. The title is displaced by the picture but is at the same time almost incorporated into it. Given that the illustration depicts a scene of war, this displacement suggests that the magazine's destructive impulse—which had been directed

⁵⁷ Lewis, *The Letters*, 66–7 and 69.

⁵⁸ Lewis warns the reader of *Blasting and Bombardiering* that s/he 'will be astonished to find how like art is to war, I mean "modernist" art' (4). See also Wilson, 'Rebels and Vorticists', 38.

⁵⁹ Richard Cork, *A Bitter Truth: Avant-Garde Art and the Great War* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1994), 76.

against a moribund culture—has been overtaken by events betokening a greater destructiveness than any imagined by the Vorticist phalanx. The subtitle ('War Number'), the date (July 1915), and the illustration place the second issue in a specific historical 'moment'. They signal not only a realization that this 'moment' has now overwhelmed pre-war avant-garde provocations but also an awareness that these provocations were perhaps uncomfortably close—in rhetoric at least—to the violence of the Western Front. The opening sentences of the second *BLAST*'s editorial make this awareness clear

BLAST finds itself surrounded by a multitude of other Blasts of all sizes and descriptions. This puce-coloured cockleshell will, however, try and brave the waves of blood, for the serious mission it has on the other side of World-War. The art of Pictures, the Theatre, Music, etc., has to spring up again with new questions and beauties when Europe has disposed of its difficulties.⁶⁰

The beleaguered tone was symptomatic. Nonetheless, *BLAST* 2 did what it could to argue that the avant-garde impulse should be sustained, and that the war should be regarded as a hiatus rather than as a decisive cultural break. It thus stood 'rigidly opposed . . . to every form that the Poetry of a former condition of life, no longer existing, has foisted upon us', and it sought to forge 'the Poetry which is the as yet unexpressed spirit of the present time, and of new conditions and possibilities of life'.⁶¹ This view was not articulated in a historical vacuum. *BLAST* 1 had distinguished between 'Northern' and 'Southern' approaches to art in order to offer an account of a nascent English art opposed to a sentimental exaltation of machine-age modernity. This argument relied on distinctions between the art produced by different countries, but it was not narrowly nationalistic; the terms 'North' and 'South' were deployed because they crossed national boundaries and referred to general cultural tendencies. By July 1915, Germany was a problematic cultural ally. Now, therefore, it is Germany rather than Italy (as in *BLAST* 1) that is seen as 'romantic' in the artistic realm and jingoistic in the political sphere. It was the German *state*, not its 'advanced' artists, that was the target, just as English cultural arrogance was depicted as equally undesirable. Blinkered nationalism of all kinds was opposed by the 'art of the great race', which was universal in its appeal.⁶²

As already noted, *BLAST* 2 was more discursive and less experimental than *BLAST* 1. Lewis used it as an opportunity to develop his thinking about Vorticism's relation to European art movements. He insisted that 'as far as art is concerned, things will be exactly the same after the War as before it' because all 'art that matters is already so far ahead that it is beyond the sphere of these disturbances.'⁶³

⁶⁰ *BLAST* 2, 5. ⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.* 70–2. For Lewis's mocking English pretensions, see 'Mr. Shaw's Effect on My Friend', *ibid.* 12.

⁶³ *Ibid.* 13.

This suggests that the 'discords' of modern life that were supposed to function as artistic stimuli in *BLAST* 1 were part of an industrial *longue durée* that had already been assimilated into art and that the 'discords' of war were of no special significance. (Lewis was to change his mind about this, of course.) In 'A Review of Contemporary Art' he returned to the question of Vorticism's position vis-à-vis European Modernism, a position he elaborated without reference to the war. Most of what he said about Cubism, Futurism, and Impressionism recapitulated ideas articulated in *BLAST* 1, but what was new (and revealing) was his concentrated critique of Kandinsky.

Kandinsky's *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* had been positively reviewed in *BLAST* 1 by Wadsworth. Pound was an admirer of Kandinsky's and may have had a hand in this.⁶⁴ In 'A Review of Contemporary Art', Lewis seemed determined to put clear blue water between himself and Wadsworth concerning Kandinsky. Lewis signalled his distance from Kandinsky when he claimed that if 'the Plastic is impoverished for the Idea, we get out of direct contact with . . . intuitive waves of power' and stressed that artists should try 'to get deeply enough immersed in material life to experience the shaping power amongst its vibrations, and to accentuate and perpetuate these'. He considered Kandinsky to be 'the only PURELY abstract painter in Europe', yet argued that because his work inadvertently reproduced forms that resembled those found in nature, this haphazard side of his art weakened it.⁶⁵ The issue was central to Lewis, who stated that in 'dealing with Kandinsky's doctrine, and tabulating differences, you come to the most important feature of this new synthesis I propose.'⁶⁶

Lewis's 'severe platform' rejected sentiment in favour of hard-edged *plastic* values.⁶⁷ Whereas Kandinsky emphasized the inward meaning of art, which he saw in terms of a spiritual reawakening, Lewis stressed the need for an engagement with the everyday world. Wadsworth's positive review of Kandinsky's *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* in *BLAST* 1 thus received a clear rebuke in *BLAST* 2. Wadsworth had suggested that Kandinsky's art was 'laying the solid foundations of the Western art of tomorrow', approaching 'this task from the deeper and more spiritual standpoint of the soul'. Lewis rejected this immaterialism out of hand: 'Kandinsky, docile to the intuitive fluctuations of his soul, and anxious to render his hand and mind elastic and receptive, follows this unreal entity into its cloud-world, out of the material and solid universe.' For Lewis, the Kandinskyan 'soul' was an 'unreal entity' and 'an automatic and puerile spook', just as the 'Blavatskyish

⁶⁴ See *BLAST* 1, 154.

⁶⁵ *BLAST* 2, 40. Kandinsky was aware of this issue and explained the residual presence of natural forms in his early work as a strategy and as an aspect of his journey towards abstraction. See Wassily Kandinsky, 'Cologne Lecture' (1914), *Complete Writings on Art*, ed. Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo (Boston: Da Capo Press, 1994), 392–400.

⁶⁶ *BLAST* 2, 42.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 43.

soul is another Spook which needs laying, if it gets a vogue'.⁶⁸ Gaudier had made much the same point a year earlier: 'I have been told that he is a very great painter, that his lack of construction is a magnificent quality, that he has hit something very new. Alas, I know all his twaddle "of the spiritual in art."' ⁶⁹

The 'material and solid universe' was of decisive importance to Lewis. *BLAST* 2 argued that inasmuch as the 'human and sentimental side of things' is essential to artistic creativity it must not be in thrall to the human element:

I would put the maximum amount of poetry into painting that the plastic vessel would stand without softening and deteriorating: the poetry, that is to say, that is inherent in matter . . . Kandinsky's spiritual values and musical analogies seem to be undesirable, even if feasible: just as, although believing in the existence of the supernatural, you may regard it as redundant and nothing to do with life. The art of painting, further, is for a living man, and the art most attached to life.⁷⁰

Kandinsky's search for a transcendent realm of spiritual value through art was rejected because this conception of art cut it off from the life that human beings needed to understand and alter. Alluding to the 'Spook' haunting Kandinsky's thought, Lewis insisted that the 'Imagination, not to be a ghost, but to have the vividness and warmth of life, and the atmosphere of a dream, uses, where best inspired, the pigment and material of nature.'⁷¹ As in *BLAST* 1, it was not the object in itself that was significant but what the object could be made to signify. This belief informed Vorticism's synthesis of interpretation and prophetic vision: 'If the material world were not empirical and matter simply for science, but were organized as in the imagination, we should live as though we were dreaming. Art's business is to show how, then, life would be.'⁷² Having derided Kandinsky's soul as a dead spook, Lewis argued that art should depict the possibilities inherent in *this* life, a task that required it to exorcise the Kandinskyan spectre. As Alan Munton rightly observes, 'Vorticist art had a content and a geometry of its own. The content is the real world of work and the streets, of dress, dance, and the body in motion, of the new city and its architecture, of industry, ports, and real and imaginary machines.'⁷³ Given Lewis's Vorticist desire to express just this reality it was unsurprising to find him suggesting that his tenets should be applied to 'Tube Posters, Magazine Covers, Advertisements and Commercial Art generally' and that he fantasized about a parliamentary act 'FORBIDDING ANY IMAGE OR

⁶⁸ *BLAST* 1, 119; *BLAST* 2, 43. I agree with Edwards that Lewis thought Kandinsky's spiritualism distracted the artist from contemporary life and came close to solipsism. See Edwards, 'You Must Speak with Two Tongues', 116.

⁶⁹ Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, 'Allied Artists' Association Ltd.', *The Egoist*, 1:12 (15 June 1914), 228. In contrast to Kandinsky's work, Gaudier thought that 'Lewis's abstractions are of a decided type and their composition is so successful that I feel right in seeing in them the start of a new evolution in painting' (*ibid.*).

⁷⁰ *BLAST* 2, 44.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* 45.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Munton, 'Vorticism', 177.

RECOGNIZABLE SHAPE TO BE STUCK UP IN ANY PUBLIC PLACE'.⁷⁴ Perhaps the dream of an omnipotent caliph who could design an entire city by *fiat* was already a gleam in the Lewisian eye.

The 'Great London Vortex' came to an end with *BLAST* 2, though there were various short-lived attempts to resuscitate the movement after the First World War. Lewis was to edit other magazines, of course (*The Tyro* and *The Enemy*, see Chapter 23), but it was *BLAST* that would always be talked about as the first manifestation of English avant-gardism. How then is it to be assessed? I began by noting that there has never been agreement as to its importance, and this is still the case. Paul Edwards claims that *BLAST* is 'now recognized as the high-water mark of modernism in England at least until the 1930s', whereas Lawrence Rainey argues that it bored critics at the time 'because it was all too familiar'.⁷⁵ Such views are never likely to be reconciled, but it should be noted that Rainey's position draws primarily on reviews in *The New Statesman* (especially Squire's) and that other critics were not only struck by *BLAST* but genuinely disturbed by it. In his first notice of *BLAST* A. R. Orage saw it as 'another sign of the spiritual anarchism of modern society' and was so concerned by what it portended that he felt *The New Age* needed to 'present a more definite picture of what an English cultural "renaissance" must be'; the following week he described *Enemy of the Stars* as 'an extraordinary piece of work', but, fearing that Vorticism was mainly emotional rather than rational, described the movement as 'the very devil'. These are hardly the responses of one who found *BLAST* to be an insipid, imitative affair.⁷⁶

Violet Hunt regarded *BLAST* as only 'slightly epoch making in its way', but she noted that '[p]eople didn't know what to make of it... and generally made it wrong'.⁷⁷ This is a sound observation, for it is clear from many of the initial reactions to *BLAST* that its readers were frankly bewildered by it. Some saw it as little more than the continuation of Italian Futurism by other means; some criticized it because they simply could not comprehend it. The link between Vorticism

⁷⁴ *BLAST* 2, 47. Lewis acknowledged that if 'you are enthusiastically for "pure form" and Kandinsky you will resist [his] line of reasoning' (ibid. 45). His critique thus outlined two opposed views of modern art.

⁷⁵ Edwards, 'Introduction', *Blast: Vorticism 1914–1918*, 9; Lawrence Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1998), 38.

⁷⁶ 'R. H. C.' [Alfred Orage], 'Readers and Writers', *New Age*, 15:10 (9 July 1914), 229; *idem*, 'Readers and Writers', *New Age*, 15:11 (16 July 1914), 253. On 10 September 1914, Orage had calmed down: 'Vorticism is dead. It was, at best, only a big name for a little thing, that in the simmering of the pre-war period suddenly became a bubble, and is now burst. Of the magazine "Blast," which was devoted to the propaganda of Vorticism, I doubt whether another issue will appear. Compared with the war it is incomparably feeble.' *idem*, 'Readers and Writers', *New Age* 15:19 (10 Sept. 1914), 449. But ten months later, when *BLAST* 2 appeared, Orage was again impressed, noting that Vorticism 'has now become, I will not say intelligible, but intelligent'. See *idem*, 'Readers and Writers', *New Age* 17:13 (29 July 1915), 309.

⁷⁷ Hunt, *I Have This to Say*, 216.

and Futurism, for example, was lazily and routinely asserted. One reviewer asked: 'what is Vorticism but Futurism in an English disguise—Futurism . . . bottled in England, and bottled badly?' Another complained that *BLAST* did not explain itself clearly enough, praised the accessible writing (by West and Ford), and gave up in the face of the paintings: 'we hardly see the point—or points; they have, indeed, their peculiar universality of maze and movement, but no comprehensible detail seems to emerge.' Eunice Tietjens saw *BLAST* as a tongue in cheek production, but was no less baffled by it, noting that 'one feels sure there must be much food for thought, if only one could come near enough to understanding it to think about it.' And Squire weighed in with a little jest, noting that *Webster's Dictionary* had 'the definition: "Blast . . . A flatulent disease of sheep."' ⁷⁸ Hostility to *BLAST*, in other words, may have sprung as much from frustrated bafflement as from the mistaken notion that it was merely Futurism in another guise.

This failure to understand may in turn have been linked to the problematic nature of avant-gardism, especially its uneasy relationship with the public, some members of which deplored its confrontational antics, while others treated the cultural 'staging' of avant-gardism in a spirit of fun, without necessarily grasping very much about the art it was ostensibly promoting. This doubled response to avant-gardism was particularly noticeable in reactions to the appearance of *BLAST* 1. If the bourgeoisie was disturbed by the avant-garde spectacle, then bohemian fellow-travellers (among them various aristocrats) participated in it with joy. ⁷⁹ Lisa Tickner is right to argue that '[c]ontrary to the popular trope of the embattled avant-garde, the avant-garde was briefly and, on certain terms, it's true, fashionable', something that Lewis knew all too well and that led him to question the viability of the avant-garde enterprise. ⁸⁰ He wrote in *Blasting and Bombardiering* that he had mistaken 'the agitation in the audience for the sign of an awakening of the emotions of artistic sensibility', only to realize that it had been nothing of the sort. ⁸¹ It is at least arguable, as Tickner suggests in a wider context, that artefacts such as *BLAST* may have offered an 'identity derived from association with the avant-garde and from *being seen* as a consumer of *outré* commodities', and that such self-fashioning might well have treated avant-garde art as a symbol of insider status rather than as a means of social change. ⁸² This view suggests that some of those who read (or perhaps were *seen* to read) a John Lane-sponsored avant-garde magazine

⁷⁸ See 'The Futurists', *The New Statesman*, 3:66 (11 July 1914), 426; 'Fine Art Gossip', *The Athenaeum*, 4523 (4 July 1914), 26; Eunice Tietjens, 'Blast', *The Little Review*, 1:6 (Sept. 1914), 33; 'Solomon Eagle' [J. C. Squire], *The New Statesman*, 5:123 (14 Aug. 1915), 449. For a brief discussion of reviewers' perplexities see Wees, *Vorticism*, 194–5.

⁷⁹ See Lisa Tickner, *Modern Life and Modern Subjects: British Art in the Early Twentieth Century* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2000), 79–115.

⁸⁰ Tickner, 'English Modernism', 22.

⁸¹ Lewis, *Blasting and Bombardiering*, 32.

⁸² Tickner, 'English Modernism', 29.

like *BLAST* may simply have been advertising their bohemian credentials.⁸³ Thus Lewis: ‘“Kill John Bull with Art!” I shouted. And John and Mrs. Bull leapt for joy, in a cynical convulsion. For they felt as safe as houses. So did I.’⁸⁴

Lewis came to believe that *BLAST* had belonged to a cultural milieu in which the avant-garde’s radical aspirations had been compromised from the outset. Maybe he was too harsh in thinking like this. Nobody can now know how *BLAST*, and the Vorticism it promoted, would have developed had the First World War not intervened, dispersing its energies, altering the cultural landscape, and destroying some of its participants. As it was, Gaudier-Brzeska was killed, Ford was shell-shocked, Pound left London, and Lewis, despite brief post-war Vorticist forays, moved away from the specific type of geometric art he had championed in *BLAST*. War and art had become intertwined, as Lewis later acknowledged: ‘With me war and art have been mixed up from the start.’⁸⁵ He came to believe that he had been wrong to think in 1915 that the war would change nothing. In the event it seemed that it had ‘bled the world white’ and that the ‘activities of the artist of 1914 did foreshadow all that has come to pass in the meanwhile’.⁸⁶

⁸³ Edward Bishop suggests Lane was selling ‘consumer *identity* rather than a commodity, marketing works that were status objects (cultural and economic) and sex objects as much as they were literature’. Bishop, ‘Re:covering Modernism’, 317.

⁸⁴ Lewis, *Blasting and Bombardiering*, 36.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 4.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* 17 and 259.

HARMONY, DISCORD, AND DIFFERENCE

Rhythm (1911–13), *The Blue Review* (1913),
and *The Signature* (1915)

PETER BROOKER

In early 1921 John Middleton Murry was invited to deliver six lectures at Oxford, the University he had abandoned ten years earlier with a second class degree, intent at that time on a more bohemian lifestyle. The result was the volume of essays *The Problem of Style* (1922), which was to become a standard reference and Murry's most reprinted work. The invitation followed on Murry's successful editorship of *The Athenaeum* between April 1919 and February 1921 in which he published reviews by Katherine Mansfield, D. H. Lawrence, T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, and others of the Bloomsbury contingent, as well as leaders and comment by Edmund Blunden, L. F. Salzman, George Santayana, and Aldous Huxley (see Chapter 15). He had met Mansfield in 1911 and they had married in 1918. Though their life together was fraught with financial and emotional difficulties and her death in 1923 remained a traumatic memory, Murry, as his biographer, F. A. Lea, comments, was on the way to becoming 'the most influential literary critic of the day'.¹ Later, in 1959, T. S. Eliot was to endorse the picture of Murry's 'eminence' as a literary critic—noting that this was a 'solitary eminence'.² At his death, Murry had published sixty-eight books, amongst them studies of Shakespeare, Swift, Blake, Keats, Dostoevsky, and Lawrence, as well as religious and political works, some fiction and collections of poetry, and extensive contributions as a journalist to a number of papers and journals. In addition he edited the volumes of Mansfield's fiction, journals, and letters. He had also founded, and between 1923 and 1948

¹ F. A. Lea, *The Life of John Middleton Murry* (London: Methuen, 1959), 99.

² John Middleton Murry, *Katherine Mansfield and Other Literary Essays* (London: John Murray, 1959), p. vii.

edited, *The Adelphi*. Eliot was careful, however, to praise Murry as a critic rather than as a poet or novelist, and as a certain kind of ‘subjective’ critic, who ‘in exploring the mind and soul of some creative writer, explored his own mind and soul’.³ As such, Murry stands as the Romantic to Eliot’s ‘impersonal’ modernist critic, a distinction accounting perhaps for Murry’s writing having been forgotten, even at the time of Eliot’s writing, aside from his studies on Lawrence and his work as Mansfield’s editor. Eliot remembers too the period of *The Athenaeum* rather than *The Adelphi*: Murry proved himself then, Eliot reflects, to be ‘a first-rate editor’ in a period when ‘*The Times Literary Supplement* under Richmond, the *Athenaeum* under Murry’ as well as ‘for a time *Art and Letters* and *The Calendar*’ comprised, he says, ‘the high summer of literary journalism in London in my lifetime’.⁴

Eliot met Murry at Ottoline Morrell’s Garsington Manor. Eliot’s memory, however, does not stretch back in 1959 to the earlier period, before the mutual encounter with Bloomsbury, to the time when, during the years 1911–15, Murry had in turn edited the three magazines *Rhythm*, *The Blue Review*, and *The Signature*. Katherine Mansfield had been assistant editor on the first two and joint author of the third magazine, but had no editorial involvement in *The Athenaeum*, by which time Murry was virtually launched upon a solo career. Murry’s autobiography, *Between Two Worlds*, has much, but not everything, to say about his relationship with Mansfield and with Lawrence, who had contributed to *Rhythm* and *The Blue Review* and with whom Murry edited *The Signature*. The first episode, concerning *Rhythm*, Murry tends to cast off in a self-deprecatory manner, claiming he has ‘no memory at all’ of the magazine’s beginning, when, at the time, he had, as F. A. Lea points out, written to his Oxford friend, Philip Landon, ‘“My heart is absolutely in it”’.⁵ In fact, it might well seem to us now that it is this adventurous, somewhat naïve, youthful period which counted most of all in terms of an early understanding of modernism and thus of a contributory strand in contemporary literary and artistic culture. During this time these magazines ran alongside, and in a spirit of some dialogic rivalry with, *The English Review*, *The New Age*, *The Egoist*, and *BLAST*. But this is to talk less of Murry as an individual than of the collaborative formation which comprised *Rhythm* and of the changes this grouping and governing ethos underwent in the short life of the two subsequent magazines. The complex internal character of these publications and of *Rhythm* in particular, as well as its place in a more broadly conceived, emerging and sometimes fractious modernism, is what I explore in this chapter.

Rhythm, subtitled ‘Art Music Literature’, was founded by two Oxford friends John Middleton Murry and Michael T. H. Sadler (later Sadleir) in 1911 with the aid of £50 from Sadler’s father, an educationalist, patron, and early collector of

³ Ibid. pp. viii, x.

⁴ Ibid. p. ix.

⁵ Quoted in Lea, *Life of John Middleton Murry*, 25.

modernist art.⁶ The magazine ran for fourteen issues from the summer of 1911 to March 1913; in its first four issues as a quarterly, and then as a monthly. Michael Sadler, who was to translate Wassily Kandinsky's *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* in 1914, made a strong contribution in early articles to the contemporary debates on post-Impressionist art, but had dropped out of the picture as co-editor by the summer of 1912, though he re-emerged momentarily in *The Blue Review*.⁷ The names of the editors did not appear until the fifth issue when Murry was joined by Katherine Mansfield as assistant editor and the Scottish painter J. D. Fergusson was named as art editor. From that time the editorial board was expanded to include a cohort of four foreign correspondents in France, and one each in Poland, Russia, and the USA, thus declaring its broad internationalist agenda across the arts. Amongst its first contributors were Murry's Oxford friends, Frederick Goodyear and Sadler; Arthur Crosssthaite, Rhys Carpenter, and, for one essay, Holbrook Jackson (the co-founder of *The New Age*); and those like Francis Carco, W. W. Gibson, and, somewhat later, Gilbert Cannan, who became regular contributors.

In terms of its visual content it regularly included illustrations and block prints, the latter repeated as headers and footers through the entire run of the magazine, including on its advertising pages, by Anne Estelle Rice, Jessie Dismorr, Margaret Thompson, Gordon 'Dorothy' Banks, and the two Scottish colourists S. J. Peplø and Fergusson. Amongst other works, there were four pre-Cubist drawings by Picasso, who Fergusson counted as a personal friend, a number of drawings and some paintings, reproduced in black and white, by those associated with Fauvism, including several by Othon Friesz, and one or more by André Derain, Auguste Herbin, and Auguste Chaubaud, with one each by Cézanne and Augustus John. Two issues in 1912 contained six drawings by Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, who was to quarrel with Murry and Mansfield after what seemed a warm and promising friendship, and was doubly annoyed by the misspelling of his name as 'Bizeska'. Later contributions towards the end of 1912 and into 1913 from Yone Noguchi on Japanese art, Floryan Sobieniowski (the magazine's Polish correspondent) on Stanislaw Wyspianski, two pairs of drawings by Natalie Goncharova, and translations, probably by Mansfield, of poems by Boris Petrovsky served, once more, to confirm the magazine's internationalism. In the event, however, aside from the visual content, this meant chiefly articles in French on French arts and the regular 'Lettres de Paris' or 'Lettres de France' by the *fantaisiste* poets Francis Carco and Tristan Derème. To some degree this sophistication was at odds with the terms

⁶ Michael Ernest Sadler (1861–1943) was Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leeds and closely associated with the Leeds Art Club which did much to promote the reception of modernist art works. His son changed the spelling of his surname to 'Sadleir' to avoid confusion with his father.

⁷ The Sadlers visited Kandinsky in 1912. Before Sadler embarked on the translation of Kandinsky's *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* he had purchased some woodcuts by Kandinsky and Kandinsky agreed that one of these should be reproduced in *Rhythm*. It never appeared, however. See *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (London: Tate Publishing, [1914] 2006), pp. vii–viii, and 129 n. 21.

Fergusson set for his involvement with the magazine: he wanted a magazine, he said, which 'would be cheap, not a de luxe magazine' and from which 'any herd boy' could get 'the latest information about modern painting from Paris'.⁸ The appearance, from the first issue, of articles in French by Francis Carco and Murry's readiness to quote Benedetto Croce's Italian without a translation in its second would have tested a herd boy and an average English readership.

The first four issues were published by St Catherine's Press with a cover, in elephant grey, derived from Fergusson's painting '*Rhythm*' of 1911. Murry, notoriously, failed to understand the terms of 'sale and return' and found himself in debt to the tune of £100 after the first four issues, precisely at the point that he announced the magazine would go monthly. St Catherine's Press had advised printing 3,000 copies which, at the price of 1s. per copy, would have yielded £150: 'not one sixth part had been really sold,' wrote Murry, and it was for him to pay 'something well over a hundred pounds'.⁹ For Murry to owe £100, the magazine must have earned £50 from 1,000 copies (amounting to a third sold), which suggests a basic average readership of 250 per issue over four issues. Less than a sixth part sold would suggest a readership of under half this figure.

A hiatus of some months followed before, at Mansfield's instigation, 'Stephen Swift and Co', the publisher of her collection of stories *In a German Pension* (1911), took over the magazine, offering Murry and Mansfield £10 a month. A strong Fauvist blue replaced the elephant grey of the cover but they were headed for another disaster. Swift (aka Charles Granville) went bankrupt, leaving Murry and Mansfield this time with a £400 debt. This they determined to pay off in instalments using her allowance from her father, until Murry realized the following year that it was easier to declare himself bankrupt.¹⁰ Martin Secker, who offered to produce the magazine more cheaply, and Edward Marsh, the compiler of the anthologies of *Georgian Poetry* begun in 1912, stepped in to help. Marsh supplied some funds and offered to install Wilfred Wilson Gibson as assistant editor.¹¹ Mansfield had meanwhile worked hard at canvassing advertising which Murry in the editorial 'What We Have Tried To Do' had earlier blithely declared as 'unessentials'.¹² Already, in the same issue, as if to point up the blatant contradiction of aesthetic intent and economic survival, there had followed a discrete one page 'Select Announcements, introducing the first three advertisements to appear in the magazine: for Hanfstaengl's photographic reproductions of art works, *T.P.'s Weekly*, a publication by St Catherine's Press, and advance publicity for the next issue of *Rhythm*. Here was a hard lesson in economics and aesthetics

⁸ Margaret Morris, *The Art of J. D. Fergusson* (London: Blackie and Sons, 1974), 64.

⁹ John Middleton Murry, *Between Two Worlds: An Autobiography* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1935), 204.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 235.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 236–7. On these episodes, see Lea, *Life of John Middleton Murry*, 33–6.

¹² *Rhythm*, 1:3 (Winter 1911), 36.

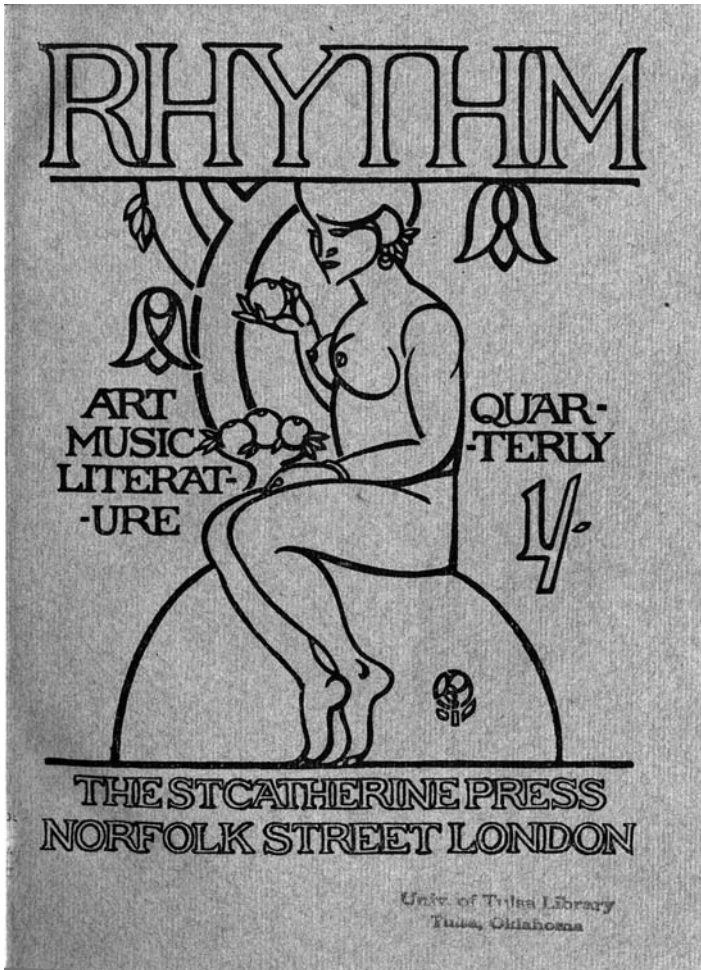


Fig. 39. Cover of *Rhythm* by John Duncan Fergusson for *Rhythm* (Summer 1911)

for the ‘little magazine’. The advertisements were for galleries and publishers, for The Parma Rooms salon in South Moulton Street—where Mansfield’s devoted friend, Ida Constance Baker, practised ‘scientific hair brushing and face massage’—and notably from Heals furnishings. All of these, while tasteful and belonging to an ‘artistic’ milieu roughly compatible with the magazine itself, assumed a more prominent physical place, coming to occupy both front and back internal pages.¹³

¹³ Claire Tomalin, *Katherine Mansfield: A Secret Life* (London: Viking, 1987), 100. From 1907, under Ambrose Heal Jr., Heals inherited an Arts and Crafts tradition inspired by John Ruskin and William Morris. Its advertisements appeared throughout 1912–13 and offered reproduction furnishings for those wishing ‘a beautiful and simple environment, chosen with taste’, emphasizing ‘comfort simplicity and distinction’. Later advertisements continuing into *The Blue Review* included publishers,

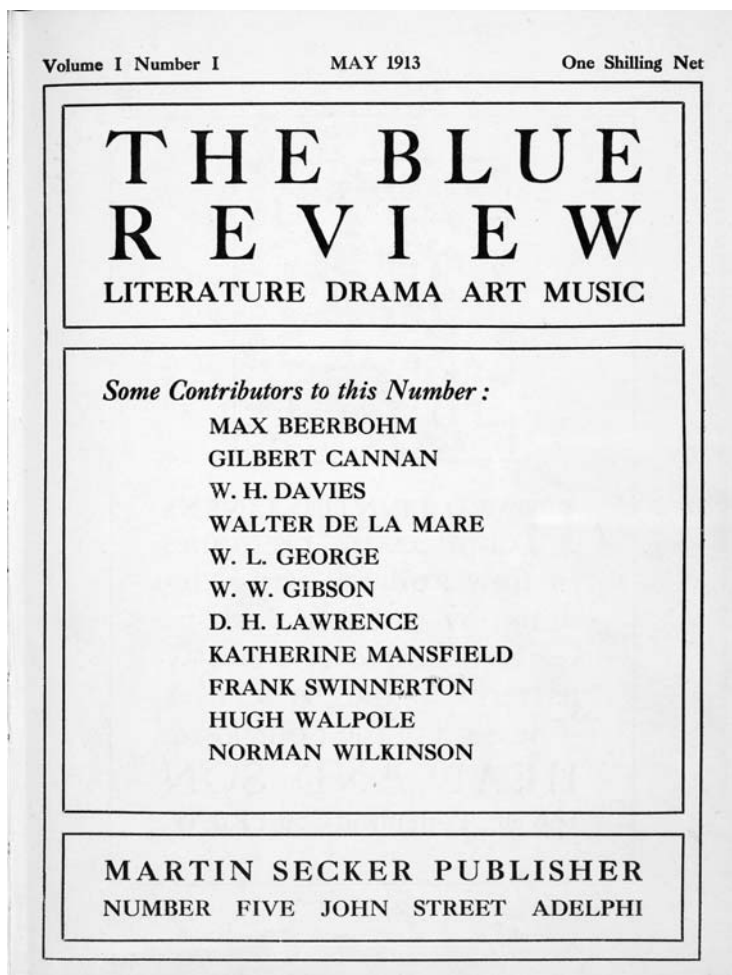


Fig. 40. Cover of *The Blue Review* (May 1913)

Rhythm ran for fourteen issues until March 1913. Fergusson left after the tenth issue, in November 1912, after which the magazine became less avant-garde, and in the end was re-using drawings by Rice, who herself stayed on until March 1913. *The Blue Review* appeared two months later, comprehensively subtitled 'Literature, Drama, Art, Music', with its core editorial personnel of Murry and Mansfield intact and some old and new contributors. It cost a shilling and ran to ninety pages with advertisements, though there were fewer than in the final issues of *Rhythm*.

predominantly Secker, as well as, for example, *The Imprint*, a magazine on printing and design. *The Blue Review* contained advertisements for *La Vie des Lettres*, *La Rassegna Contemporanea* (Rome), and *The Forum* (New York) and, in all three issues, for *La Nouvelle Revue Française*.

Without Fergusson or Rice or the team of Dismorr, Thompson, and Banks, however, *The Blue Review* had little of interest by way of visual content. The frontispiece for the first issue was a cartoon by Max Beerbohm showing Edward Marsh, Churchill's private secretary and now an important sponsor, deferring to Churchill's authority on the question of the artistic merit of the slogan 'We want eight!'—a topical reference to a demand for more warships. Within the pages of the magazine this was obviously a comfortable joke. There followed in the first issue a painting by Ambrose McEvoy, a line drawing of nudes by Derwent Lees, and sketches of a woman's wrap and a fancy dress costume, respectively by Norman Wilkinson and Harold Squire, which had little impact. The second issue included three paintings and a drawing, the most notable by J. D. Innes, friend of Derwent Lees and fellow Welshman Augustus John. The last contained a cartoon at the expense of modernist sculpture titled 'Post-Georgian' by X. Marcel Boulestin.

The magazine's regular contributors were Gilbert Cannan, Edward J. Dent, Hugh Walpole, Frank Swinnerton, and W. Denis Browne and they, along with O. Raymond Drey and, occasionally, Michael Sadler, shared its pages with the Georgian poets favoured by Marsh. The first issue contained work by De la Mare, W. W. Gibson, D. H. Lawrence, and W. H. Davies; the second and third, work by Davies, Lawrence, and Marsh himself, as well as James Elroy Flecker, John Drinkwater, Lascelles Abercrombie, and Rupert Brooke. Some of these poets (Abercrombie, Drinkwater, De la Mare, and Brooke) had appeared in the last issues of *Rhythm*, under Marsh's influence, and all were to appear in the first two anthologies of *Georgian Poetry* edited by him in 1912 and 1915. As Lea puts it, 'The Georgians flooded in in the wake of Edward Marsh.'¹⁴

It seems fair to say that Drey and Sadler, Gilbert Cannan, Walpole, and Swinnerton (though he was to write *The Georgian Literary Scene* in the 1930s) were outside this circle. One assumes that this was true too of Mansfield, though she was friendly with Brooke and Marsh.¹⁵ Murry, though its editor, felt himself to be somewhat dwarfed by the already-published figures Marsh brought in.¹⁶ Marsh and the phalanx of Georgian poets belonged in Raymond Williams's terms to an 'alternative', distinctly English, formation which had little or nothing to do with *Rhythm*'s Fauvist beginnings or debt to Bergson. Lawrence we might see as something of a special case and a different kind of link with Murry.¹⁷

What continuities there were with the earlier *Rhythm* appeared in a residual international content of reports and reviews and in the contributions by Sadler

¹⁴ Lea, *Life of John Middleton Murry*, 34

¹⁵ Tomalin, *Katherine Mansfield*, 109.

¹⁶ Murry, *Between Two Worlds*, 238.

¹⁷ A possible exception amongst the 'Georgian' group was W. Denis Browne, the magazine's music critic, a friend of Gibson, and particularly of Edward J. Dent, Marsh, and Brooke. He had set some of Brooke's poems to music, but his own musical taste led him to admire Stravinsky in an echo of *Rhythm*'s own enthusiasms for the Ballets Russes. See 'William Denis Browne', at <http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2002/May02/WDBrown.htm>

and O. Raymond Drey. Thus a section which came to be titled 'Chronicles of the Month' and occupied the bulk of the magazine included a discussion of Chinese, English, and French theatre by Cannan, notes on British fiction by Hugh Walpole, on 'French Books' and an essay 'Bennet [*sic*] Stendhal and the Modern Novel' by Murry, on 'General Literature' by Swinnerton, and on 'German Books' by Lawrence. These ran alongside regular reviews of music by W. Denis Browne, 'Galleries' by O. Raymond Drey and Sadler, and, in issue 1, a 'Review of Reviews' (on English, French, and Italian reviews—including those advertised, as indicated earlier). Sadler wrote, as he had earlier, on Anne Estelle Rice (she was a "realist" . . . in touch with nature'; her work is "cubifying" and 'a very long way from the solemn inanities of Derain . . . or the tentative naughtiness of the Grafton Group'¹⁸), and O. Raymond Drey, who married Rice in 1913, was, like Sadler, coming to terms still, as in the days of *Rhythm*, with post-Impressionism. Drey found Picasso's 'abstract rhythmic statement . . . new in paint', but in an unsympathetic review of Futurism detected 'a negation of personality'—neither realism, nor joy 'but fear in Severini's dynamism of modern speed'.¹⁹

The most obvious links across the two magazines were of course its editors, Murry and Mansfield, but their influence was negligible. There were no editorials and Murry's contributions were limited to the pieces mentioned above and possibly the single unsigned 'Review of Reviews'. His essay on Stendhal was the most substantial of these and was a statement of his belief in the compatibility of 'spiritual truth' with formal perfection in the novel. Mansfield contributed four stories over the three issues: 'Epilogue 1: Pension Séguin', 'Epilogue II' and 'Millie', and 'Epilogue III: Bains Turc', which seem to belong less to this magazine in any distinctive way than to her developing personal *oeuvre*.

In retrospect, Lawrence appears the more prominent single figure; a link back to *Rhythm* and forward to *The Signature*. He had rhapsodized over the Georgian poets ('just bursting into a thick blaze of being') in a supplement to the final issue of *Rhythm*²⁰ and his own *Love Poems* and *Sons and Lovers* were praised in *The Blue Review*, respectively by Lascelles Abercrombie (as expressing the 'right sort of novelty') and Hugh Walpole (as bringing a 'zest', a 'new thing' to the English novel).²¹ Lawrence himself contributed both the magazine's longest entry, the eighteen-page story 'Soiled Rose' in number 1, and an essay in number 2 on 'German Books'. The latter renders the idea of 'rhythm' in Lawrence's own terms, but in a way reminiscent of Murry's original call for 'the strong things of life' against a residual aestheticism.²² Thus Lawrence sees Thomas Mann, whom he

¹⁸ *The Blue Review*, 1:1 (May 1913), 69.

¹⁹ Respectively in *The Blue Review*, 1:2 (June 1913), 148, and 1:3 (July 1913), 213–14.

²⁰ *Rhythm*, 2:14 (Mar. 1913), p. xix.

²¹ *The Blue Review*, 1:2 (June 1913), 121; 1:3 (July 1913), 192.

²² 'Aims and Ideals', *Rhythm*, 1:1 (Summer, 1911), 36.

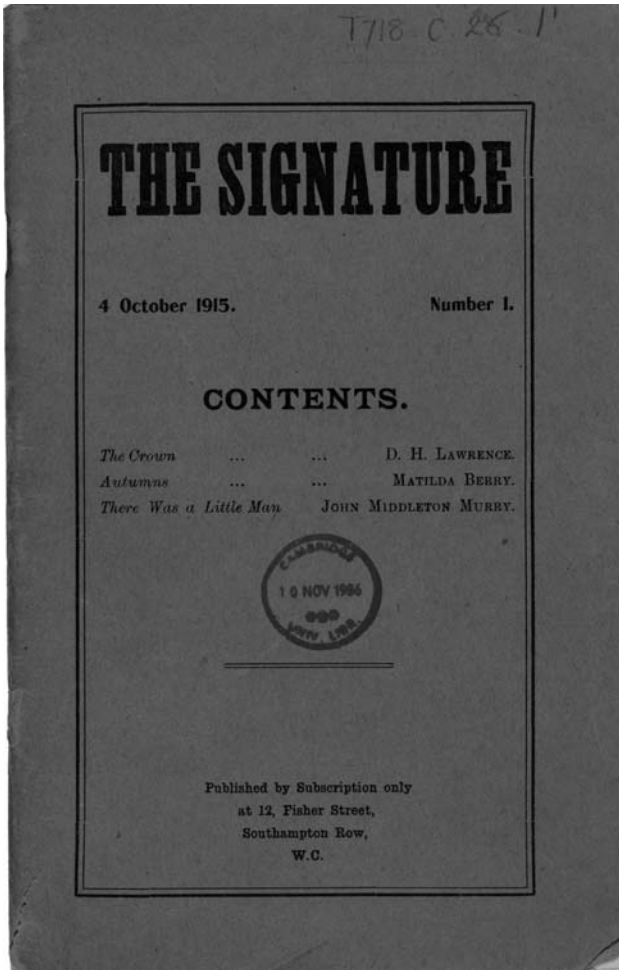


Fig. 41. Cover of *The Signature* (Oct. 1915)

makes the subject of his essay, as ‘the last sick sufferer from the complaint of Flaubert’ in similarly setting ‘his fine aesthetic sense’ against ‘the disordered corruption’ of ‘physical life’.²³ Like Flaubert (one thinks of his eminence in a more ‘regular’ modernist lineage for James, Conrad, Ford, Pound, and Joyce), Thomas Mann ‘has none of the rhythm of a living thing’. ‘Even *Mme Bovary*’, Lawrence ends, ‘seems to me dead in respect to the living rhythm of the whole work.’²⁴

What followed two years later in 1915, though hardly in sequence, were three issues of *The Signature*, founded by Murry and D. H. Lawrence with themselves and Mansfield, writing under the pseudonym of ‘Matilda Berry’, as

²³ *The Blue Review*, 1:3 (July 1913), 205.

²⁴ *Ibid.* 206.

sole contributors. The prime motivation for the magazine, whether Murry's or Lawrence's, was to 'do something' in the face of war: 'one must speak for life and growth amid all this mass of destruction and disintegration,' Lawrence declared to Harriet Monroe, 'so I bring out this little paper.'²⁵ He planned public meetings, of which, however, there were only two, attended by 'about a dozen people', though not by Murry or Mansfield—since 'that was not our affair', said Murry.²⁶ The magazine needed 250 subscribers but got less than half that number, and Lawrence gave up the project in some embarrassment. The three published issues out of an intended six, pocket-sized and with a dull grey-brown stapled cover, ran three contributions equally: from Lawrence's 'The Crown', from Murry's 'There was a Little Man' ('an attempt to convey the feverish resistance of my personal consciousness of the War'),²⁷ and two stories by 'Berry' (Mansfield). The latter were 'Autumns' and 'The Little Governess', in two parts over numbers 2 and 3. *The Signature* was an expression of Murry, Lawrence, and Mansfield's coming together in common despair at the war, but not in any comfortable artistic or ideological agreement or even conventional friendship. Thus, at this same time in 1915, when Lawrence was receiving extremely hostile reviews of *The Rainbow*, prior to its being suppressed, Murry felt that he could neither understand nor support the novel, and recalled that 'Katherine quite definitely hated parts of it.' The only difference he reckoned, somewhat bizarrely, between himself and others who were similarly repelled by the novel, was that, 'I happened to be friends with Lawrence.'²⁸

The Signature brought the uneven, sometimes utopian, sometimes catastrophic adventure of three magazines and three publishers, heavy debts, and bankruptcies in a period of less than six years to an end. The war of course disturbed everything. The main participants as well as some minor figures went on to pursue their own careers in a more separated fashion; Lawrence with extreme difficulty.²⁹ Murry went on to succeed in the world of literary magazines and journalism as a 'subjective' literary critic. Murry and Mansfield were married in 1918 but she spent more and more time in Europe and especially on the French Riviera, partly because of illness, publishing *Prelude* (1918) and *Bliss and Other Stories* (1920), which contained

²⁵ D. H. Lawrence, *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays*, ed. Michael Herbert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 249; *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, vol. ii: 1913–16, ed. G. J. Zytaruk and J. T. Boulton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 394.

²⁶ Lawrence, *Reflections*, 417, 249; Murry, *Between Two Worlds*, 352.

²⁷ Murry, *Between Two Worlds*, 353. ²⁸ *Ibid.* 351.

²⁹ With the failure of *The Signature*, the banning of *The Rainbow*, and the collapse of a plan to set up a colony in Florida, the Lawrences left London for Cornwall at the end of 1915. Lawrence's next novel, *Women in Love*, was rejected by publishers and in October 1917 he was expelled from Cornwall on suspicion of being a German spy. Feeling his life as a serious writer was wrecked, he left England at the end of 1919 to return for only twelve weeks over the next ten and a half years of his life. See John Worthen, *D. H. Lawrence: The Life of An Outsider* (New York: Counterpoint, 2005), 210.

her stories from *The Signature*, before her death in 1923. *Something Childish and Other Stories*, containing her five stories from *Rhythm* and four from *The Blue Review*, appeared in 1924. The only 'group' associated with these magazines to retain a collective identity of sorts was the Georgian contingent who appeared in *Georgian Poetry* and then in a more dispersed way in the post-war period in magazines such as *The London Mercury* and *The Owl*.

Murry, and following him, F. A. Lea, and Claire Tomalin tend to think of *Rhythm* and *The Blue Review* as the same magazine 'under a changed name'.³⁰ This simply will not stand up to scrutiny. However Murry remembered or misremembered it, *Rhythm* in its earlier phase, from mid-1911 towards the close of 1912, was the more inventive and radical of the early magazines he was involved in and belonged to a more avant-gardist and international, or at least Anglo-European, formation than *The Blue Review*, *The Signature*, or the later, more successful, journals he edited. Though *Rhythm* gained considerably during 1912 from the addition of Katherine Mansfield whose first contribution, the story 'Woman at the Store', appeared in spring of that year, it functioned most successfully, by common critical consent, as a journal of the new art rather than of literature or music. A cursory glance at the early issues of the magazine demonstrates the important part played by the artwork summarized earlier and underlines the instrumental role played by Fergusson as its art editor. The personnel involved and the associated Fauvist aesthetic so important to the magazine's distinctive identity comprised what we might term its own internal formation and, as such, deserves further consideration.

J. D. Fergusson: *Rhythm*, dance, and difference

Murry had met Fergusson in Paris in early 1911 where Fergusson had been living and absorbing the new art movements since 1907. Fergusson was ensconced in Parisian café society: he knew Picasso and Fauvist painters personally; he exhibited at the Salon d'Automne of which he became a Sociétaire in 1910 and taught at the Académie de la Palette. He was also associated with the group of 'Scottish colourists', including S. J. Peploe, G. Leslie Hunter, and F. C. B. Cadell, who all lived and worked in these years in France. This grouping and affiliation to an idea of a Scottish tradition of liberty and free expression was a significant factor in Fergusson's work and played its part in the ethos he brought to the magazine.

When he first met Fergusson, Murry was fresh from the thrill of the exhibition 'Manet and the Post-Impressionists' organized by Roger Fry at the Grafton Gallery in London in 1910. This included several works by Cézanne, Gauguin, and Van Gogh, all of whom were admired by Fergusson and his associates and discussed

³⁰ Murry, *Between Two Worlds*, 328; Lea, *Life of Middleton Murry*, 35; Tomalin, *Katherine Mansfield*, 117.

in the pages of *Rhythm*, notably by Michael Sadler, who wrote an article in the first issue of the magazine praising Anne Estelle Rice as a 'leader of the Fauvist movement'.³¹ The first, and particularly the Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition, were a Bloomsbury-based affair. None of the Scottish colourists were exhibited and their only generalized mention was by way of a reference in the catalogue introduction to 'Americans, Englishmen and Scotchmen in Paris who are working and experimenting along the same lines'.³² The exclusion, for whatever reason, of a group of painters, including Anne Estelle Rice, who were well acquainted with the new post-Impressionist art, and were indeed examples of it, is evidence of a set of cultural attitudes and further associated formation, which, however cosmopolitan it appeared, took a still very 'English' perspective on Parisian-based art movements. It tells us something therefore of the wider modernist context of which *Rhythm* was a part.

We need, first of all, however, to understand more of the intrinsic character of the magazine. Its title 'Rhythm' derived in part from Henri Bergson, who Murry was reading at the time of his first meeting with Fergusson. In his autobiography *Between Two Worlds*, Murry suggests he was impressed less by a concept than by Fergusson's personal rhythm; an artist's rhythm 'must be his own rhythm... a quality of being—an achievement of, or an effort towards integrity'.³³ Art, for Fergusson, Murry surmised, implied simultaneously 'a way of life' and a belief that 'rhythm was the essential quality in a painting or sculpture... the distinctive element in all the arts'.³⁴ Elsewhere, Murry and others, notably the art critic Huntley Carter, extrapolated upon this association of rhythm in personality and in art to suggest how both art and the individual intuited a profound creative impulse expressive of a 'great continuity' and divine harmony, a kind of Bergsonian cosmic *élan vital*.³⁵ Murry openly acclaimed Bergson in the article 'Art and Philosophy' in the first issue of the magazine. Art, he writes there, 'must go onward and forward... [it] is movement, ferocity, tearing at what lies before'.³⁶ The artist will perceive the 'essential forms, the essential harmonies of line and colour' and 'modernism', as he terms it in a very early usage, will penetrate 'the outward surface of the world', to disengage 'the rhythms that lie at the heart of things' to access the 'primitive harmonies of the world'.³⁷ Elsewhere, more directly still, Murry declared,

³¹ Michael T. H. Sadler, 'Fauvism and a Fauve', *Rhythm*, 1:1 (Summer 1911), 17.

³² Authored by Desmond MacCarthy, in Vassiliki Kolocotroni, Jane Goldman, and Olga Taxidou (eds), *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 177.

³³ Murry, *Between Two Worlds*, 154.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 155, 156.

³⁵ John Middleton Murry, *Rhythm*, 1:1 (Summer 1911), 12. And see Mark Antliff, *Inventing Bergson, Cultural Politics and the Parisian Avant-Garde* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), esp. 80–2.

³⁶ Murry, *Rhythm*, 1:1 (Summer 1911), 10.

³⁷ *Ibid.* 12.

‘Modernism means Bergsonism in philosophy,’ adding that ‘Bergsonism stands for post-impressionism in its essential meaning.’³⁸

Fergusson had not read Bergson until meeting Murry but is said to have used the word ‘rhythm’ frequently in discussing his own ideas on art. The title of the magazine, we might say, therefore, derived at the outset from a combination of personal aura and instinct, a practising aesthetic and a supporting vitalist philosophy. The first editorial of the magazine appeared unsigned, but authored we presume by Murry, under the title ‘Aims and Ideals’. Along with Murry’s article ‘Art and Philosophy’, this in effect comprised the magazine’s manifesto. Here Murry announced ‘the ideal of a new art’ which will ‘be the rhythmical echo’ of a deeply rooted reality, rejecting the ‘narrow aestheticism’ of the past for a strong-blooded, vigorous and brutal art on the side of progress and ‘the strong things of life’.³⁹ This note of muscular vitality and animalism (‘Art is movement, ferocity, tearing at what lies before’) and the call elsewhere to pioneering ‘neo-barbarians’⁴⁰ confirms an association with Fauvism, as do a series of images throughout the magazine in prose, poetry, and drawings of animals, dance or movement, including the repeated wood-cut illustrations of a tiger and monkey, and hog and peacock.

The most conspicuous visual embodiment of the idea of rhythm is taken to be the magazine’s cover derived from Fergusson’s painting ‘Rhythm’ shown in early 1911 (see Figs. 39 and 42). Both images are commonly understood as invoking the fundamental procreative or vitalist rhythm of life through the depiction of an impersonalized, elemental female who as Eve or Ceres is set in association with a tree and fruit, themselves indices of the generative force of nature.⁴¹ Along with other features, the cover would seem to confirm the adoption of a combined philosophical aesthetic and practice intent on giving dynamic form to an underlying rhythmic harmony. On occasion, however, another, contrary note is struck which suggests not so much an echoing, cosmic harmony as variation and discordancy. Thus an essay titled ‘Some Thoughts on Rhythm in Painting’ by C. J. Holmes, then Director of the National Portrait Gallery, defines expressive rhythm as depending on an ‘inequality’ rather than equality of time intervals; as founded on irregularity, variations in force, scale, and mass, rather than ‘“the measured flow of movement or beat”’ or ‘mechanical repetition’.⁴²

This tension between harmony and discord occurs elsewhere—from Murry’s passing comment, for example, on a poster he saw in Paris that the ‘yellow greens screamed in a discord which was the consummation of a perfect harmony’ to the strikingly angular and sinuous lines in Fergusson’s figure for ‘Rhythm’ and, to some

³⁸ Letter to P. Landon, 30 March 1911, quoted in Lea, *Life of Middleton Murry*, 24.

³⁹ Murry, *Rhythm*, 1:1 (Summer 1911), 36. ⁴⁰ Frederick Goodyear, *ibid.* 3.

⁴¹ See, for example, Elizabeth Cumming (ed.) *Colour Rhythm and Dance: Paintings and Drawings by J. D. Fergusson and His Circle in Paris* (Edinburgh: Scottish Arts Council Catalogue, 11, 1985), 9.

⁴² C. J. Holmes, *Rhythm*, 1:3 (Winter 1911), 1.

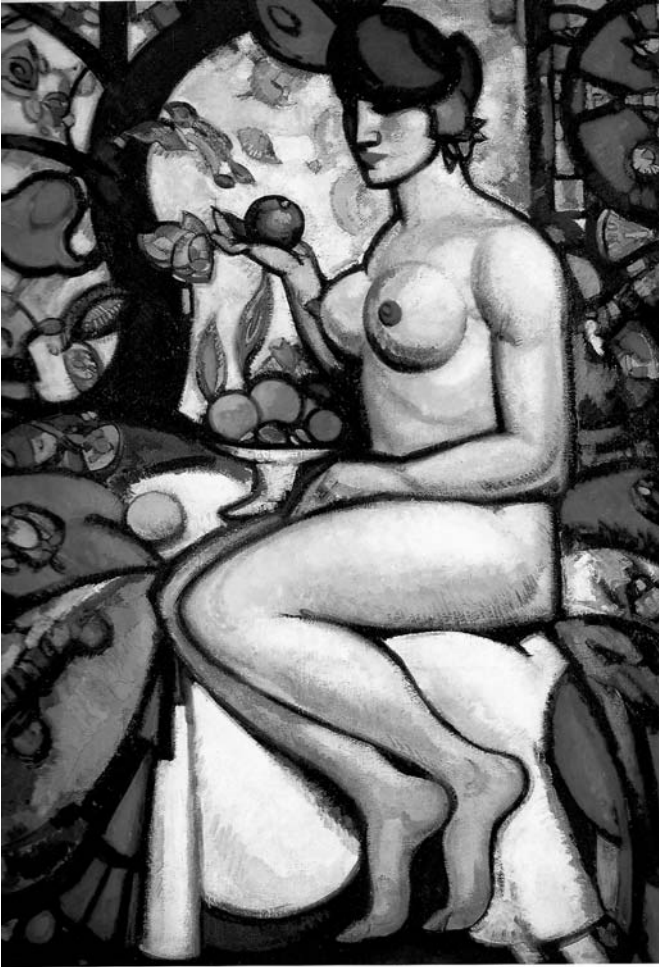


Fig. 42. John Duncan Fergusson, *Rhythm* 1911, oil on canvas, University of Stirling

degree, in the governing philosophy also of Bergson.⁴³ Thus while Bergson writes of how duration and the succession of sensations would ‘melt into and permeate one another without precise outlines’ in a seemingly undifferentiated ‘pure heterogeneity’, this would be achieved by a juxtaposition of images as ‘*dissimilar as possible*’ (my italics).⁴⁴

⁴³ Murry’s comment appeared in a letter to P. Landon, 14 December 1910, quoted, Lea, *Life of John Middleton Murry*, 20.

⁴⁴ Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1910), 104–5, and ‘Introduction to Metaphysics’, quoted, Angela Smith, *Katherine Mansfield: A Literary Life* (London: Palgrave, 2000), 11.

The melting and permeating of sensations ‘without precise outlines’ would seem to contradict the emphatic outlining of figures commonly remarked on in Fauvist painting and adopted by Fergusson and Rice—and contradict too, beyond the matter of visual representation, Katherine Mansfield’s rejection of proposed revisions to what has been seen as her ‘Fauvist’ story ‘Je ne parle pas Français’ because, she said, ‘The *outline* would be all blurred. It must have those sharp lines.’⁴⁵

This tension between fluid, harmonious shapes and regular patterns, on the one hand, and firm outlines and irregular juxtapositions, on the other, begins to suggest some terms of comparison between different modernisms, and specifically in the English scene at least, between the Fauvist or Bergsonian modernism of *Rhythm* and the different modernisms of Bloomsbury and Wyndham Lewis’s Vorticism. Though I cannot pursue this in detail here, one revealing point of common reference is provided by the example of Wassily Kandinsky, whose painting and essay *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, mentioned earlier, were well known to these groups. Aside from Michael Sadler’s own reference to the essay in the pages of *Rhythm*,⁴⁶ it was also favourably reviewed by Edward Wadsworth for Lewis’s *BLAST* (1914), where, in another entry under a compilation ‘Vortices and Notes’, Lewis sketched a three-way comparison between Matisse, a leading inspiration of Fauvism, Kandinsky, and by implication his own Vorticist aesthetic. Lewis writes:

The possibilities of colour, exploitation of discords, odious combinations, etc., have been little exploited.

A painter like Matisse has always been harmonious . . .

Kandinsky at his best is much more original and bitter. But there are fields of discord untouched.⁴⁷

Harmony, Lewis suggests, belongs to Matisse and his followers, while discord, ‘odious combinations’, bitterness, and the grotesque belong to Kandinsky ‘at his best’ but even more so to Lewis and to Vorticism. The second road we might surmise leads to a version of modernist abstraction.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Vincent O’Sullivan and Margaret Scott (eds), *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984–96), iii. 273. Angela Smith argues persuasively that Mansfield’s story, ‘Je ne parle pas Français’ can be read through the perspective of Fauvist painting; Smith, *Katherine Mansfield*, esp. 15–23.

⁴⁶ Sadler offers a rough outline of Kandinsky’s ideas for the first time in English in his article ‘After Gauguin’, in *Rhythm*, 1:4 (Spring 1912), 24–5.

⁴⁷ Wyndham Lewis, *BLAST* 1 (1914) (Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press 1997), 142.

⁴⁸ Lewis later discounted Kandinsky’s spiritualism but also the notion of ‘pure abstraction’ since it is impossible, he wrote, ‘to avoid representation in one form or another’ (*BLAST* 2 (1915), Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press, 1981, 43). For further discussion, see Paul Edwards, *Wyndham Lewis: Painter and Writer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 107–14. And see Chapter 12 in this volume. What this discussion foregrounds is the assumption that there is a logic necessarily taking



SCHÉHÉRAZADE. BY ANNE ESTELLE RICE

Fig. 43. Anne Estelle Rice, *Schéhérazade*, in *Rhythm*, 1:1 (Summer 1911)

Fergusson did not take the path to pure abstraction, either as presented by Kandinsky's Expressionism or Picasso's Cubism, any more than did Fauvism as a whole. We can pursue this other modernism, as expressed especially in the visual culture of *Rhythm*, by considering the theme of dance. This takes us closer, in one direction, to the question of representation, especially of the body. In another, it helps delineate the wider social ethic and sense of cultural identity comprising the distinctive internal formation of the Fergusson circle.

In the immediate context of *Rhythm*, and for many in the contemporary generation of modernists, 'dance' meant the sensational example of the Ballet Russes who first performed in London and Paris in the 1910s. The ballet had a wide and immediate impact upon both artistic styles and the world of fashion. In *Rhythm*, both Dorothy 'George' Banks and Anne Estelle Rice illustrated and reported on individual performances (see Fig. 43). Rice wrote effusively of the ballets 'as elemental to the last degree', full of Asia and tropical heat, of new life, realism and fantasy combined, bursting with an array of colours in regular and 'serpentine and zigzag shapes'.⁴⁹ She adds how in particular the costume and set designer Leon Bakst 'harmonizes everything', but notes too his sense of 'the value of the line to give energy and force' and use of 'daring juxtapositions'.⁵⁰ Fluid harmonies once again combine with wild and stunning exoticism: the whole expressive of an ornamental, decorative, and androgynous art, which Peter Wollen maintains, comprised the more popular side of modernism. This mode Wollen views as

'modernist' art from representation to abstraction. This was the implication of a major exhibition of Kandinsky's work staged in 2006 at Tate Modern in London, pointedly titled *The Path to Abstraction*.

⁴⁹ Rice, 'Les Ballet Russes', *Rhythm*, 2:3 (Aug. 1912), 108.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 107.

shadowing the abstract machine art and functionalist aesthetic which came to dominate the narrative of modernism and, as such, effectively sidelined Fauvism and Matisse.⁵¹

Beyond the example of the Ballet Russes, contemporary dance found expression in the more ethereal solo dancing of Isadora Duncan, Loïe Fuller, and the school of Eurythmics associated with Émile Jacques-Dalcroze and the English teacher and dancer, Margaret Morris, who Fergusson later married.⁵² An enthusiasm for dance, as in these examples, took forms that were, by turns, wildly exotic and wholesome and athletic.⁵³ The second emphasis would seem to govern the Fauvist treatment in a family of paintings and drawings of nude dancers by Fergusson, Rice, André Derain, and Matisse, whose 'La Danse' (1910) no doubt served as a common model and inspiration. The title of Fergusson's work, 'Les Eus', generally interpreted as 'The healthy ones', underlines a debt to the school of Eurythmics (see Fig. 44).

Wyndham Lewis was violently opposed to all that such works implied, both theoretically and in his own abstract and demonic rendering of the dancing human figure. In the words of art critic, Lisa Tickner, Lewis's 'sexual aesthetic was phallic, homophobic, and (ambivalently) misogynist'.⁵⁴ His taste on the dance floor was accordingly for the hot-blooded and heterosexual rhythms of the tango, the tarantella, the flamenco, or combative apache dance rather than the bland effeminacy and decadence, as he saw it, of Bloomsbury, Isadora Duncan, Eurythmics, and the *Rhythm* group. Tickner sees Lewis's *Kermesse* as 'an urgent reworking of the fauve dance' directed in general against *Rhythm's* Bergsonian vitalism and even perhaps intended as a specific rebuff to Fergusson's *Les Eus*.⁵⁵

The *Rhythm* artists' enthusiasm for music and dance gave a particular content to the idea of rhythm and, not unexpectedly, highlighted attitudes towards the body, especially the female body. Fergusson had been impatient with art schools

⁵¹ Peter Wollen, *Raiding the Ice Box* (London: Verso, 1993), 17–18.

⁵² The Sadlers, father and son, respectively wrote the introduction and a chapter for the volume *The Eurythmics of Jaques-Dalcroze*, 2nd edn (London: Constable, 1917), also containing three essays by Dalcroze. In his chapter 'The Value of Eurythmics to Art', Michael Sadle(i)r writes of how Dalcroze's teaching is 'a brilliant expression' of the desire for the unifying power of rhythm 'in its most fundamental form—that of bodily movement'. The ideal of making our whole lives rhythmic presages 'a new and more harmonious race', he writes, 'and with it an era of truly rhythmic artistic production' (62, 63).

⁵³ For some discussion on the role of dance in the longer period from the 1890s, including the 'world of ballet' known to Arthur Symons, see Frank Kermode, *The Romantic Image* (London: Routledge, 2001), 49–91, and Peter Brooker, *Bobemia in London* (London: Palgrave, 2007), 79–88. In connection with the Ballet Russes, see Ramsay Burt, 'Nijinsky: Modernism and Heterodox Representations of Masculinity', in Alexandra Carter (ed.), *The Routledge Dance Studies Reader* (London/New York: Routledge, 1998), 250–8.

⁵⁴ Lisa Tickner, *Modern Life and Modern Subjects* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 108.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* III.

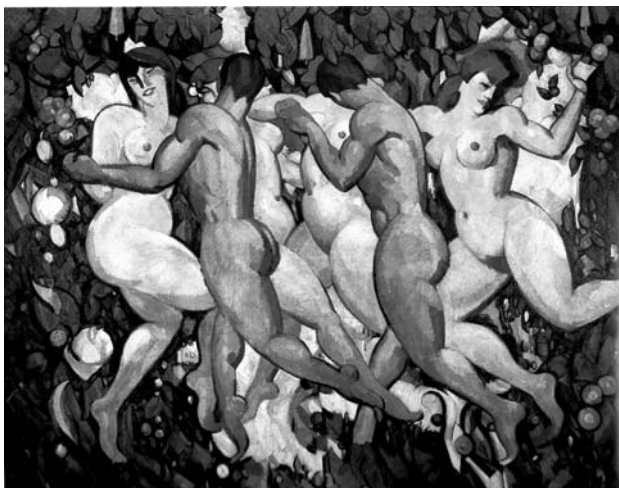


Fig. 44. John Duncan Fergusson, *Les Eus*, c.1911–13, oil on canvas, Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow. Fergusson Gallery, Perth and Kinross Council, Scotland



Fig. 45. Anne Estelle Rice, drawing, *Rhythm*, 1:4 (Spring 1912)

and consequently had had little practice in life drawing. He had painted very few nudes before 1910 when he began to produce examples such as ‘Torse de Femme’ and ‘At My Studio Window’ as well as the painting and drawing ‘Rhythm’ (see Figs. 39 and 42).

The critic Mark Antliff sees in Fergusson’s nudes a stereotypical conflation of woman with procreation and nature. In these works, he says, Fergusson painted a series depicting ‘no woman in particular’ removed ‘from any modern-day or

social context' to 'a mythological one'.⁵⁶ The emblematic 'primeval woman . . . is subsumed within the creative forces of nature' while 'The male artist alone'—on the side of culture not nature—is able to creatively mold the rhythmic *élan vital* in his own image'.⁵⁷ The ideals of a Bergsonian modernism are exposed, Antliff suggests therefore, as a privileged male domain.

While at first sight a persuasive interpretation, this fails to take account of a number of factors. Firstly, there is the influence exercised upon depictions of the body by the types and schools of movement and dance mentioned earlier. Fergusson's association with Margaret Morris confirmed this connection. In his later study *Modern Scottish Painting* (1943) he explained how Calvinism had made the Scots frightened of hell and "ashamed of being caught looking at the naked body."⁵⁸ 'The artist', he writes, 'must have the courage to paint nudes if he wants to and these must look like human beings . . . wholesome, healthy statements of wholesome healthy people'; the artist will be interested in 'the beauty of light on healthy skin'.⁵⁹ *Les Eus*, which we should notice includes male and female dancers, is entirely consistent with this thinking; a celebration through dance and movement of the wholesome healthy body and of the allied values of free thinking and open expression.

Secondly, if we view not only Fergusson's paintings in isolation but the contributions of women illustrators and artists to *Rhythm*, including especially the nudes of Anne Estelle Rice, we see the female body 'molded' in other ways. Such works appeared, moreover, at a time when, as in Rice's own experience, women at art schools could not attend life classes and were channelled into the applied arts. Instead of an exploitative depersonalization of women as 'woman', therefore, we might more productively consider the differences between the more brazen or obscured features of Fergusson's often muscular and stylized figures, such as in the 'Rhythm' painting, and the sometimes more modest, sometimes direct, but generally more genial, self-possessed, and performative aspect of Rice's nudes.

Cultural formations

Beyond the pages of *Rhythm*, Rice and Fergusson's landscapes and portraits of this period, present, unlike either's nudes, works which *are* clearly of women 'in particular' set in a decidedly 'modern-day or social context' of streets, cafes, boulevards, and living rooms where both painter and sitter belong to a social realm. There are marked similarities of subject-matter but also differences of gaze, point of view, spatial arrangement, and painterly texture. We find less an art of untroubled harmony or sexist arrogance and discord than an expression of gendered difference.

⁵⁶ Antliff, *Inventing Bergson*, 83.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 85.

⁵⁸ John Duncan Fergusson, *Modern Scottish Painting* (Glasgow: William MacLellan, 1943), 135.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 136–7, 136.



Fig. 46. John Duncan Fergusson, *Rose Rhythm, Kathleen Dillon*, 1916, private collection

One particularly interesting work by Fergusson of this type was the portrait of Kathleen Dillon, a pupil of Margaret Morris's dance school (see Fig. 46). Fergusson tells how noticing how her new hat was shaped like a rose led him to follow its convolutions in 'a continuation of the girl's character... going from the very centre convolutions to her nostril, lips, eyebrows, brooch, buttons, background cushions, right through'.⁶⁰ Though his involvement with *Rhythm* magazine, but not his friendship with Murry and Mansfield, had ended some while earlier, I would suggest that this painting, as much as the paintings 'Rhythm' or 'Les Eus', expressed the visual aesthetic of the magazine and Fergusson's rendering of the female sitter.

Fergusson ends his description of the painting 'Rose Rhythm' with a reflection on Kathleen Dillon's Irish name as meaning 'son of the wave' which he sees as carried through the wave movement in the painting. 'At last', he says, 'this was my statement of a thing thoroughly Celtic.'⁶¹ This indicates a still broader social and cultural context, and in particular the matter of cultural belongingness signalled earlier. For Fergusson this had to do with a polemical and quite specific idea of Scotland and Scottishness, an allegiance which gave the idea of rhythm a more focused provenance than the 'roots below the surface' and 'rhythmical echo' of life evoked earlier by Murry. Fergusson's *Modern Scottish Painting* was itself conceived in this spirit as a contribution to a Scottish cultural revival in which the 'distinctive colour' of a Scottish tradition and way of life would be woven, in the words of its publishers, 'into the tartan of world culture'.⁶² In the book's main argument,

⁶⁰ Morris, *The Art of J. D. Fergusson*, 103. ⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Fergusson, *Modern Scottish Painting*, Preface, n.p.

Fergusson sets a spirit of liberty, free thinking, free speech, and artistic invention against the repressive ethos of Calvinism. On one side he sets colour, a brighter Scotland, whose emblem was the multicoloured plaid of the kilt, in itself a Fauvist 'colour composition'. On the other, he sees the blackness of Scottish puritanism. To the first belonged the beauty and health of the body, freely appreciated, to the other a fundamentalist abhorrence and fear of the body, especially the naked female body.

This Celtic inheritance, jointly antagonistic to a dominant Scottish cultural sensibility and to an idea of Englishness, was at the same time far from parochial or narrowly nationalistic. For the Scots and French, says Fergusson, have an affinity as Celts, thus binding the Gaelic with the Gallic. A Scot feels at home 'among his own people' in France, he says, and adds that a new cultural alliance between these countries would help return Scotland to its own culture, 'something Scottish instead of imitation English, or rather second-rate British'.⁶³ As Duncan Macmillan has shown, this spirit of national identity and independence itself drew on a strong tradition, informed in particular, he surmises, in Fergusson's case, by the example of the multitalented biologist, urban planner, and patron of the arts, Patrick Geddes, a passionate Francophile who wove together the traditions of the Arts and Crafts movement and the ideals of the Scottish Enlightenment.⁶⁴

In Paris between 1907 and 1914, Fergusson and others expanded this woven cultural alliance into a chequered European formation of many talents. This circle included not only a continuing association with the Scottish colourist S. J. Peploe, but French and Anglo-American men and women artists, the American sculptor Jo Davidson, the stained glass and furniture designer E. A. Taylor, illustrators, dramatists, journalists, and an aviator named La Torrie. The women included Rice, the Scottish artists Jessie King and Dorothy 'Georges' Banks, the American painter Bertha Case, the Canadian Emily Carr, and Marguerite Thompson and Jessica Dismorr. Rice and Fergusson were lovers for some seven years. Several of the women were taught by Fergusson at *La Palette*, but Fergusson, says Rice's primary commentator, Carol Nathanson, 'treated women artists no differently than his male peers'.⁶⁵ Unlike other salons, there was 'no indication', she says, 'that he dominated' the group and 'what appears to have been a non-hierarchical atmosphere . . . would

⁶³ Fergusson, *Modern Scottish Painting*, 69.

⁶⁴ See Duncan Macmillan, *Scottish Art in the 20th Century* (Edinburgh and London: Mainstream Publishing, 1994), 37, and 'France and Scotland in the Arts', paper given at L'Institut Français d'Ecosse, Edinburgh: extract available at <http://www.ifecosse.org.uk/English-Version/news-ife.htm>. Geddes was the founder of the Franco-Scottish Society in 1895 and met Bergson in 1900. He was also the editor of the earlier magazine *Evergreen* (see Chapters 5 and 32).

⁶⁵ Carol A. Nathanson, *The Expressive Fauvism of Anne Estelle Rice* (New York: Hollis Taggart Galleries, 1997), 10.

have made women artists feel especially comfortable.’⁶⁶ There was apparently no snobbery either regarding the status of the fine arts vis-à-vis the applied or commercial arts in which many, including Rice, who was employed as a magazine illustrator and restaurant muralist, and Fergusson, who worked for American newspapers as a news illustrator, were involved.⁶⁷ Many of the group also contributed to *Rhythm*, of whom ‘about half the artist-illustrators’, says Nathanson, ‘were women’.⁶⁸ One senses here therefore the rare existence of a mixed and congenial, relatively democratically organized, male and female artistic community.

As discussed in the General Introduction to this volume, Raymond Williams’s notion of a ‘cultural formation’ suggests how we can understand the role of groups of associates and friends in the actual material production and theoretical construction of ‘modernism’ and how this is particularly appropriate in discussing the nexus of social, economic, and artistic relations which found material form in a journal or magazine. In this discussion, I have wanted to do two things: to draw attention to the role and interest of the visual art included in *Rhythm* but also to discover something of the inner workings of the active and changing relations that the concept of formations seeks to name.

The early *Rhythm* was pivoted upon its core editorial group and a shared ‘Bergsonian modernism’ thought to apply across the arts. What followed was its absorption into a second formation, with the introduction of Georgian poets under Eddie Marsh, and a final regrouping in *The Signature* which had neither the longevity, unity of purpose, or fellow feeling to be described as a formation at all. Formations do therefore mutate, submit to others, and disappear. But the earlier numbers of *Rhythm* indicate some other defining features: an emphasis upon the visual arts and performance rather than literature, a manifest alliance with French post-Impressionism, and more precisely Fauvism. This gave the magazine a more ‘emergent’ avant-gardist and cosmopolitan character, along with, through Fergusson and Rice and their associates, the presence of skills and tendencies with a different background—in commercial art, for example—to the shared Oxford background of Sadler, Goodyear, and Murry. In this phase, the magazine was further markedly distinguished from Georgianism, in its association with musical and artistic culture, the erotics and ethics of dance, and by the wide participation of women. This I would argue is the *Rhythm* formation at its strongest and most coherent, though this clearly and instructively does not rule out differences in ideas of formal composition, representations of the human form, or the dynamics of rhythm itself.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 7–8, 24–7. And see Roger Billcliffe, *The Scottish Colourists* (London: John Murray, 1989), 34.

⁶⁸ Nathanson, *Expressive Fauvism*, 10.

But the *Rhythm* formation was situated in other ways too. The modernists were, we know, frequently émigrés and immigrants, displaced persons in an antagonistic relation to the features of metropolitan modernity in their host cultures. Wyndham Lewis and Mansfield and Rice—and D. H. Lawrence—would in different ways bear out this alternative or oppositional stance. Fergusson seems to be distinctive in his sense of social belonging rather than the isolation which came to mark other modernist careers. As Mansfield commented, he had ‘roots’.⁶⁹

Beyond this, we encounter the broader antagonisms that arose between different modernist formations: such as between *Rhythm*’s Fauvism and Lewis’s Vorticism.⁷⁰ And what in particular we might notice, at the outer reaches of this story, is the force and influence of the hegemonic Englishness of Bloomsbury, though Bloomsbury was, as Raymond Williams has shown, itself a dissenting formation in the broader conservative context of English class society.⁷¹ The power that Bloomsbury had to exclude Fergusson and the others from a fuller picture of English, or more appropriately, a ‘British’ or European-based post-Impressionism, is an unpronounced but shaping part of the story outlined above. Beneath the homogenizing category of post-Impressionism we discover an inner dynamic, criss-crossed with affinities, differences, discordances, and exclusions together, in matters of aesthetics and national cultural identity. We see therefore how modernist formations might clash discordantly, if somewhat noiselessly, as factions within the general, and in truth, heterogeneous movement. Fergusson, Rice, and others of this company, including Katherine Mansfield, who experienced her own sometimes harmonious, sometimes discordant relationship with Virginia Woolf and Bloomsbury,⁷² did, however, pose a different kind of modernist grouping: one which, compared to the later Georgian character of first *Rhythm* and then *The Blue Review*, was exploratory and avant-gardist, and followed the rhythms, somewhat exceptionally, of a set of populist, democratic, and cosmopolitan instincts.

⁶⁹ Quoted, Smith, *Katherine Mansfield*, 73, and see *ibid.* 6–7.

⁷⁰ There were also indications of spite and rivalry on the part of *The New Age* for which Mansfield had been writing prior to joining *Rhythm*. See Tomalin, *Katherine Mansfield*, 101.

⁷¹ See Raymond Williams, *Culture* (London: Fontana, 1981), 79–81, and ‘The Bloomsbury Fraction’, in *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London: Verso, 1980).

⁷² The nervous rivalry and friendship between Mansfield and Woolf is well known. See Angela Smith, *Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf: A Public of Two* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999). One incident of immediate relevance to the present discussion concerned the cover of Mansfield’s *Prelude* published by the Woolfs’ Hogarth Press in 1918. Mansfield’s choice had been a sexualized illustration of the aloe plant by Fergusson. It ‘makes our gorges rise’, said Woolf (quoted Smith, *Katherine Mansfield*, 114). The design was accordingly removed from all but a few copies.

VI

EDITORS AND PROGRAMMES



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INTRODUCTION

The five magazines surveyed in this section were by no means the only magazines with some investment in modern or modernist literature to run in the 1920s and into the 1930s. They do, however, document some defining characteristics of this decade, one of which was the emergence of a generation of editors, T. S. Eliot, John Middleton Murry, Edgell Rickword, and Desmond MacCarthy, as figures of standing and influence. They all faced a common dilemma in the evident decline in the readership for poetry in the immediate post-war period and its aftermath and this, coupled with difficulties in book production, makes the creation and maintenance or loss of readers a recurrent theme. As the following chapters show, this was bound up too with the editor's choice of content, whether cautious and conventional or more challenging, experimental, and modernist, though as elsewhere, we see how the terms 'modernist' or 'modern' could take on a different hue, with matters of readership and survival still a governing concern. What accompanied decisions on content was a double, and not necessarily synchronized, concern with 'standards' of criticism and writing, and with types or ranks of readers. Hence the often invoked vocabulary of high-, middle-, and lowbrow taste— itself of course an expression of the stratified market characterizing this phase of modernity.

Harold Monro, who, before the war, had founded the Poetry Bookshop and edited *Poetry Review* and *Poetry and Drama*, was one who hoped to remedy the decline in readers. As publisher of the anthologies of Georgian Poetry he was, if somewhat mistakenly, regarded chiefly as a sponsor of their work. We should remember that he also published the Imagist anthology, *Des Imagistes*, edited by Ezra Pound. He sought now in the post-war years to encourage a revival of poetry through his *Monthly Chapbook*, begun in 1919. The less well-known Thomas Moulton joined, from a somewhat different perspective, in this same endeavour as editor of *Voices*. In the event, Mark Morrisson concludes in his discussion below, the 1920s saw less of a revival than a consolidation, along selective lines, not of a Georgian but of a modernist aesthetic. The figure who in the general estimation presided over this process was T. S. Eliot at *The Criterion*. Surveying the scene somewhat magisterially in the late 1950s, Eliot remembered the time of *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The Athenaeum* under Murry and, in parenthesis, *Art and Letters* and *The Calendar of Modern Letters* as 'the high summer of literary journalism in London in my life

time'.¹ This would imply a period, at the outside, from 1917 to 1927—during which time Eliot of course also established *The Criterion* (1922–39). Eliot's comment also reveals that he recognized he was not the only editor in the game. The earlier journals most friendly to the 'men of 1914', *The Egoist* and *The New Age*, had closed by the time he began *The Criterion* (the first issue of which significantly published his *The Waste Land*). Like Monro, Middleton Murry had also made a mark in the pre-war years with *Rhythm* and *The Blue Review* (see Chapter 13). Murry now embarked upon his long editorial reign, first in reviving *The Athenaeum* (1919–21), where he proved himself, said Eliot, a 'first-rate editor',² and then in *The Adelphi* (1923–48) and the short-lived *The Wanderer* (1933–4). Murry sought to establish a direct, personal relation with a broad readership of newer lower middle-class professionals. Edgell Rickword in *The Calendar of Modern Letters* (1925–7) adopted, for his part, a rebarbative tone towards writers and readers alike in pursuit of high standards for writing and a new analytic critical method. Desmond MacCarthy, in the somewhat later *Life and Letters* (1928–35), pursued a relatively progressive agenda (publishing Woolf, Lawrence, Huxley, Sackville-West) but the magazine, as Goldman shows, earned a mixed reputation. On the one hand, it was innovative, accessible, and an opponent of censorship, and, on the other, it offered little more than a sop to middlebrow taste. Cyril Connolly managed to express both views, describing *Life and Letters* in public as 'full of good things' if somewhat lacking in 'intensity and urgency' but in private as 'as daring and original as a new kind of barley water'.³ Goldman suggests that the truth lies somewhere in-between, but that MacCarthy's contribution to modernist and avant-garde culture is in the end best described as 'tepid'.⁴ She finds the magazine's stance and readership tellingly revealed in its advertising, which conjures up 'a comfortably off pipe-smoking, male, metropolitan reader, middle-class, middle-brow, but with some high-brow literary aspirations as a serious reader, a book collector and literary connoisseur, and possibly as a fledgling writer'. Rickword's criticism, Murry's loosely romantic

¹ T. S. Eliot, 'Foreword', *Katherine Mansfield and Other Literary Studies*, ed. J. M. Murry (London: Constable 1959), p. ix.

² *Ibid.*

³ Cyril Connolly, 'Fifty Years of Little Magazines', *Art and Literature: An International Review* I (Mar. 1964), 106, and Connolly, quoted in Hugh and Mirabel Cecil, *Clever Hearts: Desmond and Molly MacCarthy—A Biography* (London: Gollancz, 1990), 229.

⁴ *Life and Letters* was bought in 1935 by the writer and philanthropist Bryher (pseudonym of Annie Winifred Ellerman) to become *Life and Letters Today* principally under the editorship of Robert Herring. It merged in 1939 with *The London Mercury* and *Bookman*, and reverted to the title *Life and Letters* before it closed in 1950. Herring published American poetry as well as the Apocalyptic poets, including a majority by Dylan Thomas and established the practice of regional issues on Scottish, Welsh, and Irish writing and a remarkable range of special international issues, including examples on Scandinavian, Brazilian, Jamaican, Chinese, New Zealand, and Australian writing. Its first issue, including Mary Butts, Gertrude Stein, H.D., André Gide, Sergei Eisenstein, and Horace Gregory, promised a more daring modernist agenda than had MacCarthy.

taste, and MacCarthy's open but limited liberal attitudes, accompanied and, one might say, directly rivalled Eliot's own tone and agenda. If we believe we know now which names came through, it was not so clear at the time which of these editorial styles or which readership would win out.

As Morrisson explains, Thomas Moul's *Voices* began its life centred on a nucleus of writers from lower-class and Jewish immigrant communities in Manchester. Its dominant theme was the Georgian message of the truth of war and the survival of the natural world, joined with the hope, shouldered by a generation of former combatant poets, of a more candid and rejuvenated culture. For all its affinity with Georgian realism, however, *Voices* was open too, as Morrisson shows, to modernist tendencies in music, theatre, and the visual arts. Thus its strong regional and ethnic association extended to the writers of the Whitechapel Boys and fellow Jewish painters of London's East End, including the modernist painters David Bomberg and Jacob Kramer, who contributed to *Voices* as well as to Wyndham Lewis's *BLAST* and *Coterie*. *Voices* was, like *Coterie*, published by the radical publisher Frank Henderson, at the Bomb Shop in London's Charing Cross Road (see Chapter 19). Other contributors, appearing alongside reviews of modernist poetry and prose, included Eric Gill, Anne Estelle Rice, Lewis himself, D. H. Lawrence, Richard Aldington, John Gould Fletcher, and May Sinclair. The interest in modernist art was sustained by the magazine's arts editor, Stephen Winsten, but was given a particular emphasis. Thus Winsten and Neville Cardus called for an innovative art in touch with life which anticipated the thirties' rejection of a detached formalism and tended to foreclose on abstraction in a way that echoed the general restraint of the magazine as primarily a vehicle for new poetry. As Morrisson summarizes, Moul 'aimed aimed to foster poetry that could be experimental—though within fairly recognizable bounds'.

The explanation for *Voices*' moderation was that, like Monro, Moul was keen to foster the magazine's community of readers whom he brought together with writers and artists at half-yearly meetings. The 'little pea-green incorruptible', as the humbly produced green-covered magazine was labelled, was consciously averse to literary cliques. It suffered, nonetheless, from the high cost of production coupled with low subscriptions and insufficient advertising revenue. In a period when even the declining sales of the Georgian anthologies (down in 1922 to 8,000 from a high of 19,000) showed a waning public interest, Moul could not find a productive middlebrow sphere. As Morrisson puts it, 'Not willing to eschew modernism entirely or to publish its more extreme experiments, Moul was left with too many minor poets and too little audience.' The magazine consequently slowed to a halt and closed with the issue for autumn 1921.

Harold Monro aimed through *The Monthly Chapbook* (it became *The Chapbook* in 1920) to support a poetry revival after the war, and much like Moul, saw his task as supporting poets and cultivating a middlebrow readership. In both cases this was a response to what was perceived as arid experimentation and the narrow appeal of

modernist coteries. In Monro's words, cited by Morrisson, *The Chapbook* 'grinds no particular axe. It seeks to entertain rather than to elevate. It is neither Philistine nor High-Browed. It represents no clique. Its objects are literary; its taste is catholic. Sincerity is the only standard.'⁵ In fact, Monro's mission was not so straightforward as this suggests. For, as Morrisson points out, not only did this very issue include 'Three Critical Essays on Modern English Poetry' by T. S. Eliot, Aldous Huxley, and F. S. Flint, but elsewhere *The Chapbook* published Aldington, Herbert Read, and the Sitwells, an essay, the 'Art of Writing' by Flint (which praised H.D. and slighted a poem by J. C. Squire, editor of *The London Mercury*), and a series of special issues between 1919 and 1923 which showcased modern French poetry, Dada and Surrealism, and contemporary American writing—all of which confirmed what Morrisson describes as *The Chapbook's* 'prevailing modernist slant.'

For Monro, therefore, the revival of poetry was a broader, more international affair than Moulton had conceived. Its realization and *The Chapbook's* survival depended nevertheless on a British-based readership and of this Monro was wary. His public was easily shocked, 'and if I lose them, there will not be enough circulation to keep the things going', he said to Pound. It seems, though, that survival was not only a matter of his readers' susceptibilities, or of Monro's own daring, but, as with *Voices*, the unsupportable increase in production costs for periodicals in the immediate post-war environment. The magazine was losing money with each issue and could not achieve the 1,500 subscription mark it needed. As a consequence, Monro, in some frustration, had no choice but to close the magazine in 1925.

As suggested earlier, others were acutely conscious of the financial constraints and allied difficulties of running a magazine. When he closed *The Calendar of Letters* after two years Rickword felt that there was not only a paucity of readers but a lack of talent. He had started the magazine with the double aim of encouraging new writers and of introducing a rigorous standard of critical reviewing. The first did not materialize, John Lucas confirms, but the second did, at least in Rickword's own demonstration of an incisive and uncompromising critical intelligence. This itself may have proved too strenuous for its readership, though it did win one significant admirer in F. R. Leavis, who adopted the term 'Scrutiny' from the series of 'Scrutinies' in *The Calendar* as the title of his own journal started in 1932 (see Chapter 35).⁶ Rickword introduced an influential language for the standards of criticism but also helped establish the format for a newer type of magazine—one which would be devoted more to criticism than original work. We can see this tendency, although again it took different tones and accents, in Middleton Murry and above all in Eliot.

⁵ *The Chapbook* (Mar. 1920), inside cover.

⁶ And see F. R. Leavis, 'Towards Standards of Criticism' (1933), in *Anna Karenina and Other Essays* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1967), 219–34.

Both Murry and Eliot strove to defend standards of writing and criticism, but were aware too of the need to place themselves in a competitive field and to that end secure a fitting and supportive readership. Their economic survival depended on subscriptions or sponsorship. Both resisted advertising, Murry less successfully. Eliot's *Criterion* was supported by Lady Rothermere (wife of the owner of *The Daily Mail*) and in time by the publishers Faber and Gwyer; Murry in his period at *The Athenaeum* by the Joseph Rowntree Trust. Murry's instinct, however, was for economic independence. Thus he launched his own magazine, *The Adelphi*, very deliberately as neither 'a business proposition nor a literary enterprise' but 'an assertion of faith'—though, as Michael Whitworth shows, the magazine could not evade commercial considerations.⁷ Later in the same spirit he started up the short-lived *Wanderer* as an entirely independent project. All this was in keeping with Murry's increasingly determined individualism. He presided over *The Athenaeum* and dominated the contents and tone of *The Adelphi*. We might think of *The Athenaeum* as the more traditional publication, but, as Whitworth shows, the search for the elusive middle ground meant that it ran both traditional and newer features. Contributions from Virginia Woolf, Herbert Read, I. A. Richards, Pound, Lewis, and notably Eliot made it, Whitworth concludes, more modernist than *The Adelphi*, which aside from Murry himself and Mansfield, included in its first issues Arnold Bennett, H. G. Wells, and John Galsworthy. The latter three Virginia Woolf had famously classed as 'Edwardians' and not modernist (or 'Georgian' in her terms). That there is a distinction few would doubt, but perhaps we need a new vocabulary or map of the field, as Whitworth hints, to express it. And what of Murry's own 'late Romantic' individualism? Was Murry himself a kind of modernist? We might in this context remember the case for Yeats and for D. H. Lawrence as different kinds of modernists, and Murry's own earlier use of the term 'modernist' in *Rhythm* to describe his 'Bergsonism' (see Chapter 13).

What is clear is that Murry sought in both magazines to establish a camaraderie or 'brotherhood' with his readers: conceived of ideally as 'the man who thinks or desires to learn' and thus distinct from the highbrow intellectual or member of a coterie. Whitworth identifies Murry's 'ordinary' readers as teachers, lecturers, librarians, and museum curators, and they seemed to have responded in kind to his characteristically direct first-person address. This kind of manoeuvring and nervousness towards 'cliques' or an intellectualism associated with a more experimental modernism was common, as we can see above, to Monro and Moulton as well as *The London Mercury* which Murry saw as a Georgian rival. Murry was perhaps the most successful in capturing a broader middle band—selling 20,000 copies of the first issue of *The Adelphi*, though this was to level out at an average of 4,200 in the mid-1920s. But his relative success of both his magazines and the less assured success of

⁷ John Middleton Murry, 'The Cause of it All', *The Adelphi*, 1:1 (June 1923), 8.

some others discussed here showed that the middle ground could turn out to be a contradictory place to inhabit. Thus, Monro opened the pages of *The Chapbook* to Georgians and modernist innovators, while Murry was drawn to include the 'Edwardian' Bennett and Galsworthy, Lawrence (the inspiration for *The Adelphi* though Lawrence was embarrassed by the magazine), and Mansfield and Eliot. A coherent aesthetic and associated readership in these cases proved elusive.

MacCarthy's *Life and Letters*—praised for its showcasing progressive and modernist writing, but dismissed as tame and conventional—presents a further example of this ambivalent middle-way. What makes this example particularly interesting, however, was MacCarthy's association with the acknowledged liberal attitudes and modernist aesthetic of Bloomsbury. His stand against censorship in the magazine's early numbers, and defence in particular of Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* and Norah James's novel *Sleeveless Errand* against the charge of immorality, was not in this context surprising, though it was nonetheless undermined, as Goldman argues, by MacCarthy's invocation of the 'normal instincts in normal people', which meant that homosexuality was judged as a pathological aberration.⁸ Where this limitation appeared most sharply, however, was in MacCarthy's long-term difference with Virginia Woolf over women's supposed natural inferiority as thinkers and writers. As Goldman carefully demonstrates, the 'spat' between Woolf and MacCarthy and his regular reviewer, Peter Quennell, effectively deployed the magazine to reinforce the common cultural currency of anti-feminism at the same time as it exposed the fissured gender politics of the otherwise progressive and modernist Bloomsbury formation.

Eliot, himself a sometime associate of Bloomsbury, who memorably declared that *The Egoist* was being 'run mostly by old maids' when he joined it as contributing editor and later how he struggled to keep the writing as much as possible in 'Male hands'⁹ emerged as the point of common reference in the literary journalism of the period. Monro became a member of the dining club which functioned as a virtual advisory committee to *The Criterion*. *The Calendar* defied Eliot's superior tone and righteousness, but Edgell Rickword, Lucas feels, came after some resistance to draw on *The Waste Land* as a way of responding to a moribund culture. Murry had also asked Eliot to join *The Athenaeum* as an editorial assistant and felt that Eliot's essay 'Modern Tendencies in Poetry' helped clarify his own ideas. Eliot himself achieved three important things: he recruited a range of high-ranking European contributors (Hermann Hesse, Valéry Larbaud, Paul Valéry, Proust) alongside Pound, Woolf, Lewis, and Lawrence as well as a long list of new talents; he established a small but steady readership with relatively stable financial backing; and he introduced a principled critical vocabulary and attitude. The result was that

⁸ Desmond MacCarthy, *Life and Letters*, 1:5 (1928), 341.

⁹ *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, vol. i: 1898–1922, ed. Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), 179, 204.

The Criterion virtually co-opted the genre of the 'literary review', establishing a type which others were to take as the model of the literary magazine (no longer in Eliot's hands the radical 'little magazine' at odds with the mainstream).¹⁰ In addition, Eliot's conception and success opened up a firmer distinction than had been apparent hitherto between his increasingly conservative modernism and a more oppositional or anarchistic avant-garde characterizing movements across continental Europe.

Jason Harding in his discussion below sets *The Criterion* in an intertextual constellation of periodicals named above, including the later *Scrutiny*. With the latter journal and the earlier *Calendar*, it shared a severity of appearance and a dedication to critical standards and intelligent opinion. In this same vein, and in a further break with both earlier and contemporary magazines, it appeared without illustrations or advertisements (though some up-market advertisements were to appear in *The New Criterion*). The reward was the 'symbolic value' of its emphasis upon intelligence and the membership of a select readership (though not a coterie) this might imply and its ambitious and successful European range. This placed it, as Harding argues, in the active cosmopolitan world of European periodical culture of the 1920s, a position much valued by Eliot. There were some mounting dissatisfactions (Eliot's Toryism and Christian moralizing and the lack of a unifying editorial policy), but at its most successful it presented, says Harding, 'an eclectic mixture of modernist provocation and polite reassurance . . . of radicalism and caution': a description which says everything about its editorial character, intended readership and Eliot's influence. This formula held sway throughout the immediate periodical constellation of the 1920s and was a touchstone for more radical and conservative versions of the new and modern through the following decades, when the synthesis Eliot had sought to manage began to split apart. The character of literary modernism in Britain might even be gauged by changes in the valuation of Eliot, including of *The Criterion*, from, in one stringent example, Leavis's high praise of his poetry in the 1930s to his sense of the 'negative attitudes towards life' and the 'conventionality' of the 'public institution, a part of the establishment' that he felt Eliot had become by the 1950s.¹¹

¹⁰ Allen Tate's 'The Function of the Critical Quarterly' (1936), for example, presented *The Criterion* as 'the best quarterly of our time'; see Allen Tate, *Collected Essays* (Denver: Alan Swallow, 1959), 70.

¹¹ F. R. Leavis, 'T. S. Eliot as Critic' (1958), in *Anna Karenina*, 183, 185, and 'Retrospect 1950', in *New Bearings in English Poetry* (London: Peregrine Books, 1963), 177.

THE IDEA OF A LITERARY REVIEW

T. S. Eliot and *The Criterion*

JASON HARDING

In an interview in 1990, Malcolm Bradbury spoke of the ‘literary review’ as the successor to the avant-garde ‘little magazine’: ‘The literary review would normally be much more eclectic and would carry more types of writing, very crudely you could say that the period before the First World War in Britain is largely the period of the little magazine, and the period after the First World War is the period of the literary review.’¹ In *The Social Context of Modern English Literature* (1971), Bradbury had characterized T. S. Eliot’s *The Criterion* (1922–39) as the ‘most substantial and influential’² of the interwar literary reviews, publishing major experimental works—*The Waste Land* for instance, extracts from *The Cantos*, *The Bridge*, *A la recherche du temps perdu*, and *Finnegans Wake*—alongside analytical essays from a gallery of significant critics: Ezra Pound, Virginia Woolf, E. M. Forster, Ernst Robert Curtius, Herbert Read, I. A. Richards, William Empson, while not forgetting Eliot himself, of course. Bradbury’s taxonomy recalled Cyril Connolly’s division of literary magazines into the ‘dynamic’ and ‘eclectic’: the former are platforms for coteries, who promote radical manifestos and programmatic movements, whereas ‘eclectic’ magazines, such as *The Criterion*, are cosmopolitan and temperate, seeking to mediate the arguments and personalities associated with advanced writing, to readerships with stronger links to the mainstream of literary discussion.³

Since Bradbury’s pioneering forays, research into the social and intellectual contexts of modern literature has refined our notion of the literary review. This

¹ ‘Interview with Malcolm Bradbury’, in Wolfgang Görtschacher, *Little Magazine Profiles: The Little Magazines in Great Britain, 1939–1993* (Salzburg: University of Salzburg Press, 1993), 274–85.

² Malcolm Bradbury, *The Social Context of Modern English Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), 186.

³ See Cyril Connolly, ‘Little Magazines’, in *The Evening Colonnade* (London: David Bruce and Watson, 1973), 414–27.

work has inaugurated a closer attention to the literary magazine as a distinctive genre, one existing under exigent socioeconomic conditions, and to the position held by a magazine within an interlocking field of periodical networks. Attention to the periodical context allows the recovery of intertextual references—silent nudges and winks—to privileged interlocutors in this select field of literary journalism. In the case of *The Criterion*, this entails reading the journal in the light of its exchanges with *The Adelphi* and *The Calendar* (Eliot acknowledged the ‘common ground for disagreement’ *The Criterion* shared with these magazines)⁴ and, slightly later, with the testy Cambridge quarterly *Scrutiny*. Examination of a wealth of archival material and private correspondence has enabled a careful reconstruction of hitherto neglected aspects of the magazine—for instance, matters of finance and circulation, Eliot’s interpersonal relations with key contributors and with the editors of rival periodicals—all of which helped to shape editorial policy and ultimately the distinctive identity of *The Criterion*. By resituating Eliot’s literary review within a shifting structure or constellation of periodicals, recent research encourages measured reassessment of the role of *The Criterion* in the broader intellectual history of modernism.

The Criterion: A Quarterly Review (1922–5)

In the summer of 1921, Eliot began discussions with his Harvard classmate Scofield Thayer about the possibility of Lady Rothermere (the estranged wife of the newspaper magnate) financing an international literary magazine, in conjunction with the New York monthly *The Dial*, with Eliot directing the London edition. In the end, Lady Rothermere committed herself to sponsoring an English literary review. In October, Eliot asked the publisher Richard Cobden-Sanderson to estimate if it were possible to run an eighty-page quarterly review on the £600 that Lady Rothermere had set aside for the venture. Eliot requested that a circular be distributed to attract subscribers, since the revenue generated from them would be the lifeblood of the magazine, facilitating competitive rates of payment for contributors. Business negotiations were put into abeyance after Eliot, due to ill health, took three months’ leave from Lloyds Bank (drafting the final sections of *The Waste Land* during his convalescence). When the discussions resumed in 1922, it became clear that Lady Rothermere and Eliot had different conceptions of the magazine.

Lady Rothermere, according to Eliot, wished for ‘a more chic and brilliant’⁵ version of Frank Rutter’s *Art and Letters*, a quarterly lavishly illustrated with

⁴ T. S. Eliot, ‘A Commentary’, *The Criterion* (Sept. 1927), 194.

⁵ T. S. Eliot to Herbert Read, 19? October 1924, cited in Herbert Read ‘T.S.E.: A Memoir’, in Allen Tate (ed.), *T. S. Eliot: The Man and His Work* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1967), 20.

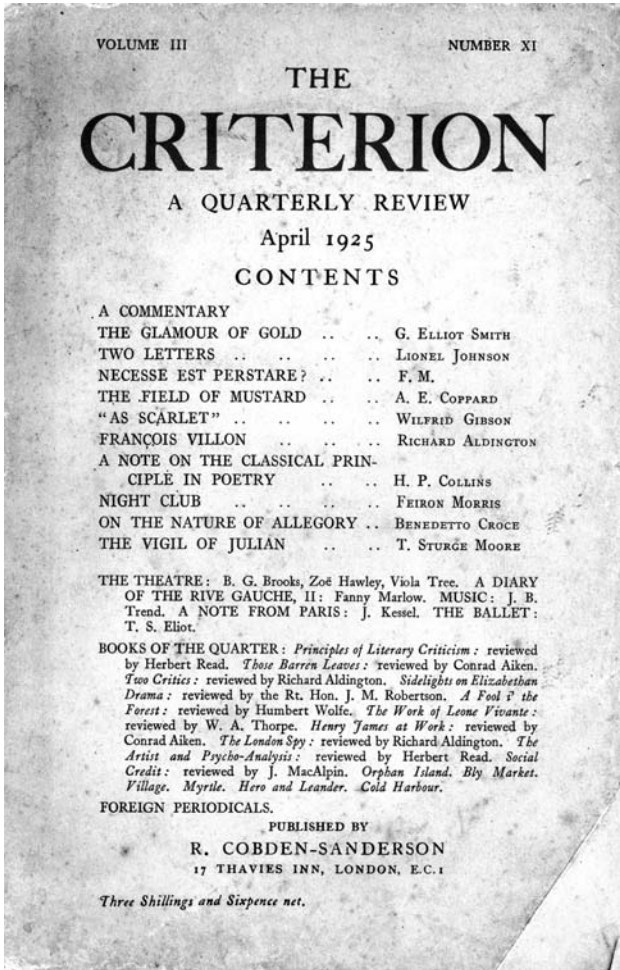


Fig. 47. Cover of *The Criterion* (April 1925)

reproductions of contemporary art (see Chapter 20). By contrast, Eliot informed Thomas Sturge Moore that he had undertaken to edit:

a modest quarterly review which is subsidised to a moderate extent for three years. I propose that the quarterly should be simple and severe in appearance, without illustrations, and my only ambition is that it should unite the best critical opinion in England, together with the work of the best critics whom I can find from other countries. Whilst I should admit other writing in very small quantity, I wish to make it primarily a critical review. To its ultimate financial success I am comparatively indifferent; but while it lasts, under my direction, I shall make

its aim the maintenance of critical standards and the concentration of intelligent critical opinion.⁶

In the spring and summer of 1922, Eliot solicited original articles from a number of European men of letters: Hermann Hesse, Valéry Larbaud, André Gide, Ernst Robert Curtius, and Paul Valéry, and he contacted Sydney Schiff about securing an unpublished contribution from Marcel Proust. Eliot later dated the beginning of his 'adult life' as 'the period in my life which is marked by *The Waste Land*, and the foundation of the *Criterion*, and the development of relations with men of letters in the several countries of Europe.'⁷ This network of international contacts was a very important feature of the cosmopolitan European periodical culture of the 1920s. In some ways, Eliot modelled his literary review on the French monthly review *Nouvelle Revue française*, to which he was then London correspondent. In short, literary creation was to be set inside the case of a great European review.

Eliot launched his review with a magisterial title, *The Criterion* (apparently chosen by his wife Vivien). The bibliographical aura exuded by the journal was also magisterial. *The Criterion's* beige octavo cover was dignified and sober: the title was printed in expensive red vertical type with the table of contents in black type. Unlike, say, *The London Mercury*, there were no advertisements: a conscious declaration of the quarterly's high-minded principles. The price of 3s. 6d. (the cost of a clothbound pocket edition of a modern popular novel) and the initial print run of only 600 copies marked the 'implied audience' as fit but few: an elite of writers, critics, and patrons of the arts—a choice readership who might advance Eliot's social and literary career. In other words, *The Criterion* sought to acquire the prestige Pierre Bourdieu has termed a *capital symbolique*, where success is not determined by market principles. Eliot's literary review entered into what Bourdieu has described as the ongoing generational struggle over the standards or *criteria* that confer legitimacy and value in this rarefied *champ clos*.⁸ In effect, *The Criterion* was an institution crucial to the dissemination and consolidation of modernist writing, seeking to lessen the isolation of avant-garde writers from a broader, educated reading public. That is to say, Eliot hoped that *The Criterion* would eventually reach a larger audience than a mere 'little magazine', one closer to the mainstream of literary discussion, like the readership he addressed in his leading articles for *The Times Literary Supplement*.⁹

⁶ T. S. Eliot to Thomas Sturge Moore, 3 April 1922, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, vol. i: 1898–1922, ed. Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), 518.

⁷ T. S. Eliot, 'Brief über Ernst Robert Curtius', *Freundesgabe für Ernst Robert Curtius* (Bern: Francke, 1956), 25.

⁸ See Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. Randal Johnson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 29–141.

⁹ When Eliot discussed his aims for *The Criterion* with Geoffrey Faber in March 1925, he said that he hoped the magazine would one day sell 5,000 copies per issue.

The contents of the ninety-six-page first issue turned out to be an eclectic mixture of modernist provocation and polite reassurance. At the centre of the opening number was *The Waste Land*, printed without the notes composed for the Boni & Liveright book edition.¹⁰ This issue also contained Valery Larbaud's lecture on Joyce's *Ulysses*, translated from *La Nouvelle Revue française*, alongside George Saintsbury's genteel, bookish reflections on 'Dullness', and the first part of Sturge Moore's study of 'The Legend of Tristram and Isolde'. *The Times Literary Supplement* commented:

What literary school, then, does this new quarterly represent? It is a school which includes Saintsbury, Sturge Moore, and T. S. Eliot. There is no such school, obviously. It becomes apparent that the only school represented is the school of those who are genuinely interested in good literature.¹¹

Pound remarked that it was a magnificent piece of editing 'for the purpose of getting into the Athenaeum Club'.¹² Certainly, the first number of *The Criterion* appealed to its niche audience, ensuring that it quickly sold out. The journal's mixture of radicalism and caution betokened the simultaneous desire to explode avant-garde incendiaries while laying down judgements of Parnassian authority.

In truth, *The Criterion* often seemed to Eliot a precarious venture, a fledgling dependent on capricious aristocratic patronage. As an employee of Lloyds Bank, he had chosen not to accept a salary for his editorial work, nor did his name appear on *The Criterion's* cover, even if his editorship was an open secret in literary London. Although aided by Vivien, and by his part-time secretary, Irene Fassett, who dealt with the voluminous correspondence associated with the journal, *The Criterion* was, in these early years, an amateur production. The onerous duties of soliciting, revising, and proof-reading contributions, after a full day's work, burdened Eliot to the point of despair. In March 1923, he told John Quinn he was 'in the midst of a terrific crisis', adding:

I wish to heaven that I had never taken up the Criterion... It has been an evergrowing responsibility; it has been a great expense to me and I have not got a penny out of it; there is not enough money to run it and pay me too... I am worn out, I cannot go on.¹³

Eliot juggled the literary ambition he had invested in *The Criterion* with his job in the City and the necessity of nursing Vivien through a series of serious

¹⁰ For details of the publication of *The Waste Land*, see Lawrence Rainey, *Revisiting The Waste Land* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 71–101.

¹¹ [Harold Child], 'Periodicals', *The Times Literary Supplement* (26 Oct. 1922), 690.

¹² Ezra Pound to John Quinn, cited in Donald Gallup, 'T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound: Collaborators in Letters', *Atlantic Monthly* (Jan. 1970), 61.

¹³ T. S. Eliot to John Quinn, 7 March 1923, cited in Gallup, 'T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound: Collaborators in Letters', 58.

illnesses. In 1923, during one of Vivien's most worrying relapses, Eliot employed Richard Aldington as an assistant editor at the 'very modest salary' of £50 per annum.¹⁴ Aldington took care of proof-reading and translations, and he established a regular section surveying 'Foreign Reviews' (F. S. Flint, Herbert Read, Alec Randall, and J. B. Trend sampled American, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Italian, and Spanish periodicals). Initially helpful, it soon became clear Aldington was not comfortable working under Eliot's direction. He left his post before the end of 1923, leaving Eliot as the sole editor for the remaining fifteen years of the review.

Despite Eliot's frustration at the shortage of time he had to edit the journal, *The Criterion* built up a distinguished list of contributors. Pound's 'Malatesta' *Cantos* and Valéry's 'The Serpent' graced the first volume. The May 1924 number contained work by Woolf, Yeats, and Proust. If *The Criterion*'s prose fiction favoured slight, witty sketches of society life (Vivien Eliot's stories were illustrative in this respect), extracts from Wyndham Lewis's *The Apes of God* set a sharply satirical cat among the Bloomsbury menagerie, causing some real offence among Eliot's friends and closest collaborators.¹⁵ D. H. Lawrence, contrary to later legend, was actively courted by *The Criterion* and contributed several stories and, in 1925, Eliot published an instalment of Joyce's *Work in Progress*. There is little doubt that Eliot's growing prestige made *The Criterion* the foremost magazine outlet in London for literary modernism. Yet, the journal's mixed allegiances also generated friction with Aldington, Pound, Lewis, the Woolfs, and the Sitwells. This was evidence of the suspicion, even resentment, in various circles. The appearance of *The Calendar of Modern Letters* in 1925, paying far better rates than *The Criterion*, caused an outbreak of defections (notably Lewis, Lawrence, and Robert Graves) to this vigorous monthly.¹⁶ (See Chapter 16.) *The Calendar*'s little-known team of reviewers acquired a reputation for bracing and incisive short book notices, such that Eliot discussed with Herbert Read the possibility of attracting some of them—Edwin Muir, for instance—to help bolster *The Criterion*'s meagre book review section. *The Calendar*'s abrasive position-taking, in part due to dissatisfaction with *The Criterion*, highlighted Eliot's failure to impress an intelligible policy more purposefully on his selection of contents. In October 1924, Eliot told Read, his

¹⁴ See T. S. Eliot in *Richard Aldington: An Intimate Portrait*, ed. Alister Kershaw and Frédéric-Jacques Temple (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1965), 24.

¹⁵ See T. S. Eliot to Virginia Woolf, 7 May 1924: 'did you not advise me . . . that it was in pursuance of the best tradition of British journalism to let one contributor say what he likes about another?', cited in Hermione Lee, *Virginia Woolf* (London: Vintage, 1996), 447.

¹⁶ *The Criterion* paid £2 for 1,000 words, whereas *The Calendar of Modern Letters* initially paid £3 3s. for 1,000 words. Under Lady Rothermere's patronage, Eliot offered much higher rates to Pound, Woolf, Lawrence, Lewis, Joyce, and Yeats. For details of the complex interrelations between *The Criterion* and *The Calendar*, see Jason Harding, *The Criterion: Cultural Politics and Periodical Networks in Interwar Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 44–63.

closest collaborator, that he felt partly constrained by Lady Rothermere's purse strings. He added:

I wish, certainly, to get as homogeneous a group as possible: but I find that homogeneity is in the end indefinable: for the purposes of the *Criterion*, it cannot be reduced to a creed of numbered capitals. I do not expect everyone to subscribe to all the articles of my own faith . . . When I write, I must write to the limit of my own convictions and aspirations: but I don't want to impose these on others, any more than I should be willing to reduce myself to the common denominator of my colleagues. What is essential is to find those persons who have an impersonal loyalty to some faith not antagonistic to my own.¹⁷

A circular drawn up by Eliot at this time asserted that *The Criterion* 'expounds the philosophy of pure Toryism'.¹⁸ A series of pugnacious political articles by Charles Whibley and his associates undoubtedly irritated liberal sections of *The Criterion's* readership. John Middleton Murry responded to Eliot's taunts about his 'Whiggery', by questioning the precise nature of *The Criterion's* 'classicism'. Although motivated at one level by journalistic rivalry, even personal animosity, the first rumblings of the 'classicism-romanticism' exchange interrogated the right-wing cultural politics Eliot promoted in his nominally 'literary' review.¹⁹

In 1925, with Lady Rothermere's three-year contract with Cobden-Sanderson about to expire, and with the Eliots suffering from severe illness, it appeared as if *The Criterion* would close. For some time, Eliot had desperately wanted to leave the Bank and receive a salary to edit *The Criterion* and to pursue his literary career. Fortunately, Whibley recommended his name to Geoffrey Faber, who was looking for a writer to build up the literary side of the new publishing venture, Faber and Gwyer. Faber looked carefully into the possibility of acquiring *The Criterion* as a *succès d'estime* and as a recruiting ground for house authors. The firm calculated that the production costs of an enlarged 180-page quarterly review, under Eliot's salaried editorship, could only be recouped if the magazine sold over 2,000 copies at an increased price of 5s. and carried at least 10 pages of advertising. This entailed doubling sales. Although retailers, such as W. H. Smith, took copies to display on bookstalls, the circulation of *The Criterion* hovered between 800 and 1,000 copies (of these just over 200 copies were by private subscription).

Lady Rothermere occasionally informed Eliot that she thought *The Criterion* was 'dull' (she failed to persuade Eliot to publish work by her acquaintance Katherine Mansfield), but she was apparently reluctant to relinquish control of her magazine.

¹⁷ T. S. Eliot to Herbert Read, 19? October 1924, cited in Read, 'T.S.E.: A Memoir', *T. S. Eliot: The Man and His Work*, 21.

¹⁸ Circular among the papers of Vivien Eliot, Bodleian Library, Oxford University.

¹⁹ For further details, see David Goldie, *A Critical Difference: T. S. Eliot and John Middleton Murry in English Literary Criticism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 69-127.

In the autumn of 1925 an issue of *The Criterion* was lost during the protracted, not to say extremely expensive, legal negotiations which created 'The New Criterion Limited' and transferred the quarterly to the more economical Faber imprint. Lady Rothermere continued her generous subsidy (which had risen to £700 per annum) and provision was made for an editorial salary of £400 per annum. Eliot always claimed that Lady Rothermere did not try to dictate the terms on which he should edit *The Criterion*. Her influence on the early years of the periodical is perhaps most evident in the number of topical notes on the fine arts, ballet, music, and the theatre. These offerings of 'radical chic' would gradually be diluted as Eliot assumed a tighter grip on his austere critical review.

The New Criterion: A Quarterly Review (1926–7)

Eliot claimed that it was only from 1926 that the physiognomy of the interwar period became clear. In January 1926, he launched *The New Criterion* with the institutional support of Faber and Gwyer; a bumper 220-page number, selling at 5s., and containing a smattering of up-market advertisements.²⁰ This issue carried writing by Ada Leveson, Woolf, Cocteau, Huxley, Lawrence, and Stein. Eliot's editorial manifesto, 'The Idea of a Literary Review', sought to define the quarterly's 'classical' sympathies:

I believe that the modern tendency is toward something which, for want of a better name, we may call classicism. . . . there is a tendency—discernable even in art—toward a higher and clearer conception of Reason, and a more severe and serene control of the emotions by Reason.²¹

Understandably, *The Criterion's* conservative readers wondered to what extent Stein's radical contribution conformed to the dictates of Aristotelian reason. Still, 'The Idea of a Literary Review' supplied a reading list of 'classicist' texts, comprised of books by Sorel, Maurras, Benda, Hulme, Maritain, and Babbitt.²² A disparate set of texts, the 'modern tendency' they most obviously supported was a marked distaste for liberal democracy. Eliot's regular editorial 'Commentaries' confirmed the hints that *The Criterion's* 'classical' tendency—in common with the 'neoclassicism'

²⁰ *The New Criterion* contained advertisements for P&O Cruises, Player's Cigarettes, and the publisher Jonathan Cape. The appearance of an advertisement for Luvisca shirts in the summer of 1926 infuriated Lady Rothermere and contributed to the dismissal of an advertising manager.

²¹ T. S. Eliot, 'The Idea of a Literary Review', *The New Criterion* (Jan. 1926), 6.

²² The list comprised Georges Sorel, *Réflexions sur la violence*; Charles Maurras, *L'Avenir de l'intelligence*; Julien Benda, *Belphegor*; T. E. Hulme, *Speculations*; Jacques Maritain, *Réflexions sur l'intelligence*; and Irving Babbitt, *Democracy and Leadership*. Eliot later added Wyndham Lewis's *The Art of Being Ruled* to this list.

of Maurras's L'Action française movement—advocated the restoration of authoritarian forms of political and social order.

Throughout 1926 Eliot frequently visited Paris, where he was able to consort with Maurras's cenacle and to discuss Thomist theology with Maritain. In this period, Eliot approached Henri Massis, editor of the Parisian monthly *La Revue universelle*, seeking to republish his causerie 'Defence of the West', an attack upon the perceived 'Oriental anarchy' threatening Europe. The serialization of Massis's chauvinist thesis (in essence, an ideological 'counter-revolution' directed at Communism) provoked a number of rebuttals in *The Criterion*; from the Indian philosopher Vasudeo Metta, the Islamic writer the Sirdar Ikbal Ali Shah, and the American poet John Gould Fletcher. Fletcher recalled the 'Hellenic paranoia'²³ that he believed pervaded Eliot's 'Criterion gang'—a reference to the conclave of civil servants and men of letters (including Read, Aldington, Flint, Randall, Trend, Harold Monro, Bonamy Dobrée, and Orlo Williams) who frequented the Grove Tavern in Knightsbridge and the Ristorante Commercio in Soho for convivial lunches and dinners, where matters of finance and policy could be raised. On becoming a director at Faber and Gwyer, Eliot used these social gatherings to intensify the organization and institutionalization of this group with close links to museums, universities, and learned societies. This all-male dining club functioned as an editorial advisory committee and its influence on *The Criterion* should not be discounted.

In August 1926, Monro sent Eliot a letter on behalf of this group urging the reorganization of the journal as a seventy-page monthly review, principally because it was felt a quarterly could no longer keep pace with contemporary society.²⁴ The proposed monthly would contain a signed editorial Commentary, lengthy chronicles of drama, art, music, and foreign literature,²⁵ creative writing, literary criticism, and an enlarged review section. Eliot agreed to the idea of the monthly in principle, but argued that he would require a greater injection of capital from the backers, as well as a full-time editorial assistant. Eliot passed the recommendation to Faber, for whom the question of monthly versus quarterly was a financial one. Again, it was hoped that a revamped *Criterion* might become popular enough to offset the considerable financial losses amassed by the periodical (over £3,000 since the launch of *The New Criterion*). In early 1927, Eliot informed regulars of the Grove lunches that *The Criterion* would become a monthly. The slimmed down half-crown *Monthly Criterion* appeared in a mustard yellow cover in May 1927.

²³ Cited by Ian Hamilton, in *The Little Magazines: A Study of Six Editors* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1976), 73.

²⁴ See Harold Monro to T. S. Eliot, 30 August 1926, McPherson Library, University of Victoria.

²⁵ *The Criterion* published foreign chronicles on American, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Russian, and Spanish literary and cultural developments.

The Monthly Criterion: A Literary Review (1927–8)

The monthly format affected the character of *The Criterion*, speeding up the turnover of contributions; increasing the demand for solicited fiction, verse, and critical articles; and drawing the inner circle of Eliot's 'Criterion group' into closer collaboration. The financial need to promote sales became more acute. A consequence was the escalation of (what Conrad Aiken called) the 'carefully picked quarrel' with *The Adelphi*, then in difficult economic circumstances.²⁶ 'The Idea of a Literary Review' had contained a barbed aside on Murry's editorials and he duly responded in *The Adelphi* in an article arguing that Eliot's 'classicist' principles suggested he should convert to Catholicism. That Eliot had commented on Murry's article as a pre-publication typescript is highly interesting.²⁷ Public disputes illustrate power struggles between adversaries occupying rival positions in the cultural field, yet the dangers of collusion that affect periodical controversy (unsurprising, considering pragmatic economic imperatives) also reveals the concord amidst strategic discord which characterizes the limited field of literary magazines. As Murry admitted in an *Adelphi* editorial, 'enemies are *necessary* to one another.'²⁸ The unfolding of the classicism–romanticism exchange in the pages of *The Criterion* and *The Adelphi* was an opportunity for these periodicals to advance their standing among contiguous—they were not identical—audiences. Murry provided a familiar stalking horse to readers of *The Criterion*: an adversary who readily accepted invitations to a conspiratorial 'picked quarrel'.

In April 1927, *The Calendar* (encountering terminal financial complications) threw down a gauntlet. Bertram Higgins reproached those English reviews supporting 'a reactionary Latin philosophy' as 'a repressive instrument of literary criticism'.²⁹ It was a veiled attack on *The Criterion*. Eliot used his Commentary to defend his recent publication of French intellectuals (Maritain's two-part essay 'Poetry and Religion' was currently being serialized). In an ill-tempered reply, *The Calendar* complained that *The Criterion*'s 'stately editorial "We"' was self-deceiving and irritatingly superior.³⁰ Eliot was upset by this charge. The question of the editorial tone of his polemical style is a sensitive one. Eliot certainly felt that he possessed 'some skill in the barren game of controversy'.³¹ At their best, his urbane Arnoldian ironies were finely judged and withering; at worst, they could sound pompous and condescending. The sarcasm he habitually deployed at Murry's

²⁶ See Conrad Aiken, *Ushant: An Essay* (Boston: Little Brown, 1952), 232–3.

²⁷ For details of Eliot's annotations on the typescript of Murry's essay 'The "Classical" Revival', see Goldie, *A Critical Difference*, 156–62.

²⁸ See John Middleton Murry, *The Adelphi* (Dec. 1929), 81.

²⁹ [Bertram Higgins], 'Art and Knowledge', *The Calendar* (Apr. 1927), 58–9.

³⁰ Douglas Garman, 'Notes and Reviews', *The Calendar* (July 1927), 155.

³¹ T. S. Eliot to Paul Elmer More, 20 June 1934, cited in John Margolis, *T. S. Eliot's Intellectual Development, 1922–1939* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1972), p. xv.

expense—often professing a complete inability to comprehend his attempts at rapprochement—was unattractive; perhaps one of those ‘errors of tone’ Eliot later came to regret.

The Calendar used its last breath to fire a defiant shot across the bows of ‘the periodical which flaunts a pretension to philosophic righteousness and yet makes as many blunders with regard the actual works of poetry or literature before it as the most unenlightened of its Georgian predecessors.’³² The editors possibly had Eliot’s neglectful treatment of American literature in mind. Eliot declined submissions from William Carlos Williams, Gertrude Stein, John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Laura Riding, R. P. Blackmur, and F. Scott Fitzgerald (Hart Crane was overjoyed when *The Criterion* accepted ‘The Tunnel’ section from *The Bridge*³³). Unlike *The Calendar*, which was distributed in Boston, New York, and San Francisco, Eliot abandoned hopes that *The Criterion* could achieve sizeable sales in America. Publication in *The Calendar*, however, never quite matched the cachet of publication in *The Criterion*, which by 1927 had acquired the momentum of authority, a state of affairs reflected in changes to the overall profile of subscribers. There was now less reliance on private subscribers from Bloomsbury and Chelsea, and a growing number of subscriptions from university libraries around the world, a measure of the *Criterion*’s institutional consolidation, but also, as Eliot conceded, that his severely intellectual monthly was ‘too heavy’ for some tastes.³⁴

The laboured controversies with *The Adelphi* and *The Calendar* certainly did very little to boost sales. Faber employed an advertising manager to place notices in the literary press. Yet, despite a print run of 2,500 copies, *The Monthly Criterion* peaked at sales of around 1,200 copies, far too low to canvass enough advertising to make financial ends meet. At the end of 1927, Lady Rothermere lost patience with the cost of subsidizing a monthly. She summoned Eliot to Switzerland to inform him she was withdrawing her subsidy, plunging *The Criterion* into immediate financial crisis. On 5 December, Irene Fassett sent a letter to regular contributors saying that ‘owing to differences of opinion between the proprietors on matters of policy’ *The Criterion* would end publication. Geoffrey Faber, however, had other ideas. He contacted Bruce Richmond, editor of *The Times Literary Supplement*, for the names of patrons who might guarantee the future of the periodical. A week after the initial announcement, Fassett informed contributors that ‘owing to certain concurrences of opinion’ *The Criterion*’s future had been secured.³⁵ In time, sufficient guarantees

³² ‘Valediction Forbidding Mourning’, *The Calendar* (July 1927), 176.

³³ See Hart Crane to Otto Kahn, 12 September 1927: ‘I have been especially gratified by the reception afforded me by the *Criterion*, whose director, Mr T. S. Eliot, is representative of the most exacting literary standards of our times’, cited in *Letters of Hart Crane, 1916–1932*, ed. Brom Weber (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), 308.

³⁴ See T. S. Eliot, ‘A Commentary’, *The Criterion* (June 1928), 289–90.

³⁵ For details of the crisis, see Harding, *The Criterion: Cultural Politics*, 17–18.

were supplied by ten benefactors, including Eliot's friends and acquaintances Whibley, Richmond, and May Sinclair and, most generously of all, the conservative political theorist F. S. Oliver, who pledged £250 per annum for three years. In June 1928, *The Criterion* announced that 'in conformity with the preference of many supporters' the journal would revert to its quarterly format.³⁶ The oscillation from quarterly to monthly and back again was evidence, as contemporaries perceived, of financial instability. Eliot would no longer harbour the illusion that *The Criterion* could pay its way or survive without 'the aid of artificial respiration'.³⁷ Faber's in-house literary review appeared for the remainder of its life at the very expensive price of 7s. 6d. (the cost of a new novel), cross-subsidized to the amount of £750 per year, by additional funds wrung from profits generated by the widely circulated *Nursing Mirror* (packed with lucrative advertising).

The Criterion: A Literary Review (1928–39)

In 1928, Eliot received a letter from Ruth Harrison, secretary to the headmistress at Roedean girls' school. This self-professed 'ordinary reader' urged Eliot to strengthen his editorial 'Commentary' in order to crystallize the review's continuity of thought.³⁸ Eliot worried that *The Criterion* lacked a determinate character and that it displayed the vagueness of a miscellany. His editorial advocacy of 'classicism' was not intended as a doctrinaire 'line' or as the rallying cry of a coterie; in 1928, Eliot defended *The Criterion* in the *Nation and Athenaeum* against this accusation.³⁹ It was often difficult to discern the 'classical' pattern in *The Criterion*'s contents. As Denis Donoghue has noted, 'There is no evidence that readers hold the articles together in their minds, like discordant images in a metaphysical poem.'⁴⁰ Eliot's eclectic editorial policy might be interpreted as a failure. It is no simple matter to determine how individual subscribers—'ordinary' readers such as Ruth Harrison; public intellectuals such as Havelock Ellis and John Maynard Keynes; or overseas readers in Egypt, India, Japan, China, and Australia—responded to the variegated contributions in each issue. Did they read *all* the contents of *The Criterion* and, as Eliot hoped, resolve the juxtapositions and discontinuities into something more than the sum of its parts?

In fact, members of his 'Criterion group', while publicly praising the journal's eclecticism, privately lamented the direction in which Eliot was taking the

³⁶ See advertisement in *The Adelphi* (June 1928).

³⁷ See T. S. Eliot, 'A Letter from T. S. Eliot, O. M.', *Catacomb* (Summer 1950), 367.

³⁸ Ruth Harrison to T. S. Eliot, 22 August 1928, Faber and Faber Archive, London.

³⁹ See T. S. Eliot, 'Letters', *Nation and Athenaeum* (21 Apr. 1928), 29.

⁴⁰ Denis Donoghue, 'Criteria Omnia', *The Cambridge Review* (9 Feb. 1968), 257–8.

magazine. In 1929, Bonamy Dobrée complained to Herbert Read that the journal was becoming a 'Religio-Political Organ', adding, 'I am beginning to feel a little uncomfortable in that galley.'⁴¹ The limits of Eliot's open-mindedness could be observed in a series of public debates. His outspoken defence of the Action française movement, for instance, dismayed many contemporaries.⁴² Similarly, his editorial selection and arrangement of a symposium on the American New Humanism annoyed disciples of Irving Babbitt, since it was evident that commissioned articles from Allen Tate and G. K. Chesterton underscored Christian opposition to this ethical philosophy.⁴³ Eliot published his own reservations elsewhere, in order not to lend *The Criterion* 'too distinct a theological cast'.⁴⁴ Yet, he regularly commissioned articles from ecclesiastics and lay theologians including Martin D'Arcy, Charles Smyth, Christopher Dawson, V. A. Demant, and George Every (the Bishop of Durham declined a request to write about H. G. Wells). This 'extra-literary' dimension altered *The Criterion's* profile and exasperated those readers who wanted more straightforwardly literary material.

In 1930, Pound rudely characterized 'Criterionism' as a 'diet of dead crow'.⁴⁵ He had railed against Eliot's choice of contributors from the beginning, although he appeared frequently in the magazine espousing his latest hobby horses, including the politico-economic nostrum of 'Social Credit'.⁴⁶ His quirky and truculent articles were out-of-step with Eliot's dignified critical review. Still, in comparison with European avant-garde magazines, such as *transition*, *This Quarter*, and the Cambridge student periodical *Experiment*, which all devoted extensive coverage to modernist innovation in literature, cinema, music, visual art, photography and architecture, *The Criterion's* regular chronicle-writers—for example, Roger Hinks on art and Philip Radcliffe on music—appeared unashamedly academic and staid.⁴⁷ Commenting on a 1933 lecture, in which Eliot quoted Maritain's *Criterion* essay in order to dissociate himself from modernist art's 'fearful progress in self-consciousness', Pound surmised:

⁴¹ Bonamy Dobrée to Herbert Read, 9 April 1929. For a full account of the roles of Read and Dobrée on *The Criterion*, see Harding, *The Criterion: Cultural Politics*, 110–42.

⁴² Eliot's exchange in *The Criterion* with Leo Ward, Catholic apologist and supporter of the Vatican's condemnation of L'Action française, is treated by Kenneth Asher, *T. S. Eliot and Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 55–7.

⁴³ This debate is examined at length in Margolis, *T. S. Eliot's Intellectual Development*, 100–28.

⁴⁴ See T. S. Eliot to Paul Elmer More, 30 December 1929, cited in Margolis, *T. S. Eliot's Intellectual Development*, 134–5.

⁴⁵ See Ezra Pound, 'Criterionism', *Hound and Horn* (Oct.–Dec. 1930), 113–16.

⁴⁶ For further details of *The Criterion's* flirtation with 'Social Credit', see Harding, *The Criterion: Cultural Politics*, 185–94.

⁴⁷ See, for example, Roger Hinks's lukewarm response to the 1936 International Surrealist Exhibition in London, 'Art Chronicle', *The Criterion* (Oct. 1936), 70–5.

It is extremely easy for an editor to acquire the habit of reading mainly or exclusively the stuff submitted to him to edit, and so, gradually to circumscribe his horizon to what contending contributors think he is likely to publish.⁴⁸

In fact, during his absence in the United States during 1932 and 1933, Eliot permitted friends and his Faber colleagues to see *The Criterion* through the press, an indication that the magazine now occupied a less vital place in his affairs.

In this period, several new English periodicals identified a palpable decline in *The Criterion's* standards of literary criticism. In its inaugural year *Scrutiny* took up the complaints begun by *The Calendar*, criticizing *The Criterion* for a tendency to 'substitute solemnity for seriousness'⁴⁹ and (in the words of F. R. Leavis) 'for the dead, academic kind of abstract "thinking" . . . worth less than nothing if not related scrupulously to the concrete'.⁵⁰ (See Chapter 35.) *The Criterion* and *Scrutiny* shared an overlap of contributors (L. C. Knights reviewed books on Shakespeare for both magazines) and concerns (above all, the struggle to safeguard 'minority culture'), but they differed markedly in tactics and tone. *The Criterion* appeared mealy mouthed and calculating to the Leavises, as it did to Geoffrey Grigson's *New Verse*, whose bad taste did not flinch at publishing a mock-obituary of Eliot.⁵¹ (See Chapter 27.) What *The Criterion* lost in comparison with the belligerent dynamism of these younger entrants to the cultural field, it made up for as the testing ground for one of London's pre-eminent publishers of advanced modern literature.

One young recruit to *The Criterion* recalled Eliot as continuing the tradition of the great nineteenth-century editors: 'None of his predecessors could have shown more diligence, courtesy, and personal concern for the recruiting of young writers, for exploring the temper of their generation, and encouraging them to put as good a face as possible on being themselves.'⁵² The typescripts submitted to Eliot represented a marked degree of pre-selection—an elective affinity between authors, the character of the quarterly, and its audience. The young writers Eliot encouraged during the 1930s, by trying out in the 'Books of the Quarter' section of *The Criterion*, resembles an antechamber for *Who's Who*: W. H. Auden, George Barker, Samuel Beckett, Isaiah Berlin, Jacob Bronowski, Basil Bunting, Brian Coffey, Alistair Cooke, Hugh Sykes Davies, Ronald Duncan, William Empson, David Gascoyne, Geoffrey Grigson, Stuart Hampshire, Desmond Hawkins, G. Wilson Knight, L. C. Knights, Louis MacNeice, Charles Madge, Malcolm

⁴⁸ Ezra Pound, 'What Price the Muses Now', *New English Weekly* (24 May 1934), 71.

⁴⁹ See [L. C. Knights and Donald Culver], 'Scrutiny: A Manifesto', *Scrutiny* (May 1932), 3 n. 1.

⁵⁰ F. R. Leavis, 'Under Which King, Bezonian?', *Scrutiny* (Dec. 1932), 213.

⁵¹ For an account of *The Criterion's* rivalry and reciprocity with *Scrutiny* and *New Verse*, see Harding, *The Criterion: Cultural Politics*, 64–106.

⁵² See Hugh Sykes Davies, 'Mistah Kurtz: He Dead', *T. S. Eliot: The Man and His Work*, 352.

Muggeridge, Joseph Needham, Hugh Gordon Porteus, Kathleen Raine, James Reeves, Roger Roughton, Stephen Spender, Ruthven Todd, Geoffrey Tillotson, and Martin Turnell. Some of these authors were corralled into Faber's prestigious stable of poets. More than that, Michael Roberts's and Janet Adam Smith's reviews of modern poetry did much to endorse the modernist canon presented in *The Faber Book of Modern Verse* (1936).⁵³

While 'Books of the Quarter' (which expanded to take up to eighty pages of each issue) was an index of Faber and Faber's consecration of new talents,⁵⁴ Eliot increasingly directed the front sections of *The Criterion* towards the deepening politico-economic crisis. At times, he spoke in his editorials as a Christian moralist; preferably, he used the quarterly as a tribunal for stage-managed symposia.⁵⁵ In 1929, J. S. Barnes, from the International Centre of Fascist Studies, and A. L. Rowse, a Labour parliamentary candidate, expounded to readers of *The Criterion* the political philosophies of Fascism and Communism. Eliot had prepared the ground in an article entitled 'The Literature of Fascism' in which he pledged himself to the constitutional reform—rather than a totalitarian destruction—of 'the frame of democracy'.⁵⁶ Montgomery Belgion, a spiky contributor, was employed by Eliot throughout the 1930s as a useful 'irritant' to stoke up the coals of controversy on selected topics.⁵⁷ Thomas Mann, Max Rychner, Alec Randall, and the Revd Edward Quinn deplored the rising tide of Nazism and the constriction of European intellectual life. Belgion noted a book documenting the persecution of Jews, but without a due sense of the fear and menace that pertained in Hitler's Germany.⁵⁸ In the late 1930s, *The Criterion* became a rallying ground for (what

⁵³ For details, see Harding, *The Criterion: Cultural Politics*, 159–74.

⁵⁴ Eliot told Geoffrey Faber that although he did not want 'an exact correspondence' between *The Criterion* and Faber and Faber, he wanted to avoid 'publishing a book by some writer who had been consistently and steadily damned in the review'. T. S. Eliot to Geoffrey Faber, 22 March 1925, cited in Ronald Schuchard, 'T. S. Eliot at Fabers: Book Reports, Blurbs, Young Poets', *Areté* (Autumn 2007), 70.

⁵⁵ For Eliot's role as a public intellectual during the period of his editorship of *The Criterion*, see Stefan Collini, *Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 303–30.

⁵⁶ T. S. Eliot, 'The Literature of Fascism', *The Criterion* (Dec. 1928), 280–90. Eliot's critique of liberal democracy in the pages of *The Criterion* is examined by Rachel Potter in *Modernism and Democracy: Literary Culture, 1900–1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 143–8.

⁵⁷ See T. S. Eliot to I. A. Richards, 24 February 1932: '[Belgion] is extremely useful as an irritant and for provoking other people to develop their own theories on important subjects,' cited in Harding, *The Criterion: Cultural Politics*, 150. For a detailed analysis of Belgion's role on *The Criterion*, see *ibid.* 143–58.

⁵⁸ For discussions of Belgion's review of *The Yellow Spot: The Outlawing of Half a Million Human Beings* (London: Gollancz, 1936), see Christopher Ricks, *T. S. Eliot and Prejudice* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), 51; Anthony Julius, *T. S. Eliot, Anti-Semitism and Literary Form* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2003), 167–70, 313–14; Craig Raine, *T. S. Eliot* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 153–4.

Eliot would call) a 'Community of Christians' who opposed the propagandist zeal of Soviet Communism, Italian Fascism, and German National Socialism.

With hindsight, Eliot's Commentaries exhibit a poignant inability to gauge contemporary political developments at their real potency. His tortuous dissection of abstract political ideas could be far removed from international events. For instance, Eliot's advocacy, at the height of the Spanish Civil War, of 'the just impartiality of a Christian philosopher'⁵⁹ appeared to numerous left-wing intellectuals as infuriatingly evasive, not to say completely beside the point. It was Eliot's profound 'depression of spirits', however, following Britain's failure to safeguard Czechoslovakia's borders, that convinced him to close down *The Criterion*. His 'Last Words' lamented that the periodical's links with European men of letters, 'which one had mistakenly thought might be renewed and fortified, disappeared from view'.⁶⁰ From the highpoint of *The Criterion*'s collaboration, in 1929, on a literary prize with four European periodicals, the prospects for these self-appointed custodians of Europe's humanist civilization appeared increasingly desolate.⁶¹ It was understandable, given the worsening political situation, that Eliot should seek to address this ferment: 'leading to emphases which somewhat stretched the original framework of a literary review'.⁶² If *The Criterion*'s defence of the patrimony of a Latin-Christian tradition can appear today like a forlorn attempt to counteract the violent realpolitik at work in interwar Europe, it should also be said that the magazine bears testimony to a scrupulous attempt to engage with troubling areas of political and cultural exchange.⁶³ It is not easy to recapture the twilight air of monastic resignation in which Eliot wrote, on the eve of the Second World War, that the 'continuity of culture' would be dependent on 'the small and obscure papers and reviews, those which hardly are read by anyone but their own contributors'.⁶⁴

'Last Words'

The elegiac tone of 'Last Words' struck the keynote for the posthumous reputation of *The Criterion*. In 1939, Delmore Schwartz praised Eliot's 'charity of

⁵⁹ See T. S. Eliot, 'A Commentary', *The Criterion* (Oct. 1938), 58. Eliot coined this phrase in order to praise the principled stand taken by Jacques Maritain, who had refused to endorse the claim made by supporters of General Franco that they were fighting a 'holy war'.

⁶⁰ T. S. Eliot, 'Last Words', *The Criterion* (Jan. 1939), 271.

⁶¹ The other periodicals were *La Nouvelle Revue française*, *Europäische Revue*, *Nuova Antologia*, and *Revista de Occidente*.

⁶² T. S. Eliot 'Last Words', 272.

⁶³ This aspect of *The Criterion* has been treated at some length in Harding, *The Criterion: Cultural Politics*, 202–26.

⁶⁴ T. S. Eliot 'Last Words', 274.

the intellect' and his 'peculiarly intelligent editorship'.⁶⁵ Eliot himself remarked, 'The first function of a literary magazine is to introduce the work of new or little known writers of talent.'⁶⁶ On several occasions, he claimed that *The Criterion* had introduced important work by Proust, Valéry, Cocteau, Maurras, Maritain, Hofmannsthal, Worringer, Scheler, and Curtius to an English public. The periodical has a fair record as a showcase of rising talent—including, Pirandello, Cavafy, Čapek, Montale, Crane, O'Faolain, Zukofsky, Auden, Empson, Spender, MacNeice, MacDiarmid, James Hanley, Henry Miller, and Dylan Thomas—although it is too much to say that these writers were *discovered* by Eliot's literary review. After examining the archives of Faber and Faber, containing over 40 box-files relating to his editorship of *The Criterion* and over 120 box-files relating to his role as a publisher, Ronald Schuchard has concluded:

There was an active correspondence between his roles as publisher and editor: books on which he reported and liked, whether accepted by Faber and Faber or published elsewhere, were frequently reviewed in the *Criterion*. Faber authors were *Criterion* contributors and reviewers, and vice versa, and parts of accepted books were occasionally printed in the *Criterion* before the books were published.⁶⁷

More than this, Herbert Howarth has praised a corollary of this editorial acumen, by suggesting that *The Criterion* acted as a catalyst for Eliot's own creative writing:

To study the files is to feel the play of one mind in every issue, and the continuity of thought from one issue to the next; to see how carefully he read his contributors, how he found in them the provocation for new contributions and sometimes the names of new contributors, whom he then approached with commissions right for their aptitudes and right for his pages, and how the themes or the momentary illumination of his contributors penetrated his mind, lodged in it, and alimanted it until over the course of years they emerged in a creative or critical work of his own.⁶⁸

The Criterion, then, provides crucial information about Eliot's gradual estrangement from experimental modernism; for 'to study the files' is to ponder the journal's highly selective and ambivalent engagement with the European and

⁶⁵ See Delmore Schwartz, 'The *Criterion*', *The Kenyon Review* (Autumn 1939), 437–49.

⁶⁶ T. S. Eliot, 'A Message', *London Magazine* (Feb. 1954), 16.

⁶⁷ See Schuchard, 'T. S. Eliot at Fabers', 63–87.

⁶⁸ See Herbert Howarth, *Notes on Some Figures behind T. S. Eliot* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1965), 264.

American avant-gardes. The 'matrix' of modernism highlights only one strand of the heterogeneous periodical networks that came together in Eliot's eclectic magazine. Plucking out the names of a few modernist writers gives only a partial picture of *The Criterion's* range and influence. More nuanced accounts must take full measure of the analytical journalism that became the dominant constituent of Eliot's magisterial literary review.

ENEMIES OF CANT

The Athenaeum (1919–21) and *The Adelphi* (1923–48)¹

MICHAEL H. WHITWORTH

The Athenaeum

One way of summarizing the structure of the literary market in the early years of the twentieth century would be to contrast two literary journals. One, established in the early nineteenth century, included contributors such as Archdeacon William Hutton and George Saintsbury. It included reports of meetings of learned societies such as the Royal Institution, the Meteorological Society, and the Royal Numismatic Society; it carried articles with titles such as ‘Some Early Friends and Contemporaries of Ruskin’ and ‘Unpublished Letters of William Hazlitt’. Each week’s issue ended with a ‘List of New Books’, short notices compiled in association with the Library Association and directed at librarians. The other literary journal, which first came on the market in April 1919, included such canonical modernists as T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis, Virginia Woolf, Paul Valéry, and André Lhote; contributors from Bloomsbury such as Lytton Strachey, Clive Bell, and Roger Fry; and others such as Herbert Read and I. A. Richards. It first published Virginia Woolf’s short story ‘Solid Objects’ and T. S. Eliot’s essay ‘The Perfect Critic’; its essays were a significant influence on Eliot’s thinking in ‘Tradition and the Individual Talent’. Like many ‘little magazines’, it was short-lived, and disappeared from the market less than two years after its first appearance.

The two journals were one: *The Athenaeum* under the editorship of John Middleton Murry from 1919 to 1921. The journal had been founded in 1828, but in

¹ I am grateful to City University, London; Special Collections, Edinburgh University Library; Modern Archives Centre, King’s College, Cambridge; Merton College, Oxford; University College, London; The Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust, York. I gratefully acknowledge the Society of Authors, as the Literary Representative of the Estate of John Middleton Murry, for permission to quote from unpublished letters by Murry.

THE ATHENÆUM

A JOURNAL OF
ENGLISH & FOREIGN LITERATURE,
SCIENCE, THE FINE ARTS, MUSIC,
& THE DRAMA.

No. 4686 [REGISTERED AS
A NEWSPAPER.] FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1920. SIXPENCE.
Printed by C.F. & J. Ashford, Ltd.

**ESSAY
COMPETITION**

THE
ATHENÆUM

WITH the aim of stimulating a critical interest in contemporary English Literature, *The Athenæum* has decided to offer a number of prizes for the best Essays on the subject:

English Literature since 1914

Dr. Robert Bridges and Professor George Saintsbury have consented to act, together with the Editor of *The Athenæum*, as judges in the competition, the Prizes for which will be as follows:

First Prize	-	-	-	£50	0	0
Second Prize	-	-	-	25	0	0
Third Prize	-	-	-	10	0	0
Ten Prizes each of	-	-	-	5	0	0
Ten Prizes each of	-	-	-	3	0	0

ESSAYS for this Competition should approximate, but not exceed, 3,500 words in length, and they should be written on one side of the paper only.

The Competition will close with the first post received on Monday, April 19th, 1920, and the result will be announced in *The Athenæum* dated June 18th, 1920.

CONDITIONS OF THE COMPETITION
will be forwarded on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope by the Editor of *The Athenæum*.

THE ATHENÆUM
10, Adelphi Terrace,
LONDON,
W.C.2.

1276

Fig. 48. Cover of *The Athenæum* (Feb. 1920)

1917, having run into financial difficulties, it was acquired by the Joseph Rowntree Social Service Trust.² The trust had been established in 1904 by Joseph Rowntree, a successful businessman and Quaker, with the intention of advancing Liberal

² The date of 1919 given in some sources—e.g., David Goldie, *A Critical Difference: T. S. Eliot and John Middleton Murry in English Literary Criticism, 1919–1928* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 34—is contradicted by the documentation given below. The mistaken belief that it was owned by Arthur Rowntree (1861–1949), Head of Bootham School, apparently began with F. A. Lea, *The Life of John Middleton Murry* (London: Methuen, 1959), 65, and was given further currency by repetition in John Carswell, *Lives and Letters* (London: Faber, 1978), 156, and in later critical works and editions.

politics; one of its strategies was to purchase newspapers, less with a view to making a profit than to influencing public thought.³ The Trust's work with newspapers was carried out by Arnold Stephenson Rowntree, J. B. Morrell, and E. E. Taylor. The Trust controlled several provincial newspapers and several political journals: the London *Nation* (from 1907), *The Contemporary Review*, and *The International Review*. In 1917, on taking over *The Athenaeum*, the Trust initially attempted to remodel it as a 'Journal of Reconstruction' under the editorship of Arthur Greenwood. The experiment was not a success. In 1919, with reconstruction no longer so urgent an issue, the Trust returned it to its former character. The extent of their subsidy was immense: in funding the journal from 1917 to 1921, they lost £22,378.⁴

The Trust gave Murry a free hand during his editorship. His business dealings with Arnold Rowntree were largely mediated by Rowntree's business manager, Alfred Bonwick. To his frustration, Murry was not a member of the editorial board, though he was permitted to attend one of its meetings in 1920 when he wished to raise the rates paid to contributors.⁵ Murry had a sense of mission about the editorship: he wanted to make the journal a success again, 'as a duty to literature & my country'; to fail would be 'an act of treachery to English literature'.⁶ He appointed J. W. N. Sullivan, a literary and scientific journalist, as an assistant editor. He offered another assistant editorship to T. S. Eliot; Eliot declined, and Murry instead appointed Aldous Huxley. He retained some features of the journal's earlier incarnations, including its conservative typography and layout, but his revival of its content helped create, in Eliot's words, 'a high summer of literary journalism'.⁷

The costs involved in the enterprise included Murry's salary, £800 a year initially, rising to £1,000 a year from January 1920 onwards.⁸ Murry did not receive any additional payment for his written contributions, though the marked copies reveal that, in the guise of the poet 'Henry King', he was sent a payment 'c/o Arthur Murry', his brother.⁹ Sullivan's and Huxley's salaries as assistant editors were

³ Joseph Rowntree, memo of 1904 to the Trustees, quoted by Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain*, 2 vols (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1981–4), ii. 42.

⁴ 'A Review of the Work of the J.R.S.S.T. 1905–1939' (unpublished typescript), 12; copy supplied to the author by Elizabeth Jackson of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

⁵ John Middleton Murry, letter of 26 Mar. 1920, *The Letters of John Middleton Murry to Katherine Mansfield*, ed. C. A. Hankin (London: Constable, 1983), 301.

⁶ Murry, letter of 6 Apr. 1920, *Letters*, 306; letter to Lytton Strachey, dated 28 June 1920, British Library Add. 60681, f.144.

⁷ T. S. Eliot, Foreword, to John Middleton Murry, *Katherine Mansfield and Other Literary Studies* (London: Constable, 1959), p. ix.

⁸ Murry, letter of 11 Dec. 1919, *Letters*, 243.

⁹ The marked copies of the journal, held at City University, London, identify the authorship of unsigned pieces, and the sums paid.

probably £500 each; both received additional payments at the regular rate for written contributions.¹⁰ When Edmund Blunden joined as ‘office boy’ in late April 1920, his annual salary was £250. The total payments to contributors averaged about £43 per issue; although in April 1920, Murry wished to increase the rates to remain competitive with those offered by the *TLS*, it would appear the Editorial Board rebuffed him.¹¹

Other costs are more difficult to gauge, and the best available evidence comes from the archive of the *Nation and Athenaeum* in the early 1920s. In 1923, the average cost of printing a thirty-two-page paper was £106 for a run of 10,000: about £5,000 a year. There would also have been costs associated with the management of subscriptions and advertisements. In 1923, *The New Statesman* was paying around £1,500 a year for business management; British Periodicals Ltd, who had managed the business side of *The Athenaeum*, proposed charging The Nation Ltd £1,650 a year.¹² British Periodicals may also have received a proportion of *The Athenaeum*’s advertising revenue and subscription revenue: its agreement with The Nation Ltd included this element.

The circulation of Murry’s *Athenaeum* can only be guessed from indirect evidence. Prior to the Rowntree takeover, it had been selling 2,000 per month; as a monthly ‘Journal of Reconstruction’, it sold 3,000 per month.¹³ After the 1921 amalgamation of *The Nation* and *The Athenaeum*, ‘more than half’ of *The Athenaeum*’s readers stayed with the periodical, and the increase in circulation was about 2,000.¹⁴ If we assume all of the 2,000 to be former *Athenaeum* readers, then it appears that under Murry the journal had sold between 3,000 and 3,500 copies per week. This was less than the political weeklies *The Nation* and *The New Statesman*: the pre-amalgamation *Nation* sold about 6,000 per week;¹⁵ in 1916 *The New Statesman* sold an average of 6,000 per issue, and it maintained sales of between 6,000 and

¹⁰ The figure of £500 is based on that offered to T. S. Eliot: see *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), 276.

¹¹ The figure is based on the totals for issues 4640–3, 4698, 4734–7.

¹² Memo from E. D. Simon to Keynes, dated 21 Apr. 1923 (King’s/PP/JMK/48/NS/8/10); carbon of agreement between The Nation Ltd and British Periodicals Ltd, Apr. 1923 (King’s/PP/JMK/48/NS/8/11–16).

¹³ Transcript of Minutes of the Joseph Rowntree Social Service Trust, 13 Apr. 1917, 29 June 1917, 19 Oct. 1917, 19 Feb. 1918; transcript supplied by Gael Bayliss, Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust, 23 Apr. 2007.

¹⁴ Transcripts of ‘Report on newspapers and periodicals, Jan. 1922’ and memo attached to minutes of meeting, 3 June 1921, supplied by Gael Bayliss, Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust, 23 Apr. 2007.

¹⁵ Keynes Papers, King’s College Cambridge, JMK/NS/4/1/1, ‘Report for Aug. 1923’. The document reports a weekly average sale of 8,641 in May–Aug. 1923, a slight increase on the previous year; from this we must subtract the increase of 2,000 consequent on amalgamation.

10,000 in the early 1920s.¹⁶ *The Times Literary Supplement* typically sold just above 30,000 copies per week in 1919.¹⁷

Intellectuals, laypersons, and *The Athenaeum's* readers

The nature of *The Athenaeum's* readership may be inferred from a wide range of direct and indirect evidence. Its 'Situations Vacant' advertisements were predominantly directed at teachers, lecturers, librarians, and museum curators. Its advertisements in other journals also indicate its target readership. A series placed in the *TLS* and *Times Educational Supplement* in late 1919, in response to competition from *The London Mercury*, provides a particularly rich source.¹⁸ The advertisements projected different and potentially contradictory aspects of the journal. The first emphasized its scholarliness, its heritage, and its literary pedigree.¹⁹ The second, third, and fourth each focused on an element in the subtitle, 'A Journal of Literature, Science and the Arts'. The second also corrected the impression given by the first that *The Athenaeum* might be dull: on the contrary, as well as being 'informative', the journal was 'readable' and its writing vigorous.²⁰ The advertisement reaches out to a readership that was (or perceived itself as being) lively and youthful, a readership indifferent to the longevity of a journal and its heritage. The third advertisement mentioned the internationalism of the journal, which implies a culturally liberal readership, in search of an antidote to wartime jingoism. It gave a paragraph to science, emphasizing the journal's appeal to the layman, while suggesting that it was also relevant to the specialist.²¹ The next advertisement focused on art, and specifically modern art. It contrasted the reader, keen to understand 'the principles and aims' of modern painting, with straw men whose judgements of modern art lacked discrimination.²² The advertisement implies an ideal *Athenaeum* reader who is discriminating and who wishes to remain detached from movements and coteries. The journal's role is to satisfy curiosity and to provide the material for a judgement without infringing upon the reader's liberty.

The fifth of the advertisements gives the most explicit characterization of the ideal reader:

What the ordinary newspaper is to the ordinary man, *The Athenaeum* is to the man who thinks, or desires to learn. It is an indispensable instrument of that

¹⁶ Edward Hyams, *The New Statesman* (London: Longmans, 1963), 74, 77; Adrian Smith, *The New Statesman* (London: Cass, 1996), 139.

¹⁷ The *TLS* gave its sales figures on the front page of each issue.

¹⁸ Advertisements, *TLS*, 3 Apr. 1919, 185; 30 Oct. 1919, 612; 6 Nov. 1919, 633; 13 Nov. 1919, 653; 11 Dec. 1919, 753; 18 Dec. 1919, 756.

¹⁹ Advertisement, *TES*, 13 Nov. 1919, 571.

²⁰ Advertisement, *TES*, 20 Nov. 1919, 483.

²¹ Advertisement, *TES*, 27 Nov. 1919, 595.

²² Advertisement, *TES*, 4 Dec. 1919, 609.

process of liberal education which should end only with man's or a woman's life. It stimulates thought upon every topic which it touches, with the same singleness of purpose, to discover and reveal the truth. It is the declared enemy of every form of intellectual cant and humbug, however eminent and established.²³

The war on humbug was anticipated by Murry in October in a letter: 'I want the *Athenaeum* to be judicial, to praise what is really good *wherever* it comes from.' He contrasted it with the quarterlies *Coterie* and *Art and Letters*, which were more strongly associated with narrow groups of writers and artists.²⁴ The criticism of 'humbug' may be contextualized with reference to the role of propaganda during the First World War, and with reference to creeping disillusion in 1919 about the promises of reconstruction. David Goldie has argued that the public had lost faith in 'official printed sources' during the war, and that 'by the time of the demise of the Ministry of Reconstruction in June 1919 there existed a widespread feeling that few positive benefits were going to accrue from the war.' In *The Athenaeum* 'disillusion' coexists with the 'revelatory, reconstructive enthusiasm of its editor'.²⁵ The war on humbug occurs at the interface between these two tones: the journal is disillusioned with the nature of establishment discourse, but zealous and optimistic about the prospect of its renewal.

The Athenaeum's advertising betrayed a degree of uncertainty about the identity of its audience. In relation to science at least, it aims at the 'layman' as distinct from the expert, though it also claims utility for the specialist. It distinguishes its reader from the 'ordinary man', but avoids the term 'intellectual', speaking instead of the man or woman who wishes to learn. If Murry wished to address the journal to intellectuals, it was not those in possession of powers of intellect so much as in the process of acquiring or refining them. The idea of the intellectual was important to him, but his definition was relatively inclusive: intellectuals were those 'who by definition have some predilection for the truth, who have learned that a judgment to be of any worth must be based upon knowledge, and that the truth has no necessary affinity with what is desired'.²⁶

While suggestions about *The Athenaeum's* ideal readership may be found in the advertisements, information about its actual readers may be gleaned from its correspondence columns, and from the winners of its essay competition in June 1920. The evidence is fragmentary. Not only are letter-writers likely to be unrepresentative of a journal's readership, but also in the case of *The Athenaeum*, the correspondence pages do not always identify the authors of letters or give their addresses, even in the marked copies. However, it is clear that *The Athenaeum* reached the audience implied by its 'Situations Vacant' advertisements: at least

²³ Advertisement, *TES*, 11 Dec. 1919, 624.

²⁴ Murry, letter of 21 Oct. 1919, *Letters*, 194.

²⁵ Goldie, *A Critical Difference*, 35.

²⁶ John Middleton Murry, 'The False Dawn', *Athenaeum* 4680 (9 Jan. 1920), 37–8.

three wrote from libraries, and several wrote from British and overseas universities. Of those whose addresses are known, a high proportion wrote from London. This is unsurprising given the journal's coverage of concerts and exhibitions in the capital, and its almost complete neglect of equivalent events elsewhere in Britain. However, letters were also published from across England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, and from France, Sweden, North America (Texas, Arkansas, and Toronto), and China. The use of initials and pseudonyms reduces the accuracy of an analysis by gender: 38 per cent of the journal's 333 correspondents remain genderless.²⁷ However, of the 207 whose gender can be determined, the vast majority (90 per cent) were male.

Of those who won the twenty-three prizes in the essay competition in June 1920, fourteen came from London, three from Scotland, and two from Yorkshire. Three were probably school teachers—they gave their addresses as educational institutions—and two were clergymen.²⁸ The gender profile is very different from that of the correspondence pages: thirteen of the twenty-three were women; ten styled themselves 'Miss', one 'Mrs', and the remaining two gave no title. (Of the remaining two, one was Mary Butts, at that time married to John Rodker; the marital status of the other remains unknown.)²⁹

From frigidity to gossip: contents and format

A purchaser of *The Athenaeum* would have paid 6d. for—usually—thirty-two pages divided into two columns. The pages were approximately 11.5 × 9 inches (293 × 228 mm), printed in a conservative Roman typeface. The format was very similar to that of other political weeklies such as the *London Nation*, *The Spectator*, *The New Statesman*, and *The Saturday Review*, and the price was the same. The format changed very little during Murry's period as editor. In common with other weeklies, *The Athenaeum* was printed entirely in black and white, with no plates or illustrations of any other kind. It did not have a distinct cover: the first few leaves consisted of advertisements; the journal proper began with a page containing the title, contents, and the beginning of the first article. The final page or pages carried further advertisements, but there were normally none in the body of the journal. The first leaf carried the long subtitle, 'A Journal of English & Foreign Literature, Science, The Fine Arts, Music, & The Drama', while the contents page gave the shorter version, 'A Journal of Literature, Science and the Arts'. The major components of an issue were usually, in this order: an editorial essay; essays and/or poems; reviews of English language books; the science column; the art section;

²⁷ The total figure excludes individuals writing as representatives of companies and corporate bodies.

²⁸ "Athenaeum" Essay Competition', *Athenaeum* 4703 (18 June 1920), 801.

²⁹ When the UK census for 1921 becomes available it will be possible to discover far more about the ages and occupations of both the correspondents and the competition winners.

the music section; correspondence; the foreign section; and finally, a list of book announcements and shorter reviews. Interspersed among them were short notices of exhibitions and learned societies, often used as column fillers, the calendar of meetings of learned societies, and the 'Bibliographical Notes'.

The editorial essay usually extended over one or two pages; it was reduced in length from 11 June 1920, and from 15 October 1920 onwards it was replaced with the less weighty 'Notes and Comments' section, subdivided into three or more distinct parts. There were usually between one and three essays: in Murry's first issue appeared Lytton Strachey's 'Lady Hester Stanhope' and the first of George Santayana's 'Soliloquies in England'. From 11 June 1920 onwards, Murry also used this section for original short fiction, beginning with Katherine Mansfield's 'Revelations'.

The reviews, between five and ten per week, covered titles in history, philosophy, science, literary criticism, poetry, and fiction. The order at this point of the journal was more fluid, but there usually followed the anonymous Bibliographical Notes (written by R. Steele). From 20 February 1920 onwards there appeared the 'Marginalia' column over the name 'Autolycus', all but two of which were written by Aldous Huxley.³⁰ From 28 May 1920 onwards, the 'Literary Gossip' page accommodated various book announcements and remarks on the book trade.

The Science column, an essay or review-essay, was usually written by J. W. N. Sullivan, with occasional contributions from Geoffrey Keynes on medical matters, and Julian Huxley on biology. It is notable for having provided a five-part outline of Einstein's General Theory of Relativity many months before Eddington's experimental proof of the theory was announced. The sections on art and music consisted usually of a major essay or review in each, supplemented by shorter notices of exhibitions and concerts.

The 'Foreign' section included translations, such as Mansfield and Koteliensky's of Anton Chekhov's letters, book reviews, and features such as Guido de Ruggiero's 'Letters from Italy' (20 June 1919 onwards) and similar letters from Holland by J. L. Walch and from Spain by J. B. Trend. Italian topics were dominated by L. Collison-Morley, while French ones were covered by a range of writers, including Murry, Eliot, Aldous Huxley, and F. S. Flint. The 'List of New Books', 'Prepared in co-operation with the Library Association', concluded each issue until June 1920. It consisted of short notices, the authorship of which is not always noted in the editor's marked copy. Some are bland and neutral summaries, but some are masterpieces of compression and ironic dismissal: of those which can be attributed, the great majority were written by Aldous Huxley and J. W. N. Sullivan.

The Athenaeum carried advertisements, but relatively few. Whereas many *6d.* weeklies interleaved pages of advertisements with the review pages, *The Athenaeum*

³⁰ The exceptions, in *Athenaeum*, 4699 (21 May 1920), 672, and 4701 (1 June 1920), 737, were written by J. W. N. Sullivan.

normally banished them to the opening and closing leaves. Following the 'Appointments Vacant' section were other miscellaneous small advertisements, covering appointments wanted, art exhibitions, author's agents, investment opportunities, typewriting services, sales by auction, and charities. Larger advertisements predominantly concerned publishers, though there were occasionally advertisements for men's suits, and advertisements from the British Commercial Gas Association which anticipated a readership of both men and women.³¹

A reader of the first few issues would have found the majority of the contributions unsigned. *The Athenaeum* had introduced the principle of anonymous reviewing in the nineteenth century in order to free its reviewers from external pressures and thereby enable them to express independent judgements.³² However, under Murry's editorship the standard practice came to be for essays and poems to be signed with the author's full name or pseudonym, and for the majority of reviews to be initialled. The reader would have had some idea of the number of writers contributing to the journal, and of who were the most frequent among them, but much remained invisible. Some contributors appeared under several different initials, creating the impression that the journal drew on a wider range of expertise than was actually the case. While a typical issue might contain contributions from between 15 and 25 writers, there were over 200 contributors during Murry's editorship.³³ Murry recruited them from diverse sources. Some—Katherine Mansfield, Rollo H. Myers, W. W. Gibson, and Thomas Moulton—had been contributors to Murry's *Rhythm* and *The Blue Review*. A few others he had known while working for the government censorship at Watergate House during the war: they included Sullivan the assistant editor; D. L. Murray; J. T. Sheppard, a classicist at Kings College, Cambridge; H. J. Milne of the British Museum; and the poet Vivian Locke Ellis.³⁴ A significant number he had met directly or indirectly through Ottoline Morrell's circle at Garsington Manor during the war: most notably Aldous Huxley, T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, Clive Bell, and Roger Fry. The significant presence of the Bloomsbury group at Garsington accounts for their substantial representation in *The Athenaeum's* pages. Many others cannot be accounted for directly through any of these routes. Murry's range of contacts accounts in part for the eclecticism of the journal and its detachment from particular modernist factions.

³¹ *Athenaeum* (28 May 1920), 691; (11 June 1920), 755; (2 Apr. 1920), 435.

³² Leslie A. Marchand, *The Athenaeum: A Mirror of Victorian Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 105 n. 21.

³³ This number has been reached by examining the editor's marked copies. It is impossible to give an exact figure because (i) a small number of the editor's marked copies do not ascribe authorship even to full-length articles, and (ii) names appear in different forms, and one cannot be absolutely sure that they do not refer to different persons.

³⁴ See H. J. Milne, undated letter to Murry, mentioning Watergate House and Sheppard, in Edinburgh University Library, E88.128. See also L. Patrick Wilkinson, *John Tresidder Sheppard* (privately printed, 1969), 13; Murry, letter of 12 Feb. 1920, *Letters*, 280.

During his editorship, the relatively small changes that Murry made were directed at making the journal more popular in its appeal. In February 1920 he reflected that 'the whole effect of the paper' was 'perhaps a little too frigid & impersonal for the ordinary man'.³⁵ The introduction of the 'Marginalia' column by Autolycus, from 20 February 1920, was explicitly intended to make part of the journal less taxing to read. It seems likely that similar motives inspired the organization of an essay competition (announced 20 February 1920; see Fig. 48), the introduction of the 'Literary Gossip' page (from 28 May 1920), the reduction in length of the editorial page and the inclusion of original fiction (both from 11 June 1920), the replacement of the leading article by the less formal 'Notes and Comments' (from 15 October 1920), the cessation of the 'List of New Books' section, and the transfer of short notices to the more readable 'Our Library Table' section (from 16 July 1920). Notably, the first of Murry's shorter-length editorials, on Dickens, begins by stating that its subject 'has for many years been in disrepute among the highbrows': the editorial detached the reader from 'the intellectuals' and the criticism of 'the educated classes', and claimed that Dickens was 'one of the greatest artists England or the world has ever produced'.³⁶

Modernism and 'the varnish of modernity'

The Athenaeum did not stand in the same relationship to a modernist movement or group as *BLAST* did to Vorticism; nor did it represent a set of intellectual values so clearly as the later *Criterion* or *Calendar of Modern Letters*. Nevertheless, during its brief lifetime it created a sense of community among those of its contributors based in London; its sense of identity was reinforced sharply in November 1919 with the launch of J. C. Squire's *London Mercury*. Murry's evening parties brought together many contributors: one on 29 May 1919 was attended by Edward J. Dent, Bertrand Russell, Roger Fry, St John Hutchinson, Gerald Shove, Fredegond Shove, Clive Bell, Katherine Mansfield, and Frank Swinnerton.³⁷ At some point Murry began holding *Athenaeum* lunches: Edward Dent's diary refers to one in Lincoln's Inn Fields on 18 June 1919, though Virginia Woolf refers to one in July 1920 as the 'first'.³⁸

³⁵ Murry, letter of 12 Feb. 1920, *Letters*, 281.

³⁶ Murry, 'Charles Dickens (1812–1870)', *Athenaeum*, 4702 (11 June 1920), 757.

³⁷ Edward J. Dent, diary for 29 May 1919, King's College, Cambridge; Katherine Mansfield, undated letter to Lytton Strachey, *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield*, vol. ii, ed. Vincent O'Sullivan and Margaret Scott (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) 321–2.

³⁸ Dent, diary for 18 June 1919, King's College Cambridge; Virginia Woolf, diary for 6 July 1920, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, vol. ii: 1920–1924; ed. Anne Olivier Bell, assist. Andrew McNeillie (London: Hogarth Press, 1978), 52. Murry reported the lunches suspended in Oct. 1920: letter to Orlo Williams, 12 Oct. 1920, Edinburgh University Library, Special Collections, E91.38.

The pages of *The Athenaeum* bear witness to several ongoing and interlocking debates about the nature of artistic value. While such debates would have been possible if the contributors had not belonged to the same social network, that network undoubtedly facilitated and accelerated the debate. The debates concerned the importance of sincerity, individuality, and impersonality in poetry; the relation of poetry to ‘heritage’ or ‘tradition’; and the importance of ‘comprehensiveness’ in poetry. The best known contribution to the debate, T. S. Eliot’s ‘Tradition and the Individual Talent’, did not appear in *The Athenaeum*, but drew upon it.³⁹

The occasion of Eliot’s lecture, ‘Modern Tendencies in Poetry’, also clarified for Murry the difference between *The Athenaeum* and one of its main competitors, J. C. Squire’s *London Mercury*. Eliot delivered it at a time when Murry was anticipating the ‘decisive struggle’ between *The Athenaeum* and both *The London Mercury* and the *TLS*.⁴⁰ The audience for the talk included many *Athenaeum* contributors—Murry, Sullivan, Dent, Edith Sitwell, St John Hutchinson—and others like C. K. Ogden, Sydney Schiff, and Violet Schiff, who might have been sympathetic.⁴¹ However, it also included J. C. Squire, and others, probably including Harold Monro, described by Murry as ‘anti-*Athenaeums*’.⁴² He described the event to Katherine Mansfield:

There’s no doubt it’s a fight to finish between us & Them—they is the ‘Georgians’ *en masse*. It’s a queer feeling I begin to have now: that we’re making literary history. But I believe we are going to. More than that, in spite of the *London Mercury* and all its money and réclame, I believe we’ve got them on the run. They’re afraid.⁴³

Murry’s ‘The Condition of English Poetry’ (5 December 1919), a review of the 1918–19 volume of *Georgian Poetry*, and the fourth volume of the Sitwells’ *Wheels*, was no doubt precipitated by the appearance of Squire’s journal.⁴⁴ It is one of the most

³⁹ For discussion of Eliot’s ‘Tradition’ in relation to *The Athenaeum*, see Linda Hutcheon, *Formalism and the Freudian Aesthetic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Michael Whitworth, ‘*Pièces d’identité*: T. S. Eliot, J. W. N. Sullivan and Poetic Impersonality’, *English Literature in Transition*, 39 (1996), 149–70; Megan M. Quigley, ‘The Most Brilliant List of Contributors on Record: The *Athenaeum*, 1919–1921’, unpublished M.Phil. thesis, Oxford University, 1998; Peter White, ‘“Tradition and the Individual Talent” Revisited’, *Review of English Studies*, 58 (2007), 364–92.

⁴⁰ Murry, letter to Lytton Strachey, 26 Oct. 1919, British Library, Strachey papers, Add. 60681 f.141.

⁴¹ Edward J. Dent notes some audience members in his diary entry for 28 Oct. 1919: Dent Papers, King’s College, Cambridge. That his ‘Ogden’ was C. K. Ogden, and his ‘Hutchinson’ St John Hutchinson are my inferences.

⁴² The uncertainty about Harold Monro relates to spelling: both Dent and Murry record the presence of a ‘Munro’.

⁴³ Murry, letter of 29 Oct. 1919, *Letters*, 199 n. 2.

⁴⁴ John Middleton Murry, ‘The Condition of English Poetry’, *Athenaeum*, 4675 (5 Dec. 1919), 1283–5.

significant statements of *The Athenaeum's* outlook. Murry laments the tendency not to care about the quality of poetry, implying that a culture of anthologization has lowered standards. While his identification of the 'false simplicity' of the Georgians, their 'worship of trees and birds and contemporary poets', is no great critical feat, he makes subtler observations. Their simplicity 'is sicklied over with at times quite a perceptible varnish of modernity, and at other times with what looks to be technical skill, but generally proves to be a fairly clumsy reminiscence of somebody else's technical skill.' Though his phrasing belongs to another world, Murry shares with Pound that belief that the poet must 'make it new': modernism, he implies, is a process of continual innovation; borrowed innovations are insufficient; the technique must serve the idea.

The available evidence suggests that Murry's decision to resign the editorship of *The Athenaeum* was a personal one, precipitated by Katherine Mansfield's absence on the Continent due to her illness. And it appears that the Rowntree Social Service Trust's decision to amalgamate the journal with *The Nation* was a consequence and not a cause of Murry's departure; the loss of the editor provided an opportunity to curb excessive losses. Murry informed J. T. Sheppard of his decision on 8 January 1921, but other contributors—Edward Dent and J. B. Trend—did not hear of it until early February; the final issue appeared on 11 February 1921.⁴⁵

The Adelphi

Murry brought out the first issue of *The Adelphi* in June 1923. The title continued until 1955, and, though the first ten to fifteen years are the most important from the standpoint of modernism, the larger history is relevant. The journal appeared monthly from June 1923 to June 1927, priced at 1s. for its first two years, and 1s. 6d. from June 1925 onwards. From September 1927 to June 1930, it appeared as a quarterly under the title *The New Adelphi*, priced at half a crown (2s. 6d.). From October 1930 onwards, it reverted to monthly publication, priced at 1s., under the editorship, initially, of Max Plowman and Richard Rees. Disagreements between Plowman and Rees led to the latter becoming the sole official editor from the August 1931 issue onwards. Geoffrey Sainsbury stood in for Rees while he travelled to Ceylon from January to June 1932, and Jack Common was editor during 1935–6. Murry remained a frequent contributor and guiding force. After reading Marx's *Capital* in October 1931, he directed the focus of the journal increasingly towards political questions. From these concerns there developed the Adelphi Summer Schools at Glossop (1934) and Caerleon (1935), and the creation of the Adelphi

⁴⁵ Murry, letter to J. T. Sheppard, 8 Jan. 1920 [i.e., 1921], King's College, Cambridge, Modern Archives Centre, JTS/2/148; Dent, diary for 1 Feb. 1921, King's College, EJD/3/1/15; J. B. Trend, letter to Dent, 4 Feb. 1921, King's College, EJD/4/429/1.

Centre at Langham, near Colchester. In September 1936 Plowman returned, encouraged by Murry's pacifism; Rees, however, had fallen out of sympathy, and his editorship ended at the start of 1937. *The Adelphi* was reduced to a thirty-two-page monthly supplied by post to 700 subscribers. It survived the Second World War, its price rising to 9d. in 1940, and to 1s. 6d. in 1944. Murry ended his editorship in 1948, handing the journal over to Henry Williamson, who in turn handed it to his friend George Goodwin; its final editor, till its demise in 1955, was Sir Ifor Evans.

'The time for art is over'

Most accounts of *The Adelphi* draw on Murry's later statement that he founded it as a vehicle for the ideas of D. H. Lawrence, but even Murry's statements are inconsistent, and early readers may not have perceived the magazine so simply.⁴⁶ From the outset, and for its whole life, it was animated by a sense of mission, albeit a mission ill-defined and mutable, perhaps by its very nature not definable. Murry's idea of a Lawrentian journal began with his reading of *Aaron's Rod*, and was confirmed in March 1923, two months after Katherine Mansfield's death, when he read and reviewed *Fantasia of the Unconscious*. Following the demise of *The Athenaeum*, he had continued to contribute to the *Nation and Athenaeum*, but reported to Lytton Strachey that he felt 'like a fish out of a water' there.⁴⁷ '[W]e journalists have learned that we must be irrelevant to make our living,' he complained in his review of *Fantasia*; Lawrence's writings gave him a new ideal.⁴⁸ As Lea remarks, as well as giving Murry a new sense of purpose, *Fantasia* also emboldened him to remove the pretence of impersonality from his writing.⁴⁹ His first-person style, though far removed from Lawrence's, was to be a hallmark of the journal during his period of influence.

In his *Son of Woman* (1931), Murry wrote that reading *Fantasia* 'clinched' his 'half-formed intention' to found *The Adelphi*. His idea was to 'prepare a place' for Lawrence on his return to England: 'I neither desired, nor intended, to remain editor of it. I was, in my own eyes, simply *locum tenens*, literally lieutenant, for Lawrence; and I waited eagerly for his coming.' On his return, Lawrence found himself out of sympathy with England, and Murry was tempted to give up the

⁴⁶ John Middleton Murry, *Son of Woman: The Life of D. H. Lawrence* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1931), 328; Rayner Heppenstall, speaking in 'The Adelphi 1923-1950' (broadcast 6 July 1958, repeated 19 July 1958, BBC Third Programme), transcript, f.1, University College, London, Orwell Collection; the broadcast was reviewed by Philip Henderson, 'The Spoken World', *The Listener*, 60 (17 July 1958), 103; Lea, *Life of John Middleton Murry*, 105.

⁴⁷ Murry, letter to Lytton Strachey, 10 July 1922, British Library, Strachey Papers, Add. 60681, f.145.

⁴⁸ John Middleton Murry, 'Relevancy', *Nation and Athenaeum*, 32 (31 Mar. 1923), 984-5.

⁴⁹ Lea, *Life of John Middleton Murry*, 104-5.

venture and travel with him to Mexico. However, elsewhere Murry remarks that ‘The *Adelphi* was not founded for Lawrence alone, as a person, but for a faith which he had proclaimed. The *Adelphi* represented a principle and a determination which, I believed, was common to us both; which, to speak exactly, I vehemently desired should be common to us both.’⁵⁰ The reader of the early issues might have taken it to be as much inspired by Katherine Mansfield as by Lawrence: the frontispiece of the first issue was a previously unpublished photograph of her, and it carried many of her works. As we shall see, while many reviews responded to Lawrentian aspects of the magazine, they did not always mention him by name.

The first editorial announced that *The Adelphi* was ‘not a business proposition’, nor a ‘literary enterprise’, but ‘an assertion of a faith’. The faith was ‘that life is important, and that more life should be man’s chief endeavour.’ Furthermore, ‘the writers who give us life’ and ‘the men of science who seek to make our knowledge and command of it more central’ were bound by a conviction ‘that man must be true to his own experience’.⁵¹ Murry’s assertion of faith drew diverse responses, some enthusiastic, others sceptical. Some professed not to understand what Murry meant. The literary editor of the *Nation and Athenaeum* remarked, ‘I am one of those old-fashioned people who want messages to be expressed in words and sentences which have a precise meaning; Mr Murry is not.’⁵²

Murry was to offer several expositions of the philosophy and purpose of his journal, one of the most careful being his editorial in July 1926.⁵³ *The Adelphi* was a literary magazine, but was distinctive because it was ‘primarily concerned with literature in relation to life’. In the course of the article he rejected claims that it was either ‘romantic’, ‘mystic’, ‘a religious periodical’, or ‘anti-intellectual’.⁵⁴ To define ‘life’, Murry defined man: it is in man’s nature to be divided between mind and body, and it is his ideal to ‘be at one’. However, man would not regain lost wholeness by regression to an animal state: ‘Not by a return, but by an advance to Nature, can he achieve it. And in so far as the moral and philosophic doctrine of this magazine can be expressed in a single phrase, it is expressed in the phrase “an advance to nature.”’⁵⁵ Murry goes on to discuss the role of the intellect, thus engaging with Eliot’s *Criterion* and with the classicist and neo-Thomist strand of modernist criticism. *The Adelphi* recognized that the intellect is ‘not in itself a creative faculty’, and it rejected its claim to ‘autonomous

⁵⁰ Murry, *Son of Woman*, 328; *idem*, *Reminiscences of D. H. Lawrence* (New York: Henry Holt, 1933), 172.

⁵¹ John Middleton Murry, ‘The Cause of it All’, *Adelphi*, 1:1 (June 1923), 8.

⁵² Quoted by John Middleton Murry, ‘A Reply to Mr Beresford’, *Adelphi* 2:8 (Jan 1925), 696–8.

⁵³ John Middleton Murry, ‘The Fourth Year’, *Adelphi* 4:1 (July 1926), 1–10. See also ‘In Defence of The “Adelphi”’, *Spectator* (17 May 1924), 785–6.

⁵⁴ Murry, ‘The Fourth Year’, 1, 3, 4, 5. ⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 3.

functioning'. Intellectualism should be 'the servant, not the master, of Life'. The intellect cannot determine what is real, but must be disciplined. The disciplining of the intellect diminishes the division within the human being. As the intellect is disciplined, the human being begins to experience 'a new harmony' and rhythm within, and discovers more harmony and rhythm 'in the world of his experience'.⁵⁶ Literature—'true literature'—achieved a 'direct communication of a gifted human being's real experience, and of his reactions to his experience'.⁵⁷ 'Just as the moral ideal we uphold is that of the creation of a new and complete individuality, so the literature which we set above all other is creative. The organic form which is the sign of the reintegrated individual is also the mark of the most valuable kind of literature.'⁵⁸

The foregoing definitions of *The Adelphi* are individualistic in emphasis, but they overlapped with other missions, more revolutionary and collectivist in nature, that were to become more significant in the 1930s. The revolutionary aspect may be glimpsed in Murry's tenth editorial, written at a time when the journal's sales had slumped. He wrote of the 'individual' man in a time of 'social upheaval' who realizes that his values are not those of his fellow men, that he is not a member of a nation but merely of 'a tiny sect'. He has to deny the reality of the world outside. 'A sense of proportion has descended upon him. He is not going to revolutionize the world.' The achievable goal is rather 'to try to create a nucleus, to gather a sort of brotherhood, to build a milieu for himself, wherein his beliefs and aspirations shall find an echo and a response.'⁵⁹ The journal's title had been suggested by Sullivan because he and Murry had worked together at 10, Adelphi Terrace, and the meaning of 'adelphi' as brothers only gradually became important.⁶⁰ The original brotherhood collapsed in October 1924, in consequence of Koteliensky's dissatisfaction with Murry's increasing dominance.⁶¹ Nevertheless, the idea of a brotherhood persisted. As Murry discovered Marx in autumn 1931, and planned to eliminate 'dilettantism' from *The Adelphi*, he wished for 'a compact body of collaborators' to form 'the nucleus' of the magazine.⁶² The later establishment of the Adelphi Centre also derived from this ideal. By the 1940s, the journal was a calling for a national renaissance based on an agricultural renaissance, a position ultimately derived from Murry's pacifism.⁶³ Though the agriculturalist *Adelphi* may seem to lie far beyond the bounds of modernism, the anti-mechanist theme leads straight back to Lawrence, and beyond him to the Victorian sages. Whereas for some writers, literature appeared able to assist in solving the problems of modernity,

⁵⁶ Murry, 'The Fourth Year', 5. ⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 6. ⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 7.

⁵⁹ John Middleton Murry, 'The Two Worlds', *Adelphi*, 1:10 (Mar. 1924), 859, 860, 864.

⁶⁰ Lea, *Life of John Middleton Murry*, 105–6. ⁶¹ *Ibid.* 134–5.

⁶² Murry, letter to Rees, dated 'Sunday', Richard Rees Papers, University College, London, Box 14, subfolder 1928–31.

⁶³ Murry, letter to Arthur Bryant, 15 Apr. 1943, University of Edinburgh, Special Collections, E88.2.

Murry's trajectory took him away from literature. As early as 1931, explaining his lack of sympathy with the poetry of Stephen Spender and Michael Roberts, he remarked that he was out sympathy with all art, and that he felt 'the time for art is over'.⁶⁴

'Artificial respiration': *The Adelphi's* finances

Though the financial records for *The Adelphi* are patchier than those for *The Athenaeum*, some significant details emerge. At first Murry's journal was an extraordinary success. Rather than the 5,000 which he had anticipated, the first issue sold at least 18,000 copies: Murry reported this figure on 4 June 1923; Richard Rees was later to report it as 20,000.⁶⁵ By contrast, the first issue of *The Criterion* had sold 600 in October 1922: the difference reflects both the price sensitivity of the market and the marketable names Murry had for the first issue: Katherine Mansfield, D. H. Lawrence, H. M. Tomlinson, Anton Tchekhov (translated by S. S. Kotliansky), J. W. N. Sullivan, Arnold Bennett, Frank Swinnerton, H. G. Wells, and Harold Laski. It was downhill thereafter. Lea claims that Lawrence's description of Jesus as a 'failure' alienated many readers, causing a drop in sales to 7,000 after July 1923. However, one might suggest other causes: an initial peak due to curiosity falling away after the first issues. It was later reported that *The Adelphi* sold an average of 4,200 copies per month in the years 1923–7.⁶⁶ In February 1925, Murry advised his readers that they should place a definite order with a newsagent, or take out a subscription: one may infer that the wholesale distributors were insisting on less generous terms. In a characteristically personal address, he reminded his readers that the financial responsibility fell on him alone. At this point, Murry rejected the possibility of subsidy, remarking that 'Life maintained by artificial respiration is not worth living'; *The Adelphi* would be false to its ideal if it were subsidized.⁶⁷

To establish the journal Murry had in fact received £400 from Vivian Locke Ellis; £250 of it had been spent on preliminary advertising.⁶⁸ Ellis's contribution was not, however, an ongoing subsidy. The moment of crisis allowed *The Adelphi* to come closer to Murry's ideal. The direct appeal brought him into a closer relation with his readers. In April 1925 he announced that the journal had survived its crisis: 'The appeal has had the effect of forming a large and valuable nucleus

⁶⁴ Murry, letter to Rees, 22 Dec. 1931, Richard Rees Papers, University College, London, Box 14, subfolder 1928–31.

⁶⁵ Murry, letter to Alice Jones, 4 June 1923, University of Edinburgh, Special Collections, E92.86; Richard Rees, speaking in 'The Adelphi 1923–1950' (broadcast 6 July 1958, repeated 19 July 1958, BBC Third Programme), transcript, f.2, University College, London, Orwell Collection.

⁶⁶ Q. D. Leavis, *Fiction and the Reading Public* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1932), 20.

⁶⁷ John Middleton Murry, 'Pro Domo Mea', *Adelphi*, 2:9 (Feb. 1925), 72.

⁶⁸ Lea, *Life of Middleton Murry*, 105–6.

of direct subscribers, and also of showing that a very large number of readers, who would subscribe if they could, simply cannot afford to do so.⁶⁹ The idea of subscribers as the ‘nucleus’ anticipates his later idea about a smaller nucleus of contributors. Murry did not consider the monthly *Adelphi* to have been a great financial success. He recorded in January 1928 that he had earned about 16s. a week from it—about £42 a year—and that at the end he had found himself £74 in debt to the printer.⁷⁰ The viability of the endeavour was assisted by the royalties on Katherine Mansfield’s estate—Murry received £1,000 in 1924⁷¹—as well as earnings on Murry’s own books.

As Murry later noted, the monthly publication also tolerated advertisements, ‘in places where advertisements had no right to be’, including advertisements interleaved with the shorter articles.⁷² The practice was common in weekly political journals such as the *Nation and Athenaeum*, but uncommon in literary reviews. It was, Murry explained, ‘far more important that THE ADELPHI should pay its way quickly than that it should be beautiful to look at’.⁷³ The first issues relied predominantly on advertisements from publishers and booksellers, though there were advertisements for typewriters, fountain pens, chocolate, long-distance travel, and a charity. The second issue saw the arrival of a quarter-page advertisement for Courtauld’s Luvisca shirts and pyjamas, a regular fixture for ten years. By January 1924, there were several full-page advertisements by department stores (see Fig. 49), which usually promoted women’s clothes; many of these advertisers also used publications such as *The English Review*, but not more popular magazines such as the 1s. monthly *Strand*.⁷⁴ The more domestic tone also included advertisements for furnishings, and advertisements for insurance aimed at the main breadwinner, implicitly male. *The New Adelphi* survived without advertisements on the front cover, but retained advertising pages within. Apart from the addition of advertisements from other literary reviews, the profile of the advertisers remained similar.

During its period as the quarterly *The New Adelphi*, 1927–30, the journal is said to have sold an average of 1,700 per issue.⁷⁵ The higher price—2s. 6d.—undoubtedly deterred some potential purchasers. Sir Richard Rees, who had met Murry in 1926, later recalled that he helped to keep *The Adelphi* going when it became a quarterly, but could not recall whether he provided financial assistance. As

⁶⁹ John Middleton Murry, ‘The Future of the *Adelphi*’, *Adelphi* 2:11 (Apr. 1925), 923.

⁷⁰ Murry, letter to Orlo Williams, 20 Jan. 1928, Edinburgh University Library, MS 2515, E91.38.

⁷¹ Lea, *Life of Middleton Murry*, 124.

⁷² John Middleton Murry, *Prospectus* [1930] bound with the *New Adelphi* (Bodleian Library), [1].

⁷³ John Middleton Murry, ‘A Month After’, *Adelphi*, 1:2 (July 1923), 89–99, esp. 98–9.

⁷⁴ *The English Review* reduced its price from 2s. to 1s. in June 1923; nevertheless, it was less populist in character than the 1s. *Strand*.

⁷⁵ Leavis, *Fiction and the Reading Public*, 20.

Harvey Nichols
of Knightsbridge

**Great Clearance
. SALE .**
Commences June 30
Continuing for Four Weeks

BARGAINS IN CARPETS.

Extra Quality COLOURED HAIR CARPET.
The following colours in stock: Dark Blue, Terra Cotta, Green, Drab, Light Blue, Peach, Gold, Natural, Grey, Rose, Dark Green, Light Brown, and Dark Brown. 27 inches wide.
Reduced to **7/9** per yard

PLAIN WILTON CARPET.
2,000 yards in stock in the following colours: Brown, Green, Beige, Orange and Blue. 27 inches wide.
Original Price 12/6 per yard. Reduced to **8/11** per yard

PLAIN SAXONY CARPET.
Stocked in the following colours: Wine, Grey, Green, Mole, Brown, Light Blue, Dark Blue, Biscuit, and Red. 27 inches wide.
Original Price 11/9 per yard. Reduced to **9/9** per yard

Extra Quality DEEP PILE SAXONY CARPET.
Stocked in the following colours: Dark Blue, Biscuit, Mole, Green, Brown, Light Blue, and Grey. 27 inches wide.
Original Price 14/11 per yard. Reduced to **12/9** per yard

SPECIAL BARGAIN.
NATURAL GREY HAIR CORD CARPET.
36 inches wide. Original Price 7/6 per yard
Reduced to **5/9** per yard
Can be made up into any size Carpet.

Remnants and Oddments Half Price on Thursdays

HARVEY NICHOLS & CO. LTD., KNIGHTSBRIDGE, LONDON, S.W.1

THE ADELPHI, printed by LUXURY BROTHERS LIMITED, Whitefriars House, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4; and published for the Proprietors, by BRITISH PERIODICALS LIMITED, 12, Curstons Street, London, E.C.4.

Fig. 49. Adverts, rear cover of *The Adelphi* (Jan. 1925)

Murry referred to 'the final year's subsidy' in March 1930,⁷⁶ it appears that someone was subsidizing the quarterly journal, and it was most probably Rees. Rees had become the beneficiary of a trust fund which provided him with at least £1,000 a year of unearned income.⁷⁷ *The Adelphi* also survived thanks to contributors willing to accept less than they might have received elsewhere: in 1928 it was paying 7s. 6d. a page, which, as Murry noted, was half *The Criterion's* rate.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Murry, letter (TS carbon) to John Coulter, 7 Mar. 1930, Rees Papers, University College London, Box 14, subfolder 1928-31.

⁷⁷ Richard Rees, *A Theory of My Time* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1963), 56-7.

⁷⁸ Murry, letter to Orlo Williams, 20 Jan. 1928, Edinburgh University Library, MS 2515, E91.38.

Rees took full financial responsibility for the journal from its resumption as a monthly in 1930. In the first few years it sold fewer than 4,500 copies per month.⁷⁹ The total extent of Rees's subsidy is not recorded. The surviving correspondence records certain ad hoc payments: for example, £250 in June 1932 to save the printer, Aldred, from having his printing machines seized. In June 1934, Murry requested a subsidy of £700 from Rees for the coming year, and in March 1935 confirmed that the journal was losing about that sum annually, though he hoped to reduce the loss to £550. Rees took the view that it needed £900 a year.⁸⁰ Exactly how the money was spent is unclear, though when Jack Common began as assistant editor, probably in 1930, he received £2 a week, and in 1936 Murry wrote of needing an annual salary of £150 for editing the journal.⁸¹ When Rees withdrew his support, the journal shrank to what Murry called 'our beggarly 32pp': its emaciation illustrates more strikingly than anything else the significance of the subsidy.⁸²

As Rees was co-editor and then editor during the period of his subsidy, the journal inevitably reflected the outlook of its principal supporter, but Murry remained an important influence. Rees and Murry corresponded extensively on matters of editorial direction. During the period of co-editorship Rees was concerned about the tone of Max Plowman's contributions to the 'Notes and Comments' section. Rees wrote to Murry in February 1931 complaining of Plowman's Rousseauesque idea of a perfect peasant society that had been 'contaminated by "the Jews" and machinery'.⁸³ The removal of Plowman as co-editor later in 1931 turned the journal away from some of its distinctly Lawrentian concerns. Rees was more sympathetic than Plowman to some manifestations of technological modernity. In December 1931 he wrote to Murry, forwarding a letter he had received from Michael Roberts. He urged Murry to encourage men like Roberts: they felt 'cut off from Eliot by his Toryism', but also felt a failure of sympathy from Murry.⁸⁴ He went on to praise a poem by Roberts ('And is Familiar Country') 'in which he juxtaposes flowers and brooks and sunshine with machines and electricity (and, alas, one "thundering tractor"!)'⁸⁵ The terms of Rees's praise imply that Roberts's poem is the antipathy of Plowman's idealization of rusticity: it represents the possibility of a reintegration which would include technological modernity.

⁷⁹ Leavis, *Fiction and the Reading Public*, 20.

⁸⁰ Murry, letters to Richard Rees, 25 June 1934 and 16 Mar. 1935, and Rees, letter to Murry, 19 June 1935, Rees Papers, University College, London, Box 14, subfolder 1934-5.

⁸¹ Jack Common, speaking in 'The *Adelphi* 1923-1950', transcript, f.3; Murry, letter to Rees, 19 June 1936, Rees Papers, University College, London, Box 14, subfolder 1936.

⁸² Murry, postcard to R. H. Ward, 8 Nov. 1937, Edinburgh University Library, E87.78.

⁸³ Rees, letter to Murry, 25 Feb. 1931, University College, London, Box 14, subfolder 1928-31.

⁸⁴ Rees, letter to Murry, 20 Dec. 1931, University College, London, Box 14, subfolder 1928-31.

⁸⁵ Michael Roberts, 'And Is Familiar Country', *Adelphi* 3:4 (Jan. 1932), 218-20.

‘A pretty yellow cover’

Purchasers of the first issue were greeted with a bright yellow cover—a feature of the journal for most of its life—and a publication of ninety-six pages, 215 × 137 mm, a common size for monthly and quarterly publications. By November 1923 it had expanded to 112 pages. Over its lifetime the journal made various small changes. *The New Adelphi* adopted a more generous page, 9.5 × 6 inches (240 × 150 mm); in 1930 the monthly *Adelphi* reverted to its former size. The most notable change came in February 1932, when it expanded from sixty-four to eighty pages per issue, by dint of using cheaper paper for the text and the cover, and by printing the cover in one colour only.⁸⁶ The emphases on content rather than appearance, on value for money, and on reaching as wide a social range of readers as possible are characteristic of the journal’s ethos throughout its life, not only during the years of Murry’s conversion to Marxism. The opening editorial drew attention to the journal’s appearance, but, in emphasizing that it was an assertion of faith, claimed that it was something more than ‘a nice little book in a pretty yellow cover’.⁸⁷

The first issue established the format for the next four years: the weightier pieces in the journal—literary essays, stories, and journals of about six pages each—were accompanied by shorter pieces in the ‘Contributors’ Club’ section, and in the miscellaneous paragraphs culled from other publications under the title ‘Multum in Parvo’. Like the ‘Autolycus’ and ‘Literary Gossip’ sections in the final twelve months of *The Athenaeum*, the shorter pieces lightened the tone, and made for a journal that would appeal to a wider range of readers. The ‘Contributors’ Club’ allowed writers to discuss recent books of interest—thus H. M. Tomlinson discussed H. G. Wells’s *Men Like Gods* (1923), and Wells discussed a book on Bolshevik Russia—but there was, notably, no formal section of reviews, and there were to be none until the beginning of *The New Adelphi*. In this regard, Murry was staking the magazine’s claim to importance on ground quite different from that of *The Athenaeum*; reviewing, the exclusion may imply, is too far removed from ‘life’. Relative to Murry’s *Rhythm* or *The Athenaeum*, art and music were given little coverage.

Murry remarked in the second issue that the reader ought not to expect the contributors to be ‘in unison’, but nevertheless, one can discern the journal’s identity being forged in the early issues.⁸⁸ Sullivan’s essay ‘On Being Oneself’ explores the discrepancy between individual taste and the approved, official canon. It can be read as an indirect response to ‘Tradition and the Individual Talent’, and as an essay empowering readers outside the cultural hegemony. Like Murry, Sullivan is concerned with the cultural institutions that obscure the truth, ‘the vast apparatus

⁸⁶ Geoffrey Sainsbury, ‘Notes and Comments’, *Adelphi* 3:5 (Feb. 1932), 257–8.

⁸⁷ Murry, ‘The Cause of it All’, 8. ⁸⁸ Murry, ‘A Month After’.

of suggestion', though his treatment is more ironic and detached.⁸⁹ In the second issue, the 'The Pressgoat' satirized the artificial production of news by journalists. Harold Laski's piece in the first Contributors' Club reacts against those who wished to give prominence to businessmen in universities, arguing that 'The justification of science and philosophy does not lie in better machinery and great wealth. It lies in themselves as ends necessary to the fulfilment of life.'⁹⁰ The relation of individualism and authentic experience to education was examined early on in Charles Barker's indictment of elementary school teaching. His condemnation of 'herd teaching' and the repression of 'childish energies' recalls Lawrence's narratives of school teaching in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. Barker's essay drew several contributions from readers, published in the following month.⁹¹ Their inclusion confirmed the impression created by Murry's style of address, that there was no firm boundary between contributor and reader; that the reader of *The Adelphi* was part of the brotherhood.

The profile of *The Adelphi's* contributors looks, in retrospect, less modernist than that of *The Athenaeum's*. It is true that T. S. Eliot contributed, as did W. B. Yeats and H.D., but their contributions were not frequent, nor representative. To those familiar with Woolf's distinction of Edwardians and Georgians (in 'Modern Fiction' and elsewhere), the inclusion of Arnold Bennett and H. G. Wells in the first issue, and of John Galsworthy in later issues, is far more striking. In the period from 1923 to 1927 Murry was by far the most frequent contributor: he produced unsigned editorial pieces, pieces over his own signature or initials, pieces signed with his pseudonym 'Henry King', and at least some of the contributions by 'Journeyman'.⁹² After him in frequency follow Katherine Mansfield and D. H. Lawrence; then, in descending order, John Shand, Henry Chester Tracy, H. M. Tomlinson, J. W. N. Sullivan, Herbert E. Palmer, S. S. Kotliansky (as a translator of Russian literature), Edmund Blunden, and Dorothy Richardson. *The New Adelphi*, though it included contributions from writers now well known within modernist studies, such as Eliot, Herbert Read, Michael Roberts, and Rebecca West, was dominated by Murry, with the next most prolific contributors being Marion Robinson, Richard Rees, James Young, and Robert Hillyer. The appearance of Roberts was a sign of the direction that *The Adelphi* was to take when it resumed monthly publication, as was that of George Orwell, who contributed as E. A. Blair. In the first two years of the new monthly (October 1930 to September

⁸⁹ J. W. N. Sullivan, 'On Being Oneself', *Adelphi*, 1:1 (June 1923), 55.

⁹⁰ 'MZ4796', 'The Pressgoat', *Adelphi* 1:2 (July 1923), 115–22; Harold Laski, 'Big Business and the Universities', *Adelphi* 1:2 (June 1923), 64.

⁹¹ Charles Barker, 'The Elementary School: An Indictment', *Adelphi* 1:3 (Aug. 1923), 206–14; Frances Gray et al., 'The Elementary School', *Adelphi* 1:4 (Sept 1923), 323–30.

⁹² Some of the 'Journeyman' pieces were collected in Murry's *To the Unknown God* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1924).

1932), Murry was again the most frequent contributor, with almost twice as many pieces as the next, Richard Rees. Behind Rees followed Geoffrey Sainsbury, E. B. C. Jones (who frequently reviewed fiction), Michael Roberts (as poet and reviewer), Max Plowman, and Eric Blair. The early years of the monthly are notable also for the appearance of the *New Signatures* poets: W. H. Auden, C. Day Lewis, Stephen Spender, and A. S. J. Tessimond. Though influenced by T. S. Eliot, this group, as Rees remarked, may also have felt 'cut off' from him by his conservatism, and in that regard, *The Adelphi* offered a home.

The profile of *The Adelphi's* readership is difficult to determine with certainty. The advertisements for women's clothes suggest that it may have been, of the literary journals, more than usually attractive to female readers, but on their own the advertisements provide weak evidence. Alan Porter, criticizing the first twelve issues, remarked that it attracted 'readers anxious to feel themselves familiar with profundities . . . (school-teachers, littérateurs, business men, undergraduates, and nobodies) who, finding themselves thwarted and unfulfilled in life, demand some emotional outpouring, some compensation of soul, to soften their discontents.'⁹³ The response to Barker's article on the elementary schools tends to confirm that teachers were a significant fraction of the readership. F. A. Lea also suggests that a higher than usual proportion were northerners.⁹⁴ A glimpse of the self-conception of *Adelphi* readers comes in the May 1926 issue. One reader wrote that Murry had 'generously admitted' him, 'and others who have kept alongside', to 'the working of his mind'.⁹⁵ One may infer that Murry's first-person addresses created the impression of personal presence; and the reference to the 'others' suggests either that *Adelphi* readers knew each other personally, or that the journal's mode of address created an imaginary community and a sense of fellowship. He defined himself as being 'not a high-brow, not a freak': it appears therefore that *The Adelphi* was sufficiently populist in its approach to reassure its readers of the normality of wishing to acquire knowledge, or, in Porter's terms, of wishing to familiarize oneself with profundities.⁹⁶

The personal relationship between editor and reader, another version of the 'brotherhood', was crucial to *The Adelphi*. Murry developed it further in 1933–4 in the eleven issues of the subscription-only journal *The Wanderer*. *The Wanderer* was written solely by Murry, and had 372 subscribers.⁹⁷ It was, explicitly, an attempt to evade the 'ethics of mass-production' which Murry felt had tainted the spheres of journalism and literature.⁹⁸ *The Adelphi* entered into more complex compromises with those ethics, particularly with regard to advertisement and

⁹³ Alan Porter, 'Anathema', *The Spectator*, 5003 (17 May 1924), 793–4.

⁹⁴ Lea, *Life of Middleton Murry*, III.

⁹⁵ 'To Readers of the *Adelphi*', *Adelphi*, 3:12 (May 1926), inside rear cover.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ John Middleton Murry, 'To My Readers', *Wanderer*, 7 (June 1934), 112.

⁹⁸ John Middleton Murry, 'To My Readers', *Wanderer*, 1 (Dec. 1933), 16.

subsidy, but the attempt to establish a direct connection was tangible throughout its existence.

'Not my colour': The reception of *The Adelphi*

The early issues of the magazine had a mixed reception. Most reviews took their cue from Murry's first editorial, *The New Age* remarking that the journal seemed 'more lively than fundamentally alive'.⁹⁹ The *TLS*, while finding it full of 'interest' and 'vigour', expressed concerns that it promised to be 'a field for individuality', and regretted that Murry had not offered a literary critical essay.¹⁰⁰ To Desmond MacCarthy, the editorial implied that the magazine's relation to its readers was 'to be of a peculiarly frank and heart-to-heart nature'. MacCarthy felt that Murry had changed his literary identity: the editorial was written from the position of 'one who has suddenly become ashamed of being "a high-brow" without becoming anything else'.¹⁰¹ He added that there was nothing to be ashamed of in being an 'intellectual'. Murry, it seemed to him, was in danger of throwing away 'his fine gifts as a literary connoisseur' in favour of the role of 'moral prophet'. Sullivan's essay, meanwhile, regrettably encouraged young men to pronounce their ill-founded literary tastes and preferences. It seemed to MacCarthy that Murry and Sullivan valued only criticism which asked 'Has this book helped me?' Such criticism was only as interesting as the subject who asked the question and the kind of help which he needed.¹⁰² *The Adelphi* found a more enthusiastic reception in *Youth*, a journal inspired by anti-modern folkist youth movements such as the Kibbo Kift Kindred. *Youth's* anonymous review mocked 'intellectual critics' such as MacCarthy who 'scoffed', 'grinned', and mentioned Murry's name only to sigh '“Ah, yes! isn't it a pity?”'

Here is a journal trying to do that which is utterly difficult in our self-conscious, sophisticated age, to convey in words the reality of direct experience, to be free, absolutely free from every tinge of attitudinization, to be free both from false simplicity and false complexity, to be able to speak in the plenitude of one's being, not to compose and construct any longer, but to communicate with one's spontaneity.¹⁰³

The Adelphi heralded a 'new form of consciousness, free from all sediment'. Some at least of its writers, the reviewer wrote, 'have come through the dingy hedge of

⁹⁹ Anon., *The New Age*, 33 (7 June 1923), 95. ¹⁰⁰ Anon., *TLS* (7 June 1923), 490.

¹⁰¹ 'Affable Hawk' [Desmond MacCarthy], 'Books in General', *New Statesman* 21 (9 June 1923), 270.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Anon., 'The Adelphi', *Youth*, 11 (Oct. 1923), 60–1. For an account of *Youth's* context, see David Bradshaw, 'Red Trousers: *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and John Hargrave', *Essays in Criticism*, 55 (2005), 352–73.

ideas and stand right up to one and speak to one as man to man, with perfect simplicity and directness'.¹⁰⁴ While the review did not mention Lawrence by name, this issue of *Youth* carried an epigraph from him, and it is clear that the reviewer was responding mostly favourably from its Lawrentian aspects.

Lawrence's own response to the writers emerging from the 'dingy hedge' was less than complimentary, and complicates the notion that *The Adelphi* was a vehicle for his ideas. 'Your articles in the Adelphi always annoy me,' he wrote in February 1924. 'Can't you focus yourself outside yourself? Not forever focussed on yourself, ad nauseam?'¹⁰⁵ Later that year, alluding to the founding ideal of *The Adelphi* as a compendious magazine, he suggested that both the 'telephone-book magazine, and the pale yellow *cri de l'âme*' were outdated ideas. 'Spunk is what one wants, not introspective sentiment.'¹⁰⁶ He was, in contrast, relieved to find that *The Criterion* had some 'guts'.¹⁰⁷ By early 1926 he felt uncomfortable appearing in Murry's journal: 'I can't go between the yellow covers of the *Adelphi* without taking on a tinge of yellow which is all right in itself, but not my colour for me.'¹⁰⁸ Although he continued to be published in it, Lawrence had no sense of personal commitment to *The Adelphi*.

Conclusion: An inaccessible heritage

Murry's two journals were influential, but in divergent ways. *The Athenaeum* set high standards for literary criticism, and was undoubtedly in Eliot's mind as he established *The Criterion*. In May 1921 he wrote that its 'suffocation' within *The Nation* was to be 'deplored'. Murry 'was genuinely studious to maintain a serious criticism', and 'had much higher standards and greater ambitions for literary journalism than any other editor in London.' In 1928 he was to refer to the 'brief and brilliant life' of the journal under Murry.¹⁰⁹

For several reasons, the influence of *The Athenaeum* has not always been recognized. Conservative in appearance, it does not fit the dominant idea of the 'little magazine'. Moreover, in its concentration on criticism rather than original creative work, it may appear to be of secondary importance; however, by being more

¹⁰⁴ Anon., 'The Adelphi'.

¹⁰⁵ D. H. Lawrence, letter to Murry, 7 Feb. 1924, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence* vol. iv: *June 1921–March 1924*, ed. Warren Roberts, James T. Boulton, and Elizabeth Mansfield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 572.

¹⁰⁶ Lawrence to Murry, *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, vol. v: *March 1924–March 1927*, ed. James T. Boulton and Lindeth Vasey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 170.

¹⁰⁷ Lawrence to Richard Cobden-Sanderson, *Letters*, v, 181.

¹⁰⁸ Lawrence to Murry, *Letters*, v, 385.

¹⁰⁹ T. S. Eliot, 'London Letter', *The Dial*, 70 (June 1921), 689; *idem*, preface, *The Sacred Wood*, 2nd edn (London: Faber, 1928).

receptive to innovative writing than *The London Mercury*, it fostered modernism in the 1920s. For literary historians who accept the importance of criticism, its influence has been underestimated for other reasons. Because of the early foundation of the journal, Murry's two-year tenure often appears as a curious annex to a Victorian institution, rather than an achievement in its own right. The standard reference work *British Literary Magazines* places the journal within the 'Romantic Age', and covers Murry's editorship in one sentence; the volume on the twentieth century includes only the far less significant *Nation and Athenaeum*.¹¹⁰ Moreover, much work from *The Athenaeum* was reprinted in collections by individual authors: readers think of 'The Perfect Critic' as part of Eliot's *The Sacred Wood* and of 'The Ottoman and the Wotnot' as part of Roger Fry's *Vision and Design*, rather than both as parts of *The Athenaeum*.

The Adelphi has been overshadowed by its editor. Murry's repeated redefinitions of its purpose make any definition elusive, and because of his insistent presence in its pages, the work of others can easily be overlooked. In the populism of its early years, and in its longevity, *The Adelphi* does not fit accepted definitions of a 'little magazine'. Moreover the literature which appeared in its pages does not match formalist definitions of modernist literature. D. H. Lawrence's position in the modernist canon has never been secure, and his claims for admission would not normally be based on *Fantasia of the Unconscious*; the *New Signatures* writers and Orwell, though influenced by Eliot and other modernists of his generation, are peripheral to the canon. The modernism of *The Adelphi* therefore needs to be reassessed with reference to a more generous definition of the movement, one which defines modernism primarily as an engagement with the intellectual problems of modernity, and in which the formal properties of literature are only one means to that end. In its own phase of modernity *The Adelphi* stood for a modernism with its roots in the writings of the Victorian sages and in the individualism of English revolutionary writers and romantic poets.

¹¹⁰ Alvin Sullivan (ed.), *British Literary Magazines*, 4 vols (New York: Greenwood, 1983–6). The point is made by Quigley, 'The Most Brilliant List', 3.

STANDARDS OF CRITICISM

The Calendar of Modern Letters (1925–7)

JOHN LUCAS

Everyone agrees that *The Calendar of Modern Letters*, a journal which lasted from March 1925 until July 1927, has an importance out of all proportion to its short and, at first glance, far from glorious career. It can't even be said to have flared briefly before plunging back into darkness. Its sales were never very great. The first issue sold over 7,000 copies, but by the end of its first year of monthly issues these had declined to below 3,000. Perhaps in an effort to arrest this decline, from April, 1926, the magazine became a quarterly, but sales continued to slide, the editors began to fill *The Calendar's* pages with their own work—a sure sign that they weren't able to attract contributors in either sufficient quantity or of the required quality—and the journal's final issue carried a statement by Edgell Rickword, entitled 'A Valediction Forbidding Mourning', in which he announced that:

We have decided to scuttle the ship, rather than to have the leaks periodically stopped by a generous patron, because the present literary situation requires to be met by a different organization, which we are not now in a position to form . . . Our conception of the nature of a literary review does not . . . encourage us to expect an immediate metamorphosis. . . . A review has quite different functions from a work of art, but the parallel may serve to explain the unwillingness of those most closely associated with the *Calendar* to continue it in its present form.¹

In his biography of Rickword, *A Poet at War*, Charles Hobday quotes Rickword as saying in his own memoir that the journal's 'demise can be attributed not so much, as many people thought, to financial reasons as to the lack of new young writers. We couldn't get work of the quality that would have justified us carrying on.' The explanation for this paucity of writing is, he says, 'the tremendous number of young

¹ Quoted, Charles Hobday, *Edgell Rickword: A Poet at War* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1989), 101.

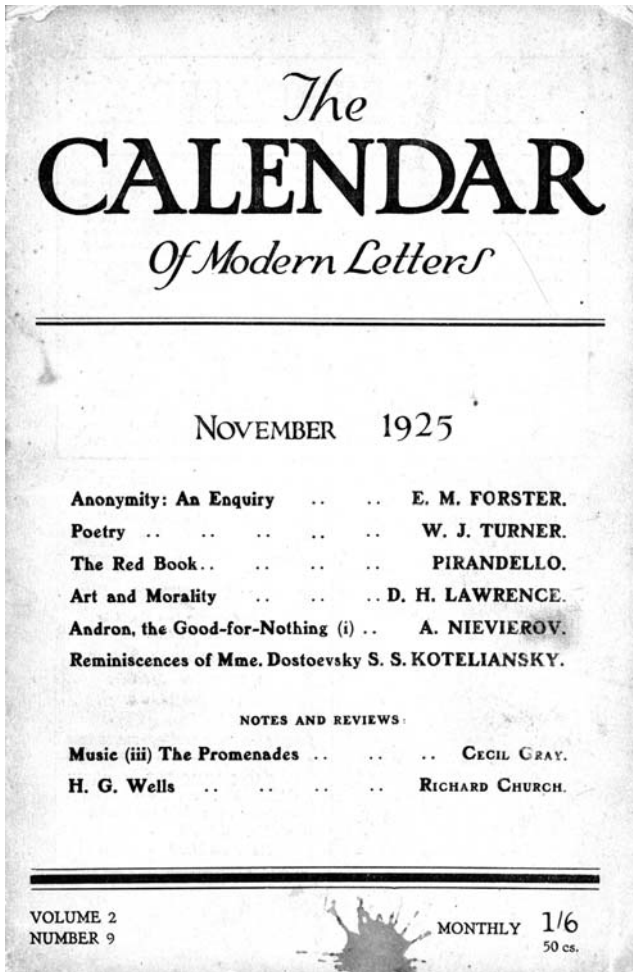


Fig. 50. Cover of *The Calendar of Modern Letters* (Nov. 1925)

men killed in the catastrophe of World War I.²² There is obviously a good deal of truth in this, although anyone at all familiar with the decade in which *The Calendar* both began and ceased publication will know that the cupboard wasn't as bare as Rickword here claims, and that, given the journal's intention to provide a home for younger writers, a reader looking to it for informed judgement on that generation would be disappointed to see how few contributors of lasting worth feature in its pages. Blunden, Graves, and Sassoon all appear, but they more or less exhaust the list of the new and the young. As for the older generation, at least those acceptable to the journal's position, Lawrence gave them *The Princess*, which was serialized over three instalments, Forster provided a review for the second issue, Wyndham

²² Hobday, *Edgell Rickword*, 101.

Lewis declined Rickword's invitation to offer some fiction and instead handed in what Hobday calls 'a rambling critical essay, which . . . finally appeared in two issues'.³ Only in Edwin Muir could the journal be said to have acquired at least one writer whose reputation would be, if not made, then certainly enhanced through his contributions to *The Calendar*.

But what established the journal's reputation and gave it, at all events in retrospect, its *cachet* was less its discovery of new voices than its combativeness as an organ of informed criticism. Its regular 'Scrutinies', in which well-known authors and their work were submitted to often devastating critical enquiry, not only attracted the admiring attention of younger writers, but famously led F. R. Leavis to adopt the name *Scrutiny* for his own journal in 1932. Thirty years later, Leavis remarked that this title was consciously chosen 'as a salute and a gesture of acknowledgement—an assertion of a kind of continuity of life with *The Calendar*'.⁴ To understand this 'life' will therefore require some account of the early career of Edgell Rickword, who, for all the work of others, notably Douglas Garman, was without doubt the journal's presiding genius.

Becoming a socialist

Rickword was born into a conservative middle-class family in Colchester in 1898. He went to the Royal Grammar School where, according to Hobday, as a 'very bright and successful pupil', he learnt among much else 'about the English class system'.⁵ Then, early in 1914, having seen the effects of a lockout of employees from the Britannia Iron works at Colchester, effects so distressing that the town's mayor organized a Relief Fund, Rickword became a socialist. Two years later, he wrote a poem protesting against the execution of the leaders of the Easter Rising in Dublin. On 25 September of the same year he joined the Artists' Rifles, engaged in front-line action for the first time early in 1918, was wounded and sent back to England on 26 May, and, when he returned to France later that summer, took with him Sassoon's *Counter-Attack* and the two-volume Muses' Library edition of Donne's Poems. Having survived the war, he lost his left eye to 'general vascular invasion', and was fitted out with a glass-eye replacement, for which he was charged 3 guineas.⁶

I say 'survived', but like virtually all other soldiers who lived on after 1918, Rickword remained for the rest of his life deeply affected by his experiences in the trenches. These were not merely the traumas that resulted from exposure to bombardment, the stench and look of dead bodies, the rain, mud, cold, the lice, the poor food, squalid living conditions, the for-weeks-at-a-time unchanged clothes, traumas that meant he would frequently wake from sleep screaming; there was

³ *Ibid.* 86. ⁴ *Scrutiny*, 20 (rpt: London: Chatto and Windus, 1963), 3.

⁵ Hobday, *Edgell Rickword*, 17. ⁶ *Ibid.* 38

also, so he later wrote, ‘the absence of any conviction that [suffering and slaughter] were necessary, that they were leading to a better organization of society.’⁷ Among those who promoted the war, he means, not among those who actually fought.

In an important article, Charles Hobday has shown how deeply Isaac Rosenberg was committed to socialist ideas, even to pacifistic ones, and that although he became a soldier he was in no sense of the war party.⁸ On the contrary, he applauded the sentiments of a verse play called ‘The Pterodamozels’, which the pacifist R. C. Trevelyan sent him and which he read when he was home on ten days’ leave in the summer of 1917. The play turns on the action of Prometheus, who, having despaired of humanity, invents a new breed of winged and feathered women, although an Englishman argues that people aren’t naturally bad, and encourages Prometheus to send the pterodamozels to capture and put on trial all those who promote and profit from the war. The women do this and:

When report of the great kidnapping
Spread through the cities . . .
The streets were filled with huge crowds of civilians,
Soldiers and sailors and munition-workers,
All shouting, ‘Down with war and the governing classes! . . .
The censorship was paralysed and when
The good news reached the trenches and the fleets,
There broke out fraternizing mutinies⁹

A few months later, on 13 October Ivor Gurney sent his friend Marion Scott a sonnet called ‘To the Prussians of England’, which not only lambasts those who scorn ‘our silly dreams of peace . . . And Brotherhood of man,’ but promises that ‘We’ll forge a knife | Shall cut the cancer threatens England’s life.’¹⁰ So when Hobday tells us that as a young officer, Rickword ‘had welcomed the [Russian] revolution’,¹¹ we should note that he was by no means alone. And although by 1923 his initial starry enthusiasm had dimmed, his commitment to socialism never faded.

This inevitably made him one of the awkward squad at Oxford, to which he went in October 1919, intending to study modern languages. True, there was a certain amount of radical thinking in the Oxford air, but Rickword’s university friends tended to be those who would afterwards make names for themselves in the literary and artistic worlds, and for whom political matters came low down on the list of priorities. They included Blunden, Graves, novelists-to-be L. P. Hartley

⁷ Edgell Rickword, *Literature in Society. Essays and Opinions, 1931–1978*, ed. Alan Young (Manchester: Carcanet, 1978), 156.

⁸ Charles Hobday, ‘Isaac Rosenberg, Revolutionary Poet’, *The London Magazine*, 40:3/4 (June/July 2000) 42–56.

⁹ *Ibid.* 50.

¹⁰ Ivor Gurney, *Collected Poems*, ed. P. J. Kavanagh (Manchester: Carcanet, 2004), 34.

¹¹ Hobday, *Edgell Rickword*, 75.

and Louis Golding, the future art historians T. W. ('Tommy') Earp and Antony Bertram, and Vivian de Sola Pinto.¹²

Rickword left Oxford after a year. By then he was married. His wife, Peggy, was far advanced in pregnancy, and he therefore needed more money than his university scholarship and disability allowance gave him. And so, in common with other young men of the time, he decided to make his home in London, where he could pursue the life of a freelance writer. Many years later, when I interviewed him for a book of essays I was putting together on the 1930s, he explained that his decision was reasonable enough. Literary journals abounded, and though none paid a great deal for reviews—the bread-and-butter of literary life—you could without difficulty get enough hack work to pay the rent and buy the day's necessities. Even with a wife and baby to support, Rickword got by.¹³

He was soon writing regularly for *The Daily Herald*, *The New Statesman*, Middleton Murry's *Athenaeum*, and the *Times Literary Supplement*. And from his contributions to the last of these, in particular, Rickword's critical acuity is at once apparent. He shreds a book on Donne which claims to find no 'beauty' in the poet's work. 'Our ears have been opened,' Rickword retorts, 'and it would be profane to now think of Donne as less than a master of English verse.'¹⁴ But his critical independence is such that he notes of Arnold Bennett's *Riceyman Steps* that its 'remarkable instinct for reality' is dependent on the author's mastery of 'living detail',¹⁵ praise which is the more pointed when we realize that for many of Rickword's generation, Bennett belonged to an older, discredited world, one Orwell famously summed up as 'the age-before-last... [when] there was a cult of cheeriness and manliness, beer and cricket, briar pipes and monogamy, and it was at all times possible to earn a few guineas by writing an article denouncing "highbrows."'¹⁶

It should be said that Rickword had already begun to hone his critical skills at Oxford, where he had written several sharp pieces for *Oxford Poetry*, commenting, for instance, that John Freeman's poems suffer because of his reluctance to undertake 'the donkey-work', and that Freeman is typical of those who object to 'working on a poem when the first glow of creation has cooled', an objection Rickword dismisses as 'sentimental'.¹⁷ He is equally assured in taking on F. S. Flint's call for

¹² De Sola Pinto features memorably in Sassoon's *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*, and became, while Professor of English Literature at Nottingham University, a well-known champion of, among others, the Earl of Rochester, Byron, and D. H. Lawrence—awkward squaddies, all of them.

¹³ See John Lucas (ed.), *The 1930s: A Challenge to Orthodoxy* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1978), 4.

¹⁴ Edgell Rickword, *Essays and Opinions, 1921–1931*, ed. Alan Young (Manchester: Carcanet, 1974), 20.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 63–4.

¹⁶ George Orwell, 'Inside the Whale', in *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, vol. i: *An Age Like This* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), 555.

¹⁷ Rickword, *Essays and Opinions*, 312.

contemporary poetry to be written in *vers libre*: 'theories about the way to write poetry are utterly useless, and when borrowed from the French (whose material requires handling so differently) positively a nuisance. It is obvious that poetry may be written in a hundred ways, in the rhythms of normal speech, of prose, of a merry-go-round, or even in cadence.'¹⁸

These are not the remarks of a bystander. Rickword was both a practising poet and someone whose intimate knowledge of French poetry is to be found not merely in a number of outstanding reviews of Baudelaire, Huysmans, Mallarmé, Corbière, and Valéry, but in *Rimbaud: The Boy and the Poet*, published in 1924. This was written at a time of very great stress, for in 1923 and not long after the birth of a second child, his wife, Peggy, went mad. (The story, occluded though it is, is set out at some length in Hobday.) Nevertheless, Rickword managed to finish his book. It was his second. For in November 1921, he had published his first collection of poems, *Behind the Eyes*. The publishers, Sedgwick and Jackson, were among the leading poetry publishers of the day, and had seen through their press many collections from the war, including Gurney's *Severn and Somme* and *War's Embers*. *Behind the Eyes* includes four poems about the war, including the icy, disturbing 'Trench Poets' ('I knew a man, he was my chum, | But he grew darker day by day, | and would not brush the flies away'), remarkable not only for its discomposingly matter-of-fact tone but for Rickword's use of lower-case at the beginning of lines, more than half-a-century before this became common practice.¹⁹ As a whole the collection is less accomplished than its successor, *Invocations to Angels and the Happy New Year* (1928), one of the unsung masterpieces of the decade, but in its technical resource and variety *Behind the Eyes* is far better than most collections published in the early 1920s. In short, by the time Rickword began with others to think about setting up a journal, he was already established as an accomplished poet, a formidably intelligent critic, and someone whose reading in European literature gave him an outlook very far from provincial, insular, or, though he loved good ale, 'beer and cricket'.

Standards of criticism

According to Hobday, *The Calendar* was 'a family affair'.²⁰ The editors were to be Rickword and Douglas Garman, a young man who had gone to Cambridge to study first classics then modern languages, but who, on inheriting some money from his father, had left without taking his degree. The two young men had first met in the autumn of 1921, because Garman's sister Mary was engaged to

¹⁸ Rickword, *Essays and Opinions*, 312 and see Hobday, *Edgell Rickword*, 52.

¹⁹ 'Trench Poets', in Edgell Rickword, *Collected Poems*, ed. Charles Hobday (Manchester: Carcanet, 1991), 16.

²⁰ Hobday, *Edgell Rickword*, 85.

Rickword's then friend, the poet Roy Campbell.²¹ When I met Garman's second wife, I learnt that Douglas Garman left Cambridge intending to become a dramatist, and that this, together with his left-wing views, had led to him being more or less disinherited. He pocketed precious little money from his father's will, and his family, having intended him for a 'proper' career—church, law, or the army—were not prepared to bankroll him in his intended one (one he never achieved).

Fortunately, another Garman sister, Lorna, was married to a wealthy publisher, Ernest Wishart, and he agreed to provide financial backing for the journal. The financial manager was Rickword's cousin, Cecil, an able reviewer whose substantial 'Note on Fiction', published in *The Calendar* in 1926, was described by F. R. Leavis as 'an incomparable aid to the intelligent criticism of novels',²² and an Australian friend from Oxford days, Bertram Higgins, was also closely involved. Higgins was a poet of whom Campbell thought highly and, like Garman and Rickword, was, according to the latter, a member of their 'discontented club, discontented with all the established novelists and the literary cliques'.²³ Out of this discontent would come the feature for which *The Calendar* is best remembered, the famous series of 'Scrutinies' which I discuss further below.

First of all, however, I need to add a few more details about the journal's origins. Why start one at all? There are two reasons. One, discontent with the literary establishment, two, a belief that younger, and more deserving, writers needed to be promoted and that these were the representatives of 'Modern Letters' for whom the journal would act as a 'Calendar', providing interested readers with a list of writers to whose work they should be attending. But as I have already indicated, this belief was barely realized. Of the poets and fictional prose writers who appeared in the journal's pages, the best were already known, and the others were never more than mediocre.

As to *why* they weren't more talented there can be no definite answer. The journal paid, and though the financial rewards weren't great, that would not have put off aspiring authors, especially as the going rate of £3 per thousand words equalled that of the *Times Literary Supplement*. *The Calendar* was intended to be 'a mouthpiece for the young, nearly half the contributors being under thirty';²⁴ but the mouthpiece couldn't be plugged in securely because, so Rickword himself suggested, the most talented of that generation had been killed off in the war. This rather ignores younger women writers. It also takes no account of the possibility that talented writers preferred to be published elsewhere, either by more established journals, of which there were plenty, or by journals that showed some flair in making their presence visible.

²¹ Ibid. 67.

²² F. R. Leavis, 'Towards Standards of Criticism', in *Anna Karenina and Other Essays* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1967) 231. Hobday, *Edgell Rickword*, 131.

²³ Rickword, *Poetry Nation*, 1 (1973), 78. Hobday, *Edgell Rickword*, 85.

²⁴ Ibid.

For by comparison with, say, *Coterie*, *Adelphi*, or even *The London Mercury*, *The Calendar of Modern Letters* was almost disabblingly modest in announcing itself, and its sober mien seemed calculated to avoid the curious eye. The first issue of the journal came complete with a Preface written by Rickword and headlined 'Instead of a Manifesto', and this, at a time when manifestos were all the rage, feels like a deliberate attempt to lower expectations. It even begins by asserting that:

The reader we have in mind, the ideal reader, is not one with whom we share any particular set of admirations and beliefs. The age of idols is past, for an idol implies a herd—to each literary idol a herd of literary worshippers—and for the modern mind the age of herds is past.²⁵

And Rickword goes on to remark in this non-manifesto:

The artist, who can differ only in degree and in function from the rest of men, by revealing distances, creates realities. It is through him that we can perfect our individuality, our own shape, which under the comparatively crude strokes of actual experience might remain only roughly chipped out on that rock of ages, the folk-mind The aim of writing is not to convince someone else (for that can never happen against the will) but to satisfy oneself. If, as well, the reader's pleasure is aroused by one of the many means literature has to waken such a response, then the reader may make a gift of his assent or dissent to the conventicles founded on those wraiths, for the cycle of expression is complete without them.²⁶

The impulse is entirely democratic, but the take-it-or-leave-it tone could hardly be more likely to put potential readers off.

Yet the first number, which appeared in March 1925, contains a number of good things. As well as the opening instalment of Lawrence's 'The Princess', there are poems by Graves and Sassoon, and a letter from Dostoevsky to his mistress. This last is important not so much in itself but because it ushers in the journal's readiness to be 'modern' in the sense of non-insular. Future numbers would include work by Luigi Pirandello, Leonid Leonov, Alexander Nieverov, Isaac Babel (Rickword in particular kept an eye out for the work of post-revolutionary Russian writers), and contributions from the American poets Hart Crane, Allen Tate, and John Crowe Ransom; and the journal regularly carried articles on such luminaries as Rimbaud and Valéry, Gide and Proust, besides publishing translations from Baudelaire's *Journeaux Intimes* and Chekhov's *The Wood Demon*.

The first issue of *The Calendar* also contained an essay by Garman on Poe and an altogether sharper one on Barrie by Rickword, which the *Times Literary Supplement*, in its sympathetic review of the journal's appearance, picked out as

²⁵ Rickword, *Essays and Opinions*, 169.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

“penetrating and very amusing”.²⁷ Of this essay, Rickword remarked in later years that in ‘those days’ it was ‘sticking one’s neck out’ to attack Barrie as he did. ‘He was still rather a deity.’²⁸ Reviewers for the journal were also encouraged to stick their necks out. All critical notices were gathered together in the second half of the journal, under the general heading ‘Comments and Reviews’, for which Rickword prepared by announcing that ‘In reviewing we shall base our statements on the standards of criticism, since it is only then that one can speak plainly without offence, or give praise with meaning.’²⁹

And it is here that the true importance of *The Calendar* begins to emerge. The reviews in the first issue are, in truth, a mixed bunch. Bertrand Russell covers two books on medieval society, Higgins writes with no great flair or insight on Sacheverell Sitwell’s poems and a life of Flecker, and Garman airily dismisses Arthur Symons’s translations of Baudelaire. These are stings which carry no great venom. But the issue ends with a clutch of short notices covering some two pages. These, which are altogether sharper, are unsigned, although Hobday, who has good reason for his attribution, thinks they are almost certainly by Rickword. And it is Rickword who will dominate the journal’s critical writing for the rest of its short existence, not so much because he appears more frequently than other contributors, because he doesn’t, but because his contributions set the standard for *The Calendar* at its best. And that best is ‘Scrutinies’. For evidence of this, it is necessary to do no more than glance at what passes for reviewing and critical writing in virtually all other journals of the time. It is its critical edge that makes *The Calendar of Modern Letters* so significant a publication.

And yet at a time when the journal was beginning to gain definition as a place for truly valuable critical writing, cultural as well as literary, it was beginning to lose its readership. A year after it began, sales dropped to below 3,000. Hobday thinks there is a link although some readers, including the reviewer in the *Times Literary Supplement*, protested that some of the verse was obscure. Hobday concludes that that ‘probably the strongest reason for falling sales was a widespread feeling that readers were being given too much critical powder and not enough jam in the form of lighter reading.’³⁰ Perhaps disheartened by this decline in sales, the editors decided to change the journal from a monthly to a quarterly, but whereas format and length remained the same—between eighty to ninety-six pages per issue, front half new writing and substantial essays, back section reviews—the price rose from 1s. 6d. to half a crown (17 ½ d. to 25p in new money). A steep increase and not one likely to gain new readers.

Nor did it. There has been some speculation that a reason for the fall-off may have had something to do with the political atmosphere of the time. Certainly the

²⁷ Quoted, Hobday, *Edgell Rickword*, 88

²⁸ *Ibid.* 89.

²⁹ Rickword, *Essays and Opinions*, 170.

³⁰ Hobday, *Edgell Rickword*, 91.

General Strike of 1926 seemed to demand a taking of sides,³¹ but there is little evidence of partisanship in *The Calendar* during the early months of 1926, and I agree with Hobday that for John Gross to detect ‘“a recurrent *communisant* strain in the magazine”’, he must have been influenced by what he knew of Rickword and Garman’s later careers.³² By the mid-1930s both had joined the Communist Party of Great Britain, but ten years earlier, while both were on the left, neither was especially militant. And Rickword in particular was sceptical of some of the grander claims being made for the new Russian state. True, at the time of the strike itself, the two of them decided to help the strikers, but by the time they had made up their minds to do so, the strike was over, and they spent the evening of 18 May getting drunk. They were theoretically of the left, but at that precise moment this did not translate into action.

And there is another matter which needs to be dealt with here, Rickword’s admiration for the writings of Wyndham Lewis. In later years he moderated his enthusiasm, so much so that in his 1931 verse satire, ‘Twittingpan’, he has his simpering littérateur protagonist ask ‘“Don’t you think Wyndham Lewis too divine? | The brute male strength that shows in every line.”’,³³ but at the time he was editing *The Calendar* his regard for Lewis was genuine. Hence, his request for Lewis to contribute to the journal’s first issue. His lengthy review of Lewis’s proto-fascistic *The Art of Being Ruled* is clearly sympathetic to the author, as he himself acknowledged when, in the essay on Lewis which he contributed to *Scrutinies II*, he wrote that:

the pleasure of its comic sarcasms and vituperative energy . . . has done great service in clearing away many moribund ideas. At the time I thought this work might become the *Culture and Anarchy* of our generation, trusting that its rather thick and muddled prophetics would be clarified in subsequent pronouncements. This has not yet occurred, and the trend of Lewis’s later Writings does not encourage me to think it ever will.³⁴

‘Scrutinies’

But Rickword’s essay on Lewis is important if for no other reason than that it shows how, by the time of its writing, he had uncoupled himself from Lewis’s influence. To understand how and why that came about we need to consider the difference

³¹ See John Lucas, *The Radical Twenties: Writing, Politics, Culture* (Nottingham: Five Leaves Publications, 1997; New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 217–55.

³² Quoted, Hobday, *Edgell Rickword*, 92. Rickword, *Essays and Opinions*, 291.

³³ Quoted, Hobday, *Edgell Rickword*, 133.

³⁴ Rickword, *Essays and Opinions*, 289. It is worth noting that in an early essay for *The Calendar*, ‘The Recreation of Poetry’, Rickword praises Swift in particular and 18th-century satire in general for an ability to mobilize what he calls ‘“Negative” Emotions’, *Essays and Opinions*, 170–5.

between Rickword before and after the 1926 Strike. *Scrutinies II* was published as a book of thirteen critical essays in 1931, and, as well as Rickword on Lewis, contains two essays on Eliot (one on the poetry by Alec Brown and the other on Eliot's critical writings by Higgins), Peter Quennell on the later Lawrence, Jack Lindsay on James Joyce, and Empson on Virginia Woolf. Rickword's essay, admirably clear about Lewis, is also a clearing of accounts. It is, therefore, very different from his lengthy 'Notes for a Study of Sade', published in the February 1926 issue of *The Calendar*, which is very much *à la Lewis*. Hence, Rickword's approval of Sade's placing 'positive value on the destructive impulses because, he would say, they ensure a swifter return to Nature of the raw material of which it is in need, breaking down the more complex organisms into the simpler ones.'³⁵ Also, 'The policy of state-craft . . . is to sift the natural givers and takers, those who will suffer and bestow, and those who exert and assert, into positions where they can satisfy these tendencies, and to provide a system of easy compensations for the dualistic majority.'³⁶ Even his remarks on war would be likely to earn Lewis's rasping approval.

War, the greatest of all crowd experiences, probably owes its irrationally prolonged existence to the provision it makes for both tendencies in human emotion. Under the excuse of patriotism, manliness and courage, the masochist can hug his exquisite bundle of thorns and win decorations for exceptional bravery in the discharge of his temperament. The sadist will not be found where there is most reason to expect him; those, at least, who have any intelligence remove themselves early in the programme to posts of minor or major authority in the Base Camps and bull-rings of the Back Area and the 'glass-houses' of permanent cantonments. These provide more docile subjects than the fear-crazy men of the enemy line, made dangerous by despair.³⁷

The cool savagery of this suggests that Rickword was well supplied with both material and technical resources to have become a first-rate prose satirist had he so chosen. The essays 'The Apology for Yahoos' and 'Some Aspects of Yahoo Religion', both of which appeared in *The Calendar*, look as though this is a path he means to follow. The former in particular, with its account of Yahoodom as incorporating the virtues of 'manliness' and monogamy, mounts an unrelenting attack on what is perhaps best thought of as bourgeois philistinism laced with naïve optimism. The yahoos are:

united in an unshakeable belief in the superiority of love to hatred. Love is beautiful they say, hatred is ugly, and they are never tired of contrasting the benign expression of contented lovers with the distorted mask of gratified evil. Love delights to share its pleasure in youth and in old age its consolation, but

³⁵ *Ibid.* 217.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 221.

³⁷ *Ibid.* 221–2.

hatred remains aloof and solitary, and its self-sufficiency falls like a reproach over the prostrate couples.³⁸

This is the Artist as Enemy, and the Lewisian pose perhaps looks towards Auden's 'A Bride in the Thirties' and especially to the rejection of bourgeois expressions of love that become commonplace in that decade.

Yet Rickword writes nothing else substantial in this vein of satirical prose, and we have therefore to be content with such poems as the mordant 'Luxury' in *Invocations to Angels* ('The churches' sun-dried clay crumbles at last, / and courts of Justice wither like a stink / and honourable statues melt as fast / as greasy garbage down a kitchen sink') and the two verse satires, 'Twittingpan', a post-*Calendar* attack on aestheticism and the London literary racket, and the well-known 'To The Wife of a Non-Interventionist Statesman' written at the time of the Spanish War. But the 'Notes for a Study of Sade', and the pieces on the Yahoos, shot through with contempt for sentimentality and bourgeois assumptions, intendedly make for uneasy reading and their tone is such as to explain the bewildered exasperation of Sassoon's protest: 'why do they want to be "attacking" everyone?'³⁹

His words were prompted by hearing that *The Calendar* was thinking of asking Virginia Woolf to write on Edmund Gosse, a possibility Sassoon considered 'an outrage'.⁴⁰ For Sassoon, Gosse was a grand old man of letters who deserved to be saved from contumely and scorn. For the editors of *The Calendar* he was mired in the complacencies of the discredited age-before-last, and as such fair game. If Sassoon's feelings for Gosse alert us to the accuracy of Hugh MacDairmid's dismissal of *Sherston's Progress* as evidence of 'the eternal Englishman | Incapable of rising above himself, | And traditional values winning out | Over an attempted independence of mind,'⁴¹ the work of the Scrutineers can equally be seen as a determination to assert a critical independence from the literary establishment, which is what earned the approval of Leavis and others.

The truth, however, is that the concept of Scrutinies was perhaps more important than the essays themselves managed always to be. Garman on Walter de la Mare, Higgins on Masfield, and Edwin Muir on Arnold Bennett are, none of them, especially incisive, although Muir's assessment, while sometimes severe, is sufficiently alert to Bennett's worth to provide a balanced and perceptive critical account. But it is in what they stand for rather than what they accomplish that the essays represent an important cultural moment. Their assaults on various living monuments of English Letters must have seemed especially significant at the time because, even if most of the monuments were left still standing, they had been sometimes defaced and in all cases scarred by the hammer blows of the iconoclasts.

³⁸ Rickword, *Essays and Opinions*, 229.

³⁹ Hobday, *Edgell Rickword*, 89.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ John Lucas, '“For Ever England”: The Case of Siegfried Sassoon', in *idem, Moderns and Contemporaries: Novelists, Poets, Critics* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1985), 134.

How much these had hurt became apparent when in 1928 the essays were gathered together in book form and issued as *Scrutinies by Various Writers*, with additional contributions by, among others, Dorothy Edwards on G. K. Chesterton, Graves on Kipling, and, most importantly, Lawrence's devastating essay on Galsworthy. This was described in *The Spectator* as "revolting in taste and indecent in expression", and by the *Observer* as "a pitiful piece of scurrility".⁴² And the reviewer in the *Times Literary Supplement* tried to cover the scars of those whom Rickword had identified in his original forward as "an avenue of cyclopean statues leading to a ruined temple" while withdrawing to the high ground of disdain. The *TLS* commented, "We are in no danger of thinking that it is inevitable, even for young men in a hurry, to adopt the standard of literary courtesy set up in this volume."⁴³ Literary courtesy would, of course, be ruled out of court by Leavis and his journal, anxious as they were to not merely topple the statues but to flatten the temple. But the work was undoubtedly begun by *The Calendar*.

One of Rickword's greatest gifts was his ability to review contemporary work in little space but with an invariable precision that set his writing worlds apart from what passed for critical commentary. Here, for example, is an anonymous reviewer in Holbrook Jackson's *Today*, writing of *The Dark Fire*, a collection of poems by W. J. Turner, who was one of Rickword's friends and a contributor to *The Calendar*. There is, we are told:

deep feeling and great beauty behind all this author's work, whether he writes the lyric of a few lines or the longer poem with a definite burden of thought. The burden, in the latter case, is lifted by music, and we think most readers will be strongly moved by the pages entitled 'The Shepherd Goes to War.' Among several others that are notable, this poem stands out as an achievement of which the author may be sure and for which the critic may be grateful.⁴⁴

Reading this it is easy to understand why I. A. Richards set out to establish the ground rules for *Practical Criticism*, the seminal work he produced in 1929. But Rickword was already doing it, as here, for example, in his scalping of Laurence Binyon for showing no sign of 'having apprehended any non-literary experience, [showing] no sign of contemporary speech in his idiom, or of contemporary life in his imagery'.⁴⁵ As for Alfred Noyes and his attempt to create a scientific epic answerable to modern life, Rickword quotes some lines including 'The dawn-wind, like a host of spirits . . . | A bird cried once, a sharp ecstatic cry | As if it saw an angel' and comments 'if "science" had really meant anything, poetically, to Mr Noyes, it would have altered his universe; would have created metaphors.

⁴² Hobday, *Edgell Rickword*, 109.

⁴³ *Ibid.* 108–9.

⁴⁴ *To-Day*, ed. Holbrook Jackson, 4:20 (Oct. 1918), 73.

⁴⁵ Rickword, *Essays and Opinions*, 186.

As it is, he sails his pretentious kite with rags of literature and superstition in its tail.⁴⁶

All Rickword's critical writing is prompted by what Pope called 'The strong antipathy of good for bad'. And the importance of *The Calendar* has much to do with wishing to clear the ground for the good, which meant wielding the sharp critical tool or 'billhook' used by Geoffrey Grigson, student and unabashed admirer of Wyndham Lewis. But here lay the problem, according to Rickword, at least. The ground may have been cleared, but where was the new growth? As noted above, Rickword gave as one of his reasons for closing down the journal the dearth of good new writing, and, to repeat, it is certainly true that *The Calendar* had difficulty in recruiting writers of sufficient worth to its pages. But there are other reasons for the decision to close the journal down.

In the first place, I suspect Rickword had simply had enough. I don't think he was by temperament cut out for the chore of editing a journal, not over a number of years, anyway. When I talked to him in the late 1970s about his reason for ending *Left Review*, a journal he had helped edit some ten years after *The Calendar* closed down, he told me that 'it was the same with *Left Review* as with *The Calendar*. We seemed to have worked through the available material all too quickly. And I honestly don't think we could have got much stuff at that time in England.'⁴⁷ This suggests that the pages of both journals had limited access to top-class new writing, and that when the flow stopped there was no alternative but to bring them to a close. But in fact neither *The Calendar* nor *Left Review* was especially remarkable for the quality of its poetry or fiction. It was the critical writing that made them remarkable. And in the case of *The Calendar* I suggest that events brought Rickword to see that his critical stance was not so much wrong as insufficient.

What is important here is Rickword's attitude to T. S. Eliot. There is no doubt that in the early part of the 1920s Rickword badly underestimated Eliot's work. Hobday reports Roy Campbell as saying that in 1920 Rickword thought more highly of both Flecker and Turner than he did of Eliot, and the appearance of Eliot's *Poems 1909–1925* failed to convert him, as the notably cool review he published in *The Calendar* makes plain. He acknowledges Eliot's hold over the young, which he attributes to his ability 'to explore and make palpable the more intimate distresses of a generation for whom all the romantic escapes had been blocked'.⁴⁸ This, Rickword says, is partly a matter of technique and partly of 'realisation of language, reaching its height in passages in "The Waste Land" until it sinks under the strain and in "The Hollow Men" becomes gnomically disarticulate'.⁴⁹ So that although there is a 'steady achievement' leading up to the most recent work, 'the

⁴⁶ Rickword, *Essays and Opinions*, 185.

⁴⁷ Lucas (ed.), *The 1930s*, 6.

⁴⁸ Rickword, *Essays and Opinions*, 180.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 181.

seeds of dissolution are apparent rather early'.⁵⁰ That Rickword is not prepared to bow the knee to Eliot as poet seems clear enough.

But turn from that review to the publication, right at the end of *The Calendar's* short career, of Rickword's long masque-poem, 'The Happy New Year', and it is at once apparent that Eliot's example has affected Rickword very deeply indeed. For 'The Happy New Year', written between the spring and autumn of 1926, is a strange, hallucinatory, and in many ways compelling account of contemporary London, which ends with the Presenter enunciating his vision of a city through which prowl the homeless and rootless, 'by unmade roads, raw gardens, blank-eyed lamps, | cinders and tin-cans and blown evening papers, | among refuse-pits and sewer-mouths, | wandering fires and voices of the swamp'.⁵¹ There is no space here to provide an exhaustive account of the poem but we can note that 'The Happy New Year' seems to have its beginnings in an odd paragraph in the April 1926 issue of *The Calendar*, where the anonymous writer, who is almost certainly Rickword, refers to a strange poem the editors have come by, in which:

the crops rot, the land becomes water-logged, and complete sterility ensues. This the author considers an adequate symbol of the contemporary consciousness. . . . Literary references are intended to enrich the texture of the verse with imagery, for invention risks being vulgar, and, besides, the success of several very cultured poems has recently approved the innovation.⁵²

This suggests a spoof on *The Waste Land* may be in the offing, but it hardly prepares us for the resultant masque, which is a far more serious, even anguished work. What happened?

The answer, I believe, is the General Strike. As noted earlier when the strike began, Rickword, although on the side of the strikers, did not seem to have understood its import. Nor am I convinced that from 1925 until the middle of 1926 *The Calendar* is to be seen as radical in a more than general way. In short, it was not so much the strike itself as its aftermath that seemed to demand a taking of sides. The sheer punitive nastiness of Baldwin, the gloating of the right-wing press, the antics of Reith's BBC—these made for a notable sharpening of attitudes, and a conviction, among those on the left, that something dreadful had occurred and that they had been party to it, and bore some responsibility for what had happened. Leonard Woolf spoke for many when, recalling that period in his autobiography,

⁵⁰ Ibid. We should also note that in an essay for *The Calendar*, 'Languid Strings', Rickword takes for granted the propriety of Eliot's 'dissociation of sensibility', first mooted in his famous essay on the Metaphysical Poets in *The Sacred Wood* (1921), by arguing that Pope plainly evolved his style with an understanding of how 'Donne worked his transmutations', but that during his time English poetry began to enter 'the Stage of Sentiment which advertised itself as the Age of Reason', in which 'feeling becomes primary and the thought is derived from it' (*Essays and Opinions*, 176).

⁵¹ Rickword, *Collected Poems*, 104

⁵² Quoted, Lucas, *The Radical Twenties*, 194, and see 194–7 for a full discussion of the masque.

he said that this was ‘the most painful, the most horrifying’ of political occurrences at home to have occurred in his lifetime.⁵³

As far as ‘The Happy New Year’ is concerned, then what began in April 1926 as a charade or burlesque ended up as something entirely different: a troubled, guilt-tinged, bitter account of contemporary society divided between the SINISTERS—those on the left, the poor, the dispossessed—and the DEXTERS—those on the right, the Bright Young Things, the proto-fascists. Lewis now emerged not as a model for Rickword but as one of the DEXTERS. And although Eliot, too, might find a natural home on that side of the street, *The Waste Land*, through what could be regarded as its prophetic diagnosis, offered the chance to explore what was happening in post-war society in a manner more adequate to the occasion than any other alternative. Rickword’s masque ends with the Sinisters, for the moment defeated, passing into the night, from which they may return at some time in the future to reclaim the city from which they have been banished. Deliberately down-beat though this ending is, it nevertheless holds out hope for future change. Arnold Rattenbury is almost certainly right therefore to argue that Rickword deliberately brought *The Calendar* to an end once the editors decided that they no longer wanted to identify with a culture that they saw as moribund:

because the whole of society producing it was moribund. The final number of the *Calendar* came to the conclusion that in fact this was the case, and that the proper preoccupation of writers must now be social change. The questions had been literary, the answer political.⁵⁴

To concur with this is not to renege on my suggestion that Rickword was always ready to walk away from enterprises that he felt had gone dead. It is, however, to suggest that we should acknowledge this as entirely reasonable. Given his convictions, there was not much else he could do.

⁵³ Lucas, *The Radical Twenties*, 218; for Leonard Woolf see *Downhill All the Way* (London: Hogarth Press, 1967), 348–9.

⁵⁴ Arnold Rattenbury, ‘Total Attainder and the Helots’, in Lucas (ed.), *The 1930s*, 144.

THE CAUSE OF POETRY

Thomas Moulton and *Voices* (1919–21), Harold Monro
and *The Monthly Chapbook* (1919–25)

MARK S. MORRISSON

The year 1919 saw thousands of soldiers struggling to resume a ‘normal’ life after one of the most horrific of wars. Writers returning from World War I wondered what literature and the institutions of publishing would look like in a post-war world. Poetry, especially, was at a critical juncture. In 1912, Harold Monro had exuberantly proclaimed in his *Poetry Review* that ‘we are expecting a new dawn, converging toward some vital exuberance, a rushing, untameable new creative impulse in English poetry.’¹ His Poetry Bookshop had opened on December 1, 1912, to coincide with the launch of the first *Georgian Poetry* anthology (1911–12).² It sold 15,000 copies (poetry had sustained a surprising boom throughout the war) beginning in 1916, after the much-romanticized death of the young poet Rupert Brooke in the Aegean.³ Although modernists came to criticize Marsh’s *Georgian Poetry* anthologies as stodgy lark-lover poetry for the indiscriminating, it must be remembered that the lines between Georgians and modernists had not been so starkly drawn during the previous decade. Harold Monro’s *Poetry Review* (1912) and *Poetry and Drama* (1913–14) and his Poetry Bookshop had been instrumental in publishing and promoting all of these strands of pre-war poetry (see Chapter 7). Though the differences among them were very real, he saw them as participating in a single poetic renaissance. Readers expressed a remarkable willingness to buy war poetry, and book publishers and magazine editors were happy to oblige by putting reams of it into print (much of it of questionable quality). This surge in poetry’s popularity, however, had fallen off by 1919, and

¹ Harold Monro, ‘Notes and Comments’, *The Poetry Review*, 1:9 (Sept. 1912), 423.

² Dominic Hibberd, *Harold Monro, Poet of the New Age* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 107–8.

³ Robert H. Ross, *The Georgian Revolt, 1910–1922, Rise and Fall of a Poetic Ideal* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1965), 14.

magazine publishers faced seriously heightened expenses in the post-war economy. Nevertheless, a number of new literary magazines began in 1919, attempting to set a poetic agenda and reinvigorate audiences for poetry. Amongst them, Thomas Moul's *Voices* (1919–21) and Monro's *Monthly Chapbook* (1919–25) would attempt to create a wide platform and critical underpinnings for what they hoped would be a more mature and selective version of the poetry revival in Britain. They encompassed a range of poetry that would include both Georgian and modernist verse. Yet, Monro's *Monthly Chapbook* (which became *The Chapbook* after it ceased to appear reliably each month) would ultimately tilt the scale toward modernist verse and look more toward the emerging modernist luminaries of the 1920s, even though it still published some Georgian poetry. And *Voices*' complex response to the war gave it a very different literary trajectory—and a much shorter life.

Voices

Voices was published in London, with its first issue appearing in January 1919. Its first editorial headquarters was at Hendersons Bookshop at 66 Charing Cross Road. Hendersons styled itself 'Specialists in Socialist Literature' or, more provocatively, 'the Bomb Shop', and it carried politically charged literature and 'little magazines', including Dora Marsden's *New Freewoman* and its successor, Marsden and Harriet Shaw Weaver's *The Egoist* (see Chapter 11). Though *Voices* published a number of poems, fiction, and prose that allied it more to the political left than to the right, it was not a political journal in the way that Marsden's journals were, and it also had no partisan affiliations. Indeed, though *Voices*' motto was 'Each voice speaks

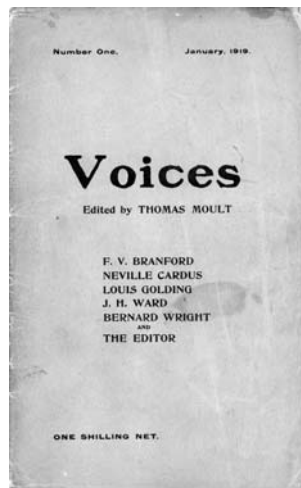


Fig. 51. Cover of *Voices* (Jan. 1919)

an individual and independent vision', it was an aesthetic provocation more than a political one.

Voices appeared monthly in its pea-green cover and could be obtained by subscription or for 1s. per issue, a fairly typical price for a literary monthly. It appeared monthly for most of its life, and issues tended to run at around fifty pages and included a few illustrations. Moulton intended the magazine to be attractive, but not to run it into the ground financially with an expensive presentation. He defended the look of the magazine to Holbrook Jackson, editor of *To-day*, after the first issue of *Voices* had appeared:

Alas, your comment on the outward appearance of the paper is only too justified—none knew it better than I myself. Last summer I was walking through St. James' Park with my friend Michael Sadler and we chanced to be talking about the little shilling reprint by [the publisher] Maunsell of Padraic Pearse's stories, with its wretched print and unutterably bad paper. It was then that I decided the get-up of the paper I had been planning for four years didn't matter a jot, and it was there he saw for the first time the explanation of the downfall of all those monthlies de-luxe from *The Yellow Book* and *The Dome* to our own *Rhythm* and *The Blue Review*. . . In ten years we'll see which matters most in the world: the two productions which compare so incomparably favorably with *Voices* or the humble *Voices* itself.⁴

Though Moulton later claimed that *Voices* had been 'founded immediately on the declaration of Armistice' he had conceived of the idea for the magazine four years prior to its launch.⁵ *Voices* ultimately began its life centered on a nucleus of writers from lower class and immigrant communities in Manchester, where Moulton (1893–1974) was educated. Appearing regularly was prose by the renowned music critic and cricket journalist for the *Manchester Guardian*, Neville Cardus (1889–1975).

Other regular contributors from Manchester emerged from its Jewish community and helped bring more Jewish writing into the journal than was common in modernist 'little magazines' of the period, especially given the anti-Semitism infecting some modernist circles. One of the most prevalent was the novelist, poet, and travel writer Louis Golding (1895–1958), born to Ukrainian Jewish immigrants and educated at Manchester Grammar School and then, after the war, at Oxford. Golding's prose piece, 'Voices', kicked off the journal. Maurice Samuel (1895–1972), who is now primarily regarded as an American novelist, was also a frequent contributor. He had been born in Romania in a Yiddish-speaking Jewish community, but he immigrated to Manchester as a child, and had his primary and secondary education there. He studied at Manchester University before emigrating to New

⁴ ALS Thomas Moulton to Holbrook Jackson, February 8, 1919, Holbrook Jackson Manuscripts, The Poetry Collection, State University of New York at Buffalo. Ellipses in original.

⁵ Thomas Moulton, 'Editorial', *Voices* (Jan. 1921), 2.

York in 1914, and must have made his connections to *Voices*' Manchester core before leaving. (He had also been stationed in Europe during the war.)

These writers' prominence in the magazine may have contributed to its interest in publishing and reviewing literary and visual arts work from Jewish figures or with Jewish themes. Indeed, the arts editor of *Voices* was Stephen Winsten (1893–1991), who had been born Samuel Weinstein and was one of the so-called Whitechapel Boys group of Jewish writers from the East End that included John Rodker, Joseph Leftwich, and the war poet Isaac Rosenberg. The Whitechapel Boys came to embrace a group of Jewish painters, too, who were key to British modernist art. Many of these were among the Slade School's most aesthetically daring pupils: David Bomberg, Mark Gertler, and Jacob Kramer, among others.⁶ Bomberg and Kramer were both *Voices* contributors, and Winsten also would bring in other Jewish modernist artists—Lucien Pissarro and Jacob Epstein, for instance. Bomberg and the Ukranian-born Kramer (1892–1962), who grew up in Leeds before studying at the Slade, were already noted in avant-garde circles in London for their contributions to Wyndham Lewis's journal, *BLAST* (1914–15). Kramer's 'Jews Praying on the Day of Atonement' was prominently included as a plate in the June 1920 *Voices*. That same issue also published poetry by the Zionist political writer and poet Israel Zangwill (1864–1926), who appeared from time to time in the journal. Notably, Zangwill published his essay 'Are the Jews a Nationality?' in the October 1919 issue of *Voices*, cautioning against the facile use of the term 'nationality' to describe what Jews share in common. (One thinks immediately of the tense encounter Leopold Bloom has with 'The Citizen' in the 'Cyclops' chapter of *Ulysses*, published a few years later, in which the Irish Bloom is accosted by an Irish nationalist bigot about what nationality he could possibly have as a Jew.)

Voices did not publish any overt manifestos or identify its writers with a group name—as, say, Imagists and Vorticists had done in the pre-war London milieu. But it was the initial group of writers, mostly from Manchester and other northern towns, whom critics thought of as a group. As the February 1919 *Voices* quoted *The Manchester City News*: 'The world should soon hear much of these men who have now introduced themselves as VOICES.' A month later, *The Englishwoman* would refer to them as 'a band of young writers who are not afraid to cast conventionalism on one side, and of whose honesty and sincerity there is no doubt.' However, London was still very much the literary capital, and *Voices* eschewed the possibility of creating a distinct Manchester modernist scene. Ultimately, its response to World War I gave it an entirely different identity.

Voices, as a poetry journal, promulgated an image of youth returning from war ready to speak candidly about their experiences and to rejuvenate British culture.

⁶ See Rachel Dickson and Sarah MacDougall, 'The Whitechapel Boys', *Jewish Quarterly* 195 (Autumn 2004), <http://www.jewishquarterly.org/article.asp?articleid=21>.

As Winsten remembered it fifty-five years later in his touching obituary for Moulton in *The Times*:

I must be the last of the 'Voices' group brought together by Thomas Moulton soon after the First World War. He felt the need for a renaissance in art and literature and so started 'Voices'. It was daring of him to give over the art side to me who, like millions of other young men had been away from art and literature.⁷

In almost every issue, *Voices* published and reviewed war literature. Its first number included eight poems by Frederick Victor Branford (1892–1941), whom it listed with his military rank, as Flight-Lieut. F. V. Branford. Branford, who served in the Royal Naval Air Service, was injured in the Battle of the Somme and permanently disabled. He became a regular contributor.

Some of Branford's poems sounded a theme prevalent in British war poetry, but important to *Voices* as well—nature's survival in the face of mechanistic warfare. His short poem, 'Flanders', in the January 1919 *Voices*, for instance, reads in its entirety:

Two broken trees possess the plain,
Two broken trees remain.
Miracles in steel and stone
That might astound the sun, are gone.
Two broken trees remain.⁸

The 'miracles' of human endeavor that we imagine might even impress the source of life on earth—the sun—are impermanent. Yet the 'broken trees' remain, a significant symbol, perhaps, to a critically injured veteran like Branford who clung to life and wished to find the resources to endure. And they do what human armies cannot: they 'possess' a landscape.

This turn from the destruction of mechanized warfare to the durability of seemingly frail nature was not new to war poetry. As Paul Fussell put it in his classic study of the poetry of World War I, 'Recourse to the pastoral is an English mode of both fully gauging the calamities of the Great War and imaginatively protecting oneself against them.'⁹ The British soldiers often remarked upon the nightingales and larks singing around the trenches, and, of course, the poppies and other flowers that bloomed in the scarred fields of Flanders and elsewhere were a frequent theme of war poetry.

Georgian poetry's emphasis on the life and landscape of the countryside seemed a perfect fit for much of the war poetry in *Voices* and elsewhere. Those pastoral resources, and a realist way of describing and interpreting them, had been at the

⁷ Stephen Winsten, 'Mr. Thomas Moulton', *The Times* (Nov. 23, 1974), 16.

⁸ *Voices* (Jan. 1919), 14.

⁹ Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 235.

heart of much pre-war Georgian poetry, and, not surprisingly, Rupert Brooke had one of the biggest poetic ‘bestsellers’ of the war with ‘The Soldier’. As Modris Eksteins has noted, Germany was, in a sense, the ‘modernist’ nation in the war—it represented massive political and social change—while Britain, already lagging behind America and Germany in industrial might, was the conservative one. British soldiers encountered the contradictions between their experiences in the war and a mode of understanding the world, culturally and politically, that was not entirely adequate to them. As Eksteins argues, ‘The soldier became then not just the harbinger but the very agent of the modern aesthetic, the progenitor of destruction but also the embodiment of the future.’¹⁰

Those pastoral resources that so pervaded the British psyche and became the very locus of the ‘modern’ poetic focus of the *Georgian Poetry* volumes could also be seen as insufficient—even to the Georgian poets and especially to soldier-poets. Siegfried Sassoon published in *Georgian Poetry*, beginning in the third volume, and one of *Voices*’ key soldier-poets, Edmund Blunden, published in *Georgian Poetry* as well. As Blunden’s poem, ‘Estrangement’, in the February 1920 issue of *Voices* put it: ‘Oaks, once my friends, with ugly murmurings | Madden me, and ivy whirrs like condor wings: | The very bat that swoops and whips askance | Shrills menace at me, whose soul died in France.’¹¹ Similarly, Branford’s poems and those of the other war poets who contributed to *Voices* were not much like the ‘forever England’ poetry of Brooke. What was particularly missing was a sense of ‘hearts at peace, under an English heaven’—the line ending Brooke’s ‘The Soldier’, published in January 1915. Branford’s next poem after ‘Flanders’ was entitled ‘The Secret Treaties’. The poem began ascribing a religious sanction for England’s entrance into the war, but then turned bitter:

We sprang, to win a New Jerusalem.
 Now is our shame, for we have seen you fling
 Full sounding Honour from your lips like phlegm,
 And bargain up our soul in felonies.
 O England! It were better men should read
 In dusty chronicles, of how a death
 Had found thee in the van of these crusades;
 To tell their eager sons with bated breath,
 And burning eyes, about a golden deed,
 A vanished race, and high immortal Shades.¹²

The disillusionment evident in some of the *Voices* poems presaged the bitterness of Ezra Pound’s famous indictment, in section IV of *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*, of

¹⁰ Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (New York: Doubleday, 1989), 213.

¹¹ *Voices* (Feb. 1920), 5.

¹² *Voices* (Jan. 1919), 14.

'liars in public places', and his portrait of soldiers who 'walked eye-deep in hell | believing in old men's lies, then unbelieving | came home, home to a lie, | home to many deceits'. *Voices* regular Louis Golding himself concluded in a poem entitled 'Peace, 1919', in the July 1919 issue: 'For swift as Peace hath stifled War, | Black War hath stifled Peace.'¹³

Even as the magazine was understood as telling truths about the war, it was given to rejuvenation, to creating space for a cultural coming-of-age of a generation that many had feared utterly destroyed by the war. As Bernard Wright put it in the February 1919 issue of *Voices* in 'Mr. Louis Golding', a review of Golding's volume *Sorrow of War*, Golding 'is of that generation which, returning now from war with the naked energy born of sheer force of living in their eyes, shall cleave with their utterance to the heart of things'.¹⁴ Similarly, Israel Zangwill wrote for the February 1919 *Voices*, 'I have found vitality in all the work of VOICES . . . I am very rejoiced to think that any of our young *intelligentia* [*sic*] have survived the war. I had a horrid fear that the young generation was extinct, and I am glad to see that a remnant is alive and kicking.'¹⁵ Responses to the journal almost invariably focused upon its generational youth. Gilbert Cannan noted, 'VOICES has the cumulative effect, and the effort of the younger generation gathers weight.'¹⁶ It was to the war veterans—and even to those still in France, not yet demobilized—that the journal very much wished to appeal. Moulton included a response from 'An Army Sergeant in France' at the end of the February 1919 issue. The sergeant noted that 'It gives me reassurance that the world still holds clean strong men and good women. I think you will understand what it means out here, and I am grateful to you for it.'¹⁷ Upon the beginning of the journal's third year, in the January 1921 issue, Moulton led off with his quoting from a newspaper. The newspaper mentioned the unlikelihood of any poetry magazine surviving its infancy, but congratulated *Voices* for having done it. It went on to reaffirm the journal's war identity:

Voices, too, is one of the few publications in which there has ever been printed any vital truth about the war as a human experience. For it is written, to a large extent, by men who fought in the war, and it is chiefly the poets among these men who are putting on record the only faithful account of the spiritual adventures of the combatant troops, anything of the sort having had to be suppressed, for temporary reasons, during the actual war, and being a drug in the market of the general press after it. A poet like Wilfred Owen tells us in a few hundred lines more of the quintessential truth about war than has ever been achieved by the efforts of historians and war correspondents. And in the giving of such knowledge

¹³ *Voices* (July 1919), 25.

¹⁴ *Voices* (Feb. 1919), 78.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 80.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. iv.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

to the world *Voices* has done its bit as stoutly as its contributors did their other bit in its season.¹⁸

Moult himself said that *Voices* was ‘founded immediately on the declaration of Armistice in the belief that the barren years of the Arts since 1914 were about to be succeeded by rich aspiration among young artists toward the utmost freedom and strength of expression’.¹⁹ He concluded, ‘we still believe it as profoundly as before to be our sacred duty to cherish and uphold . . . the faith of the young men in Flanders, in France, and with the Army of the Rhine, who were sustained by it in their brief time and have left it to us as part and parcel of the heritage they died to save.’²⁰

By early 1920, though, Moult was beginning to feel that most of the popular war poetry had been lauded simply because of its subject rather than its value. In an essay Moult published in *The English Review* entitled ‘The Poetic Futility of Flanders’, he noted that ‘Only to-day is it dawning on the reading public that the critics themselves are profoundly skeptical about the war’s fruitfulness, so far, in art and letters; indeed, there are those who, even in face of the opening verse from Thomas Hardy’s “Men Who March Away”, have resolved that the war has contributed to English poetry nothing at all.’²¹ Moult argued that poetry is produced not simply from having fought in the war:

For the poet’s vision will be entirely different from the soldier’s experience. It will be . . . a return to life in its essentials. And of this vision the war-setting will be the medium of interpretation, not the fundamental reality. All that the great and terrible event which ended in Europe a little while ago will have contributed to this great and far more terrible poem is the key that enables its creator to convey his supreme embracement of the universal in terms of the local, the particular.²²

This was an extraordinary critical move for an editor dedicating his own magazine to telling the truth, often through poetry, about the war. Yet it also signaled a desire for the war not to define a generation as stunted and colonized by its experience, but rather for that generation to use their survival of the war to begin a positive aesthetic renaissance.

Moult’s ‘The Old Men’, in the February 1919 issue of *Voices*, expressed the same sense of betrayal and anger seen in Branford ‘Secret Treaties’. Yet, Moult emphasized the war as a generational experience. His poem approaches the hell-like terms Pound would use in Cantos XIV and XV to indict the betrayers who

¹⁸ *Voices* (Jan. 1921), ‘Editorial’, 1.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 2.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Thomas Moult, ‘The Poetic Futility of Flanders’, *English Review* (Jan. 1920), 68.

²² *Ibid.* 71.

led the country into war. Moulton begins 'The Old Men' with a horrific image of the older generation sacrificing the younger:

They crowd the brink of the pit,
The old, lascivious men.
With horrible lust in their eyes
And twitching avid senses, thwarted
Of age's peace, contorted,
Never to be sound or sweet again,
They gape above the shambles, their thoughts lick at the blood
Spitting up from the pen.²³

The poem develops images of impotent and hateful old men sacrificing 'the beauty of the ripening males | Whose limbs are unblenched, | Whose eyes are clear, who love with all their proud | Glad pulses thundering and hearts aburst in flame'.²⁴ The purity of masculine, youthful beauty jarringly compared to images of violence might look familiar to readers of Wilfred Owen. But the poem ends with the note of youthful exuberance that many writers disillusioned by the war found it hard to share.

Georgians, modernists, and the space in between

The sincerity and truth to life of a band of new poets might have had a particular resonance with poetry readers in 1919, especially since Thomas Moulton himself would be published that same year in the fourth volume of Marsh's highly successful *Georgian Poetry* anthology. (Indeed, Moulton's poems in *Georgian Poetry* had already been published in *Voices*.)

Voices from the start had been sympathetic to the Georgian poets, but especially to their earlier impulses towards a realist poetry. Specific issues of *Voices* were dedicated to Georgian poets—to James Stephens for his *Crock of Gold*, to John Masefield for *The Everlasting Mercy*, and to W. H. Davies. The magazine published poetry by Blunden and Abercrombie, and regularly reviewed work by the Georgians Davies, Masefield, John Drinkwater, Walter de la Mare, Edward Shanks, Fredegond Shove, and Squire.

Yet, for all of the Georgian emphasis in *Voices*, the magazine did also publish a fair number of modernists. D. H. Lawrence (himself considered both a Georgian poet and a modernist) had poetry featured, and in October 1919, he published his *Voices* essay 'Verse Free and Unfree', which argued that free verse was 'the poetry of that which is at hand: the immediate present'.²⁵ Other modernist writers in *Voices* included Richard Aldington, May Sinclair, and John Gould Fletcher. Moulton also

²³ *Voices* (Feb. 1919), 93.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ D. H. Lawrence, 'Verse Free and Unfree', *Voices* (Oct. 1919), 130.

published writing by critics sympathetic to modernism, including literary commentary by John Middleton Murry, discussions of modern music by Cardus, and essays on modernist theatre by Edward Gordon Craig. Moreover, Moulton frequently reviewed modernist poetry and prose that had appeared in periodicals such as *The Egoist*, *Chapbook*, *Coterie*, and *Wheels*. He also reviewed modernist fiction such as Virginia Woolf's *The Voyage Out* and *Night and Day*.

Probably due to Winsten's influence, the artwork, in particular, came from the more aesthetically challenging corners of the London art world. *Voices* certainly included some less daring artists, such as Claud Lovat Fraser, who also designed many covers for Monro's *Chapbook* and served as essentially a house designer for Poetry Bookshop publications. (Fraser survived the first German gas attack on a British battalion in the war only to die of a sudden illness in 1921.) But, as noted earlier, many of the artists contributing work to *Voices* were from the avant-garde segments of the British art world. Many had come through the Slade as it was turning out a first generation of British modernist artists, and some had been involved in the Vorticist movement. Moulton even included a primitive drawing by Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, the Vorticist sculptor who had been killed in 1915. Other modernist artists included Wyndham Lewis, David Bomberg, Jacob Kramer, and Edward Wadsworth (all of whom had been published in *BLAST*), and Lucien Pissarro, Paul Nash, Eric Gill, Edmund X. Kapp, Anne Estelle Rice, John Duncan Fergusson, and the engraver and book designer Robert Gibbings. Moreover, Winsten kept up with all the most important exhibitions of modernist work in London during the brief life of the magazine, including Jacob Epstein's Leicester Galleries exhibition in March 1920, and other British and European modern art shows at the New Art Salon, and the Grafton, Doré, Mansard, and Leicester Galleries, including the exhibition of the X Group that Lewis used to try to revive Vorticism after the war.

But the war itself became a justification for criticizing work that strayed too far into abstraction or failed to be realistic enough about the horrors of war. In his review of Exhibition of War Paintings at Burlington House in 1920, Winsten noted:

The Government has certainly shown a catholicity of taste: the industrious cubist figures in Mr. W. P. Roberts' paintings of "A Shell Dump" were perhaps not aware that Mr. Sargeant's mythical lads are posing near them for a picture called "Gassed". The Exhibition has proved that Cubism is quite harmless: it can say as little as other schools, and has the saving sense of humour... For the jester dared not reveal the serious side of War or he would lose his commission. And the War artist, unless he is absolutely blind, has certainly behaved as the clown.²⁶

²⁶ Stephen Winsten, 'Painting: The War Exhibition', *Voices* (Mar. 1920), 881 (ellipses in original).

Cardus had written an early attack in *Voices* upon aestheticism, arguing that 'beauty for beauty's sake is nothing less than the root evil of modern art. It is this pursuit of the perfectly nebulous that stultifies so many of the creations of the hour.'²⁷ He argued that 'Art is simply life in apotheosis. The stuff of it is ample enough in our workaday world' and warned that

The men who turn away from life to cultivate beauty for beauty's sake in art, instead of art for the sake of its masterfulness over life, are surely doomed to be the minor poets—Ernest Dowson, Beardsley, Verlaine, Mallarmé, Ravel, and the rest. These indeed are the artists who are understandable only in terms of their own definite personalities.²⁸

Cardus and Winsten rejected what they saw as a kind of detached aestheticism (that could include complete abstraction) as a dead end, given the calamity of the war. They called for re-attaching art to life. One route in *Voices* that such a project could take was mapped out in Robert Derriman's 'Movement in Art'. Derriman wrote off Vorticism as 'a prewar weapon' that struck a blow at the Academy and the New English Art Club, but 'is now obsolete, in fact "passed over"' (to everyone except for Ezra Pound), and belonged to the pre-war environment of 'hit the public over the head'.²⁹ But now art must gain 'a proper function and value in modern life. To this end the artists, singly or collectively, must build steadily and sanely, using on one hand the crafts—Weaving, Pottery, Stain-glass, etc.,—on the other commercial devices such as posters and other advertising designs... for their formal and decorative expression.'³⁰ Art must become 'practical'.³¹ In the second installment in October 1919, Derriman continued this call for artists to return to their earlier role as craftsmen: 'If he is to command a larger public he must have a wider use.'³² Of course Roger Fry's Bloomsbury-dominated Omega Workshops and Lewis's Rebel Art Centre had tried to do something like this, as would Eric Gill, Robert Gibbings, and other modernist artists connected to *Voices*. But it is clear that the logic of returning art to a connection with life did foreclose some of the most radical directions of modernist abstraction in the minds of some *Voices* writers. Even artists such as Bomberg and Wadsworth who, during their Vorticist years, had flirted with almost complete abstraction were more restrained in their *Voices* work. Wadsworth, in fact, created art for exactly the type of decorative, everyday use that Derriman advocated, contributing woodcuts of 'Specimens of Chapter Initials' to the July 1920 issue.

²⁷ Neville Cardus, 'Beauty for Beauty's Sake', *Voices* (Jan. 1919), 47.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 44, 46.

²⁹ Robert Derriman, 'Movement in Art', *Voices* (Sept. 1919), 121.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 121–2.

³¹ *Ibid.* 122. ³² *Voices* (Oct. 1919), 169.

Institutions of poetry and community

Moult aimed to make *Voices* more than merely a monthly selection of poetry. As we have seen, he aimed to foster poetry that could be experimental—though within fairly recognizable bounds. Fostering young poets of the generation that had gone to war in their late teens and early twenties also meant showing Britain that this generation had indeed survived the war and was inspired to write by it and often about it. Moult chose to create an institution for poetry that would draw upon already established strategies that would connect it to the literary establishment. *Voices* had a ‘Notes on Present-Day Art’ section at the end of each issue (which later was transformed into a ‘Reviews of New Books’ section along with a ‘Chimney Corner’ section of announcements), for example, that would review developments in the various arts and new poetry publications. The section connected *Voices* to a broad range of other literary journals as it reviewed each month’s offerings in periodicals from the modernist *Egoist* to the anti-modernist *London Mercury*, as well as *The English Review*, *The Athenaeum*, and *The Nation*.

Moult also attempted to foster a community for poetry by holding half-yearly gatherings of *Voices* readers and writers. These events featured not only writers and artists publishing in the journal, but also significant figures of the London literary establishment. The advertisement for the spring 1920 gathering read:

THE EDITOR OF ‘VOICES’ has pleasure in announcing that the Half-Yearly Gathering of Subscribers and Friends will take place on Monday evening, May the Seventeenth, in the Caxton Hall, Westminster (St. James’ Park Station, District Railway), at eight o’clock. An invitation is extended to every reader and his or her friends, and among those who have kindly promised to be present are Mr. ISRAEL ZANGWILL (who will preside), Miss MAY SINCLAIR, Miss ANNE ESTELLE RICE, Mr. W. H. DAVIES, Mr. ST. JOHN ERVINE, Mr. AUSTIN HARRISON, Mr. ALEC WAUGH, Mr. W. L. GEORGE, Mrs. DAWSON SCOTT, Mr. C. LOVAT FRASER, Mr. O. RAYMOND DREY, and (if in town) Mr. J. D. BERESFORD and Sir ARTHUR QUILLER-COUCH.³³

Of course, Moult must have been using these gatherings for multiple purposes—to promote the magazine to its readers and potential readers by dazzling them with the star-studded quality of the participants, to help keep the favorable attention of the literary establishment focused upon the magazine, and perhaps even to help cultivate young talent.

The critics and key journalists included the influential *Voices* supporter Quiller-Couch, who had held the Chair of English at Cambridge since 1912 and was perhaps one of the most prominent critics of English literature before

³³ *Voices* (Apr. 1920), 129.

F. R. Leavis's ascendance. Zangwill was similarly well established in the London literary world. Austin Harrison, who had been editor of *The Observer* from 1904 to 1908, took over from Ford Madox Hueffer (later Ford) as editor of *The English Review* in 1910 (see Chapter 9). He steered the review into safer waters and financial stability by publishing prominent authors whom Ford had published—Conrad, Tolstoy, and Wells, for example—but also focusing on Georgian poets such as Monro, Masfield, de la Mare, and even Moulton, as well as established writers such as Maurice Hewlett, Eden Philpotts, and William Watson.³⁴

The gathering also included a range of writers typical for *Voices*, from the Georgian favorite W. H. Davies to the more experimental novelist May Sinclair. The modernist aesthetics of the painter Anne Estelle Rice was balanced by the presence of Claud Lovat Fraser. Beresford and St John Ervine were already established writers, and W. L. George was a prominent writer on feminism. Mrs Dawson Scott was already a veteran at helping out young writers by bringing them together with established ones. She had founded the 'To-morrow Club' to help cultivate and promote young writers in 1917, and, within a year of the *Voices* gathering, would launch PEN. As it turned out, John Galsworthy, soon to be the first president of PEN, himself attended the gathering, as did R. A. Scott-James, Gordon Craig, John Gould Fletcher, Arthur Waugh, and many others, including the young violinist Jascha Heifetz.

The event drew a fair amount of media attention, much of it apparently focused on the cast of speakers and the politically 'diametrically opposed speeches' of Zangwill and Harrison.³⁵ Moulton tried to make the most of this, noting that *The Pall Mall Gazette* had named *Voices* the 'little pea-green incorruptible' and that W. L. George had declared that 'just this difference of opinion shows that the publication is vigorous, and not the organ of a pallid clique'. It was a 'place for the renescent letters we all desire'.³⁶

Voices managed to attract a respectable number of advertisements. Some were for local London merchants, such as Good's Cameo Corner and Elspeth Phelps clothing, or for literary and typewriting services. Most of the advertisements, though, were for bookshops, such as Hendersons, and for publishers—from the established Macmillan, Heinemann, and Chapman and Hall to Elkin Mathews and to Robert Gibbings's Golden Cockerell Press, an art press with which Eric Gill would work in the 1920s. Journals such as the left-wing *Daily Herald* and *The Englishwoman* also bought advertising space.

³⁴ See Mark Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism: Little Magazines, Audiences, and Reception, 1905–1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), 51–2.

³⁵ Thomas Moulton, 'Voices and World-Politics: The Half-Yearly Gathering in London', *Voices* (June 1920), 241–3.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 242.

Despite the support from the literary establishment and a fairly steady, though modest, stream of advertising revenues, the journal was doomed to a short life. Part of the problem was, again, the increasing costs of publication during the period. The magazine simply was not bringing in enough money through advertising revenue or subscriptions. By the beginning of the fifth volume, the financial strains had begun to show publicly. In Moul's 'Editorial' at the beginning of the issue, he maintained his desire to keep the magazine free from commercial interests:

our endeavour shall still be towards the encouragement of young artists who otherwise might be sufficiently of the wilderness to be neglected, by making them realise that in England today there remain corners where the weight of materialism which so relentlessly presses on the most of existence is still ineffective, since beyond printers and paper-merchants (and not altogether with these) there are in *Voices* no commercial interests whatsoever.³⁷

Indeed, as we have seen, he invoked Quiller-Couch's words about the journal keeping 'the faith of the young men—in Flanders, in France, and with the Army of the Rhine—who were sustained by it in their brief time and have left it to us as part and parcel of the heritage they died to save'.³⁸

The half-yearly gathering in Caxton Hall on December 20, 1920, served its stated function of connecting the magazine's writers to its audience and the literary world, but Moul had also obviously decided to use the meeting to help create some financial stability for *Voices*. The supporters of the magazine came up with schemes to increase its circulation and support its finances, including the creation of a 'Development Fund to ensure greater publicity' and a campaign for readers themselves to boost subscriptions. The attendees 'felt that individual effort on the part of readers might be made *at once* in several ways: by dealing with advertisers in *Voices*: by introducing the magazine to local literary societies, libraries, and university circles: and by every subscriber gaining through his own personal effort the subscription of at least one other.'³⁹ Even an annual literary competition with a 20-guinea prize was proposed. Nevertheless, *Voices* managed to publish only a few more issues—a February 1921 issue, and then a Summer and an Autumn 1921 issue. And that was the end of *Voices*.

Moul's efforts to support 'individual voices' rather than specific cliques or aesthetic directions left him unable to break through to the public or any specific corner of the literary world. Even the Georgian poetry bandwagon was slowing down. *Georgian Poetry* IV sold 15,000 copies, but *Georgian Poetry* V, in 1922, only sold 8,000. Ross, concludes that such an obvious fall in sales demonstrated that *Georgian Poetry* 'had outlived its day'.⁴⁰ Not willing to eschew modernism entirely

³⁷ *Voices* (Jan. 1921), 'Editorial', 2. ³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ The Cricket, 'Chimney Corner', *Voices* (Jan. 1921), 31–2.

⁴⁰ Ross, *The Georgian Revolt*, 232.

or to publish its more extreme experiments, Moulton was left with too many minor poets and too little audience. Moulton complained to Marsh about not having suitable poetry to publish.⁴¹ While praising Moulton's efforts with *Voices* during the summer of 1920, Richard Aldington also commiserated with him about the bleak situation of literary periodicals in the immediate post-war years. Aldington complained that little could be expected from the tepid and conservative weeklies and established literary magazines, and he argued that even the new literary periodicals were immature and too restrictive in focus.⁴²

The Monthly Chapbook

Voices' response to the war—its goal of creating a broad forum for the voices of a generation of survivors, bent on reconnecting poetry and life—had, in reality, led it to be perhaps *too* non-partisan for a poetry periodical in the 1920s. While *Voices*, Moulton's own forum to give voice to young writers, critics, and artists, did not survive past 1921, he noted with approval another such forum that stood more of a chance because of its founder's history in the pre-war poetry scene. Harold Monro's *Chapbook*, wrote Moulton, 'is an indication of the prevailing eagerness of those whom we might call "established" to seek out and make known any work by their juniors which gives sign of promise and the gift.'⁴³

Harold Monro was already a major force in pre-war London poetry, having established the most important institution for contemporary poetry: the Poetry Bookshop, with its broad offerings in contemporary verse, its own publishing business, and its regular poetry readings. He had already edited two important poetry magazines: *The Poetry Review* for the Poetry Society in 1912, and his own *Poetry and Drama* (1913–14). He had also published the highly successful *Georgian Poetry* anthologies and the much less successful but still important Imagist anthology, *Des Imagistes*, edited by Pound. After being released from the army, deeply depressed and less able to control his drinking, Monro went back to full-time work at the Poetry Bookshop and decided to launch a new periodical. As Dominic Hibberd explains,

The quarterly *Poetry and Drama* had been too solid for many readers, but the monthly *Poetry Review* had involved too much work. His solution was ingenious: the wartime chapbooks had been easy to produce and sell, so the periodical itself

⁴¹ Ibid. 181.

⁴² See ALS Richard Aldington to Thomas Moulton, June 21, 1920, and TLS Richard Aldington to Thomas Moulton, July 20, 1920, Richard Aldington Collection of Papers, Berg Collection, The New York Public Library.

⁴³ 'Periodicals: A Survey of Contemporaries. January and February', *Voices* (Mar. 1920), 86.

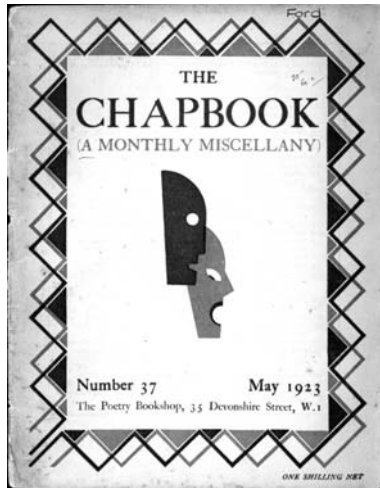


Fig. 52. Cover of *The Monthly Chapbook* (May 1923)

would be treated as a chapbook, each number unique, with its own cover and sometimes even its own editor.⁴⁴

Thus *The Monthly Chapbook* was born. Like *Voices*, it aimed at supporting a poetry revival after the war, but its mission emphasized new directions in poetry and new institutions to support poets in their craft and to cultivate better reading audiences for poetry.

The Monthly Chapbook was, like *Voices*, a 1s. monthly, running generally from twenty-four to thirty-two pages or so per issue. Like *Voices*, it carried advertisements, predominantly for presses, bookshops (including, of course, its own Poetry Bookshop publications), and journals, and adverts related to the publishing world, such as courses in writing and illustrating at the Practical Correspondence College. It carried a few display ads for non-literary products—soaps, for example, and even the ‘Muller Nutrient’, for ‘when work is a strain and the brain won’t respond’. Monro also attempted to build his advertising revenues by exhorting readers at the bottom of the advertisements: ‘Please mention The Monthly Chapbook when writing to Advertisers.’

Like the chapbooks that the Poetry Bookshop published, each issue had a different cover illustration. Monro attempted to benefit from having had a subscription base for *Poetry and Drama* before the war, styling the new magazine for a while as *Poetry and Drama* ‘new series’, and noting in the first issue that ‘former subscribers to POETRY AND DRAMA will find THE MONTHLY CHAPBOOK as useful from the student’s point of view, and more entertaining from the point of view

⁴⁴ Hibberd, *Monro*, 200.

of the general reader.’⁴⁵ Monro also noted that the new journal would, like its predecessor, create a record of the year’s productions in poetry, drama, and critical literature. But, unlike *Poetry and Drama*, each issue would be devoted to a specific topic or set of authors. At the end of each issue he even laid out his plans for the entire year’s upcoming issues (and he often did, in fact, produce the issues he had planned).

Monro noted inside the cover that *The Chapbook* ‘grinds no particular axe. It seeks to entertain rather than to elevate. It is neither Philistine nor High-Browed. It represents no clique. Its objects are literary; its taste is catholic. Sincerity is the only standard.’⁴⁶ Yet the very issue in which this description first appeared was devoted to *Three Critical Essays on Modern English Poetry*. The writers were not Davies, Masfield, or Abercrombie, much less Squire. They were, in fact, T. S. Eliot, Aldous Huxley, and F. S. Flint—three writers identified with modernist circles in the post-war period. Poetry and criticism related to war literature appeared from time to time, but the war did not give *The Chapbook* a mission, as it had with *Voices*. The imperative for a kind of poetic realism and a rebirth of English literary culture that animated *Voices* simply did not mark *The Chapbook*.

The Chapbook did publish Georgian poetry along with modernist work. The lead-off issue of the journal in July 1919 included several poets who had published or would publish in *Georgian Poetry*—W. P. R. Kerr, de la Mare, Sassoon, Lawrence, W. J. Turner, Monro himself, Sturge Moore, Robert Nichols, and Davies. These poets, and Charlotte Mew, who would be associated with them, dominated the first issue; some of them appeared from time to time in later issues. Monro continued to publish the *Georgian Poetry* anthologies while publishing *The Chapbook*. The fifth and final *Georgian Poetry* covered the years 1920 to 1922, though by 1925, *Georgian Poetry* had clearly reached something of a dead end. Monro’s interest in new literary directions had, in fact, guided most of the material he published in *The Chapbook* from 1919 to 1925. Indeed, that first issue, which included so many Georgian poets, also published work by H.D., Flint, Aldington, Herbert Read, and all three Sitwells.

Monro published a great deal of modernist poetry and criticism by modernist poets in *The Chapbook*. The magazine’s difference in emphasis from *Voices* was evident even in some of their exchanges. For example, an essay by Flint on the ‘Art of Writing’ read more like a manifesto for modernism than an essay. Laid out in the form of numbered axioms, it praised H.D., discussing her Imagist poem ‘Sea Gods’ from *Sea Garden*. By contrast, it lambasted J. C. Squire, dissecting his poem ‘The Moon’, which had appeared in Squire’s own journal, *The London Mercury*. Summing up, Flint complained,

⁴⁵ *The Monthly Chapbook* (July 1919), front page.

⁴⁶ *The Chapbook* (Mar. 1920), inside cover. *The Monthly Chapbook* was named *The Chapbook* between January 1920 and 1925.

Lack of artistic cohesion, lack of poetic rhythm, clumsiness: they can be found in all Mr. Squire's work. Turn to the piece called *Acacia Tree*, an attempt at 'free verse', in *The Lily of Malud* (an atrocious title). It gives its author away completely. He is not a poet; and his verse?—'a thin-blown shape of a rhyme.'⁴⁷

H.D., on the other hand, 'is a poet . . . Her rhythm is distinctive. Her words belong intimately to one another—cohere . . . It is a style perfectly adapted to the poetic purpose it interprets.'⁴⁸

Moult, writing in the April 1920 *Voices*, responded to Flint's *Chapbook* essay, complaining that 'Mr. Flint examines one of Mr. Squire's least characteristic verses alongside "H.D.'s" best . . . However much one may agree with his conclusions, such a method does not make for profit. Nor is it criticism; it is merely a mistake.'⁴⁹ Moult had wished to foster a range of poetry that could include both H.D. and Squire, but also a critical sincerity that could put aside partisanship in its evaluations. Critical writing in *The Chapbook*, however, would attempt to give a more definite shape to the post-war poetry landscape.

The prevailing modernist slant of *The Chapbook* colored many of its issues. Flint, who had regularly written the 'French Chronicle' feature of *Poetry and Drama* before the war, created a special issue of *The Chapbook* (October 1919) entitled *Some Modern French Poets (A Commentary, with Specimens)*. The 'modern French poets' Flint chose to discuss ranged widely, including many working in a symbolist vein, but also some of the most aesthetically challenging French modernist poets: Guillaume Apollinaire, Jean Cocteau, and Paul Eluard, for instance. Another issue, in November 1920, would focus on the Dada and Surrealist authors, Tristan Tzara, Francis Picabia, Paul Eluard, André Breton, Philippe Soupault, Louis Aragon, and Paul Morand.

Similarly, John Gould Fletcher edited a May 1920 issue of *The Chapbook* entitled *Some Contemporary American Poets*. Fletcher clearly assumed there was a British audience with an interest in American experimental poetry. The issue discussed and published examples of work by E. A. Robinson and Robert Frost as well as the more conventional Midwestern poetry of Edgar Lee Masters, Vachel Lindsay, and Carl Sandburg, discussing the importance of *Poetry* and *Reedy's Mirror* to the Midwestern poetry renaissance. But it also discussed more experimental work by Pound, Conrad Aiken, Amy Lowell, Alfred Kreymborg, and Wallace Stevens—even publishing all but one stanza of the latter's 'Sunday Morning'. Kreymborg would edit an April 1923 *New American Poems* issue of *The Chapbook* that included, along with his own work, that of many modernist poets—Williams,

⁴⁷ F. S. Flint, 'Presentation: Notes on the Art of Writing; on the Artfulness of Some Writers; and on the Artlessness of Others', *The Monthly Chapbook*, 2:9 (Mar. 1920), 22.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 24.

⁴⁹ Thomas Moult, 'Periodicals: A Survey of Contemporaries—The Month of March', *Voices* (Apr. 1920), 128.

E. E. Cummings, Fletcher, Aiken, Stevens, Jean Toomer, and Marianne Moore, for example, alongside Frost's 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening' and other less experimental work by Witter Bynner, Babette Deutsch, Edna Millay, and others.

The Chapbook was audacious in its pairings of seemingly disparate directions in poetry, writing, and art, and its focus was always more international than *Voices'* narrowly British view of a post-war revival could allow it to be. The yearly miscellany issue of *The Chapbook* for 1925, for instance, published Bloomsbury-related writers Leonard Woolf and the Sitwells, along with the modernist work of Lewis, Jean Cocteau, André Derain, Read, Fletcher, and Aldington, as well as the work of poets associated with *Georgian Poetry*, including Graves, Sassoon, Monro himself, and T. Sturge Moore. The Irish authors Liam O'Flaherty and Padraic Colum and the Greek poet C. P. Cavafy appeared in the same volume. These combinations resulted from Monro's effort to create a space for a broad range of poetry rather than to take up the work of a single faction.

Indeed, Monro had some sense of the limits of his audience's taste for the international and experimental. While his *Georgian Poetry* anthologies had sold many thousands of copies, *The Chapbook* could never make that kind of break into the mainstream poetry-reading audience. As Joy Grant has noted, 'The attempt to lead his public onward and outward while retaining their subscriptions was evidently a task of great delicacy.'⁵⁰ Grant quotes Monro's rejection of an essay submitted by Conrad Aiken in 1922: it was 'rather too condensed and difficult for the kind of person who reads the *Chapbook* . . . your method and style assume your reader to be of rather more than average intelligence.'⁵¹ Of *The Chapbook's* readership, Monro told Pound in 1923, 'The public it appeals to is rather a difficult one, of course, being composed to a considerable extent of people who may be easily shocked and if I lose them, there will not be enough circulation to keep the things going.'⁵² Some issues, such as the *New American Poets* issue discussed above, did cost the magazine some readers who believed, according to Monro, that 'several of the poems consisted of superficial nonsense that ought never to have been printed.'⁵³

But the format of *The Chapbook*, as essentially a series of 'special issues', allowed it to serve as an institution for modern poetry and, to a lesser extent, drama. As much as the Poetry Bookshop was at the centre of Monro's efforts to foster and disseminate important post-war poetry, he clearly attempted to make *The Chapbook* serve that mission by creating its own institutional framework. This would be achieved not only by publishing poetry but also by foregrounding

⁵⁰ Joy Grant, *Harold Monro and the Poetry Bookshop* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), 150.

⁵¹ Quoted, *ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.* 151.

criticism, publishing bibliographies, and using the chapbook inspiration of the new magazine to give each issue a focus related to the mission of the journal.

The critical dimension of the journal inspired such issues as the March 1920 *Three Critical Essays on Modern English Poetry* noted above, Alec Waugh's February 1920 issue on *Modern Prose Literature: A Critical Survey*, and the critical essays in the special issues on, for instance, French or American poetry. Monro also broadened his critical net with special issues such as the July 1922 issue, *Three Questions Regarding the Necessity, the Function, and the Form of Poetry*. Monro posed the following questions to twenty-seven writers: '1. Do you think that poetry is a necessity to modern man? 2. What in modern life is the particular function of poetry as distinguished from other kinds of literature? 3. Do you think there is any chance of verse being eventually displaced by prose, as narrative poetry apparently is being by the novel, and ballads already have been by newspaper reports?' The survey was answered by a typical range of poets. The Georgian poets Sturge Moore, Martin Armstrong, W. H. Davies, and John Freeman tended to be much more certain that poetry was necessary for humans than the modernist poets Eliot, Pound, and Fletcher were. But the question about the dominance of prose over poetry in modern life inspired more serious thinking about the communal role of poetry, the relationship of both poetry and prose fiction to the rise of modern journalism, and even whether humans possessed fundamentally different instincts for poetry than for prose.

The Chapbook also published special issues on genres it saw as related to poetry. It published musical settings of poems by poets such as de La Mare, for example, and a number of plays and drama-related issues, such as Albert Rutherston's August 1919 issue on *Decoration in the Art of the Theatre* and Gordon Craig's February 1921 issue *Puppets and Poets*. Some of these issues helped keep the magazine running when Monro had a nervous breakdown in August 1919 and spent months in a sanatorium, but they clearly were part of the plan for the journal from the beginning, as its published lists of planned future issues attested.

Some issues served yet another purpose, as Monro attempted to shape and expand audiences for poetry and for drama in the post-war era: they published bibliographies of poetry and lists of plays. The June 1921 issue, for instance, was *A List of 101 Commendable Plays Ancient and Modern, Compiled by the Plays and Publications Committee of the British Drama League for the Use of Community Theatres, Schools, & Dramatic Groups in Town & Country*. This continued the outreach mission that Monro had brought before the war to the *Poetry Review*, *Poetry and Drama*, and the Poetry Bookshop, with their ties to the verse recitation movement.⁵⁴ The mission of *Poetry and Drama*, which *The Chapbook* claimed in its front matter to carry on, was 'to provide a complete record of the poetry and drama of the day'. The June 1920 *Chapbook* was *A Bibliography of Modern Poetry: With*

⁵⁴ See Morrisson, *Public Face*, 54–83.

Notes on Some Contemporary Poets (Compiled and Edited by RECORDER). Recorder was the young Alec Waugh, who had assembled a forty-four-page, small-print list of all the poetry books published in Britain from January 1912 to May 1920. The list alone, as Hibberd puts it, provided ‘astonishing testimony to the poetry boom in which Harold had played a leading part’.⁵⁵

Like *Voices*, though, *The Chapbook* also faced the steep increase in production costs for periodicals in the immediate post-war environment. Beginning already at the fourth issue, Monro was forced to price the October 1919 issue, F. S. Flint’s *Some French Poets of To-Day*, at 1s. 6d. As he explained, ‘Owing to the excessive cost of production it is found impossible to sell the present enlarged number of THE CHAPBOOK at less than 1/6 net. An announcement will be made next month as to the price of future issues.’⁵⁶ The magazine continued at 1s. 6d. until the February 1922 issue, when it experimented with returning to 1s.

But the finances of the magazine were always shaky. *The Chapbook* announced in the front matter of each issue that ‘Poems accepted for THE CHAPBOOK are paid for one month after publication’, but as Hibberd notes, when Monro accepted Ford’s ‘The House’ for the March 1921 issue, ‘He was annoyed . . . when a fee was hinted at. Ford had been unaware, like most people, that the shop was financially dependent on its proprietor; he was abashed, and said he would write for nothing from now on, “your services to Literature being so splendid.”’⁵⁷

Ultimately, the magazine was never able to become completely financially independent. Its doom was sealed, to Munro’s frustration, by its inability to break beyond the thousand-subscriber mark. As Monro complained in 1923, ‘The small public that supports THE CHAPBOOK has amply demonstrated its enthusiasm, but it amounts at present only to a thousand persons, and, apparently, in spite of the opportunities for publicity afforded by the Poetry Bookshop, it cannot be made to rise to the fifteen hundred necessary for existence.’⁵⁸ The magazine lost about as much money each month as it paid out to contributors, despite having no rent or editor’s salary to pay. Monro complained, ‘There must be something wrong. Is it with the public, or with the periodical? Are there not fifteen hundred people in the English speaking world who think it worth while to spend one shilling a month on THE CHAPBOOK?’⁵⁹ He went on to vent his frustration:

What a number of meretricious or wicked things exist upon the earth: fake drugs; quack critics; bogus companies; poisonous patent foods; Sunday newspapers; Outlines of Literature and Art! Millions of people support these, and we only need five hundred. Hundreds of people earn thousands of pounds through them

⁵⁵ Hibberd, *Monro*, 211–12.

⁵⁶ *The Monthly Chapbook* (Oct. 1919), inside cover.

⁵⁷ Hibberd, *Monro*, 211.

⁵⁸ ‘Editorial’, *The Chapbook* (June 1923), 2.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

and we are not asking to earn anything, but rather to be allowed to give something away—not for the virtue, but for the pleasure.⁶⁰

The magazine either needed a patron to provide three hundred pounds per year or five hundred new subscribers to make it possible to continue as a monthly. But it was not to be. Monro published only two more issues of *The Chapbook* after that June 1923 issue—a hardback annual of roughly 70 pages in October 1924, and a final hardback annual for 1925, of about 120 pages, brought out for the bookshop by Jonathan Cape.

Legacies

Neither *Voices* nor *The Chapbook* met with the success their editors had hoped for them in terms of circulation and impact. They both shared the goal of re-integrating poetry into post-war British culture and of fostering a broadly non-partisan poetry revival, even if *The Chapbook* moved more into the modernist camp than *Voices* had. *The Chapbook* attempted to buttress the institutions for educating audiences and supporting poets that Monro had begun before the war in his Poetry Bookshop and its publications, while *Voices* tried to create a new readership for poetry among the young generation awaiting demobilization or returning from the war. Both magazines faced the difficulty of eschewing the partisan fray of the 1920s literary scene.

While *The Chapbook* ultimately had more success and endurance than *Voices*, Moulton abandoned the magazine as a form for disseminating the poetry he felt was valuable and instead found lasting commercial and literary success as an anthologist. Perhaps hastening his decision to end *Voices*, Moulton signed contracts with Jonathan Cape in Britain and Harcourt, Brace in New York to bring out a yearly poetry anthology. The first one, *Best Poems of 1922*, set the agenda, publishing a mixture of broadly accessible poetry which was heavy on Georgians, but also featured some modernist work and some regular *Voices* writers, such as A. E. Coppard and Louis Golding. The modernists chosen, however, were primarily working in the pre-war Imagist vein at the time. Moulton had found an aesthetic mixture culled from magazines in the UK and America that would be worth repeating, year after year, from 1922 until the final volume in 1943. Ironically, this path led him finally to the presidency of the same conservative Poetry Society that had removed Harold Monro as editor of its *Poetry Review* in 1912 for his aesthetic daring. Moulton even became chair of that magazine's Editorial Board from 1952 to 1962. Stephen Winsten noted in his 1974 obituary for Moulton that 'Thomas

⁶⁰ 'Editorial', *The Chapbook* (June 1923), 3.

Moult never lost hope. In his last years he acted as President of the Poetry Society and he wrote to me about it: "A wonderfully thriving organization, even in days like these when everybody talks about and lives on planes and machinery."⁶¹ Moult's hopes for poetry had always been high, even if it came increasingly to seem a precious sanctuary in a society whose pace had changed beyond all recognition.

⁶¹ Winsten, 'Mr. Thomas Moult', 16.

DESMOND MACCARTHY, *LIFE AND LETTERS* (1928–35), AND BLOOMSBURY MODERNISM

JANE GOLDMAN

Introduction

There was a short-lived general literary review called *Life and Letters* published in London and Manchester between November 1923 and August 1924, but it is not to be confused with the more successful and enduring *Life and Letters*, which was launched in June 1928 by the Hon. Oliver Sylvain Baliol Brett, who became in 1930 third Viscount Esher. From 1928 to 1934, it was edited by the Bloomsbury acolyte, Desmond MacCarthy (1877–1952). After this first phase under MacCarthy, *Life and Letters* was bought in 1935 by the writer and philanthropist Bryher (pseudonym of Annie Winifred Ellerman) and later merged with *The London Mercury* to become *Life and Letters Today*.

In 1928 MacCarthy relinquished editorship of *The New Statesman* to take on *Life and Letters*, which was itself published by the New Statesman Publishing Company, ‘sharing printing and production with the left-wing journal’.¹ In the same year he also took on the mantle of ‘chief literary critic for *The Sunday Times*, in succession to Sir Edmund Gosse’.² Adverts for its sister journal, *The New Statesman*, appear throughout *Life and Letters*, and latterly there appeared occasional adverts for *The Sunday Times*.³ MacCarthy’s personally endorsed facsimile letter soliciting support, sent out in its thousands, secured 2,600 subscribers, and ‘encouragingly fifty pages of advertising were guaranteed at the outset’.⁴

¹ Hugh and Mirabel Cecil, *Clever Hearts: Desmond and Molly MacCarthy—Biography* (London: Gollancz, 1990), 225.

² *Ibid.* 233.

³ See for example, adverts for *The New Statesman*: 5:4, 307; 8:1, 109; 9:1, 129; 10:5, 635; and for *The Sunday Times*: 10:5, 629; 11:2, 129.

⁴ Cecil, *Clever Hearts*, 225.

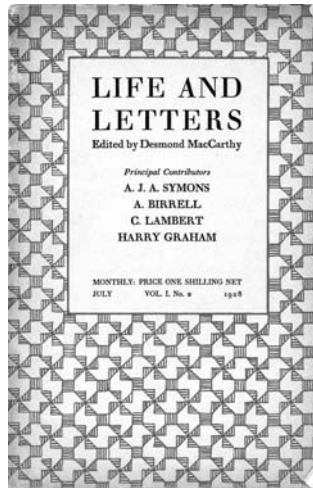


Fig. 53. Cover of *Life and Letters* (July 1928)

From June 1928 until December 1931 *Life and Letters* was published as a monthly; it became a quarterly in 1932; and in April 1934 reverted back to a monthly, when Hamish Miles took over for a year. R. Ellis Roberts served as editor between 1935 and 1936, with some assistance from MacCarthy. Robert Herring, the Scottish poet and film critic, and (Dorothea) Petrie Townshend, took over in 1936, and Robert Herring was sole editor from 1937 to 1950. *Life and Letters* absorbed its one time rival, *The London Mercury*, in May 1939. Its title variants were *Life and Letters Today* (September 1935–June 1945), and *Life and Letters and the London Mercury and Bookman* (July 1945–January 1946).

This chapter focuses on the first phase of *Life and Letters*, 1928 to 1935, while it was mainly under MacCarthy's editorship. The first part offers a general introduction to the magazine and samples a range of its contents, including editorials, essays, stories, poetry, reviews, and advertisements. The second focuses on a significant series of exchanges between the magazine and Virginia Woolf, exploration of which, as well as illuminating Woolf's own compositional processes, throws light on the stance and influence of the magazine and its reviewers, particularly with regard to women's fiction and gender politics. As well as pointing up its editorial stance, the spat between Woolf and *Life and Letters* also gives insight into the magazine's (intended) readership, not to mention the ambivalent relationship of *Life and Letters* to Bloomsbury modernism, which, already evident elsewhere in its pages, becomes all the more precarious when this partially subterranean skirmish is unearthed.

Life and Letters: 1928 to 1931

The achievement of MacCarthy's 'new literary journal', when it was first launched, was, according to David Cecil, that it 'managed, as few such publications do, to be at the same time intellectually impressive and agreeable reading'.⁵ Indeed *Life and Letters* 'was conceived', according to MacCarthy's biographers, Hugh and Mirabel Cecil, 'as a more unconventional rival to J. C. Squire's *London Mercury*, also a monthly journal; it was shorter and less artistically produced, but even so, its patterned cover of red and pale brown, its attractive print and good paper, gave it a well-designed, dignified appearance.'⁶ Cyril Connolly in his influential essay, 'Fifty Years of Little Magazines' (1964), also recalled the publication of *Life and Letters* as 'the literary event of the late twenties', and as:

full of good things, especially under MacCarthy, though rich in Edith and Osbert Sitwell and Dylan Thomas afterwards. Unfortunately, Desmond MacCarthy disliked the American-Paris school and spread his net wide to catch amateur writers who happened to do something rather well, e.g., murderer's confessions, and the result was a magazine which though still a pleasure to read in bed lacks all intensity and urgency—the eclectic run wild.⁷

But Connolly's diary for 1928 is less kind, likening it to a literary *Punch* magazine and finding it as 'august and readable as any late Victorian arse wiper, and as daring and original as a new kind of barley water'.⁸ MacCarthy's biographers, on the other hand, remark on the growing reputation of his *Life and Letters* 'as an original and entertaining journal stirring public interest', and publishing 'brilliant, young' and 'avant-garde' writers. They also point up MacCarthy's use of the magazine to mount a 'cogent attack on government censorship of books and plays', his brave championing of Radclyffe Hall's *Well of Loneliness* and D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterly's Lover*, and of his joining Bertrand Russell in condemning censorship at the Congress of the World League for Sexual Reform in London in 1929.⁹ David Miller and Richard Price include *Life and Letters* in their (2006) bibliography of 'little magazines' but conclude that it is 'not a true little magazine, in that it was published on a commercial footing', but they deem it 'a significant literary journal, particularly strong in the early years on Bloomsbury authors, and then, in the 1930s, on the poets of "the Auden generation"'.¹⁰ But even with such a

⁵ David Cecil, 'Introduction', *Desmond MacCarthy, The Man and His Writings* (Constable: London, 1984), 15.

⁶ Cecil, *Clever Hearts*, 225.

⁷ Cyril Connolly, 'Fifty Years of Little Magazines', *Art and Literature: An International Review*, 1 (Mar. 1964), 106.

⁸ Connolly, quoted Cecil, *Clever Hearts*, 229.

⁹ Cecil, *Clever Hearts*, 226–7.

¹⁰ David Miller and Richard Price, *British Poetry Magazines 1914–2000: A History and Bibliography of 'Little Magazines'* (Cambridge: British Library and Oak Knoll Press, 2006), 108.

strength of contributions by a range of modernist authors, from Wyndham Lewis to Virginia Woolf, *Life and Letters*' standard commercial printed magazine format, tame typography, bereft of illustrations, cartoons, or photographs, hardly makes it a pioneer of experimental modernist aesthetics itself. Its political stances, moreover, even accounting for its interventions against censorship, pale alongside the more extravagant and extreme gestures and energies of its modernist and avant-garde contemporaries.

The first volume of *Life and Letters* in fact featured several dead writers from the nineteenth century, publishing essays by George Santayana, Thomas Hardy, and a memoir of Andrew Lang by the still living Max Beerbohm. But thereafter MacCarthy's (often regular) contributors included Virginia Woolf, Clive Bell, Aldous Huxley, Cyril Connolly, Sherwood Anderson, A. J. A. Symons, André Maurois, Vernon Lee, Robert Byron, David Cecil, Erich Maria Remarque, Lytton Strachey, Vita Sackville-West, E. M. Forster, Hope Mirrlees, David Garnett, Dilys Powell, Roy Campbell, Arnold Bennett, Peter Quennell, Bertrand Russell, Robert Graves, Hilaire Belloc, Osbert Sitwell, and Edith Wharton. MacCarthy made space for long literary essays and for reports on American and European literature, including crime fiction and thrillers as well as for occasional short fiction and poems, and later for theatre and films. Reviews were usually anonymous. There were regular bibliographies on earlier literature and on key writers, thinkers, or movements, including, for example, John Donne, Henrik Ibsen, clairvoyance, and the Restoration.

Advertising in *Life and Letters* was placed at the front and back, with regular small advertisements, in the first volume, for the London School of Journalism (the most loyal), and larger ones for Westminster Bank, the Tottenham Court Road furniture store, Heal's, the Everyman's Co-Operative Investment Trust, Libraco equipment for libraries, Sun Life Assurance, and various presses including Cape, Basil Blackwell, Heinemann, Cayme Press, and Allen and Unwin.¹¹ There were also advertisements for the Foyle First Edition Club, The Times Book Club, as well as for Lotus Veldtschoen shoes, Three Nuns tobacco, De Reszke cigarettes, and P&O Cruises. The issue with one of the highest number of advertisements in the first phase of the magazine was 2:4 (April 1929), which included Pearsall Smith's 'Jeremy Taylor', Edith Wharton's 'Visibility in Fiction', Cyril Connolly's essay, 'The Position of Joyce', which was on *Anna Livia Plurabelle*, Shane Leslie's 'Lines Written in the Month's Mind of Mona Dunn', and MacCarthy's 'In the Margin of Proust'. The advertisements in this issue included the London School of Journalism, Three Nuns tobacco, Bumpus booksellers, Cartoons by Low for

¹¹ The two bound runs of *Life and Letters* in the National Library of Scotland and Glasgow University Library do not include all of the advertising matter at the front and back of each issue. However, a sample unbound issue (1:2), includes these missing pages of advertisements. The discussion of advertisements here is based only on the bound volumes.

The New Statesman, and small advertisements for typewriting and bookbinding services, along with *Life and Letters* subscriptions. Such advertisements suggest the caricature of a comfortably off pipe-smoking, male, metropolitan reader, middle class, middlebrow, but with some highbrow literary aspirations as a serious reader, a book collector and literary connoisseur, and possibly a fledgling writer. The didactic bibliographies and explicatory essays on literature ancient and modern suggest a reader requiring tutelage in modern tastes if only to line his stylishly furnished living room with the right sort of modern books.

There was a sharp falling away in advertisements in June 1929 (2:6). It was not until March 1930 (4:3), a meaty issue that contained essays by Arthur Symons and Cyril Connolly, that they picked up, and included advertisements for the London School of Journalism and De Reszke cigarettes. Advertising was sparse between issues 6:3 (March 1931) and 7:6 (December 1931). When the shilling monthly *Life and Letters* announced, in December 1931, its 'continuance as a half-crown quarterly', MacCarthy confessed that 'we should have increased the price [from one] to two shillings after the first year',¹² noting too that another 'important part of the revenue of *Life and Letters*, namely, its advertising pages, has been adversely affected by the general trade depression... but we feel that many who were disinclined to advertise every month will be willing to come to *Life and Letters* four times a year.'¹³

MacCarthy also reflected in this transitional editorial that the magazine had 'published repeatedly some of the best recent work'. He names, amongst others, Aldous Huxley, F. L. Lucas, Hilaire Belloc, Max Beerbohm, Sturge Moore, Gordon Craig, Arthur Symons, Clive Bell, Bertrand Russell, Vernon Lee, Thomas Hardy, Evelyn Waugh, Cyril Connolly, George Santayana, Edith Wharton, Victoria Sackville-West, Edward Sackville-West, Somerset Maugham, and Erich Maria Remarque.¹⁴

Interestingly, however, the first three names in MacCarthy's list are his Bloomsbury colleagues Lytton Strachey, E. M. Forster (both also Cambridge Apostles like MacCarthy), and Virginia Woolf. He boasts of the magazine's brave vision in devoting 'occasionally a whole number to one contribution, as we did when we had the luck to spot before publication *High Wind in Jamaica*, or to one subject, as in the case of the Samuel Butler number'.¹⁵ Lengthy extracts from Richard Hughes's novel, *High Wind in Jamaica*, were published, along with the editorial rationale for this gesture, in the August 1929 number (3:2). The Samuel Butler issue was the October 1931 number (7:4), and included 'Unpublished Extracts from the Note-Books of Samuel Butler'.¹⁶ MacCarthy pledged to 'continue' this policy, but in fact there were no further such singly devoted numbers under his editorship. In his 1931 editorial MacCarthy also, rightly, boasted of the magazine's

¹² *Life and Letters*, 7:6, 373.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 371-2.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 371.

¹⁶ *Life and Letters*, 7:4, 300-10.

publication of 'remarkable contributions by writers little known or only beginning their careers. Few people had heard of Mr. A. J. A. Symons (as a writer) before they read his "Baron Corvo"; one of the very best and most amusing portraits of this decade.'¹⁷ Symons's essay, 'Frederick Baron Corvo', appeared in the second issue of the magazine, in July 1928, and *Life and Letters* achieved a second coup in going on to publish, in April 1933, a substantial extract from Symons's forthcoming book, *The Quest for Corvo*.¹⁸ MacCarthy's list of high spots up to December 1931 continues:

We still hear people praise G. M. Young's essay on 'The Victorian Age' as a first-rate piece of balanced history; many still remember Romanov's 'Without Elder Blossom' as a story which gave them a glimpse of love in Soviet Russia. Human documents such as McDougal's account of how he murdered Miss Holland, and Samuel Butler's account of his strange friendship made dints, and certainly Miss Antonia White's and Mr. Arthur Symons' descriptions of what it felt like to be mad ought also to have done so. They were not only curious but beautiful.¹⁹

It is worth exploring a little further this list of MacCarthy's gems from this first phase of *Life and Letters* up to December 1931. They show what he himself as editor thought most representative of his magazine's achievement, and they bring a particular nuance to its position regarding key modernist topoi such as, in turn in the examples below, literary and historiographical reactions to the Victorians; literary and political stances regarding the emergent Soviet Russian state; a marked interest in modern psychology, states of consciousness, and specifically madness; and the exploration of sexuality, including alternatives to compulsory heterosexuality, and the literary and social acknowledgement of homosexuality.

'Victorian History', by the Tory historian G. M. Young (1882–1959), appeared in February 1931.²⁰ The publication and reception of this essay, Young's third piece for *Life and Letters*, marked a turning point in his career.²¹ The son of a waterman, later a steamer master, he became a scholar at St Paul's School then Balliol College, Oxford. He worked for the cabinet office, was secretary to Arthur Henderson, and was later director of the Anglo-Austrian bank. After the war he devoted himself to writing, but it was not until he was fifty that he published his first book, *Gibbon* (1932), one year after his 1931 essay for *Life and Letters*.

Young's essay presented a provocative review of recent histories of the Victorian period, bemoaning the shortcomings of both popular and academic 'Research' historians.²² His opening salvoes were directed at *The Victorian Tragedy* by

¹⁷ *Life and Letters*, 7:6, 372.

¹⁸ *Life and Letters*, 1:2, 81–101; 9:2, 164–80.

¹⁹ *Life and Letters*, 7:6, 372.

²⁰ *Life and Letters*, 6:2, 123–45.

²¹ See also G. M. Young, 'England in Decline' (*Life and Letters*, 3:3, 288–92) and 'A Word for Gabriel Harvey' (4:6, 492–6).

²² G. M. Young, 'Victorian History', *Life and Letters* (Feb. 1931), 124.

'Dr. Wingfield Stratford', and his closing ones at the work of Lytton Strachey. What rankled Young most seems to be Stratford's class-consciousness: 'He can spot a bourgeois ten miles off. He nowhere defines bourgeois, but his idea of one can be elicited from pages 126 to 128, where it will be found to include Napoleon, Samuel Smiles, Sainte Beuve, and Matthew Arnold, and to exclude Dr. Stratford and Christ.'²³

The Victorian tragedy of Stratford's book title is 'a population mounting every year above the possibility of maintenance except from overseas'.²⁴ Young finds this '*idée fixe*' to be 'even more remarkable than an analysis which assumes that the upper classes were all Tories, and the middle classes all engaged in cut-throat competition, and forgets that a large number of both were educated men'.²⁵ In conclusion, Young understands 'the objectivity of the scientific school [and] the flippancy and conceit of the popular school to be equally distorting approaches to history'.²⁶ He singles out Lytton Strachey as responsible for the current trends in historiography, but if Strachey's *Eminent Victorians* (1928) as well as Hugh Kingsmill's *Matthew Arnold* (1928) represent the current unfortunate trend, then Young also finds, 'signs that the tide is turning... what struck me, for example about the historical parts of Mr. Sitwell's *Gothick North* was not that they were better written than most histories, but that they were so much better history'.²⁷ Sacheverell Sitwell's experimental three-volume work, *The Gothick North: A Study of Medieval Life, Art, and Thought* (1929), combined fact and fiction in its approach to history, inventing two 'characters from our own present lives, using them to give argument to my purpose', and rendered the second volume 'in the form, practically, of a novel', in order to explore the material culture of the Gothic.²⁸

Not unsurprisingly, two issues later, *Life and Letters* published an incensed letter to the editor from Esmè Wingfield-Stratford, complaining 'it is not cricket to pillory an author for nonsense he has never dreamed of uttering, and of snobbery of which he is perfectly innocent', and offering a 'denial on point of fact' regarding the alleged observations on class.²⁹ MacCarthy offered Young some support later in December 1931 but Young did not appear again in *Life and Letters* until May 1934 when he contributed the opening essay to that issue, 'The New Cortegiano',³⁰ a meditation on Compton Mackenzie's *Literature in My Time* and Queenie Leavis's *Fiction and the Reading Public*, which he viewed as a speculation upon 'the content and animating drive of the next culture'.³¹ He considered recent women's writing, more than men's, to be of 'distinction', and Virginia Woolf to be the

²³ Young, 'Victorian History', 124.

²⁴ Stratford, quoted in *ibid.* 127.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.* 144.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Sacheverell Sitwell, *The Gothick North: A Study of Medieval Life, Art, and Thought* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1929), 2.

²⁹ 'Letter', *Life and Letters*, 6:4, 322.

³⁰ *Life and Letters*, 10:53, 133-44.

³¹ G. M. Young, 'New Cortegiano', *Life and Letters*, 10:53, 139.

most important contemporary writer: 'the only stylist of our day whom the reader instinctively matches with the great artists of the past is a woman. Culture is surely not extinct in the age of *The Common Reader*. Could its future be in safer hands than those which shaped the prose of *Flush*?'³² Thereafter Young made four further substantial contributions to *Life and Letters*.³³

MacCarthy's support for Young in his sniping at the pioneering anti-Victorianism of MacCarthy's own Bloomsbury colleague, Strachey, underlines the fact that Bloomsbury itself cannot be understood as monolithic in its politics or aesthetics, and that, indeed, it thrived on dissent and disagreement. Strachey's work itself, of course, also appeared in *Life and Letters*, as MacCarthy boasted, including the lead essay for the April 1931 issue, 'Madame De Lieven',³⁴ which also published Wingfield-Stratford's letter *contra* Young.³⁵ And after Strachey's death in January 1932, MacCarthy paid his respects in *Life and Letters*, in March of that year, with 'Lytton Strachey as a Biographer'.³⁶

A second revealing example of MacCarthy's selected gems, 'Without Elder-Blossom' by Pantelimon Romanov, appeared in November 1928 and is the title story in a collection which, according to the prefatory note supplied by its translators, Ivor Montagu and S.S.N., 'occasioned controversy and had a popular success in Russia in 1926'.³⁷ The student narrator, whose gender is not at first clear, describes her sexual encounter with a 'comrade', a fellow student, 'handsome' and 'clever', but who, embodying the pervasive ideology that 'soldiers of the revolution . . . have no time for tenderness and "sentimentality"', rejects romantic love in favour of free sexual expression: 'love is contemptibly regarded as part of psychology—and only physiology is "the thing"'.³⁸ She regrets the squalid conditions in which she finds herself and fellow students living and contrasts these with the public show of cleanliness exhibited by 'our State, our beggarly proletarian State' and 'our University, [which] is now the most beautiful building in Moscow'.³⁹ A scene of intimacy describes how the two lovers negotiate between his robust stance on sexual liberty and her quiet insistence on romantic love ('But within me, just as much as in him, was that unpleasant feeling of desire').⁴⁰ The story closes with her finding the sprig of elder-blossom she had pinned to her breast at the start 'crumpled' but yet still there, 'dragging'.⁴¹ Elder-blossom, the

³² *Ibid.* 144.

³³ G. M. Young, 'The Emotions and Mr. Huxley', *Life and Letters*, 10:54 (June 1934), 280–9; 'Prose, Old and New', 11:59 (Nov. 1934), 147–56; 'Tunes Ancient and Modern', 11:62 (Feb. 1935), 544–54; 'Puritans and Victorians', 12:1, 58–63.

³⁴ *Life and Letters*, 6:4, 247–58.

³⁵ Strachey's other publications in *Life and Letters* were 'Mandell Creighton', in June 1929 (2:6, 409–16); and 'Froude' in December 1930 (5:6, 431–8).

³⁶ *Life and Letters*, 8:1, 90–102.

³⁷ *Life and Letters*, 1:6, 453.

³⁸ *Ibid.* and 457, 455, 456.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 454–5.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 466.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 467.

translators point out, 'is used as a translation of "cheremukha"—the "bird-cherry tree" . . . symbolic of romantic love'.⁴²

A third example cited by MacCarthy, Samuel Herbert Dougal's 'A Murderer's Confession', was published as the leading piece in volume 1:3 (August 1928) and reprinted from *The Sun* newspaper (15 July 1903), the day after Dougal had been executed. His account of his murder of Camille Cecile Holland in May 1899, known as 'The Moat Farm Murder', made such an impression on MacCarthy that he 'preserved it and frequently lent it to others who were also impressed', as he relates in his preface: 'It is not only a very curious human document, but it has as a story the vivid convincing power more often found in good fiction than in confessions. It is well worth preserving.'⁴³ But the piece is in fact hardly to be ranked alongside the modernist touchstone he brings to mind (Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*). Dougal shows little in the way of remorse in his confession, and describes the eventual discovery of the body he had hidden as a thankful 'end' to his 'life of misery'.⁴⁴ Fear of discovery had become the main cause of his misery, but he also suggests, by way of stereotypical misogynistic caricature, his victim herself as another source. 'I had made up my mind then that this should be the last drive that Miss Holland should ever have, because as we were driving along she started to nag me again, and she was jawing me all the time we were in the Chequers, the public-house where we had some whisky.'⁴⁵

'Samuel Butler's account of his strange friendship' was published in the special issue on Butler of October 1931, as 'Charles Paine Pauli and Samuel Butler'. It is a lengthy and detailed account of his long friendship with Charles Paine Pauli, a handsome and charming rogue, whom he first met in New Zealand and to whom he gave sustained financial support over many years until Pauli's death in 1897. Butler gives an eloquent account of his fluctuating feelings, from attraction and admiration to guilt and hurt, throughout the various phases of their friendship, along with as detailed and accurate a record as he could muster of the precise sums of money that he had passed to Pauli over the years. He records his utter astonishment on discovering at his funeral that Pauli had a number of other such long-term supporters who had likewise succumbed to his charms and protestations. Butler's concluding remarks are both sanguine and touching:

The only decent end for such a white heat of devotion as mine was to him for so many years was the death of one or other of the parties concerned. . . . if he had died as he easily might in any of his winter colds years before the end actually came, I should have been haunted by the fear that I had been the cause until my dying day. Whereas my conscience is absolutely clear.⁴⁶

⁴² *Life and Letters*, 1:6, 453.

⁴³ Desmond MacCarthy, 'Preface', *Life and Letters*, 1:3 (Aug. 1928), 161.

⁴⁴ Samuel Herbert Dougal, 'A Murderer's Confession', *Life and Letters*, 1:3 (Aug. 1928), 189.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 164, 165, 170.

⁴⁶ Samuel Butler, 'Charles Paine Pauli and Samuel Butler', *Life and Letters*, 7:4 (Oct. 1931), 296–7.

Butler also points out that if this account is ever read 'it should be remembered that it is an *ex parte* statement, and that Pauli's version of the matter can never be known. For I hardly think that he can have left a record concerning any part of it.'⁴⁷

'The House of Clouds' by Antonia White appeared as the leading piece in the September 1930 issue of *Life and Letters*, three years before the publication of her first, ground-breaking, novel, *Frost in May* (1933), based on her traumatic experiences of Roman Catholic Convent education. At the time of the *Life and Letters* piece, White was making a living from writing advertising copy and newspaper fiction, while in the throes of a turbulent love life. 'The House of Clouds' draws on her experiences of mental breakdown after the annulment, owing to non-consummation, of her first marriage, in 1921 and her committal to Bethlem Hospital, London. Although she was not certified again, the possibility of mental illness haunted her for the rest of her life.

MacCarthy introduced her account as a "document" [of] psychological as well as literary value', which suggests to him that:

certain forms of insanity, as far as their mental aspect was concerned, could be ascribed to a derangement in the sufferer's perception of time, he or she living in a world in which impressions were so widely separated that previous ones were forgotten or only vaguely remembered. It is, after all, only recollection of a preceding impression which enables us to distinguish any object from any momentary apprehension of it which is coloured by our emotional state at that moment.⁴⁸

White's third person, fictional account of the auditory and visual hallucinations of her story's protagonist, Helen, moves seamlessly between various states of psychosis, and 'The House of Clouds' appears to be a place of the dead, masquerading as a hospital:

She knew quite well that they were not nurses; she even recognized faces she had seen in picture papers. These were rich women whose sons had been killed, years ago, in the war. And each times [*sic*] a woman came in, Helen went through a new agony. She became the dead boy.⁴⁹

White's invocation of the war dead and war trauma is in keeping with the period's increasing acquaintance with psychological matters, and madness itself, as a direct result of the battlefield.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Ibid. 298. ⁴⁸ Desmond MacCarthy, *Life and Letters*, 5:3 (Sept. 1930), 145, 147.

⁴⁹ Antonia White, 'The House of Clouds', *Life and Letters*, 5:3 (Sept. 1930), 151.

⁵⁰ White went on to publish another piece, 'The Saint', in *Life and Letters* in November 1931 (7:5, 347-55).

The first person account of madness, 'Confessions: A Study in Pathology', by the great critic and poet of the symbolist movement, Arthur Symons, appeared as the leading piece in the March 1930 issue of *Life and Letters*. This is an extract from his last notable book, *Confessions: A Study in Pathology* (1930), which looks back to September 1908, when Symons, 'on a trip through Italy with his wife, suffered a severe mental breakdown (most likely a manic-depressive psychosis) which required almost two years of confinement in mental institutions'.⁵¹ He never fully recovered and his writing was marred by a marked incoherence. Almost inevitably his reputation suffered: 'Confessions: A Study in Pathology' is his devastating swansong. Symons here describes, in a fluid and sometimes incoherent narrative, his year and a half of torment and anguish in enforced confinement in an asylum.⁵² But he also admits to an amazing 'break that occurred then between my reason and my reality' finding that he 'had half forgotten my own existence . . . the memory of things past, the memory of things present—which went by like the flowing of some dream river—and in fact I had lost tangible hold of everything'.⁵³

MacCarthy's biographers are perhaps right to single out, as one of its most significant cultural contributions, the stand that *Life and Letters* took against censorship during its early numbers, but MacCarthy himself does not choose to mention this in his 1931 retrospect. In fact the initial anonymous review of Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* is quite even-handed in its assessment of it, *without* its 'challenging thesis', as a 'simple, pleasantly written love-story with an unhappy ending'.⁵⁴ But, *with* it, in its culmination, the novel is 'over-weighted, both by sentiment and sectarian passion'.⁵⁵ The reviewer concludes that

since the shirted and tailored hero is, so to speak, a hero-heroine, and the later and least successful chapters . . . are concerned with the woes peculiar to her temperament, with the frequent plea that even female 'inverts' self-styled deserve a share of sunshine, etc., *The Well of Loneliness* is likely to raise a different set of issues, foreign to aesthetics and outside the province of this report.⁵⁶

MacCarthy's lengthy editorial in the next issue, invoking John Milton and Have-lock Ellis et al., closes thus:

History shows that only those communities have flourished in which men were allowed to pool their experience and comment freely on life, and that the suppression of freedom is a graver risk to civilization than the circulation of any book to morality.⁵⁷

⁵¹ Karl Beckson, 'Symons, Arthur William (1865–1945)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept. 2004; online edn, May 2007. Accessed 8 March 2008. Available at <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36400>

⁵² Arthur Symons, 'Confessions: A Study in Pathology', *Life and Letters*, 4:3 (Mar. 1930), 191, 195.

⁵³ *Ibid.* 193–4.

⁵⁴ *Life and Letters*, 1:4 (Sept. 1928), 313.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 314.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 313.

⁵⁷ *Life and Letters*, 1:5 (Oct. 1928), 341.

A year later, following the successful prosecution of both *The Well of Loneliness* and *Sleeveless Errand* (1929), a first novel, 'about the effects of wartime morality', by Norah C. James,⁵⁸ MacCarthy went on to argue in his *Life and Letters* editorial, 'Obscenity and the Law', not for an alteration of the law but for 'a more accurate application of the actual law', since neither book should be rightly considered 'immoral'. MacCarthy finds *Sleeveless Errand* to be:

a novel which contains gross and vulgar expressions, though it is an austere moral indictment of sordid sensuality and lack of decent human standards. . . . In my own opinion it was a novel which every youth and girl tempted to join a tipling, promiscuous set such as the author describes, might well read with profit; I know several sensible parents who have borrowed it to lend it to their children.⁵⁹

Life and Letters: 1931 to 1935

The new quarterly format of *Life and Letters* ran from issue 8:1 (March 1932) to 9:4 (February 1934), and began impressively enough, with the table of contents shown in Fig. 54. This was the template, more or less, for the next two years of *Life and Letters*, with substantial essays or stories by one or two established names, alongside the less well known, followed by a wide ranging review section by named reviewers. 'A Modern Lover' (1912), another piece by D. H. Lawrence, was posthumously published in 1933. MacCarthy himself made regular contributions, including 'A Critic's Day Book', and Peter Quennell was the most regular reviewer, although the generic grouping of reviews under headings of fiction, poetry, and general literature lapsed in 1933. Highlights in this period include another previously unpublished extract from Samuel Butler's Notebooks, 'Jones and Myself [Ms. Notebook 1900]', in June 1932, and Evelyn Waugh's 'Seth' in the same issue; Edward Gordon Craig's 'Baa-Baa Blonde Sheep' and John Eglington's 'The Beginnings of Joyce', in December 1932; Havelock Ellis's 'Marcel Jouhandeau', in March 1933; the extract from A. J. A. Symons's *The Quest for Corvo* in 1933; and Sean O' Casey's 'A Fall in a Gentle Wind' in 1934.

The first of the new issues also sported a healthy crop of advertising pages, at the front and back of the magazine. The advertisements were predominantly for publishing companies: Macmillan, Allen and Unwin, Cambridge University Press, *The New Statesman*, Gerald Howe, La Belle Sauvage Editions, and Sheed and Ward. The new subscription rates for *Life and Letters* were advertised at 11s. per annum, along with the new advertisement rates: '1s. 6d. per

⁵⁸ See Celia Marshik, 'History's "Abrupt Revenges": Censoring War's Perversions in *The Well of Loneliness* and *Sleeveless Errand*', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 26:2 (Winter 2003), 145-59.

⁵⁹ Desmond MacCarthy, 'Obscenity and the Law', *Life and Letters*, 2:5 (May 1929), 328.

LIFE AND LETTERS	
EDITED BY DESMOND MACGARTHY	
VOL. VIII. No. 44. MARCH 1932	
CONTENTS	
MEDITERRANEAN IN JANUARY	Page 1
By D. H. Lawrence	
NAUSICAA	3
By William Plomer	
ANÆSTHESIA	30
By Hugh Anthony	
LUGH PIRANDELLO	39
By Justice Levin	
THE LAST TO CALL HIM CHARLEY	48
By E. V. Lucas	
CHINESE PUNCH AND JUDY	67
By Stella Benson	
PASSENGERS	74
By J. A. H. Ogden	
LYTTON STRACHEY AS A BIOGRAPHER	90
By Desmond MacCarthy	
A CHRONICLE OF RECENT BOOKS	103

Fig. 54. Contents page of *Life and Letters* (March 1932)

insertion for 12 words or less, 9d. per line (6 words) thereafter.⁶⁰ Advertisements for various publishers continued to appear in healthy numbers over the next two years alongside occasional advertisements for the Sun Life Assurance Co. Canada, Royal Ascot Hotel, L. W. Pendred furniture, and the Academy Cinema.

Hamish Miles took over editorship of *Life and Letters* in April 1934, when it reverted to a monthly, and was published by Constable, in larger format with two columns per page, with an annual subscription of 27s. The Contents for April 1934 was as follows:

Wars and Emotions, Aldous Huxley, 7–26
An Irish Schooling, Seán O’Faoláin, 27–32
The Living Poem, Herbert Palmer, 32
The Dumb Ox[: A Study of Ernest Hemingway], Wyndham Lewis, 33–45
Saturnina’s Destiny, Jenny Ballou, 46–57
Nine London Pictures, G. W. Stonier, 58–65
An Experiment with Rhyme, Bonamy Dobrée, 66–72
Growing Like a Tree, Eric Linklater, 72–8
The Nuncio: a poem, Herbert Read, 79–84
The Burning Cactus: a story, Stephen Spender, 85–96
The Land Without Heroes, G. F. Green, 97–105
Cross Section: A Monthly Survey, 106–10:
Hunger Marchers, G.B., 106

⁶⁰ *Life and Letters*, 8:1 (Mar. 1932), III.

Two Plays [Sean O'Casey, *Within the Gates*; W.H. Auden, *The Dance of Death*], G.B., 107

Raw Material [shocking story in *West Sussex Gazette*; Advt in *Time*], 109

From a Notebook, D.G.B., 109

Press Note, 110

Reviews [T. S. Eliot, *After Strange Gods*; Samuel Butler's Notebooks; biog of Queen Elizabeth; A. J. A. Symons, *The Quest for Corvo*; Larens van der Post; Graham Greene, *It's a Battlefield*; *Germany*, Ewald Banse, *Prepare for War*], 111

This general format continued until April 1935. Highlights include W. H. Auden's prose monologue, 'Sermon by an Armament Manufacturer', in May 1934, Wyndham Lewis's study of William Faulkner, 'A Moralist with a Corn Cob', and Edwin Muir's 'Franz Kafka', both in June 1934. The new 'Cross-Section' cultural and political survey included three 'Letters to Nigeria' by 'C.S.', published between July and September 1934, which reported from Pall Mall on the current play in the test match and the state of British and European politics, sometimes in alarming tones.

The Times man is enormously better than he was twelve months ago, when he refused to see any good in Hitler at all and wrote of him as if he were only some sort of ugly fungus. He now writes sense, the best and most informative sense, I think, that is being printed anywhere in Europe. Which is exactly as it should be. After all, if one can't trust *The Times* what can one trust?⁶¹

The advertisements were plentiful under Miles's editorship, and were again mainly for publishers such as Macmillan, Methuen, Dent, Constable, Cassell, and the Poetry Bookshop; but there were also advertisements for Burgoyne's South African Wines, *Cinema Quarterly*, the Cancer Hospital (endorsed by the poet laureate John Masefield), and the *Star and Garter Magazine* (for Disabled Sailors and Soldiers).

When, in October 1934, R. Ellis Roberts took over editorship of *Life and Letters*, with Desmond MacCarthy's epistolary endorsement, the contents were as follows:

Editor's Advertisement [R. Ellis Roberts and letter from Desmond MacCarthy], 5-6

The Affairs of Men, 7-13

Roger Fry[: an appreciation], Michael E. Sadler, 14-20

De Gloria Paradisi, Basil Blackett, 21-2

Chatterton and You and Me, Laurence Whistler, 23-4

'In the beginning you said—', Elizabeth Bibesco, 25

A Lover, Mary Butts, 26-37

The Applied Science of the Next 100 Years [Biological and Social Engineering], Julian Huxley, 38-46

⁶¹ *Life and Letters*, 10:5 (Aug. 1934), 613.

- Lotus Land, H. J. Massingham, 47–56
 The Children's Bread, [F. Mary] Mrs. Clement Parsons, 57–62
 The Widower's Son, F. J. Kelly, 63–70
 Mignon, A. A. Kisby, 71–83
 The Market, H. Ide, 84–7
 Morning in Seville, H. M. Tomlinson, 88–90
 Aunt Felicia, H. H. Bashford, 91–100
 Lambs' Tails for Luncheon, Anne Freemantle, 101–5
 At Home and Abroad:
 Clive Bell [An Open Letter to any Member of the Travel Association],
 106–12
 Frank Swinnerton [Why Foreign Visitors shun England], 112–15
 Reviews [including Ezra Pound, *Make it New*, and Wyndham Lewis, *Men Without Art*], 116–28.

'The Affairs of Men' became the regular leader in the remaining numbers until April 1935, reflecting the growing concerns over the darkening political horizon. And from December 1934, films were regularly reviewed. Mary Butts appeared again, with 'The Warning', in January 1935. Another highlight under Roberts's editorship was W. B. Yeats's play, 'The King of the Great Clock Tower', in November 1934; and other contributors included G. K. Chesterton, E. M. Delafield, and Cecil Day Lewis. The volume of advertisements declined in this phase of the magazine. Regular advertisers included *The Spectator*, Cambridge University Press, Cassell, Constable, and Gollancz.

Life and Letters, in both the phases discussed here, sits somewhere between Connolly's and Cecil and Cecil's estimations, between a 'late Victorian arse wiper' and a progressive organ 'stirring public interest', showcasing modernist and 'avant-garde' writing, and championing anti-censorship. But, as the details of Virginia Woolf's spat with the magazine make clear, the gender politics of *Life and Letters* could often be found veering closer to the Victorian in the terms of its misogyny—though this may in itself be understood as a familiar misogynist tactic in modernism's gender wars. The spat also again points to clear and deep fissures in Bloomsbury modernism.

Virginia Woolf's spat with *Life and Letters*

Given MacCarthy's record of anti-censorship, it may seem a little churlish to turn now to a discussion of the contribution of *Life and Letters* to the common cultural currency of anti-feminism. But even the Cecils, his biographers, acknowledge that MacCarthy's 'pioneering mood did not stay with him';⁶² and his defence of

⁶² Cecil, *Clever Hearts*, 227.

Radclyffe Hall couches homosexuality in the terms of pathological aberration and abnormality, dwelling on the 'normal instincts in normal people' and 'the emotions which the abnormal person recognizes as the noblest he, or she, is capable of feeling'.⁶³ Such observations are worth bearing in mind when considering Woolf's spat with the magazine.

Woolf was both published and reviewed in MacCarthy's *New Statesman* and his *Life and Letters*,⁶⁴ but there were notorious frictions between these Bloomsbury colleagues, not least because as 'Affable Hawk' in *The New Statesman* MacCarthy had sided with Arnold Bennett in his estimation of women's natural intellectual inferiority to men. He published Woolf's scathing rebuttal in October 1920 under the heading 'The Intellectual Status of Women', which is clearly an antecedent to her feminist manifesto of 1929, *A Room of One's Own*.⁶⁵ This earlier exchange perhaps encourages Woolf critics and editors, such as Morag Schiach and S. P. Rosenbaum, to understand her spat a few years later with *Life and Letters* as directly between MacCarthy and Woolf.⁶⁶ But Peter Quennell, I suggest, was Woolf's adversary here, although MacCarthy might well have used him as a cat's paw. The

⁶³ Desmond MacCarthy, 'Literary Taboos', 1:5 (Oct. 1928), 341.

⁶⁴ Virginia Woolf published the following pieces in *Life and Letters*: 'The Niece of an Earl', 1:5 (Oct. 1928), 356–61; 'Dr. Burney's Evening Party', 3:3 (Sept. 1929), 243–63; 'The Essays of Augustine Birrell', 5:1 (July 1930), 29–38.

⁶⁵ 'The Intellectual Status of Women', reprinted as Appendix II, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Anne Olivier Bell and Andrew McNeillie (London: Hogarth, 1978), ii. 339–42.

⁶⁶ See Morag Schiach, Explanatory Notes, *A Room of One's Own* by Virginia Woolf (Oxford World's Classics, 1992), 416 n.: 'MacCarthy is also the author of the phrase about women "acknowledging the limitations of their sex", which Woolf addresses in Chapter IV.' S. P. Rosenbaum, 'Introduction', *Women and Fiction: The Manuscript Versions of A Room of One's Own*, ed. S. P. Rosenbaum (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p. xxx:

Woolf took the partial quotation from the August 1928, issue of the new periodical *Life and Letters* that her Bloomsbury friend Desmond MacCarthy had started editing and to which she contributed. Woolf had been disagreeing in print with MacCarthy about the capabilities of women since 1920, when she criticized a review of his on some books about women. (Woolf, 'The Intellectual Status of Women' (1920), Appendix II, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Anne Olivier Bell and Andrew McNeillie, vol.2: 1920–1924 (London: Hogarth, 1978), pp. 339–42.) That criticism anticipates the arguments of *A Room of One's Own*. MacCarthy's remark in *Life and Letters* comes at the beginning of his review of a young woman's novel. Its autobiographical relevance appears in a further part of the quotation that was omitted by Woolf: 'If, like the reporter, you believe that female novelists should only aspire to excellence by courageously acknowledging the limitations of their sex (Jane Austen and, in our own time, Mrs Virginia Woolf have demonstrated how gracefully this gesture can be accomplished)...' After the publication of *A Room of One's Own*, in which Woolf used the same elliptical quotation, MacCarthy wrote in *Life and Letters* that he was horrified to find his unhappy sentence used so acridly when it was inspired by a wholehearted admiration of Woolf's work. He went on to praise her again, but still concluded obtusely that we should applaud the way she recognized her limitations. Later, however, he delighted Woolf with his favourable review of her book in the *Sunday Times*.

review that sparks off the spat is anonymous so it is not entirely unreasonable to assume it was penned by MacCarthy (although he did give *A Room of One's Own* a warm review in *The Sunday Times*), but I will show the author was in fact Quennell.

This brief review is of a very successful first novel, *Another Country*. Although not mentioned in the review, the manuscript of this book had won a prize for the best novel written by an undergraduate of Oxford, or Cambridge, University. To the competition panel's utter astonishment, its author was a very young woman, Helene Du Coudray, a Russian immigrant, born Helene Heroy in Kiev in 1906, and exiled to England at the age of twelve. After Oxford, she worked as a translator and a biographer. She published three other novels, and a major biography of Metternich. Du Coudray, as an Oxbridge undergraduate and aspiring novelist, is rather like Woolf's fictional Mary Carmichael in *A Room of One's Own*. But she is not named in Woolf's text, whereas certain key phrases in the review are cited verbatim and repeated in refrains throughout the book. The most offensive term is 'limitations' and Woolf in *A Room of One's Own* brings out the full sense of gender territoriality implicit in the review. The latter opens with:

If, like the reporter, you believe that female novelists should only aspire to excellence by courageously acknowledging the limitations of their sex (Jane Austen and, in our own time, Mrs Virginia Woolf have demonstrated how gracefully this gesture can be accomplished), Miss du Coudray's first novel, *Another Country*, may at the outset prove a little disappointing, since here is a writer definitely bent upon the attainment of masculine standards. But it would need a very bigoted anti-feminist to pretend that her efforts have not been rewarded with an unusual measure of success.⁶⁷

Unlike Austen and Woolf herself, Miss Du Coudray has succeeded in breaching her feminine limitations and writing a convincingly masculine prose, characterized in the apparently manly terms of 'sobriety and reticence' and a confidence inspiring 'style' which is likened to 'some substantial, dark-hued stuff'.⁶⁸ And although 'Miss du Coudray is a very young woman, yet her work is curiously mature' to the reviewer.⁶⁹ There is a Darwinian whiff to this, as if this young woman author has taken an evolutionary step towards literary manhood. And Woolf certainly picks up the scent in *A Room of One's Own*. She praises Austen and Emily Brontë for 'alone entirely ignore[ing] the perpetual admonitions of the eternal pedagogue—write this, think that'. And she directly cites, with corresponding footnote the *Life and Letters* review:

They alone were deaf to that persistent voice, now grumbling, now patronising, now domineering, now grieved, now shocked, now angry, now avuncular, that

⁶⁷ [Anon.], 'Readers' Reports', *Life and Letters*, 1:3 (1928), 221–2.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 222.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

voice which cannot let women alone, but must be at them... to be refined; dragging even into the criticism of poetry criticism of sex; admonishing them, if they would be good and win, as I suppose, some shiny prize, to keep within certain limits which the gentleman in question thinks suitable—'... female novelists should only aspire to excellence by courageously acknowledging the limitations of their sex.'⁷⁰

The 'shiny prize' may refer to du Coudray's own glittering prize, although the review does not explicitly mention it. Woolf understands the prize to re-establish the 'limitations' that the review claims du Coudray has managed to exceed. Although these resonances of Du Coudray are not noticed by critics, Woolf's elision of her own name from the citation she gives in her footnote is noticed.⁷¹ Woolf notes, 'If, like the reporter, you believe that female novelists should only aspire to excellence by courageously acknowledging the limitations of their sex (Jane Austen [has] demonstrated how gracefully this gesture can be accomplished).'⁷²

Woolf continues in the main body of the text by remarking on the surprising fact that 'this sentence was written not in August 1828 but in August 1928', a remark which in pointing up the antiquated nineteenth-century gender politics of the review may be understood to place the modern misogyny of *Life and Letters* with, *pace* Connolly, very *early* Victorian arse-wipers. The year 1928 has already been invoked in chapter 3 of *A Room of One's Own* where it is noted that the 'very words' of Dr Johnson's cruel analogy for women preachers are 'used again in this year of grace, 1928, of women who try to write music [by Cecil Gray]. "Of Mlle. Germaine Tailleferre one can only repeat Dr. Johnson's dictum concerning a woman preacher, transposed into terms of music. 'Sir, a woman's composing is like a dog's walking on his hind legs. It is not done well, but you are surprised to find it done at all.' So accurately does history repeat itself."⁷³ And significantly, Woolf concludes the 1928 passage in chapter 4 by returning to the matter of literature, territoriality, gender, and caninity: 'Literature is open to everybody. I refuse to allow you, Beadle though you are, to turn me off the grass. Lock up your libraries if you like; but there is no gate, no lock, no bolt that you can set upon the freedom of my mind.'⁷⁴

When we turn to the 'limitations' passage in the manuscript version of *A Room of One's Own*, we see that the attribution is not to *Life and Letters* but to *Art and Life*. This may not be a slip of the pen so much as an attempt to fictionalize the

⁷⁰ Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (London: Hogarth, 1929), 112.

⁷¹ Rosenbaum, 'Introduction', p. xxx; Schiach, Explanatory Notes, 416.

⁷² Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, 113. ⁷³ Ibid. 82–3.

⁷⁴ Ibid. 113. I have explored the possibility of reading the opening narrator of *A Room of One's Own* as a dog-woman in '“Ce chien est à moi”: Virginia Woolf and the Signifying Dog', *Woolf Studies Annual* (2007), 49–86. The quoted passage above returns us to that opening incident where the canine speaker is chased from the grass.

facts or create a composite target. We can also see in the manuscript version further evidence for Rosenbaum's attribution of the review to MacCarthy. In the earlier draft Woolf takes her swipe at *Life and Letters* in the context of her discussion of 'Chloe and Olivia' and lesbian erotics in women's fiction: 'Chloe's torch could show us a great many things never seen in the light of day before; once she gets it firmly in her hand.'⁷⁵ This speaks directly to the Radclyffe Hall case and to MacCarthy's editorial in defence of *The Well of Loneliness* in *Life and Letters*. In the draft, Woolf has the aspiring woman novelist meeting the approval of the 'anonymous gentleman in Art & Letters' by writing about shopping, and thereby 'courageously aspiring to excellence by courageously acknowledging the limitations of her sex'.⁷⁶ The shop 'Marshall & Freebody's' is specifically mentioned, perhaps alluding to an advertisement in the magazine, except that there is no such shop, but the name is a composite of existing shops, none of which advertised in *Life and Letters*. Interestingly, she juxtaposes these thoughts on shopping and the limitations of women writers with amused reference to the 'Bishop who knew that cats did not go to Heaven'.⁷⁷

So, along with the Bishop's cat, the draft conjoins the 'Chloe liked Olivia' sequence with the citation of the *Life and Letters* review: 'What did she feel about the limitations of her sex? She had done her boating party & her laboratory'⁷⁸ (Chloe and Olivia share a laboratory in the final version too). But these elements are dispersed into different chapters in the published version, as Rosenbaum notes.

When *A Room of One's Own* is reviewed in *Life and Letters*, it is not done so anonymously. Quite unusually, the reviewer's initials appear at the close: 'P.Q.' I am assuming that this is Peter Quennell. In signing P.Q. to this review he is also elliptically acknowledging his authorship of the earlier anonymous review of Du Coudray. His citation of Woolf's citation of himself is worth careful consideration:

Happening to glance into the middle of her essay, the reviewer was horrified to see quoted there, amid acid commentary, a sentence, part of an anonymous criticism, which he remembers having contributed last year to the columns of *Life and Letters*. It expressed a belief that 'female novelists should only aspire to excellence by courageously acknowledging the limitations of their sex.' Is it credible, Mrs Woolf exclaims, that this perverse and obscurantist dogma can belong, not to the opinions of 1828, but to opinions still current and, even today, presumptuously emitted? It is an echo of 'that persistent voice, now grumbling, now patronising, now domineering, now grieved, now shocked, now avuncular', whose idiotic admonitions and unwanted counsels keep buzzing in the female novelist's ears.

⁷⁵ Virginia Woolf, *Women & Fiction: The Manuscript Versions of A Room of One's Own*, ed. S. P. Rosenbaum (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 120.

⁷⁶ Ibid. ⁷⁷ Ibid. 121. ⁷⁸ Ibid.

And yet, curiously enough, my unhappy sentence was inspired by a wholehearted admiration of Mrs Woolf!⁷⁹

So far, so self-reflexive. P.Q. elliptically outs himself as Woolf's, albeit misunderstood, adversary, and in the process outs her by making clear that she herself was originally directly named and praised by him in the offending sentence. When he expands on his use of the 'unfortunate' word 'limitations', P.Q. returns to figures of animality, clearly picking up on both the canine and feline (remember, for example, the manx cat) subtexts in *A Room of One's Own*, when he compares women novelists to panthers and domestic cats:

True, they cannot construct sewing-machines, nor have they the skill to invent new systems of metaphysics. But their sight is sharper, their sense of smell more exquisite, their movements are considerably more graceful than yours or mine. In fact, they, too, have their limitations; but one does not think of them as inferiors. And it is characteristic of their instinctive wisdom and unfathomable dignity that never, never do they attempt to walk upon their hind-legs. Such, alas, is the spectacle afforded by the huge majority of women novelists.⁸⁰

Dr Johnson's misogynist dancing dog figure has turned pussy cat here. Pressing his feline metaphor P.Q. characterizes 'certain contemporary female novelists' as 'those infinitely "tamed and shabby tigers" who have learned to ring dinner-bells and scrape together alphabets with talons which, if they had been put to their proper use, could have laid bare the reader's heart in a single devastating flash.'⁸¹ Moving on to Woolf herself, he describes *her* first novel, *The Voyage Out*, as 'still half-emergent from the chrysalis'—implicitly, therefore, unlike Du Coudray's. *The Voyage Out* is also evidence that 'Woman's grasp of situation and character—human character viewed from the outside—is notoriously less comprehensive than man's'. It is only with 'the charm of *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*' that Mrs Woolf 'has recognized her limitations; thus they need never occur to us except as an incentive to applause'.⁸²

Ironically, it was Woolf who got Peter Quennell the job as reviewer for MacCarthy on *The New Statesman* and then *Life and Letters*. On 6 May 1926, during the General Strike, she records in her diary that 'Quennel [*sic*], the poet, came; a lean boy, nervous, plaintive, rather pretty; on the look out for work, & come to tap the Wolves—who are said, I suppose to be an authority on that subject. We suggested Desmond's job. After an hour of this he left.'⁸³ He was to enter into further literary dialogue with Woolf as the respondent to her *Letter to a Young Poet* in the Hogarth Letters series (1932). Her letter was addressed to John Lehmann but perhaps she has

⁷⁹ P.Q., 'New Novels', *Life and Letters*, 3 (July–Dec. 1929), 551.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.* 554.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Virginia Woolf, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Anne Olivier Bell and Andrew McNeillie (London: Hogarth, 1980), iii. 79.

her scrap with P.Q. in mind when she remarks that ‘The more you begin to take yourself seriously as a leader or as a follower, as a modern or as a conservative, then you become a self-conscious, biting, and scratching little animal whose work is not of the slightest value or importance to anybody.’⁸⁴ Interestingly Quennell, in his *Letter to Mrs. Virginia Woolf*, writes contritely of the young male poet he represents as ‘chained by the leg like a cockatoo’, a far squawk from MacCarthy’s predatory ‘Affable Hawk’; and he openly cedes formerly masculine poetic territory to Woolf herself:

The poet has been deprived of his mappin terrace. Steadily, during a long course of years, it has been split up and given away to the other arts. You, yourself, as a distinguished modern novelist, one who excels in the semi-poetic method, have received a large slice of his ancient domain. Time was when he roamed the entire zoo.⁸⁵

Woolf records her considerable dismay at the prospect of Quennell’s Hogarth Letter. It takes a visit to the archives in Texas to discover what precisely are the ‘*nine words omitted*’ of her presumably venomous epithet for him in her private letter to Lehmann of July 1932:

Now it is pouring, and the Vicars wife is dead, and I must see, in spite of the bells tolling and the trees dripping if I can defend myself (I’m rather annoyed by the way that we’ve succumbed to [*nine words omitted*: that pushing and at the same time wriggling, eel,] Quennel: but Leonard thought we must have him if anyone: I’d much rather be answered and torn up and thrown in the waste paper basket by you or [Cecil] Day Lewis: but it cant be helped.)⁸⁶

Elsewhere she writes of the ‘knives’ in Quennell’s brain, and of his ‘clever agile thin blooded mind’ and refers to him as an ‘exiguous worm’.⁸⁷ Intriguingly, Woolf records in her Diary in October 1935 a visit to Quennell’s friend Elizabeth Bowen, after which ‘I have a dull heavy hot mop inside my brain next day & am a prey to every flea, ant [*sic*] gnat (as for example that I let P. Quennel misrepresent me & never answered him).’ But was it only his Hogarth Letter that ‘rankled’?⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Virginia Woolf, *A Letter to a Young Poet* [Hogarth Letters No. 8] (London: Hogarth, 1932), 3.

⁸⁵ Peter Quennell, *A Letter to Mrs. Virginia Woolf* [Hogarth Letters No. 12] (London: Hogarth, 1932), 6–7.

⁸⁶ Virginia Woolf, *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann (London: Hogarth, 1979), v. 82. I am grateful to Danielle Brune Sigler, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin, for access to the missing nine words.

⁸⁷ Woolf, *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, v. 206; *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Anne Olivier Bell and Andrew McNeillie (London: Hogarth, 1984), v. 14; *Letters of Virginia Woolf*, v. 206.

⁸⁸ Virginia Woolf, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Anne Olivier Bell and Andrew McNeillie (London: Hogarth, 1983), iv. 347.

Quennell makes no reference, in his autobiography, to the *Life and Letters* spat with Woolf. But in his compelling and quite detailed account of his reviewing work for MacCarthy at *The New Statesman* and *Life and Letters*, he emphasizes the 'remarkable degree of licence' MacCarthy gave his young male recruits, who, he says,

suffered from very little censorship. While Cyril [Connolly] was gaily disembowelling Galsworthy, Walpole, Arnold Bennett and other celebrated twentieth-century novelists, I lashed around at the contemporary poets. Sacheverell Sitwell and Robert Graves were writers I always enjoyed discussing; but a brace of popular versifiers, Gerald Gould and the literary civil servant Humbert Wolfe, became my favourite Aunt-Sallys.⁸⁹

Quennell goes into considerable detail about the novelists he reviewed (Hemingway and Lawrence, for example), but says nothing much about Woolf. He gives a cold shoulder to Bloomsbury in calling its arch enemy, Wyndham Lewis, 'a critic of near-genius' and in his boast of 'manag[ing] to see through the flimsy fabric of [Lytton] Strachey's Elizabethan opus'.⁹⁰ He continues: 'One is apt to forget how rich the period was; and much of its activity revolved around Virginia Woolf and her group of life-long friends. Hanging on the fringe of the literary world, I was not myself attached to Bloomsbury, either by birth or by election.' But he was befriended and helped by 'a pair of distinguished Bloomsburian figures, the art critic Clive Bell and the translator Arthur Waley'.⁹¹ He recalls his 'anxious life' of 'journalizing' in the period 1928–30 for MacCarthy's *New Statesman* and *Life and Letters*, including one review which offended Harold Acton enough to send 'Judas P. Quennell' a three-page letter of 'virulent abuse': 'I was assured by my correspondent, a thoroughly craven, mean and snobbish spirit.'⁹² There follows a self-pitying passage which Quennell seems to offer up by way of apology or excuse, in which he describes his failing marriage during this period and his declining health and eventual appendectomy. His only solace, it transpires, was his daily walk in Kensington Gardens accompanied by 'a Bedlington terrier. I enjoyed these walks... Only as I returned home [to his wife] did melancholy now and then swoop down.'⁹³

Meanwhile, Quennell's adversary, Mrs Woolf, was at this very time sharpening her talons to begin work on her most overtly canine novel, *Flush*. Reading the canine and feline discourse of misogyny in the literary reviews of *Life and Letters*, it is little wonder that she came to write a novel about a dog! However, the anonymous review of *Flush* that appeared in *Life and Letters* in February 1934 is pretty restrained in its expressed reservations: 'The margin of safety with which Mrs. Woolf threads her adroit way among the reefs and shallows of bathos has,

⁸⁹ Peter Quennell, *The Marble Foot: An Autobiography, 1905–1938* (London: Collins, 1976), 154.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* 158.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.* 167.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

one cannot help thinking, been somewhat exaggerated by previous critics. Danger is often very near: Flush's agonized interpretation of the state of Miss Barrett's heart . . . does not quite convince us.⁹⁴ The reviewer concludes that the canine content is irrelevant so long as it is 'retailed in Mrs. Woolf's delightful prose, her long, easy sentences, her apparently sprawling, yet delicately precise, paragraphs . . . It is the style, and the style alone, that matters. Poor Flush, in the last resort, is no more than a pretext.'⁹⁵

Flush, which was at the time regarded, even by devotees of Woolf, as an embarrassing detour into populism, in fact received more attention from *Life and Letters* than her widely acknowledged modernist tour-de-force, *The Waves* (1931)—listed in the April 1931 issue, among the editor's 'Notes on New and Forthcoming Books', as *The Wave* [*sic*]. But perhaps it is not a preference for middlebrow Woolf over highbrow Woolf that accounts for this possibly studied neglect, especially given that Bernard in that novel is in part a thinly disguised satiric portrait of MacCarthy. In writing her fictional account of Bernard's privileged education, Woolf may even have drawn on MacCarthy's piece for *Life and Letters* (September 1929), 'The Mark on the Shutter Or, A Small Boy's Conscience: a story on public school life', which echoes the title of Woolf's famous experimental short story 'The Mark on the Wall' (1919), and which appeared in the same issue of *Life and Letters* as Woolf's essay 'Dr. Burney's Evening Party'.⁹⁶ MacCarthy did review *The Waves*, but not for *Life and Letters*. In his column, 'The World of Books', for *The Sunday Times* (27 December 1931), a general round-up of the year's books, he observes, 'In the hands of poetic and imaginative novelists the inner-monologue and the "fantasia" have proved fruitful . . . in *The Waves* Virginia Woolf pushed her method of dreaming subjectivity to its extreme limit.'⁹⁷ But the resonance with Quennell's earlier offensive discourse of 'limitations' in the pages of *Life and Letters* is difficult to miss. Woolf's diary entry for 27 December 1931 records, 'I am cross with Desmond, for talking about dreaming subjectivity & *The Waves*; I have been making phrases about his damnable tepidity—he who neither loves nor hates—in short I am in a healthy condition. And it is, remarkably, April the First.'⁹⁸ Her own phrasing here echoes key terms associated with the phrase-making Bernard and his exchanges with the Catullus-citing Susan in the opening pages of *The Waves*, but it also suggests MacCarthy will again be her target in a new literary project.

In gauging its contribution to modernist and avant-garde culture, 'tepidity' may well serve to characterize MacCarthy's *Life and Letters*. Its achievements lie in bringing, and attempting to explain, the work of many prominent modernists, along with modernist issues of censorship, psychology, sexuality, and historiography, to

⁹⁴ [Anon.], *Life and Letters*, 9:4 (Feb. 1934), 494.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* 496.

⁹⁶ *Life and Letters*, 3:3 (Sept. 1929), 243–63.

⁹⁷ Desmond MacCarthy, 'The World of Books', *Sunday Times* (27 Dec. 1931).

⁹⁸ Woolf, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, iv, 56.

a wider audience, and in publishing a number of key writers before they were recognized. Yet it may also be understood to be trading on the cachet of its more progressive modernist contributors while pandering to modernism's reactionary and conservative wings, its modernist credentials restricted by its Victorian format perhaps. The spat with Virginia Woolf certainly exposes *Life and Letters* very own reactionary 'limitations' in that most contested of modernist spheres: gender politics.

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VII

INTO THE 1920s: DISPERSAL AND DIFFERENCE



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INTRODUCTION

The period of the 1920s was a particularly significant one for modernism in Britain and Ireland. Many seminal texts of the modernist movement were published, a number in the key year of 1922: Joyce's *Ulysses*, Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Yeats's *Later Poems*, and Woolf's *Jacob's Room*.¹ The very terms 'modernist' and 'modernism' came to be used more widely in critical and cultural debate, a feature reflected in the numerous critical reviews, such as *The Criterion*, *The Calendar*, and *The Athenaeum* that achieved prominence during this time (see Part VI for details).² The decade also saw English as a discipline become more established as a central subject in schools, following the publication of the Newbolt Report, and in universities with the development of methods such as 'practical criticism', devised by I. A. Richards and supported by F. R. Leavis in Cambridge (see Part X Introduction and Chapter 35).³ The close association between the rise of a canonical modernism and the emphasis upon a formalist 'New Criticism' in English studies has often been noted by critics.⁴

More widely, the 1920s was a decade of profound change within British and Irish society which, arguably, established these two countries in a modern shape and structure that was to endure for many years to come. Key political changes, such as the first, short, Labour government in 1924; the widening of the franchise for women in 1928 (the so-called 'flapper' vote); and, after the civil war, the founding of the Irish Free State in 1922, were witnessed in the decade. John Lucas characterizes the period as one of a 'tangible radicalism', pointing to the formation of the Communist Party of Great Britain in 1920 and the rise in the circulation of the left-wing newspaper *The Daily Herald* to between 200,000 and 300,000.⁵

¹ For a consideration of modernism and modern culture in this year see Michael North, *Reading 1922: A Return to the Scene of the Modern* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

² An early example of the use of 'modernist' is found in Laura Riding and Robert Graves, *A Survey of Modernist Poetry* (London: Heinemann, 1927).

³ See, for example, Chris Baldick, *The Social Mission of English Criticism, 1848–1932* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), and Brian Doyle, *English and Englishness* (London: Routledge, 1989).

⁴ See *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, vol. vii: *Modernism and the New Criticism*, eds A. Walton Litz, Louis Menand, and Lawrence Rainey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

⁵ John Lucas, *The Radical Twenties* (Nottingham: Five Leaves Publishing, 1997), 141.

The General Strike of May 1926, argues Lucas, only brought to a head a simmering sense of political unrest that became prominent after the war ended in 1918.

However, in trying to assess how the cultural landscape of the 1920s was shaped by these social, economic, and political changes we notice that critical opinions vary considerably. While Lucas sees the decade as one of radicalism and detects a fragmentation in its cultural forms, Samuel Hynes sees uncertainty as the dominant tone of the post-war years, at least up until 1926, with escapism informing much of the cultural work of the time.⁶ Assessing English art in the period, David Peters Corbett notes how a sense of loss, attendant upon the experience of war, resulted in a search for tranquillity after 1922, summed up by the political appeal of the Conservative Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin.⁷ *Radicalism, fragmentation, uncertainty, tranquillity* (to which we might add Cyril Connolly's term for the twenties, *futility*): the very range of terms indicates both a dispersed response to the period, and that there were many different strains within the culture of the time.⁸ Turning to the magazines of the period discussed here only confirms this picture, as we move from various manifestations of avant-garde modernism (*The Tyro, Close-Up, Art and Letters*), to a politically charged discussion of culture (*Time and Tide, The Bermondsey Book*), and to magazines which emphasize a nostalgic engagement and response to modernity (*The Owl, The Golden Hind, The Apple*).

The periodicals considered in this section, however, do share some common themes and issues: a central one is that of how culture might respond to the cataclysmic events of 1914–18.⁹ One definite response was a refusal of dogma, exemplified by the many 'isms' that dominated the pre-war cultural field. It is striking that none of the magazines considered here can be considered, as Thacker argues of *Coterie*, as the mouthpiece of a movement. The cultural formations linked to a number of these magazines often overlapped: *Coterie*, for example, brought together poets published as Imagists (Aldington, Flint, Fletcher, H.D., Lowell) with figures associated with the Georgians such as Monro and Blunden, and artists linked to Vorticism (William Roberts, David Bomberg, Gaudier-Brzeska, and Lawrence Atkinson). *Art and Letters*, as Beasley demonstrates, also drew upon diverse cultural groups: the socialist, Nietzschean modernism of Frank Rutter and Herbert Read (also linked to *The New Age*); war poets (Wilfred Owen, Isaac Rosenberg, Siegfried Sassoon); and Vorticists such as Lewis, Roberts, Epstein, and Wadsworth. Rogers also notes that although the magazines *Form* and *Golden Hind* often strike a tone of Georgian nostalgia, they also included writers such as Dorothy

⁶ Lucas, *Radical Twenties*, 177; Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (London: Bodley Head, 1990).

⁷ David Peters Corbett, *The Modernity of English Art, 1914–30* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 61.

⁸ Connolly, cited in Peters Corbett, *Modernity of English Art*, 93.

⁹ Two of the magazines considered here, *Art and Letters* and *Form*, actually started during the war years.

Richardson, Graham Greene, Yeats, and poets associated with Imagism and the Sitwell group around the anthology *Wheels. Time and Tide* and *The Bermondsey Book*, as Dowson shows, also contained a wide-ranging set of contributions across the spectrum of politics and modernism.

One way to understand the heterogeneous composition of these magazines is by distinguishing between what Raymond Williams calls the internal organization of the groups associated with these magazines and their external relations to the wider social and political sphere.¹⁰ Groups such as those that informed *Coterie* and *The Owl*, as Thacker shows, can be analysed as cultural formations with informal memberships, shared visions, styles, and a collective public manifestation in a periodical. However, their external relations are much more muted, especially when contrasted with oppositional groups such as the Futurists or Vorticists. This rather withdrawn quality in both the *Coterie* and *The Owl* formations can be understood as a direct response to the political rhetoric dominant during the war. Fewer people now felt like signing up to an aggressive manifesto that challenged the way in which art and culture were received in the public realm.

What, instead, is quite common in these magazines is the anti-manifesto or anti-'ism' statement or stance. Thacker observes this in the cover image by William Roberts utilized by *Coterie* and *New Coterie*, and in an editorial that rejected 'a heavy declaration of editorial policy', since it signified (in a revealing phrase in the post-war context) a 'cultural Prussianism' that would enforce 'a flat and sullen uniformity'.¹¹ Similarly the first issue of *The Owl* proclaimed that it 'has no politics, leads no new movement and is not even the organ of any particular generation'.¹² Rogers also notes how *Form's* intention was to print the best work currently being produced, 'without discrimination in favour of any school or group'.¹³ *Art and Letters*, as Beasley shows, was at one time closely associated with Wyndham Lewis's attempt to revive Vorticism after the war with Group X, which would exhibit at Heal's Mansard Gallery in the spring of 1920. The external stance of Group X, however, was yet again opposed to the declaratory manifesto: Lewis wrote that 'no theory or dogma . . . would be liable to limit the development of any member. Each member sails his own boat.'¹⁴ Another member, William Roberts, notes 'this time no manifestos were issued; our plain "X" offered no message or new theory of art.'¹⁵

Interestingly, the disavowal of dogma did not prevent the development of magazines that crossed the arts, such as *Art and Letters* and *The Apple*. This points to an increasing acceptance of modernism as a general artistic style rather than its being tied to any specific ism or movement. Group X offered no 'new theory of art' because by 1920 there was a more general recognition of modernism in the visual

¹⁰ For more on this distinction see the General Introduction to this volume.

¹¹ 'Editorial', *Coterie*, 6/7 (Winter 1920-1), 4.

¹² 'Foreword', *The Owl*, 1 (May 1919).

¹³ 'Introduction', *Form*, 1:1 (Oct. 1921), 1.

¹⁴ Lewis, cited in Peters Corbett, *Modernity of English Art*, 75.

¹⁵ Roberts, cited in *ibid.*

arts, even if the nature of that modernism in Britain was of an adaptive or revisionist form.¹⁶ Herbert Read and Frank Rutter envisaged *Art and Letters* as being linked to a small gallery, an association, and a bookshop that would be 'a centre of all modernist activity'.¹⁷ This was conceived in a spirit of democratization, also shared by *The Apple*, and again can be seen as part of a post-war attempt to resist sectarian tendencies within British modernism.

Such impulses also motivated the increased interest in European culture and the international aspects of modernism in almost all of the magazines in this section. The increasing internationalism of the times is seen by John Lucas as yet another reaction to the war, part of a rejection by the younger generation of the xenophobia which had fuelled the conflict across Europe.¹⁸ One specific instance of this is the interest shown in xylography, or the art of wood-cutting, in *Art and Letters* and *The Apple*, a technique with strong roots in continental Europe, especially Germany. Woodcuts also featured in *Coterie*, *The Owl*, and in a 'Woodcut Number' of *Form* in 1921. Another feature that indicated the European and international dimension was the growing sense of modernist periodical networks, noted in such features as adverts or reviews of foreign language publications. *New Coterie*, for instance, published a European Anthology of writers in translation; in *The Tyro*, as Paul Edwards notes, we find adverts for *De Stijl* and *L'Esprit Nouveau*, confirming Lewis's strong links with avant-garde European artists; and Dowson notes how even *The Bermondsey Book*, focused, as its title declares, upon a specific community in London, contained regular 'Letters from Abroad' after 1925 and exchanges with readers around the globe.

Laura Marcus notes how *Close Up* consistently looked to European cinema, especially in Germany and Russia, for its model of a modernist film art. The magazine was a fascinating example of the diversification of modernist activity in the period, shown in its attempt to provide a new style of writing about cinema (particularly in the work of literary modernists such as Dorothy Richardson and H.D.) adequate to the moving images on the screen. An interest in urban modernity and questions of race and culture shows too how the magazine pushed the modernist agenda forward. Though edited in Switzerland, and drawing considerably upon the film culture of Berlin, it was resolutely directed towards improving British film culture by demonstrating the excellent work being done abroad. The first translations from Eisenstein appeared in the magazine, along with numerous stills from the work of Pabst and other Expressionist directors. Even the fact that silent films lacked a language pointed, for the *Close Up* group, to an incipient internationalism, a feature of course lost with the coming of the 'talkies' in 1927. *Close Up* was also international

¹⁶ On this point see Peters Corbett, *Modernity of English Art*, ch. 2. As he argues, the 1920s demonstrate the 'persistence of modernism under the sign of an adaptive revisionism' (73).

¹⁷ Herbert Read, *The Contrary Experience: Autobiographies* (New York: Horizon Press, 1963), 106.

¹⁸ Lucas, *Radical Twenties*, 183.

in its distribution, being available in bookshops in Paris, Berlin, London, Geneva, New York, and Los Angeles. The magazine, as Marcus demonstrates, was part of a set of modernist magazine networks that included the Paris-based *transition* and the American *Dial*.

Robert Herring, who was the London correspondent for *Close Up*, also had strong links with *The London Mercury* (see Chapter 10) and took over as editor in 1935 of *Life and Letters*, which became *Life and Letters To-day* and then in 1939 merged with *The London Mercury*. Both papers were purchased by Bryher, who had also provided the funding for *Close Up*. The role of the private patron is another quite striking feature of many of the magazines considered in this section and, indeed, is a key feature of post-war modernism considered more widely.¹⁹ Aside from the example of Bryher and *Close Up*, we might note how *The Owl* was funded by the artist and editor William Nicholson; how the latter version of *Art and Letters* relied upon the support of Sydney Schiff, who exerted some control over the editorial contents of the magazine, and how it was Schiff too who funded Lewis's magazine, *The Tyro*. Writing to Lewis, Schiff provided an interesting insight into the role of the patron when he asked that his name be kept secret: 'I have come into this thing to support you, but as soon as certain [people] get wind of it they . . . would imagine that as I was in it they ought to be paid handsomely.'²⁰ The fact that more patrons seemed to be prepared to support magazines again indicates a more widespread acceptance of the modernist movement.

Time and Tide also benefited from private financial support and was started by Margaret Haig, Viscountess Rhondda, whose family money derived from the coal industry. The magazine indicates another direction for modernist energies after the war, that of feminist politics. Rhondda's stated aim for the magazine shows that its commitment to the 'new' was another response to the post-war landscape: 'The old ideas had failed us, but what exactly were the new ones that were to save us?'²¹ Rhondda's magazine and that of *The Bermondsey Book* (which was not funded by private patronage) were committed to exploring the relations between literature, critical thinking, and democracy, producing, says Dowson, a 'counter public sphere' in which to debate issues of importance for women and other marginalized groups. Opposed to what they perceived as the negative effects of the popular press, these magazines did not seek a small coterie audience but hoped to raise the quality of debate on politics and culture as a matter of vital public interest. In this sense both magazines are clearly part of the 'tangible radicalism' of the decade, especially

¹⁹ See Joyce Wexler, *Who Paid for Modernism?* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1997); Lawrence Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

²⁰ Quoted in Paul O' Keefe, *Some Sort of Genius: A Life of Wyndham Lewis* (London: Pimlico, 2001), 221.

²¹ Viscountess Rhondda, *This Was My World* (London: Macmillan, 1933), 301.

in the extraordinary story of *The Bermondsey Book*, which along with the activities of its related bookshop, sought to engage the working classes of this very poor area of London in modernism, modern culture, and politics. Virginia Woolf, a figure whose work was not really published in many of the 'little magazines', was discussed at length in both *Time and Tide* and *The Bermondsey Book*. In connecting modern literature with the wider issues of social transformation these magazines clearly pointed the way to the more politically committed publications of the 1930s.

Another figure who linked modernism with cultural criticism, albeit of an entirely different hue, was Wyndham Lewis. The story that emerges in Paul Edwards's account of *The Tyro* and *The Enemy* is that of a radical artist whose pre-war hopes for an English avant-garde, in the form of *BLAST* and Vorticism (see Chapter 12) had been shattered by the war. As Edwards comments, Lewis in the 1920s—conditioned by the failure of *The Tyro*—started to consider 'why an artistic effort that was fully in the mainstream of European modernism should be considered to be at the margins of culture in England'. This led Lewis to explore, via the polemics of *The Enemy*, the political reasons why his version of modernism had become so marginalized in Britain. Lewis's isolation at this time is confirmed by the contents of *The Enemy*, which is almost entirely his own work and shows how out of line he was with the revisionist modernism found in other contemporary British magazines, particularly in the visual arts. Immediately after the war Lewis's Group X had chimed with the fashion for refusing polemical manifestos, but by the time of *The Enemy* in 1927 Lewis refused to be so culturally ecumenical. *The Enemy*, he wrote in number 2, had received many interesting contributions but as the paper is 'primarily a critical organ . . . intended to promote, in as intensive a fashion as possible, a certain system of ideas' very few such contributions will be published.²² Of the subsequent 130 pages only about 20 are not by Lewis. As Edwards notes, in this publication there was little difference between periodical and pamphlet and Lewis—like the editors of *Time and Tide* and *The Bermondsey Book*—'always retained an avant-garde ambition to intervene directly in public culture and to change it'.

Intervening in public culture was not high on the agenda of many of the magazines discussed by Stephen Rogers. *Form*, *The Golden Hind*, and *Decachord* display precisely some of the qualities that might have made Lewis despair about the fate of modernism in Britain. They are, however, instructive as magazines demonstrating different forms of response to the course of modernity after the First World War. One strong current in *Form* is that of an interest in the occult which Rogers argues can be understood as a negative, or, in Raymond Williams's terms, 'alternative' if 'residual' reaction to modernity, looking back to the 1890s, but feeding into the interests in the irrational found in Freud and Surrealism. The

²² Wyndham Lewis, 'Notes Regarding Details of Publication and Distribution', *The Enemy*, 2 (Sept. 1927), p. viii.

range of contributions to these three magazines defies easy categorization, as Rogers demonstrates, but all show evidence of trying to ‘reconcile modernist radicalism with tradition’. This sometimes manifests itself in seeking refuge in a conservative nostalgia, often associated after the war with various forms of Georgian writing. At other times, however, the magazines welcome the revisionist forms of modernism widespread in Britain, especially in the visual arts of Paul and John Nash, Edward Wadsworth, Laura Knight, and Alan Odle.

In 1919 Katherine Mansfield wrote that the war had radically altered the cultural field: ‘I feel in the profoundest sense that nothing can ever be the same—that, as artists, we are traitors if we feel otherwise: we have to take it into account and find new expressions, new moulds for our new thoughts and feelings.’²³ All of the magazines in this section respond, in diverse ways, to this sentiment, even if at times the ‘new moulds’ contained forms that struck some—such as Wyndham Lewis—as older types of expression. In a sense this diversity only emphasizes the uncertainty of the times, manifest in a fragmentation of pre-war British modernism and a search for a radicalism that started to move, in periodicals such as *Time and Tide* or *New Coterie*, more towards a cultural politics of modernism that was to dominate much of the following decade.

²³ Cited in Chris Baldick, *The Modern Movement: The Oxford English Literary History*, vol. x: 1910–1940 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 10.

AFTERMATH OF WAR

Coterie (1919–21), *New Coterie* (1925–7), Robert Graves
and *The Owl* (1919–23)

ANDREW THACKER

Introduction

Coterie was a classic ‘little magazine’ of the period after the First World War. It published six issues, from May 1919 to Winter 1920–1 before folding, only to be relaunched as *New Coterie*, running from November 1925 to the Autumn of 1927. The original editors were Chaman Lall, an Indian student at Jesus College, Oxford, and Russell Green, of Queen’s College, Oxford. The masthead also included two US editors, Stanley I. Rypins and Conrad Aiken (between 1916 and 1927 Aiken lived in England for parts of each year and had been at Harvard with T. S. Eliot). An editorial board contained some impressive names: T. W. Earp, Richard Aldington, Aldous Huxley, Nina Hamnett, T. S. Eliot, and Wyndham Lewis. Both *Coterie* and *New Coterie* sold for 2s. 6d. a copy, a fairly average figure for such a literary quarterly. *New Coterie* seemed to print 1,000 copies, quite a normal run for such a publication.¹ Details of patronage and funding for the magazine are sketchy although Earp (whose father had been a Liberal MP) had inherited £40,000 and took a flat in London’s Regent Square. Green was given money by Earp to furnish the flat and they both stayed there until 1924, with Huxley also living there for a while. Vincent Tollers suggests that ‘contributors gave to a cause, expecting nothing in return’.² This may have been true of *Coterie*, since Aldous Huxley, as an editor,

¹ The copy of *New Coterie*, 1 (Nov. 1925) held by the Harry Ransom Center, Austin, Texas, has a note on the contents pages: ‘1000 copies for sale.’ This is confirmed in an advert for *New Coterie* in *The Calendar of Modern Letters* for November 1925: ‘Only 1000 numbered copies will be for sale. Please order early.’

² Vincent Tollers, ‘*Coterie*’, in Alvin Sullivan (ed.), *British Literary Magazines: The Modern Age 1914–84* (London/Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986), 110–11.

wrote to a potential contributor in 1920: 'I am afraid I can offer no payment and only a limited amount of glory.'³ However, the first issue of *New Coterie* printed an indignant letter from Edith Sitwell's secretary protesting at a circular sent from the magazine:

Writers of Miss Sitwell's standing do not 'submit' their works for approval, neither, though they are sometimes willing to help undergraduate publications without payment at all, do they accept payment at the rate of five shillings a page. Miss Sitwell asks me to assure you that she does not suspect you of deliberate bad manners; your mistake is probably the result of lack of experience in dealing with writers of eminence.⁴

Clearly the magazine did pay contributors, if not to a rate acceptable to 'writers of eminence', even one who had contributed, presumably unpaid, to *Coterie* a few years earlier.⁵ The magazine's finances, like many others at this time, were shaky, as the editorial notes: 'It is notorious that no English periodical, devoted entirely to literature, can pay its way. It is notorious, at least, to all who have ever sacrificed their scanty leisure in conducting such periodicals.'⁶ Contributor Douglas Goldring confirmed this perilous economic situation, recalling how no 'periodical devoted entirely to lit and art could hope to show a profit in 1925 and the fact that the editor sent token cheques to their contributors was evidence of generosity on their part, since the cheques did not come out of the public's pocket but out of their own'.⁷

Regardless of its poor finances *Coterie* and *New Coterie* published work of an excellent standard, even if the appearance of Eliot's 'A Cooking Egg' in the first issue sets a benchmark that was not always maintained. *Coterie* has long been recognized by commentators as a significant magazine. Hoffman's *The Little Magazine* calls it 'an outstanding magazine of art and letters', and for Sullivan the magazine is interesting for demonstrating how closely connected British and American writers were at this time.⁸

³ *Letters of Aldous Huxley*, ed. Grover Smith (London: Chatto and Windus, 1969), 185.

⁴ 'Editorial', *New Coterie*, 1 (Nov. 1925), 7. The payment rate does, however, seem low in comparison to certain other, comparable, publications. In 1920 Graves paid Edmund Blunden £5 for his poem in the second issue of *The Owl* (see *In Broken Images: Selected Letters of Robert Graves 1914-1946*, ed. Paul O'Prey (London: Hutchinson, 1982), 118); while in 1922 Eliot indicated to F. S. Flint that the rates of pay for *The Criterion* were low, at £10 per 5,000 words (T. S. Eliot, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, vol. 1: 1898-1922, ed. Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), 542).

⁵ Edith Sitwell contributed four poems to *Coterie* 2 and 3 in 1919.

⁶ 'Editorial', *New Coterie*, 1, 6-7.

⁷ Douglas Goldring, *The Nineteen Twenties: A General Survey and Some Personal Memories* (London: Nicholson and Watson, 1945), 107-8.

⁸ Frederick J. Hoffman, Charles Allen, and Carolyn F. Ulrich, *The Little Magazine: A History and a Bibliography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), 255; Sullivan, *British Literary Magazines*, 110.

The title of *Coterie*, with its suggestion of an insular, inward approach to literature is, as will be seen below, somewhat at odds with its actual contents. Robert Graves's *The Owl* (three issues only, May 1919, October 1919, and November 1923) is, in many ways, much more of an inward-looking coterie production, being funded and co-edited by Graves's father-in-law, William Nicholson, and his friend W. J. Turner, and containing work by Nicholson, Graves, and Graves's wife, Nancy Nicholson.⁹ The periodical codes of *The Owl*—in terms of size, paper, and reproduction of visual arts—are of a higher standard than *Coterie*, which, for example, never contained colour reproductions apart from its covers. It might seem easy to distinguish these two magazines along the familiar fault lines running through British modernism at the time: seeing *The Owl* as a 'Georgian' magazine, as its first issue contained poetry by Thomas Hardy, John Masefield, and W. H. Davies, and a skittish cover, by Nicholson, of an owl and friends; and *Coterie*—with its angular William Roberts's covers and the presence of Eliot and Richard Aldington—as the more avant-garde magazine, tied to 'Imagist' rather than 'Georgian' poetic forms. Such a judgement, however, mistakes both the complexity of the cultural formations associated with these two magazines and the nature of the cultural environment for magazine publication in the years immediately following the First World War. To analyse these two factors we can start by tracing the origins of both magazines to Oxford during the war.

An Oxford coterie

The initial reaction upon viewing the contents of any typically heterogeneous modernist magazine is to seek to make connections between the various contributors, in terms of either personal relationships or contacts, or to discover whether a group of some form pre-existed the actual publication of the magazine. Sometimes magazines signal the formation of a new ism or group (*BLAST* announcing Vorticism); at other times, the magazine is the mouthpiece of a group already operating, in some sense, collectively (the Pre-Raphaelites and *The Germ*, for instance). *Coterie*, though it does not espouse a particular ism or style, was of the latter kind, and can be traced back to a set of Oxford undergraduates, self-consciously called 'The Coterie', who met to read poetry in the rooms of T. W. Earp in Beaumont Street.

Various memoirs of this group exist. L. A. G. Strong ('LAGS'), contributor of poems about Dublin life in *Coterie* 1, recalled that he became friends with Russell Green and Earp in 1915, and that the latter 'made me a member of a group which met once a week to read aloud what they had been writing, and exchange criticism.

⁹ Both *The Owl* and *Coterie* are available as digital editions through the Modernist Journals Project: see <http://dl.lib.brown.edu:8080/exist/mjp/index.xml>

Foremost in this group was Aldous Huxley.¹⁰ The nucleus of the group included Wilfrid Childe, Robert Nichols, Gerald Crow, Eric Dickinson, and Stanley Rypins, all of whom contributed in some way to *Coterie*. Strong remembers this group as very much a hangover from the *fin de siècle*: ‘The nineties lingered in Oxford, like the last rays of sunset in a summer sky. Dowson we especially admired. Poetry was felt to be esoteric, and its inspiration to lie in specialized living.’¹¹ Of this bohemian life Strong recalls Earp distributing hashish among members: Nichols giggled, Childe was sick, and Earp had a vision of baboons chewing rubies.

E. R. Dodds, Ulsterman and a classical scholar who would become Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford in 1936, also noted that ‘Tommy Earp was the creator of the *Coterie* and its presiding genius; his spacious rooms in Beaumont Street were its headquarters.’¹² Dodds recalled that the membership included Childe, Crow, Dickinson, Green, Nichols, Strong, Huxley, and E. H. W. Meyerstein, though, like Strong, he does not mention Chaman Lall at all. Dodds does, however, tell a story of how another young poet became associated with the group. In 1914, Dodds attended a class on Plotinus, given by J. S. Stewart. The class dwindled to two—Dodds and a young American student on a visiting scholarship. This was T. S. Eliot, who confessed to Dodds that he was interested in ‘mystical experience’ and wrote poetry:¹³

I told him that a little group of us—the *Coterie*—were accustomed to meet of an evening for the purpose of reading our poems to each other and having them torn to pieces critically. Would he care to read us something of his? He agreed, and a few days later ‘The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock’, an unpublished work by T. S. Eliot, was read by its author for the first time to an English audience. We did not tear it to pieces. We were startled and, yes, a little puzzled, but less puzzled than excited.¹⁴

Eliot’s verse chimed with Dodds’s view that ‘The last enchantments of the nineties were fading; Georgian verse began to taste over-sweet; we expected some sort of revolution in English poetry, and to some of us at least this new man sounded like its precursor and harbinger.’¹⁵ Dodds does not indicate which of the group were influenced by Eliot’s ‘revolution’, but certainly the poetic styles of *Coterie* members such as Childe, Strong, and A. E. Coppard does not seem to have embraced the new verse forms. For these poets the enchantments of the nineties and Georgian styles still lingered.

¹⁰ L. A. G. Strong, *Green Memory* (London: Methuen, 1961), 180.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² E. R. Dodds, *Missing Persons: An Autobiography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 41.

¹³ Dodds was interested in psychical research throughout his life, and started a small group of the Society for Psychical Research at Oxford, along with Russell Green (*Missing Persons*, 98).

¹⁴ Dodds, *Missing Persons*, 40. ‘Prufrock’ was first published in *Poetry* in June 1915.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Dodds also recalled that Eliot ‘became a regular member of the Coterie; he said little, but that little was always pungent and to the point’.¹⁶ There is little evidence to indicate what Eliot thought of ‘the Coterie’. His views of Oxford, however, were mostly negative—he complained of suffering ‘indigestion, constipation, and colds constantly’ and preferred to be in London, attending ‘cubist teas’ or working at the British Museum.¹⁷ The only mention of a group that might be Earp’s coterie occurs in a letter from 21 March 1915, when Eliot notes: ‘I have met several very agreeable men this term. . . . Two Irishmen, who have rather raised my opinion of that race, one or two new Englishmen, and several Indians, (whom on the whole I find more congenial than English).’¹⁸ The two Irishmen might well have been Dodds and Strong, and Chaman Lall one of the congenial Indians.

The publication in May 1919 of Eliot’s ‘A Cooking Egg’ in the first *Coterie* indicates that his time with Earp, Green, Huxley, and the other coterie members had had some impact. By this time Eliot was married, had published his first volume, *Prufrock and Other Observations* (1917), obtained editorial positions on *The Egoist* and *The Athenaeum*, and was moving in key literary circles in London. In *Coterie* 3 (December 1919) he is listed as a member of an impressive editorial committee (Earp, Huxley, Green, Richard Aldington, Nina Hamnett, and Wyndham Lewis). Earp recalled Huxley and Eliot attending an editorial meeting for *Coterie* in October 1919, yet both ‘seemed harassed by duties and domesticity, and I couldn’t help pitying the slave-like way in which they departed to their last respective tubes’.¹⁹ By the next issue, for autumn 1920, Eliot, Lewis, and Aldington are no longer named as part of this committee. A postcard from Eliot to Russell Green, from November 1920, indicates that Eliot was preoccupied with other matters: ‘Again I should like to help you, but am involved in personal anxieties which take all my time—I shall not even be able to fulfil any promises made, much less make new.’²⁰

Prior to the appearance of the magazine, the Oxford ‘Coterie’ had already cemented a certain identity as a group with their editing and contributions to *Oxford Poetry*. This was a series of anthologies published from 1910 onwards by Basil Blackwell which contained work by current undergraduates or graduates of the university: authors were listed alongside the name of their college. Russell Green (Queen’s) had won the prestigious Newdigate Prize for English verse in 1916 and

¹⁶ Dodds, *Missing Persons*, 40.

¹⁷ Eliot, Letter to Conrad Aiken, 25 February 1915, *Letters*, 88; 92.

¹⁸ Eliot, *Letters*, 92. Diwan Chaman Lall studied law at Oxford and upon returning to India entered politics, becoming the right-hand man to Moti Lall Nehru, Pandit Nehru’s father. After independence, he was India’s first Ambassador to Turkey, later to become a Member of Parliament for the Congress Party, rising to the Father of the House and a member of the legislative assembly.

¹⁹ T. W. Earp to Mary Hutchinson, 2 October 1919, unpublished letter, Harry Ransom Center, Austin.

²⁰ T. S. Eliot to Russell Green, 16 November 1920, unpublished postcard, Harry Ransom Center, Austin.

had his poetry published annually in the *Oxford Poetry* anthologies from 1915 to 1918. Earp (Exeter), Childe (Magdalen), and Huxley (Balliol) had all served as editors of the anthology from 1915 to 1919 and many of the contributors to *Coterie* had their work published here, confirming the close link between the university and the magazine.²¹ With the second issue and the relocation of the editor in London, the preponderance of Oxford undergraduate authors waned: now there was work by Richard Aldington, Gaudier-Brzeska, Walter Sickert, Herbert Read, and John Gould Fletcher, indicating a closer acquaintance with avant-garde circles in the metropolis. The cover of *Coterie 2*, with its café or cabaret scene by Adrian Allinson, friend of the Vorticist Wadsworth, only confirms this shift in cultural formations. The magazine now sought to establish itself within the fractured post-war world of English modernism.

The Owl from Parnassus

In 1921 Robert Graves followed many in the *Coterie* formation by editing the *Oxford Poetry* anthology. That Graves knew this group is confirmed in a letter to Strong from 1919: 'I am claiming for you an eventual place on Parnassus [the joke name given to Boar's Hill where Graves was living] which I deny (all but) every other member of yr Côtérie.'²² While in an earlier letter to Siegfried Sassoon Graves says he has seen a lot of 'young Oxford poets, Aldous Huxley, Wilfrid Childe, and Thomas Earp, exceptionally nice people but a trifle decayed'.²³ However, the first *Owl*, published in May 1919, owed more to Graves's pre-existing links with the Georgians and other poets than to the environment of the university. A second major influence on the magazine, somewhat underplayed by critics hitherto, is that of Graves's father-in-law, the artist William Nicholson.²⁴ In this sense *The Owl* had all the inwardness of a coterie production, drawing heavily upon friends and family much more than the magazine edited by Green and Lall.

Graves had met Nancy Nicholson in 1917 and married her a year later, when the idea of *The Owl* was first conceived. According to Marguerite Steen it was

²¹ Others published in both the anthologies and the magazine included Strong, Lall, Dodds, Nichols, C. H. B. Kitchin, and Eric Dickinson. Another *Oxford Poetry* contributor, Naomi Mitchinson, published a play in *Coterie 5* under the pseudonym 'Michal'. The 1919 *Oxford Poetry* contains an acknowledgement to the editor of *Coterie* for permission to reprint a poem by Eric Dickinson.

²² Letter, 1919, Harry Ransom Center. In another letter Graves thanked Strong for some stories submitted to, but not published in, *The Owl*.

²³ Letter, 26 March, 1917, cited in Graves, *Selected Letters*, 67.

²⁴ Bryant, for example, ignores the role played by Nicholson in securing material and the original idea for the magazine. See Hallman Bell Bryant, 'The Owl', in Sullivan (ed.), *British Literary Magazines*, 333–6.



Fig. 55. Cover of *The Owl* no. 1 (May 1919) by William Nicholson

Graves's father-in-law who instigated *The Owl*, after sketching a design of an owl with several smaller owls moving around the central figure:

When completed, he showed the design to Robert Graves. 'Here's an idea for a book, Robert, which starts, just as it ought to start, with the cover.' He went on to describe his idea of what such a book should be... that it should be an anthology of all the best in drawing, in prose and in poetry, by contemporary artists and writers, and that it should appear periodically, at no settled dates, but only when its compilers had collected enough of the right kind of material to justify its publication. Like many of William's ideas, it was thoroughly idealistic and uneconomic in conception.²⁵

Graves and his friend W. J. Turner were to look after the 'letterpress', while Nicholson dealt with the illustrations and financed the venture. To call the project 'idealistic and uneconomic' is interesting since it indicates how *The Owl* continues in a trajectory from British aesthetic magazines of the 1880s and 1890s, such as *The Yellow Book* and *The Dial*. The rather archaic term 'letterpress', employed also in the preliminary pages of the first *Owl* to credit the printer, was used in the first number of *The Yellow Book* (1894). The use of 'letterpress' in *The Yellow Book*, according to Linda Dowling, signifies a link with the late nineteenth-century revival of printing and an insistence upon typographic beauty as opposed to the simple readability of more commercial publications.²⁶ Nicholson, of course, had

²⁵ Marguerite Steen, *William Nicholson* (London: Collins, 1943), 136.

²⁶ See Linda Dowling, 'Letterpress and Picture in the Literary Periodicals of the 1890s', *Yearbook of English Studies*, 16 (1986), 117–31. See also Chapters 3 and 4 in this volume.

first established himself in this period with his poster work as part of the 'Beggartaff Brothers', and other work in magazines such as *The Dome* and *The Studio*.²⁷ *The Owl* was thus in the tradition of the 'Book Beautiful' movement of the previous century: it was of a large quarto format (10" × 13"), with a sewn binding, extensive use of colour printing by the rather old-fashioned stone lithograph, and a vast expanse of 'white space' on the page.²⁸ For example, J. C. Squire's ten-line poem, 'Song' is given the luxury of a single page, as are all the poetic contributions, and a blank verso facing the poem. In keeping with the 'Book Beautiful' format, it was expensive, priced at 10s. 6d., some 8s. more than a single issue of *Coterie*. And uneconomic it proved to be: Graves wrote to Edward Marsh that 'if we sell all the 1000 copies at 10s 6d we will hardly be able to get the typing back.'²⁹ Contributors were paid a fee which rose, according to sales, and Graves sent Edmund Blunden £5 for his poem 'Country God' in the second issue.³⁰ Nicholson, perhaps recalling the strategies of luxury book collectors of the *fin de siècle*, hoped to recoup some of the costs by gathering together the unsold copies and offering them to collectors.³¹ It was an attitude to the magazine captured perfectly in a *Times Literary Supplement* review of 4 December 1919: *The Owl* 'must be kept as carefully as ever was *The Yellow Book*. It is no squib to go off and be forgotten, but a treasure.'³²

If its attitude to commerce and many of the periodical codes displayed by the magazine echoed the 1890s, much of the literary material indicated Graves's Georgian connections.³³ Writers such as W. H. Davies, Blunden, Squire, and Walter de la Mare all appeared in *The Owl*. Graves had met Edward Marsh, editor of the Georgian anthologies, while at school and in a letter to Marsh in 1915 asks that after the war 'with the help of other young Georgians to whom I trust you will introduce me, [we] will try to root out more effectively the obnoxious survivals of Victorianism.'³⁴ This claim is a useful reminder that Georgian verse was not as reactionary as it has sometimes been understood, and is perhaps better seen as a *modern* if not modernist reaction to the nineteenth century. However, Graves's conception of the magazine was deliberately to distinguish it from the more radical forms of modernist publication that began to appear after the war and an embrace

²⁷ See Colin Campbell, *William Nicholson: The Graphic Work* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1992).

²⁸ The information on the reproductive technique is from Graves's son, as conveyed in John W. Presley, 'The Owl: An Extended Bibliographic Note', *Gravesiana: The Journal of the Robert Graves Society*, 1:1 (June 1996), 33–45.

²⁹ Graves, *Selected Letters*, 149. Perhaps in an attempt to regain costs the last issue of 1923, *The Winter Owl*, increased in price to 12s. 6d.

³⁰ Graves, *Selected Letters*, 118. ³¹ Steen, *Nicholson*, 137.

³² Quoted in Campbell, *Nicholson*, 128.

³³ For the concept of 'periodical codes', building on Jerome McGann's 'bibliographic codes', see the General Introduction to this volume.

³⁴ Graves, *Selected Letters*, 30. Several of the later Georgian anthologies contained work by Graves.

of the Georgian hues of pastoral and nostalgia fitted this requirement very well. Writing to Sassoon he notes that the motivation behind the magazine is 'quality, no especial line but anything good, and nothing controversial'.³⁵ Graves's desire to avoid controversy was designed to contrast it with other 'little magazines' then appearing, as a letter to Turner in September 1918 indicates: 'The Sitwells are getting up a paper bought for them by Arnold Bennett called Art & Letters which I am rather sceptical about. . . . the Sitwells are making it a show only *pour les jeunes*; I imagine that J. C. Squire is an old fogey to them.'³⁶ The refusal to produce a magazine populated with young experimentalists informed the choice of Thomas Hardy as the initial poet in *The Owl*, with the title of his poem 'The Master and the Leaves' perhaps being a statement of the regard in which Graves and the other Georgians held the 79-year-old 'master'. In *Goodbye to All That* Graves quoted Hardy as saying that '*vers libre* could come to nothing in England'.³⁷ An avoidance of free verse and of the partisan quality of periodicals linked to *les jeunes* is also evident in the editorial 'Foreword' to the first *Owl*:

'All Owls are Satisfactory,' Lewis Carroll begins his essay on these birds: we accept the omen gratefully.

It must be understood that 'The Owl' has no politics, leads no new movement and is not even the organ of any particular generation—for that matter sixty-seven years separate the oldest and youngest contributors.

But we find in common a love of honest work well done, and a distaste for short cuts to popular success.³⁸

Such a statement is, of course, typical of many magazines at the time, but an inspection of the contents belies the claim somewhat since so much of the poetry is so Georgian in theme and style. *The Owl* may not have been the organ of any grouping but the range of contributors was quite limited: of forty-two contributors to the three issues, five contributed to all issues, with another ten contributing to two issues. The appearance of work by the editors, Graves and Turner, in all issues, along with work by Graves's father-in-law and wife adds to the inward looking feel of the journal. In the second *Owl* an ink and wash drawing, 'The Picnic', by William Nicholson shows a family scene including Graves in uniform, along with his wife, and his friend Sassoon (see Fig. 56). Not quite a coterie but more like a family photo album is the impression given here, a sense confirmed by two of Nancy Nicholson's illustrations, 'A Careless Lady' (no. 1) and 'Vain Man' (no. 2),

³⁵ Graves, 12 October 1918, *Selected Letters*, 103.

³⁶ Quoted in Campbell, *Nicholson*, 121. *Les jeunes* was a term often used for experimental writers such as the Imagists; see Ford Madox Ford, 'Les Jeunes et Des Imagistes', in *Outlook* (9 May 1914), 636–40.

³⁷ Robert Graves, *Goodbye to All That* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 251.

³⁸ 'Foreword', *The Owl*, 1 (May 1919). Hardy was 79, while Pamela Bianco was only 12. A child artistic prodigy, Bianco had a show at the Leicester Galleries in 1918.



Fig. 56. *The Picnic* by William Nicholson, from *The Owl* (May 1919)

both of which contain representations of the Graveses and their married life at the time.

Graves and his wife had moved to Oxford after his war service, taking up a government-funded grant to study at St John's College in October 1919. Due to ill health Graves persuaded the authorities to allow him to live a few miles outside of the university, renting a cottage in the garden of the poet John Masefield's house at Boar's Hill. Here Graves became part of a formation dominated by Robert Bridges, the poet laureate. Others that lived nearby included Robert Nichols, a contributor to *Coterie* and minor war poet ('one more neurasthenic ex-soldier', said Graves),³⁹ Edmund Blunden, and Masefield himself. As Graves drolly noted: 'A number of poets were living on Boar's Hill; too many, Edmund [Blunden] and I agreed. It was now almost a tourist centre.'⁴⁰

Many of the contributors were thus drawn from such local friends and from family. Hardy's poem on the leaves 'budding, master, budding, | We of your favourite tree' sets the pastoral tone evident in a number of the contributions. Sassoon writes of a point-to-point meeting, Squire's 'Song' uses an extended analogy with the seasons and weather to describe a loved one, while Blunden's 'A Country God' typifies the Georgian vocabulary of the countryside:

When groping farms are lanterned up
 And stolchy ploughlands hid in grief,
 And glimmering byroads catch the drop
 That weeps from glimmering twig and leaf.⁴¹

³⁹ Graves, *Goodbye*, 241.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 240.

⁴¹ Edmund Blunden, 'Country God', *The Owl*, 2 (Oct. 1919), 22.

The title of Blunden's poem had originally been 'Pan Grown Old' but Graves asked for it to be changed to 'A Country God' since 'All this Pan business is played out anyway.' Substituting the pastoral for mythology was part of a trend that Graves sought to capture in the work in *The Owl* and in his own poetry, as he explained to Blunden: 'War-poetry is played out I'm afraid, commercially, for another five or ten years. . . . Country Sentiment is the most acceptable dope now, and this is the name I've given my new poems.'⁴² In *Goodbye to All That* Graves noted that writing *Country Sentiment* was a way to 'forget about the war'.⁴³

However, pastoral is always more than mere forgetting and here represents a complex response to the war, rejecting nostalgia in favour of an attempt to recover the image of the countryside from that of the trenches which Graves knew only too well. Even many of the pastoral poems in *The Owl* are shadowed by death—de la Mare's 'Rabbit' ends with a murderer nearby and Blunden's 'A Country God' is haunted by:

An echo of the world's sad drone
That now appals the friendly stars—
O wail for blind brave youth whose wars
Turn happiness to stone.

Other instances of the recent conflict informing the contents of *The Owl* include Edwin Lutyens' drawing of the Cenotaph memorial in number 2, and the account of a massacre from T. E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* printed in number 3. Graves's 'Ghost Raddled' seems more like an oblique commentary upon the war than an attempt to forget it, with its 'clouded tales of wrong | And terror I bring to you'. Set in an unnamed house, the images are replete with pain and suffering; sleeping men are woken 'Bone chilled, flesh creeping'; blood is 'choking the gutter'; while others are full of 'endless grief | From breasts long rotten'.⁴⁴ These are far from comfortable images of country sentiments.

There are other contributions to *The Owl* than those that can easily be labelled Georgian: poems by Edgell Rickword and the Americans John Crowe Ransom and Vachel Lindsay look forward to the 1920s and to a less parochial vision of modern poetry.⁴⁵ It is also intriguing to find stark black and white illustrations by the radical American artist Rockwell Kent in the second issue.⁴⁶ But it is perhaps Siegfried Sassoon's famous poem on the Armistice, 'Everyone Sang', that typifies the formation that produced *The Owl*:

⁴² Graves, 12 July 1919, *Selected Letters*, 113.

⁴³ Graves, *Goodbye*, 228.

⁴⁴ Robert Graves, 'Ghost Raddled', *The Owl*, 1 (May 1919), 8.

⁴⁵ Graves's *On English Poetry* was reviewed by Ransom in the important American magazine, *Fugitive*, 3 (Oct. 1922).

⁴⁶ Kent was associated with the social realist 'Ash Can' school of American painting and in later life became a militant socialist, blacklisted in the McCarthy era, and winner of the Lenin Peace Prize in 1967.

Everyone suddenly burst out singing;
 And I was filled with such delight
 As prisoned birds must find in freedom.
 Winging wildly across the white
 Orchards and dark green fields; on-on-and out of sight.

Everyone's voice was suddenly lifted;
 And beauty came like the setting sun:
 My heart was shaken with tears; and horror
 Drifted away . . . O, but Everyone
 Was a bird; and the song was wordless; the singing will never be done.⁴⁷

Written by a personal friend of Graves, the poem employs the metrical patterning and plain diction found in Georgian verse, along with the essential comparison to the positive values of nature (beauty 'like the setting sun' and 'Everyone | Was a bird'). The attempt to replace the 'horror' of the war with birdsong might obliquely refer to *The Owl* itself, though the 'wordless' song perhaps points to the problems faced by the magazine itself in coming to terms with the role of art and literature after the war. What song modern culture should sing or what course it should take after the war was a topic that marks out the character of *The Owl*: partly looking backwards to the 1890s, trying out a Georgian idiom that no longer seemed adequate to the horrors experienced by many of its writers, but unwilling to try anything that smacked too heavily of modernist controversy. Another symptom of this confused position is found in a letter from Graves while organizing the second issue: 'I have secret dreams of it [*The Owl*] as the organ of Labour . . . art and letters in the good days after the Revolution.'⁴⁸ Bizarre as this seems, it does indicate an uncertainty of tone and direction also to be found in other publications at the time, including the magazine *Coterie*.

Coterie: Internationalism and revolution?

In his book on the 'radical twenties' John Lucas notes the mood of 'internationalism' discernible in many modernist magazines at this time. Internationalism was 'essential to much literary enterprise of the time, especially that of younger writers for whom it was a political matter—a rejection of the xenophobia of the older generation of the war—eager.'⁴⁹ Lucas detects this spirit within Middleton Murry's work at *The Athenaeum* from 1919 and in *Art and Letters* (1917–20).

⁴⁷ Siegfried Sassoon, 'Everyone Sang', *The Owl*, 2 (Oct. 1919), 6. Graves's more negative reaction to the message of the poem was 'But "everybody" did not include me'; *Goodbye*, 228.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Campbell, *Nicholson*, 124.

⁴⁹ John Lucas, *The Radical Twenties* (Nottingham: Five Leaves Press, 1997), 183.



Fig. 57. Cover of *Coterie*, no. 6/7 (Winter 1920-1) by Nina Hamnett

(See Chapters 15 and 20.) These magazines, suggests Lucas, display a ‘determination to undo the jingoistic fervour of the preceding years and to insist that culture, which knows no national boundaries, has to be safeguarded from the wreckage of war.’⁵⁰ Lucas’s judgement undoubtedly captures one strand, an important one given the historical context, of the contents of *Coterie*, *New Coterie*, and *The Owl*—but it does not define the overall tenor of these magazines. Issue 1 of *Coterie*, for example, contains nothing definable as international; issue 2 does contain a drawing by Gaudier-Brzeska and some translations by Helen Rootham from Rimbaud; issue 3 has a single Modigliani drawing; while issue 4 has drawings by Gaudier-Brzeska, Zadkine, and André Derain. So the internationalism is mainly confined to the visual arts; it was not until the later issues that Paul Selver (a key contributor of translations to *The New Age* before the war) introduced a number of translations of eastern European poetry. The transition from Oxford ‘coterie’ to guardian of international culture took a little while. *New Coterie* does, however, contain a European Anthology in each issue, collecting translations of poetry by writers as various as Nietzsche, Strindberg, and Rilke. *New Coterie* of course appears some six years after the first *Coterie*, in a period when networks of travel and cultural exchange between Britain and continental Europe were more established—Ford’s *Transatlantic Review*, for example, started in 1924.

Rather than an overt internationalism in terms of its contributions, one strand of *Coterie* displays a hankering after the flavours of bohemian life, whether in Paris or London, with or without hashish. Like *The Owl*, *Coterie* in its earliest manifestation had at least one toe still in the 1890s. Witness Nina Hamnett’s drawing on the cover

⁵⁰ Lucas, *Radical Twenties*, 185.

of issue 6/7 (see Fig. 57) with its café scene of wine and conversation (a note on the title page of this issue boasts that *Coterie* may now be purchased at W. H. Smiths on the Rue de Rivoli). This aspect of bohemia is also found in poems such as Conrad Aiken's 'Cabaret', Earp's 'Urbanity', and Iris Tree's 'Café Royal', the latter an interesting depiction of returning to a site replete with bad memories of previous lovers (possibly Wyndham Lewis).⁵¹ The cover of issue 2 with its cabaret setting, by Adrian Allinson, might conceivably pay homage to the Cave of the Golden Calf, the famous pre-war venue founded by Frida Strindberg and decorated by Lewis, Gill, and Spencer Gore.⁵² Russell Green, one of the two editors and founders, had studied French at Oxford and Nina Hamnett's biography of bohemian life, *Laughing Torso*, recounts meeting Green in Le Dôme café, Paris, as a prelude to ten days of 'low haunts' in Montmartre, some Bal Musettes, and more drinking at the Dome.⁵³

One way to think about these images of bohemian life is to link them to the magazine's title. Lucas's argument about the internationalism of the post-war magazines is partly designed to foreground the political discourses of the time and is a useful counter to some previous accounts that have interpreted *Coterie* as part of a 'late Edwardian' climate of young writers uninterested in the political debates explored in the pages of *The New Age*, for example, but who would submit work to *Art and Letters*, *Wheels*, *Coterie*, or *Voices*.⁵⁴ But the politics, or lack thereof, of *Coterie* are nowhere near as obvious as these opinions imply. That *Coterie* was associated with left-wing trends after the war is clearly correct: it was published at The Bomb Shop, a renowned left-wing bookshop in Charing Cross Road. Hamnett remembers The Bomb Shop as 'Frank Henderson's famous left-wing bookshop with scarlet shelves in the Charing Cross Road'.⁵⁵ Though no clear guide to left-wing sympathies a number of poems in the early issues register deep feelings of antipathy to the recently concluded war: Richard Aldington's 'Breaking Point', for example, sneers at the 'bastard pomp' and 'flatulent hypocrisy' of 'this silly war'

⁵¹ See Paul O'Keefe, *Some Sort of Genius: A Life of Wyndham Lewis* (London: Pimlico, 2001), 218–19.

⁵² See Richard Cork, *Art beyond the Gallery in Early 20th Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), ch. 2, and Peter Brooker, *Bohemia in London: The Social Scene of Early Modernism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), ch. 4.

⁵³ Nina Hamnett, *Laughing Torso* (London: Virago, 1984 [1932]), 226.

⁵⁴ See Tollers, 'Coterie', III.

⁵⁵ Hamnett, *Laughing Torso*, 127. The Bomb Shop at 66 Charing Cross Road was taken over by Eva Reckitt Collett as Collett's in 1934. Other radical bookshops with the same name existed in Birmingham and Bristol. The shop was said to be decorated with murals by, or similar to those by, the 1890s socialist artist Walter Crane. The Bomb Shop also published *Voices* in 1919 and a small book of lithographs and poems by David Bomberg, *Russian Ballet* (1919), inspired by the Ballet Russes. An advert in *The Enemy* for 1927, 'Frank Henderson at the Blue Bookshop', advertises 'An Intelligent Selection of Modern Books'.

and calls for friends with similar views who are 'Untainted by moral cowardice, | By respect for institutions'.⁵⁶

A more directly political piece is found in Douglas Goldring's article in issue 3, 'English Literature and the Revolution'. Goldring, a famous pacifist in the war, offers a fascinating analysis of how the cultural politics of magazine publication are part of the wider problems of the economic organization of British society:

Any one who picks up one of the weeklies, provided he knows something of literary London, can visualise the cliques and sets, the personal animosities, the log-rolling and the snobbishness which underlie their smooth-flowing columns of praise or blame. A writer who does not lunch with other writers, who has no friends among the literary 'best people', who is not published by some smart publisher clever enough to exhale an aroma of 'Oxford' will not as a rule receive much attention from the 'leading organs of critical thought'. The London papers whose reviewing ignores social or commercial influences can be counted on the fingers of one hand.⁵⁷

Perhaps Goldring was unaware of the 'aroma' of Oxford that lay behind *Coterie*. However, Goldring's views echo many of the founders of modernist magazines, and represent almost the accepted justification for the explosion of periodicals in this period. In order for an artistic voice to be heard, it must circumvent the commercially dominated press governed by the mass circulation publishers. However, Goldring's critique is rather different from this in its focus upon the social, as well as commercial, restraints upon publication. To publish a work of art, continues Goldring, requires the 'finesse of a social struggler and the bland assurance of a bagman', or the work will not be accepted.⁵⁸ The 'root of the evil', he adds, is embedded in our social life and is one more symptom of 'national corruption and spiritual deadness which are the preludes to upheaval'.⁵⁹ He continues with the following polemic:

Now a revolution is a setting free of forces which have been violently constrained. The intellectual energies of England, so far as her younger writers are concerned, are to-day bottled up. . . . And so in England to-day the artist's way to freedom lies through that drastic change in our social life which it is convenient to refer to as the Revolution. That this is no idle fancy but a statement of fact must be realised by all those who have any appreciation of the change which has come over the continent of Europe during the past two years.⁶⁰

Goldring concludes by referring to Hungary, Germany, and Soviet Russia, noting how the 'effect of revolution on the creative capacity of a people is like a renewal

⁵⁶ Richard Aldington, 'Breaking Point', *Coterie*, 2 (Sept. 1919), 14–15.

⁵⁷ Douglas Goldring, 'English Literature and the Revolution', *Coterie*, 3 (Dec. 1919), 69.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 71. ⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 72. ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

of youth'. Goldring's convictions are shared by Chaman Lall in an article in the same issue on the problems besetting the English theatre: 'The present system commercialises art and puts it under the Iron Heel of wage-slavery. . . . Is it not necessary for the artist to recreate the whole fabric of Society and base it on such foundations that free Art can thrive without commercial taint?'⁶¹

Such an alliance between political revolution and modernist experiment is fascinating, and recalls Graves's one time aim for *The Owl*. In his later overview of the 1920s, Goldring elaborated on this combination of aesthetics and politics, commenting on the period 1918–31 that:

It was revolutionary not only in the political sense, but also in the fields of art, literature, social life, religion and ethics. As we have, at last, come to realize, politics and religion, art and sex are only different aspects of creative energy, closely interlinked manifestations of the *elan vital*, which cannot, without mutual loss, be kept separate, in watertight compartments.⁶²

This argument, clearly indebted to Bergson, is an interesting one by which to understand the diverse nature of the contributions to a magazine such as *Coterie*: within its pages celebrations and critiques of decadent bohemia can coexist with calls for revolution against the iron heel of wage slavery. *Coterie* is clearly not a magazine whose rationale is defined by the political, like 1930s journals such as *Left Review* or *Poetry and the People*. But in its attention, in part, to the uneasy alliance between the political and the cultural it echoes pre-war magazines such as *The New Freewoman* or *The New Age*. Such a mixture also perhaps explains the alliance with the radical publisher Frank Henderson: bombs, whether revolutionary or cultural, were to some clearly on a par.

Modernist movements

Another way to understand this point is to view *Coterie* self-reflexively through the lens of its own title. If we want to define the magazine in terms of its formation then it is crucial to understand the cultural logic of the 'coterie' envisaged here. Prima facie, the name conflicts with any political impulse towards revolution. A coterie is a withdrawn clique, uninterested in the social world except as it impinges upon its own members—its character is precisely that of the log-rolling and snobbishness berated by Goldring.⁶³ We struggle, then, to see the aesthetic coterie as any kind

⁶¹ Chaman Lall, 'Shaw, the Show, and the Shawm', *Coterie*, 3 (Winter 1919), 77–8.

⁶² Goldring, *The Nineteen Twenties*, p. xv.

⁶³ Lawrence Rainey's barbed critique of H.D. in his *Institutions of Modernism* is precisely aimed at her being 'a coterie poet, one whose writings circulated, like bonbons at a dinner party, among a cénacle of friends and hangers-on in wealthy bohemia.' See Lawrence Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 148.

of parallel to the revolutionary avant-garde.⁶⁴ Literary movements often suffer from intrinsic tensions between the composition of the group and the aspirations of the individual artist. Witness, for example, Pound and Lowell's competing versions of Imagism; or Lewis's dragooning of unwilling volunteers for the Vorticist manifesto. However, often these tensions are given space to breathe and coexist within the pages of a magazine; even when a magazine is clearly the mouthpiece of a movement, dissenting voices can sometimes be heard.

What is missing from the pages of *Coterie* is the stamp of any aesthetic movement. *Coterie* is not the mouthpiece of any ism. In many senses this defines its formational character within the history of the modernist magazine: it brings together any number of contributors who, in other places, and particularly in the years prior to the First World War would have been aligned with particular movements. For example, almost all of the major, and minor, contributors to the Imagist anthologies are present in *Coterie* (except for Pound, who had left London for Paris at this time): John Gould Fletcher, Aldington, H.D., Amy Lowell, F. S. Flint, and John Cournos all feature in the magazine, but—and this is the significant point—with no explicit mention of Imagism as a doctrine, style, or movement. Even when Flint praises Aldington's poetry in issue 3 he nowhere describes his work as Imagist. This is in complete contrast to the way in which similar articles, praising an Imagist and written by a fellow Imagist, appeared in *The Egoist* or *Poetry*, only a few years previously.⁶⁵ Equally, there are a number of contributors associated with the Georgians, Harold Monro and Edmund Blunden, for example, but again *Coterie* contains no profile for the group as such. Vorticist art from figures such as Gaudier-Brzeska, Bomberg, Lawrence Atkinson, and William Roberts constitutes a fair presence in *Coterie*, but again without ever being named as such.⁶⁶ Indeed, Goldring has a poem in *Coterie* 4 which gently satirizes this disavowal of named movements: 'Post-Georgian Poet in Search of a Master'. Here he writes that before the war he was 'a safe young Georgian' but now 'all is chaos, all confusion', with new figures like 'T.S.E.' using 'great words that are as Greek to me'. The poem expresses something of a post-war sense of lost direction amongst British modernists: 'Whom must I imitate? Who's really It? | On whose embroidered footstool should I sit?'⁶⁷ Essentially, the war seems to have halted the cultural jockeying for position that characterized the years from around 1910,

⁶⁴ For the classic account of this issue see Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

⁶⁵ See the 'Special Imagist Number' of *The Egoist*, 1 May 1915.

⁶⁶ One explanation for this kind of tactic is given by David Peters Corbett's suggestion, in *The Modernity of English Art 1914–30* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), that, for the visual arts, 'the history of the twenties in England is largely a history of disavowal of critical modernism and the return of modernity in other and less focused guises. For English culture as a whole in the 1920s there is a complex hesitancy about relations to modernity' (19).

⁶⁷ Douglas Goldring, 'Post-Georgian Poet in Search of a Master', *Coterie*, 4 (Easter 1920), 50.

between Cubism, post-Impressionism, Futurism, Vorticism, and Imagism. This is not to suggest that these movements do not have a presence in *Coterie*—far from it, as for example an early poem by Herbert Read which attempts something like a Cubist or Vorticist depiction of the industrial East Riding of Yorkshire: ‘Squat gas-cylinders | Sink in the clutch of hexagonal frames.’⁶⁸ Many other poems are marked by the concision and free verse of Imagism; there are also a good number of prose poems. However, the presence of Imagism is now felt as a *style* rather than a *movement*.

The trope of the ‘coterie’ does not signal a withdrawal from social engagement but a banner below which various writers and artists could group together, without necessarily needing to espouse a defined style or position. This is how we should read the various images of interrelated figures that adorn the covers of *Coterie*—from Brown on the cover of the first issue to Bomberg for number 4, and Roberts for number 3 (see Fig. 58). Roberts revised this image for the cover of *New Coterie* (see Fig. 59) and two differences are worth noticing. The first is that the covers of *Coterie* varied—this in itself indicates a certain plurality of visual identities in keeping with the idea that the ‘coterie’ adopts no one ism or style. *New Coterie*, in contrast, stuck with slightly different versions of Roberts’s revised design, demonstrating a rethinking of how magazine covers present a coherent, recognizable identity for an audience. Secondly, we can see how the semi-abstract figures of the 1919 cover, where even the sexual identities of male and female are slightly obscured, are now replaced by the more representational and humanized figures (all male) of the 1926 cover. Roberts’s 1919 image represents the coterie title upon a kind of flag being supported by a group of merged figures, in an aping of a political avant-garde identity where individuality is subsumed beneath the collective. They move forward, perhaps looking towards the kind of revolutionary freedom for the artist envisaged by Goldring. Interestingly, the typeface used here (although not elsewhere in the magazine) is very close to the bold san-serif used in *BLAST*, showing the continuities with Roberts’s Vorticist heritage. However we read the image, it seems clear that this is not a coterie identity on the retreat from the social world around.⁶⁹

The first, and only, editorial in *Coterie* in issue 6/7 takes up the question of the nature of the relation between the group and the individual. The editorial responds to the following critique of the magazine in *The Daily Herald*:

The word ‘coterie’ signifies ‘a set of persons associated by exclusive interests’, and the ineffectiveness of this quarterly is due to the individualism of its contributors. . . . This autumn number is . . . also suffering from a more deep-seated

⁶⁸ Herbert Read, ‘East Riding’, *Coterie*, (Sept. 1919), 18.

⁶⁹ It might also refer to Roberts’s work with Wyndham Lewis’s post-war ‘X’ Group, an attempt to recapture some of the avant-garde energy of the Vorticists. See Andrew Heard, *William Roberts 1895–1980* (Newcastle: Hatton Gallery, 2004), 52–5.



Fig. 58. Cover of *Coterie*, no. 3 (Dec. 1919) by William Roberts

malady, namely, its lack of collective significance. Such ephemeral publications are of no value unless they express a coherent group-movement, and *COTERIE* is the loosely-edited miscellany of a group which is united only by an orange paper cover decorated with a fake-Beardsley design.⁷⁰

The editorial points out that in the next paragraph the left-wing *Daily Herald* complains that the poetry in *Coterie* is poor due to a lack of the 'essential solitude' of the poet. This is indeed somewhat contradictory, but the editorial does not really address the issue of the absence of a clearly defined group movement. It argues that *Coterie* has abstained 'from the contemporary and traditional foible of prefacing

⁷⁰ 'Editorial', *Coterie*, 6/7 (Winter 1920-1), 3.

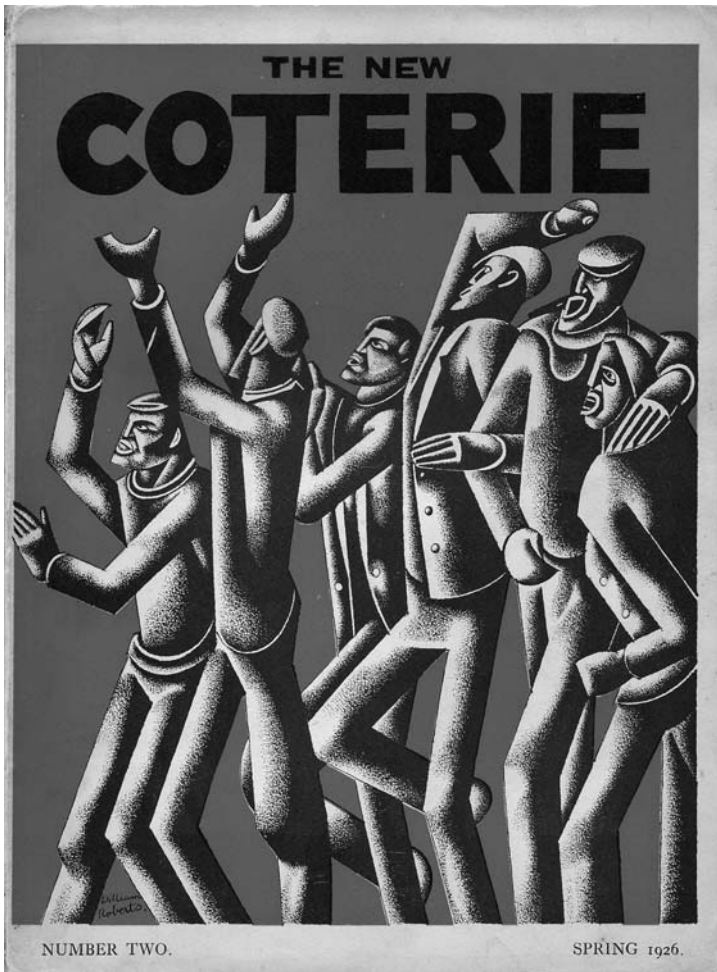


Fig. 59. Cover of *New Coterie*, no. 2 (Spring 1926) by William Roberts

each number with a heavy declaration of editorial policy', and that it rejects the 'cultural Prussianism' that would enforce a 'procrustean formalism' or the 'anaemia of a flat and sullen uniformity'.⁷¹

As rhetoric this is fine, but the collapse of the magazine after this issue may point to the perils attached to being a coterie devoted to modernist innovation per se rather than to any particular movement within that broad grouping. *Coterie*, argues the editorial, has relied for success 'rather upon inherent quality than upon a preliminary campaign of publicity... [i]t has not needed six thousand mercurial

⁷¹ Ibid. 4.

circulars to establish its reputation; nor is it aided by attachment to a wealthy press.⁷² But it is precisely the absence of these economic and cultural factors, allied to a rather vague, though commendable, editorial policy of plurality that meant that *Coterie*—like many other magazines—was subject to the dangers of internal financial collapse.

A new coterie

Almost five years passed between the demise of *Coterie* and its resurrection as *The New Coterie*. Though there are some continuities, in many ways the magazine was now a very different operation. Information about the editorial arrangements of the re-launched magazine is hard to find—no editor or editorial board was named; editorial statements are scarce; and correspondence to the editor was to be addressed to the publisher. One can perhaps assume that Green continued as the editor from the tone of the editorials and the interest in French literature noted in *New Coterie* 2.⁷³ The magazine was published by another radical publisher, Charles Lahr, who in 1921 took over the Progressive Bookshop in Red Lion Square, Holborn, and it was from there that he published *New Coterie* from 1925. Lahr had joined the Industrial Workers of the World in 1914, was interred as an enemy alien during the war, and was involved with many radical political groups. Lahr also set up the Blue Moon Press, using an old press of William Morris's, publishing writers such as D. H. Lawrence, T. F. Powys and H. E. Bates (all of whom appeared in *New Coterie*). In 1922 Lahr had married Esther Archer, from a Jewish socialist background, who appeared as the publisher of the magazine ('E. Archer'). An image of Archer, by Jacob Kramer, appeared in *New Coterie* 2. Roberts, who designed the covers for *New Coterie*, had married Kramer's sister, Sarah. The Red Lion Bookshop was described by H. E. Bates as a 'rabbit hutch' on account of its tiny size, accommodating no more than four or five people at any one time.⁷⁴

A statistical analysis of the two magazines illustrates how they differed in terms of contributors. There were 136 contributors to the two magazines in total, with only 13 contributors to *Coterie* re-appearing in *New Coterie*. There were ninety-two contributors who only appeared once—almost two-thirds of the total—indicating that, once again, this was not a coterie publication of friends. There were few regular contributors to either magazine: only fifteen contributors appeared three or more times in the twelve issues of *Coterie/New Coterie*. Of those associated with

⁷² 'Editorial', *Coterie*, 3–4. ⁷³ See the 'Editorial' to *New Coterie*, no. 2.

⁷⁴ See F. A. Munby and Ian Norrie, *Publishing and Bookselling* (London: Jonathan Cape, rev edn, 1974), 376. In 1933 Lahr published another little magazine, *Seed*.

the original Oxford 'Coterie' grouping, only Huxley (6 appearances), Earp (5), and Green (3) appeared in both magazines; Strong appeared 5 times and Aiken 4, but neither of them in *New Coterie*. One of the most striking features of the line-up for *New Coterie* are the new voices found in its pages, such as the Irish writer Liam O' Flaherty (4 appearances), and the Welsh writer Rhys Davies (4). Also strongly represented are a number of Jewish artists, some linked with the 'Whitechapel Boys' group, and others linked with the radical group associated with Esther Archer and Charles Lahr: Jacob Kramer (3), Louis Golding (2), and Bernard Meninsky (2) all contribute work to *New Coterie*, while Bomberg had supplied a cover for *Coterie*. These links to diverse cultural formations once again emphasize how the magazine broke away from its Oxford 'coterie' origins and became a much more heterogeneous type of publication. The mixture of aesthetics and politics hinted at in the pages of *Coterie* is perhaps more visible in *New Coterie*. It is difficult, for example, not to view Roberts's red cover for the spring 1926 copy of *New Coterie* (see Fig. 59) in the light of the General Strike that started in May, even though the event itself is not commented upon in the magazine.

Conclusion

To conclude I turn briefly to Lawrence Rainey's argument in *Institutions of Modernism* about the radical transformation of the cultural marketplace by the new institutions of mass culture. The response by modernists, argues Rainey, involved patron-investors and the emergence of what Pound termed an 'aristocracy of the arts' devoted to the creation of modernist art commodities.⁷⁵ Rainey notes two key examples of this trend: the limited edition and the little review, illustrating his argument with the examples of *The Little Review*, *The Dial*, and Eliot's *The Waste Land*.⁷⁶ This argument, however, only works for certain magazines within modernism, and it is significant that Rainey's consequent examples focus much more on the role of patronage in promoting limited editions (see, for example, his chapters on *Ulysses* and on the book publication of *The Waste Land*) than upon the role of 'little magazines'. His discussion of *The Little Review*, for example, is brief in comparison to that of *The Dial* and *Vanity Fair*. Consideration of a fuller range of modernist magazines would reveal a considerably more nuanced picture of the relationships between art, the commodity, and the institutions of mass culture. None of the magazines considered above really fit Rainey's argument that well. *The Owl* may have appeared as a luxury commodity, and Nicholson may have thought of it in those terms, but Graves saw the role of the magazine in the post-war world to be quite different. *Coterie* and *New Coterie* are also cases

⁷⁵ Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism*, 38–9.

⁷⁶ Ibid. 92–106.

in point. Their very names point to the complex identities assumed by magazines in this period; identities related to the institutions of mass culture but, finally, perhaps not fully explained by them. More than anything these magazines illustrate much about the fate of modernism in Britain after the war, with their tenuous grasp upon commercial viability and their uncertain tone of voice, but expressing a commitment still to an experimentation in the arts that was analogous, in some undefined way, to the idea of political revolution.

LITERATURE AND THE VISUAL ARTS

Art and Letters (1917–20) and *The Apple* (1920–2)

REBECCA BEASLEY

Literature and the visual arts in the ‘little magazine’

The juxtaposition of literature and the visual arts is a feature of many modernist magazines: *BLAST*, *The Dial*, *The Egoist*, *The Little Review*, and *Rhythm* are only the most well-known examples of an alliance central to the success of literary modernism. For the editors of these magazines, contemporary visual art and design signalled their publication’s modernity and provided an avant-garde frame for literary material that was often less secure in its experimentation. Yet these magazines provide no theoretical account of the relationship between literature and the visual arts in their pages, no interrogation of the visual content’s unstable status as stand-alone artwork, illustration, or decoration, no acknowledgement of its difference from the verbal matter that surrounded it. It was in literary modernism’s interest to present itself as part of a new aesthetic culture of experiment that pervaded all the arts in a comparable fashion; to acknowledge the reverse, that different arts had different histories and ideologies, even different conceptions of modernism itself, would be to call into question the assumed stylistic analogies that served literary modernism so well. This deliberately naïve conjunction of literature and the visual arts was primarily a product of modernism in its early, aesthetic, phase. In the immediate aftermath of the Great War modernist magazines largely relinquished the provocative experiments of early modernism for the consolidation of achievements referred to as high modernism, a consolidation that involved increased specialization within disciplines. The two magazines under consideration in this chapter, *Art and Letters* (1917–20) and *The Apple (of Beauty and Discord)* (1920–2), are products of the transition between these two phases of modernism. Both retain something of early modernism’s

heterogeneity, yet are also distinctively post-war in their sense of cultural mission.

The respective editors of *Art and Letters* and *The Apple*, Frank Rutter and Herbert Furst, were not of this post-war generation. Rutter was born in 1876 and Furst in 1874, a decade before their modernist contributors, and twenty years before the youngest writers and artists appearing in their pages, such as Robert Graves, Herbert Read, and the younger Sitwells. Rutter and Furst had come of age at the end of the nineteenth century, the era of aestheticism, and though Rutter, especially, was a major promoter of modernist art, the aesthetic values of the 1890s are readily discerned in both magazines. Rutter's preferred style of painting was Impressionism and neo-Impressionism, practised in Britain by the New English Art Club and the Camden Town Group; Furst was a champion of the arts of wood-cutting and wood-engraving, which had been revived by the Arts and Crafts movement. Both were specialists in the visual arts, though they had strong literary interests. Rutter had been the *Sunday Times* art critic since 1903, and was the author of books on Rossetti, Whistler, and post-Impressionist painting. He had also written, with Ladbroke Black, a rugby-themed romantic novel set against the background of the Boer War: *A Muddied Oaf* (1902).¹ Furst had managed the London office of Kunstverlag Franz Hanfstaengl, the publisher of fine art reproductions, from 1897 to 1916, written books on Chardin and Dürer, and published two volumes of poetry.² In 1918 Furst opened a gallery, the Little Art Rooms, at 8 Duke Street, Adelphi; a year later Frank Rutter opened the Adelphi Gallery at 9 Duke Street, next door.

¹ Frank Rutter, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Painter and Man of Letters* (London: Grant Richards, 1911); *James McNeill Whistler: An Estimate and a Biography* (London: Grant Richards, 1911); *Revolution in Art: An Introduction to the Study of Cézanne, Gauguin, Van Gogh, and Other Modern Painters* (London: Art News Press, 1910); *A Muddied Oaf* (London: Treherne, 1902). For an account of Rutter's early career, see his *Since I Was Twenty-Five* (London: Constable, 1927). Rutter appears to have left no archive, and there are remarkably few of his letters in the archives of others. The most substantial collection located is in the Society of Authors' Papers in the British Library (Add. 56794), which contains letters from Rutter, primarily on legal issues, between 1909 and 1937.

² Herbert Furst, *Chardin and His Times* (London: Gowans and Gray, 1907); *Chardin* (London: Methuen, 1911); *Dürer* (London: T. C. and E. Jack, 1910); *Songs of London: A Medley Grave and Gay* (London: Gowans and Gray, 1908); *Songs of Town and Country* (London: Gowans and Gray, 1911). For further biographical information on Furst, see 'Herbert Furst—An Appreciation', *Apollo*, 42 (1945), 301; for an institutional history of Hanfstaengl, see Helmut Heß, *Der Kunstverlag Franz Hanfstaengl und die frühe fotografische Kunstproduktion: das Kunstwerk und sein Abbild* (München: Akademischer Verlag, 1999). Furst, like Rutter, appears to have left no archive, but there are a substantial number of letters in the T. Sturge Moore Papers in the Senate House Library, University of London (MS 978). The early letters are mainly concerned with Furst's exhibition and sale of Sturge Moore's works through the Little Art Rooms, the later with Furst's editing of *Apollo*.

Art and Letters (1917–20)

The first issue of *Art and Letters: An Illustrated Quarterly* was published in July 1917.³ The title page announced that it was edited by Frank Rutter and the neo-realist painters Charles Ginner and Harold Gilman. Herbert Read was also a co-editor, but he later explained that army regulations had prevented his name appearing.⁴ Four issues appeared before publication was suspended in June 1918, due to increased costs of paper and printing and the pressures of war work.⁵ *Art and Letters* reappeared in January 1919, still as a quarterly, with Rutter responsible for the visual art content, Osbert Sitwell as joint literary editor with the still-anonymous Read, and Sydney Schiff (the novelist and translator ‘Stephen Hudson’) as an anonymous backer with editorial control. The magazine appeared four times in 1919 and twice in 1920, before folding in the spring of that year.

These two incarnations of *Art and Letters*, wartime and post-war, present noticeably distinct versions of modernism. The first incarnation, shaped by Rutter, is an example of the Nietzschean-inflected socialist modernism, propagated by members and associates of the Leeds Arts Club, founded in 1903 by Alfred Orage and Holbrook Jackson, who subsequently became the editors of *The New Age*. This socialist modernism is distinguished by its links with the culture of the 1890s, its emphasis on English contexts and traditions, and its acceptance of realism as a modernist mode.⁶ In this first phase, the magazine contains more visual art than literary content. In its second incarnation *Art and Letters* presents a more familiar and canonical version of modernism. Under the influence of Read and Sitwell, the magazine’s literary content increases in quantity and quality, and more

³ This is according to the information given on the journal’s title page; Read gives the date of publication as ‘the end of June, 1917’: see Herbert Read, *The Contrary Experience: Autobiographies* (London: Faber, 1963), 257; and *Annals of Innocence and Experience* (London: Faber, 1940), 176. Although most of the earlier volume was reprinted with minor changes in *The Contrary Experience*, with the addition of ‘A Dearth of Wild Flowers’ and ‘A War Diary, 1915–18’ (the latter a major source of information about *Art and Letters*), the chapter ‘Art and Letters’ (section 7 of ‘The Falcon and the Dove’) was reduced to a footnote on p. 257.

⁴ Read, *The Contrary Experience*, 257; James King, *The Last Modern: A Life of Herbert Read* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1990), 47.

⁵ ‘Notice’, *Art and Letters*, 1:4 (1918), n.p. Ginner served in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps and the Intelligence Corps, and both he and Gilman received commissions from the Canadian War Records Office: see Wendy Baron, *Perfect Moderns: A History of the Camden Town Group* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 167, 172; and Richard Thomson, ‘Gilman’s Subjects: Some Observations’, in *Harold Gilman, 1876–1919* (London: Arts Council), 33–4. Rutter worked for the Admiralty from 1917 to 1919: see *Since I was Twenty-Five*, 211.

⁶ Although there were modernist illustrated quarterlies that preceded *Art and Letters* (*Form*, *The Mask*, *Rhythm*), Jason Harding is surely right that Rutter’s deliberate adoption of the subtitle was a homage to the illustrated quarterlies of the *fin de siècle*, such as *The Yellow Book* and *The Savoy*: see Harding, *The Criterion: Cultural Politics and Periodical Networks in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 110.

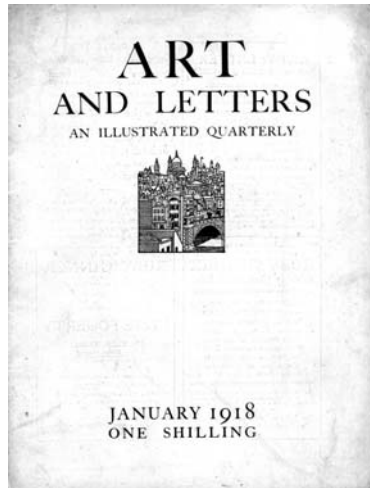


Fig. 60. Cover of *Art and Letters* (Jan. 1918)

prose fiction in particular is included. Two points about its literary modernism are striking: its incorporation of war poetry as part of the modernist experiment, and its gathering together of almost all the pre-war and wartime modernist cliques, bar the Bloomsbury group.

The two incarnations are also distinguished from each other by their finances. The first three issues were priced at one shilling, and the fourth at one shilling and sixpence. Annual subscriptions cost four shillings. When the magazine reappeared it cost two shillings and sixpence throughout its run, with an annual subscription costing ten shillings and sixpence, falling to ten shillings in the last two issues. The last three issues advertised an annual subscription rate for the United States of two dollars and fifty cents, naming the magazine's American agent as Egmont Arens, then a publisher and editor, later better known as an industrial designer. The first incarnation was clearly more dependent on advertising for its funds: as well as carrying advertisements to benefit its editors and contributors (for Gilman and Ginner's drawing lessons, Ruby Ginner's dance school, Rutter's *Revolution in Art*, the Allied Artists' Association), it also ran a small number of commercial advertisements, most regularly the British, Foreign, and Colonial Corporation investment bank, *Colour* magazine, Foyle's bookshop and—in its first issue only—the 'Oxygen Face Cream', Ven-Yusa. *Art and Letters* under Rutter actively sought out commercial advertising, printing the rate for advertisements alongside its subscription information in each issue.⁷ Under Schiff's patronage the magazine required less external funding:

⁷ Orage published a hostile review of the first issue in *The New Age*, complaining in particular of the amount of commercial advertising: see R.H.C., 'Readers and Writers', *New Age*, 21 (1917), 287.

the advertisements were for books by contributors, Adelphi Gallery exhibitions, and other periodicals and publishers (including the Ovid and Hogarth presses, *The Egoist*, *The Arts Gazette*, and Egmont Arens's *Playboy: A Portfolio of Art and Satire*).⁸

Socialist modernism: The Leeds Arts Club and the Allied Artists' Association

The character of the first stage of *Art and Letters* was formed by two contexts in particular: the Leeds Arts Club and the Allied Artists' Association. Rutter and Read had first conceived of *Art and Letters*, or something like it, in 1914, at the beginning of their acquaintance in Leeds.⁹ They had met at the Leeds Arts Club in 1913: Rutter had moved to Leeds from London in April 1912 to take up the position of curator at Leeds City Art Gallery; Read, who had grown up in Yorkshire, enrolled at the University of Leeds in September 1912. Both found their institutions hostile to recent developments in art and literature, and turned to the more congenial, less provincial, Arts Club.¹⁰ Although little primary material relating to the club during this period has survived, David Thistlewood and Tom Steele, extrapolating from newspaper articles and the memories of an Arts Club member, have argued that the influence of Rutter and the University's new Vice Chancellor, Michael Sadler, had the effect of extending the club's primarily political and broadly cultural interests into the field of contemporary art.¹¹ Rutter was an authority on modern British and French painting, and since 1909 Sadler had been building a collection that included work by Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin, Augustus John, and Wassily Kandinsky.¹² In June 1913 Rutter organized the Leeds Arts Club's *Loan Exhibition of Post-Impressionist Pictures and Drawings*, and in May 1914 its exhibition of Cubist and Futurist works, the latter with a catalogue introduction by Wyndham

⁸ Nevertheless, it seems that Schiff made a loss on his investment: in September 1919 T. S. Eliot wrote in surprise to Schiff, 'Do you mean that there is a loss of £400 a year? I cannot understand why it should be so heavy as that, even if subscribers are very few': see T. S. Eliot, letter to Sydney Schiff, 24 September 1919, in *The Letters of T.S. Eliot*, ed. Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), 333.

⁹ 'Art and Letters [editorial]', *Art and Letters*, 1:1 (1917), 1; Read, *Annals of Innocence and Experience*, 176.

¹⁰ Rutter, *Since I was Twenty-Five*, 200–10; Read, *Annals of Innocence and Experience*, 175. See also Michael Paraskos, 'Herbert Read and Leeds', in Benedict Read and David Thistlewood (eds), *Herbert Read: A British Vision of World Art* (London: Leeds City Art Galleries, 1993), 25–37.

¹¹ Tom Steele, *Alfred Orage and the Leeds Arts Club, 1893–1923* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1990), 177, 188; David Thistlewood, *Herbert Read: Formlessness and Form: An Introduction to his Aesthetics* (London: Routledge, 1984), 179 n. 5.

¹² Rutter, *Since I was Twenty-Five*, 153; Michael Sadleir, *Michael Ernest Sadler* (London: Constable, 1949), 222, 232–41.

Lewis.¹³ Both Rutter and Sadler saw strong connections between contemporary art and social reform and were actively involved in workers' education initiatives.¹⁴ In addition, although Orage had left Leeds in 1905, his interpretations of the relationship between socialism and culture continued to influence the club via its regular debates of *The New Age* editorials.¹⁵

When Rutter joined the Leeds Arts Club, he was already well known as the founder of an organization he described as 'socialism in art'. In 1908 he had founded the Allied Artists' Association as a British equivalent of the Salon des Indépendants, an alternative exhibiting venue to the conservative and selective Royal Academy and the once-progressive New English Art Club. Membership of the Association was open, and all members were eligible to exhibit works they chose themselves. The order of hanging was determined by lot, the catalogue order by ballot, and the committee that oversaw the hanging rotated alphabetically through the membership. Its annual non-juried exhibitions (1908–21) not only fostered the careers of a generation of British artists, but also introduced the British public to the most important contemporary artists from abroad before the post-Impressionist exhibitions of 1910 and 1912.¹⁶

Art and Letters was not the organ of the Allied Artists' Association (that role was filled by *Art News*, an 'art newspaper' Rutter edited from 1909 to 1915), nor of the Leeds Arts Club (*The New Age* was more closely related), but these institutions contributed to the magazine's self-definition. Like the Leeds Arts Club and *The New Age*, the socialism of *Art and Letters* was combined with a commitment to a Nietzschean aristocracy of the arts: as Read explained in a letter of 14 February 1917: 'No one is a more convinced *social* democrat than I am. But it seems to me Art and Thought are essentially aristocratic things. They are the product of the finest senses and the finest brains.' Rutter made a similar point in the winter 1918 issue: 'Vital art-work is controversial and displeasing to the majority.'¹⁷ But *Art and*

¹³ Steele, *Alfred Orage and the Leeds Arts Club*, 189, 223; Walter Michel, *Wyndham Lewis: Paintings and Drawings* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1971), 447; Richard Cork, *Vorticism and Abstract Art in the First Machine Age*, vol. ii (London: Gordon Fraser, 1976), 332; Anna Gruetzner Robins, *Modern Art in Britain, 1910–1914* (London: Merrell Holberton/Barbican, 1997), 116, 184. Wyndham Lewis, 'Preface', in *Exhibition, Leeds*, proofs[?] of exhibition catalogue [copy], Broadside Box—Works of Wyndham Lewis, Wyndham Lewis Collection, 4612, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.

¹⁴ Rutter, *Since I Was Twenty-Five*, 208; Steele, *Alfred Orage and the Leeds Arts Club*, 178–9, 197.

¹⁵ Thistlewood, *Herbert Read*, 27.

¹⁶ Rutter, *Since I Was Twenty-Five*, 185, 180–99; *idem*, *Art in My Time* (London: Rich and Cowan, 1933), 134–8; Gruetzner Robins, *Modern Art in Britain*, 116. Rutter had joined the Fabian Society at the beginning of his career, though he later remarked that he had 'joined it chiefly for the opportunity it gave me to meet and converse with George Bernard Shaw and other Fabians, like Aylmer Maude and [Arthur] Clutton Brock' (*Since I Was Twenty-Five*, 82).

¹⁷ Read, *The Contrary Experience*, 82; Frank Rutter, 'Nine Propositions', *Art and Letters*, 2 (1918–19), 52.

Letters departed from *The New Age* in its editorial perspective: where *The New Age*'s was economic, *Art and Letters*'s was to be aesthetic, 'against the *New Age* we intend to insist upon the primacy of beauty—even in economics,' Read wrote.¹⁸

Art and Letters was closer in spirit to the Allied Artists' Association. A notice in the first issue informed readers that the magazine 'is conducted on co-operative lines' with profits shared among editorial staff and contributors,¹⁹ and just after the first issue appeared, Read outlined his and Rutter's post-war plans for the development of the magazine according to the principles of the AAA: they envisioned establishing 'a small gallery' and an 'Allied Authors' Association' with a self-selecting publication programme, whose books would be sold through a bookshop in the gallery. The aim was to produce 'a centre of all modernist activity', motivated by a commitment to 'the democracy of Art'. 'The havoc wrought by Capitalism in industry and the life of the workers is obvious,' Read continued, 'The havoc wrought by capitalism in Art is less obvious but no less vital. It is not too much to say that for the last two hundred years or so, Art has been strangled to death in Europe. No work of art, however great a masterpiece it may be, has a chance today unless it can be guaranteed "to pay". We shall alter this.'²⁰

***Art and Letters*, volume 1**

The first volume of *Art and Letters* was markedly stronger in the visual arts than literature. It presented a distinctive account of contemporary visual work, in which new versions of realism were more predominant than the formal experiments undertaken by Vorticist and Bloomsbury artists. Rutter's co-editors for the first two issues, Harold Gilman and Charles Ginner, were members of the AAA, founder members of Walter Sickert's Camden Town Group, its successor the London Group, and the related and contemporaneous Cumberland Market Group, established following the publication of Ginner's article on 'Neo-Realism' in *The New Age*. In that article, Ginner had defined his and Gilman's painting against both conservative realism, or naturalism, and the two main currents of post-Impressionism, Cubism and Fauvism. Against what he perceived as the decadence and academicism of post-Impressionism, Ginner advocated Neo-realism as 'the plastic interpretation of Life through the intimate research into Nature'.²¹

It was this aesthetic philosophy that Read saw as the distinctive contribution of *Art and Letters*, even though his own taste in painting tended more towards Vorticism. In a letter written just after the first issue appeared, he explains that the 'distinctive ideas' of the 'school' represented by *Art and Letters* oppose both

¹⁸ Read, *The Contrary Experience*, 102.

¹⁹ *Art and Letters*, 1 (1917), p. [ii].

²⁰ Read, *The Contrary Experience*, 106–7.

²¹ Charles Ginner, 'Neo-Realism', *New Age* (1914), 271–2.

traditional realists 'who only show us life in a section', and 'the Romanticists and Abstracts (poor me!) who do not relate their art to life at all'.²² In Read's opinion, the most important article in the first issue was Ginner's 'Modern Painting and Teaching', in which Ginner described the emergence of a contemporary British style that synthesized the lessons of the Impressionists (in colour) and the Cubists (in design).²³ While praising the work of Wyndham Lewis, Lucien Pissarro, and Gilman, the artist Ginner saw as emblematic of the best in recent British painting was Spencer Gore, who had died of pneumonia three years earlier, at the age of thirty-five. Gore, wrote Ginner, 'did not close his eyes to the Cubist and Vorticist movements, but learnt much from them while remaining a realist in his outlook on life'.²⁴

Ginner's commitment to promoting British art, especially in the neo-realist style, was shared by Rutter. This is not to suggest that either were provincial in their knowledge or taste; on the contrary, Ginner had grown up and trained in France, and Rutter, through his art criticism and the AAA, was promoting international, especially French, developments in art well before the post-Impressionist exhibitions of 1910 and 1912. But both saw more continuity between British contemporary art and its Impressionist and neo-Impressionist precursors than were allowed in Roger Fry's and Clive Bell's more influential exhibitions and writings. Rutter's 1913 *Post-Impressionist Pictures and Drawings* at the Leeds Arts Club and his larger *Post-Impressionist and Futurist Exhibition*, shown in October the same year at the Doré in New Bond Street, emphasized the importance of Pissarro, Seurat, Signac, Bonnard, and Vuillard, and represented contemporary British painting much more fully than Fry's 1912 *Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition*, though with the striking omission of work by Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant, and Fry himself.²⁵ Their work he considered to be dominated by 'French-derived conventions', a distraction from the main British line of development exemplified by Philip Wilson Steer, William Rothenstein, Augustus John, William Nicholson, and Walter Sickert, reaching contemporary expression in J. D. Fergusson, Christopher Nevinson, Wyndham Lewis, Edward Wadsworth, Paul Nash, Robert Bevan, Stanley Spencer, Matthew Smith, Mark Gertler, Henry Lamb, Ethel Walker, Jacob Epstein, and Gilman, Ginner, and Gore.²⁶

²² Read, *The Contrary Experience*, 72, 102. For reproductions of Read's Vorticist-inspired works of 1916–17, see Benedict Read, 'Herbert Read: An Overview', in Read and Thistlewood (eds), *Herbert Read: A British Vision of World Art*, 11–24, esp. 22–3, and Paraskos, 'Herbert Read and Leeds', 30. In June 1917 Read exhibited 'half a dozen' of his 'weird drawings at . . . the annual exhibition of the Allied Artists Association, which is a sort of Artists Trade Union' (*The Contrary Experience*, 87).

²³ Read, *The Contrary Experience*, 257.

²⁴ Charles Ginner, 'Modern Painting and Teaching', *Art and Letters*, 1 (1917), 20.

²⁵ Frank Rutter, 'Foreword', in *Post-Impressionist and Futurist Exhibition* (London: Doré Galleries, [1913]), [1–5]; *idem*, *Art in My Time*, 149–50; Gruetzner Robins, *Modern Art in Britain*, 116–37.

²⁶ Rutter, *Since I Was Twenty-Five*, 192; *idem*, *Art in My Time*, 227–32.

Artists from this genealogy dominate the first volume of *Art and Letters*. In the first issue, the cover carried a Ginner design of London roofs (subsequently used on the title page of all four issues of the first volume, as well as to illustrate a poem by Read in the third issue), and the editorial was illustrated by Lucien Pissarro's wood engraving of three rural labourers in conversation. The issue carried two further designs by Ginner, one more by Pissarro, and reproductions of drawings by Gilman, Sickert, and E. McKnight Kauffer, another member of the Cumberland Market Group. Subsequent issues included work by Sickert, Ernest Forbes (a member of the Leeds Arts Club), Christopher Nevinson (a member of the Cumberland Market Group), Paul Nash (whose brother John exhibited with the Cumberland Market Group), Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, Nina Hamnett, and Thérèse Lessore (all members of the London Group), the Scottish Colourists J. D. Fergusson and Samuel Peploe (long championed by Rutter and Michael Sadler's son, Michael Sadleir), and Charles Picart Le Doux (like Fergusson, Gilman, Ginner, Nevinson, Pissarro, and Sickert included in the Doré exhibition).

The literary content of the first volume was uneven: Laurence Binyon, who published a poem to the second issue, and George Reston Malloch, who appeared in the fourth, were the only contributors with an established literary reputation, and Read, whose poetry and book reviews appeared throughout the journal's life, the only other contributor whose reputation has endured. Rutter contributed two stories, 'The Growing up of Winifred' and 'The End of the Chapter'. Ralph Holbrook Keen contributed 'The Friend', which reappeared in his 1921 volume of stories, *The Little Ape*. Further poetry was provided by Geoffrey Whitworth (the founder of the British Drama League), Jan de Holewinski (the Polish critic who had curated a Russian section at Rutter's first AAA exhibition), and the now-forgotten poets Brian Hill and H. Austin Petch. The regular book review column at the end of each issue suggested diverse interests: reviews of James Joyce, Joseph Conrad, and Anton Chekhov appeared alongside those of Ralph Hodgson, Rudyard Kipling, and Hugh Walpole. The critical contributions, however, suggested a more consistently contemporary interest: they included essays on Turgenev, Hugh Lane's art collection, and the work of free dance pioneer Margaret Morris, and Read's Imagist-influenced 'Definitions towards a Modern Theory of Poetry'.

***Art and Letters*, volumes 2 and 3**

At 3:30 p.m. on 26 October 1918, Read and Rutter met Osbert and Sacheverell Sitwell at the Café Royal to discuss the Sitwells' offer to buy and relaunch *Art and Letters*. Read was enthusiastic, describing them in a letter as aristocratic and wealthy with an establishment background, but 'also furious socialists, good poets (Sachie very good) and very young (about my own age). They are crammed

full of enthusiasm for the future and it is with them that I can imagine myself being associated a good deal in the future.' On 14 November he reported that Osbert Sitwell was to become a third shareholder in *Art and Letters*, and joint literary editor with Read, with Rutter remaining art editor.²⁷ Read's account does not record that, a month earlier, Arnold Bennett, prompted by Sitwell, had planned to buy the magazine from Rutter, and presumably Read, and install Sitwell as editor, and that when Bennett withdrew due to what he perceived as Sitwell's lack of commitment, Sydney Schiff became Sitwell's patron. Sitwell subsequently told the story of Bennett's involvement, but did not mention Schiff's.²⁸ Unpublished letters between them, however, show that Schiff exerted considerable control over the magazine: in October 1919 it was Schiff, not Rutter, to whom Sitwell addressed his request for payment for his contributions and control of the poetry section, 'always, of course, on the understanding that you have final veto'.²⁹ Read and Sitwell planned to run the literary part of the magazine on 'very modernist lines' and they succeeded.³⁰ The first issue of the second volume of *Art and Letters* was published in January 1919, opening with Sitwell's 'Te Deum', a confrontational poem that presented the magazine as a survivor of the war's attempt to eradicate the avant-garde.³¹ Further poetry was contributed by Ford Madox Ford, Aldous Huxley, Siegfried Sassoon, Edith Sitwell, and Sacheverell Sitwell; prose by Ginner, Wyndham Lewis, Read, and Rutter; and drawings by Picasso and *BLAST* contributors Gaudier-Brzeska, Jacob Kramer (a friend of Read's from the Leeds Arts Club), Lewis, and Edward Wadsworth. Subsequent issues continued

²⁷ Read, *The Contrary Experience*, 139, 146 (Read refers to Rutter as 'Toby').

²⁸ Schiff's papers do not show whether he took over all the finances of the magazine or only a share. Read's account in *The Contrary Experience* suggests that he and Rutter remained shareholders, at least initially, but Sitwell's letters to Schiff in the autumn of 1919 imply that Schiff had a level of editorial control commensurate with full ownership of the magazine. In *Annals of Innocence and Experience* (176), Read implies that Rutter was not a shareholder in 1918, but that he took over Read's share in the summer of 1919. See Philip Ziegler, *Osbert Sitwell* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1998), 118–20; Theophilus E. M. Boll, 'Biographical Note', in Stephen Hudson [Sydney Schiff], *Richard, Myrtle and I*, ed. Violet Schiff (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1962), 38; Miron Grindea, 'In Search of our Proust', *Adam*, 260 (1957), 7–9; Osbert Sitwell, *Laughter in the Next Room* (London: Macmillan, 1949), 28–9; *idem*, *Noble Essences: A Book of Characters* (London: Macmillan, 1950), 291–3; *Letters of Arnold Bennett*, 4 vols, ed. James Hepburn (London: Oxford University Press, 1966–86), i, 265–6, iii, 69, 71–2.

²⁹ Osbert Sitwell, Letter to Sydney Schiff, 17 October 1919, Schiff Papers, British Library, Add. 52922, vol. 7. See also Sitwell's letters to Schiff on the 19 October 1919 and 19 February 1920. Letters between Schiff and other contributors, notably T. S. Eliot and Wyndham Lewis, also demonstrate that Schiff was directly concerned with obtaining material for the magazine: see Eliot, *Letters*, 324, 331, 333, 375; Sydney Schiff, Letters to Wyndham Lewis, 7 March, 26 July, 24 November 1920, Wyndham Lewis Collection, 4612, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library. I am grateful to Michael Whitworth for alerting me to the Lewis correspondence.

³⁰ Read, *The Contrary Experience*, 146.

³¹ Sitwell elaborates on this argument in *Laughter in the Next Room*, 151–2.

to group together modernists whose careers had begun before or during the war (Aldington, T. S. Eliot, Ford, Douglas Goldring, Lewis, Katherine Mansfield, Ezra Pound, Dorothy Richardson), war poets (Wilfred Owen, Isaac Rosenberg, Siegfried Sassoon), and writers of Read's and the younger Sitwells' generation (Wilfred Rowland Childe, Gerard Hopkins (the translator nephew of the poet), Aldous Huxley, I. A. Richards). Further notable contributors included Ronald Firbank, who published a chapter of *Valmouth* (1919), Sydney Schiff (as 'Stephen Hudson'), and the suffragist and pacifist poet Susan Miles (Ursula Roberts). Reflecting the Sitwells' association with a school of young composers, scores by Bernard van Dieren and E. J. Moeran were reproduced in the second and fourth issues respectively.

According to Sitwell, Rutter allowed his co-editors to influence the art content of the magazine and although some of Rutter's favoured artists continued to appear (Gilman, who died in February 1919, Ginner, the Nash brothers, McKnight Kauffer), neo-realism was only one of the modernist styles reproduced. Former Vorticists and Vorticist associates, such as Epstein, Gaudier-Brzeska, Kramer, Lewis, William Roberts, and Wadsworth, were particularly well represented. In fact, in bringing together the ex-Vorticists and the neo-realist artists of the London and Cumberland Market Groups, *Art and Letters* became a vehicle for the yet-to-be-named Group X, which would exhibit together at Heal's Mansard Gallery in the spring of 1920. Although Group X tends to be remembered as a brief revival of Vorticism, Lewis's catalogue notes emphasized the group's belief that 'the experiments undertaken all over Europe during the last ten years should be utilized directly and developed'.³² Reviewers, including Rutter, characterized the development as 'a new sort of realism, evolved by artists who have passed through a phase of abstract development'.³³ In this sense, *Art and Letters* could be interpreted as continuing to promote a version of neo-realism, originally associated with Ginner, now advocated by Lewis. At the same time, however, it is noticeable that there is a shift away from the deliberately British focus of the first volume: works by Matisse, Modigliani, Severini, and Picasso were reproduced, as were those by London-based (typically Slade-educated) non-British

³² Wyndham Lewis, 'Foreword: Group X', in *Group X Exhibition Catalogue* (London: Mansard Gallery, 1920), 5; *idem*, *Blasting and Bombardiering* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1937), 211. The following artists exhibited: Jessica Dismorr, Frank Dobson, Frederick Etchells, Ginner, Cuthbert Hamilton, Lewis, McKnight Kauffer, Roberts, John Turnbull, and Edward Wadsworth. See Charles Harrison, *English Art and Modernism, 1900–1939* (London: Allen Lane, 1981), 156–60; David Peters Corbett, *The Modernity of English Art, 1914–30* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 74–5.

³³ Frank Rutter, 'Round the Galleries', *Sunday Times*, 28 March 1920, 7. See also 'New Pictures: Principles of the X Group', 1 April 1920, *The Times*, 14, col. a.

artists such as Benjamin Coria, Àlvaro Guevara, Anne Estelle Rice, and Edward Wolfe.³⁴

The Apple (of Beauty and Discord) (1920–2)

The *Apple (of Beauty and Discord)* was a quarterly magazine, published by the Colour Publishing Company as an off-shoot of their successful art monthly *Colour* and edited by the art critic and *Colour* contributor, Herbert Furst ('Tis'). Its first

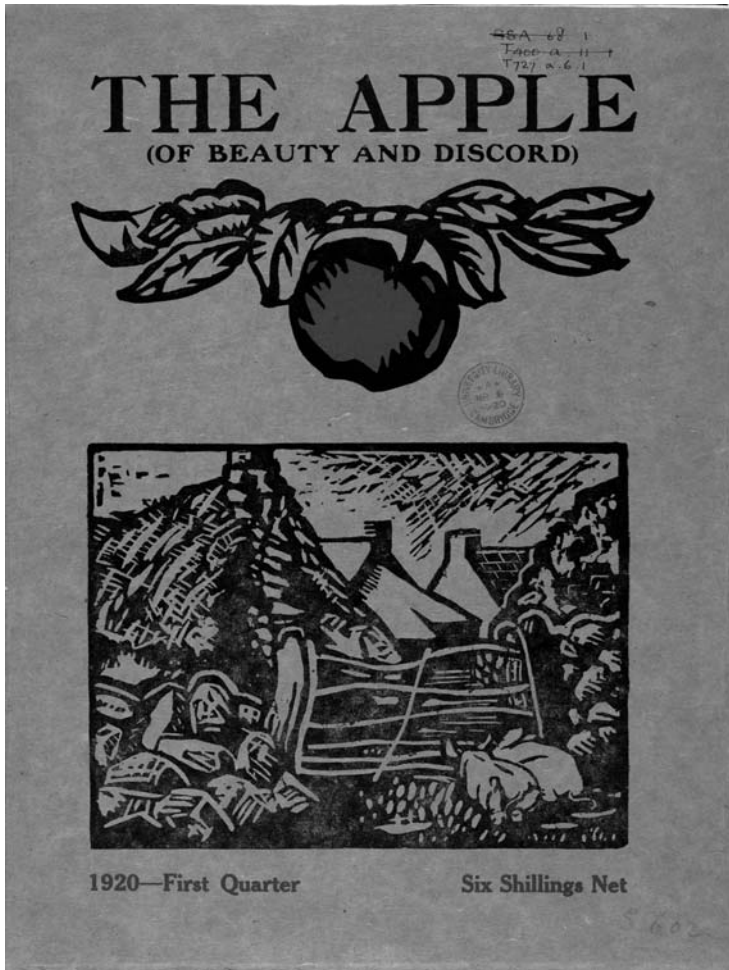


Fig. 61. Cover of *The Apple* (First Quarter, 1920)

³⁴ In 1919 Osbert and Sacheverell, helped by Read, organized an *Exhibition of Modern French Art* at the Mansard Gallery. See Sitwell, *Laughter in the Next Room*, 164–6.

issue was published in January 1920 and three further issues appeared during that year, but only two more issues were published: one in the first quarter of 1921 and a final issue in April 1922.³⁵ It is probable that *The Apple* folded through lack of funds: in the penultimate issue, Furst called for more subscriptions to sustain *The Apple* through the ‘economic “winter” and political “bad weather”’, and the number of advertisements declined sharply in the last two issues.³⁶

Advertised as ‘A New Quarterly Devoted to Art and Letters’, *The Apple* initially appears to be in direct competition with *Art and Letters*: it shared *Art and Letters*’ heritage in the magazines of 1890s aestheticism and, in its earliest numbers, published some of the same writers and artists (Edmond Kapp, E. McKnight Kauffer, Charles Marriott, Thomas Sturge Moore, John Nash, Ezra Pound, Osbert Sitwell, and Edward Wadsworth). But priced at six shillings throughout its run, *The Apple* was considerably more expensive. Its advertisements, too, implied a wealthy target audience: as well as art schools, bookshops, publishers, and galleries, regular advertisers included Rolls-Royce, De Reszke cigarettes, Morny French perfumes and soaps, and Helena Rubenstein cosmetics.³⁷ Despite this, the foreword to the first issue declared *The Apple* was intended to have a universal appeal, to be ‘looked at, bought, enjoyed and digested by “high and low” without distinction’, yet to avoid the ‘easy gustatory persuasiveness of the peach’. To this end, *The Apple*, like *Colour*, advocated ‘catholicity’ in its contributions, in striking contrast with *Art and Letters*’ deliberately limited aesthetic focus.³⁸

The new xylography

The Apple was intended to repeat the success of *Colour* for the graphic arts. Reviewing its first issue, Charles Marriott wrote that

It does for black-and-white—in the widest meaning of the term—what ‘Colour’ does for painting; with the distinction, of course, that in this case the works are seen not as ‘reproductions’ but as if designed for the page on which they are printed. Every technical method, woodcut, lithography, line etching and aquatint, and so on, is represented, besides all the varieties of medium that are covered by the word ‘drawing’.³⁹

³⁵ See ‘*The Apple*’ [advertisement], *Colour*, 16:1 (1922), p. xii.

³⁶ [Herbert Furst], ‘Foreword’, *The Apple (of Beauty and Discord)*, 2:1 (1921), p. [i].

³⁷ [Inside front cover], *The Apple (of Beauty and Discord)*, 1:2 (1920), 74, 133.

³⁸ [Herbert Furst], ‘Foreword’, *The Apple (of Beauty and Discord)*, 1:1 (1921), 5; J.H.W., ‘The “Colour Magazine” Exhibition’, *Colour*, 16 (1922), 14.

³⁹ C.M. [Charles Marriott], ‘Notes of the Month’, *Colour*, 12 (1920), p. xii. An excellent overview of print-making in Britain is provided in the introduction to Frances Carey and Antony Griffiths, *Avant-Garde British Printmaking, 1914–1960* (London: British Museum, 1990), 9–24.

Through his former career at Hanfstaengl, Furst could claim considerable expertise in fine art reproduction, and during the period of *The Apple's* publication he became associated with one medium in particular: xylography, or wood-cutting and wood-engraving.⁴⁰

Original wood-engraving and wood-cutting, revived in the 1890s by William Morris and the writers and artists associated with the Vale and Eragny Presses (Charles Ricketts, Charles Shannon, Thomas Sturge Moore, and Lucien Pissarro), began to achieve popular recognition as arts in their own right in the second and third decades of the twentieth century. In 1919 the first exposition was published as a special number of *The Studio*; in 1920 John Beedham's influential manual *Wood Engraving* appeared, the Society of Wood Engravers was founded, and its first annual exhibition was held at the Chenil Gallery.⁴¹ Xylography began to shed its association with fine printing and connoisseurship, and accrue instead a distinctively post-war potential to educate and entertain a new working- and middle-class audience for whom original paintings were unaffordable.⁴²

Xylography had attracted the attention of British modernist artists before the war, but they were at least as influenced by developments in continental Europe, especially Germany, as in Britain. At the same time that Morris and Ricketts were using wood-engraving to invoke the values of pre-industrial England, the groups around the Munich magazines *Jugend* and *Simplicissimus* were reviving the medieval woodcut by reference to a specifically German aesthetic tradition. The technique was adopted by expressionist artists, especially by the Brücke group, and also the Munich-based Kandinsky, six of whose woodcuts were bought by Michael Sadler's son, Michael Sadleir, from Rutter's 1911 Allied Artists' Association exhibition.⁴³ It is this tradition that stands behind the Vorticist interest in woodcutting in *BLAST*, for example.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ For an account of the difference between wood-cutting and wood-engraving, see Joanna Selborne, *British Wood-Engraved Book Illustration, 1904–1940* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 7. Many British artists produced both woodcuts and wood-engravings, and the term woodcut was frequently used (including by Furst) to refer to both techniques.

⁴¹ See Selborne, *British Wood-Engraved Book Illustration*, 33–43, 77, 75, 110–11; Malcolm C. Salaman, *Modern Woodcuts and Lithographs by British and French Artists* (London: Studio, 1919); John R. Beedham, *Wood Engraving* (Ditchling: S. Dominic's Press, 1920).

⁴² See Frank Rutter, *Modern Masterpieces: An Outline of Modern Art* (London: George Newnes, [1940]), 298; and Malcolm C. Salaman, 'The Woodcuts and Colour-Prints of Captain Robert Gibbings', *Studio*, 76 (1919), 3.

⁴³ Robin Reisenfeld, 'Cultural Nationalism, Brücke and the German Woodcut: The Formation of a Collective Identity', *Art History*, 20 (1997), 291, 298–9; Jill Lloyd, *German Expressionism: Primitivism and Modernity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 67; Gruetzner Robins, *Modern Art in Britain*, 132; Adrian Glew, '“Blue spiritual sounds”: Kandinsky and the Sadlers, 1911–1916', *Burlington Magazine*, 139 (1997), 602; Sadleir, *Michael Ernest Sadler*, 237.

⁴⁴ See Wyndham Lewis, 'Notes [on some German Woodcuts at the Twenty-One Gallery]', *BLAST*, 1 (1914), 136. Other modernist magazines that featured xylography included *Art and Letters*,

The Apple became a major forum for the dissemination of original woodcuts and wood-engravings, and Furst emerged as a key figure in the field. He was the author of *The Modern Woodcut* (1924), described by recent critics as 'a bibliographic milestone in the literature of twentieth-century wood-engraving'.⁴⁵ He held exhibitions of new work at the Little Art Rooms, he published four books of plates in the gallery's 'Modern Woodcutters' series (*Gwendolen Raverat* (1920), *Frank Brangwyn* (1920), *T. Sturge Moore* (1921), and *Edward Wadsworth* (1921)), and between 1927 and 1930 he edited four volumes of a deluxe annual, *The Woodcut*.⁴⁶

The Apple, volumes 1 to 3

Although Furst's forewords to each issue of *The Apple* emphasized the magazine's openness and variety, a relatively consistent aesthetic stance can be traced across the pages. It is a conservative and idealist stance, based on a belief in the universality of aesthetic values and a commitment to art as the expression of emotional truths. The most explicit statement of this position is Charles Marriott's 'The Apple of Discord', which argues that although the ideas expressed by a work of art may be divisive, its craftsmanship can transcend time and space: 'Taste and intelligence change from generation to generation, and vary with climate; but the way a man handles a pen or pencil is always the same and all the world over. There is no difference, except in degree of refinement, between the cave drawings of Altamira, the etchings of Rembrandt, and the drawings of Augustus John'.⁴⁷

This aesthetic approach is implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) opposed to modernity, and is particularly distrustful of the commercialism it associates with modern art. In each issue, Furst, as 'Tis', inveighed against what he saw as the 'toxic infection' of modern civilization, the 'hypertrophic development of the intellect at the expense of emotion'. In art, he argues, this leads to an emphasis on the theorization of form over an emotional response to content, and attention-seeking 'stunts' over craft. In one article he names this 'Picassine poisoning' after Picasso's 'purely intellectual' art, but he associates it equally with art for art's sake,

The Egoist, and *Rhythm*. Publications by Roger Fry's Omega Workshops and Leonard and Virginia Woolf's Hogarth Press were notable for their use of the woodcut: see Judith Collins, 'Omega and Hogarth Woodcuts', in Jeremy Greenwood (ed.), *Omega Cuts* (Woodbridge: Wood Lea Press, 1998), 9–18.

⁴⁵ Selborne, *British Wood-Engraved Book Illustration*, 121.

⁴⁶ Exhibitions at the Little Art Rooms included *Woodcuts by T. Sturge Moore* (1919), *Woodcuts by French Artists, Also a Few by Robert Gibbings* (1920), *International Woodcuts* (1924), and *Woodcuts by J. F. Greenwood, Barbara Greg, Norman Janes, Gwendolen Raverat, C. W. Taylor* (1926). According to an advertisement, in 1921 a fifth volume on John Nash was in preparation for the Modern Woodcutters series and other titles were planned: see *The Apple (of Beauty and Discord)*, 2 (1921), 47.

⁴⁷ Charles Marriott, 'The Apple of Discord', *The Apple (of Beauty and Discord)*, 1:1 (1920), 40.

post-Impressionism, and Dada.⁴⁸ Although reactionary, this was by no means an uncommon position in the period (it corresponds to the dominant critical viewpoint in *The New Age*, for example; see Chapter 8), and Furst's and Marriott's arguments were repeated by many of his contributors, including T. Sturge Moore, Louis Golding, and Frank Blunt. Even certain modernist tenets coincided with these arguments: Ezra Pound, who published opinion pieces in the first and third issues, does not look wholly out of place when he states that 'we have lost the faculty to perceive beautiful form save at the set moment when we are ready for the aesthetic tickle'.⁴⁹ The poet Kenneth Hare's 'By-Ways of Poetry' series, in which he introduced little-read poems from the past (often from the Renaissance), also upheld this position.

In the literary contributions, these aesthetic values manifest themselves in prose and poetry influenced by the genres of the folk tale, the fable, and the ballad, and by the style of the late Pre-Raphaelites and Thomas Hardy. 'The Comely Lass' and 'The Shepherd's Tale', contributions by the poet and anthologist Thomas Moulton to issues 2 and 4, are characteristic of *The Apple's* fictional content: they are rural stories written in a lightly archaic style, coloured by the use of dialect (in this case Derbyshire). A similar approach is taken by Susanne R. Day in 'The Hill of the Fairy Fox', an Irish folk tale, and Xenia Lowinsky (better known as the horticulturist Xenia Field), in the tightly written fable 'Half a Crown and a Sailor', both of which appeared in the second issue. A contemporary slant on the same form was provided by Herbert Fletcher's regular stories of lonely spinsters.

The first issue of *The Apple* was its most stylistically diverse, with contributions by modernists Iris Barry, Pound, John Rodker, and Osbert Sitwell (of whom only Pound contributed again), alongside *The Apple's* more prolific and consistent contributors: established writers from the *Colour* stable, such as Hare, the tramp poet Bart Kennedy, and the Dartmoor novelist and playwright Eden Philpotts, and a number of young writers loosely associated with the Georgian poets. This last category included several overlapping groups: A. E. Coppard, Robert Graves, Richard Hughes, and Louis Golding were friends from Oxford, who, along with other *Apple* contributors Jean Guthrie Smith and Herbert Shipp, published in Thomas Moulton's

⁴⁸ 'Tis' [Herbert Furst], 'Picassine Poisoning', *The Apple (of Beauty and Discord)*, 2:1 (1921), 6. See also 'Tis' [Herbert Furst], 'On the "Stunt" Temperament', *The Apple (of Beauty and Discord)*, 1:2 (1920), 78–85; *idem*, 'Where is Art?', *The Apple (of Beauty and Discord)*, 1:3 (1920), 150–4; *idem*, 'The Cow's Ears', *The Apple (of Beauty and Discord)*, 1:4 (1920), 214–16.

⁴⁹ T. Sturge Moore, 'Man's Likeliest Children', *The Apple (of Beauty and Discord)*, 1:1 (1920), 18–20; Louis Golding, 'Of a Miraculous Mirror', *The Apple (of Beauty and Discord)*, 1:1 (1920), 62–4; Frank Blunt, 'The Machine and the Painter', *The Apple (of Beauty and Discord)*, 2:2 (1922), 74–8; Ezra Pound, 'The Curse', *The Apple (of Beauty and Discord)*, 1:1 (1920), 22. However, Pound and Furst disagreed fundamentally about the value of modern art: see Furst's letter in response to Pound's negative review of the Little Art Rooms' inaugural exhibition: 'The Little Art Rooms [letter]', *The New Age*, 24 (1919), 167.

magazine, *Voices* (1919–21).⁵⁰ (See Chapter 17.) Joseph Leftwich, like Rodker, was one of the ‘Whitechapel boys’, a group of young Jewish writers and artists who grew up together in the East End of London, whose early work was published by *Colour*. In 1920 Leftwich edited a Yiddish magazine, *Renaissance*, which published Golding and Moulst in Yiddish translation.⁵¹ Graves, Hughes, and Moulst were included in the Georgian anthologies, and more well-established Georgians, W. H. Davies and Sturge Moore, were also *Apple* contributors. Indeed, the terms of praise in Moulst’s article on fellow-Georgian Walter de la Mare underline the affinity between *The Apple* and a certain strain of Georgian poetry: Moulst praises de la Mare’s ‘studies in quaint humanity’, his ‘gift for miniature work’, and his achievement of ‘perfect harmony between the worlds of the ideal and the real’.⁵²

The Apple was primarily a journal of the graphic arts, however. Following the pattern of the literary contributions, some modernist work appeared in the first two issues: Fergusson, Gaudier-Brzeska, Lewis, McKnight Kauffer, and Wadsworth were all represented, but only Fergusson (once) and Gaudier (twice) featured in later issues. A very broad range of xylographic styles was represented, including work by most of the major contemporary figures: Robert Gibbings, Ginner, Philip Hagreen, Sydney Lee, Paul Nash, Raverat, Ludovic Rodo, and Ethelbert White. Claude Lovat Fraser designed decorative headings for the regular articles and series. The many etchings and lithographs reproduced tended to be more naturalist in style and less innovative than the woodcuts and wood engravings, but, again, the pages were dominated by young contemporary practitioners, such as Edmund Blampied, Gerald Brockhurst, Fred Carter, John Copley, Benvenuto Disertori, Ethel Gabain, and E. S. Lumsden. A smaller amount of graphic work by very well-established artists, including Royal Academicians William Strang and George Clausen, and the French painter and illustrator Théophile Steinlen, was also reproduced.

The aesthetic idealism of the ‘By-Ways of Poetry’ series had a visual parallel in the reproduction of a selection of etchings, woodcuts, and drawings from earlier periods and cultures. In the first issue a nineteenth-century engraving of Beauvais Cathedral by John Coney and an eleventh-century drawing by the Buddhist priest Toba Sojo are presented to the reader with explanatory commentaries, and included in the second are a seventeenth-century etching by Jacques Callot, a drawing by Albrecht Dürer, and an early nineteenth-century English design. Reproductions of several ancient Greek engravings and drawings appear in subsequent issues,

⁵⁰ A. E. Coppard, *It’s Me, O Lord!* (London: Methuen, 1957), 185–8, 234; Richard Perceval Graves, *Richard Hughes: A Biography* (London: André Deutsch, 1994), 44–57.

⁵¹ Joseph Leftwich, ‘Autobiographical Note’, in *Joseph Leftwich at Eighty-Five: A Collective Evaluation*, ed. S. J. Goldsmith (London: Federation of Jewish Relief Organisations, Association of Jewish Writers and Journalists, The World Yiddish Committee, 1978), 4–10.

⁵² Thomas Moulst, ‘The Poetry of Walter de la Mare’, *The Apple (of Beauty and Discord)*, 2:1 (1921), 18–20.

implying that the contemporary graphic work produced should be compared against the greatest artistic achievements of the past. The belief in a constant and universal measure of art was also forcibly expressed in Furst's reproduction and discussion of the woodcuts by Viennese children that had been exhibited at the British Institute of Industrial Art in the autumn of 1920.⁵³ Arguing against the children's teacher, the pioneering art educator Franz Čížek, Furst maintains that the children's woodcuts are successful not because their work is simple in form, but because they approach their subjects sincerely: 'it is this naïvité not of expression but of emotion that... teaches all great artists and all little children the true "significance of form".' This is a fine distinction, and one that is not made entirely successfully, but it enables Furst to argue against both Rousseauist romanticism and the modernist cult of primitivism he associates with it, while maintaining his idealist stance: 'If the Children's exhibition could prove anything it is only this, that we require no knowledge of aesthetics in order to create a work of art.'⁵⁴

In keeping with this belief, critical articles are a relative rarity in *The Apple*, and those published, such as Moul't's on de la Mare and Cecil French's on Alphonse Legros, are celebratory rather than educational or analytical.⁵⁵ *The Apple* aimed to be enjoyable and entertaining, rather than provocative, a magazine in which contemporary graphic work could be surveyed and, potentially, sold. *The Apple*, like *Colour*, provided a free service connecting readers with the artists represented in its pages, and, beginning in the second number, it listed the titles and prices of all works for sale.⁵⁶

Conclusion

The 'Apple Service' indicates that Furst's ambitions for the dissemination of contemporary art were not restricted to magazine publication.⁵⁷ Furst and Rutter both saw their magazines as a means of public education that would result in an increase in the purchase of original works of art, greater support for contemporary

⁵³ See S. B. Malvern, 'Inventing "Child Art": Franz Čížek and Modernism', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 35 (1995), 262–72.

⁵⁴ 'Tis' [Herbert Furst], 'The Artist as Child', *The Apple (of Beauty and Discord)*, 2:1 (1921), 42. The woodcuts are reproduced on pp. 38–9 of this issue, and p. 46 of the next.

⁵⁵ Cecil French, 'The Lithographs of Alphonse Legros: A Note', *The Apple (of Beauty and Discord)*, 1:4 (1920), 244.

⁵⁶ "'Apple' Service', *The Apple (of Beauty and Discord)*, 1:2 (1920), 142.

⁵⁷ Although *Art and Letters* did not offer a comparable service, the contents pages advertise that copies of Paul Nash's woodcut, *The Elm Trees*, reproduced in the fourth number of volume 2, were available from the *Art and Letters* office, and a copy of a drawing by Matisse (untraced) was issued as a supplement to subscribers with the second number of volume 2.

artists and, ultimately, a reinvigoration of aesthetic and cultural life for all. The programmes of their galleries, the Little Art Rooms and the Adelphi Gallery, were closely related to those of their magazines: if the magazines were able to disseminate and disperse information about contemporary art, the galleries provided the opportunity to collect and concentrate such knowledge. The Adelphi Gallery was to be a 'centre of all modernist activity', in which one could attend exhibitions and buy works of art and contemporary literature.⁵⁸ The Little Art Rooms, similarly, held exhibitions and sold art and books; it also advertised an 'Art Lending Library of Books & Photographs for Study & Reference' and a 'Bureau for Art Research and Information'.⁵⁹

These projects demonstrate a notable confidence in the product to be viewed, read, researched, and sold: in *Art and Letters*' case, modernism; in *The Apple's*, contemporary non-modernist art. The categories of early twentieth-century culture were taking shape, and the diversity of pre-war experiment began to be replaced by a recognizable modernist style, a development aptly illustrated by the sharp division between the first and second incarnations of *Art and Letters*. There were plans to consolidate the diverse strands of the avant-garde: in 1918 Read approached Harriet Shaw Weaver about amalgamating *The Egoist* and *Art and Letters*' publishing businesses, Lewis planned an office that would create collaborations between artists and industry, and Osbert Sitwell thought of asking Heinemann to publish 'a large paper' to showcase 'the English Modern movement'. But as Mark Morrisson has discussed, this confidence ebbed away within the first few years of the 1920s: the pre-war and wartime modernist magazines either folded or changed dramatically, and the projects to regenerate society according to modernist principles foundered.⁶⁰ The journals that replaced them were quite different in tone.

In his 1940 biography, *Annals of Innocence and Experience*, Read called Eliot's *Criterion* the 'sequel' to *Art and Letters*' 'forgotten experiment': '*Art and Letters*, in its two years' existence, had precipitated the first crystals of a new literary substance, and it was out of this substance, intensified, to some extent purified, and amalgamated with new ingredients, that the new review was moulded.'⁶¹ Indeed, Eliot's 1921 correspondence demonstrates that *The Criterion* was first conceived as a third incarnation of *Art and Letters*, and the early numbers of *The Criterion*, which began publishing in 1922, drew on a number of *Art and Letters*' contributors (notably Read, Aldington, Schiff, Lewis, and the Sitwells). But from its inception

⁵⁸ Read, *The Contrary Experience*, 106.

⁵⁹ Herbert Furst, Letter to Thomas Sturge Moore, 23 January 1919, T. Sturge Moore Papers, Senate House Library, University of London, MS 978, 27/66.

⁶⁰ Mark S. Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism: Little Magazines, Audiences, and Reception, 1905–1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), 115–16, 203; Osbert Sitwell, letter to Sydney Schiff, [Sept. or Oct. 1922], Schiff Papers, Add. 52922, vol. 7; Wyndham Lewis, letter to John Quinn, 3 September 1919, in *The Letters of Wyndham Lewis*, ed. W. K. Rose (London: Methuen, 1963), 112.

⁶¹ Read, *Annals of Innocence and Experience*, 178.

Eliot had a strong sense of the magazines' differences: *The Criterion* 'will differ from *Art and Letters* in that it will not be illustrated and that it will contain a much smaller proportion of verse and fiction', he wrote to Read, 'It will be mainly critical and reflective.'⁶² (See Chapter 14.) 'The Function of a Literary Review', Eliot's well-known definition and defence of *The Criterion* that concludes the first volume, is strikingly different in tone and choice of vocabulary from the first and only editorial in *Art and Letters*, which defined its aim as 'to uphold the highest standards in all the arts, paying no respect to popular sentiment, and making no concession to commercial opportunities'.⁶³ Eliot, by contrast, writes that:

The object is not to create more experts, more professors, more artists, but a type of man or woman for whom their efforts will be valuable and by whom they may be judged. . . . A cultured aristocracy cannot indeed create genius, but it can provide genius with an immediate audience, it can keep the national intelligence vigorous and it can check what is crude, tedious and impudent.⁶⁴

A similar comparison might be made between *The Apple* and *Apollo*, which first appeared in 1925, and was edited by Furst from 1935 to 1939. As *The Criterion* discarded illustration in order to become a 'literary review', *Apollo* discarded literature to focus on art and antiques: by the time Furst became editor in 1935, it had adopted the subtitle 'A Journal of the Arts for Connoisseurs and Collectors'. *Art and Letters* and *The Apple* are the articulation of a transitional phase in early twentieth-century culture: they display the moment when some careers are taken up over others (Eliot and Read supersede Rutter and Ginner), when certain styles achieve dominance (Eliot's and Read's modernism triumphs over Rutter's British realism and Furst's and Moulton's Georgian aesthetic), and when the prospect of art playing a central role in ordinary everyday life is briefly glimpsed, but disappears.

⁶² Eliot, *Letters*, 461, 467, 547. Schiff frequently consulted Eliot's advice about *Art and Letters*, to Sitwell's irritation. See Eliot, *Letters*, 324, 332, 340; and Osbert Sitwell, letter to Sydney Schiff, 17 October 1919, Schiff Papers, British Library, Add. 52922, vol. 7.

⁶³ 'Art and Letters', *Art and Letters*, 1 (1917), 2.

⁶⁴ T. S. Eliot, 'Notes: The Function of a Literary Review', *Criterion*, 1 (1923), 421.

CINEMA AND VISUAL CULTURE

Close Up (1927–33)

LAURA MARCUS

By 1927, the year in which the film journal *Close Up*, edited by Bryher [Annie Winifred Ellerman] and the young artist Kenneth Macpherson, began publication, the cinema was a little over thirty years old. In Britain, as elsewhere, publications on and about various dimensions of film had accompanied the medium from its early years. In addition to the various technical and trade journals (the most significant of which were *Kinematograph Weekly*, *The Cinema*, and *The Bioscope*), the 1910s saw the emergence of a number of fan magazines, including *Moving Picture World* (1910), *The Pictures* (1911), and *The Picture Show* (1919). Such publications both contributed and responded to the cultural fascination with ‘stars’, and substantially focused on discussions of, and interviews with, film actors. The success of these magazines led, as D. L. LeMahieu has noted, to the adoption of some of their features by the popular press, including film gossip columns such as *The Daily Express*’s ‘Cinema Notes’, while the end of the 1910s saw the emergence of dedicated film columns in a number of mainstream newspapers.¹ C. A. Lejeune became the *Manchester Guardian*’s first film critic in 1922, writing a weekly column until she left to become the *Observer*’s film critic in 1928: Iris Barry became film critic for a number of journals and newspapers in the early to mid-1920s, including *The Spectator*, *Vogue*, *The Adelphi*, and *The Daily Mail*.²

¹ D. L. LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy: Mass Communication and the Cultivated Mind in Britain between the Wars* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 47.

² For discussion of Lejeune’s and Barry’s film criticism in the 1920s, see Laura Marcus, *The Tenth Muse: Writing about Cinema in the Modernist Period* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 277–318. Further discussions of Barry’s early film criticism include Leslie Kathleen Hankins, ‘Iris Barry, Writer and Cineaste, Forming Film Culture in London 1924–26: The *Adelphi*, the *Spectator*, the Film Society and the British *Vogue*’, *Modernism/Modernity*, 11:3 (2004), 488–515; and Haidee Wasson, ‘Writing the Cinema into Daily Life: Iris Barry and the Emergence of British Film Criticism’, in Andrew Higson (ed.), *Young and Innocent? British Silent Cinema* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2001), 321–37.

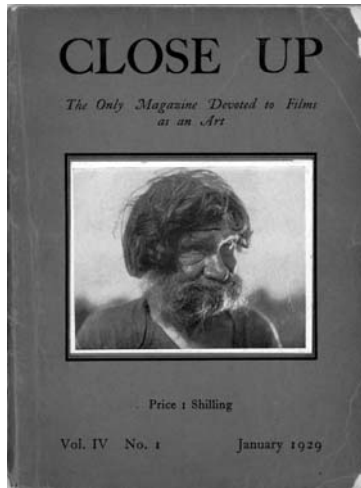


Fig. 62. Cover of *Close Up* (Jan. 1929)

Barry, along with the film critic and producer Ivor Montagu and the cinema proprietor Sidney Bernstein, was one of the founding members of the London-based Film Society, the private cinema society established in 1925 to show films, predominantly European, which were for the most part unavailable for general viewing in Britain. From its inception, the Film Society spurred a number of journals to begin covering the cinema for the first time, or in new ways. A film column, entitled 'From Alpha to Omega' appeared in *The Nation and Athenaeum* for the first time on October 1925, and discussed the opening programme of the Film Society.³ Walter Shaw Hanks, writing in *The Criterion* in 1926, discussed a programme of experimental French films which he had seen in Paris, but which were also screened at the Film Society, and linked them to the rhythm and movement of the Russian ballet.⁴ Bonamy Dobree's theatre column for *Vogue*, 'Seen on the Stage', started to address cinema as well as theatre in late December 1925, again turning to a recent Film Society performance.⁵ Drama critics, indeed, often took on the role of film critics in the 1910s and 1920s, a move which Bryher, for one, deplored:

Most of the film critics of the various daily, weekly or monthly journals have come to cinematography via dramatic criticism. And if ever there was a gulf between two arts it is between the theatre and the cinema. The cinema depends upon reality;

³ The first film column, 'From Alpha to Omega', appeared in *The Nation and Athenaeum* on 31 October 1925. The reviews covered the Film Society's screenings and, from 1926, films at other London cinemas (including the New Gallery, the Plaza, and the Tivoli). In May 1926, 'From Alpha to Omega' became 'Plays and Pictures', and discussion of films became more perfunctory.

⁴ Walter Shaw Hanks, 'Cinema and the Ballet in Paris', *Criterion*, 4:1 (June 1926), 174–84.

⁵ Bonamy Dobree's column for *Vogue*, 'Seen on the Stage', covered the Film Society screenings as well as theatre productions between 1925 and 1926.

the theatre upon exaggeration. . . . Words are not much good to describe a film. For it is not a play, it is rhythm, and movement, and photography, and cinema-acting, which is utterly removed from theatre-acting, and it needs to be seen, not described. Yet many critics make no effort to see pictures that could give them a standard of criticism.⁶

The claim is a contestable one: the interlocking histories of drama and film from the end of the nineteenth century onwards are very complex. It was nonetheless the case that the perceived competition between theatre and film and, more specifically, the threat represented by the popularity of the cinema to the theatre, distorted and, arguably, held back the development of early film criticism. The discussions of cinema in the established monthlies and reviews, including *The English Review*, *The Fortnightly Review*, *The Quarterly Review*, and *The Nineteenth Century and After* were, unlike those in *The Spectator* and *The London Mercury* (both of which included regular film reviews from the mid-1920s onwards), directed not towards specific films (though this did begin to change towards the end of the decade, with the Film Society screenings) but towards broader discussion of film art and the phenomenon of film. The attitudes of their writers, often drama critics in the first instance, towards the new medium tended to be, at best, defensive, and their definitions of 'art' were based on a highly traditional aesthetics and concept of 'beauty'.

This was the British context out of which *Close Up* emerged, and against which it defined its mission, and the sense of its timeliness and importance was noted by others. *The New Age*, for example, wrote of *Close Up*'s arrival:

The films now receive due attention—more than their due according to many—from the daily papers. But the daily paper has not space enough, nor the daily journalist time, to do more than suggest possibilities. There are also cinema periodicals. But they are also trade papers, which serve their trade purpose and provide good reading for the cynical. Up till now there has been little outlet for constructive criticism beyond that provided, occasionally and grudgingly, by a few of the more intelligent literary periodicals. That is why we welcome the publication of 'Close Up'. . . . It is not entirely satisfactory. One wonders, for instance, seeing Miss Gertrude Stein's name in the contents list, what she has to say about the films. After reading her article (or is it a poem?), one wonders still more. But Mr. Oswell Blakeston's caustic commentary on British films, and Mr. Kenneth Macpherson's plea for more insistence on film 'art', more than make up for this. And in any case even the faintest glimmering of intelligence would be welcome in the sentimental murk of the film.⁷

⁶ Bryher, *Film Problems of Soviet Russia* (Territet, Switzerland: POOL, 1929), 131.

⁷ W.H.H., *The New Age*, 29 September 1927.

The byline of *Close Up* was 'The Only Magazine Devoted to Films as an Art'. It was, however, the very conception of 'art' that was to be redefined in the pages of the journal. Macpherson's first editorial, 'As Is', discussed not so much art as the artist and the medium: 'Perplexities, debates, arguments: Cinematography has stuck itself in front of the artist, and the artist wants to work his medium straight. . . . It has to be the film for the film's sake.'⁸ In the same editorial he wrote that 'the hope of the cinema lies with the amateur',⁹ blurring the divide, as he did in his own film-making, between 'amateur' and 'alternative' cinema, and bringing to the fore the necessity, at the heart of *Close Up*'s project, of active spectatorship, participation, and creation in and of the new medium. To her friend Viola Jordan, H.D. wrote at this time

I am now intensely interested [in film] . . . am doing a little critical work for a new very clever movie magazine, supposed to get hold of things, from a more or less 'artistic' angle but not the highbrow attitude . . . It is to be called, CLOSE-UP, a splendid title I think . . . I feel [film] is the living art, the thing that WILL count but that is in danger now from comnerical [*sic*] and popular sources.¹⁰

Close Up's claim to be the only magazine of its kind was not entirely accurate. A number of film magazines, including *Le Film* (1914–19), *Ciné pour Tous* (1919–23), *Cinémagazine* (1921–), and *Cinéa* (1921–3), had been established in France in the late 1910s and early 1920s, some of which were dedicated to the aesthetics of the new medium. *Le Film* was edited from July 1917 by the film critic and scenarist Louis Delluc, and was supported by Colette, Abel Gance, Louis Aragon, and others. Delluc left *Le Film* in 1918 and set up *Le journal du ciné-club* in 1929 and *Cinéa* in 1921: these were among a large number of film magazines in the early 1920s which offered sometimes critical support to French cinema, which had been overtaken by US production in the last years of the war decade.¹¹ *Close Up* could, nonetheless, lay claim to an originality and a particularity through its internationalism, including its profound engagement with a film culture which included the most significant and influential avatars of Weimar and Soviet cinema in the 1920s. It was in *Close Up* that the first English translations of articles by Sergei Eisenstein appeared. Numerous stills from the films of Austrian film director G. W. Pabst, based in the later 1920s in Berlin, and from the cinema of the Soviet Union, including works by Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and Dovzhenko, were published in the pages of the journal at a time when censorship, on sexual and political grounds, was operating against their films

⁸ Kenneth Macpherson, 'As Is', *Close Up*, 1:1 (July 1927), 8, 14.

⁹ Ibid. 14.

¹⁰ H.D., letter to Viola Jordan, 6 June 1927, Viola Jordan Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Quoted in Jayne E. Marek, *Women Editing Modernism: 'Little' Magazines and Literary History* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995), 129.

¹¹ For further discussion of French film culture in the early twentieth century, see Christophe Gauthier, *Le passion du cinéma: cinéphiles, ciné-clubs et salles spécialisées à Paris de 1920 à 1929* (Paris: Association Française de Recherche sur L'Histoire du Cinéma, 1999).

in a number of European countries. Weimar Germany was by and large free of this censorship, and Berlin and its film culture became the most significant location and context for the *Close Up* editors in their engagement with and mediation of the cinema of the period.

Close Up was edited by Kenneth Macpherson and co-edited, and funded, by Bryher. Bryher, daughter of the shipping magnate Sir John Ellerman (who was, on his death in 1933, named as having been the richest man in England) was the companion of the poet H.D.: they had met in 1918, after Bryher had read H.D.'s collection of Imagist poems, *Sea Garden*. When, in 1927, Bryher's marriage to the American writer and publisher Robert McAlmon (contracted primarily, it would seem, so that she could gain independence from her family) had ended in divorce, Bryher, for the most part open about her lesbianism, entered into another 'marriage of convenience', this time with the twenty-five-year-old Macpherson, who was in a relationship with H.D. The three of them left London to spend a good part of their time in Switzerland, where Bryher had already established a base, and where, Bryher was later to write in her memoir *The Heart to Artemis*, 'it was possible to see French, German, American and English films all in the same week.'¹² Over the next few years they entered whole-heartedly into film-making, film criticism, film publishing, and film culture, with Macpherson and Bryher particularly active in seeking out material for the journal on their visits to Berlin.

Close Up first appeared in July 1927, with a print run of 500 copies and a sale price of 5 francs in France (as against a cost price of three francs) and one shilling in England: the annual subscription rate was seventy francs or fourteen shillings per year. A smaller number of half-yearly bound volumes were also produced, with a sale price of ten shillings and sixpence, rising in the case of limited back copies. In 1929, for example, the price of the first bound volume (July–December 1927) had risen to twenty-five shillings: the bound volumes were, the promotion stated, 'collector's books . . . of the greatest value as REFERENCE BOOKS FOR THE FUTURE as well as for the present . . . *Close Up* makes rapid progress every month. The demand for earlier numbers is enormous. When they are sold their value will be trebled. To buy a volume is an investment which you will be wise to make.'¹³ The terms of cultural and monetary value were inextricably intertwined, and the investment was predicated less on film as history than on concepts of its 'development' and futurity.¹⁴

¹² Bryher, *The Heart to Artemis: A Writer's Memoirs* (London: Collins, 1963), 248.

¹³ This advertisement appeared at the end of 4:5 (May 1929).

¹⁴ The terms of the *Close Up* advertisement closely echo those used by *The Egoist*, as in its advertisement for Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*:

The first edition of this masterpiece among modern works of fiction (for which not only was no British publisher to be found willing to publish, but *no British printer willing to print*) is now nearly exhausted. Copies of the first edition, 'printed in America', will be very valued possessions when 'The Portrait' becomes more widely recognized—as it certainly

Copies of the first issue of *Close Up* were sent to a number of writers and critics, including Ivor Montagu, May Sinclair, Virginia Woolf, Walter White (the Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People), Gertrude Stein, Langston Hughes, Carl Van Vechten, Anita Loos, John Dos Passos, and E. E. Cummings: the list was largely a literary one and contained the names of a striking number of figures associated with the Harlem Renaissance, an issue to which I will return later. The magazine was initially distributed through bookshops in Paris, Berlin, London, Geneva, New York, and Los Angeles. It continued as a monthly journal until the end of 1930, becoming a quarterly (at a sale price of three shillings and six pence) from early 1931 until its final issue in December 1933.

Close Up was an imprint of POOL publications, which produced two early 'psychoanalytic' novels by Macpherson (*Gaunt Island* and *Pool Reflection*), Bryher's cinematographic war novel *Civilians*, and works of film criticism and theory, the most significant of which were Eric Elliott's *Anatomy of Motion Picture Art* (1928) and Bryher's *Film Problems of Soviet Russia* (1929). POOL books were advertised in most of the journal's issues. Macpherson also directed four POOL films, which were again extensively 'trailed' in the journal's pages; only one, *Borderline*, in which H.D. and Bryher acted alongside Paul and Eslanda Robeson, survives intact.¹⁵ The creation of POOL mirrored, to a significant extent, Bryher's and H.D.'s previous involvements with small press and journal editing and publishing in the literary sphere, in which literary journals and 'little magazines' had been, or became, imprints of publishing concerns which also produced books and translations.¹⁶

During the war years, H.D. had taken over the role of assistant editor of *The Egoist* from her then husband, Richard Aldington, who was serving in France. The Egoist Press was set up, and incorporated the journal as one of its imprints, in 1916: the Press published numerous modernist works, including those of Joyce and T. S. Eliot, as well as the Poet's Translation Series, with which Aldington and

will—as an outstanding feature in the permanent literature of the present period. Readers of THE EGOIST who have not already secured a copy should *order at once*. (*The Egoist*, June 1917)

I am grateful to Christabel Kirpatrick for this reference, which is discussed in her Ph.D. thesis, *Making Modernism Pay: Conflict, Creativity and Cooperation between British Writers and Commercial Publishers 1910–1930* (University of London, 2007). For fuller discussion of the relationship between modernism, patronage, and the market see Lawrence Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Cultures* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), *passim*.

¹⁵ *Foothills* and *Wing Beat* exist in fragmentary form, *Monkey's Moon* remains lost. The fragments of *Foothills* and *Wing Beat* were reassembled by Anne Friedberg in 1979 after a box of nitrate film was discovered among H.D.'s papers at Yale. They are currently in the film collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

¹⁶ For fuller discussion of H.D.'s and Bryher's editorial activities, prior to and including work on *Close Up*, see Marek, *Women Editing Modernism*, 101–37. See also Georgina Taylor, *H.D. and the Sphere of Modernist Women Writers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

H.D. were centrally involved. On Bryher's side, there was also a significant history of engagement with publishing and the press, both mainstream and modernist. Her father was a major shareholder, with Lord Northcliffe, of the London *Times*. During the First World War he bought *The Sphere: An Illustrated Newspaper for the Home* and he had controlling interests in a number of magazines, including *Tatler* and *The Sketch*. In 1923, Sir John Ellerman gave a substantial amount of money to Bryher's first husband, Robert McAlmon, who used it to fund the Contact Publishing Company, extending his 'little magazine' *Contact*, which he had founded with William Carlos Williams in 1920. The Contact Publishing Company, and its imprint Contact Editions, in which Bryher almost certainly played a larger role than she has been given credit for, was responsible for the publication of many significant works of modernist literature, with writing by Joyce, Mina Loy, H.D., Mary Butts, and Stein. McAlmon used the Dijon-based printer Darantière for Contact Editions, including the printing of Sylvia Beach's 1922 edition of *Ulysses*. The *Close Up* editors chose Darantière for the first issues of their journal, before moving to the Mercury Press in England in 1928, and for H.D.'s autobiographical novellas and short stories, printed in limited editions and privately circulated. These were written during the years of the engagement with film and were themselves forms of 'performance' and 'projection' having much in common with the POOL films directed by Macpherson.¹⁷

Bryher made a direct connection between film-making and 'little magazine' publishing, writing in *The Heart to Artemis* that:

It became the fashion for the *avant-garde* cinema groups to make films as it had been the custom in Paris to bring out two issues of a magazine. There were societies all over Europe, they corresponded with *Close Up* and subscribed to it... these small pictures [such as Macpherson's *Borderline*] were training the directors and cameramen of the future as the 'little reviews' had trained the writers.

Her comments were made in the context of a discussion of the coming of sound, the expense of which, she argued, killed off experimentalism and, by extension, avant-gardism, and of silent film as 'the art that died': 'by 1934 *Close Up* and about sixty of these [cinema] groups had ceased to exist.'¹⁸ One implication here is that *Close Up* was to be identified with the silent cinema, whose internationalist potential was its primary attraction for Bryher. In fact, the journal crossed the years of the transition from silent to sound film and is a major resource for a history and an understanding of the ways in which many of sound film's initial detractors became 'converted' to the new possibilities represented by the sound medium in this period. That the

¹⁷ H.D., 'The Usual Star' (1934), 'Kora and Ka' (1934), 'Mira Mare' (1934), 'Nights' (1935), and 'Two Americans' (published with 'The Usual Star'), which gives a fictionalized account of H.D.'s meeting with Paul Robeson.

¹⁸ Bryher, *The Heart to Artemis*, 264–5.

'literary' contributors to the journal—notably H.D. and Dorothy Richardson—did not seek to follow film from its silent to its sound manifestations raises complex questions of literature–film relationships and of a gendered response to silence and sound that this chapter will take up later.

Film and the 'little magazine'

For the moment, however, I want to focus on the perceived relationship between the literary and the filmic in *Close Up*'s early constitution, in a context in which involvement with literary 'little magazines' had been a major inspiration for the group's engagement with film culture. In 1970, the American film critic and avant-garde director Herman Weinberg wrote a Foreword to the facsimile copy of *Close Up*, in which he recalled his excitement at the first appearance of the journal in 1927:

It was a time of great ferment in all the arts . . . and 'little magazines' proliferated everywhere. In America we had the *Dial*, *Broom*, *Contact*, *Secession*, *This Quarter*, *Transatlantic Review*, *Hound and Horn*, *Pagany* and, from abroad, *transition*, and of course, *Close Up*, which was for us at the time as much a literary magazine as a film one for it had a distinguished roster of contributors including Havelock Ellis, André Gide, Osbert Sitwell, H.D., Dorothy Richardson, Gertrude Stein, Marianne Moore, René Crevel, Jean Prevost, and Arnold Bennett, among others. Heading the film writers were V. I. Pudovkin and Sergei Eisenstein (his essays, 'The Dynamic Square' and 'Principles of Film Form,' appeared here in their English versions for the first time), Harry Alan Potamkin, Oswald Blakeston, Robert Herring, Marc Allégret, Pera Attasheva, Man Ray, etc.—names that were to join their French, German, Soviet and American colleagues to form the first body of serious film criticism.¹⁹

Weinberg thus suggested that *Close Up* had focused in equal measure on literature and film. Marianne Moore, a college friend of H.D.'s, gave an account of the journal's first issue in a 1927 number of *The Dial*, the New York magazine with which she was centrally involved. She called *Close Up* a 'little cinema review', but defined its 'experiment' as 'prais[ing] an art through a medium other than its own, without having mastered the terms of the auxillary art'.²⁰ Her review thus suggested that she saw the journal as the production of passionate amateurs whose first language was that of literature and not film.

It has indeed been argued that the editors sought to gain status for the journal by inviting significant literary figures, including Gertrude Stein (who contributed

¹⁹ Herman G. Weinberg, *Saint Cinema: Writings on the Film 1929–1970* (New York: Dover, 1973), 319–20.

²⁰ Marianne Moore, *Dial*, 83 (Nov. 1927), 449–50.

three pieces) and Virginia Woolf (who declined the invitation) to contribute. There was certainly an interest, most marked in the journal's early stages, with the responses of writers to the threat and the promise of the new medium. The journal, moreover, retained a 'writerly' dimension to the extent that many of its contributors were engaging in the 'experiment' of creating a discursive medium adequate to the new art of film, and of constructing film-spectatorship and 'writing about cinema' as itself a form of 'film-making'.²¹ When Macpherson opened his editorial preface, 'As Is', in the second issue of the journal with a diatribe against a 'distinguished author' who had refused his invitation to 'dynamically discourse on the film', he revealed his major aspiration for the mode of the journal's film-writing. 'Dynamic discourse'—writing in and of motion—was to be at the heart of *Close Up*'s project.

These 'writerly' and undeniably 'coterie' aspects of the journal's foundation do not detract from the immense importance it acquired in broad, international film contexts. *Close Up*'s correspondents, most of them added at intervals during the first two years of the journal's production, were based across Europe and the USA. They included Andor Kraszna-Krausz, editor of the journals *Film für Alle* and *Film Technik* in Berlin, which promoted amateur film-making, Simon Gould of the Film Arts Guild as, for their first few issues, 'New York' editor and the film critic Harry Alan Potamkin as 'New York' correspondent, the film directors Marc Allégret and Jean Lenauer in Paris, and, in Moscow, Pera Attasheva, Eisenstein's companion. *Close Up*'s wider pool of contributors increasingly included participants in the film industries from these and other geographical locations. Each monthly issue contained, on average, around ten articles, which might be on specific films, on national cinemas, or, though less frequently, on film techniques and technological developments. These articles were followed by briefer notes on topics including new or revived films, books on film, and information about film clubs.

Robert Herring, one of the earliest British film critics, who had joined *The London Mercury* as its assistant editor in 1925, became *Close Up*'s London correspondent in 1927. In 1935 he would become editor of *Life and Letters To-Day*. This was bought by Bryher in 1935: it subsequently merged with *The London Mercury* (which absorbed the London *Bookman*), purchased by Bryher for £800 in 1939. Oswald Blakeston, who had worked as a cinema organist, a clapperboy, and an assistant cameraman at Gaumont Studios, and was involved in the making of a number of avant-garde and abstract films, contributed the greatest number of articles to *Close Up* of any contributor to the journal in its six years, becoming its 'assistant editor' in 1931. Both Herring and Blakeston had strong links to London's

²¹ For fuller discussion of this aspect of the journal, see Anne Friedberg, 'Reading *Close Up*: 1927–1933', in James Donald, Anne Friedberg, and Laura Marcus (eds), *Close Up 1927–1933: Cinema and Modernism* (London: Cassell, 1998), 1–26; and Laura Marcus, 'The Moment of *Close Up*', in *The Tenth Muse*, 319–403.

broader film culture and wrote for a variety of publications in the late 1920s and 1930s. Herring contributed to the architectural journal *Drawing and Design* and replaced C. A. Lejeune as film critic of the *Manchester Guardian* in 1928: he later became a member of the Film Society council. Blakeston wrote for *The Architectural Review* (a monthly journal which frequently included articles on film and which devoted columns to discussion of *Close Up* and of Macpherson's film *Borderline*) and for the experimental 'little magazine' *Seed*, which ran for only two issues in 1933. The range of their journalistic engagements is indicative of the ways in which film was entering wider cultural spheres at this time, including those of art and architecture, and Herring commented on the ways in which he shaped his film criticism in accordance with the nature of the journals in which he wrote, focusing, for example, on the formal and 'pictorial' dimensions of films in his articles for *Drawing and Design*. Contributions by Herring and Blakeston to such journals also helped to connect *Close Up* to a broad cultural arena.

Nonetheless, there are numerous markers, including advertising, publicity, and review notices, which strongly suggest *Close Up*'s affiliations to, and identifications with, other avant-garde and experimental journals, and with the Anglo-American readership in Paris. *Close Up* announced itself as a magazine 'devoted to the art of the screen' and 'entirely independent of any commercial interests'. Accepting no advertisements from film companies, 'it is able to enjoy a freedom in the expression of its opinions which has made it known as the most candid and outspoken review of the screen yet published.' The journal was indeed free from any financial reliance on advertising, funded as it was by Bryher's wealth, and a substantial percentage of those adverts that it did contain were promotions of the books and the journals with which the *Close Up* circle and their friends had connections, including *The London Mercury* and *The Dial*. Issues of *Close Up* in its first years also included full-page advertisements for Adrienne Monnier's Parisian 'bookshop movement' 'La Maison des amis des livres' and Sylvia Beach's 'Shakespeare and Company', the advertisement for which included a laudation from the writer and translator of modernist texts Valery Larbaud. Beach, Larbaud was quoted as saying, 'assembles the elite among the young English, Irish and Americans who are temporarily in Paris'. The *Close Up* editors assumed a readership familiar with the French language: a number of articles, including the regular column by Jean Prévost, 'La Face humaine à l'écran', were published in their original French.

The fact that the journal's editors perceived there to be a shared identity between their potential readers and those of the Paris-based avant-garde journal *transition* is suggested by the full-page advertisements they took out. A page of advertising in *transition*'s July 1927 issue, announced POOL, its 'new hope' concerning books, its 'new beginning' concerning cinematography, and the first part of *Close Up*, 'a monthly magazine to begin battle for film art'. The avant-garde rhetoric—of

novelty and of action—was to the fore. There were some strong parallel developments between *Close Up* and *transition*: the inclusion of articles by Eisenstein and by Harry Alan Potamkin (the Marxist film critic who also contributed to Seymour Stern's short-lived US journal *Experimental Cinema*, which was committed to Soviet film and politics, and to the arts magazine *Pagany*), articles on Surrealist, experimental, and abstract film, with a succession of stills from Man Ray's *Emak Bakia* and photographic studies by the American Francis Brugiere (Oswell Blakeston's collaborator on the abstract film *Light Rhythms*); the presentation of uncaptioned, 'ethnographic' photographs and film stills (in the case of *transition*, from the US photographer Paul Strand's 1933 Mexican project *Redes* (*Nets*)) in later issues of both journals, as if to take the (now talking) cinema away from words and back to a silence which had become identified with the 'native' subject.

On the other hand, *Close Up* contributors did not evince any of the passion for Chaplin/'Charlot' present in both *transition* and the American-Paris 'little magazine' *Broom*. While *Close Up* was on the whole less fiercely anti-Hollywood than many of the books on film art of the period, it did not celebrate the American cinema as the path to a filmic and poetic future. *Broom*, edited by Harold Loeb and Matthew Josephson (also a contributing editor to *transition*), proclaimed an American Dada and 'the Age of the Machine': it also drew its energies from the Parisian Dadaist and Surrealist passion for all things American, and it was here that film played a crucial role, acting as a reflecting and refracting mirror-screen for each country's perceptions of itself and of the other nation and culture. This construction of the film as cultural and national mirror was also at work in *transition*: 'Thus educated by the moving pictures and the texts and illustrations so varied, we find in America not only a model and an object of admiration, but the stuff of poetry,' Jean George Auriol wrote in *transition* in May 1927, although an article he published two years later now found this 'poetry' in the French experimental cinema of Man Ray and André Sauvage.²² *transition* also published a number of film scenarios by Surrealist writers—Antonin Artaud, Philippe Soupault, Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes—in which their creators sought to depict 'a purely visual cinema', in Artaud's phrase. The preoccupation with cinema in *transition* was very substantially focused on word-image relationships—'We need new words, new abstractions, new hieroglyphics, new symbols, new myths,' proclaimed the editorial, 'Suggestions for a New Magic', in the June 1927 issue.²³ *transition* was

²² Jean George Auriol, 'The Occident', *transition*, 2 (May 1927), 156; 'Whither the French Cinema', *transition*, 15 (Feb. 1929), 257–63.

²³ 'Suggestions for a New Magic', *transition*, 3 (June 1927), 178–9. For discussion of *transition* and word-image relationships, see Michael North, *Camera Works: Photography and the Twentieth-Century Word* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 61–82. *Camera Works* also contains a chapter on *Close Up* in the context of the coming of sound (83–105).

not, like *Close Up*, significantly concerned with the broad reach, and national and international dimensions, of film cultures. An advertisement for *Close Up* in *Experimental Cinema* (June 1930) was restrained and concise in its typography and in its promotional claims: 'An independent international review, devoted to the discussion and analysis of film art. *Close Up* is abundantly illustrated with stills from the best films. *Close Up* has numerous correspondents in contact with film activities throughout the world.'

Close Up's promise, in its first issue, was that the journal would deal first with 'the film problem as a whole' and thereafter 'with special conditions in Europe and the States with numbers on the Negro attitude and problem and on the Far East in relation to cinema'.²⁴ While French cinema and cinema culture was well represented in the journal, Bryher, in particular, had experienced, ambivalently and at times negatively, American–Paris avant-gardism in the earlier 1920s. She was much more strongly drawn to Berlin, the most powerful cultural centre for the *Close Up* group in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The rise of Nazism in the early years of the 1930s was thus all the more shocking and Bryher was not only a clear-eyed witness of its impact on the city but a prescient observer of the nightmare of the history to come.

Britain and Europe

While *Close Up* drew its energies from Berlin, and was edited in Switzerland, its editors retained a missionary zeal in relation to British film culture, or, as they perceived it, to its absence. Like the Film Society in London, one of *Close Up*'s central aspirations was to improve the quality of British cinema by revealing to the producers and the consumers of film the alleged poverty of British films by comparison with their European counterparts. The representation of the journal's national and international identity tended to alter according to place and context: in *The Dial* it was announced as 'a new European magazine to approach films from the angles of art, experiment and development', whereas in *The Nation* and *The London Mercury* it was 'a British review', 'the *first* magazine (all British) to approach films from the artistic, psychological and educational points of view'. Unvarying, however, was its critical attitude towards British cinema: 'the only thing that could be said for it [was] that it didn't seem to mind being a laughing stock.'²⁵ Macpherson wrote in his first *Close Up* editorial, an opinion he was not to soften in any significant way until his approving review of Hitchcock's first sound film *Blackmail* in 1929,²⁶ though in the editorial for January 1928 he expressed the view

²⁴ Kenneth Macpherson, 'As Is', *Close Up*, 1:1 (July 1927), 15.

²⁵ *Ibid.* 7.

²⁶ Kenneth Macpherson, 'As Is', *Close Up*, 5:4 (Oct. 1929), 57–263.

that England was 'on the upgrade. Money being thrown about. Determined on efficient mediocrity.'²⁷

There were also shared foundations between *Close Up* and the Film Society in the early interest in German cinema: the Expressionist film for the Film Society, and the 'psychological realism' of Paul Czinner's *Nju* and of the Austrian-born but Berlin-based G. W. Pabst for *Close Up*. Pabst's *Joyless Street*, in which the young Greta Garbo played the central role and which explored the desperate poverty of Vienna in the years immediately following the First World War, was to remain a cinematic touchstone, for Bryher and H.D. in particular, and discussion of Pabst's films remained a crucial element of the journal for its duration. Bryher met Pabst and the psychoanalyst Hanns Sachs, one of the members of Freud's 'secret ring' and an editor of the psychoanalytic journal *Imago*, on a trip to Berlin in 1927: Pabst and Sachs had collaborated on *Secrets of a Soul* (1926), a cinematic case-study exploring the origins of a phobia and the workings of the psychoanalytic method of understanding and curing the neurosis. Sachs, who became Bryher's analyst, wrote a number of significant articles for *Close Up*, and psychoanalytic thought and theory was to play a central role in the journal. In Berlin in this period, film and psychoanalysis, cinema and city, were, for the *Close Up* group, inextricably intertwined. 'Perhaps because my own unconscious was in the process of release, the unconscious passions of the city [Berlin] struck me with all the more force,' Bryher was to write in her memoir: 'I saw hunger, brutality and greed but there was also the sudden compassionate gesture, a will to help or the pre-battle awareness of the single rose, the transient beauty of some girl's face.'²⁸

Soviet cinema entered *Close Up* in its second volume, beginning in January 1928, with stills from Alexander Room's *Bed and Sofa* and the claim by Macpherson that Russia 'was the foremost country to deal with the cinema artistically and educationally on a wide scale, and the rule instead of the exception'.²⁹ A number of stills from Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin*, a film banned from general distribution in Britain, appeared in February and March 1928, and an article on Pudovkin's *The End of St. Petersburg* in the following month's issue. The September 1928 issue was described as 'a Russian number', following, in Macpherson's words, 'a rush of new films from Russian into Germany', which had brought about a difficult critical task, in that 'an impartially critical attitude must be established': 'before we can begin to cope with the films as films, we have to cope with the public which has been carefully nurtured to believe that all Russian films are veiled digs at Europe's dwindling thrones.'³⁰ In Russia, Macpherson argued, the populace were not merely spectators but 'active in participation': *Close Up*'s ideal of active spectatorship thus

²⁷ Kenneth Macpherson, 'As Is', *Close Up*, 2:1 (Jan. 1928), 6.

²⁸ Bryher, *The Heart to Artemis*, 259.

²⁹ Kenneth Macpherson, 'As Is', *Close Up*, 2:1 (Jan. 1928), 5–6.

³⁰ Kenneth Macpherson, 'As Is', *Close Up*, 3:3 (Sept. 1928), 5.

became associated with the greatness of Russian films, and ‘Russian cutting’—montage—was identified with ‘realism and the reaction of an actual participant’.

For both the Film Society and *Close Up*, Soviet cinema became increasingly central, and both organizations were particularly exercised by the question of censorship in the 1920s. Extensive anti-censorship activity by Ivor Montagu included the publication of his pamphlet *The Political Censorship of Films* in 1929, the year in which he joined the Communist Party and became actively involved in the London Worker’s Film Society. *Close Up* had its own campaign against censorship, with a petition organized by Dorothy Richardson, and, from the perspectives of the censors and the right-wing press, *Close Up* and the Film Society were very much, and dangerously, connected. Eisenstein’s 1929 lectures to the Film Society made their first appearance in published form in *Close Up* as ‘The Principles of Film Form’ (which also appeared in *Experimental Cinema*) and ‘Methods of Montage’. Bryher’s book on the topic of Russian cinema, *Film Problems of Soviet Russia*, was also published in 1929, and widely and favourably reviewed. Virtually all the reviews mentioned the stills from Russian films reproduced in the book, and comments reveal the intense interest in Soviet cinema at this time and the level of frustration generated by censorship: ‘The “stills” it produces from contemporary work by Einstein [*sic*] and Pudovkin’, Anthony Gishford wrote in the Oxford student paper *The Isis*, ‘fills one with impotent rage against the system of censorship under which we suffer.’³¹ *Film Problems of Soviet Russia*, like so much of the material in *Close Up*, was written as a protest against British censorship laws, a detailed account of which appeared in Macpherson’s editorial in the February 1929 ‘censorship protest issue’. Bryher’s book was also written as a spur to the reader–spectator: ‘It is really the question of what you, the spectator, are willing to do for the screen, for the cinema is an active, not a passive, art.’³²

An active art

This account of the cinema as an active art, and an art of activity, was manifested in *Close Up* at every level. Bryher contributed articles on specific films and film genres to the magazine but her writings were more often exhortations to the reader to promote the cinema and the art of the film. ‘What Can I Do [?]’ was published in two parts in the March and May issues of 1928, ‘How I Would Start a Film Club’ in June. The articles were directed at a British audience without ready access to the broader European film culture discussed and celebrated in the pages of the journal. Talk to your local cinema owner, Bryher suggested: ‘Talk to people about the cinema. In the bookstore, the station, the post office, the bank, the grocer’s shop, there will be film fans; people who have grown up with the cinema and are ready for

³¹ Anthony Gishford, *Isis*, 14 January 1930.

³² Bryher, *Film Problems of Soviet Russia*, 132.

more than they are given only do not know what to ask for, by themselves.’³³ Form a cinema library. Subscribe to *Close Up* and persuade your friends to buy it too: ‘For as our circulation increases so we can help films in more and in wider ways.’³⁴ Organize a monthly showing of interesting but non-commercial films. Purchase an inexpensive projector (advertisements for the Debie portable ‘Jacky’ projector, ‘for education and home projection’, appeared with some frequency in the pages of the journal). Start a film club. ‘Interest, enthusiasm, vitality: these rather than money are the chief factors.’³⁵

‘Active’ participation, ‘active’ spectatorship, also defined the journal’s modes of film writing and its accounts of cinema-going. Macpherson liked to open his editorials as if they were part of an ongoing conversation. ‘Well you are right enough’, begins one, ‘who say how much the screen must falsify true values.’³⁶ Dorothy Richardson’s ‘Continuous Performance’ articles were also narrative enactments of the entry *in medias res* experienced in ‘continuous performance’ cinemas; ‘... So I gave up going to the theatre’ is the opening of her first article.³⁷ The ellipsis (and Richardson was in general much exercised by the question of punctuation) becomes the graphic equivalent of this particular film experience, although her concern was predominantly with the charting of the everyday experience of cinema-going rather than with an avant-garde of film spectatorship.

In her *Close Up* articles, Richardson, one of the most loyal and consistent of the journal’s contributors, mapped London through its different sites of cinema-going and cinema spectatorship: the West End, the slums, the suburbs. ‘We are for THE FILM as well as for FILMS,’ she wrote, referring to her fascination with the medium as a whole and with its specific, and specifically modern, modes and powers of representation.³⁸ Richardson’s ‘Continuous Performance’ articles included discussions of slow motion, captions, musical accompaniment, and, as a central and governing preoccupation, issues of speech and silence, writing and talking, and the ‘audible running commentary’ of the woman film spectator who, in her refusal to adopt the position of the passive spectator in the face of the ‘silent, stellar radiance’ of the female star on the screen, was asserting ‘that the onlooker is part of the spectacle’.³⁹ Richardson did not adopt the position of the ‘film critic’, who had to follow the path of the new film rather than waiting for what came to the local cinema: ‘these films coming soon or late find us ready to give our best where we have served our apprenticeship and the screen has made in us its deepest

³³ Bryher, ‘What Can I Do’, *Close Up*, 2:3 (Mar. 1928), 22.

³⁴ Bryher, ‘What Can I Do (II)’, *Close Up*, 2:5 (May 1928), 34.

³⁵ Bryher, ‘How I Would Start a Film Club’, *Close Up*, 2:6 (June 1928) 24.

³⁶ Kenneth Macpherson, ‘As Is’, *Close Up*, 1:3 (Sept. 1927) 5.

³⁷ Dorothy Richardson, ‘Continuous Performance’, *Close Up*, 1:1 (July 1927) 34.

³⁸ Dorothy Richardson, ‘There’s No Place Like Home’, ‘Continuous Performance V’, *Close Up*, 1:5 (Nov. 1927), 4.

³⁹ Dorothy Richardson, ‘Continuous Performance VIII’, *Close Up*, 2:3 (Mar. 1928), 55.

furrows.⁴⁰ Her emphasis on the value of the local space and place, and on staying in that place to see films, made literal her assertion that ‘the film, by setting the landscape in motion and keeping us still, allows it to walk through us.’⁴¹ Cinema, in her account, thus brought into being a form of ‘(im)mobile travel’,⁴² suggesting the concept of a ‘haptic cinema’ and the ways in which film ‘touches’ the eye, just as the ‘business of the expert front rower’, whose position she literally took up in the cinema, was ‘to find the centre of action and follow it as best he can’.⁴³ While Richardson’s explorations and celebrations of popular film spectatorship often seem to be at odds with Macpherson’s avant-gardism, her constructions of film viewing as a new mode of travelling and transport, and her representations of embodied spectatorship, were at the heart of *Close Up*’s project.

In the issues published in the last quarter of 1927, ‘dynamic discourse’ proliferated. Macpherson’s editorial for October was followed, in November, by his extended piece ‘Matinee’. Both articles were attempts to emulate or ventriloquize the experience of the ‘ordinary’ film-goer, from a position both inside and outside it. Macpherson, or his narrative persona, speculated on the popular attractions of ‘Big Films’, which, his article suggested, were based on identification not with characters but with stars, and brought about ‘a kind of hypnotic daze... Mind in some way neatly obliterates itself.’ The antidote lay in seeing the best:

See *Kopf Hoch Charley*, see *The Student of Prague*, see *Potemkin*, *Out of the Mist*, *Chang*, *Prince Achmed*, and then begin to judge! . . . ‘Think of what all these films, considered as different specimens of one medium, amount to in the aggregate! Shuffle them up, make one force of them, and isn’t it a mighty force?’ Think what you have. First of all pure form, every single attribute of photographic art, miracles to work in tones and tone depths, light, geometry, design, sculpture . . . pure abstraction all of it. Then this not static but with all the resources of movement, change, rhythm, space, completely fluid to the will of the artist.⁴⁴

The avant-garde of viewing consisted in a form of spectatorship working against the grain of the commercial film, either to extract ‘essence’ or ‘beauty’ from the narrative flow or, as in the case of Macpherson’s Editorial, to construct in imagination an entirely different film, composed, in this instance, from an aggregate of those films most highly valued by the *Close Up* group. Macpherson’s ‘Matinee’ essay extended these representations, ‘making strange’ the cinema space by means of visual or retinal impressions and constructing film criticism and commentary as a form of

⁴⁰ Richardson, ‘There’s No Place Like Home’, 4.

⁴¹ Dorothy Richardson, ‘Continuous Performance: Narcissus’, *Close Up*, 8:3 (Sept. 1931), 185.

⁴² For broader discussion of this concept, see Giuliana Bruno, *Atlas of Emotion: Journeys in Art, Architecture and Film* (London: Verso, 2002), 7.

⁴³ Dorothy Richardson, ‘Continuous Performance VII: The Front Rows’, *Close Up*, 7:1 (Jan. 1928), 60–1.

⁴⁴ Kenneth Macpherson, ‘As Is’, *Close Up*, 1:4 (Oct. 1927), 15–16.

film-making. Whereas, in his editorial, Macpherson imagined an aggregated 'art' cinema as a counter to the commercial film, in 'Matinee', he 'produced' his own film as a way of correcting and, indeed, erasing the projected spectacle.

I am not seeing Lya de Putti nor the others with her . . . I would somehow contrive my close up differently, along the corridor, dark sliced with triangles of half dark and cubes and oblongs and parallelograms of half dark and half light cutting and criss-crossing to fall and slant across the face, keep the face moving, move the camera with the face. . . . there is something quite different you get in the meaning of geometry and plastic tone depths. Films should begin in the middle, end in the middle.⁴⁵

This was literally 'alternative' cinema, as well as a cinema of the mind. Macpherson took up H.D.'s charged models of telepathic communication and thought-projection, while translating the images of the screen into modernist and, more specifically, Cubist geometries. To begin and to end in the middle was not only a rejection of conventional narratives but a way of cutting across the boundaries between film and reality, inside and outside. Modernity, and more specifically urban modernity, was imagined or written as film, producing a synthesis of city and cinema.

H.D.'s lengthy discussion of Pudovkin's *Expiation* (*Sühne*) began with a proto-cinematic viewing of a street-scene ('I so poignantly wanted to re-visualize those squares of doors and shutters and another and another bit of detail that of necessity was lost at first that I did illogically (I was late already) climb back') before she entered the cinema to begin watching the film, already 'about one third over':

Rain poured over a slab of earth and I felt all my preparation of the extravagantly contrasting out of doors gay little street, was almost an ironical intention, someone, something 'intended' that I should grasp this, that some mind should receive this series of uncanny and almost psychic sensations in order to transmute them elsewhere; in order to translate them.⁴⁶

Film and pre-film (the 'dimensional dream-tunnel' of the street) are brought into an 'uncanny' relationship, allowing H.D. as spectator to 'translate' the 'remote and symbolical' dimensions of the film. *Expiation's* destructive beauty was perceived by H.D. as an 'excess', echoing the Romantic sublime: it was something beyond the limit, 'taking the human mind and *spirit* further than it can go'. Her film aesthetics and her model of vision were predicated on symbol, gesture, 'hieroglyph', and her film writing tended to provide not retrospective judgement on a film, but a performative running commentary on the processes of spectating which became

⁴⁵ Kenneth Macpherson, 'Matinee', *Close Up*, 1:5 (Nov. 1927), 60–1.

⁴⁶ H.D., 'Expiation', *Close Up*, 2:5 (May 1928), 39–40.

a form of 'inner speech', acting as a screen onto which the film images could be projected.

There are echoes in Macpherson's and, even more strongly, in H.D.'s film writings, of Surrealism's 'charged' accounts of film-going and cinema spectatorship. Much film writing of the 1910s and 1920s committed to 'film as an art' shared with Surrealism, though not always for the same reasons, the desire to 'liberate' images or sequences from, in Paul Hammond's words, 'the narrative that held them prisoner'.⁴⁷ *Close Up's* models of good spectatorship also differed, however, from those of the Surrealists. In the Surrealist 'aleatory' reception of film, the ideal context was one in which the spectator would remain ignorant of the identity and provenance of the images on the screen, as he or she wandered from cinema to cinema, entering and leaving at will or whim and without regard to the narratives of the projected films. For the *Close Up* writer, by contrast, the title of the film was certainly a matter of moment, intensified if the film were the work of a Pabst, an Eisenstein, or a Pudovkin, and discussion of films by these directors (in articles by H.D., Bryher, Macpherson, Herring, Potamkin, and other contributors) did not, for the most part, fragment them into charged and isolated images but were largely framed as if the writer/viewer were 'walking through' (or, in Richardson's terms, being walked through by) the film as he or she described it. Moreover, the equation between dreams and cinema was as strongly made by a number of *Close Up's* contributors as it was by Surrealist writers, but, as Hanns Sachs suggested in his article on 'Film Psychology', the film-work was seen to function not only by analogy but by contrast with the dreamwork.⁴⁸ Whereas the dream disguises unconscious wishes and desires, as a way of eluding 'the censor', the film reveals them. The film could thus be said to be closer to dream interpretation, with its emancipatory potential, than to the dream itself. In this way, the conceptual relationship between film and dream could be both upheld and made commensurate with the ideal of active spectatorship at the heart of *Close Up's* project.

Eisenstein's model of 'montage' as a provocation of the spectator into thought was, indeed, a far more powerful inspiration to the *Close Up* writers than the Surrealist aspiration to absorb everyday reality into the world of the dream. In 'The New Language of Cinematography', Eisenstein contrasted the cinematography of 'the first phase', in which 'we were striving for a quick emotional *discharge*', and 'the new cinema [which] must *include deep reflective processes*'.⁴⁹ Bryher wrote of Eisenstein's *Ten Days that Shook the World* that it was the film that revealed to her most clearly the nature of cinematography: 'Perhaps it is because its entire appeal is to the intellect—not to the emotions solely. . . . There is not a shot in the picture

⁴⁷ Paul Hammond, *The Shadow and its Shadow: Surrealist Writings on the Cinema* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2000), 8.

⁴⁸ Hanns Sachs, 'Film Psychology', *Close Up*, 3:5 (Nov. 1928), 8–15.

⁴⁹ S. M. Eisenstein, 'The New Language of Cinematography', *Close Up*, 4:5 (May 1929), 12.

that has not been created by mind alone.⁵⁰ In his discussions of the making of *Borderline*, Macpherson (stung by the criticism that he had followed French and German models too closely) argued that he had intuited rather than imitated the model of 'overtone montage' which Eisenstein had explored in his essays 'The Fourth Dimension in the Kino' and 'Methods of Montage' (published as parts I and II of 'The Fourth Dimension of the Kino' in *Close Up* for March and April 1930). Nonetheless, the essays by Eisenstein published in the journal during the period in which *Borderline* was being planned were undoubtedly a direct influence on the film's construction and on Macpherson's conceptions of the workings of association and the connection between shots.

Borderline

The lengthy *Borderline* pamphlet, published anonymously by Mercury Press, but almost certainly authored by H.D., was written to accompany and explain the film. The pamphlet appears to have acted as something of an irritant to those critics who attended the film's London screening at the Academy Cinema on 13 October 1930: *The Daily Mail* film critic E. A. Baughan called it 'an absurd high-brow pamphlet', while C. A. Lejeune, in general sympathetic to *Close Up*'s cause, argued that films should be able to communicate without elaborate verbal explanation.⁵¹ The weight of words produced to promote, explain, and defend the film, both in the pages of the journal and in the pamphlet and libretto that accompanied at least some of the film's limited screenings (in Berlin, Catalonia, Brussels), returns us to the question of the balance between word and image, literature and film, which were raised at the journal's foundation. It also, and perhaps more tellingly, indicates the very particular nature of *Close Up*'s context and endeavour, in which film criticism and film-making were aspects of the same project, and in which the journal's primary influences (notably those of Eisenstein, Pabst, and Sachs) arose from figures who were also major contributors to the journal and often formed part of the intellectual and social milieu in which the editors were living and working. Bryher and Macpherson would, on their trips to Berlin, collect film gossip or, in Bryher's preferred term, 'dirt', which would then be printed in the pages of the journal, while the editors proudly reproduced a signed photograph of Eisenstein on which he had written the dedication: 'To K. Macpherson. Editor of the closest up to what cinema should be.'

At the close of the 1920s and into the 1930s, Paul Robeson, who was spending time in London, entered their social frame. His first contact with the *Close Up*

⁵⁰ Bryher, *Film Problems of Soviet Russia*, 38.

⁵¹ E. A. Baughan, 'Robeson as Film Player: A High-Brow Amateur Picture', *New Chronicle* (4 Oct. 1933); and C. A. Lejeune, 'The Pictures: Critic as Creator', *Observer* (19 Oct. 1930).



Fig. 63. Signed photograph of Sergei Eisenstein, *Close Up* (Jan. 1929)



Fig. 64. Picture of Paul Robeson in 'Borderline', *Close Up* (July 1930)

group, at the end of 1928, had been with Robert Herring, who had written an article on 'negro films' for the *Manchester Guardian* to which Robeson had responded. The magnified representations of Paul Robeson in *Borderline*—Macpherson films him as if he were a giant—mirrors not only the hero worship of the *Close Up* group—Macpherson, Herring, H.D., Bryher—towards him, but their tendency to objectify 'the Negro'. 'Like a dream, the great negro head looms disproportionate, and water and cloud and rock and sky are all subsidiary to its being,' H.D. wrote in the *Borderline* pamphlet: 'Light has been, it is obvious, created by that dark

daemon, conversant with all nature since before the time of white man's beginning.⁵² The 'primitivism' displayed here is typical of much modernist writing on race and blackness, though there were complexities and contradictions in *Close Up's* representations of a 'racialized' cinema. August 1929 saw the special issue on 'Negro cinema'—the Negro attitude and problem—promised in the journal's first issue, and it appeared as Macpherson worked on the photoplay for *Borderline*. The special issue was brought together largely at Herring's urging, and although a number of the black writers he had hoped to commission (including Countee Cullen and W. E. B. DuBois) did not contribute articles, there were substantial pieces from the writers Geraldyn Dismond and Elmer Anderson Carter (the editor of *Opportunity Magazine: A Journal of Negro Life*) as well as letters from the black playwright Paul Green and from Walter White. Contributions from Macpherson, Potamkin, Herring, and Blakeston on 'Negro cinema' made up the rest of the issue.

In bringing Robeson into the film, and in producing the special issue on 'Negro Cinema', the POOL group might be said to have been placing themselves within that inter-racial cultural dynamic which constituted an alliance between Afro-American and European modernisms, as in Nancy Cunard's *Negro* anthology, to which Macpherson contributed an article on 'A Negro Film Union—Why Not?' Yet this account is complicated by demands, supported by *Close Up* contributors, for a 'pure' black cinema. For Herring, 'there should be Negro films made by and about them. Not black films passing for white, and not, please, white passing for black. We want no van Vechtens of the films.'⁵³

Virtually all the articles in the special issue took up the question of the 'Negro voice' in relation to film. During the transition period to sound, there was intense discussion, in the pages of *Close Up* as elsewhere, of 'Negro cinema'. In *Close Up*, Elmer Anderson Carter quoted the *New Yorker* drama critic Robert Benchley—'It may be that the talking-movies must be participated in wholly by Negroes, but, if so, then so be it. In the Negro the sound picture has found its ideal protagonist'—while Geraldyn Dismond concluded: 'And the talkie which is being despised in certain artistic circles is giving [the Negro movie actor] the great opportunity to prove his right to a place on the screen.'⁵⁴

Close Up's increasing concern with 'the talkies' became intertwined with the question of black cinema. While the black writers in the special issue explored sound film and its cultural possibilities, Macpherson and Potamkin focused on the question of vision in ways that indicated the complex and ambivalent nature of their perceptions of silence and sound, vision and aurality, in relation to the black

⁵² H.D., 'Borderline', in *Close Up 1927–1933: Cinema and Modernism*, 233.

⁵³ Robert Herring, 'Black Shadows', *Close Up*, 5:2 (Aug. 1929), 101. Carl van Vechten was the white author of *Nigger Heaven* (1926).

⁵⁴ Elmer Anderson Carter, 'Of Negro Motion Pictures', *Close Up*, 5:2 (Aug. 1929), 111; Geraldyn Dismond, 'The Negro Actor and the American Movies', *ibid.* 97.

actor, the 'Negro' film, and the visibility of racial identity. Discussing *The Emperor Jones*, Potamkin argued that the play offers 'the ideal scenario for the film of sound and sight and their alternation'. The way would seem to have been paved for the sound film. Yet, Potamkin insisted, it was the black body (rather than the voice) that would ground the filmic (as opposed to the theatrical) experience, defined through its ability, unavailable to the more distancing stage, to portray 'the increasing sheen of sweat on the bare body'. 'The negro', he argued, 'is plastically interesting when he is most negroid . . . Jones should not be mulatto or Napoleonic, however psychological requirements demand it. He should be black so that the sweat may glisten the more and the skin be apprehended more keenly.'⁵⁵

For Macpherson, 'Talking films took films from us but they have given us a glimpse of him [the negro].'⁵⁶ His article on Hitchcock's *Blackmail* had suggested a 'conversion' to sound along the lines suggested by the manifesto 'The Sound Film', written by Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and Alexandrov, and published in *Close Up* in October 1928. For the Soviet directors, the 'talking film' was to be embraced when it produced 'a new *orchestral counterpoint* of sight-images and sound-images'.⁵⁷ Yet Macpherson's assertion that 'talking films took films from us' encodes a set of complex responses to the coming of sound. The 'us' might indeed have referred to the previous white dominance of the (silent) cinema, now become (properly) subordinate to 'Negro cinema' and sound. Yet the sense of loss in the statement is a powerful one. *Borderline* was a silent film made in the context of the coming of sound: it even silenced Paul Robeson's voice. In his November 1930 discussion of his film, Macpherson wrote:

Eighteen months ago everybody was saying the silent film had reached perfection. It had no further to go. When in reality it had only reached the first stage in an intensive development. And oddly enough, it was not until after the talkies had swept the silent film out of existence, that *Borderline*, perhaps the only really 'avant-garde' film ever made, came about.⁵⁸

From this perspective, *Borderline* was not outmoded or anachronistic as a silent film made in the sound era; its avant-gardism was predicated on the use of silence in the face of sound. The statement chimes with film writings by Dorothy Richardson, who, refusing to follow film into its sound period, nonetheless perceived silent cinema as the gift of the coming of sound, brought into (new) being by what had succeeded it.

⁵⁵ Harry A. Potamkin, 'The AfroAmerican Cinema', *Close Up*, 5:2 (Aug. 1929), 97.

⁵⁶ Kenneth Macpherson, 'As Is', *ibid.* 90.

⁵⁷ S. Eisenstein, V.I. Pudovkin, and G. Alexandrov, 'The Sound Film: A Statement from U.S.S.R.', *Close Up*, 3:4 (Oct. 1928), 12.

⁵⁸ Kenneth Macpherson, 'As Is', *Close Up*, 7:5 (Nov. 1930), 294.

The critical failure of *Borderline*, along, perhaps, with Macpherson's sense that the ideal of art had been driven from the film, were contributory factors in the loss of his passions for film and film-making, and his diminished editorial role in *Close Up*. In 1930, he had disrupted the ménage by taking a male lover, causing a considerable crisis to the group and leading to the intensification, orchestrated by Bryher, of their various involvements with psychoanalysis. H.D.'s last contribution to *Close Up* was published in the issue for December 1929: like Richardson, she mourned the loss of silence, the 'inner speech' which silent film had made possible and the discursive productivity—a mode of writing in and through the cinema—which silent film had brought into being. Both writers saw the question of silence and sound in highly gendered terms: sound film was a mechanism too far and the destruction of, in H.D.'s words, 'that half-world of lights and music and blurred perception'.⁵⁹ While Bryher, too, would call silent film 'the art that died', there is evidence that she encouraged Macpherson to continue with film-making in the age of sound, while *Life and Letters To-Day*, under her ownership and Herring's editorship, greatly expanded its coverage of film in the sound era, with a number of issues containing a substantial cinema section. Nonetheless, the loss for her was certainly that of the utopian dream of film's universalism and internationalism, 'because "the silents" offered a single language across Europe'.⁶⁰

Bryher's labours, in which she was aided by, amongst others, Herring and Blakeston, held the journal together until the end of 1933. The predominance of visual images in the last volumes of the journal reinforces the sense that the coming of sound had led to a decrease in 'dynamic discourse' on the film. It also attests to an increasingly photographic aesthetic in the journal: many of the images reproduced were not film stills but examples of abstract film (including compositions by Brugiere and Blakeston) and those of the new German photography which, Macpherson suggested in a review of Helmar Leski's book of photographs, *Köpfe des Alltags*, had become 'cinema at its best', with movement now seen to inhere within the still image itself.⁶¹

In this period the journal also published articles on national cinemas, including Japanese cinema and Turkish cinema. A lengthy article by Herman Weinberg exploring 'The Foreign Language Film in the United States', claimed that:

Europe, a heterogeneous state, found itself more sharply divided in 1928 than in any year since the end of the war. A new barrier of language had arisen between the dozen countries as a result of the invention of the talking film in America. The silent film, with its universally understood play of pantomime (and captions which

⁵⁹ H.D., 'The Mask and the Movietone', *Close Up*, 1:5 (Nov. 1927), 31.

⁶⁰ Bryher, *The Heart to Artemis*, 248.

⁶¹ Kenneth Macpherson, 'As Is', *Close Up*, 8:3 (Sept. 1931), 225.

could be translated into any language) was doomed to cinematic limbo before the onslaught of the talking film.⁶²

Bryher's last contribution to *Close Up* was entitled 'What Shall You Do in the War?' She took up the question of war and division in relation to the rise of national socialism and its manifestations in Berlin, including the increasing oppression of Jews and liberals. She brought in the issue of film only at the close of her article, arguing that peace could be fought for with cinema. Nonetheless, her references to the film societies and to 'small experiments [which] raised the general level of films considerably in five years' suggested that the energies that had gone into alternative cinema and cinema theory would now be needed to 'raise respect for intellectual liberty' if 'we' were not to plunge 'in every kind and color of uniform, towards a not to be imagined barbarism'.⁶³ The article spelled out a valediction for *Close Up* and the aspirations, aesthetic and political, that had brought it into being.

In its six years, *Close Up* laid the foundations for a new kind of film journal and a new form of film writing. The early work of the film theorist and director Paul Rotha, to take one example, in particular his highly influential book *The Film Till Now* (1930), was in its focus on montage theories and on psychoanalysis clearly shaped by the preoccupations of the *Close Up* writers. As I have suggested, the journal undoubtedly motivated a number of general art and cultural magazines to increase their coverage of cinema and discussions of film aesthetics. When the *Hound and Horn: A Harvard Miscellany* (which in its first issue welcomed *Close Up* as 'perhaps the only magazine which is wholly devoted to criticism of the screen as a potentially artistic medium'),⁶⁴ began to include articles on film, *Close Up* appears to have provided the model, with the Harvard journal producing the occasional lengthy article on a European director (Eisenstein, Murnau, Lubitsch), accompanied by numerous stills. There was also substantial overlap with *Experimental Cinema*, founded in 1930, whose byline was 'A monthly projecting important international film manifestations'. *Experimental Cinema*, permanently cash-strapped, folded in 1934, by which time it had been joined by a number of other related film journals. These included the British journal *Film Art: International Review of Advanceguard Cinema*, edited by B. Vivian Braun, which included among its contributors several who had written for *Close Up* (including Blakeston and Weinberg) and which extended the concerns of the earlier journal, including those of war and film, cinematic abstraction, and film and education. *Cinema Quarterly*, edited in Edinburgh by Norman Wilson, began publication in 1932, running until 1935, at which point it merged to become *World Film News* (1936–8): it, too, showed similarities to *Close Up*, in its combination of articles on film art,

⁶² Herman G. Weinberg, 'The Foreign Language Film in the United States: A Survey', *Close Up*, 10:2 (June 1933), 167.

⁶³ Bryher, 'What Shall You Do in the War?', *ibid.* 192.

⁶⁴ *The Hound and Horn: A Harvard Miscellany*, 1:1 (Sept. 1927), 66.

developments in film technology, new international cinemas, and film culture, with a particular focus on film societies. The emergence of *Sight and Sound* in 1932, and its attachment to the nascent British Film Institute in 1934, was a measure of film culture's increasing establishment.

Close Up was formative in all these initiatives, but there were also differences, of the times and of the nature of the project. Firstly, while both *Film Art* and *Cinema Quarterly* included numerous articles defending the 'essentially' visual nature of film aesthetics, their post-transition status led to a different shaping of the arguments from those of *Close Up*, which had traversed the uncertain years before and during which sound film was established. Secondly, while *Film Art* included some contributions from women writers, and had a few women on its editorial board, women contributors were largely absent from both *Experimental Cinema* and from *Cinema Quarterly*, whose primary commitment was to the documentary aesthetics and politics of John Grierson and his collaborators. Despite the success of women film critics in the national press, and, indeed, in many of the journals and magazines of the 1920s, the film journals of the early 1930s and beyond which, at one level, seemed to be continuing the work of *Close Up*, showed little of that journal's commitment to questions of gender and spectatorship, nor to the significance of psychoanalytic theory in its interplay with the cinematic apparatus and the cinematic mind. It would be some four decades before these concerns would again be placed at the heart of the study and the theory of film, and before the dialogue with *Close Up* would begin again.

INTERVENTIONS IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Time and Tide (1920–30) and *The Bermondsey Book* (1923–30)

JANE DOWSON

Recalling her intention in founding *Time and Tide*, Lady Margaret Rhondda evoked the mood for progress following the First World War: ‘The old ideas had failed us, but what exactly were the new ones that were to save us? . . . I wanted to find, to test, and to spread the customs and the ideas that could be health-giving and life-saving.’¹ To this end, she championed free-thinking dialogue and the role of intellectual women as board members, journalists, writers, and influential figures in all areas of public life. In 1923, *The Bermondsey Book* was begun by the social reformer, Ethel Gutman, who in 1921 had set up the Bermondsey Bookshop to provide free access to literature and foster the local community’s ardour for self-improvement. The quarterly review was explicitly ‘a serious effort in independent literary journalism . . . open to those who can’t get a voice anywhere else’.² Its purpose of bridging geographical and social divides by placing working-class writers alongside illustrious authors and thinkers was certainly achieved through the contiguous activities of the bookshop meetings and the review. The format and tone of both periodicals were explicitly pitched against the insidious sensationalism of the popular press. They brought new writing to intelligent readers who were perhaps not reached by some ‘little magazines’, while commenting on the decade’s national and international politics, economic depression, increasing unemployment, and the advances in feminist policies.

Magazines such as *Time and Tide* and *The Bermondsey Book* help us revise Jürgen Habermas’s notion of a literary–political public sphere, constituted by property-owning, book-educated men, by directing our attention to the ‘counter spheres’

¹ Viscountess Rhondda, *This Was My World* (London: Macmillan, 1933), 301.

² Editorial Notes, *The Bermondsey Book* (BB), 1:2 (Mar. 1924), 3–4.

of marginal groups, notably women and plebeians.³ Habermas observed how the reading circles based in coffee houses during the 1770s emerged from the needs of 'a bourgeois private people to create a forum to read periodicals and to discuss them, to exchange personal opinions, and to contribute to the formulation of an opinion that from the [seventeen] nineties will be called "public".'⁴ These circles were exclusively male. By contrast, the editors of *Time and Tide* and *The Bermondsey Book* promoted the social equality of women and the working class. They did not intend their periodicals to set up alternative subcultures of minority groups but to participate in the exchange of ideas that constituted what Habermas has termed 'a critically debating public'.⁵ The editors' visions for their magazines as agents of social democracy spanned differences in gender, race, nation, and class but, as in the eighteenth century, they were averse to forms of mass culture that stifled intellectual rigour. Their intention was to fortify a democratic book-reading public available to intelligent members of any sex or class.

Egalitarian ideals were woven into the magazines' editorial statements, principles of selection, and organization. The close contact with their readers that was sustained through encouraging feedback, 'at homes' (*Time and Tide*) and meetings at the bookshop (*The Bermondsey Book*), corresponds to Habermas's paradigm of a public whose discourse was rooted in literary texts and mediated through magazines and discussion groups. The editors' commitment to what Habermas terms 'communicative rationality' might account for the caution with which they discussed the most experimental spectrum of modernist fiction and poetry, especially where its emphasis on subjective interiority might seem at odds with an ideal of literary practice that changes minds and social policies. In a review, for example, of T. S. Eliot's collection of essays, *For Lancelot Andrews*, in *Time and Tide*, Stephen Haden Guest declared it 'an important book. Because Mr Eliot, who is editor of the *Criterion*, is becoming, to an increasing number of disciples, almost infallible' but rejected its self-reflexiveness: 'his criticism is not life-giving; it is a mechanism of defence against a too-keenly felt reality, a retreat. It is his magnificent poetry which is valuable.'⁶ Similarly, in *The Bermondsey Book*, the experiments of Gertrude Stein and Edith Sitwell prompted Humbert Wolfe to ask, 'should the poet, then, instead of adventuring behind the utmost edge of reality, deliberately turn his back

³ See, for example, Rachel Potter, 'Modernism and Democracy: A Reconsideration', *Critical Quarterly*, 44:2 (July 2002), 1–16; Mark S. Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism: Little Magazines, Audiences, and Reception 1905–20* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001); Georgina Taylor, *H.D. and the Public Sphere of Modernist Women Writers 1913–1946* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁴ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger with Fredrick Lawrence (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), 73.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Stephen Haden Guest, *Time and Tide (T&T)* (29 Mar. 1929), 369–70.

on it?'⁷ Nevertheless, as here, the reviews broadened the readership of innovative work.

The literary review is a dominant genre in both periodicals, encouraging an openness to international advances in theatre, fiction, poetry, and later film.⁸ Whereas the collapse of the literary public sphere in the mid-nineteenth century was concomitant with increased literacy and the attendant practice of reading in private,⁹ the opinion columns in *Time and Tide* and *The Bermondsey Book* resuscitated a 'critically debating public' through dialogue and participation. Just as Habermas judged the impact of the periodical article by the 'flood of letters' it provoked,¹⁰ so the substantial correspondence pages turned solitary readers into writers conversing in an international network. Habermas also noted how journals with some political content had the largest number of subscribers and were the most widely read,¹¹ and the combination of literary and political reviews might partly account for the success of both magazines. Through the course of the decade, they saw a rise in subscriptions, grew in size, and moved to bigger premises. In turn, these achievements register a public hungry for artistic practices that expanded their ideas and had a perceptible social function.

Time and Tide (1920–30)¹²

A first-class weekly review, as I saw it then, and still see it today, is read by comparatively few people, but they are the people who count, the people of influence, the people who make the universities, the people who teach the young, the people who make the laws and the people who administer them. The good weekly review is, in fact, amongst the unacknowledged legislators. The vast crowd that reads the popular press—and almost everyone of us, if he is to be honest, must admit that he is amongst it—is not influenced in serious matters by what he reads there. They turn to other mentors.¹³

Lady Rhondda's statement above would appear to support Mark Morrisson's claim that the popular press served as a useful 'rhetorical enemy' against which

⁷ Humbert Wolfe, 'The Difficulties of the Poet', *BB*, 5:2 (Mar.–May 1928), 17–18.

⁸ *The Bermondsey Book* started film reviews in 1926 and *Time and Tide* from 1930.

⁹ Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 73, 168.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 42. ¹¹ *Ibid.* 73.

¹² The first issue was 14 May 1920. It was then published as a weekly broadsheet on Saturdays, initially priced 4d. and consisting of around twenty-three pages. The magazine continued until 1976. The present discussion covers 1920–30. Muriel J. Mellowyn surveys the periodical's entire lifespan, 'Time and Tide', in Alvin Sullivan (ed.), *British Literary Magazines: The Modern Age, 1914–84* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986), 441–53.

¹³ Lady Rhondda, 'Introduction', in Anthony Lejeune (ed.), *Time and Tide Anthology* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1956).

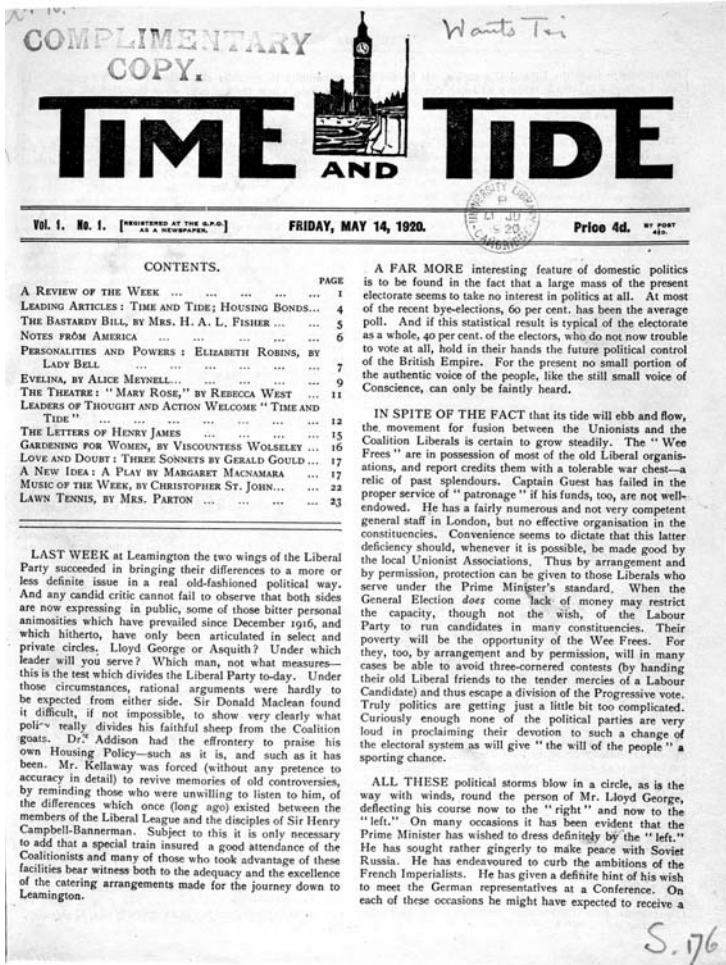


Fig. 65. Cover of *Time and Tide* (1920)

modernist writers would pitch their own publications.¹⁴ Her dismissiveness does not, however, stem from cultural snobbery but from a sense that the mass market's manipulation of public opinion contaminated free-thinking dialogue. At the same time, Lady Rhondda intended to affect opinion and *Time and Tide* became an exemplar of professional journalism and, according to Mellown, 'one of the most outstanding and influential journals of the twentieth century'.¹⁵ While holding its own as a London periodical, *Time and Tide* provided impressively informed

¹⁴ Morrison, *Public Face*, 9.

¹⁵ *T&T* printed snippets of reviews from the Press and was advertised in *The Times* during 1929 (22 Feb., 5; 1 Mar., 12; 12 Apr., 10; 10 May, 10; 21 June, 8). Mellown, '*Time and Tide*', 440.

editorial comments in its wide-ranging coverage of more global politics along with local cultural events through the regular columns, 'Review of the Week', 'In the Tideway', and 'Timetables'. The editors countered the condescending tone and disconcerting anonymity in the *Times Literary Supplement* with personalized but balanced reviews and by cultivating animated debates through the readers' letters. The correspondence often engaged with the frequent series that pursued a topical issue for several weeks, from equal franchise to public lodging houses and covered buses. These and the editors' respectful tone were ingredients in the 'subtle bond of intimacy established between the paper and its readers' to which the editor attributed the gradual 'upward curve of sales' between 1920 and 1928 when it expanded its size and raised the price to sixpence.¹⁶ After eight years of 'an uphill fight', due to 'intense competition' it had 'won full recognition as a leading weekly paper of general non-party interests'.¹⁷ The year 1928 was the pivotal point of success that propelled the move to 32 Bloomsbury Street from 88 Fleet Street. While one alleged secret of its success was its 'definite' outlook, it also consistently endorsed free speech. Thus, in 'What Price Milton?', quoting from *Areopagitica*, Winifred Holtby asserts the right to utter and argue freely according to conscience as the cornerstone of British democracy. Holtby exposed the new postmaster general's instruction that the BBC must refrain from including industrial, political, and religious controversy in its broadcasts.¹⁸ Rebecca West's 'The Journalist and the Public',¹⁹ in a series on the future of the press, provoked lively correspondence at a time when the trial of Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* was viewed as a case against free expression. The latter provoked a leading article against censorship and in a review of the book, Vera Brittain spoke against 'persecution' and 'ostracism'.²⁰ Elsewhere, Brittain promoted university magazines, 'these culture grounds of confidence' to encourage writing that has yet to be 'discouraged by scorn or indifference'.²¹

Time and Tide went on to enact the ideal of an egalitarian communicating public. Throughout the 1920s, it monitored legislation that would allow women to have equality in law alongside the progression of Bills that addressed rising unemployment.²² On its second anniversary, it announced a lowered subscription

¹⁶ 'Moving House', *T&T* (10 May 1929), 547.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 'Independent—Non Party' and later 'The Review with Independent Views. Politics Literature. Art' was printed under the title to each edition.

¹⁸ Winifred Holtby, 'What Price Milton?', *T&T* (27 Jan. 1928), 72–3.

¹⁹ Rebecca West, 'The Journalist and the Public', *T&T* (2 Mar. 1928), 194–6.

²⁰ 'The *Well of Loneliness* Decision', *T&T* (23 Nov. 1928), 1124–5; Vera Brittain, Review, *T&T* (10 Aug. 1928), 765.

²¹ Vera Brittain, 'University Magazines', *T&T* (21 Jan. 1927), 60; 'Argos', [Vera Brittain], 'University Magazines', *T&T* (20 May 1927), 451–2.

²² Leading article on the half a million reported unemployed, *T&T* (23 Sept. 1921), 903–4; leading article urging an all-party conference on unemployment, *T&T* (22 Nov. 1929), 1396.

rate from four to three and a half pence due to the prevailing depression and in 1926 produced two 'STRIKE issues'. It kept a check on the economic policies of the new Labour party both in and out of government. That women members had fallen from nearly one million in 1921 to less than half was the subject of concern at the General Council of the Trades Union Congress in 1925, and in 1928, St John Ervine, a regular reviewer, wrote a long article on George Bernard Shaw's *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism*.²³ While emboldening the voices of women against any impediments to their independence, the paper rallied against other injustices, from the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti in 1927 to the victimization of 'lunatics' in the press.²⁴

Like her predecessor, Harriet Shaw Weaver, who financed *The New Freewoman* and *The Egoist*, *Time and Tide's* founder Margaret Haig, Viscountess Rhondda (1883–1958), was independently wealthy and a strong public figure. She had supported militant suffragettes as a young woman, had been interested in *The New Statesman* when it began in 1913, and desired to start her own paper in the knowledge that weekly reviews ran at a heavy financial loss but had 'never been done by a woman'.²⁵ As a 'business associate' of her father's before the First World War, she experienced the 'sex barrier' to the public sphere: 'No person who has never been cut off from the gossip of their profession, who has never stood outside the mainstream of supply of talk, can realise how immensely important that talk is. Half the action that is taken depends for its success on a thorough knowledge of intelligent professional gossip.'²⁶ In 1926, she took over from Helen Archdale as editor and continued until 1958. Winifred Holtby became director in 1926 and between 1927 and 1933 was a 'highly successful and much sought after journalist'.²⁷ *Time and Tide* enabled Holtby to reconcile her parallel impulses for social reform and writing. Her reporting became increasingly international, particularly through her involvement with the recently formed League of Nations Union.²⁸

Rebecca West, a director from 1923, published an article about the impact of journalism on public opinion with reference to *The Freewoman* and *The New Freewoman*:

For that paper, unimportant as it was in content, and amateurish in form, had an immense effect on its time. . . . *The Freewoman* by its candour did an immense

²³ 'Women and Trade Unions 1', *T&T* (27 Feb. 1925), 197. St John Ervine (1883–1971), Irish novelist and dramatist, was a friend of Holtby.

²⁴ Report on Sacco and Vanzetti, *T&T* (26 Aug. 1927), 768–9. Dr Marion MacKenzie, 'Lunacy and Restraint', *T&T* (23 Sept. 1921), 904–5.

²⁵ Rhondda, *This Was My World*, 303.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 230.

²⁷ Paul Berry and Alan Bishop (eds), *Testament of a Generation: The Journalism of Vera Brittain and Winifred Holtby* (London: Virago, 1985), 12.

²⁸ See also Holtby, Report on the League of Nations, *T&T* (14 Sept. 1923), 928–9; article on sixth assembly of the League of Nations in Geneva, *T&T* (2 Oct. 1925).

service to the world by shattering, as nothing else would, as not the mere cries of intention towards independence had ever done, the romantic conception of women.²⁹

The seismic shift from conceptualizing femininity in terms of self-effacement to the view of women as agents of literary production was registered by a number of concurrent initiatives. Virginia and Leonard Woolf had started the Hogarth Press in 1917, and the anthology *Wheels* (1916–21) was a group venture by Edith Sitwell, Nancy Cunard, and Helen Rootham that attracted considerable attention in the literary press. In 1927, the Seizin Press was set up by Laura Riding (with Robert Graves) (see Chapter 34), and in 1928 Nancy Cunard started The Hours Press.³⁰

With Rhondda, West, and Holtby at the helm, *Time and Tide's* paradigm of the female intellectual with a social conscience attracted notable novelists and reporters as reviewers and directors.³¹ Strong role models were also elevated through the lengthy weekly portraits of men and women, past and present, who made a difference to public life. These collectible 'Personalities and Powers' range from Marie Curie to Maude Royden.³² On 1 June 1928, the paper included a four-page pull-out supplement 'Josephine Butler's legacy' that exhorted women to persist in championing just causes. The baton of social reform was also handed down through obituaries to Emmeline Pankhurst and Millicent Fawcett in 1929. *Time and Tide* supported women in all three major political parties, including the MPs Mrs Wintringham (Liberal), Lady Astor (Conservative), and Ellen Wilkinson (Labour). Each election they published a list of MPs who had voted for policies supported by women's organizations; and the female 52 per cent of the electorate helped return a Labour government in 1929.³³

In the pages of *Time and Tide*, intellectual women could eschew the myths of mindless femininity and weak creativity maintained through popular women's magazines. *Vogue* had been inaugurated in Britain in 1919, *Good Housekeeping* in 1922, and BBC *Woman's Hour* in 1923. While opposed to ghettoization, an article by an editor for the *Manchester Guardian* and *Yorkshire Post* made a case

²⁹ Rebecca West, *The Freewoman* (16 July 1926), 648–9.

³⁰ These assertive female activities contrast with the apolitical reporting and literary conformity of the Oxford women undergraduates in their inter-college journal *The Fritillary*.

³¹ The following list of directors was printed in 1928: Mrs Chalmers Watson (Chairman), Viscountess Rhondda (vice-chair), Professor Winifred Cullis, Miss E. M. Delafield, Miss Cicely Hamilton, Winifred Holtby, Lady L. Llewellyn, Marion Jean Lyon, Rebecca West, and Mrs Wintringham.

³² Maude Royden, a feminist, pacifist, socialist, woman preacher was a frequent contributor to *T&T* (1 Sept. 1922), 832.

³³ See 'Women Candidates for Parliament', *T&T* (23 Nov. 1923), 1168–9. Other campaigns include Ellen Wilkinson's Bill about Women Police (*T&T* (4 Dec. 1925), 1184), correspondence on women and the priesthood (*T&T* (9 Nov. 1923), 1131), and Lady Rhondda pertinently calling for the right of peeresses to take their seats in the House of Lords (*T&T* (9 June 1922), 541).

for reclaiming the woman's page in the national papers for an 'exchange of ideas' since women's interests are 'as wide as the world'. She called for 'intimate, honest, revealing, letters from ordinary people [which] are, I believe, the best "copy" in the world.'³⁴ Anti-sentimentality is ingrained in the stance of the reviewers, such as Anne Doubleday on Mary Borden's *Flamingo*: 'The whole thing is a tawdry and rather pretentious mixture of cynicism and sentimentality';³⁵ a complimentary profile of Stella Benson approved how 'Her fierce humour pierces the sentimental subterfuges of a muddle-headed world.'³⁶ There is a paradox in the surrounding advertisements for high couture fashions and home furnishings that entrench ideals of feminine domesticity, but these are outweighed by publishers' promotions and other notices concerning intellectual culture.

The threat of being charged with sentimental femininity manifested itself in an exceptionally rational mode of reviewing with Rebecca West as the luminary.³⁷ In 1929, she set out the coinciding and conflicting aspects of the Labour and Feminist movements in a three and a half page article, 'The Inconveniences of Power'. Stimulated by the re-election of the Labour Party and the full political enfranchisement of women, West provided a historically informed assessment of how the current political status of the government and of women's social and economic positions were at odds with each other. A subsequent letter by Lady Rhondda under her alias 'Candida' reiterates the coercion to become stakeholders in public life. Moreover, the feminist 'party', she writes, must aim for 'integration'.³⁸ Whereas Habermas viewed the eighteenth-century public sphere as dependent upon a private domain that was implicitly female, domestic, and unliterary, in this twentieth-century magazine, we find 'women's' issues regarded as shared public concerns. There were accounts, in addition, of enfranchisement around the world with frequent updates on progress in the United States,³⁹ of victories over Divorce Law reform,⁴⁰ and of

³⁴ Crystal Eastman, 'What Shall We Do with The Woman's Page?', *T&T* (20 May 1927), 470, with ensuing correspondence, including a letter from 'a north-country woman' (*T&T* (27 May 1927), 502).

³⁵ *T&T* (11 Nov. 1927), 1015.

³⁶ 'Personalities and Powers', *T&T* (12 Nov. 1926), 1028–9.

³⁷ Royde-Smith, 'Rebecca West: Novelist', review of *Harriet Hume*, *T&T* (27 Sept. 1929), 1148–9. For further discussion of West's early journalism as 'a form of intervention in the public sphere' see Lyn Pykett, 'The Making of a Modern Woman Writer: Rebecca West's Journalism, 1911–1930', in Kate Campbell (ed.), *Journalism, Literature and Modernity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 170–89. See also, Jane Marcus (ed.), *The Young Rebecca: Writings of Rebecca West 1911–17* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982).

³⁸ 'Candida', 'Rebecca West and Feminism', *T&T* (5 July 1929), 816–17.

³⁹ 'The World Over: Atmosphere and the Woman', *T&T* (15 July 1921), 678–9; 'Aspects of British and American Feminism', *T&T* (21, 28 Mar. 1924); 'Feminism in England and America', *T&T* (9 July, 1926), 616.

⁴⁰ *T&T* (27 Jan. 1922), 77.

the Matrimonial Causes Bill when 'In England for the first time men and women have equal divorce rights.'⁴¹

The airing of conventionally private dilemmas further adjusted the boundaries of the 'public sphere'. In 1921, Maude Royden's series on the sexes explored at length such controversies as women's sexual needs, friendships, and the meeting of minds in marriage: 'Modern psychology is lifting the veil from the suffering which repression causes.'⁴² *Time and Tide* advertised the works of Marie Stopes and in 1926 printed correspondence that indicated the readers' divided approach to birth control.⁴³ It was vigilant about legislation that allowed women into the professions and championed the right of married women to work,⁴⁴ although it was not beyond printing a sentimental poem 'Mother' by Hilda Skae.⁴⁵ The editorial policy appeared to straddle both 'Old' and 'New' feminist causes.⁴⁶ On 19 January 1923, a supplement on The Six Point Group held to equality with men as the unifying goal, yet in 1926, 'The New Feminism', was examined in a leading article and defended in a letter from Eva Hubback followed by an editor's note that *Time and Tide* 'has no connection with the Six Point Group'.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, in 1927 it advertised the Group's literary lectures, including Thomas Moulton, former editor of *Voices*, on 'The Place of Women in the Poetry of our Time'.⁴⁸ Although opinions varied, the collective intention of the editors was to participate in a democratic sphere of public activity rather than remain in an 'alternative' female subculture. To this end, Cicely Hamilton acted as a watchdog of reactionary influences in 'The Backwash of Feminism' and 'The Return to Femininity'.⁴⁹

In her autobiography, Lady Rhondda reflected on the fight for equality with men as a necessary step but was glad to move on to 'bigger game': 'changing not the laws, but a point of view, that is really worth while... alter a nation's habit of mind, and the laws will alter themselves.'⁵⁰ In 1927, a series culminated in a

⁴¹ *T&T* (13 July 1923), 74–5. The Matrimonial Causes Bill that would allow divorce after seven years of separation had failed the third reading before being passed in 1923.

⁴² Maude Royden, 'The Problem of the Sexes in 1921', *T&T* (8, 15, 22, 29 July and 5, 12, 19 Aug. 1921), stirred up correspondence between July and December 1921.

⁴³ See letter from Marie Stopes defending birth control, *T&T* (26 Mar. 1926), 314–15.

⁴⁴ Leading article, 'Recent Dismissals by Married Women', *T&T* (9 Dec. 1921), 1176.

⁴⁵ *T&T* (26 Aug. 1921), 814.

⁴⁶ 'Feminism Divided' (rpt. from the *Yorkshire Post*, 26 July), *T&T* (6 Aug. 1926), 714–15. Reprinted in Berry and Bishop (eds), *Testament of a Generation*, 47–5.

⁴⁷ 'The New Feminism', *T&T* (5 Mar. 1926), 220–1; *T&T* (20 Aug. 1926). Eva Hubback (1886–1949), Newnham, Cambridge; Chair of London County Council Schools Sub-committee; Principal Morley College.

⁴⁸ *T&T* (4 Feb. 1927), 120. The address 92 Victoria Street was the base of the Six Point Group and included a lecture room for communal lectures.

⁴⁹ *T&T* (8 Sept. 1922), 853–4; and (12 Aug. 1927), 737.

⁵⁰ Rhondda, *This Was My World*, 298, 300.

much publicized debate with G. K. Chesterton and then a leaflet, 'Women and the Leisured Classes', by Lady Rhondda. For her, the crucial division in society was not determined by economic differences, but by women who acquiesced in the 'natural' role of homemaker and held back those who sought to influence public opinion.⁵¹ In his summing up of the debate, George Bernard Shaw blamed the popular press for the passivity of both men and women across social echelons: 'Most of the daily newspapers of London today, although you may not know it, are rammed down your throats. They are shoved in the places where our brains should be. That is one of the things we have to get rid of.'⁵²

The most explicit articulation of the relation between an intelligent press and public democracy is the report of *Time and Tide's* 'At Home', held in the Hyde Park Hotel on 30 November 1927, with extracts from three speeches on 'The Function of the Weekly Review'. Lady Rhondda spoke in terms of a single 'public' who demand 'a higher and higher standard of accuracy and lack of bias in its news', aligning *Time and Tide* with *The Nation*, *The Spectator*, *The New Statesman*, and *The Saturday Review*, as papers with 'the highest office' in journalism that try 'not merely to talk but to think'. Her vision was of 'a kind of building up of an organic whole so that it does come to represent the approximate point of view of its public, whether they be writers or readers. Only so can it be effectively one of the opinion makers of the world.'⁵³ West, the second speaker, defended the daily paper's niche but condemned current practice that tended to 'commercial genius' and copied the Americans' shorter columns of 500–600 words (instead of 1,000 or 1,200) that are 'unwriteable' and 'only for the feeble minded': 'Americanisation of the newspaper is persisting . . . except no one reads American newspapers,' she said. For West, there was 'nothing more important' than a 'journal of opinion' in order to rescue the post-war political machine and restore the English parliamentary system. The other speaker, Professor Winifred Cullis, concurred that *Time and Tide* had picked up readers who preferred intellectually demanding journalism to the partisan polemic of populist reporting.⁵⁴ The following year, one such reader, of the International Magazine Co. Ltd, reiterated the point: 'The trouble in the periodical publishing world today is that the bookstalls are overcrowded with cheap stuff unworthy of the publishers who issue it in mass quantities.'⁵⁵

⁵¹ 'The Menace of the Leisured Woman', between 'Candida and a Candid Friend', Kingsway Hall, 27 January. 1927, 8 p.m. Report by Holtby, *T&T* (4 Feb. 1927), 108–9; 'Jottings on the Debate', extracts from both speeches, *T&T* (11 Feb. 1927), 141; and correspondence for several weeks afterwards. Review of Rhondda's *Leisured Women* (London: Hogarth Press, 1928), by Cicely Hamilton, *T&T* (13 Apr. 1928), 360.

⁵² G. B. Shaw, full text of his summing up speech, *T&T* (4 Feb. 1927), 106–7.

⁵³ Lady Rhondda, 'At Home', *T&T* (9 Dec. 1927), 1114.

⁵⁴ West and Cullis, *ibid.*

⁵⁵ Letter from Ivor Nicholson, *T&T* (21 Sept. 1928), 877. See also a riposte on the five differences between American and English book-selling, by Michael Seidler, *T&T* (28 Sept. 1928), 896–7.

The conceptual connection between literature, critical thinking, and democracy is further transmitted through the review of a pamphlet *Books and the Public*, by the editor of *The Nation*, John Maynard, and others who had written columns for the paper on the crisis in publishing and the book trade resulting from the circulating libraries: 'The immediate remedy must lie in making the reading public realise that economy in buying books is not a virtue.'⁵⁶ The reviews in *Time and Tide* did their bit and embraced an eclectic *mêlée* of literary activity. In 1921 about 200 books were reviewed but by 1930 the number was more like 700. The anti-sentimental stance and dedication to the social implications of art perhaps account for the reviewers' tenacity for social realism, but they were open to innovation that broadened minds. Rebecca West's review of the Russian Ballet *Chout* at the Princess Theatre in 1921 insisted that culture which generated intellectual freedom was embattled by mass art, although 'Futurism has no function to fulfil in England'.⁵⁷ In 1926, a profile of Marinetti paid tribute to 'the leader of the "new art" for his vigorous personality' and 'his active and often masterly mind'.⁵⁸ The progressiveness of Henri Bergson was similarly appreciated in 1927—'everywhere, he emphasizes the idea of progress, movement, and in a word, of evolution'—with a telling endorsement that a philosopher must be practical rather than a 'spinner of abstract theories'.⁵⁹

While the comments on European thought were considered, the treatment of American culture was more mixed, as seen earlier in West's dismissal of its newspapers. While encouraging political news from the United States, American modernist writers had a muted reception. Amy Lowell's *Tendencies in American Poetry* was noted with interest⁶⁰ and Carl Sandburg's *Selected Poems*, edited by Rebecca West, were advertised through Thomas Moul's review.⁶¹ In a review of Laura Riding's *Contemporaries and Snobs* and *A Survey of Modern Poetry* by Riding and Robert Graves, Naomi Royde-Smith was unsure about Gertrude Stein 'whom we all know' and the 'new or modernist school of poetry', epitomized by e. e. cummings: 'they have a theory of poetry which embraces them.'⁶² Although the Harlem Renaissance does not specifically feature, the poem 'One Day I told My Love' by Countee Cullen appeared in June 1929.⁶³ The previous month, Rebecca West had taken issue with Wyndham Lewis for implying that the Negro movement was degenerative and in September a poignant short story exposing

⁵⁶ 'Buy More Books', review of *Books and the Public* (London: Hogarth Press, 1927), *T&T* (14 Oct. 1927), 911.

⁵⁷ *T&T* (1 July 1921), 627–8.

⁵⁸ 'Personalities and Powers', *T&T* (5 Mar. 1926), 222–3.

⁵⁹ 'Personalities and Powers', *T&T* (1 Apr. 1927), 309–10.

⁶⁰ *T&T* (7 Apr. 1922), 328.

⁶¹ *T&T* (13 Aug. 1926), 735.

⁶² *T&T* (16 Mar. 1928), 252. See also review of Stein, *The Making of Americans: Being a History of a Family's Progress*, by Sylvia Lynd (1926), 271–2.

⁶³ Countee Cullen, 'One Day I Told My Love', *T&T* (7 June 1929), 685.

racial abuse was printed.⁶⁴ Louis Untermeyer's foreword to an *Anthology of Modern American Poetry* that claimed five hundred new poetry books a year over the past decade prompted Sylvia Townsend Warner to write 'An Enquiry into the Decay in the Uses of Poetry', in which she laments the loss of the public Ode.⁶⁵ Warner's column on 'Tendencies in Contemporary Literature' typically jostles her ironically nostalgic British traditionalism with an ambiguously progressive outlook: 'It may be that future readers will say of our period: "How delightfully dull!" and while carrying about *Ulysses* as a pocket classic find in *An American Tragedy* (say) the same rather snuffy fragrance which lingers in the pages of *Ivanhoe*.'⁶⁶

In 1929, Rebecca West took up the cause of Elinor Wylie, whose character had been defamed in the New York press.⁶⁷ In compensation, several of Wylie's poems were printed in *Time and Tide* after her death,⁶⁸ but her work was reviewed unfavourably by Naomi Royde-Smith, who preferred the technical expertise of Edith Sitwell, whom she advocated between 1927 and 1929, declaring *Rustic Elegies* 'the most important verse of the moment' and *Gold Coast Customs*, 'poetry of a very high order, no easy introspective, self-appraising verse, but writing which demands an intelligent as well as emotional response from the reader'.⁶⁹ By association, Royde-Smith asserts her own rationality. In a lengthy tribute to Charlotte Mew, Sitwell herself disregarded the confessionalism of Wylie and Millay in preference for Mew's 'impersonality': 'she died and her work is still unrecognized, while sloppy nonsense about insincere and vulgar "love" affairs makes a cheap notoriety for other and cheaper women verse-writers.'⁷⁰ Although Sitwell proposed analysing Mew 'as if she were a man' the article actually gestures towards a modern aesthetic of female poets through connecting Mew and Christina Rossetti with her own adventurous versification and elusive symbolism.

While the poetry reviewing was instructive, few poems were printed and, oddly, these were often pastoral, especially in the early years. Conversely, the numerous

⁶⁴ Rebecca West, review of *Paleface* by Wyndham Lewis, *T&T* (24 May 1929), 623–5; David Stewart, 'The Negro', *T&T* (27 Sept. 1929), 1145.

⁶⁵ Sylvia Townsend Warner, 'An Enquiry into the Decay in the Uses of Poetry', *T&T* (29 Apr. 1927), 403–4.

⁶⁶ Sylvia Townsend Warner, 'Tendencies in Contemporary Literature', *T&T* (19 Nov. 1926), 1051–2.

⁶⁷ Rebecca West, 'The High Cost of Personal Journalism', *T&T* (18 Jan. 1929), 62–4.

⁶⁸ Elinor Wylie, 'The Last Supper', *T&T* (15 Mar. 1929), 290; 'A Poem', 'True Vine' (12 Apr. 1929), 424; 'Desolation is a Delicate Thing' (10 May 1929), 545.

⁶⁹ Naomi Royde-Smith, *T&T* (14 Oct. 1927), 916; (8 Mar. 1929), 264–6. See also the positive profile, 'Personalities and Powers: The Three Sitwells', *T&T* (25 Dec. 1925), 1262–4, and a review of *Rustic Elegies*, *T&T* (14 Oct. 1927), 914–16.

⁷⁰ Edith Sitwell, 'The Poems of Charlotte Mew', review of *The Farmer's Bride* and *The Rambling Sailor*, *T&T* (21 June 1929), 755–6; 'Modern Poetry' (30 Mar. 1928), 308–9; 'A Few Remarks on Sitwellism' (6 Apr. 1928), 332–3.

pieces of short fiction in *Time and Tide* are diverse and contemporary, although in her article on the increasing market for short stories created by the growth of magazine culture, Cicely Hamilton seems unaware of cutting edge examples.⁷¹ Characteristically, Holtby's pieces maintain a realist narrative that occasionally moves into fantasy.⁷² The year 1927 seemed to be a particularly bumper year, starting Sylvia Townsend Warner, Katherine Mansfield, and Stella Benson.⁷³ Debates about English conventionality, particularly in marriage, are frequently registered through dialogue. Similarly, class injustices are dramatized in a discussion about a pauper's funeral between a passer-by and a flower seller in 'The Death of a Match Seller', by Eleanor Farjeon, and feature in Naomi Mitchison's, 'I'm a Business Man'.⁷⁴ Other significant contributors include Edith Nesbit, the Irish Kathleen Coyle, and Edith Wharton.

Although the reviewers were tuned to works that tended towards rational and public conversations about modern culture, *Time and Tide* also brought the more innovative fiction to the attention of a widening readership, especially in the latter 1920s. While men, notably St John Ervine, were regular columnists, it was the principal literary commentators, Winifred Holtby, Cicely Hamilton, Rebecca West, and Sylvia Lynd, who investigated the experimental publications of James Joyce, Ezra Pound, and T. S. Eliot along with the new work of Virginia Woolf, May Sinclair, Sylvia Townsend Warner, E. M. Forster, Ford Madox Ford, Joseph Conrad, and D. H. Lawrence. Lawrence contributed several reviews and five poems in 1929, and his writing was favourably discussed, possibly due to its Freudian characterization.⁷⁵ Naturally, women's texts were given the serious consideration denied them in other papers. Lynd declared 'Rebecca West is a woman of genius' in her review of *The Judge*; later, West's *The Strange Necessity* was applauded and *Harriet Hume: A London Fantasy* was cited as 'one of the sensations of the autumn publishing'.⁷⁶ Most of all, Virginia Woolf's works from *Jacob's Room* onwards

⁷¹ Cicely Hamilton, 'Fiction on Crutches', *T&T* (1 Oct. 1926), 875–6.

⁷² Winifred Holtby, 'The Resurrection Morning', *T&T* (21 Oct. 1927), 935–6; 'Remember, Remember!' (25 Nov. 1927), 1055–6; 'The man who hated God' (10 Feb. 1928), 126–7; 'The Bird Flies' (27 July 1928), 722–3; 'Poor Mary' (17 May 1929).

⁷³ Sylvia Townsend Warner, 'I am come into my garden', *T&T* (28 Jan. 1927), 79–81; 'Zizanias' (20 May 1927), 472–3; 'A Moral Ending' (23 Sept. 1927), 836. Katherine Mansfield, 'The Apple Tree', *T&T* (20 May 1927), 473–4. See also Sylvia Lynd, 'The Genius of Katherine Mansfield', *T&T* (22 June 1923), 635–6. Stella Benson, 'The End of the Party', *T&T* (11 Mar. 1927), 231–3; also, 'The Oblivious Sea' (30 Jan. 1925), 109–11.

⁷⁴ *T&T* (14 Oct. 1927), 904; (14 June, 1929), 717–19.

⁷⁵ Sylvia Lynd, review of D. H. Lawrence's, *The Ladybird*, *T&T* (30 Mar. 1923), 345–6; also, review of *The Plumed Serpent* (5 Feb. 1926), 127.

⁷⁶ *T&T* (1922), 691; (27 July 1928), 725–6. Naomi Royde-Smith, Review, *T&T* (27 Sept. 1929), 1148. See also Anne Doubleday, review of West's, *The Return of the Soldier* at The Playhouse, dramatized by John Van Druten, *T&T* (22 June, 1928), 614–15.

were acclaimed.⁷⁷ In her review of *To the Lighthouse*, Olive Heseltine asserts, 'Mrs Woolf is unlike any other writer whether as a literary critic, as a novelist of the classical tradition, or as the ablest assailant of that tradition; her genius is beyond dispute. The book has none of the sensations and incidents common to the popular novel.'⁷⁸ Significantly, 'popular', rather than masculinist or conservative, writing, is evoked negatively. 'M.W.' commends 'Kew Gardens' as 'a distinguished example of the best modern lyric prose' which readers could sample in Woolf's condensed 'reflection', 'The Sun and the Fish'.⁷⁹ *Orlando* was listed under Books for Christmas, and praised by Clara Smith, although she glossed over Woolf's subversive treatment of sexuality and biography.⁸⁰ In 1929 an enthusiastic review and then excerpts from *A Room of One's Own* promoted a book that encapsulated how the paper connected literary with social transformation.⁸¹ Its argument that women need a space of their own along with access to public places articulated the ways in which *Time and Tide* had established a community of women in the production of the magazine while influencing an international network of male and female readers. Woolf's reservations about separatism that appear in her discussion of androgyny are embedded in *Time and Tide's* liberal humanist practices and ideals. Her mixed feelings about feminism and literature are manifest in the differing stances of *Time and Tide's* journalists, with Royde-Smith wary of 'women's literature' and West overtly advertising their work.

The integration of literary pieces, reviews, and political commentary, in a periodical dedicated to changing the minds of the nation's key thinkers repeatedly emphasized the social function of art. Perhaps because it is a particularly public genre, the reviews of theatre were prominent and consistent, with George Bernard Shaw regularly given a high profile.⁸² The editors' preference for more obviously 'public' literature meant that, as it moved into the 1930s, *Time and Tide* was ready to host the poems too, of, amongst others, Auden and Spender.

The Bermondsey Book (1923–30)

'A *Quarterly Review* devoted to all phases of life and literature, will be something quite new among contemporary periodicals.'⁸³

⁷⁷ Review of Woolf, *Jacob's Room*, *T&T* (1922), 1136.

⁷⁸ Olive Heseltine, Review of *To the Lighthouse*, *T&T* (17 June, 1927), 573.

⁷⁹ M.W., *T&T* (2 Dec. 1927), 1088; (3 Feb. 1928), 99–100.

⁸⁰ *T&T* (14 Dec. 1928), 1233. Clara Smith, Review of *Orlando*, *T&T* (12 Oct. 1928), 943.

⁸¹ Theodora Bosanquet, Review of *A Room of One's Own*, *T&T* (15 Nov. 1929), 1371–2. Extracts, *T&T* (22, 29 Nov, 1929), 1403–4, 1434–6.

⁸² The regular theatre critics were Christopher St John, Anne Doubleday, and Shirland Quinn.

⁸³ Editorial Preface, *BB*, 1:1 (Dec. 1923). Blue cover and yellow inset. 2s. Published by Cecil Palmer, then by William Heinemann from 2:3 (June 1925).

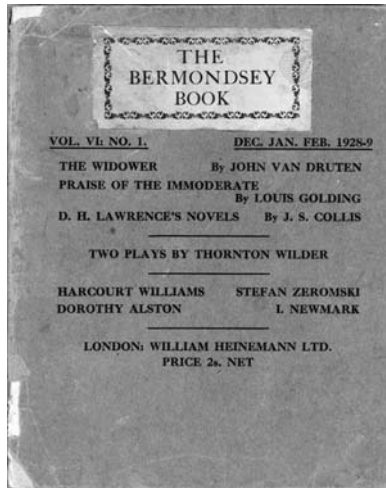


Fig. 66. Cover of *The Bermondsey Book* (Dec. 1928–Feb. 1929)

Habermas recognizes that participation in a literary public sphere would ideally stretch to all book-readers rather than be predetermined by social conditions, namely education and property ownership. In these terms, *The Bermondsey Book* is a symptom of its readers' desire for knowledge and equal voice in an educated communicating public. The opening 'Dedication' was a manifesto for nourishing the spirit through the written word under the principle of 'each for all, and all for each':

This was the aim of those who opened the bookshop in Bermondsey Street, and it is no less the aim of the Book... Life without Literature and the ideals which flower from its reading, is barbarism, and a nation in which the humblest and poorest cannot have free access to the thought and beauty which are its heritage, EXISTS, but does not LIVE.

The barriers of ambition and greed which divide nations and cause wars, the personal prejudices that separate individuals and maintain the contradictions of class will disappear when art and literature exercise their fullest influence as levellers, making all men one. In the mental life there may be differences, but there are no distinctions.⁸⁴

Like the founding principles of *Time and Tide*, these words confirm Mark Morrisson's view that modernists shared an 'optimism about redirecting the public function of the press'.⁸⁵ Also, like Lady Rhondda, the Bermondsey editor defined the paper against the 'meretricious writing in a section of the popular press devoted

⁸⁴ 'Dedication', *BB* 1:1 (Dec. 1923), 3–4.

⁸⁵ Morrisson, *Public Face*, 11.

to stunts, snippets, and stupidities'.⁸⁶ The ideal of literature as shared territory was flagged by the sign outside the bookshop, 'he who runs may read', and reiterated throughout the first issue.⁸⁷ Later, the purpose of providing a platform for unknown writers with potential became the more urgent and repeated endeavour of the *Book*.⁸⁸

The substantial editorials trace the growth of the review and the developments of ideas among the increasing number of locals who frequented the bookshop, attended the weekly events, and read *The Bermondsey Book*. In November 1926, the Bookshop moved to larger premises, from 89 to 171 Bermondsey Street, originally a pub named after the pugilist Tom Causer.⁸⁹ It provided a Reading Room and its opening hours, 5.30–10.30 (later extended to 5.00–11.00) p.m., were amenable to workers. The 8.30 p.m. Sunday night lectures and discussions of art, literature, music, and philosophy ran from September to April (extended to May from 1925). The collaborative Wednesday evening play readings during the summer months proved particularly popular.⁹⁰ The larger lecture room of the new premises was still not big enough for the growth in attendees.⁹¹ The editorial to the September–November 1927 issue documented the exponential increase in contributions, although many were unsuitable, with a request for 'original short stories (not of the popular magazine type), essays with new points of view about anything under the sun, experiences of life, and provocative and outspoken articles'.⁹²

The editorials to *The Bermondsey Book* were unattributed but likely to have been by Ethel Gutman, followed by Frederick Heath after her death in March 1925.⁹³ An incomer to the economically deprived district, perhaps Gutman had been inspired by Alida Monro, who ran the Poetry Bookshop (1913–25) in Devonshire Street when Harold Monro was called up.⁹⁴ (See Chapters 7 and 17 on Monro.) Like Lady Rhondda, Gutman was more humanitarian than feminist and the profile of intellectual womanhood flourished in the environment that she established. In 1924, one account of the Sunday evening debates presents the community

⁸⁶ 'Dedication', 4.

⁸⁷ Editorial Notes, *BB*, 1:4 (Sept. 1924), 8. See Alexander Paterson, 'Across the Bridges', *BB*, 1:1 (Dec. 1923), 5–6.

⁸⁸ Editorial Notes, *BB*, 1:2 (Mar. 1924), 3–7.

⁸⁹ Editorial Notes, *BB*, 4:1 (Dec. 1926), 3–4.

⁹⁰ Editorial Notes, *BB*, 3:4 (Sept. 1926), 1–2.

⁹¹ Editorial Notes, *BB*, 4:2 (Mar.–Apr. 1927), 4.

⁹² Editorial Notes, *BB*, 4:4 (Sept.–Nov. 1927), 3.

⁹³ See 'In Memoriam', for a tribute to Gutman, who had moved into Bermondsey and founded the shop and the review, subsequently dedicating herself to their activities: 'There will be no changes save those she had approved and planned. It remains her Book' (*BB*, 2:3 (June 1925), 3–4).

⁹⁴ Joy Grant, *Harold Monro and the Poetry Bookshop* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), 88–91. Alida, née Klementaski, married Harold in 1920. She continued with the weekly readings and produced the anthology of *Georgian Poetry III*. See *T&T* (2 and 9 Apr. 1930).

spirit, high morale, and egalitarian society that the Bermondsey literary centre was fuelling. The audience comprised 'as many women as men' while the Chair was often from another country. Most significantly the audience would challenge the speakers' arguments.⁹⁵ A corroborating photograph shows a woman as Chair, an equal number of women in the audience, and all dressed smartly.⁹⁶ In a lecture on 'The Woman's Point of View' (1925), E. Clephan Palmer of the liberal *The Daily News* concluded that men were more suited to present a woman's view.⁹⁷ However, in a debate on 'The Victorian Woman versus the Modern Woman' (1929), the modern 'emerged victorious'.⁹⁸ In 'A Woman thinks of War', a bookshop member declared, 'If the hatred of war to which she gives expression is common to the majority of women, then some beginning may have been made to the abolition of it.'⁹⁹ Although the number of contributions by women to the *Book* dwindled after Gutman's death in 1925, the reviews recognized some of the most progressive literary figures such as Mary Borden, Sylvia Townsend Warner, Edna St Vincent Millay, Katherine Mansfield, and in particular Charlotte Mew, 'one of the greatest poets of her time'.¹⁰⁰

In parallel with *Time and Tide*, Virginia Woolf had extensive publicity. *To the Lighthouse* was a recommended book and after an initial recommendation,¹⁰¹ *A Room of One's Own* was allocated a long review in the final issue. In his summary of 'this brilliant little book', Frederick Heath exhorted women to seize their new opportunities and become the long-awaited sisters to Shakespeare: 'it is a magnificent prediction, and no man could be so grudging as to deny the hope of its fulfilment.'¹⁰² In the spirit of the editors' commitment to levelling social and literary playing fields, Woolf's short story 'Jones and Wilkinson', about a reverend and a major, sits alongside the tales by working men of mining and railways. Although in Woolf's narrative, 'the gifts and tastes of both gentlemen were better adapted for pleasure than for labour', their reversals of fortune could afford satisfaction for the working-class readers.¹⁰³ The preference for literature threaded with social commentary is suggested by other short pieces, notably 'The Voyage' by H. E. Bates, Frances Gregg's 'On Being Poor', 'Out of Work' by Frank Bellamy ('a Yorkshire miner who is a daily witness of the unemployment he so

⁹⁵ 'The Melancholy Dane', 'Sunday Night at the Bookshop', *BB*, 2:2 (Mar. 1925), 103–4.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* 102. ⁹⁷ Editorial Notes, *BB*, 2:3 (June 1925), 6.

⁹⁸ Editorial Notes, *BB*, 6:4 (Sept.–Nov. 1929), 6.

⁹⁹ Maeve O'Callaghan, 'A Woman Thinks of War', *ibid.* 52–9.

¹⁰⁰ F.H., reviews of Warner's *Mr Fortune's Maggot*, *BB* 4:3 (June–Aug. 1927), 81–2; the *Journal of Katherine Mansfield*, 4:4 (Sept.–Nov. 1927), 97–8; and Mew's *The Rambling Sailor*, 6:4 (Sept.–Nov. 1929), 104–5.

¹⁰¹ *BB*, 4:3 (June–Aug. 1927), 86; 7:1 (Dec. 1929–Feb. 1930), 104.

¹⁰² F.H., *BB*, 7:2 (Mar.–May 1930), 96–7.

¹⁰³ Virginia Woolf, 'Jones and Wilkinson', *BB*, 3:3 (June 1926), 48–53.

vividly describes'), 'Autobiography of a Bermondsey Boy' and 'Life within the Black Square Mile'.¹⁰⁴

Like *Time and Tide*, *The Bermondsey Book* endorsed liberal democracy rather than party politics. In 'Eton or Bermondsey', the writer cum businessman Gilbert Frankau purported to approve the political spectrum, intelligence, and diligence that he found in the audience after delivering a lecture, and placed the majority on the political Right.¹⁰⁵ The ensuing correspondence tackled his implicit reinforcement of conservative politics and patronizing preconceptions about social class and education.¹⁰⁶ Low expectations of literary life in Bermondsey were further exposed by editorials that cited a French teacher's surprise at the intelligence and enthusiasm of the Monday evening classes,¹⁰⁷ and quoted from Thomas Hardy's letter, 'one would never guess from the title [the review] to be of such high quality'. As the editor remarked: 'Mr Hardy, like some others, evidently thought the *Review* a parochial one instead of what it is, an International Quarterly.' Allegedly, copies went to 'nearly every country in the world'.¹⁰⁸

The hunger for literature in those who did not own it as birthright emanates from the reports of the bookshop's activities and review pages. 'Art versus Industrialism' between Frederick Heath and Sidney Gutman was reportedly a lively debate,¹⁰⁹ and in March 1925, a 'spirited debate' on 'Whether Literature plays a more important part in Social Life than Politics' resulted in 'a clear majority for literature'.¹¹⁰ One student at Birkbeck College wrote of joyfully purchasing Tennyson's *Oenone* from a local barrow.¹¹¹ The members' animated discussion about 'the six best novels in the English language and the six best plays in the world'¹¹² demonstrates their pleasure in canonical works along with an appetite for the new. A lengthy letter from a reader in Newcastle-in-Tyne outlines the literary ambitions among the miners: 'All sorts of obstacles are overcome by these men in their thirst for knowledge.' As proof, The Workers Educational Association held classes in nearly all the pit villages and 'small dramatic groups flourish everywhere... nearly all the groups have one or more members in the Clarion Society, which runs the Great People's Theatre in Newcastle.'¹¹³ One of the longest running and energetic debates in the *Book* surrounded Hugh Walpole's top twenty modern

¹⁰⁴ H. E. Bates, 'The Voyage', *BB*, 5:2 (Mar.–May 1928); Frances Gregg, 'On Being Poor' 4:4 (Sept.–Nov. 1927), 5–6; Frank Bellamy, 'Out of Work', 5:4 (Sept.–Nov. 1928), 90–3; 'F.B.', 'Autobiography of a Bermondsey Boy', 2:2 (Dec. 1924), 8–12; Dorca Sewell, 'Life within the Black Square Mile', 1:1 (Dec. 1923), 20–2.

¹⁰⁵ Gilbert Frankau, 'Eton or Bermondsey', *BB*, 1:1 (Dec. 1923), 38–40.

¹⁰⁶ Letters by H. H. S. French, 'Bathos from Bayswater', and Jack Uglow, 'The Real Need', *BB*, 1:2 (Mar. 1924), 58–61.

¹⁰⁷ Editorial Notes, *BB*, 1:2 (Mar. 1924), 5.

¹⁰⁸ Editorial Notes, *BB*, 1:4 (Sept. 1924), 3.

¹⁰⁹ Editorial Notes, *BB*, 1:2 (Mar. 1924), 4.

¹¹⁰ Editorial Notes, *BB*, 2:3 (June 1925), 7.

¹¹¹ Letter from Richard Jackson, *FSA, BB*, 4:2 (Mar.–May 1927), 3–4.

¹¹² *BB*, 3:3 (June 1926), 4.

¹¹³ Letter from S. H. Fomison, *BB*, 4:2 (Mar.–May 1927), 6–7.

novels. While naming the obvious Edwardians, his contemporary authors included May Sinclair, Joseph Conrad, E. M. Forster, Virginia Woolf, Aldous Huxley, and D. H. Lawrence, ‘perhaps the most discussed writer of today’.¹¹⁴ Jack Uglow, ‘a Bermondsey boy’, was among the correspondents who took issue and substituted his own list.¹¹⁵ The open-mindedness of the immediate readership also allowed more outspoken commentary. One of the most satirical reviews took issue with Wyndham Lewis’s self-aggrandising new periodical *The Enemy* and his assessment of Pound, Stein, and Joyce.¹¹⁶ The correspondence particularly indicates a strong desire to possess and influence literary culture. The connection with a global public sphere was embedded by regular ‘Letters from Abroad’ after 1925. One notable exchange of culture was between a working-class man in London and a reader in Brooklyn, New York City.¹¹⁷ The international reach of the review is further marked by snippets of letters from Europe, South Africa, North America, and New Zealand, from where one reader underlines the review’s reputation for intellectual quality and a desire for realism: ‘According to the tone of the majority of the “popular” publications, however, they appear to have space and readers solely for stories which depict life as it is not . . . I found your magazine different from the majority.’¹¹⁸

The voices of educated working-class readers conversed not only across the globe but also across literary circles. The review evidently became a source of reference for editors and a respected outlet for writers. Two poems published in *The Bermondsey Book*, by Humbert Wolfe and Aldous Huxley, were included in Thomas Moults’s *The Best Poems of 1926*; four short stories from the review were included in *The Best British Short Stories of 1926*; ‘Fine Feathers’ by A. E. Coppard was published in *The Best British Short Stories of 1928*,¹¹⁹ and in 1928, an article by H. G. Wells was exclusive in Britain to *The Bermondsey Book*.¹²⁰ In 1929, it printed an unpublished speech by J. S. Mill, ‘On the Use of History’,¹²¹ and boasted two plays by Thornton Wilder, the first of his work to appear in an English periodical: ‘In granting permission to publish the plays Mr Wilder expressed his appreciation of the *Bermondsey Book* and the high standard it strives to maintain.’¹²²

¹¹⁴ Hugh Walpole, ‘A Letter to a Stranger’, *BB*, 1:4 (Sept. 1924), 10–13. See J. S. Collis, ‘The Novels of D.H. Lawrence’, *BB*, 6:1 (Dec. 1928–Feb. 1929), 13–18.

¹¹⁵ Correspondence, ‘Mr Walpole and the Modern Novel’, *BB*, 2:1 (Dec. 1924), 74–7.

¹¹⁶ I. Meir Lask, *BB*, 4:3 (June–Aug. 1927), 83–5.

¹¹⁷ S.B., ‘An Exchange of Ideas’, *BB*, 7:1 (Dec. 1929–Feb. 1930), 51–60.

¹¹⁸ George Clark, cited in Editorial Notes, *BB*, 6:3 (June–Aug. 1929), 3. See also, Letter from a South African Miner, *BB*, 4:1 (Dec. 1926), 6–7.

¹¹⁹ *BB*, 4:2 (Mar.–May 1927), 7. A. E. Coppard ‘Fine Feathers’, 5:1 (Dec. 1927–Jan. 1928), 22–43; and in Edward J. O’Brien (ed.), *The Best British Short Stories of 1928* (London: Dodd, Mead, 1928).

¹²⁰ H. G. Wells, ‘The Next Phase in America: A Retrospective Forecast’, *BB*, 5:3 (June–Aug. 1928.), 10–18.

¹²¹ J. S. Mill, ‘On the Use of History’, *BB*, 6:2 (Mar.–May 1929).

¹²² Thornton Wilder, ‘Two Plays’, *BB*, 6:1 (Dec. 1928–Feb. 1929), 8–12.

The predilection for drama reviews is in keeping with the ideals of a public literary community. A. Paget, 'a working man', did a stint of London theatre reviewing as the regular 'Critic in the Gallery', on which he reflected towards the end of the decade.¹²³ There was appreciative feedback on 'At the Cinema', the first film review columns by the 19-year-old James Wellard, who developed into a scholar and novelist.¹²⁴ Relatively few poems appeared, although E. A. Robinson's 'Silver Street' was published in the first edition. At the Georgian and aristocratic ends of the literary-social spectrum was Vita Sackville West's 'At Rhey: A Poem' and Heath recommended *The Land* for the Hawthornden Prize.¹²⁵ The coexistence of stylistic innovation and traditionalism that characterizes poetry in the period is registered in other selections: a 'new poem' by Thomas Hardy, 'The Weary Walker',¹²⁶ Sylvia Townsend Warner's pastoral lyric, 'The Espousal',¹²⁷ and Siegfried Sassoon's 'To One in Prison'.¹²⁸ F. C. Davis, a clerk in a Bermondsey factory whose poems had been in the review, was the first to place a volume with a commercial publisher: 'Mr Davis's success is a justification of the primary purpose of the *Bermondsey Book*, which is to give unknown authors a chance of publication they are not likely to obtain elsewhere.'¹²⁹

From 1926, frequent events and articles on poetry indicate the locals' readiness to widen their repertoire of contemporary work. A reading by Edith and Osbert Sitwell was chaired by Harold Monro, 'a well-known Sitwellian',¹³⁰ and Monro lectured on twentieth-century poetry.¹³¹ Humbert Wolfe, 'a very popular poet' gave a reading¹³² and his invigorating article 'The Difficulties of the Poet', addressed Eliot's 'The Hollow Men' and *The Waste Land*, along with Gertrude Stein ('who for me has reduced the English language to a series of uncontrollable hiccoughs'), Edith Sitwell, and his own work.¹³³ He cites Carl Sandburg and H.D. as exemplifying the liberty being imported from America: 'we invoke the saxophone or factory hooter in place of pipe and the harp; we substitute Walt Whitman for William Shakespeare.' Wolfe concluded, 'Contemporary life does not scan and to interpose rhythm is necessarily to muffle or mislead it.' At the end of the decade, James H. Wellard's lengthy defence of free verse echoed Wolfe: addressing the new 'spirit of

¹²³ A. Paget, 'Critic in the Gallery', *BB*, 3:2 (Mar. 1926), 47–54; 6:1 (Dec. 1928–Feb. 1929), 27.

¹²⁴ James Wellard, 'At the Cinema', *BB*, 4:3 (June–Aug. 1927), 60–6.

¹²⁵ Vita Sackville-West, 'At Rhey', *BB*, 4:3 (June–Aug. 1927), 74. Review of *The Land*, *BB*, 4:2 (Mar. 1927), 87–8.

¹²⁶ Thomas Hardy, 'The Weary Walker', *BB*, 3:1 (Dec. 1925), 8.

¹²⁷ Sylvia Townsend Warner, 'The Espousal', *BB*, 4:4 (Sept.–Nov. 1927), 64.

¹²⁸ Siegfried Sassoon, 'To One in Prison', *BB*, 4:1 (Dec. 1926), 56.

¹²⁹ Editorial Notes, *BB*, 4:2 (Mar. 1927), 3. F. C. Davis, *The Passing and Other Poems* (London: Elkin Mathews, 1927).

¹³⁰ *BB*, 4:1 (Dec. 1926), 5–6. ¹³¹ Editorial Notes, *BB*, 3:2 (Mar. 1926), 4.

¹³² Editorial Notes, *BB*, 4:3 (June–Aug. 1927), 4.

¹³³ Humbert Wolfe, 'The Difficulties of the Poet', *BB* 5:2 (Mar.–May 1928), 16–24.

the twentieth century; associated with commercialism, machinery, speed, noise and “efficiency”, he decided, ‘It seems to me that the unsettled spirit of the times can only be adequately expressed in free verse.’¹³⁴

Ultimately, *The Bermondsey Book* dissipates the elision of popular or lowbrow art with inferior class identity. In a rather self-congratulatory piece of rhetoric, ‘High-brow, Low-brow, and no Brow at all’, Stuart Hodgson, editor of *The Daily News*, conceded the highbrow’s contempt that ‘tried to keep his knowledge select’ was at the ‘root of nearly all the explosions in society which we call revolutions’, yet concluded that the highbrow urge to plough a superior furrow was inevitable and necessary to the progress of human civilization.¹³⁵ In contrast, a report on the Bookshop’s third anniversary celebration enjoyed the absence of ‘any “highbrow” discussion . . . all silly contradistinctions of class as we know them in this imperfect world were absent’.¹³⁶ The overlaid interventions into literary and political public spheres achieved by the shop and the book were tied up with other seismic social reforms in the Bermondsey district and were mentioned in *Time and Tide* in 1928.¹³⁷ According to Fenner Brockway’s history of the socialist doctor Alfred Salter and the Bermondsey Labour Council Administration 1922–8, ‘It is doubtful whether municipal history affords a parallel of similar changes either in the actual reforms carried through or in the spirit of the administration.’¹³⁸ With the Council’s ‘enthusiasm for culture’, the central library had been extended and included a lecture hall for five hundred in which were weekly educational and literary talks. The number of the library’s registered readers grew and the Bookshop that began in 1921 became ‘a club of culture’.¹³⁹

Positive reviews of several numbers in the *Times Literary Supplement* had proclaimed the establishment’s stamp of approval: ‘[*The Bermondsey Book*] contains an account of the literary activities of the Book Shop, but it also gives much literary matter of high quality.’ However, there were signs of relegating the magazine to an alternative sphere: ‘This quarterly magazine encourages working people to write for themselves and others to write what working people will enjoy reading, and it carries out its task well.’¹⁴⁰ This reviewer undermines the editors’ purpose of intervening in a unified sphere of literary political culture.

¹³⁴ James H. Wellard, ‘In Defence of Free Verse’, *BB*, 7:2 (Mar.–May 1930), 27–32.

¹³⁵ Stuart Hodgson, ‘High-brow, Low-brow, and no Brow at all’, 1:2 (Mar. 1924), 16–19.

¹³⁶ Editorial Notes, *BB*, 1:3 (June 1924), 4.

¹³⁷ ‘A Worker’s Club House in Bermondsey’, article by an MP reporting on the new housing replacing dilapidated buildings, *T&T* (7 Dec. 1928), 1210.

¹³⁸ Fenner Brockway, *Bermondsey Story: The Life of Alfred Salter* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1949), 104. West Bermondsey was the first constituency to be represented by two women, Mrs E. M. Love and Mrs Ada Salter, who also became mayor.

¹³⁹ Brockway, *Bermondsey Story*, 106.

¹⁴⁰ *TLS* (10 Apr., 12 June 1924). See also, reviews, *TLS* (3 Jan. 1924, 24 Sept. 1925, 16 Sept. 1926).

The Bermondsey Book came to a sudden stop in 1930. The last editorial made enigmatic reference to 'usual difficulties' but there was no hint of folding. On the contrary, the review had doubled in size from the initial sixty pages; contributions had nearly trebled in the previous year that had also seen an increase in subscribers.¹⁴¹ In the previous issue, the demise of *The Edinburgh Review* had prompted the Bermondsey editor to bemoan the declining health of literary journalism which he blamed on the popular press for pandering to the modern crowd. He believed that this unthinking crowd incorporated members of the 'cultured class': 'the passion of the modern reader for the topical, which is too frequently the ephemeral, is notorious, but we are surprised to learn, that among the cultured classes, there are not sufficient people with a sense of tradition strong enough to support a journal as famous as the *Edinburgh Review*.'¹⁴² The editor's other enemy was a pervasive individualism that prevented literature from constituting a communal and public activity in which all could participate.

In conclusion, we can see how these two periodicals help us question a binary model of modernist publications based on a perceived 'culture wars' between intellectuals and the masses that correlates to educated property-owning men defining themselves against women and the working class. In terms consistent with Habermas's theorization of the public sphere and communicative competence, the editors opposed the mindless journalism of the popular press that produced political inertia and prevented individuals from participating in a democracy that through the extended franchise had never been more available. As Heath insisted in his penultimate editorial, 'The one great fact remains, that without the existence of good literary reviews there would be little or no chance for that full freedom of expression by the power of which the writer, with ideas and style, emerges from obscurity to recognition.'¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Editorial Notes, *BB*, 7:2 (Mar.–May, 1930), 3.

¹⁴² 'F.H.' [Frederick Heath], Editorial Notes, *BB*, 7:1 (Dec. 1929–Feb. 1930), 3–5.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.* 5.

CULTURAL CRITICISM AT THE MARGINS

Wyndham Lewis, *The Tyro* (1920–1), and *The Enemy* (1927–9)

PAUL EDWARDS

‘The only thing that is left even to criticise is the revolutionary machine.’¹

BLAST, the magazine of the Vorticist movement, is recognized as central to the modernist effort in England, despite running for only two issues (1914 and 1915). Wyndham Lewis, its editor, went on to edit two further magazines that have had much less recognition. *The Tyro* (also two issues) and *The Enemy*, which Lewis managed to sustain for three issues, were, more obviously than *BLAST*, vehicles for Lewis’s personal campaigns for viable forms of modernism at particular historical moments. All were intended to act like volcanic eruptions to reshape the cultural landscape. *BLAST* remained for Lewis throughout his career as exemplifying a moment when such a reshaping seemed genuinely possible, before the landscape was altered far more drastically by the First World War. One of the things that make *BLAST* important is the editorial decision to make it a vehicle for forms of literature that match the innovations of the abstractionist painters on display in its plates. Lewis felt compelled to create this literature himself (his dissatisfaction with what his fellow-writers were producing is well-documented).² Lewis was himself a painter and knew from the inside what were the characteristics of Futurist-inspired innovation that writing, to be modern, needed to incorporate. *BLAST*, right down to the design of its typography, its cheap paper and garish cover, embodied the paradox of a transcendent artistic energy blocked but also expressed by the sheer *matter* of cultural modernity. This is also evident in Lewis’s paintings of the period, and lends substance to his later statement—that annoyed nearly everyone except

¹ Wyndham Lewis, ‘The Diabolical Principle’, *The Enemy*, 3 (1929), 80.

² ‘A good deal of what got in [to *BLAST*] seemed to me soft and highly impure.’ Wyndham Lewis, *Rude Assignment: A Narrative of my Career up-to-date* (London: Hutchinson, 1950), 128–9.

the ever-generous Ezra Pound—that ‘Vorticism, in fact, was what I, personally did, and said, at a certain period.’³ Lewis adds that this practice can be ‘extended’ into an aesthetic, both in painting and, ‘less theoretically’, in writing. A key feature of any such aesthetic would have to be the strategic use of contradiction expounded in the Vorticist manifesto:

2. We start from opposite statements of a chosen world. Set up violent structure of adolescent clearness between two extremes.
3. We discharge ourselves on both sides.⁴

In Lewis’s own work this spirit of contradiction is manifested as a kind of dialectic that is never sublated or resolved at some ‘higher level’ of unity in the work of art, but instead is absorbed into the central tissue of the work and is displayed there, open for experience and analysis. In its most general sense, the strategy is a response to modernity itself: an embrace of its matter in typical cultural forms, pitted against a sense that the potential energy of modernity is constrained and contradicted by the ideologies those cultural forms are (often unwittingly) used to convey. One of the results of this is satire, but the ground where Lewis’s ‘contradictions’ interact is always modernity: art or writing that fails to acknowledge the revolutionary transformation of modernity he simply ignores. Another result, taking up huge areas of Lewis’s literary output, is a major theoretical analysis of precisely this contradiction in modernity and modern culture.

As suggested earlier, the moment of *BLAST* always represented an ideal for Lewis, and one of the reasons may be that even if he was speaking for himself all the while (‘What I did and said’), he believed that others were occupying the same ground as he was. In accepting him as their spokesman, his fellow-Vorticists evidently believed so too. One of the purposes of *BLAST* was to map this common ground, and show where its borders with other European avant-garde movements should be drawn. This process of defining ground (as well as occupying it and defending it) remained a major function of Lewis’s later magazines; but they also raise the question of who else occupied it alongside him.

Lewis’s hopes of issuing a third number of *BLAST* on his discharge from the army after service at the front and a stint as official War Artist came to nothing.

³ Wyndham Lewis, ‘Introduction’, *Wyndham Lewis and Vorticism* (exhibition catalogue, Tate Gallery, 1956), 3. Pound wrote to Lewis (5 or 6 Oct. 1956), ‘PARENthesis/did I say yr/2 page preface to your Picture show, one of the best statements yu hv/ever made.’ *Pound/Lewis: The Letters of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis*, ed. Timothy Materer (New York: New Directions, 1985), 299. For the relations between literary and visual Vorticism, see Reed Way Dasenbrock, *The Literary Vorticism of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis: Towards the Condition of Painting* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), and Paul Edwards, ‘“You Must Speak with Two Tongues”’: Wyndham Lewis’s Vorticist Aesthetics and Literature’, in Paul Edwards (ed.), *Vorticism 1914–1918* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 113–20.

⁴ ‘Manifesto’, *BLAST* 1 (July 1914), 30.

He returned with a new sense of the social responsibilities of art, however, and this led to the composition of a pamphlet, published by Harriet Shaw Weaver's Egoist Press in 1919, *The Caliph's Design: Architects! Where is your Vortex?*, calling for the new visual language of Vorticism to be used in the design of a rebuilt, modernist London.⁵ It was, said Lewis, a kind of third *BLAST*, but it cannot be mistaken for a magazine. The significance of his statement, rather, is that he thought of his magazines (like his numerous pamphlet volumes) in terms of their social purpose; they were never simply collections of favoured work that he wished to set before an interested public. Lewis always retained an avant-garde ambition to intervene directly in public culture and to change it.

The Egoist Press is also listed as the publisher of *The Tyro*, but the main cost was borne by Lewis's patron, Sidney Schiff (the friend and translator of Proust), who wrote under the name of Stephen Hudson. Like *BLAST*, it is primarily a painters' magazine, bearing the subtitle, *A Review of the Arts of Painting, Sculpture and Design*.⁶ This was a new attempt (after the failure of 'Group X' to make a splash in 1920) to present the avant-garde under a single banner.⁷ The appearance of the first issue is striking (though still much tamer than *BLAST*). It was stapled, measured 37.5 cm (high) by 25 cm and comprised twelve pages, without any protective cover, so it resembled a small newspaper (though a higher quality paper was used). It was laid out conventionally in two columns of small print per page, and its visual impact derived primarily from the three full-page-height black and white caricatural drawings of grinning 'Tyros' it reproduced, one being on the cover. These satirical figures also featured in Lewis's one-man show that coincided with the issue of the magazine, 'Tyros and Portraits', held at the Leicester Galleries in April 1921.

In a short editorial, Lewis explains 'The Objects of this Paper'. It is to be a 'rallying point' for experimental painters, but will also welcome 'kindred phenomena in letters, science or music'.⁸ Lewis's underlying premises are soon made clear: the culture that dominated England in the nineteenth century is now dead (despite attempts to maintain its hegemony); there is 'no passage back' to the period before the 1914–18 war, and a 'new state of life' is imminent; but so far all that exists is a 'No Man's Land atmosphere' since 'there is no mature authority, outside of creative and

⁵ *The Caliph's Design: Architects! Where is your Vortex?* (1919), rpt., ed. Paul Edwards (Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press, 1986).

⁶ 'It [*BLAST*] is mostly a painters magazine with me to do the poems.' Ezra Pound to James Joyce, c. 1 April 1914, in *Pound/Joyce: The Letters of Ezra Pound to James Joyce, with Pound's Essays on Joyce*, ed. Forrest Reid (New York: New Directions, 1970), 26.

⁷ For 'Group X', see Andrew Wilson, 'Demobilisation: The End of Vorticism or Another Blast? 1919–21', in Andrew Wilson (ed.), *ICSAC Cahier 8/9: Vorticism* (Brussels: ICSAC, 1988), 205–18.

⁸ *The Tyro*, 1 (n.d. [Apr. 1921]), 2. Note that Lewis calls *The Tyro* a 'paper', aligning it with ephemeral newspaper rather than art or craft production values. *The Tyro* was reprinted in facsimile by Frank Cass and Co. in 1970. The thin indiapaper used for issue 1 in this reprint is misleadingly flimsy.

active individual men, to support the new and delicate forces bursting forth'. In the circumstances, those 'whose credentials are in the future' must 'entrench ourselves; but we do it with rage'.⁹ Lewis's imagery reveals how thoroughly the experience of war had now entered into the most basic habits of his thought; the pre-war past may have died, but the cultural deformation effected by war itself would not be easy to escape. Any rage in the pages of *The Tyro* is well under control, however, and Lewis even goes to the extent of describing himself as a 'pacifist, a sort of Quaker' in the art wars he says are taking place around him. The context is a remarkably temperate (but effective) critical attack on Roger Fry as an unsuitable 'mediator' between English painting and the European movement.¹⁰

Lewis's reasoned criticism of Fry (and his Bloomsbury associates) is that they do not represent that element in English culture that should now be developed, and that by the same token they misrepresent contemporary experimental painting to the French painters to whom they present themselves as ambassadors. They are 'of almost purely eminent Victorian origin . . . the direct descendants of Victorian England'.¹¹ As in *BLAST*, Lewis again wants English culture to be integral with that of Europe (he mentions France, Germany, and Italy), but it is a particular form of Englishness, that of the Elizabethans, Rowlandson, and Hogarth, that he proposes to integrate. When he suggests that a painter who applied the 'great method' of the 'Chinese, Egyptian [or] Rajput painters' 'to the subject matter of our day' would be regarded as a 'vulgar, harsh, revolutionary', he is implicitly claiming for his own caricatural Tyros a heritage that combines the timeless classicism of the Orient with the comic 'vulgarity' of grotesque English comedy. His new modernism will not 'neglect the popular, modern industrialized world'.¹²

The problem is that the drawings reproduced in the first issue hardly sustain Lewis's ambition, even if the concurrent exhibition may have done.¹³ And the Tyronic narrative Lewis was composing was not included—or, indeed, ever completed.¹⁴ As a 'rallying point' for others, particularly other painters, *The Tyro* was

⁹ Wyndham Lewis, 'The Children of the New Epoch', *The Tyro*, 1, 3.

¹⁰ Wyndham Lewis, 'Roger Fry's Rôle of Continental Mediator', *ibid.* 3. Lewis's description of himself is doubly disingenuous, containing a reminder that Fry came from a prominent Quaker family and that several Bloomsbury figures had been pacifists and avoided military service during the war, which Lewis in particular resented. He believed that their hold over the English art world had been secured while others were away fighting, and he felt that his own career had been damaged by the time he had devoted to military service.

¹¹ *Ibid.* Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians* (1918) was held to be part of a rebellion against the same past that Lewis wished to supersede.

¹² Wyndham Lewis, 'Roger Fry's Rôle of Continental Mediator'.

¹³ Only two of the five exhibited 'Tyro' paintings survive, *A Reading of Ovid* (Scottish Gallery of Modern Art) and *Mr Wyndham Lewis as a Tyro* (Ferens Art Gallery, Kingston upon Hull).

¹⁴ The 'serial story', 'Will Eccles', that Lewis begins on p. 6 was not continued in issue no. 2. Its opening is in an A.B.C. teashop (praised for their cheap modern décor in *BLAST*, 1), where the waitress brings Will his breakfast egg. It is 'Gladys, the dreary waitress, in her bored jazz' (p. 6).

partly compromised by the project that gave it its title. Tyros are, according to Lewis's introductory note, 'immense novices [who] brandish their appetites in their faces, lay bare their teeth in a valedictory, inviting, or merely substantial laugh'.¹⁵ The surviving Tyro paintings successfully combine a post-Cubist idiom with the visual world of the comic poster or Punch and Judy show, but they represent only a part even of Lewis's work of the time. As fictional creations, Tyros represent 'partly religious explosions of laughing Elementals [and are] at once satires, pictures and stories'. They are 'figures of a constantly renewed mythology' that Lewis intended to have significance beyond the personal, but as a visual project in particular they were uniquely his own.¹⁶ If the Tyro project could not 'rally' other painters, however, it had the potential to draw other writers, at least. Lewis's 'note' echoes the remarkable essay he had written as an introduction to his early stories, 'Inferior Religions', placed by Pound in *The Little Review* in September 1917.¹⁷ The compatibility of Lewis's position and aesthetic with that expounded by T. S. Eliot in the 'Notes on Current Letters' that he contributed to *The Tyro* is remarkable. In the first of these, 'The Romantic Englishman, the Comic Spirit, and the Function of Criticism', Eliot is concerned with the health of the traditional 'myth which the Englishman has built about himself', tracing it back to Volpone and Falstaff and seeing its modern embodiment in such music hall performers as Little Titch, George Robey, and Marie Lloyd. Eliot claims that the modern dramatist is 'terrified of the myth' and so resorts to tepid naturalism. Instead of seeing himself on the stage 'more admirable, more forceful, more villainous, more despicable' than he actually is, modern man 'has only the opportunity of seeing himself, sometimes, a little better dressed'.¹⁸ Eliot himself would later make damaging compromises with the better-dressed school of theatre, but in this article he is virtually at one with Lewis in promoting an aesthetic based on the mythopoeic aspects of English popular grotesque comedy. He had been on a cycling tour in France with Lewis the previous summer, writing to Sidney Schiff that he did not know 'anyone more profitable to talk to'.¹⁹ The shared aesthetic that surfaces in Lewis's Tyros and Eliot's *Sweeney Agonistes* may well have developed out of these conversations and

'Hoodopip', the 'life of a Tyro', was not completed; a draft typescript is in the Wyndham Lewis collection (4612), Department of Rare Books and Manuscripts, Cornell University Libraries.

¹⁵ 'Note on Tyros', *The Tyro*, I, 2. ¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Wyndham Lewis, 'Inferior Religions', (written c.1915), *The Little Review*, 4:5 (Sept. 1917), 3–8, rpt. Wyndham Lewis, *The Complete Wild Body*, ed. Bernard Lafourcade (Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press, 1982), 315–19. Lafourcade signals the continuity by reprinting Lewis's published writing on Tyros in this collection.

¹⁸ T. S. Eliot, 'The Romantic Englishman, the Comic Spirit, and the Function of Criticism', *The Tyro*, I, 4.

¹⁹ T. S. Eliot to Sidney Schiff, 22 August 1920, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, vol. i: 1898–1922, ed. Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), 402.

from Eliot's admiration for 'Inferior Religions'.²⁰ Eliot's other short prose piece, 'The Lesson of Baudelaire', picks up Lewis's concern with the relation between English and French culture and implies approval of Dadaism as diagnosing a 'disease of the French mind'; hence it is not directly relevant in England.²¹ The nascent Tyro–Sweeney projects of Lewis and Eliot, for which *The Tyro* was partly intended as a vehicle, are a kind of equivalent of Dada, drawing on elements of English culture that have been forced out of elite culture but survive in what that elite wrongly identifies as 'vulgar and harsh'. Eliot was to be the only person, apart from Lewis himself, to contribute to all of the magazines Lewis edited.²²

The Tyro, issue 1, also carries reproductions of drawings by 'Vorticists' David Bomberg and William Roberts,²³ and critical articles by Herbert Read (criticizing the Georgian poetry of Walter de la Mare and its equivalent in painting) and O. R. Drey, discussing the limitations of the Bloomsbury theory of significant form. Drey, married to the painter Anne Estelle Rice, connects back to Middleton Murry's *Rhythm* and to *Coterie*, while Read would later be associated with Eliot at *The Criterion*. John Rodker contributed a Wellsian squib, and there were poems by Robert McAlmon, John Adams, and Eliot himself (lines related to the 'Hollow Men' sequence).²⁴ Only Lewis's fragmentary story 'Will Eccles' and his glaring, toothy and sharp-suited Tyros come anywhere near being vulgar and harsh, however.

The second issue, published in 1922 and running to nearly a hundred pages, though more substantial, is less visually striking than the first because of a change of format. It is now a compact quarto, leaving insufficient height for anything but a somewhat compressed grinning Tyro on the cover. But in other respects this issue is more impressive. The integration with European art called for in issue 1 is now given substance with a photograph of sculpture by Jacques Lipschitz and a 'Lettre de Paris' from Waldemar George insisting that Cubism has not actually been superseded by reactionary classicism there. There is also an article on Russian art by Jessica Dismorr (ex-contributor to *Rhythm* and ex-Vorticist). Almost as significant are adverts for *De Stijl*, *L'Esprit Nouveau*, and other commercial outlets for the latest in modern design and music; the first issue had contained no advertisements.²⁵ Lewis was in touch at this time with the most

²⁰ 'Inferior Religions remains in my opinion the most indubitable evidence of genius, the most powerful piece of imaginative thought, of anything Mr. Lewis has written' (T. S. Eliot, 'Tarr', *The Egoist* (Sept. 1918), 106).

²¹ T. S. Eliot, 'The Lesson of Baudelaire', *The Tyro*, 1, 4.

²² Eliot contributed to *BLAST*, 2, *The Tyro*, 1 and 2, and *The Enemy*, 1.

²³ Bomberg never joined the group, though he exhibited with them.

²⁴ T. S. Eliot (under the pseudonym 'Gus Krutzsch'), 'Song to the Opherian', *The Tyro*, 1, 6. The lines relate to 'Doris's Dream Songs', which themselves were perhaps intended for *Sweeney Agonistes*.

²⁵ Lewis was in touch with Theo Van Doesberg and Léonce Rosenberg, proponents of some of the most advanced European art of the time. Other advertisements are for Louis Vauxcelles'

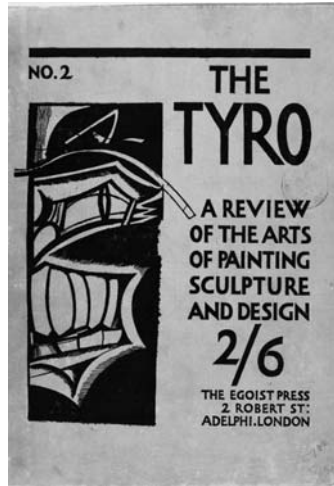


Fig. 67. Cover of *The Tyro* (1922)

advanced forces in art in Paris, Holland, and Berlin. There are 18 plates with reproductions of work by Lewis, Frank Dobson, Dismorr, Frederick Etchells, and Edward Wadsworth—representative of the most experimental work being produced at the time in Britain. The same contributors as in number 1 (minus McAlmon and with the addition of the paymaster, Sidney Schiff) appear again. Eliot's contribution, 'The Three Provincialities', gives a slightly different inflection to the ideas he had already expressed in 'Tradition and the Individual Talent'. In mounting a case against narrow nationalism and insularity in writers from England, the United States, and Ireland, the essay clearly relates to Lewis's own desire for English painters to work in a larger European tradition. For Eliot, the tradition to which English-speaking writers—wherever they are domiciled—should have allegiance is that of the English language itself, not a particular nation. Eliot praises James Joyce in particular for transmuting material of local interest into international significance by virtue of his consciousness of 'the whole weight of the history of the language'. Writers concerned only with the national traditions instead of those of literature written in English will be 'completely insupportable to posterity'.²⁶

L'Amour de l'art, Harold Munro's Poetry Bookshop, Heal's Mansard Gallery (for an exhibition of crafts), the Rowley Gallery ('the modern note in decoration'), the music publishers J. and W. Chester (including their 'miniature essays on important Contemporary Composers') and the 'Foreign Bookseller' Richard Jaschke. A full-page advertisement by Goodwin and Tabb is devoted to the composer Arthur Bliss, whose scores were published with cover designs by ex-Vorticists William Roberts and Edward Wadsworth; Lewis would later provide the cover for Bliss's *A Colour Symphony*.

²⁶ T. S. Eliot, 'The Three Provincialities', *The Tyro*, 2, 11–13.

With this issue, the magazine acquires the air of a concern that could continue—except, of course, that a periodical must have a turnover and variety of contributors, and there is no evidence that Lewis sought this. This may be related to the ‘entrenched’ position that he believed was a necessary part of being an advanced artist. He was able to exaggerate or mock his own propensity to paranoid suspicion of his associates, and does so in a series of four comic ‘Tyronic Dialogues’ in which an adept of art-world in-fighting and hypocrisy instructs a novice in the arts of survival: ‘Everyone is outwardly and for the world a charming fellow or woman, incapable of anything but the most generous and kind (always KIND, this is a key-word) behaviour. Everyone knows that in reality everybody is a shit, as much as he or she *dare* to be.’²⁷ Lewis himself seems to have organized his professional relationships more or less on this basis, however, and this was not the best attitude for someone wishing to edit a magazine that must be, in the last analysis, something of a team effort. But this is only one side of Lewis. The essay on the aesthetics of modern painting that he included in the second issue shows the powerful and articulate intelligence he could bring to bear on a subject, an intelligence often masked by the rhetoric of his more polemical pieces.²⁸ It was this intelligence that caused Eliot to regard his conversation as so valuable. And ‘Bestre’, the short story Lewis published in issue 2, shows him as a literary stylist as advanced as the painter on display in the issue’s plates, and more vulgar and harsh.

The Tyro made little impact, visual modernism made no headway in England, and Lewis retired from it, apparently hurt. From now on he was concerned with understanding why it had made no headway, and why an artistic effort fully in the mainstream of European modernism should be considered to be at the margins of culture in England. He needed to reflect, as well, on the consequences of this for defining and re-creating a viable modernist practice that had seemed so easy in 1914 (‘We will convert the King if possible. A VORTICIST KING! WHY NOT?’).²⁹ Making one of the least likely transformations imaginable, he emerged in 1926 as a political theorist and social analyst, with the publication of *The Art of Being Ruled*. It was the first of a series of polemical volumes of cultural history and cultural criticism published over the next four years.³⁰ ‘I have quarrelled with almost everybody in order to get the money and time to write this and other books,’ he told Eliot, shortly before quarrelling with him, also, over Eliot’s failure to print

²⁷ Wyndham Lewis, ‘Tyronic Dialogues.—X. and F.’, *The Tyro*, 2 (n.d. [Mar. 1922]), 47.

²⁸ Wyndham Lewis, ‘Essay on the Objective of Plastic Art in Our Time’, *The Tyro*, 2, 22–37.

²⁹ *BLAST* 1, 8.

³⁰ *The Art of Being Ruled* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1926), *Time and Western Man* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1927), *The Lion and the Fox: The Rôle of the Hero in the Plays of Shakespeare* (London: The Richards Press, 1927), *Paleface: The Philosophy of the ‘Melting-Pot’* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1929).

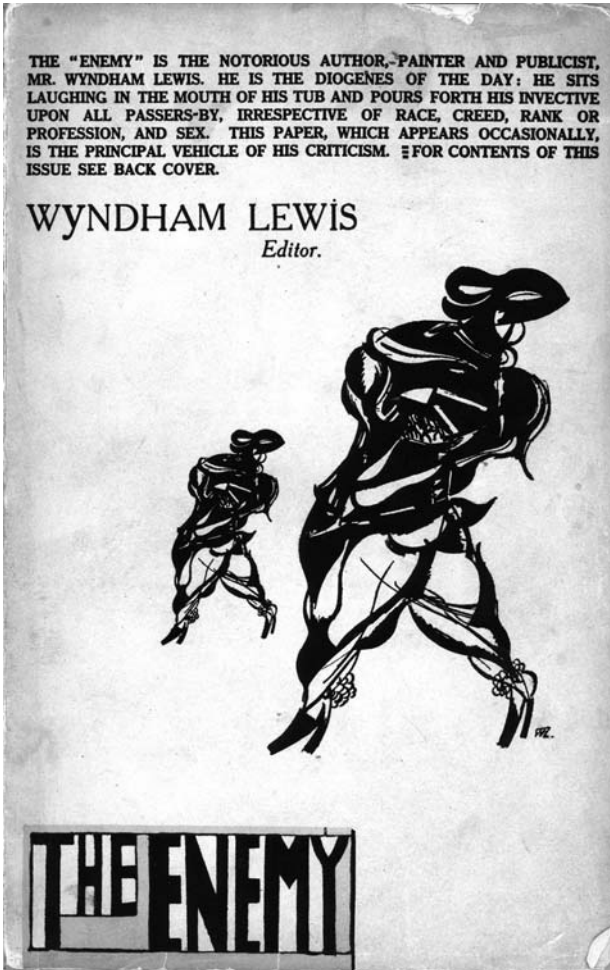


Fig. 68. Cover of *The Enemy*, 3 (First Quarter, 1929)

a long article announced for *The Criterion*.³¹ Lewis had come more and more to conduct his professional life from an entrenched position, and the title of the next (and last) of his magazines, *The Enemy: A Review of Art and Literature*, reflects this. The note on the cover of the third and final issue (1929), explains:

The 'Enemy' is the notorious author, painter and publicist, Mr. Wyndham Lewis. He is the Diogenes of the day: he sits laughing in the mouth of his tub and pours forth his invective upon all passers-by, irrespective of race, creed, rank, or

³¹ Wyndham Lewis to T. S. Eliot, January 1925, *The Letters of Wyndham Lewis*, ed. W. K. Rose (London: Methuen, 1963), 148. For the quarrel with Eliot (which Eliot did his best to defuse), see *ibid.* 149–54.

profession, and sex. This paper, which appears occasionally, is the principal vehicle of his criticism.³²

While there were contributions from others, the magazine was in fact dominated by Lewis's work and artistic personality. Each issue contained a lengthy section of critical polemic that would later appear in book form.³³ There was little distinction in *The Enemy* between pamphlet and periodical, and Lewis in fact issued 'Satire and Fiction', a broadside intended to feed controversy about his novel, *The Apes of God*, under the rubric of 'Enemy Pamphlets No. 1' in September 1930.

Printing of *The Enemy* was part-funded by Sir Nicholas and Lady Waterhouse, while the publisher was Lewis himself, using the title, 'The Arthur Press'.³⁴ The standard of production of the three issues was high. Folio size, issue 1 (February 1927) had on its cover a full-colour depiction of Lewis's 'Enemy', a masked 'primitive' warrior mounted on a small pony; a colour plate inside reproduced one of Lewis's most advanced 'metaphysical' watercolours, *Figures in Air* (probably chosen to show an affinity with Giorgio de Chirico, about whose work the issue contained an essay),³⁵ and there were five half-tone reproductions. There were 210 pages, and 12 more were devoted to advertisements. The second number (September 1927) has a cover printed in black, red, and yellow from line blocks of Lewis's artwork: a constructivist design built out of freehand lettering. There are 16 pages of advertisements in addition to the magazine's 177 pages, but no half-tone reproductions. A new printer was used (though thanks to Waterhouse the £197 15s. 0d. bill for the first had been settled promptly), and the cover price was raised from 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. Lewis was slow to settle the second bill, as only 2,000 of the 5,000 printed had sold by May 1928. He had printed so many of issue 2 because demand had outstripped supply of issue 1, of which only 1,500 had been printed before the type was broken up. In September 1928 the printer employed

³² Cover note on *The Enemy*, 3 (First Quarter [Mar.] 1929). A facsimile of *The Enemy*, with editorial notes, commentary, and additional unpublished material, was published by Black Sparrow Press (3 vols., Santa Rosa, 1994), ed. David Peters Corbett.

³³ Issue 1's 'The Revolutionary Simpleton' was incorporated in *Time and Western Man*, published later the same year; the essay in issue 2, 'Paleface: "Love? What ho! Smelling Strangeness"', became part of *Paleface: The Philosophy of the Melting-Pot* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1929); 'The Diabolical Principle', in issue 3, was coupled with the essay Lewis had given to *The Calendar of Modern Letters* when Eliot delayed its publication in *The Criterion* and issued as a book, *The Diabolical Principle and the Dithyrambic Spectator* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1931).

³⁴ Lewis also used this title for the publication of his 1930 satire, *The Apes of God*. For a discussion of his use of the 'press' in this context, see Mark Perrino, *The Poetics of Mockery: Wyndham Lewis's The Apes of God and the Popularization of Modernism* (Leeds: W. S. Maney for the Modern Humanities Research Association, 1995), ch. 6.

³⁵ Wilfred Gibson, 'Giorgio di Chirico', *The Enemy*, 1, 9–14. The essay immediately precedes the colour plate, and is accompanied by a reproduction of de Chirico's *Mystery and Melancholy of a Street* (1914).

a debt collector for the £250 still owing. Waterhouse advised Lewis on how to deal with this, and guaranteed an overdraft at Lewis's bank.³⁶ No printer is listed for issue 3 (March 1929), which is considerably reduced in length (100 pages, plus 20 pages of advertisements). Only black and yellow ink are used on the covers, which are nevertheless graphically the most successful of the three issues, with large line-block reproductions of two of Lewis's most striking black ink designs. Inside, a plate on coated paper shows 'A recent photograph of the Enemy, Mr. Wyndham Lewis' wearing a tightly buttoned short-collared jacket, with underslung pipe in mouth, and sporting his trademark broad-brimmed black hat. Twenty pages of advertisements suggest an improbable increasing business efficiency on Lewis's part, but may be mainly due to the critical acclaim the magazine had received. 'With the possible exception of *transition*', a historian records, 'the *Enemy* received more notice in press and periodicals than any other magazine', and much of this coverage was favourable and admiring.³⁷ Typically, Lewis quoted from it in a publicity flyer ('Some extracts from first notices of . . . the *Enemy* No. 1') and in the magazine itself. Advertisements were placed mainly by publishers, art galleries, and bookshops. Anton Zwemmer, the art bookseller in Charing Cross Road, who also exhibited Lewis in his gallery, advertised in every issue. Lewis's own books (and *The Enemy* itself) are advertised, some by his publisher, Chatto and Windus, some simply by collections of extracts from reviews. Lewis's own prominence among the advertisements assists the strategy of dramatizing his intended Enemy persona. Every issue also shows Lewis cultivating an expected readership by informing them of forthcoming 'Enemy' campaigns:

An appeal is made here for some sort of conscious co-operation. Any people interested, therefore, in the activities outlined in this paper should get in touch at once with the organisation that it is here intended to build up, and support it by some deliberate propagandist zeal. . . . The director will be glad of the opportunity of getting in touch with correspondents.³⁸

³⁶ Details drawn from Waterhouse correspondence in the Wyndham Lewis collection, Department of Rare Books and Manuscripts, Cornell University Libraries, and David Peters Corbett's 'A Note on the *Enemy* and "The Arthur Press"', *The Enemy*, 3 (rpt. Black Sparrow Press), 133–4. See also Lewis's letter to a tax inspector, c.1928, concerning the finances of *The Enemy* (*The Letters of Wyndham Lewis*, ed. W. K. Rose (London: Methuen, 1963), 186–7).

³⁷ Frederick J. Hoffman et al., *The Little Magazine: A History and a Bibliography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), 284 (quoted in Peters Corbett, 'Afterword', *The Enemy*, 3 (rpt. Black Sparrow Press), 132). Lewis's bibliographers record only one review of *The Tyro*, by Walter Sickert in *The Burlington Magazine* in 1922 (a review Lewis extracted and used in publicity for *The Enemy*). Bradford Morrow and Bernard Lafourcade, *A Bibliography of the Writings of Wyndham Lewis* (Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press, 1978) record seven reviews of *The Enemy*, 1, but overlook three quoted by Lewis in publicity in the second issue. Three reviews are recorded of issue 2, and one of issue 3. Lewis's books received much more coverage, but periodicals are not normally reviewed.

³⁸ 'Preliminary Note to the Public', *The Enemy*, 1, pp. vii–viii.

No records of any such cooperation survive, and it is doubtful whether Lewis could have sustained it. As usual with Lewis, some of the planned work he announced appears in later issues, and some does not. The 'Notes Regarding Details of Publication and Distribution' in issue 2 and its 'Editorial Notes' create the sense of business-like activity directed to a known end, however. And some of these notes, such as Lewis's mockery of the best-selling *Mother India*, or the small essay on the avant-garde, 'The Paris Address', stand as short essays in their own right.³⁹ The final issue in particular dramatizes the Enemy persona to maximum effect, all its bustle giving an impression that *The Enemy* is central and engaged on all sides with the culture it desires to defeat.

In a prospectus for *The Enemy*, Lewis wrote that it would be 'in every way a more comprehensive and ambitious venture than THE TYRO. Not since the appearance of BLAST ten years ago has such a demonstration of revolutionary zeal in the service of the arts been launched upon the English world.'⁴⁰ In one sense this is a fair claim, and *The Enemy* has the appearance and form of an avant-garde magazine, but from another point of view its contents—a series of polemical critiques of (to list some of Lewis's targets in the three issues) Ezra Pound, James Joyce, Gertrude Stein, Alfred North Whitehead, D. H. Lawrence, Sherwood Anderson, *transition*—represent a comprehensive and quite unparalleled reaction against the avant-garde. A full exploration of this paradox would require more exposition of Lewis's thought in the 1920s than is possible or appropriate here. But he evidently felt that there was a continuity of effort and objective in the three magazines he edited, and perhaps the basis of this was his continuous attention to contemporary culture, accompanied always by an attempt to answer the question, 'What Art Now?'⁴¹

In *BLAST* he asked this question on behalf of an emerging English branch of an established international movement of innovation in the arts, that included Cubism, Futurism, and Expressionism. In answering it he produced a rationale for a distinctive practice that the magazine expressed in its material substance (right down to the garish puce paper used for the cover), in its manifestos, and in the works of art it reproduced. Lewis's own 'play', *Enemy of the Stars*, also answered the question both by its form and by the way that form directly manifested the existential problematic that was its theme. *The Tyro* sought to perform something like the same service for the English avant-garde after the war. A realignment with European culture, dissociation from French neo-classicism and from the dregs of Victorianism, accompanied by an embrace of a vital and vulgar comic harshness in English culture, form the basic programme, for which Lewis enlisted the support of T. S. Eliot and other writers on art and aesthetics. For various

³⁹ 'Editorial Notes', *The Enemy*, 2, pp. xi–xxxi.

⁴⁰ Prospectus, *The Enemy*, 3 (rpt. Black Sparrow Press), 140.

⁴¹ The title of an essay published by Lewis in the aftermath of the First World War, in *The English Review*, 28 (Apr. 1919), 334–8.

reasons this programme failed; and we may assume that Lewis's own quarrelsome and mistrustful personality was a factor.⁴²

This was not how Lewis saw it, however, and in *The Enemy* he set about making a new set of discriminations and dissociations within the avant-garde, attempting once again to secure a position from which a genuinely innovative culture could, at that moment, flourish. In *The Enemy* there is a shift in emphasis to literature and ideas, since Lewis had now transferred most of his artistic effort into writing; but he had always found more to criticize in the work of his literary contemporaries than in the work of visual artists.

The premise of *The Enemy* critiques is the statement Lewis makes in the Appendix to the book-length polemic, 'The Revolutionary Simpleton', which comprises most of issue 1: 'If we turn to art, we find that experiment in the arts, or *revolutionary* experiment. . . . has almost ceased since the war. By experiment I mean not only technical exercises and novel combinations, but also the essentially new and particular mind that must underlie, and should even precede, the new and particular form, to make it viable.'⁴³ Lewis's own creativity sprang from his consciousness of contradictions, and here he is drawing attention to a contradiction of which his fellow-modernists seemed to him to be unaware. They embraced the 'matter' and techniques of modernity, but did not re-order that matter expressively so that it furthered the original pre-war ambition to project a new civilization. Instead, they seemed to accept uncritically an atavistic ideology which Lewis thought was not essential to modernity—and, indeed, contradicted it. As he explained in 1952, what, a decade after *BLAST* and the Vorticist movement, 'had suddenly arrogated to itself the title of successor to the dying civilization, in too many respects resembled it.'⁴⁴ Lewis's own response to the cultural figures he criticized is accordingly also somewhat contradictory, though the contradictions are easily overlooked, since at no point does Lewis express himself in the manner of a man in two minds.

So, for Lewis, Charlie Chaplin, for example, is 'the greatest screen artist' despite the fact that he is representative of the infantilism of much post-war popular and high culture.⁴⁵ James Joyce merits 'eternal glory' for *Ulysses*, but the 'stuff' from which *Ulysses* has been compiled is not the material of a vital modernity but a moribund provincial Victorianism: 'It is like a gigantic Victorian quilt or antimacassar. Or it is the voluminous curtain that fell, belated (with the alarming momentum of a ton or two of personally organised rubbish) upon the Victorian scene.'⁴⁶ A relevant modernism would engage with the modern world—which

⁴² It was not the only factor, however. Eliot was unable to finish *Sweeney Agonistes*. The association with Lewis is confirmed by a letter of September 1923 thanking him for his encouragement of the project (Cornell).

⁴³ Wyndham Lewis, 'The Revolutionary Simpleton', *The Enemy*, 1, 189.

⁴⁴ Wyndham Lewis, *The Writer and the Absolute* (London: Methuen, 1952), 38.

⁴⁵ Lewis, 'The Revolutionary Simpleton', 87. ⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 112, 111.

had been transformed by war and revolution and their accompanying ideologies. Joyce's work, however technically advanced it was, was ideologically naïve, and nostalgically occupied ground that modernity had irrevocably abandoned.

The 'contradiction' is nowhere else so clear as it is in Lewis's most sustained attack on the English-speaking avant-garde in Paris in issue 3, in the essay, 'The Diabolical Principle'. Lewis here refers also to William Plomer, Sherwood Anderson, and D. H. Lawrence, attacked for their 'primitivism' in 'Paleface', in issue 2:

Plomer is probably the best novelist in South Africa to-day. D. H. Lawrence in England and Sherwood Anderson in America, are among the very best writers produced by those countries recently: and as to Paris, is it necessary to say that almost all that is good, in formal tendency or in actual achievement, as either painting or writing (and there is not much) is to be found here and there between the covers of *Transition* [*sic*]?⁴⁷

A key requirement for the mind of the new, revolutionary writer and artist, Lewis explained when he reprinted 'The Revolutionary Simpleton' in *Time and Western Man*, is 'to know enough of the sources of his ideas, and ideology, to take steps to keep these ideas out [of the central tissue of his work] except such as he may require'.⁴⁸ The consequences of this demand were, first, that Lewis himself needed to make a comprehensive historical analysis of the origins and contemporary manifestation of the ideas and ideologies he believed had deleteriously found their way into contemporary culture, so that he could make 'a rigorous restatement . . . of the whole "revolutionary" position'; and second, that he needed to make 'a restatement of my personal position[, which] in its turn must bring me into conflict with the interests of several people with whose name mine has been fairly closely associated'.⁴⁹ Ideology includes politics, and the political position in favour of which *The Enemy* analyses were undertaken was an idealized version of liberal individualism and humanism that 'the free democratic West' should aim at: 'Let us behave *as if* the West were free, and as if we were in the full enjoyment of an ideal democracy.'⁵⁰ Accordingly, the first proposed name for 'The Arthur Press' was 'Free West Publications'.⁵¹ The title now smacks of the period of the Cold War, and Lewis's 'as if' is tempered and complicated by a conviction of 'the

⁴⁷ Lewis, 'The Diabolical Principle', *The Enemy*, 3, 28.

⁴⁸ Wyndham Lewis, *Time and Western Man* (1927), rpt. ed. Paul Edwards (Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1993), 136.

⁴⁹ Lewis, 'The Revolutionary Simpleton', 46.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 49–50. Lewis is here moderating the pessimistic authoritarianism of his earlier *Art of Being Ruled* (see n. 52 below). By 1931 his pessimism had returned with a vengeance, and he produced his notorious exposition of National Socialism, *Hitler* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1931).

⁵¹ See Prospectus, *The Enemy*, 3 (rpt. Black Sparrow Press), 140.

eventual success, in one form or other, of Communism'.⁵² It is further complicated because 'other' forms of communism, for Lewis, included Fascism.

Perhaps because *The Enemy* did not publish much in the way of creative art or literature, the impression created was of a solely hostile—and largely personal—critique rather than criticism practised (as Lewis consistently claimed) in favour of a radical modernism that would provide the creative myths by which society could make the most of the transformations brought about by new techniques and inventions. *The Enemy*, issue 1, contains a short essay by Eliot and one on Beethoven by J. W. N. Sullivan, but there are no 'creative' works apart from Lewis's own drawings.⁵³ The only contribution not by Lewis in the second issue is an essay by Henry John (Jesuit son of Augustus) that attempts to marshal support from St Thomas Aquinas for some of Lewis's arguments in *The Art of Being Ruled*; Lewis should have been too embarrassed to publish this, and it does nothing to assist his case. Only with issue 3 are there creative contributions by others: the over-florid romanticism of Roy Campbell's poem, 'The Albatross', and a poem by Laura Riding that few readers would have been able to differentiate from the kind of writing Lewis criticized in Gertrude Stein.⁵⁴ The result was that those he attacked represented Lewis as excluding himself from the culture of innovation and experiment, while he felt that he was clearing new ground for it. He acknowledged in 'The Diabolical Principle' that others had seen him merely as a 'counter-storm', but explained that 'Such an essay as *Time and Western Man* is not supposed to imitate in its form an attic temple. It is a sudden barrage of destructive criticism laid down upon a spot where temples, it is hoped, may under its cover be erected.' He adds that the temple he would design would 'not be a greek temple, as it happens'.⁵⁵ The reproductions of his own art in *The Enemy* were clear enough evidence of this, as was the fiction, such as *The Childermass* (1928) and *The Apes of God* (1930), that he was working on at the time.

The projection of an 'Enemy' persona and use of 'incandescent rhetoric' gave a personal flavour to his criticism that invited (and received) retaliation from those he attacked.⁵⁶ He would not have minded this, but there are signs that he regretted

⁵² Lewis, 'The Diabolical Principle', 80. In *The Art of Being Ruled* Lewis commends Fascism as a variant of Marxian Communism: 'All marxian doctrine, all *étatisme* or collectivism, conforms very nearly in practice to the fascist ideal' (321).

⁵³ T. S. Eliot, 'A Note on Poetry and Belief' (15–17) and J. W. N. Sullivan, 'The Position of Beethoven in the Modern World' (1–7); this latter essay deals with some of the same questions that concern Lewis in his examination of the relations between art and modern scientific ideas.

⁵⁴ Roy Campbell, 'The Albatross', *The Enemy*, 3, 85–8; Laura Riding, 'Fine Fellow Son of a Poor Fellow', *ibid.* 88–9.

⁵⁵ Lewis, 'The Diabolical Principle', 24–5.

⁵⁶ See, for example, anon. [Robert McAlmon?], 'Unrecommended Pages: Alex's Journal: Re *The Pekker*—Edited by Winnie Jewit', *This Quarter*, 4 (Spring 1929), 281–9; and Eugene Jolas, Elliot Paul, and Robert Sage, 'First Aid to the Enemy', *transition*, 9 (Dec. 1927), to which 'The Diabolical Principle' is a reply.

the scale and forcefulness of his critique of Joyce, which occupies thirty-five pages of 'The Revolutionary Simpleton'.⁵⁷ It is characteristic, too, that Lewis should have solicited a contribution from Joyce for the issue in which the attack appeared (Joyce sent a section of 'Work in Progress' now in the Lewis collection at Cornell).⁵⁸ In the next issue he attempted to bring Joyce onto the ground he had ideologically cleared for them both, writing that Joyce was in *transition* 'by accident' because 'as an adventurous artist, there are so few places he can go'.⁵⁹ A fine ink portrait drawing of Joyce, made by Lewis in 1920 in the early days of their friendship, is also reproduced opposite p. 112 of the same issue, suggesting that Lewis hoped to win Joyce back into his camp. But Joyce was immovable, and the ground was cleared for no one but Lewis himself. Writing of the 'individualism' of *The Enemy* in later life, however, Lewis averred, 'I have never felt in the least alone'. Rather, he felt that he belonged to a 'type' that was 'out of place'. 'I did not look upon myself as a "rare type", however. I could not understand why most of my acquaintances looked at most things as they did, and as I did not.'⁶⁰

Lewis intended to issue further numbers of *The Enemy*. He even accepted poems by Stephen Spender for a proposed fourth issue.⁶¹ Other projects (notably the completion and publication of *The Apes of God*) intervened. Although he regarded his magazines as instruments of support for the business of real creation that went on elsewhere, they can now be seen not only as agents in the history of a disputed avant-garde, but as works in their own right. *BLAST* still remains the model for any artistic rebellion against the status quo, and, as Walter Sickert recognized, the essay on aesthetics in *The Tyro* transcends its partisan context.⁶² *The Enemy*, along with the books that derived from it, helped establish in England what is now taken for granted, that culture (high and popular) is not simply an aesthetic phenomenon, but a carrier of ideas and ideologies that shape the way we live.

⁵⁷ '[Joyce] was a man who heard criticism with difficulty. On my side, I feel I should have been more circumspect: I warmed to my subject. I was perhaps too forcible' (Lewis, *Rude Assignment*, 55). The fullest comparative study of Lewis and Joyce is Scott Klein, *The Fictions of James Joyce and Wyndham Lewis: Monsters of Nature and Design* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). For an account of their public 'feud' after Lewis's attack, see Paul Edwards, 'Wyndham Lewis versus James Joyce: Shaun versus Shem?', in Sarah Briggs, Paul Hyland, and Neil Sammells (eds), *Reviewing Ireland: Essays and Interviews from 'Irish Studies Review'* (Bath: Sulis Press, 1998), 164–73.

⁵⁸ A draft of 'The Lesson'; cf. James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (New York: Viking, 1966), 282–302. Lewis may have solicited the contribution before he had decided what his own contribution would be. His original intention had been to issue 'The Revolutionary Simpleton' as a separate pamphlet rather than include it in the first issue of *The Enemy*. See Paul Edwards, 'Afterword', in Wyndham Lewis *Time and Western Man* (1927), rpt. ed. Paul Edwards (Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1993), 489–91.

⁵⁹ Wyndham Lewis, 'The Paris Address', *The Enemy*, 2, pp. xxiii, xxvi.

⁶⁰ Lewis, *Rude Assignment*, 197.

⁶¹ Lewis to Spender, 5 November 1929, unpublished; Ms in Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin.

⁶² Walter Sickert, review of *The Tyro* (1922), rpt. in extract, *The Enemy*, 1, p. ii.

It is because no one (except Lewis himself) built ‘temples’ on the ground he had cleared that in a history of modernist magazines *The Tyro* and *The Enemy* seem marginal. Cultural criticism itself arguably seems marginal to modernism (except when modernism is itself the object of such criticism). There is a circle, whether vicious or not, in Lewis’s own apparent marginalization: he is at the margin because that was where he cleared the space that the avant-garde refused to occupy; and the avant-garde refused to accommodate Lewis because he was producing ‘marginal’ (and hostile) criticism. The common factor in both positions is Lewis’s own contradictory personality and the strategy of contradiction that was its correlate. The strategy enabled him to function as the volcanic force energizing the Vorticist artists in 1914, but by 1936 it led to his being described by W. H. Auden as ‘fuming out of sight, | That lonely old volcano of the Right.’⁶³

George Orwell, of the same generation as Auden, wrote to a friend about Lewis and *The Enemy*, saying that Lewis had ‘got some kick in him’, but adding the caveat that he was not sure whether Lewis was a ‘sound thinker’: ‘The copy of the *Enemy* I read was all a ferocious attack, about the length of an average novel, on Gertrude Stein—rather wasted energy, one would say.’⁶⁴ Lewis’s version of cultural criticism has two lines of inheritance, both of which engage only with one side of his strategic contradiction. Orwell clearly follows his example in his ideological readings of culture, particularly the everyday culture of modernity. It was Lewis who pointed out that,

the most harmless piece of literary entertainment—the common crime story for instance, or the schoolboy epic of the young english proletariat centred around the portly figure of Bunter, ‘the owl of the remove’ (see *Magnet Library*, weekly 2d., of all newsagents)[—]is at all events politically and morally influential. . . . And the influence upon the mind of the whole nation, adult and juvenile, of the Hollywood film-factory is terrific: for ‘shaping lives’ it is obviously an engine comparable to the Society of Jesus.⁶⁵

Here, surely, is the seed from which Orwell’s essay ‘Boys’ Weeklies’ sprang. But for Orwell the avant-garde is of little importance, and his own critical practice is

⁶³ W. H. Auden, *Letter to Lord Byron* (1936), rpt. *The English Auden: Poems, Essays and Dramatic Writings*, ed. Edward Mendelson (London: Faber and Faber, 1977), 198. For the relationship between Lewis and Auden, see Stan Smith, ‘Broad-minded Leftwingers and Marxian Playboys: Wyndham Lewis, W. H. Auden and the Literary Left in the 1930s’, in Carmelo Cunchillos Jaime (ed.), *Wyndham Lewis the Radical: Essays on Literature and Modernity* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007).

⁶⁴ George Orwell to Brenda Salkeld, September (?) 1932, *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, vol. i: *An Age like This*, ed. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (London: Secker and Warburg, 1968), 101. Presumably the issue Orwell read was number 3, attacking *transition* rather than Stein exclusively.

⁶⁵ Wyndham Lewis, *Men without Art* (1934), rpt. ed. Seamus Cooney (Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press, 1987), 12.

largely divorced from any sophisticated enquiry into the question ‘what art now?’, just as his novels, apart from an imitation of Joyce in *A Clergyman’s Daughter*, are formally conventional and show little aesthetic ambition beyond a utilitarian transparency. What, politically, is ‘sound thought’ was what pre-occupied him instead. The other line of inheritance was in Canada, through Harold Innis and Marshall McLuhan. In an interview recorded in 1967, McLuhan explains Lewis’s importance to him: ‘That’s where I got it. It was Lewis who put me onto all this. . . . Lewis was the person who showed me that the man-made environment was a teaching machine, a *programmed* teaching machine.’ Lewis, he says, extended the symbolist recognition that the work of art is a ‘mechanism for shaping sensibility’ to the ‘corporate activity of the whole society in making environments that basically were artefacts or works of art and that acted as teaching machines on the whole population’.⁶⁶ What disappears in the McLuhan tradition, on the other hand, is Lewis’s attention to ideology and politics: the ‘message’ is occluded by attention to the ‘matter’ of the media of modernity, its corporate artwork, whereas for Lewis there remained an intractable contradiction between the two levels that needed constant critical engagement. In the context of cultural criticism, the marginal status of *The Enemy* needs rethinking.⁶⁷ Because it was truly modernist, it was the only cultural criticism in England not premised on the conservative idea that the potentialities of metropolitan and cosmopolitan modernity were to be (critically) deplored rather than celebrated.

None of Lewis’s magazines had long lifespans or even achieved regular schedules. They left debts for others to pick up and were in some ways fortuitous by-products of a reckless, disorganized life. But it was a life dedicated to the creation of art and literature, and the magazines survive as evidence of this uniquely ‘entrenched’ dedication. Without Lewis’s commitment, creative energy and embattled personality their existence would be inconceivable.

⁶⁶ Marshall McLuhan, ‘Recollections of Wyndham Lewis’, flexidisk recording in *Arts Canada*, 114 (Nov. 1967).

⁶⁷ For an assessment of Lewis’s role in the development of Cultural Studies and his relation to George Orwell (and to the currently dominant paradigm of the discipline), see Alan Munton, ‘George Orwell, Wyndham Lewis and the Origins of Cultural Studies’ (2003). Accessed 1 February 2007. Available at: <http://www.arasite.org/amlewis.html>.

NOSTALGIA AND REACTION

Austin O. Spare and *Form* (1916–17, 1921–2), *The Golden Hind* (1922–4), and *The Decachord* (1924–31)

STEPHEN ROGERS

It has been suggested that John Lane, who had published Wyndham Lewis's *BLAST* in 1914, may have been seeking to revive the concept of *The Yellow Book*, when he approached the artist Austin Osman Spare (1886–1956) about the production of a new periodical devoted to art and literature called *Form*.¹ If *BLAST* was a painfully prescient title for a journal appearing in the summer of 1914, then it might be argued that *Form*, in looking back to the aesthetic movement, was a title that signified a retreat from the chaos unleashed by the emerging tragedy on the Western Front.

Austin Osman Spare was the key figure in the history of *Form*. He was the son of a City of London policeman and gained a place at the Royal College of Art. In 1904 he was celebrated as the youngest exhibitor at the Royal Academy summer exhibition and praised by George Frederick Watts and John Singer Sargent.² In 1905, he left the Royal College of Art to pursue his own artistic interests. These were closely related to the influence of a Mrs Paterson, whom he had encountered as a child and regarded as having supernatural powers. He had received his initiation into the occult in Kennington in South London where, as in the East End, traditions of folklore had survived the nineteenth-century shift towards urban modernity. Mostly this was manifested by the use of 'sympathetic magic'—for example, the use of specific charms to cure particular ailments.³ Spare's comments on the occult

¹ Phil Baker, 'Austin Osman Spare', in *Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 746.

² George Frederic Watts (1817–1904) was an important proponent of the Arts and Crafts movement. John Singer Sargent (1856–1925) was noted for his Edwardian high society portraits and First World War paintings.

³ See Edward Lovett, *Magic in Modern London* (Croydon: Printed at the Advertiser Offices, 1925).

and Mrs Paterson help us understand the nature of his vision in relation to this social background:

As for a glimmering of a knowledge of the occult, I have always had it in me from my childhood. It developed most just before the 1914 war and afterwards . . . The ability to 'read the cards' first came to me when I was a boy, through an old lady. She lived to be a hundred and one. A friend of my parents, she used to tell my fortune when I was quite young . . . She impressed me as a person. . . . She was a natural hypnotist. She would say, 'Look in that dark corner,' and, if you obeyed, she could make you visualize what she was telling you about your future.⁴

The arts of painting and drawing seem to have provided Spare with the means to render his own visualizations, a counterpart of Mrs Paterson's hypnotism, in that it enabled the dream life to be brought into the conscious domain. It was an article of faith with Spare that 'the dream life is the only real life—in the dream world we tap the subconscious and get the unadulterated *truth*, not the tissue of lies as in the conscious world.'⁵ To present this immaterial world required a thorough mastery of technique, and it was Spare's concern for this technical dexterity that aligned his art with that of the past. As he explained his artistic credo in a conversation with Grace Rogers, there was 'nothing like the traditions of the past, Michelangelo, Raphael, Perugino . . . there's too much concentration on the moderns these days.'⁶ It is probable too that the marketability of Spare's visionary graphic work was the impetus behind the founding of *Form*. He told Steffi and Kenneth Grant in the 1950s that 'I did walk into John Lane's and sold him 12 drawings for 100 [pounds] when I was 18 and told him what text to put them with. I admit I couldn't do it now—I haven't the cheek . . . John Lane made his money and asked for more—hence FORM 1 came into existence.'⁷ This must have been a somewhat more complicated process than Spare remembered, for *Form*'s first appearance followed this visit to John Lane's publishing office in Vigo Street by a full twelve years. In 1905 Spare published *Earth Inferno*, containing a mixture of occult text and drawing. By 1907, when he staged a show at the Bruton Gallery, his art was attracting considerable interest, and this exhibition was reviewed widely, including in *The New Age*.⁸

Spare spent the years 1908–13 working on the book usually regarded as the most complete explanation of his magical philosophy, *The Book of Pleasure* (1913). It was at this time too that he came in contact with Aleister Crowley and began

⁴ Gavin W. Semple, *Zos-Kiā: An Introductory Essay on the Art and Sorcery of Austin Osman Spare* (London: Fulgar, 1995), 7.

⁵ A. R. Naylor (ed.), *Existence: Austin Spare, 1886–1956* (Thame: I-H-O, 2006), 68.

⁶ *Ibid.* 67.

⁷ Kenneth Grant and Steffi Grant, *Zos Speaks!* (London: Fulgar, 1998), 17.

⁸ See C. Gasquoine Hartley, 'A Young Socialist Painter, Mr. Austin Spare', *The New Age* (Dec. 7, 1907), 117.

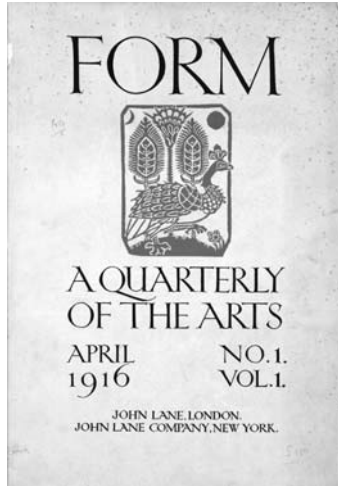


Fig. 69. Cover of *Form* (Apr. 1916)

the process of initiation into Crowley's *Argentum Astrum*, by signing the Oath of a Probationer in 1909. Some of Spare's drawings appeared in Crowley's bi-annual occult review *The Equinox*, *the official organ of the A. A.: the review of scientific illuminism* (1909–13). However, Spare quickly understood that Crowley's training was based on a hierarchical structure, owing much to The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. In reaction to this formal and ritualistic path to spiritual enlightenment Spare started to evolve his own instinctive methods, which were expressed in *The Book of Pleasure*.

The first issue of *Form* appeared in April 1916. It opened with a symptomatic essay by the illustrator Edmund J. Sullivan on 'The Grotesque', illustrated by Spare and Philip Newton. After indulging in an evocative recreation of the ritual of Catholic worship, Sullivan shifts the attention to the horrors of the grotesque, in a reminder of the contemporary horrors of the First World War. Sullivan stated, 'still doubts and horrors and fears of punishment for sins as yet undreamt of haunted the dark. The daylight might belong to God; but night could be, and sometimes was, the Devil's own.'⁹ He then explored various historical and personal examples of the grotesque. The purpose of the essay was to assert that it is possible to find a cause for spiritual resurrection even in the chaos and dirt of the present apocalyptic times: 'we are rooted in slime; yet out of the slime our brains are nourished, and reach the stars.'¹⁰ This article appeared in the magazine immediately before a double-page colour drawing by Spare, entitled 'Holocaust', which depicted the naked torso of a man with his arms outstretched in a way that suggested the pictorial tradition of Christ on the Cross, though in Spare's drawing he is flanked by two naked female

⁹ Edmund J. Sullivan, 'The Grotesque', *Form*, 1:1 (Apr. 1916), 6.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 11.

forms. The image is a powerful example of the atavistic element at work in Spare's art, while the depiction of severed male heads at the bottom of the picture exploits the 'grotesque' tradition in a way that anticipates some of the poetry that appeared during the war.

This example demonstrates Spare's skill in rendering the imagination. A significant article by Spare and Frederick Carter is concerned with automatic drawing. This was essentially a polemic pleading the case for the use of the subconscious as a means of expressing what is usually suppressed by the effect of education and habit. It was through the activity of automatic drawing that the 'hard conventions of the day' may be broken down so that 'art becomes, by this illuminism or ecstatic power, a functional activity expressing in a symbolical language the *desire towards joy unmodified—the sense of the Mother of all things*—not of experience.'¹¹ The secret of this form of creation, according to Spare and Carter, was to be found in the effectiveness of the artist's hand to follow—'without control'—the unconscious wish or desire, so that 'its intention should just escape consciousness'.¹² It was intended to demonstrate that the 'mind in a state of oblivion, without desire towards reflection or pursuit of materialistic intellectual suggestions [was] in a condition to produce successful drawings of one's *personal* ideas, symbolic in meaning and wisdom.'¹³ This was a statement that defined art as a subjective outcome of the individual's imagination, and therefore in opposition to the sort of artistic product that could be marketed according to prevailing conventions. In this sense the artist was urged to react against mechanical means of the reproduction of images, and Spare and Carter specifically refer to the 'power of literal reproduction (such as that of the photographic apparatus)' as being insufficient to realize what they referred to as the 'representation of real form'.¹⁴

Another contribution to *Form* demonstrates a similar reaction against modernist poetry. Thus, Harold Massingham's parody 'Recipe for an Imagist Poem' attempts to portray Imagist poetry as formulaic and mechanical, in an attack occasioned by the un-English theoretical approach adopted by Pound and the Imagists as much as by their practice.¹⁵ By contrast, *Form* was resolutely 'Georgian' in its poetic contents. It was, though, notable for the publication of two of Edward Thomas's poems, 'Lob' and 'Words', which demonstrated an elegiac response to the loss of folklore and a wistful plea to the enrichments of organic language. These poems appeared under Thomas's pseudonym of 'Edward Eastaway', an almost ironically inspired 'Georgian' disguise, which belies the 'un-poetic' newness of the poetry.¹⁶ Thomas had had no control on the printing of these poems, which

¹¹ Austin O. Spare and Frederick Carter, 'Automatic Drawing', *Form*, 1:1 (Apr. 1916), 28–9.

¹² *Ibid.* 30. ¹³ *Ibid.* ¹⁴ *Ibid.* 27.

¹⁵ Harold Massingham, 'Recipe for an Imagist Poem', *Form*, 1:1 (Apr. 1916), 41.

¹⁶ It took F. R. Leavis to discover Thomas's modernity. See F. R. Leavis, *New Bearings in English Poetry* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), 55.

had been arranged by James Guthrie, who had served for a short while on the editorial committee of the magazine. It is difficult to know how formal editorial meetings were, but Guthrie's short-lived involvement does suggest some sort of a disagreement between him and the other committee members. It is clear too from Thomas's correspondence with the 'Georgian' poet Gordon Bottomley that he was not altogether comfortable with the prospects of appearing in *Form*. He wrote: 'The company in *Form* will be nigh as rum. Spare I think doesn't know Eastaway... As long as they don't misprint me I shan't mind my company or care if it minds me.'¹⁷ To make matters more complicated Bottomley seems to have suggested that 'Lob' and 'Words' should not be published in *Form*. Thomas revealed that it was too late to rescue the poems as the magazine had apparently already gone to print, though he seems to have continued trying vainly to recover the poems.¹⁸ By the time they eventually appeared Thomas seems to have become totally disillusioned: 'I have looked at *Form*. It seems an ugly tasteless mess'¹⁹—quite unlike the simplicity of style that he been working towards in his own work. The appearance of Thomas's poems in *Form*, therefore, revealed a fundamental uncertainty about the nature of modern poetry and 'Georgianism' in the magazine.²⁰

The advertisements that appeared in *Form* were closely related to the publisher, with listings and descriptions of 'Books on Art and Artists' published by John Lane and The Bodley Head. Among those promoted were Ezra Pound's *Gaudier-Brzeska*, *BLAST*, *The Yellow Book*, and books on Aubrey Beardsley, Charles Conder, and James McNeill Whistler. Books illustrated by Frank Brangwyn and Spare himself were also advertised, as were books devoted to Hubert and John (significantly Anglicized) Van Eyck. Adverts also appeared for *The Burlington Magazine* and *The Connoisseur*, aimed at specialist art collectors. There was a full-page notice by The Morland Press, the printers of *Form*, advertising their services as fine printers of such items as Christmas greeting cards and 'ex libris' bookplates, which were popular at this time. While these advertisements targeted an audience that would have been self-consciously familiar with aesthetics, not all the products advertised were directly concerned with such cultivated interests. Among these was one for the 'Mac Safety Razor',²¹ which adopted a modern tone that referred the reader to the item's convenience, stating that it was easy to clean, took Gillette blades, and was 'a workmanlike tool in spite of its size—light yet having the correct touch for clean and easy shaving'. However, the product did combine this efficiency

¹⁷ Thomas to Bottomley, letter, 11 February 1916, *Letters from Edward Thomas to Gordon Bottomley*, ed. R. George Thomas (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 259.

¹⁸ Ibid. 264. ¹⁹ Thomas to Bottomley, letter, 30 July 1916, Ibid. 269.

²⁰ James Reeves suggested, 'there was a brief period during which the image of modern poetry in the minds of most educated readers was that presented by the Georgian movement' (James Reeves (ed.), *Georgian Poetry* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981), p. xi).

²¹ *Form*, 1:1, NS (Oct. 1921), unnumbered page.

with the luxury of a 'velvet lined case to ensure long use'.²² The razor was available 'post free' from an address in Borough, the district close to Spare's home in south London.

When *Form* was revived, in October 1921, it was noted in the 'Introduction' that opened the new series that the magazine was now about to appear in a 'more convenient format', expressly designed to appeal to a wider public who 'interest themselves in the arts' than the subscribers to the first two issues of 1916 and 1917.²³ The intention was to print the best work currently being produced, embracing literature, fine art, music, and criticism 'without discrimination in favour of any school or group'.²⁴ Evidence of this policy appeared in the first number of the new series containing literary work by Arthur Waley, Richard Aldington, Robert Graves, Edgell Rickword, Edmund Blunden, T. Sturge Moore, Walter de la Mare, John Drinkwater, W. J. Turner, and Edith Sitwell. The result was that contributors to the *Georgian Poetry* anthologies appeared alongside Imagists and the self-conscious moderns who had appeared in *Wheels* (1916–21). High standards were maintained in the reproduction of artworks, and the magazine continued to seek a good mix of pictures, calligraphy, and articles. The artwork reproduced reflected the contemporary interest in woodcuts, and included an issue described as a 'Woodcut Number' which featured works by Frank Brangwyn, Austin O. Spare, Frederick Carter, Sidney Sime, Cecil French, Ludovic Rodo, Laura Knight, Walter Spradbury, Edward Wadsworth, and Paul and John Nash.²⁵ These artists continued to contribute through the three issues of the new series, and were joined by Powys Evans, William Nicholson, and C. Lovat Fraser. Other distinguishing features were to include 'satire and the psychology of the Arts'.²⁶ The magazine was now published by The Morland Press in Ebury Street, who would also produce an *Edition de Luxe*, limited to fifty copies, printed on hand-made paper, and signed by the Editors. Similarly, it was announced that in conjunction with the publication of *Form* there would appear associated signed *Editions de Luxe* of modern literature, the first volumes of which would be *Eight Poems*, by W. B. Yeats and *Twelve Poems*, by J. C. Squire. The poems by Yeats were simultaneously published in *Form* and in the format of the *Edition de Luxe*.²⁷ This was an example of the response to the widespread demand of the public for illustrated collectable editions of popular contemporary poets. This was partly due to the continued influence of the Arts and Crafts movement, and the example provided by William Morris and the Kelmscott Press. The assumption here was that the craftsmanship

²² Ibid.

²³ 'Introduction', *Form*, 1:1 NS (Oct. 1921), 1.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ *Form*, 1:1 NS (Oct. 1921). The Society of Wood Engravers had been founded in 1920, and included among its members Edward Gordon Craig, Gwen Raverat, Eric Gill, Lucien Pissarro, and John Nash (who joined in 1921). See John Rothenstein, *John Nash* (London: Macdonald, 1983), 63.

²⁶ 'Introduction', *Form*, 1:1 NS (Oct. 1921), 1.

²⁷ The eight poems by Yeats were later published in *The Wild Swans at Coole* (1919).

of the poet was matched by the craftsmanship of the artist, and was bound in a volume that reflected this 'unique' partnership. The fact that the printing was on hand-made paper confirms the aesthetic concern with pre-mechanical methods of production.

Editorial matter was provided by W. H. Davies to each of the three issues of *Form* that appeared in 1921–2. According to Richard Stonesifer, Davies's involvement was not a success; he described *Form* as 'an ill-fated venture with Austin Spare which quickly folded up, but which occupied much of his time for some months'.²⁸ Davies's editorial introductions were marked by a kind of satirical levity in the general criticism of contemporary poets. Editing a literary review seems to have acquired an especially desirable status at this time, and it was not altogether strange that Davies was keen to try the role. He had made a number of useful contacts in the post-war literary world and among those recruited during the revived magazine's short life there were a number associated with Edith Sitwell, including Aldous Huxley, Arnold Bennett, Walter Sickert, Lytton Strachey, Siegfried Sassoon, and Herbert Read.²⁹

A number of the essays in the new series of *Form* dealt obliquely with the aftermath of the First World War, thereby engaging in the re-assessment of values that occurred in the early 1920s. Arthur Waley's essay on Confucius, for example, declared that 'there is an aesthetic quality in religion which makes it durable, while old morals fade as quickly as old jokes'.³⁰ In particular Waley wished to separate morality from the exclusive concern, or obsession, with sex. He acknowledged that there was a need to escape from 'the spectacle of 20th century morality'.³¹ Richard Aldington's 'A Roman Letter' expressed a similar need to place the present in the context of the past, evoking the pagan worship of Dionysus, and calling for 'the rebirth of spring, maternity and desire'.³² Robert Graves, in an article on 'Inspiration and The Pattern', explored the unconscious processes that underlie the writing of poetry. He suggested that the poet was the heir to 'witch doctors, his ancestors',³³ again stressing the attempt to connect with the past to make sense of the confusions and anxieties of the present.

Form was also notable for printing some significant poetry, including a canto of Laurence Binyon's translation of Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, the whole of which was eventually published from 1933 onwards and was recommended by Ezra Pound. Another poet who had contacts with both Pound and Eliot and

²⁸ Richard J. Stonesifer, *W. H. Davies: A Critical Biography* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1963), 131. Robert Graves wrote to Stonesifer that Davies 'found himself being pompous from embarrassment . . . These articles were Bill playing an awkward part' (undated letter quoted p. 173).

²⁹ Stonesifer, *W. H. Davies*, 121, 130.

³⁰ Arthur Waley, 'Confucius', *Form*, 1:1 NS (Oct. 1921), 9. ³¹ Ibid.

³² Richard Aldington, 'A Roman Letter', *Form*, 1:1 NS (Oct. 1921), 16.

³³ Robert Graves, 'Inspiration and The Pattern', *Form*, 1:3 NS (Jan. 1922), 103.

also contributed to *Form* was Harold Monro.³⁴ His poem entitled 'Memory' appeared in the November/December 1921 edition of the magazine. This poem reflected the disorientation of the post-war moment and effectively identified the predicament of modern man: 'I am a child of the past; | Heir to the future', but was less satisfactory in resolving this tension, which was perhaps why Monro later changed the poem, when it appeared as 'Prayer to Memory', in his *Real Property* (1922).³⁵ Joy Grant has suggested that Monro was concerned in this collection with seeking 'a new acceptance of dim primeval forces in the hinterland of modern consciousness'.³⁶ The poem was an invocation to an ancient deity, essentially one that represents Monro's conception of the Divine, and serves to underline the extent that *Form* provided a space in which it was possible for poets to articulate an uncertain nostalgia, often with pagan associations, amid the barren aftermath of the war.

In an essay on 'The Black Arts', J. F. C. Fuller, who had been one of Aleister Crowley's protégés, also explored the search for meaning in modern life by recourse to pagan sources of knowledge, in this case by highlighting the occult tradition.³⁷ This was in keeping with Thomas Laqueur's recent argument that the interest in the occult during this period of the rapid advancement of modernity demonstrates a 'reaction against the modern, against the view that the universe is devoid of meaning, without a guiding principle, without a font of wisdom, without a God'.³⁸ However, when Crowley arrived back in London and, noting the apparent success of his former pupil's magazine, hoped to raise some money by selling some of his poems and short stories to Spare, he found that the magazine was unable to continue due to lack of funds.³⁹

Although *Form* ceased to exist beyond the issue for January 1922, it was soon followed by an heir: *The Golden Hind: A Quarterly Magazine of Art and Literature*, which began publication in October 1922. The new periodical was published by Chapman and Hall (the publishers of Dickens and Thackeray), and it must have

³⁴ Harold Monro (1879–1932) was proprietor of the Poetry Bookshop in Devonshire Street and editor from 1919 of *The Monthly Chapbook*; see Ch. 17.

³⁵ Harold Monro, *Real Property* (London: The Poetry Bookshop, 1922). See Harold Monro, *The Collected Poems of Harold Monro* (London: Cobden-Sanderson, 1933).

³⁶ Joy Grant, *Harold Monro and the Poetry Bookshop* (London: Routledge, 1967), 217.

³⁷ J. F. C. Fuller, 'The Black Arts', *Form*, 1:2 NS (Nov.–Dec. 1921), 57–66.

³⁸ Thomas Laqueur, 'Why the Margins Matter: Occultism and the Making of Modernity', *Modern Intellectual History*, 3:1 (2006), 135. Laqueur suggests that the use of the term 'occultism' first appeared towards the end of the nineteenth century to denote the emergence of something new. He challenges, however, Alex Owen's contention that this emergence signalled a turn to individualism as part of a modernist cultural sensibility. See Alex Owen, *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2004).

³⁹ See Keith Richmond, 'By Magick, Art: Austin Osman Spare and Aleister Crowley', in *Now for Reality: The Focus of Life: written and illustrated by Austin Osman Spare, Poems by Aleister Crowley* (Thame: Mandrake, 1990), 11.

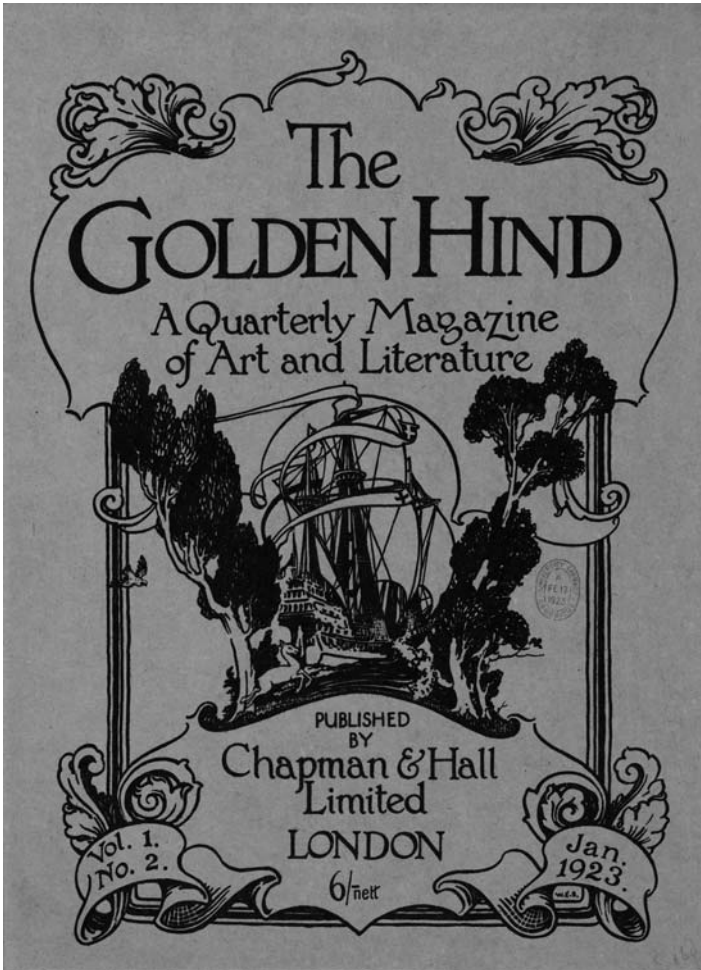


Fig. 70. Cover of *The Golden Hind* (Jan. 1923)

been the involvement of such a prestigious publishing house that encouraged Spare to co-edit the magazine with Clifford Bax (1886–1962), who had already contributed to *Form*. Clifford Bax (younger brother of composer Sir Arnold Bax) was an important influence on the direction *The Golden Hind* was to take. He had probably first met Spare as an art student, though the details are unclear.⁴⁰ Bax's attitude to life seems to have been dominated by a nostalgic conservatism and a search for alternative spiritual sources that characterized many of the contributions to *The Golden Hind*, and this was manifested in his later criticism of 'Modernistic

⁴⁰ See Carol de Saint Victor, 'Golden Hind, The', in Alvin Sullivan (ed.), *British Literary Magazines: The Modern Age, 1914–1984* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1986), 193–9, 194.

artists', who he claimed 'are painting not for men but for robots, not for eyes but for lenses'.⁴¹ Bax was opposed to what he saw as the mechanical methods of contemporary artists, and compared them unfavourably with great artists of the past, especially Renaissance artists, who 'strove to delight the spectator as a whole man' through representational and not abstract art. Bax believed that painters should appeal to the interests of ordinary men and women in the way that a film does in the contemporary world. His purpose then was to oppose what he saw as the intrusion of aesthetics and the 'concerns of the workshop' into the realm of art which was for an audience of 'full-living men and women'.⁴² Bax's ideas on politics are equally revealing. He believed, for example, that the world of public affairs had become too large for the mind to encompass, leading to political apathy, and contrasted this with how 'a citizen of old Athens or of Florence in the Renaissance dwelt in a community of more practicable size and must have taken as lively an interest in the concerns of the city as a boy will take in the life of his school'.⁴³ Although these observations were made some ten years after *The Golden Hind's* collapse, they reveal the duality of his attitudes: at once nostalgic for the traditional functions of literature in an earlier age but wanting to engage with the new mass audience in a contemporary fragmented society he distrusted.

It was probably Bax who influenced Chapman and Hall to undertake the production of such a lavish periodical. He was a long-time friend of Alec Waugh, whose father Arthur Waugh—an occasional contributor to *The Yellow Book*—was by this time Managing Director of Chapman and Hall,⁴⁴ and he was the founder of the Phoenix Society (1919–26), which sought to revive Elizabethan and Restoration dramas. So it is likely that the choice of the magazine's title, and its lavish folio-sized illustrated cover depicting Drake's *Golden Hind* seen from a sylvan landscape (the work of Walter Spradbury), owed something to his ideas. It is characteristic of the magazine's contents, then, that it printed J. Thomas Looney's attempt to make a case for the aristocratic Earl of Oxford, in the guise of the idealized Renaissance man, as the author of Shakespeare's works.⁴⁵

A number of the contributors to *Form* were attracted to publishing also in *The Golden Hind*. Richard Church, W. H. Davies, Havelock Ellis, Cecil French, Aldous Huxley, Peter Renny, and the artist Walter Spradbury were all recruited to its pages. As with *Form*, there were few advertisements. These tended to be largely publishers' advertisements, and it is possible that, as Chapman and Hall

⁴¹ Clifford Bax, *Ideas and People* (London: Lovat Dickson, 1936), 26. Bax had adapted Karel and Josef Čapek for the English stage, so would have been familiar with the anti-totalitarian satire on mechanical man, *R. U. R.* (1921).

⁴² Bax, *Ideas and People*, 26–7.

⁴³ *Ibid.* 14.

⁴⁴ Arthur Waugh was Managing Director of Chapman and Hall from 1902 to 1930.

⁴⁵ *The Golden Hind*, 1:1 (Oct. 1922), 23–30.

were funding the project, the need for more mainstream commercial advertising was less important. These publishers adverts included notices of the publication of books by Chapman and Hall themselves, as well as by John Lane's The Bodley Head, Collins, and Cecil Palmer—including F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned*.⁴⁶ Other authors whose works were advertised included Knut Hamsun, Rose Macauley, Forrest Reid, Norman Douglas, and Henry Williamson. However, comparatively little space was devoted to these lists of current publications, a policy which tended to contribute to the sense *The Golden Hind* conveyed of being remote from immediate social and economic questions. Instead it concentrated on an aesthetically enclosed world concerned with the imagination as a means of escape and nostalgia. The list of the private subscribers that appeared in the first issue also tended to verify this sense that the audience for the magazine was a coterie of like-minded people. It is perhaps significant in this regard that a few of the contributors to *The Golden Hind* were also subscribers, notably Ethel Colburn Mayne⁴⁷ and Naomi Mitchison,⁴⁸ who both contributed stories. Mitchison had also known Aldous Huxley, another contributor, since childhood. Huxley's historical 'The Ambassador of Capripedia' and 'Albert: Prince Consort', which appeared in the magazine, are very different to the contemporary social satire of his *Chrome Yellow* (1921) or *Antic Hay* (1923), and again point to the confusions in a period caught between the rival claims of nostalgia for a traditional lost past and a consciously modern sensibility. This confusion is felt, too, in the contributions of L. A. G. Strong, which revealed modern states of sensibility through conventional narrative methods. A positive review by H. F. Rubinstein of Eugene O'Neill's plays, and especially *The Emperor Jones*, equally struggles with modernity, finally putting forward the tentative notion that it is the time for the 'unexplored' area of 'the modern negro' to be addressed.⁴⁹

The poetry printed in *The Golden Hind* is largely of negligible quality, although some important poets did contribute. F. S. Flint and W. H. Davies were the most distinguished of these. There were also pieces by writers best known for their work in different genres, in particular the novelists Dorothy Richardson and Graham

⁴⁶ *The Golden Hind*, 1:1 (Oct. 1922), unnumbered page.

⁴⁷ Ethel C. Mayne (1870–1941) had been for a while sub-editor on *The Yellow Book*, and was also published in Ford Madox Ford's *Transatlantic Review* in 1924. Her story 'Stripes' was printed in the first issue of *The Golden Hind*, 1:1 (Oct. 1922), 31–4. She later contributed a poem, 'The Tribute', to 2:5 (Oct. 1923), 42 and another short prose piece, 'Humour' to 2:8 (July 1924), 19–20.

⁴⁸ Naomi Mitchison (1897–1999) later became famous for novels that used historical events to explore contemporary issues. A short story with a historical setting, 'The Wine Merchant', was published in *The Golden Hind*, 1:3 (Apr. 1923), 5–8. Her first successful novel, *The Conquered*, also came out in 1923.

⁴⁹ *The Golden Hind*, 1:1 (Oct. 1922), 35.

Greene, who had poems published in the magazine.⁵⁰ Perhaps the most notable contribution, however, to this aspect of the magazine was Ford Madox Hueffer's critical article on certain modern tendencies of the poetic art, entitled 'Third Rate Poet'.⁵¹ This piece attacked the romantic strain of idealism that Ford believed marred much of the poetry written since Shelley. Ford's view was that this had had a damaging effect on the course of modern poetry, so much so that 'Literature never had less hold on, never less interpenetrated the strata of, National Life. That is a terrible condition to which to have reduced the Body Politic—and it is the work of the "poetical compositions" and the "highly refined imaginations of the more select classes" of the last hundred years.'⁵²

Austin O. Spare was the most significant visual artist to appear in the pages of *The Golden Hind*. His large Rubens-like nudes were characteristic of the magazine's first issue, and remained a feature, though it is telling that Spare's work became less prominent towards the end of the magazine's life. Indeed, it was the appearance of these images that caused Heffer's bookshop in Cambridge to refuse to sell it in its shop.⁵³ Other notable contributions came from John Austen and Alan Odle. Austen's work owed much to Aubrey Beardsley's example in its emphasis on the importance of line to produce elegant, fantastic, and erotic drawings. Among the lesser figures whose art work appeared in *The Golden Hind* was Evelyn Waugh, who was at this time struggling to make a career as an artist.⁵⁴ Other visual artists who contributed were Grace E. Rogers, a close friend and supporter of Austin Spare, Laurence Bradshaw, Frank Brangwyn, Cecil French, who also wrote an article celebrating Arthur Symons,⁵⁵ Haydn Mackey, John Nash, Ludovic Rodo, Walter Spradbury, Alfred Warbis, Nora Wright, and Jack B. Yeats.

The life of *The Golden Hind* must be seen in the context of its economic situation. In fact its appearance coincided with a downturn in Chapman and Hall's profits. As a relatively small business it was very reliant upon its shareholders. These were a mixture of preference and ordinary shareholders, who depended upon

⁵⁰ Richardson's husband, Alan Odle (1888–1948), provided some of the artwork reproduced in *The Golden Hind*. Richardson's poem 'Helen' appeared in 2:7 (Apr. 1924), 31. Graham Greene, 'The Coming', *ibid*.

⁵¹ Ford Madox Hueffer [Ford], 'Third Rate Poet', *The Golden Hind*, 1:1 (Oct. 1922), 16. T. S. Eliot wrote to Ford expressing the opinion that his 'view of Shelley came closer to his own than any other he had read'. Max Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life*, vol. ii (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1996), 121. Ford's career was closely followed in the review section of *The Golden Hind*, with Peter Renny contributing favourable notices of *The Marsden Case* (1923), *Mister Bosphorus and the Muses* (1923), and *Some Do Not...* (1924).

⁵² Hueffer, 'Third Rate Poet'. ⁵³ Bax, *Ideas and People*, 36.

⁵⁴ See Selina Hastings, *Evelyn Waugh: A Biography* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1994), 103–4. Hastings states that Waugh sold woodcuts to both Bax and *The London Mercury*. A number of woodcuts were published, and a notable pen drawing, 'The Tragical Death of Mr. Will. Huskisson', *The Golden Hind*, 2:8 (July 1924), 22.

⁵⁵ Cecil French, 'The Poetry of Arthur Symons', *The Golden Hind*, 2:7 (Apr. 1924), 13–22.

the company's ability to pay substantial dividends. In the immediate aftermath of the war it appeared that the business was in a healthy position; a number of new authors had been taken on and the technical books department had been enlarged by J. L. Bale as the company sought to respond to modern trends in the trade. It is likely that this confidence encouraged the lavish production of *The Golden Hind*, although in 1921 profits were already reduced. However, in 1922 the situation deteriorated to such an extent that there were no dividend payments for ordinary shareholders, and in 1923 the dividend payable to preference shareholders dropped to four per cent. The result was that the shareholders' meetings became increasingly volatile, and in April 1924, the directors were put under pressure to increase profits.⁵⁶ It is not surprising, in these circumstances, that *The Golden Hind* ceased publication with the issue of July 1924, with the plain comment that 'owing to insufficient support, this magazine will no longer appear'.⁵⁷

The effect of the failure of *The Golden Hind* was to shape the rest of Austin Spare's career, immediately sending him into a bitter period of self-doubt, and resulting in the savage satire of the *Anathema of Zos*.⁵⁸ In fact, Spare's work had ceased to appear in the magazine, the last contribution being a reproduction of a bookplate in the issue for January 1924. *The Golden Hind* was Spare's last editorial adventure, and he subsequently devoted his time and energy to automatic drawings and delving into the psychic world through dreams and magical experimentation, while making a home in various flats south of the Thames, living, as he told Grace Rogers, as 'a swine with swine'.⁵⁹ Initially he was able to make a precarious income from the construction of radio sets. Spare's later career was conducted largely in poverty and partial obscurity; he refused to compromise with the commercial aspects of the art trade and exhibited his work in local public houses.⁶⁰ Bax's own sardonic reflection on the failure of *The Golden Hind* was that 'quarterly magazines of art and literature belonged to the age of silk hats, hansom-cabs, drawing-rooms and permanent marriages'.⁶¹

In 1924 another periodical, *The Decachord*, began the uncertain life of a literary magazine during the interwar years, though in fact it was to continue until 1946.

⁵⁶ See Alec Waugh, *The Early Years of Alec Waugh* (London: Cassell, 1962), 197–203.

⁵⁷ *The Golden Hind*, 2:8 (July 1924), 1.

⁵⁸ *Anathema of Zos* was written in 1924, but not published until 1927. It is significantly subtitled, 'The Sermon to the Hypocrites: An Automatic Writing'. Spare wrote, 'I detest your Mammon. Disease partakes of your wealth. Having acquired, ye know not how to spend' (*Anathema of Zos* (Thame: I-H-O, 2001), 21).

⁵⁹ Quoted, Gavin W. Semple, 'A Few Leaves from the Devil's Picture-Book', in Austin Osman Spare, *Two Tracts on Cartomancy* (London: Fulgar, 1997), 9.

⁶⁰ He did receive some recognition and some money when an exhibition was arranged at the Archer Gallery (Oct. 1955). See Mark Hedsel (and David Ovason), *The Zelator: A Modern Initiate Explores the Ancient Mysteries* (London: Century, 1998), 2.

⁶¹ Bax, *Ideas and People*, 35.

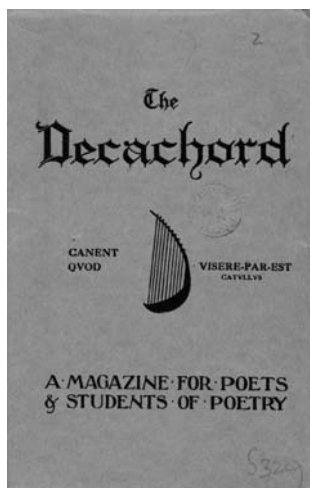


Fig. 71. Cover of the *Decachord* (May–June 1924)

This was perhaps particularly surprising, as the 1920s were the years in which Anglo-American modernism consolidated its position.⁶² The survival of *The Decachord* revealed the extent that those who had responded so enthusiastically to Edward Marsh's 'Georgian' anthologies were still able to support self-consciously 'traditional' English poetry magazines. In its later years, from 1931 to 1946, it was edited by Phillippa Hole, and while it retained a focus on the West Country, it shifted away from its earlier direction to incorporate a response to the more political thirties. However, in its original form, during the years of the editorship of Charles John Arnell, it was resolutely regional, though with a greater catholicity than might be expected. *The Decachord* was quite different to the metropolitan-based reviews of arts and letters, *Form* and *The Golden Hind*. It was published by the Poetry Publishing Company, based in Exeter, and the relatively few advertisements printed in the magazine contributed to the regional tone it conveyed. One example was an advert for Ash's Patent 'Perfect' Leg-Rest, listed as being available from a factory in Exmouth, and which readers were helpfully informed needed no cushion, and was 'just the thing for Poets and Writers'. The manufacturers were keen to suggest that the product had a legitimate 'surgical use', but the claim that the Leg-Rest is suitable 'as a luxury for the tired man or woman in the study, lounge, railway carriage or on shipboard', reveals that the item was marketed at the comfortably well-off reader. Clearly those with a middle-class aspiration for comfort and convenience, coupled

⁶² Harold Monro recorded in the Introduction to his anthology of modern poets in 1929 that 'to-day we have each our *Waste Land*, and the strong influence of Mr. T. S. Eliot, and a few other poets, chiefly unacknowledged in Georgian circles, is more indicative of future tendencies than any other recognizable Signpost' (Harold Monro (ed.), *Twentieth Century Poetry: An Anthology* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1929), 9–10).

with a delight in literature as a higher form of cultivated leisure, would be likely to respond to such an advertisement. On the same page there appeared an advert for *The New Coterie*, confirming the association between physical comfort, leisure, the contemplation of the arts, and a certain modern sophistication. Reaffirming the magazine's local affiliations and traditionalism, however, the opposite page carried a full-page advertisement for Charles John Arnell's *An English Lute: A New Anthology of Contemporary Verse*, which is listed as being available from the *Decachord*'s Exeter publishers.

The Decachord evidently began as an off-shoot of Charles John Arnell's interest in poetry. He had been born in 1850 on the Isle of Wight, and had had a successful business career, before embarking upon the editing of a magazine titled *Poetry* in 1918. Frank Noble Wood has recorded that at the age of 6 Arnell was examined by the phrenologist Professor Rumball. Phrenology—a pseudo-science that purported to establish individual character traits from an examination of the configurations of the head—had become very popular during the nineteenth century and was treated with a seriousness difficult now to appreciate. Apparently Rumball's report noted that the young Arnell 'had not the poetical temperament, but he had the talent', and no doubt this talent was encouraged by the opinions of the distinguished professor.⁶³ Arnell retired from a successful business career in 1905, eventually moving to Exmouth. Swinburne and Thomas Hardy seem to have been the significant influences on his work,⁶⁴ and, once freed from his business interests, he was able to indulge his interest in poetry. His own verse, which had appeared in a number of periodicals and papers, was collected in *Random Rhymes of a Vectensian* (1914) and *Love in a Mist* (1918), both of which demonstrate a thorough-going commitment to rhyme and traditional verse forms, as well as the traditional subject-matter of poetry.

It is clear too that *The Decachord* (the title is taken from the name given to an ancient ten-string musical instrument, an illustration of which decorated the front cover⁶⁵) began as a reaction against certain tendencies of modern poetry. Both the front cover and the title page stated that the magazine was intended for 'students and lovers of poetry'—rather than for professors and critical exegesis of the obscurities of modern poetry. Arnell apparently felt that it was necessary at the outset to identify what he understood by the term 'poetry', and the first item in the first number is in effect a manifesto, though lacking the self-consciously

⁶³ Frank Noble Wood, 'Charles John Arnell', in Charles John Arnell (ed.), *Poets of the Wight: An Anthology of Vectensian Poets*, 2nd edn (Newport, Isle of Wight: The County Press/Exeter: Poetry Publishing Co. 1933), 194. The first edition had appeared in 1922, so this publication in some ways anticipates some of the issues and orientations adopted by *The Decachord* during the period of Arnell's editorship.

⁶⁴ Hardy's death was recorded in *The Decachord*, and marked by a poetic tribute from Arnell (*The Decachord*, 4:14 (Jan.–Feb. 1928), 3).

⁶⁵ *The Decachord* was also the subject of a poem by Arnell that appeared in 1:2 (May–June 1924), 34.

contentious 'attack' associated with the publications of the avant-garde. The essay, 'What Poetry Is', made extensive use of a number of authorities, including Byron, in developing Arnell's argument. His conclusion is that if poetry was to be understood from a historical perspective, which is what he attempted, then it became merely a record of changing sensibilities. In consequence he concluded that 'a real and exhaustive description of *poetry in its widest sense* is almost as unattainable as a strict definition of *music*.'⁶⁶ The reference to music reveals a crucial aspect of Arnell's conception of poetry, which owed something to the example of the Elizabethan poet Thomas Campion,⁶⁷ and was one of the foundations on which *The Decachord's* editorial policy was constructed. This conception was essentially based on the association between poetry and music derived from 'the greater of the Greek poets', who, Arnell asserted, mastered the skills of versification to such an extent that whatever they wanted to express they instinctively found the appropriate 'form, phrase, and word' in such a way as to invite comparison with the musician. Thus, for Arnell, 'the true poet finds his thought in emotion, and its expression demands still more—style and form', with the result that 'verbal music was inseparable from their art'.⁶⁸ Hence the title of the magazine: conceived in evident opposition to the prevailing coteries of modernism. To this end, Arnell attempted to distance the policy of *The Decachord* from what he suggests, in the age of criticism, is the fault of the 'preconceived idea, exclusive taste, or rank prejudice'.⁶⁹

The contemporary debate in the 1920s about the claims of the Ancients and the Moderns defines a feature of the critical stance taken by *The Decachord*. Arnell's roots were deep in the nineteenth century and a view of culture that owed much to the classical education provided by public schools at the time. However, he would seem to have looked back to Swinburne as much as to Greek and Latin poets, asserting, in an introduction to a selection of Swinburne's verses included in his anthology of Isle of Wight poets, that '*Vectis* may fairly claim this superb singer.'⁷⁰ Here Arnell not only details Swinburne's qualifications to be included in an anthology of Isle of Wight poets, but praises his talent as a poet in the terms he had outlined in his essay on 'What Poetry Is'. Thus he claims that 'Swinburne possessed the *art* of poetry in the highest degree, and was a consummate and, perhaps, unrivalled master of language, rhythm, and rhyme.'⁷¹ In Swinburne, Arnell found the embodiment of all that tradition could offer by way of grand example.⁷² Swinburne's *Cleopatra*, Arnell admits, in a review of that work, was

⁶⁶ The Editor [C. J. Arnell], 'What Poetry Is', *The Decachord*, 1:1 (Mar.–Apr. 1924), 3.

⁶⁷ Thomas Campion (1567–1620), who had been rediscovered by A. H. Bullen.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 2–3. ⁶⁹ *Ibid.* 3.

⁷⁰ Charles John Arnell, 'Algernon Charles Swinburne', in Arnell (ed.), *Poets of the Wight*, 128.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* 127.

⁷² It is worth noting that Ford Madox Ford referred to Swinburne in an obituary as 'of the Victorian poets... the most traditional. Of him alone it would not seem mockery to say that he smote a lyre' (*The English Review* (May 1909), 193).

not one of his best, but nonetheless 'exhibits that inborn sense of euphony which culture may perfect, but can never create'.⁷³ This went some way to claim a link between the poet of genius and natural creation, and in so doing confirmed Arnell's distance, geographically as philosophically, from the cultural centre of London. It is, if nothing else, entirely consistent, given his strong commitment to the West Country, that Arnell should be wary of crediting metropolitan-dominated culture for its poetic excellence.

Arnell quickly established a group of 'stalwarts' who not only provided the stable diet of *The Decachord's* poetic contributions but also helped with the duties of editorship and critical commentary.⁷⁴ Poets who regularly appeared were conventional in style, and included Wilfrid Rowland Childe, Wilfrid Gibson, E. H. W. Meyerstein, Eden Philpotts, Lady Margaret Sackville, and Alberta Vickridge. Occasionally poems were also published by writers with wider and more durable reputations, such as Siegfried Sassoon and Robert Graves. The magazine also provided Graham Greene with a regular outlet for the publication of his early verses. The most notable contributors, however, were S. Matthewman and Edwin Faulkner. From the first number, Matthewman is established as Assistant Editor and Faulkner as Consulting Editor. Faulkner, in particular, exhibited a strong influence as a literary critic. In an essay on 'Elizabeth[an] and Augustan', he posited the view that 'with Shelley and Wordsworth begins a tradition that is neither Elizabethan nor Augustan, but modern.'⁷⁵ He looked back to the Romantics, but demonstrates a sensitive awareness of changes that had influenced contemporary culture. Thus he notes, with enthusiasm, that Marvell was 'a much-neglected poet, only now just coming into his own',⁷⁶ and expressed surprise that Palgrave did not include 'To His Coy Mistress' in *The Golden Treasury*, because of Victorian notions of appropriate morality. He concluded with the observation, taken from Marvell, that the increasing tendency of specialization in modern society was at odds with an age when 'poetry and sane judgement in practical matters were not . . . considered incompatible'.⁷⁷ However, Faulkner's commentary in *The Decachord* is characterized, most interestingly, by the attempt to reconcile modernist radicalism with tradition. Thus he argues that:

A man often thinks he has cut himself off from all tradition when he has merely hitched himself on to a tradition still more ancient than the one he has rejected. The Jazz Band, which to some is the last word in modernity is largely a reversion

⁷³ *The Decachord*, 1:4 (Sept.–Oct. 1924), 135.

⁷⁴ Arnell refers to his 'stalwarts' in *An English Lute: A New Anthology of English Verse* (London: C. W. Daniel, 1922), unnumbered page.

⁷⁵ Edwin Faulkner, 'Elizabeth[an] and Augustan', *The Decachord*, 1:2 (May–June 1924), 43.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 46. ⁷⁷ *Ibid.* 47.

to primitive music, and many of the experiments in painting and sculpture which bewilder the bourgeois are strangely akin to archaic types which only a few years ago interested only anthropologists. But the most startling irony of all is the way in which the rebel is apt to become in course of time himself a tradition.⁷⁸

He cites the example of Wagner to prove that yesterday's experiment is tomorrow's tradition, confirming how he was a little out of step with the magazine's general tone of cultural conservatism. Another contributor, Eleanor Hebblethwaite, expressed this conservatism in an essay on 'The Modern Spirit in Poetry', which espoused the view that 'poetry is ageless and timeless'⁷⁹ and was concerned with the unchanging aspects of human experience. Nonetheless, she too demonstrated an awareness of the way changing lifestyles were threatening the sense of coherence that had for centuries been founded upon continuity with the past in rural communities sufficiently small to be seen in some sort of totality. In contrast she questioned whether 'this tyranny of electric advertisement and picture palace, and all the deafening screech and speed of urban existence' will produce a reaction, sending 'the Modernist seeker after beauty . . . back to primal life and the silences of the eternal hills.'⁸⁰

Any attempt at an evaluation of *Form*, *The Golden Hind*, and *The Decachord* in relation to modernism, or what perhaps might more usefully, in this context, be termed the challenge of modernity, is bound to face certain difficulties. Certainly these magazines, in their collective content, and in their editorial perspectives, look back to an elusive past. The pressing urgency of the period, in both its economic and social reality, as well as in the forms of aesthetic modernity, challenged sensibilities that hungered for spiritual and mental rest. In each case it could be said that this hunger was manifested in an attempt to find cultural continuity. Nonetheless these magazines were themselves part of the fragmented culture of the period, as it was generally perceived. What was perhaps remarkable was that they so often traced their notions of stability to the already fragmenting late nineteenth century, manifesting nostalgia and reaction in a way that derived from just those forces that were part of the modern crisis. H. J. Birnstingl, writing an essay, echoing aestheticist style and criteria, on 'Würzburg' in *The Golden Hind*, captured the duality of the sensibility that these magazines struggled to articulate, typically seen in terms of the picturesque Romanticism of the moment:

⁷⁸ Edwin Faulkner, 'On Certain Poets of To-day', *The Decachord*, 1:5 (Nov.–Dec. 1924), 149.

⁷⁹ Eleanor Hebblethwaite, 'The Modern Spirit in Poetry', *The Decachord*, 2:10 (July–Aug. 1926), 142.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 147.

In the realm of space, no less than in that of time, there is a certain charm in the transitional. And, as in history the student finds his keenest delight in those periods which show the dawn of a new light impinging upon men's consciousness, so that mankind is seen amidst the complex reactions of an old and a new order, so, too, certain towns, by reason of their particular position in space, seem to merge in themselves dual characteristics.⁸¹

⁸¹ H. J. Birnstingl, *The Golden Hind*, 1:2 (Jan. 1923), 3.

VIII

COMMITMENT TO THE NEW



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INTRODUCTION

The 1930s are known for the dramatic impact of economic and political crises and for the sense of combined mission and foreboding with which literary and cultural forms responded to these developments. The magazines were no exception. They spoke out in the voice of a generation against injustice and war and for a new engaged art and literature. But if there was a broadly unified sense of purpose, individual magazines often also assumed a particular character in their content and orientation, in ways attributable, above all, to a remarkable set of editors—amongst them Edgell Rickword, Geoffrey Grigson, and John Lehmann. The chapters below detail the careers of these and other less familiar figures along with the varied fortunes of individual magazines running from the late 1920s to the early 1940s.

Together the magazines present a complex, faceted, and changing story. Their titles alone, however, tell their own tale. On the one hand, *Experiment*, *Venture*, *New Verse*, *New Writing*, *Twentieth Century Verse*, and *Contemporary Poetry and Prose* declared an emphasis on ‘newness’ and the modernity of the present moment. On the other, *Cambridge Left*, *Left Review*, and *Poetry and the People* advertised an overtly radical and progressive politics. Together they suggested a combined awareness not simply of ‘now’ but of this moment in time, going forward in response to a specific call for commitment and action with an urgency we do not meet in, say, the earlier *New Age*. This call was also sounded in the two prominent anthologies, *New Signatures* (1932) and *New Country* (1933), edited by Michael Roberts which effectively introduced many of the poets associated with the decade: amongst them, W. H. Auden, Cecil Day Lewis, Stephen Spender, John Lehmann, and William Empson. Roberts gave voice here to those whose instincts in a time of economic depression and political reaction turned them away from an earlier, now seemingly elitist modernism. Thus he introduced *New Signatures* as representing ‘a clear reaction against esoteric poetry in which it is necessary for the reader to catch each recondite allusion’, while in the more political *New Country* he announced how the writer ‘sees more and more clearly that his interests are bound up with those of the working class’.¹

¹ Michael Roberts (ed.), *New Signatures* (London: Hogarth Press, 1932), 12, and *New Country* (London Hogarth Press, 1933), 18.

'Newness' appeared then to require less a commitment to formal experimentation than to a faithful rendering of the everyday, sometimes in an anti-establishment or populist vein or more directly working-class cause. This stance gained currency as the decade received the shocks of mass unemployment, the rise of Hitler, the Spanish Civil War, and the threat of war between nations, but the evidence of the magazines, as the accounts below reveal, show how questions of form and idiom were far from forgotten. Certainly, many magazines were marked by a left-leaning social conscience, as was literary and intellectual culture generally. And for some this entailed a direct political allegiance. *Left Review* (1934–8), for example, edited in turn by a collective, and then by Edgell Rickword and Randall Swingler, was established as an organ of the British Section of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers. It joined debates on the merits of Socialist Realism, supported the Soviet Union against European fascism, and vigorously engaged on the Republican side on the Spanish Civil War. *Poetry and the People* was as strong a defender of the oppressed in Spain and as unflinching an opponent of fascism and war, but its commitment, more typically in the period, was not of a doctrinaire kind. Indeed, as Peter Marks points out, the organized Left made a negligible impression on the formal political scene in this period. The Communist Party won only 0.1 per cent of the vote in 1935 and other left-wing factions were, in truth, marginalized and ineffective. The response to dogma as to dictatorship was rather to open the pages of magazines and by extension, it was hoped, the general culture to younger and different voices, speaking in different tones across class and nation. *Poetry and the People* and *New Writing* consciously took up these aims. But so too, in their own terms, did the resolutely iconoclastic foes of pretension and propaganda, Geoffrey Grigson in *New Verse* and Julian Symons in *Twentieth Century Verse*. Their principal example and touchstone—indeed, for some, their *raison d'être*—was the verse of W. H. Auden, whose poetry gave birth, even in his early career, to a common mode: the 'Audenesque'. Edwin Muir's and Janko Lavrin's *European Quarterly* (1934–5) does not immediately suggest it belongs to the realms of newness or activism, but its announced mission was similarly to expand horizons and so counter the narrowing ideological prejudices of the time. It included translations from Russian, Bulgarian, Polish, Czech and German, Italian, and Spanish and made a particular case for the relevance of Kafka. This European orientation was not itself entirely new but in this period took on a pronounced, polemical, and pedagogic edge in what was again a distinctive feature of contemporary magazine culture.

All of this was a matter too of these magazines' relation to modernism. Not every one found it as easy as Michael Roberts to dismiss the literary modernists of the 1910s and 1920s. As McCracken points out, *Experiment* still looked, if somewhat ambivalently, to the examples of T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, and D. H. Lawrence and was pleased to publish an episode of Joyce's 'Work in Progress'. In similar vein A. T. Cunninghame reluctantly confessed in *The European Quarterly*

that Eliot remained 'a yardstick', and we might indeed see Eliot's *Criterion* as a precedent for this magazine's consciously open attitude to European writing. Its editors, Muir and Lavrin, says Marks, had 'modernist affiliations' through their earlier association with *The New Age*. In *The New Age* Muir had published a series of articles on 'We Moderns', which became his first book *We Moderns: Enigmas and Guesses* (1918), praised by Orage as 'the reflections of a modern mind'.² Muir later published studies of Joyce, Woolf, Eliot, and Lawrence in his *Transitions* (1926) and *The Structure of the Novel* (1928) and considered Joyce's *Ulysses* 'a work of genius', though now 'fallen into the past' along with Woolf and Huxley. His preference all the same was not for social or socialist realism but for a different kind of modernist: Franz Kafka. Grigson, for his part, had conceived *New Verse* with Hugh Ross Williamson, the author of the first full-length study of Eliot, and Grigson's own first collection *Several Observations* was indebted in more than its title to Eliot's *Prufrock and Other Observations*. Even those associated with *Left Review* and *Poetry and the People* who rejected modernism's supposed 'decadence' and 'escapism' on political or class terms were reacting, as Marks puts it, to the 'necessary thesis' to their antithesis. For the more openly politically committed, bourgeois culture, fascism and imperialist war stood on one side, worker writers and the model of the Soviet Union on the other. The freedom with which writers invoked 'communism' and 'revolution' was a mark of the period's sometimes automatic rhetoric. There was some scepticism, nonetheless, towards party political positions, particularly when it came to matters of aesthetics and literary value. The degree to which *Left Review* followed a party line or adopted the principles of socialist realism along with the call for a new socialist society is debatable. Its 'Controversy' section debated questions of literature and culture, including modernist examples, from a wide range of left-leaning positions. Under Rickword, who edited the magazine from January 1936 to June 1937, it widened its contributors to include figures such as André Malraux, Romain Rolland, and Bertolt Brecht, as well as Herbert Read on Surrealism, and paintings by Miró and Magritte. This new breadth coincided with the organization of the Popular Front and the crisis of the Spanish Civil War—a striking expression of which was the questionnaire and subsequent *Left Review* pamphlet *Authors Take Sides*, published to huge sales of 5,000 copies in two weeks. Organized by Nancy Cunard it carried the imprimatur of, amongst others, Louis Aragon, W. H. Auden, Heinrich Mann, Pablo Neruda, Stephen Spender, and Tristan Tzara. Of those who replied, 5 were for Franco; 127, including Samuel Beckett, Cyril Connolly, Rebecca West, and Virginia Woolf, were for the Republican government. Supposedly 'decadent' modernists and friends of modernism could plainly respond as others did to the urgency of the times.

² See Wallace Martin, *The New Age under Orage: Chapters in English Cultural History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967), 278.

One way to be new or 'modern' if not 'modernist', in the familiar sense, was to be young. The voice of a new generation was heard most obviously in the Cambridge undergraduate magazines *Experiment*, *The Venture*, and *Cambridge Left*. *Experiment*, Scott McCracken tells us (Chapter 25 below), was the more cosmopolitan of this group, but all were confined in their contributors and readership to the environment of Cambridge. All of them, too, were short-lived; their existence determined as much as anything by the length of the academic year and undergraduate degree. They were caught in other ways too, in this interim period, between the past and future. Thus while their editors and contributors were confident, forward-looking members of an elite fellowship and institution, heading for fame—and infamy, in the case of the future spies Anthony Blunt and Donald Maclean—their efforts to 'make it new' were overshadowed by the losses of the First World War and curtailed by the threat of future conflict. McCracken comes consequently, in a far-reaching insight, to emphasize the uncertainty and incompleteness of this episode and this formation, expressed jointly in these magazines' prevailing aesthetics and politics.

Experiment and *Venture* bridged the late twenties and early thirties and to that extent shared a common ethos, though *Experiment*, guided by the youthful editorial team of William Empson, Hugh Sykes Davies, and Humphrey Jennings, was the more self-consciously modernist. It was respectful of Eliot, Joyce, and Lawrence but lived up to its title more in Sykes Davies's innovative 'jazz' poetry, Empson's use of science, and a number of essays on the cinema. *The Venture* favoured the Georgians and a concept of high culture over modernist decadence, but both magazines were ready to inspect the longer genealogy of the modern from Herrick and Shakespeare onwards and in this respect became more closely identified. The later *Cambridge Left* (1933–4) was marked by a more directly politicized agenda, calling in the person of the poet and activist, John Cornford, and a generation of young contributors such as Charles Madge, W. H. Auden, and Stephen Spender, for a newly engaged literature, alive to the everyday, and critical of what was perceived as the 'collapse into subjectivity' of the earlier modernists. *Cambridge Left* presented a searching and radical commentary on the First World War, the illusions of the twenties, and the economic and political failures of the 1930s, and McCracken points in particular to J. D. Bernal's essay 'The End of a Political Delusion' as marking out the territory of this changed political culture. The threat of fascism's malignant nationalism and glorification of war was seen simultaneously to expose the crisis of capitalism and the weakness of the 'private dream worlds' of Joyce, Picasso, and Eliot. Artists and writers were consequently called upon to 'take sides', resulting in what became a standard admiration for Soviet-style communism and revolutionary Soviet cinema along with a ritualistic dismissal of the now orthodox 'high' modernists, condemned for their retreat into 'academicism'—as McCracken points out, a widespread term of abuse in the period. *Experiment* can sometimes be seen to share this attitude with *Cambridge Left*, even if its

politics were less clear-cut. The influence and standing of Eliot and Joyce persisted nonetheless and the modernist example made itself felt, indirectly but influentially, in the protocols of 'Practical Criticism' and the shaping of Cambridge English.

John Lehmann had been a contributor to *The Venture*, and his *New Writing* was as much an example of the experience of transition and 'rupture across generations' McCracken describes as the earlier magazines. In particular, Lehmann voiced a common frustration with privilege and elitism (even if he, like some others, was a beneficiary of this system). He began *New Writing* in 1936 and sought in a deliberately populist gesture to deflate both the idea of the poet and, perhaps more significantly, the figure of the editor. Lehmann himself embodied the paradoxical effect of his own aims. After a modest beginning he became a prominent figure as *New Writing* gained a mass readership, rising to 100,000 copies as *Penguin New Writing* through an association with Allen Lane and the new Penguin Books. Whatever else, *Penguin New Writing* launched in 1946, was not a 'little magazine'. Nonetheless, Lehmann sought, as many 'little magazines' had done, to break new ground, an aim announced in the plain speaking of the magazine's original title and carried through in Lehmann's editorials, the contents and contributors, and overall organization of the magazine.

Like others, Lehmann experienced an ambivalent relation to the first generation modernists, derived particularly, in his case, from a direct association with the Woolfs and especially with Leonard Woolf at the Hogarth Press where Lehmann worked as an assistant.³ Consequently, as Françoise Bort points out, he found a different lineage, not so much in the obvious precedents of *The Criterion* or *Coterie*, but in William and Robert Chambers's mid-nineteenth-century *English Journal*. In addition, as Bort explains, Lehmann established what was in effect a different set of social relations of production. As a result, the newness of 'New Writing' was less a matter of formal experiment than a new way of being an editor and writer in relation to contributors and a large and loyal readership as well as in relation to contemporary social and political issues. The contributors themselves were young Cambridge friends, who had been included in *New Signatures*, but were relatively untried. They were introduced in the magazine, in the spirit of ordinariness Lehmann aimed for, less by a way of a description of their literary background or education than by their objective circumstances, straightforwardly described. Thus George Orwell appeared as 'a government official in Burma' and a 'volunteer in Spain, where he was wounded'; V. S. Pritchett as having 'left school at the age of sixteen' to earn 'his living in the leather and photography business' and then by selling 'feathers and theatre tickets' in France. To some extent *New Writing* shared this tone with *Poetry and the People* and with other magazines, like

³ Recounted in Lehmann's *Thrown to the Woolfs: Leonard and Virginia Woolf and the Hogarth Press* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1978).

New Verse and *Twentieth Century Verse*, which set their face against any sign of pretension. On the other hand, like *The European Quarterly*, *New Writing's* content and contributors stretched across Europe, broadening its readers' awareness at a time when reactionary nationalisms sought to divide and denigrate peoples. This internationalist tendency was made more apparent in the single issue miscellany *Daylight* produced in collaboration with exiled Czech writers in 1941 (and followed by *New Writing and Daylight*, 1942–6).

Most magazines were concerned with the health, relevance, and quality of poetry. *New Writing*, by contrast, introduced a new kind of prose narrative. Its major innovation was probably the hybrid form of autobiographical reportage or participatory history introduced by Christopher Isherwood's piece 'The Nowaks'. There was also the novelty, in form and function, of Lehmann's own editorials, which, as Françoise Bort shows, paradoxically reinforced a personal charisma in the same gesture that Lehmann assumed a conversational equality with his readers. The figure of the editor became a persona, a 'hyper presence' or 'master of ceremonies', as Bort puts it, in would-be intimate conversation with his audience. The newness of *New Writing* therefore comprised at bottom the combination of youth, a docu-fictional treatment of contemporary issues, and a democratizing mode, dependent on a vocabulary of community rather than class and a commitment to the ordinary rather than the proletarian.

Geoffrey Grigson's *New Verse* and Julian Symons's *Twentieth Century Verse* stood out against the literary establishment and cliques of whatever kind. Most of the contributors to either magazine were on the left while their editors belonged, if anything, argues Stan Smith, 'to a tradition of Tory anarchism'. Their avowed joint concern, however, was with the poetry not the politics, and what poetry meant was represented pre-eminently by W. H. Auden. *New Verse's* Auden 'Double Number' of November 1937 spelled out Auden's specialness. In Grigson's description he was 'a Monster' who 'does not fit', and was 'no gentleman'; who did 'not write, or exist, by any of the codes, by the Bloomsbury rules, by the Hampstead rules, by the Oxford, the Cambridge, or the Russell Square rules' but sits on 'the dangerous side of the frontier'.⁴ Grigson, in particular, evangelized for this creative outsider; he was 'something good and creative in European life in a time of the very greatest evil'.⁵

Few other writers approached this exemplar, even within the ambit of the 'Audenesque', though Grigson's co-editors for a time, Bernard Spencer and Kenneth Allott, produced the kind of direct prosaic poetry he admired. Grigson and Symons were notoriously hostile to other contenders, including, as Smith notes, the modernists Wallace Stevens, Hugh MacDiarmid, and William Carlos Williams, and to 'the pure bogus modernism' associated with 'so much American

⁴ Geoffrey Grigson, 'Auden as a Monster', *New Verse*, 26–7 (Nov. 1937), 13, 14, 16.

⁵ Geoffrey Grigson, 'Twenty-Seven Sonnets', *New Verse*, 2 NS (May 1939), 49.

poetry'. Grigson found something to praise, nonetheless, in Ezra Pound, and pronounced that 'After Yeats and Eliot there were no better poets in England than Auden and MacNeice.' He was also very early, in the English context, in his notice of Surrealism, and had in 1933 already published translations by David Gascoyne of Paul Eluard and others, and Charles Madge's essay 'Surrealism for the English'. *New Verse* 18 (December 1935) published a poem by Gascoyne, his review of collections by Eluard and Hugh Sykes Davies, along with a review of Gascoyne's own *Short Survey of Surrealism*. And in 1936—the year of the London Surrealist Exhibition—*New Verse* 20 (April–May, 1936) published Hugh Sykes Davies's notable essay 'Sympathies with Surrealism'.

Smith points to a fascinating and illuminating convergence in this connection. For what was admired in Auden and MacNeice (and presumably in Eliot and Yeats) was their 'exact, material view. . . . Both make familiar use of objects', and are 'able to impart ideas through objects'. In his 'Poetic Description and Mass-Observation', in *New Verse* in 1937, Madge showed how Mass-Observation's 'objective statements about human behaviour. . . . produce a poetry' which raises 'what has become unnoticed through familiarity. . . . into consciousness again'.⁶ As Smith points out, this is the technique of defamiliarization widely employed in European modernism. Madge reported subsequently on the so-called 'Oxford Collective Poem' assembled by twelve undergraduates through a process of observation, filtering, selection, and group composition. The result was a description of social conduct in 'objective, scientific fashion' which at the same time disclosed the 'hinterland, the background of social fantasy'. As Smith's account suggests, Surrealist juxtaposition and free association converged here with the Audensesque. It might be noted too that Kenneth Allot, who shared Grigson's admiration for the discipline of straightforward observation, also published several poems in the Surrealist outlet *Contemporary Poetry and Prose*.

Surrealism arrived late on the British scene in 1936 and took its character from immediate and longer-term tendencies in the national culture. As Rod Mengham's account shows, it was also marked by personal and internal ideological and aesthetic tensions. Roger Roughton began *Contemporary Poetry and Prose* in 1936, the year, once more, of the epochal 'International Surrealist Exhibition' at the New Burlington Galleries. He was a militant defender of Soviet communism but less dogmatic magazine editor who was influenced by Dada and the uniquely intense air of political activism in Parton Street. Here *Contemporary Poetry and Prose* rubbed shoulders with *Left Review*, the radical publishers Lawrence and Wishart, the bookseller David Archer (who published the first collections by George Barker, Dylan Thomas, and David Gascoyne), and the Workers Theatre Movement. A populist instinct, common to the period, also drew Roughton to folkloric elements, for example, the traditional English ballad 'Little Musgrave' which he included

⁶ Charles Madge, 'Poetic Description and Mass-Observation', *New Verse*, 24 (Feb.–Mar. 1937), 3.

alongside poems and stories by Dylan Thomas, William Empson, David Gascoyne, Gavin Ewart, E. E. Cummings, and himself, in the magazine's first issue.

Roughton appeared to show no interest in the visual content of Surrealism. *The London Bulletin* (1939–40), edited by E. L. T. Mesens, was by contrast committed to the visual arts throughout its life. Further differences over the direction of British Surrealism, however, led to disabling tensions, notably between Mesens and Toni del Renzio, the editor of *Arson*. As Mengham reports, del Renzio's independent-minded policy—which included contributions from Eileen Agar, Emmy Bridgwater, Edith Rimmington, and Marguerite Salle—challenged the received gendered composition of British Surrealism at the same time as his pugnacious editorial style and throwaway humour fuelled the regular in-fighting amongst the British Surrealist contingent and helped undermine what common platform the movement had established.

One major disagreement, however, comprising what Mengham describes as 'one of the most important organizing tensions of English Surrealism' took the form of a running debate in the magazines, notably between Humphrey Jennings and Herbert Read, on the genealogy of Surrealism. Jennings took issue especially with Read's view that Surrealism was derived from Romanticism (Read argued this case for modernism in general) rather than, as Jennings argued, from a now-degraded classicism. This 'de-emphasizing of individual subjectivity', as Mengham puts it, informed Jennings's wish to engage with 'something real'. His own practice in writing, painting, photography, and film drew on the effects of technology, notably the camera, to create a multi-perspectival collage in conjunction with 'a left-wing political agenda, an attachment to popular forms and iconography, and a revaluation of the cultural unconscious'. Jennings's position informs his involvement, alongside Charles Madge and Tom Harrisson, in the Mass-Observation movement whose systematic non-subjective reporting of the major events and routines of contemporary everyday life induced, as above, a 'defamiliarising' politicized perspective on 'something real'. McCracken and Smith respectively note this tendency in *Experiment* and as a potential of the Audenesque. Mengham emphasizes how, for Jennings, changes in technology provided the fundamental experience of modernity. British Surrealism cannot be understood, Mengham argues, 'without a recognition of the conceptual centrality of technologies used not simply to represent bare objects, but . . . objects filled with and surrounded by fantasies and memories, desires and inhibitions, whose source is in the cultural unconscious'.

For all their differences from each other, therefore, and their distance from the more mainstream modernist figures and achievements of the 1920s, these various magazines broke into a new realm on behalf of a new generation. Auden and the wide influence he cast does perhaps sum this up, but 'modernism', though in one guise, disparaged or circumvented, found new life in an association with European art and writing, a changed relation with its readers and political events, and in British Surrealism, a distinct cultural heritage and potential.

CAMBRIDGE MAGAZINES AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Experiment (1928–30), *The Venture* (1928–30),
and *Cambridge Left* (1933–4)

SCOTT MCCRACKEN

‘Nor are we at pains to be littered with the Illustrious Dead and Dying’
—*Experiment*

There are at least three reasons why we might want to revisit the student magazines of Cambridge University of the late 1920s and early 1930s: first, because they had some aesthetic worth or literary merit; second, because, as with the publications discussed below, they were the products of an elite institution that had an important place in the class structure of interwar Britain; and third, because the contributors went on to become important figures in their own right. In practice, all these reasons apply, but each is insufficient in itself. The magazines discussed in this chapter conform in their production to the genre of ‘little magazines’ and a more enlightening way to think of such publications is in relation to the way Walter Benjamin thinks of the ephemera of modern culture in *The Arcades Project*. Like many of the transient objects and practices Benjamin discusses, ‘little magazines’ are destined for ruin, failure, and defeat; but like a momentary fashion or a passing style in architecture the magazines only become historically legible at the point of their obsolescence. At which point, they can be reconfigured in relation to a broader field within the history of modernity. It is, therefore, their incompleteness rather than their coherence that signals the ways in which they contribute to a broader cultural history. In what follows, I track that incompleteness in relation to the form of three Cambridge magazines and attempt to relate it to the wider context of the interwar period.

Aesthetics and politics

The quotation at the head of this chapter comes from the manifesto of *Experiment*. The dead weighed heavily on the three most significant student magazines published at Cambridge University between the wars: *Experiment*, *The Venture*, and *Cambridge Left*. As Samuel Hynes has pointed out, this was the generation whose fathers and elder brothers had died in the First World War.¹ They were at once cut off from the past and living forever in its shadow. ‘Making it new’ in this context meant striving for an aesthetic and a politics that both resisted the constraints of history and produced forms of writing that would be resolutely contemporary. Inevitably, as with all student publications and many ‘little magazines’, the print runs were short, appearances irregular, the writing patchy. Yet each magazine achieved a distinctive character, despite some shared preoccupations and a gradual convergence between *Experiment* and *The Venture*. However, it is as ‘expositions by which change occurs and is made legible’,² rather than as discrete cultural objects, that the significance of these Cambridge ‘little magazines’ is best understood.

In literary terms, *Experiment* was the most accomplished. A review of ‘Recent Magazines’ in the September 1933 issue of *Poetry* described *Experiment* (which had ceased publication two years earlier) as having ‘fulfilled the promise of its title by printing prose and poetic work of severe novelty and independence’.³ It has certainly been the most written about, partly because William Empson was one of the five editors and the journal saw early publication of his poetry and criticism.⁴ Empson’s place alongside I. A. Richards and F. R. Leavis in the development of Cambridge literary criticism between the wars has kept *Experiment* in view. It was also the most self-consciously modernist. T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, and D. H. Lawrence, but also Gerard Manley Hopkins, were key influences.⁵

¹ Samuel Hynes, *The Auden Generation: Literature and Politics in England in the 1930s* (London: Bodley Head, 1976), 17–19.

² Brian Maidment, ‘Victorian Periodicals and Academic Discourse’, in Laurel Brake, Aled Jones, and Lionel Madden (eds), *Investigating Victorian Journalism* (London: Macmillan, 1990), 147.

³ Morton Dauwen Zabel, ‘Recent Magazines’, *Poetry*, 42:6 (Sept. 1933), 348–9.

⁴ By far the best and most insightful account is Jason Harding, ‘Experiment in Cambridge: “A Manifesto of Young England”’, *Cambridge Quarterly*, 27:4 (1998), 287–309. But see also Thomas M. Sawyer, ‘Experiment’, in Alvin Sullivan (ed.), *British Literary Magazines: The Modern Age, 1914–1984* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986), 177–9; Kate Price, “Finite But Unbounded”: *Experiment Magazine*, Cambridge, England, 1928–31’, *Jacket*, 20 (Dec. 2002), <http://jacketmagazine.com/20/price-expe.html>; and, with particular reference to Empson, John Haffenden, ‘His Presence Spellbound Us All: The *Experiment* Group’, in *William Empson*, vol. ii: *Among the Mandarins* (Oxford University Press, 2005), 151–75.

⁵ The significance of Hopkins is clear in Elsie Phare’s essay, ‘Valéry and Gerard Hopkins’, *Experiment*, 1 (Nov. 1928), 19–23; and Hugh Sykes Davies’s essay ‘The Ornate Style’ in *Experiment*, 7 (Spring 1931), 17–24.

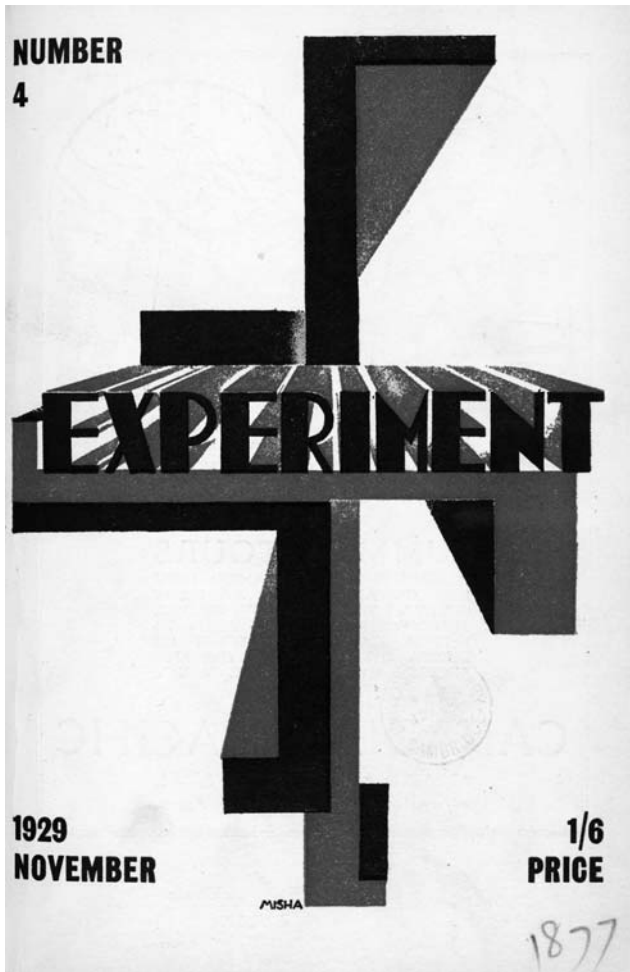


Fig. 72. Cover of *Experiment* (Nov. 1929)

The Venture has had less critical attention. The review article in *Poetry* does not mention it at all, although it does mention another student publication, *Contemporaries and Makers*, edited by John Kaestlin.⁶ *The Venture* is usually seen as *Experiment's* literary antagonist; both ran between 1928 and 1931, and what discussion there has been is usually by way of contrast.⁷ Its poetry was, at least

⁶ Of which Zabel writes, 'The fiction in this journal is slight and naturalistic, but the verse exhibits on occasion some very dignified intuitions, notably in the work of G. J. Greene, Robert Hamer, and Stanley Richardson.' A review by John Drummond (who also contributed to *Cambridge Left*) of Pound's *XXX Cantos* is also praised: Zabel, 'Recent Magazines', 349.

⁷ See Harding, 'Experiment in Cambridge', 296–301; Price, "Finite But Unbounded"; and Haffenden, *Empson*, 164–5.

to begin with, more Georgian than modernist. Its prose was often pedestrian, recycling realist and gothic tropes. It favoured woodcuts over the modernist images by artists such as Henri Cartier-Bresson found in *Experiment*. However, key figures, such as Humphrey Jennings and Elsie (E. E.) Phare contributed to both; and *Experiment* itself included pieces that were more Georgian than modernist.⁸ Although they opted for different aesthetics, the critical concerns of both *The Venture* and *Experiment* overlapped. Interestingly, at a time when the concept of the modern was subject to intense debate, essays about the significance of early modern literature were common to *Experiment* and *The Venture* (and, as we shall see, *Cambridge Left*). The poetry in both magazines drew on classical themes, but as much to underline modernity's dynamic relationship with the past, in the manner Benjamin identifies in Baudelaire, as to pay homage to traditional Cambridge scholarship.⁹

While the aesthetic tendencies of *The Venture* and *Experiment* diverged, the contributors found themselves on similar political ground. Julian Bell's demand, in a letter written to Michael Redgrave in 1930, that *The Venture* stayed 'the paper of the Right' seems odd now from a poet who died in the Spanish Civil War;¹⁰ but Right versus Left here makes more sense as a literary rather than a political binary. The 'left-wing' *Experiment* invited experiments in revolutionary new forms but the contributors to the 'right-wing' *Venture* were hardly conservative. The editors included Redgrave, the future actor and prominent socialist, and Anthony Blunt who was to work for Soviet intelligence as the 'Fourth Man'. The contributors included Donald Maclean, another future Soviet spy, although his fictions in life were more successful than his fictions on paper. Few of the original participants in *The Venture* were self-consciously avant-garde.

Cambridge Left began four years later, running for five issues between 1933 and 1934; and it was marked by what was already a different epoch. *Poetry* described it as 'Cambridge's contribution to economic and political discussion, and perhaps the best organised and most perceptive organ of the group'; and Ezra Pound thought it worth a review in its own right.¹¹ The magazine reflected the growing politicization of the student body, although this was still at an early stage.¹² The first issue included a poem by W. H. Auden and the magazine adopted a critical stance that challenged the high modernism of the 1920s, demanding a new engaged

⁸ See, for example, O. W. Reynolds's prose, 'Synopsis: Mirror to Introspection', *Experiment*, 4 (Nov. 1929), 3; or K. H. Jackson, 'Winter Morning', *ibid.* 46.

⁹ 'It is very important that the modern, with Baudelaire, appear not only as the signature of an epoch but as an energy by which this epoch immediately forms and appropriates antiquity' (Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. H. Eiland and K. McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1999), [J5, 1], 236.

¹⁰ Cited in Harding, 'Experiment in Cambridge', 299.

¹¹ Zabel, 'Recent Magazines', 350. E. Pound, 'Cambridge Left', *Poetry*, 42:6 (Sept. 1933), 353–5.

¹² See Pat Sloan (ed.), *John Cornford: A Memoir* (Dunfermline: Borderline Press, [1938] 1978), 95–113.

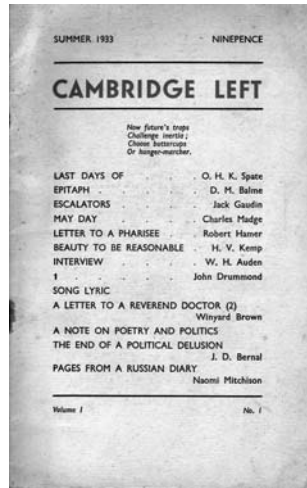


Fig. 73. Cover of *Cambridge Left* (Summer 1933)

aesthetic.¹³ In the second issue of *Cambridge Left*, published at the same time, John Cornford, the poet, activist, and political thinker who also died in Spain in 1936, wrote that the ‘collapse into subjectivity of Eliot, Joyce or Pound shows more and more clearly the fate of those who refuse to admit the necessity of choice’.¹⁴ He compared their ‘collapse’ with the ‘revolutionary fermentation in the work of the younger poets—W. H. Auden, Charles Madge, Stephen Spender, C. Day Lewis, Richard Goodman, H. V. Kemp’.¹⁵ Many of the debates in the magazine concern the necessity of a new proletarian aesthetic, one that cannot be reached by the ‘bourgeois’ writers of the 1930s, but against which imagined ideal all current art must be measured. This particular form of writing the now was then also a writing of the future, at a time when the future seemed as likely to bring catastrophe as transformation: ‘Sudden reversals—no slow change’ as John Reeves wrote in his poem ‘New Year Notes’.¹⁶ However, before examining this temporality, which in one way or another affected all three magazines, it pays to move down several levels from the macro-history of the period Eric Hobsbawm calls in his history of

¹³ Julian Bell chose to argue with the position of *Cambridge Left* as well, calling in a letter to *The Student Vanguard* in 1934 for a ‘return to classicism and the development of a new plain style’: Julian Bell, ‘Letter to the editor’, *The Student Vanguard*, 2:4 (Jan. 1934). The letter was a response to Cornford’s ‘The Class Front in Modern Art’, published in the previous issue, but echoing Cornford’s contributions to *Cambridge Left*. Both pieces are republished in Jonathan Galassi (ed.), *Understand the Weapon, Understand the Wound: Selected Writings of John Cornford* (Manchester: Carcarnet, 1976), 46–56.

¹⁴ John Cornford, ‘Left’, *Cambridge Left*, 1:2 (Winter 1933–4), 25 (as above).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ John Reeves, ‘New Year Notes’, *Experiment*, 7 (Spring 1931), 26.

The Short Twentieth Century, the 'Age of Catastrophe' (1914–45),¹⁷ to the material history of the magazines' production and to their reception at the level of the everyday.¹⁸

Micro-histories

Experiment was originally funded by William Hare, Lord Ennismore, from his private income. The editors were Hare, Empson, Jacob Bronowski, Humphrey Jennings, and Hugh Sykes Davies: the so-called 'Five'. The first six issues were priced at one shilling and sixpence, the seventh, which attempted to move the magazine beyond Cambridge, at two shillings. *Experiment's* cover was a striking modernist design in green and black by Misha Black.¹⁹ Looking a bit like an avant-garde swastika (although the magazine leant to the Left) a 3D, cinematic rendering of the title emerged off the page. The magazine's advertisements suggested ambitions that reached beyond Cambridge. They included investment opportunities and travel in Canada (possibly because of the involvement of the Canadian G. F. Noxon as publishing editor); London shops that might appeal to well-heeled undergraduates, selling reproductions of modern artists, stationery, and gifts for 'gentlemen'; the *Modern Scot: (The Organ of the Scottish Renaissance)*, edited by J. H. Whyte; and *The New Review*.

The Venture was edited by Blunt, Robin Fedden, and Redgrave. All six issues sold at one shilling and six pence. The cover was more conventional than that of *Experiment*. Issues 1–3 were on blue paper with a small design of a satyr by Christopher Millet. Issues 4–5 had a larger more modernist design by Guy Barton (who had contributed a lino cut to the first issue) of a figure reading a scroll in a rural landscape dominated by an enormous modern building reminiscent of Cambridge University Library or the Senate House of London University (neither even begun in 1929). The issues contained advertisements for record shops and places to eat out in Cambridge; 'University Motors' in London, indicating traffic to the metropolis; the ADC theatre in Cambridge; and, in issue 5, *Farrago*, an Oxford periodical, suggesting some interaction with Britain's other elite university.

Cambridge Left was the product of Cambridge students and academics. It sold at ninepence for the first two issues and then at sixpence for the subsequent three

¹⁷ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century* (London: Michael Joseph, 1994), 21–2.

¹⁸ '[T]he formal qualities of the periodical are shaped by its particular relationship to time' (Margaret Beetham, 'Towards a Theory of the Periodical as a Publishing Genre', in Brake, *et al.* (eds), *Investigating Victorian Journalism*, 26).

¹⁹ Black's parents were Russian émigrés. Although the design appears to borrow from Russian Futurism, Black (1910–77) left Baku, his birthplace, at the age of eighteen months.

issues.²⁰ It was plainer than either *Experiment* or *The Venture*, printed on cheaper paper with a bold, red title. Its advertisements show it to be well connected with the London cultural scene and included *New Verse*, edited by Geoffrey Grigson; *The Twentieth Century*; *film art*; 'Marxists Literature and Periodicals' from Archer's Bookshop in Parton Street, London; and Wyndham Lewis's *The Apes of God* from Zwemmer's Modern English Bookshop in Charing Cross Road. The first two issues made a gesture towards collective production in that the magazine's printer was the Leicester Co-operative Printing Society Limited.²¹

Contemporaries, a more conventional undergraduate magazine, serves as a useful comparison with the other three.²² It was originally called *Contemporaries and Makers*, the longer name was apparently a compromise because the first issue included another magazine that was going to be called *Makers*.²³ It reverted to the shorter title from the second number. It cost one shilling and six pence until the last issue, which was two shillings and was more professional looking than the other three magazines. The cover was printed on thin coloured card with a circular design of a male figure apparently gesturing to the word 'Contemporaries'. Indicating its more parochial purview, all the advertisements were for Cambridge establishments except for two literary notices in the last issue for *1616 (English and Spanish Poetry): A Review* and poems by Stanley Richardson. The rest were for shoe, clothes, and book shops, tea rooms and restaurants, including the American Sandwich Bar; the Festival Theatre; and Robert Sayle and Co.'s Circulating Library, Cambridge.

Distribution of all the magazines was initially confined to Cambridge. As indicated by its range of advertisements, *Experiment* was the most cosmopolitan. Its reach was extended when the Canadian Gerald Noxon joined as publishing editor and extended distribution beyond Cambridge to London, Paris, and Toronto. The editors contributed a section to an issue of the Paris-based *transition* in June 1930. Connected to Bloomsbury via Empson and to Paris through the relationship with *transition*, and to Canada through Noxon, the magazine exuded an air of metropolitan knowingness, which made it the subject of local parodies, even though the

²⁰ Kevin Morgan, the historian of the Communist Party of Great Britain, thinks a Party subsidy for what was essentially a literary publication was unlikely, so it is probable that it was funded by an individual or individuals: private communication.

²¹ The magazines tended to change printers between issues, suggesting that it was possible to shop around. *Experiment*, nos. 1–2, were printed by Cambridge University Press; nos. 3–5 were printed by Gloucester Printers Ltd, Blackfriars Press, Gloucester; no. 6 was printed by R. I. Severs, Cambridge. *The Venture* does not record the printer. *Cambridge Left*, nos. 1–2, were printed by the Leicester Co-operative Printing Society; nos. 3–4 were printed by W. Heffers and Sons, Cambridge; vol. 2, no. 1 was printed by Diemer and Reynolds Ltd, Bedford. *Contemporaries*, nos. 1–2, were printed by R. I. Severs, Cambridge.

²² Although it shared contributors such as Robert Hamer, Winyard Browne, D. M. Balme, and Charles Madge with *Cambridge Left*. Kaestlin was a wide-ranging and quite accomplished critic who contributed essays on Joyce, 'Negro Poetry', and 'Berdyayev and Doistoievski'.

²³ *Contemporaries*, 1:2, 46.

contributors to the first five issues consisted largely of Cambridge undergraduates or recent graduates. *The Venture*, despite its formal conservatism, did not escape parody either.²⁴ It had a personal, but not much of an aesthetic, connection with Bloomsbury through Julian Bell. It is difficult to judge how far the readership of *Cambridge Left* extended, but it is perhaps significant that Eric Hobsbawm, who arrived in Cambridge as an undergraduate two years after the last issue, did not see a copy.²⁵ Nonetheless, the number of advertisements for other magazines and London bookshops suggests it was connected to metropolitan culture and politics.

Contemporaries was a much more parochial affair, although John Drummond's review and extracts from Pound's *XXX Cantos* in the first issue did provoke a letter from the poet, which was published in the second issue. But local conditions shaped the other three magazines as well. The production and reception of all four magazines was conditioned by the rhythm of the short, intense, Cambridge University term, governed by the weekly essay and tutorial. None survived for more than three years, the length of an undergraduate degree. Each was supposed to appear once a term, but they rarely managed such regularity. *Experiment* ran for only seven issues, *The Venture* for six, and *Cambridge Left* and *Contemporaries* for five. William Empson's first book, *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, famously, was made up of essays started as an undergraduate for the weekly tutorial. All the critical essays published in the Cambridge magazines shared this genre and might have been destined for the same testing ground. The poems and prose extracts were, at the same time, of a suitable length for an exercise in practical criticism as pioneered by I. A. Richards. In short, the forms present in the Cambridge magazines were those appropriate to the emerging practice of Cambridge English as it would become established for half a century.

Incompleteness and cultural milieu

In this respect, the magazines reflected the eagerness to please of the willing student, where even the urge to *épater* the professor, intellectually or politically, can stem from the desire to get noticed through contradiction. Jason Harding captures and to some extent reflects this atmosphere with a quotation from Eric Griffiths on 'a group of friends diversely gifted, often at odds with one another but united by deadlines and the desire to shine'.²⁶ One of the characteristics of an elite institution is that it can produce a sense of anxiety that results in a generalized

²⁴ The parodies appeared in *The Cambridge Gownsmen* and *Granta*. See Price, "Finite But Unbounded".

²⁵ Private communication.

²⁶ Harding, 'Experiment in Cambridge', 288. Harding himself writes of 'a remarkable period in the intellectual life of the university', of Empson as the 'outstanding poet-critic of his generation', the editorial committee of *Experiment* as 'unusually talented', its contributors coming from 'an astonishing

and self-supporting mutual flattery, just as the sense of an elite fellowship can inspire the confidence to break rules. But such confidence is future-orientated. The expectation is that personal success will be the reward for brilliant iconoclasm; and Cambridge's function as educator of the ruling class meant that, for most of the contributors to its 'little magazines', personal success did ensue.

Yet, at the time, the promise of success can be tainted with the fear of failure. As a consequence, the experiments in writing found in the Cambridge magazines incorporate both anxiety and play. In *Experiment*, the fear is of a too forced experimentation. In *Cambridge Left*, it is possible to sense, in the contributors' denunciations of bourgeois art, an underlying anxiety that they are playing at politics in a privileged space for a limited period. John Drummond's anti-war poem in the first issue reflects this in a repudiation of his upbringing:

Literature: John Buchan, etc., espionage,
Kept alive anti-Hun tradition vigorously.
'How did you like the Huns?' asked ex-officer master,
I having returned from spell of inflation profiteering
With family.²⁷

This is not to say that the three magazines were frivolous, or self-serving or that they did not, at times, contain examples of brilliance. Rather, they attempt to capture the temporality in which they were produced, to describe their incompleteness as cultural artefacts, an incompleteness that is, as Margaret Beetham suggests, an integral part of the creative process of the periodical as an aesthetic form, but which is always a particular form of incompleteness: having characteristics specific to the cultural milieu of a specific time and place. It is the local characteristics or micro-history of that incompleteness that opens up a way to understand the relationship of these magazines as cultural formations to the macro-history of the interwar period.²⁸ Viewed as cultural formations, they should be scanned less for the gems they contain, or as Brian Maidment puts it 'like fossil hunters, in search of specimens to fill a cabinet', but rather understood as part of an unfinished process.²⁹

Part of that process concerns the class structure of Britain in the interwar period and the place of Cambridge in that structure. Although a small number of grammar school boys were present by the 1930s, the ethos of the university was still that of the private boarding school. It was also, according to Eric Hobsbawm, remarkably

variety of academically brilliant undergraduates and research students'. Such representations may not be inaccurate, but there is some danger of fostering the mythical self-fashioning of Cambridge as an elite institution (ibid. 287–90).

²⁷ John Drummond, *Cambridge Left*, 1 (Summer 1933), 7.

²⁸ See David Peters Corbett and Andrew Thacker, 'Raymond Williams and Cultural Formations: Movements and Magazines', *Prose Studies*, 16:2 (Aug. 1993), 84–106.

²⁹ Maidment, 'Victorian Periodicals and Academic Discourse', 147.

parochial, despite the presence of figures who would become some of the leaders of the newly decolonized nations after the Second World War.³⁰ As an institution, Cambridge fitted snugly into the hegemonic middle-class bloc that emerged in the 1930s to dominate electoral politics despite the fact that this was the short period in which the industrial working class were in the majority in Britain.³¹ It is only necessary to look at the contributors to the first issue of *Cambridge Left* to understand that, even for those who advocated revolutionary politics, the future was bright. Oskar Spate became the director of the Australian National University's Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies. David Balme became the founding principal of University College in the Gold Coast and then Professor of Classics at Queen Mary College. Charles Madge was a poet, a leading figure in the Mass Observation movement and later Professor of Sociology at the University of Birmingham. Robert Hamer went on to direct films such as *Kind Hearts and Coronets* at Ealing Studios. Harry Kemp became a poet and literary critic who worked with Laura Riding. J. D. Bernal was already a leading physicist and active Communist, who would go on to become, amongst other things, an important historian of science. Naomi Mitchison, who contributed a report from the Soviet Union to this first issue of *Cambridge Left*, was a member of the Haldane family, and already an established writer.

Yet these actual futures, only anticipated for the contributors at this point, should be set against the uncertainty of the period, which threatened to disrupt the future with economic and political collapse or war. The interwar period offered a different sense of incompleteness that sharpened the usual undergraduate anxieties. In this context, the legacies of early twentieth-century modernisms, with their open-ended aesthetics, were inevitably the subject of debate. Both politically and aesthetically the period between 1928 and 1934 was a critical one. The 1920s had been a period of labour militancy, culminating in the defeat of the General Strike in 1926. The year 1929 saw the Wall Street Crash and the beginning of the Great Depression. The second failed Labour government lasted, in almost impossible circumstances, from 1929 to 1933; and 1933 saw the coming to power of the Nazis in Germany. Despite these upheavals, there was little student activism at Cambridge until the early 1930s; indeed most students had participated in strike-breaking rather than support for the trades unions. Empson had been typically ambivalent about the strike, offering support for both sides.³² But *Experiment's*

³⁰ Eric Hobsbawm, *Interesting Times: A Twentieth-Century Life* (London: Allen Lane, 2002), 100–13. For an interesting debate about Indian identity, see A. Krishnaswami, 'The Indian Mind', *Contemporaries*, 3 (1933), 137–9; and M. D. Taseer, 'Correspondence: The Indian Problem', *Contemporaries*, 4 (1934), 195–7. Taseer was one of the first Indian students to study English at Cambridge. He went on to become the Principal of Islamia College, Lahore. See also Chapter 37 by Jim Keery in this volume.

³¹ The best account of class structure in the period is Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England 1918–1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

³² Haffenden, *Empson*, 126.

debt to high modernism and the developing critical techniques of Cambridge English can be further related to the politics of the period in the sense that the open-ended and future-orientated forms of high modernism were themselves products of the politics of the 'Postwar', the title of the first contribution to *Experiment* 1.³³

A rupture between generations

For John Lehmann, a contributor to *The Venture*, Cambridge between 1927 and 1930 was still haunted by the shadow of the First World War.³⁴ The impact of the war marked the interwar period to the extent that every subsequent crisis took the form of an aftershock of that original tremor. It marked the modernist sense of temporality as much as the philosophies of Nietzsche or Bergson, because it registered a rupture between generations: between then and now, the past and the contemporary. In *Experiment*, this rupture was written through the modernisms of Eliot, Joyce, and Lawrence, with some allusions to Yeats. In *The Venture*, Georgian nostalgia for an (invented) pre-war world and its forms soon gives way to an adoption of *Experiment's* more forward-looking modernism. Yet as in Storm Jameson's interwar trilogy, *The Mirror in Darkness*, the images provoked by the war come to mean not just the 1914–18 conflict, but an imminent future, because it is the inevitable consequence of a failed system of capitalism, made manifest in the Wall Street Crash in October 1929 and subsequent Depression.

Although several examples could be chosen, Jacob Bronowski's poem in the *Experiment* 3, 'Juliet, Dead', exemplifies the strong influence of Eliot and the lasting legacy of the war to which 'The Waste Land' was itself a response:

From buds shut against late snow grows September
and from autumn crocuses,
winter planted this sleepless season
under the bone
such that are changeable bleach and age
April was their begetting.

The theme of the poem is resurrection, but another poem by Bronowski in the same issue, 'Prayer', asks Astarte, the Egyptian war goddess for burial:

Tighten, Astarte, my lids
let me have, that died
three seasons ago, burial

³³ Basil Wright, 'Postwar', *Experiment* 1 (Nov. 1928), 2–3.

³⁴ Cited in T. E. B. Howarth, *Cambridge between Two Wars* (London: Collins, 1978), 218. For more on Lehmann see Chapter 28 of this volume.

The poem ends:

Beat out my eyes and the broken mouth that remembers
 only earth, bruise me and blind me, there was death
 my lids gape for burial.
 Astarte after the hemlock poppy
 and after poppy
 Astarte.

If the reference to poppies seem clear enough, death, more explicitly the war dead, is a theme taken up again by Bronowski in *Experiment* 7 in 'Poems' 8:

... Put out your fronds, death
 out of the blind gunpits the lovely corruption
 whose roots with shoulders grow
 heavily to the fatigued gunsprings and blossom
 for vivid death.

Yet, however strong the influence of Eliot, his newly declared political stance provoked unease. In *Experiment* 5, Hugh Sykes (later Hugh Sykes Davies), wrote of political apathy as part of 'post-war psychology' and cited 'The Waste Land' and 'Hugh Selwyn Mauberley' as examples of a retreat into 'academicism' (a widely used term of abuse in the period).³⁵ The essay was broadly for the League of Nations and against political quietism; but Eliot's poetic influence was not so easily avoided. In the last issue, *Experiment* 7, which marked an attempt to reach out beyond the University, John Reeves's 'New Year Notes' returns again to the themes rehearsed by Bronowski:

Last year widowed many beds,
 ladies will rise early in the spring,
 plant flowers on graves that faith would once have planted,
 the dead heart living
 bent to speak to the dead heart dead.

The relationship of the contributors to *Experiment* and Eliot, Joyce, and Pound, who might well have figured amongst the 'illustrious dying', even while they were far from dead,³⁶ might be related to a later but still modernist response to the rupture created by the war. In this respect, fragmentary forms of a belated 'Eliotesque' modernist poetry were able to represent both the unfinished, temporary, but

³⁵ Hugh Sykes, 'The League of Nations', *Experiment*, 5 (Feb. 1930), 6.

³⁶ Eliot seems to echo *Experiment*'s manifesto in *The Four Quartets* when he writes 'Why should we celebrate | These dead men more than the dying?' See 'Little Gidding', in *Collected Poems, 1909–1962* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974), 220.

fundamentally future-orientated character of the Cambridge term and a particular historical moment.

Joyce was almost as important an influence, seen most clearly in Malcolm Lowry's contributions to the later issues of *Experiment*.³⁷ Reeves's poem in *Experiment* 7 was followed by the magazine's greatest coup, an extract from Joyce's *Work in Progress* (which would become *Finnegans Wake*), reprinted from the first issue of *transition*,³⁸ permission having been secured by Bronowski when *Experiment* contributed to *transition* in 1930.³⁹ The extract was followed by a short explanatory note by Stuart Gilbert:⁴⁰

Work in Progress may be likened to . . . a folded fan or a polyptych whose surface is inscribed with an akasic record of all the stages of human progress, its cycles of growth and decline, illusions that flourish, decay and then revive, its wars to end war, utopias each as futile as its precursor, no less and no more, ultimates identical with antepenultimates.⁴¹

The hope of *Experiment* was that it might, through an extension of the avant-garde of the 1920s, cut away from the immediate past, overcome history, and yet reconnect to it. This perhaps accounts for the number of different historical reference points in the magazine, from Bronowski's Juliet, to his resurrection of an Egyptian goddess and Gilbert's use of Hindu philosophy in the term 'akasic record', meaning 'the memory of all that has passed'.

D. H. Lawrence gets a more positive, but still ambivalent, assessment in *Experiment*. In contrast with the academicism criticized by Hugh Sykes Davies, Bronowski finds that 'Lawrence's passion . . . was for the first-hand, in experience, in ethic—in living; was also for the first-hand in his creation of living: for the first of all directness, the directness of perception.'⁴² Lawrence embraced the age because his work was incomplete: his 'incompleteness and instability may have made him more valuable to this age as a man'.⁴³ But Bronowski finds this division, 'a division in the age rather than in Lawrence', 'an object for regret'.⁴⁴

Wyndham Lewis, on the other hand, is roundly dismissed by all five editors in *Experiment* 3 for choosing to 'communicate process rather than result'.⁴⁵ The real attack comes, however, on his anti-political statements. The lack of politics of

³⁷ Malcolm Lowry, 'Port Swettenham', *Experiment*, 5 (Feb. 1930), 22–6; 'Punctum indifferens skibet gaar videre', *Experiment*, 7 (Spring 1931), 62–75.

³⁸ James Joyce, 'A Work in Progress', *transition*, 1 (Apr. 1927), 3–29.

³⁹ Harding, 'Experiment in Cambridge', 294.

⁴⁰ Gilbert was a friend of Joyce. He helped to translate *Ulysses* into French and wrote *James Joyce's Ulysses: A Study* (1930) based on his conversations with the author.

⁴¹ Stuart Gilbert, 'A Footnote to *Work in Progress*', *Experiment*, 7 (Spring 1931), 32–3.

⁴² J. Bronowski, 'D. H. Lawrence', *Experiment* 7:8. The assessment is probably coloured by Lawrence's death the year before.

⁴³ *Ibid.* 13.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ 'Wyndham Lewis's "Enemy"', *Experiment*, 3 (May 1929), 2.

the French Surrealists, Lewis, and Eliot all come in for criticism: 'none of these abstractions offers even an individual basis, because none is a possible, that is self-consistent, system.'⁴⁶ Yet the 'Five' are as evasive (even obscure) as Lewis himself when it comes to defining a position. The polemic to match Lewis's polemic itself exhibits more process than results.

Perhaps because of an ambivalent relationship to their literary predecessors, it was *Experiment's* embrace of the now that yielded its most promising pieces. Sykes Davies's 'jazz' poetry, Empson's use of science, and a number of essays on the cinema offered new ways of engaging with the contemporary. Sykes Davies's relationship to jazz is explored in the unpromisingly titled essay, 'The Primitive in Modern Art', published in *Experiment* 3. His anti-racist stance does not extend to questioning the definition of the 'primitive': 'as a reaction from the complications of modern civilization art is becoming more and more primitive',⁴⁷ but he argues that Western music has simply taken what it needed (we might today say, after Franz Fanon and Edward Said, its fantasy of what it needed) from African American music: 'It merely happened, entirely by chance, that among negroes was preserved a strongly rhythmical form of music. Western music required music of this kind, and it was at once adopted.'⁴⁸ Finding evidence of the 'physiological' effect of rhythm in modern music and, to a lesser extent, in poetry, he argues that 'rhythm is as important in poetry as in music'.⁴⁹ In this respect, Sykes Davies's own modernism can be attributed to his desire to tackle 'the woolliness of language': 'Soon a clearly cut instrument will be ready to hand with which it will be easy to achieve genuinely primitive beats. And essential.'⁵⁰

The Sykes poem 'Music in an Empty House',⁵¹ which is reminiscent of the 'Time Passes' section of *To The Lighthouse* (1927), uses a 'jazz' rhythm to achieve its effect:

The house was empty and
the people of the house
gone many months

Months for the weevil
for the patient worm
timber-mole softly tunnelling
for the parliament
of rats

⁴⁶ Wyndham Lewis's "Enemy", 5.

⁴⁷ Hugh Sykes, "The Primitive in Modern Art", *Experiment*, 3, 29.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 31.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 32. A similar impulse lies behind an essay comparing an exhibition of rock painting from South Africa and *La Jeune Peinture* by Humphrey Jennings and G. F. Noxon. This included illustrations of paintings by F. Cossio, F. Borès, and André Masson: 'Rock Painting and "La Jeune Peinture"', *Experiment*, 7 (Spring 1931), 37–41.

⁵¹ Hugh Sykes, 'Music in an Empty House', *Experiment*, 1 (Nov. 1928), 31–2.

The gaps between words, which recall Pound's 'In a Station of the Metro', signify the emptiness the poem tries to convey, but the poem might also be read as a perfect embodiment of the form of the irregular, or improvised, periodical; the appearances of which are punctuated by gaps and silences. In fact, the notion of the gaps as signifiers of incompleteness might be taken further. The 'Time Passes' section of *To the Lighthouse*, when 'through the rusty hinges and swollen sea-moistened woodwork certain airs, detached from the body of the wind (the house was ramshackle after all) crept round corners and ventured indoors',⁵² signifies the interlude of the war, but here (as perhaps also for Woolf) the emptiness is also the interlude between the war past and the war to come. The appearance of Eliot's rat, which drags 'its slimy belly' in 'The Waste Land',⁵³ connects the house to the trenches as do the images of shrouds and winding sheets:

In a certain curtain'd room
 the halting steps evade
 chairs white shrouded

To twitch the winding sheet
 around a grand piano
 thin phalanx of sound
 sharp rat's teeth edge yellow
 with decay

However, that music can be made from emptiness suggests a forward-looking, more positive art. The stretch between words creates a new rhythm which alters and pluralizes meaning; and, if the gaps can also be read as syncopation, the last two stanzas suggest a dialogue between two instruments or voices, allowing the words to be read in different sequences:

Then falling send
 as tenantry
 damp-muffled chords
 rusting strings
 a still-born song

Their fortissimo	The tattered
scarce	tapestry
stirs	holds
near	many
cobwebs	moths

⁵² Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (London: Grafton, [1927] 1977), 118.

⁵³ On rats and Eliot see Maud Ellmann, 'Writing Like a Rat', *Critical Quarterly*, 46:4 (Winter 2004), 59–76.

The penultimate stanza can be read as ‘rusting strings, a still-born song’ or as ‘rusting, a still-born strings song’ while the last stanza, more obviously, invites a double reading: first horizontally, then vertically.

Elsewhere, *Experiment*'s engagement with the modern emerges from the poetry's embrace of the modern city, for example in John Cullen's 'Paris, 1930' and in essays on the cinema by Basil Wright, G. F. Noxon, T. H. White, and Sen. To be modern was to engage with East and West: Moscow (*Experiment* included translations of Russian literature by George Reavey) and Paris; but, interestingly, very little engagement with the United States is in evidence. It also meant being scientific. Empson's criticism and poetry were a guiding light for the magazine. The poems published included 'Camping Out', and several from the 'Letter' sequence. It was Empson, above all, who invited the epithet, 'brilliant', but in retrospect, there is a cold, hard crystalline quality about his 'modern lines'.⁵⁴ They sparkle, but do not always engage. The American poet Richard Eberhart stands out as a distinctive voice. However, looking forward to Surrealism and the Mass Observation movement that would engage contributors to all three magazines, it is the poems that incorporate a sense of the everyday into their illuminations that seem to anticipate the surrealist preoccupations of the 1930s: for example, Kathleen Raine's 'brown empty beer-bottles gleaming warmly | by a frequented pleasure-river'.⁵⁵

By the late 1920s, even a conservative historian of Cambridge University like T. E. B. Howarth accepts that 'capitalism and international relations' had 'come under intolerable strains' and that the impact was being felt in the colleges.⁵⁶ Empson's poem 'Note on Local Flora' published in *Experiment* 5 in February 1930, hints at a relationship between the captives and an inferno to come:

There is a tree native in Turkestan,
Or further east towards the Tree of Heaven,
Whose hard cold cones, not being wards to time,
Will leave their mother only for good cause;
Will ripen only in a forest fire;
Wait, to be fathered as was Bacchus once,
Through men's long lives, that image of time's end.
I knew the Phoenix was a vegetable.
So Semele desired her deity
As this in Kew thirst for Red Dawn.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ William Empson, 'Disillusion with Metaphysics', *Experiment*, 1 (Nov. 1928), 48.

⁵⁵ Kathleen Raine, 'Hymn for the B.V.M.', *Experiment*, 3 (May 1929), 22.

⁵⁶ Howarth, *Cambridge between Two Wars*, 140.

⁵⁷ William Empson, 'Note on Local Flora', *Experiment*, 5 (Feb. 1930), 26.

The glasshouse at Kew might stand for the Cambridge College. Messianic time can wait its moment, not being a 'ward' to the everyday rhythms of college life. But what is the 'this' of the last line? The Phoenix as vegetable seems deflationary, but a 'Red Dawn' from 'further east' is surely more than a joke in 1930. The interest in a Russian modernity demonstrated by Reavey's translations was more than academic.

Rapprochement

The Venture is disappointing in comparison with *Experiment*. Even the poems by Louis MacNeice in the first issue do not quite work. 'Gardener Melancholy' falls flat, even in the joke of its ending:

Weep water-fountain creepily,
Weep me back my Ganymede,
Weep tree-fountain sleepily,
Weep creepily, so creepily;
I have not sown my packets of spring seed.⁵⁸

In the first number, Michael Redgrave's short story is melodramatic, although his writing improves in later issues.⁵⁹ Frank Birch's essay 'Shakespeare and the Modern Stage' inveighs against 'the new-fangled sects, the Expressionists and what-not' and includes casual anti-semitism.⁶⁰ Although the magazine published the early work of writers such as John Lehmann, its real success was Anthony Blunt's contributions on the history of art from Rococo to the Gothic revival to Cubism. Despite a knowledge of the French schools that must have been unrivalled at the time, Blunt was not always sympathetic. In 'Self-consciousness in Modern Art', in the first issue, he imagines the disgust of Cézanne, returning from the dead to discover that Picasso and Matisse 'reverenced him as their god': 'Cursing himself for unconsciously begetting their abortions he would summon Pluto to carry him back to the realm of Hades where he could discuss with the shade of Delacroix the decadence of the moderns.'⁶¹

In fact, Blunt's real target was not modernist art, but 'the decadence of modern art into mere academicism', the same term Hugh Sykes had used against Eliot and Pound. He pronounces the Cubism of Picasso and Braque 'one of the most astonishing and complicated events in the history of art'.⁶² In a later essay, he

⁵⁸ Louis MacNeice, 'Gardener Melancholy', *The Venture*, 1:1 (Oct. 1928), 20.

⁵⁹ See, for example, his poem "Love's Tightrope," or "The Triumph of Blondin." *A Dream of Crystal Palace*, *The Venture*, 3 (June 1929), III.

⁶⁰ Frank Birch, 'Shakespeare and the Modern Stage', *The Venture*, 1 (Oct. 1928), 30, 36.

⁶¹ Anthony Blunt, 'Self-Consciousness in Modern Art', *The Venture*, 1 (Oct. 1928), 46.

⁶² *Ibid.* 48.

gives a remarkably lucid account of the rise and fall of that movement, even though, in the end, he seems to say that its main contribution has been to improve technique rather than be admirable as an end in itself: 'Artists, like Picasso, who have sometimes returned to purely representational art after a period of Cubism, appear to have derived from their experiments a more profound knowledge of the principles of construction and design.'⁶³ Knowledgeable and sceptical at the same time, Blunt's criticism is typical of the best of *The Venture*, which included an impressive coverage of contemporary theatre, music, literature, and art, but which sought to preserve a concept of high culture against the decadence of the moderns.⁶⁴

It is perhaps not surprising that Blunt's essay on Cubism comes in the final issue, which marked a rapprochement with (or perhaps a surrender to) *Experiment*. The 'Final Manifesto' offers a partial recantation of earlier issues: 'We regret publishing a lot of things and not publishing one or two others'; and it is defensive about its inclusion of poems by *Experiment* poets, Empson and Sykes Davies: 'we introduce in this number contributions from two writers who are supposed to be an anathema to us. They have not contributed before for the simple reason that they were editing a paper of their own.'⁶⁵ Malcolm Lowry, a latecomer to *Experiment*, also features, as does J. D. Cullen, a contributor to *Experiment* 4. It seems that *Experiment* had won the future. Its influence is evident in other contributions to the last *Venture*. A poem such as Margaret Amos's 'Theory', for example, might be described as Empsonian in its combination of poetic and scientific entropy:

The energy we expend
Of mind, assume, not physical
Only return will mend,
Else it is weakening and waste.⁶⁶

The counterblast was left to Julian Bell, who was allowed an attack on 'Poetic Obscurity', the targets of which appeared alongside. But his argument rested on a limited view of poetic meaning: 'If the poem is to produce on the reader the psychological effect which the poet intended, the former must understand every word and construction in exactly the manner in which the poet understood them when writing.'⁶⁷ Yet, if the future appeared to belong to *Experiment*'s insurgents, the victory was short-lived. For *Experiment* did not survive outside Cambridge's city limits; and although its influence would persist locally, the new decade brought a new world, less conducive to self-conscious experimentation.

⁶³ Anthony Blunt, 'Cubism', *The Venture*, 6 (June 1930), 264.

⁶⁴ See, for example, Edward J. Dent, 'Music and the People', *The Venture*, 2 (Feb. 1929), 65–9.

⁶⁵ 'The Final Manifesto', *The Venture*, 6 (June 1930), 254.

⁶⁶ Margaret Amos, 'Theory', *The Venture*, 6, 255.

⁶⁷ Julian Bell, 'A Brief View of Poetic Obscurity', *The Venture*, 6, 285.

The end of political delusion

A red dawn, if not Empson's polysemous 'Red Dawn', would have been welcomed by the contributors to *Cambridge Left*, who were as yet still a minority in the University and in the country. Nonetheless, the atmosphere had changed by the summer of 1933. Hitler had been in power since 30 January and unemployment stood at three million. Four lines below the masthead were the words:

Now future's traps
Challenge inertia;
Choose buttercups
Or hunger-marcher.

The arrival of the hunger marchers in Cambridge had been a life-changing event for some students.⁶⁸ For J. D. Bernal in the first issue of *Cambridge Left* 'the last four years have epitomised the experience of a generation';⁶⁹ and in the magazine's manifesto, hidden away on page 10, we learn that 'The motives . . . of those who are writing for this paper, have changed, along with their motives for doing anything. It is not so much an intellectual choice, as the forcible intrusion of social issues.'

The poetry in this same issue compares badly with *Experiment*. Charles Madge's contribution 'May Day' did not get reprinted in his first collection, *The Disappearing Castle* (1937), and certainly does not appear in his *Selected Poems*. As a consequence, Auden's contribution, 'Interview' stands out:

Having abdicated with comparative ease
And dismissed the greater part of your friends;
Escaped in a submarine
With a false beard, hoping the ports were watched.
How we shall greet your arrival;
For it isn't snowing
And no one will take you for a spy.

Of course we shall mention
Your annual camp for the Tutbury glass workers
Your bird-photography phase, and the Dream at the Hook
Even the winter in Prague though not very fully:
Your public refusal of a compass
Is fixed for to-morrow.⁷⁰

These first two stanzas combine the political and the everyday to surreal effect. The poem is as a result far more successful than the better known 'Brothers who when

⁶⁸ See Sloan (ed.), *John Cornford*, 104–5.

⁶⁹ J. D. Bernal, 'The End of a Political Delusion', *Cambridge Left*, 1 (Summer 1933), 10.

⁷⁰ W. H. Auden, 'Interview', *Cambridge Left*, 1, 5.

the sirens roar'. The fear of surveillance comes with a sense of its absurdity, which works better than the strained solidarity of:

We know the terrifying brink
From which in dreams you nightly shrink.
'I shall be sacked without', you think,
 'A testimonial.'

In 'Interview', the juxtaposed lines seem arbitrary, but this is because they are statements forced and reified for a bureaucratic end, rather than because of the arbitrariness of the world. They might, the poem suggests, have a real and urgent meaning for the subject interviewee, discouraged or intimidated into silence; and the comic pleasure the reader takes from the details—submarines, false beards, cross swords on a map—signals the generosity latent in that silence.

If Auden here acts as authorization for the first issue, in later numbers his poetry is the subject of critical debates about what is appropriate to the moment. J. D. Bernal's essay 'The End of a Political Delusion' marks out the territory: 'The war smashed forever the idea of peaceful and continual progress. Out of the war came the Revolution and the second and more powerful blow was struck against the very foundations of intellectual liberalism.'⁷¹ This was the keynote of the magazine. The twenties had offered the 'illusions of American prosperity and the British labour party'. The Crash, the failure of the second Labour government, and the rise of fascism in Europe revealed the truth. According to Bernal, this truth would shatter the private dream worlds offered by 'Joyce and Picasso, and T. S. Eliot', by Freud, and even by 'Einstein and Dirac'. Capitalism was self-evidently in crisis, social democracy had failed, and fascism was the 'last malignant stage of decaying capitalism'. The policy of the Comintern at the time was 'class against class' and Social Democrats were labelled 'Social Fascists'.⁷² The idea of the popular front would only come later, too late for most of Europe. But if the failure by Communist parties to make alliances was disastrous in the early 1930s, Bernal's analysis of fascism—'a narrow and aggressive nationalism, the rousing of hysterical race hate unknown even in barbarian times, the deliberate preparation and glorification of war'—does not seem overblown in the light of what was to follow, nor does the call for a concrete programme of action to oppose it seem unreasonable.

Cambridge Left does not seem to have promoted orthodoxy, a reflection perhaps of both the idealism of its contributors and the competing analyses of the time. This partly explains Ezra Pound's enthusiasm for the journal. Without 'the least

⁷¹ Bernal, 'The End of a Political Delusion', II.

⁷² Cornford's rousing essay, 'The Struggle for Power in Western Europe', in *Cambridge Left*, 3 (Spring 1934) is a good example of this position, e.g. p. 53: 'the Communist International... has always resolutely put forward the slogan of class against class.'

regret [for] having ignored social problems during the first ten years of my writing', Pound observes that the 'freshness of this new review is possibly of itself sufficient demonstration that the good poetry of the next twenty years will be written by poets who have this awareness', where 'awareness' refers to the consciousness of the 'forcible intrusion of social issues' described in the manifesto.⁷³

Another possible reason for Pound's support is that the first issue contained a poem by John Drummond, a supporter of the economic theories of Major C. H. Douglas, a singularly unorthodox position in a journal associated with the Communist Party. Drummond had published a review and extracts of Pound's *XXX Cantos* in the first issue of *Contemporaries* earlier in 1933. Pound concludes his review of *Cambridge Left* recommending Social Credit and in the second issue of the magazine Douglas's theory becomes the subject of a debate between Drummond and the Marxist economist Maurice Dobb. Drummond writes initially in response to Dobb's article, "Social Credit" and the Petit-Bourgeoisie' in *Labour Monthly*,⁷⁴ refuting Dobb's 'intention to show that the Social Credit movement has "Fascist significance"'.⁷⁵ Dobb had cited Pound's support for both Mussolini and Social Credit as an example of the closeness of the two positions. In response, Drummond claims Hitler came to power on a socialist not a fascist programme, which he changed at the direction of 'his finance-controllers', and defends Mussolini: 'However much one disagrees with Fascism, Mussolini deserves some praise' he writes.⁷⁶ Dobb responded succinctly in *Cambridge Left* 4 to say that he was:

concerned, not with what people *say*, but with the *actual* significance of historical tendencies—with the *ends* they actually serve. And it is of the essence of Fascism that its declared ideals (which are always 'radical') are in sharp contradiction to the actual ends it serves.⁷⁷

Pound claims, on the basis of the first issue alone, that it was the magazine's dissenting stance, its declaration that it wanted to solve the problems of the day 'by trial and error' that made it attractive.⁷⁸

If the magazine's willingness to engage in open debate about fascism was indeed attractive, its other side, the glorification of the Soviet Union just as Stalin's campaign of terror was taking shape, now seems naïve. Yet even here, things were not clear cut. Two contradictory aspects stand out. On the one hand, there was

⁷³ Ezra Pound, *Cambridge Left*, 1, 10.

⁷⁴ Maurice Dobb, "Social Credit" and the Petit-Bourgeoisie', *Labour Monthly*, 15:9 (Sept. 1933), 552–7.

⁷⁵ John Drummond, 'Social Credit', *Cambridge Left*, 2 (Winter 1933–1934), 33. ⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 35.

⁷⁷ Maurice Dobb, 'Social Credit: A Reply to Mr Drummond', *Cambridge Left*, 4 (Summer 1934), 108.

⁷⁸ Pound, *Cambridge Left*, 1, 10.

the adoption of the socialist state as a campaigning banner, the stuff of hymns to communism such as Harry Kemp's poem 'On 13th Plenum':

A sixth of the world wields Soviet Power
Under comrade Stalin's lead.
Comrades, arise and shake the world
Defend our land from bourgeois greed!⁷⁹

On the other hand, it is clear that an idealized version of the Soviet Union acted as a fantasy for British Communists, one which offered the fulfilment of a history of progressive ideals from 1789 to the present. Bernal exemplifies this position in the second issue: 'In science, in education, in religion, in the family, in the prisons, the U.S.S.R. gives practical embodiment to the progressive ideas of the 19th and 20th centuries. The Communists are the piers and the only defenders of the liberal tradition.'⁸⁰ In practice, this fantasy and a lack of clarity about what constituted a socialist aesthetic allowed the magazine a degree of latitude in its poetry and criticism as well as in its debates about politics and economics. The early thirties were years when *Scrutiny* and *Criterion* countenanced Marxism⁸¹ and *Cambridge Left* was actually in dialogue with *Scrutiny*, then in its second year.⁸² The ritual condemnation of the high modernists of the 1920s (although again not Lawrence or Forster) could sit alongside praise for montage in Soviet cinema, while debates about realism and innovation raged.

The debate in *Cambridge Left* about a socialist aesthetic began with an essay in the third issue by Helen Davis and Harry Kemp: 'The Rise and Fall of Bourgeois Poetry'. Interestingly, they begin with examples from early modern literature, a period that then, as now, attracts attention because it throws the impact of modernity into sharp relief. That Davis and Kemp cite James Reeves and Humphrey Jennings's article on Herrick in *Experiment* 7 confirms the importance of such debates for the Cambridge magazines. Herrick also appears in Rose Macauley's interesting historical novel, published in 1932, *They Were Defeated*. The aim of the novel and both essays was to reclaim Herrick from the misunderstanding of succeeding centuries. For Davis and Kemp, a proper appreciation of Herrick's form requires a proper understanding of the pre-industrial social relations in which he lived. Shakespeare's work is claimed as incorporating the aspirations of an emergent revolutionary bourgeoisie, a not unorthodox Marxist position, but this was challenged in the following issue, where the second half of their essay was

⁷⁹ H. V. Kemp, 'On 13th Plenum' *Cambridge Left*, 3, 59.

⁸⁰ J. D. Bernal, 'The Scientist and the World Today', *Cambridge Left*, 2, 44. See also Jack Gaudin's essay 'Shame' in *Cambridge Left*, 3, which advocated a vision of sexual liberation more in tune with undergraduate aspirations than Stalin's conservatism.

⁸¹ See Francis Mulhern, *The Moment of Scrutiny* (London: New Left Books, 1979), 63–9.

⁸² See *Cambridge Left*, 2, 46–8; *Cambridge Left*, 1, 68–9.

preceded by the semi-satirical, 'Barricades on Bankside or, *The Adventures of Two Marxists in Search of a Heroe*':

containing divers wittie discourses of the vaine follye of one Kemp, a gallant Machiavel of CAMBRIDGE who pretended to the tongues with his disloyal speeche touching Our Sovereigne Ladye ELIZABETH limed a wench of Girton-colledge neare the Universitie, and had all the Towne agaping after his fond freneticall phantsies.

The essay takes Davis and Kemp to task for their crude historical understanding of the English bourgeois and their naïve recruitment of Shakespeare to the revolution, which was caricatured as 'Shakespeare was a jolly good poet... therefore Shakespeare must have been a bourgeois revolutionary of the first water.'⁸³ Instead it offers a much more detailed account of the transition from feudalism to capitalism in England and an argument that Elizabethan playwrights were more closely aligned with the Court than with the merchant class. Again, however, the argument about the early modern is part of a debate about the contemporary. The theatres' dependence on the Court was 'a condition of their existence; without it the City, *the revolutionary bourgeoisie*, would have suppressed them utterly, as being, in the most charitable view, so much "dope for the masses", much as the Communist today regards Hollywood.'⁸⁴ Shakespeare's late plays are characterized as the 'poetry of escape': 'there is a good deal of T. S. Eliot in *The Tempest*,' they comment;⁸⁵ and the critique is brought up to date with debates on contemporary poetry with the argument that good art doesn't appear until after the moment of victory, thus bourgeois literature emerges only after 1688. Before that there is 'a fighting utilitarian literature: crude propaganda and very little art'.⁸⁶ Thus, while Davis and Kemp see Auden as exemplifying the 'leftward-moving' bourgeois poet, the authors of 'Barricades on Bankside' are more sceptical about the progressive credentials of the Auden circle.

Unfinished business

Such debates were then in their infancy, but they would continue in various forms for much of the century, resurfacing with particular salience in the 1980s, a decade with uncanny similarities to the 1930s. In their incompleteness, the Cambridge magazines find their corresponding moments later in the century. In terms of aesthetics, they mark the beginning of a number of different currents. In the thirties, many of the contributors would coalesce around British Surrealism, while figures such as John Lehmann were central to the promotion of 'new writing' in that decade (see Chapters 28 and 29). Yet, the biographies of the contributors

⁸³ Anon., *Cambridge Left*, 4, 83.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* 87.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 88.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

trace too many narratives to make for an easy summary. Charles Madge for example became a sociologist after the war, only finally publishing his *Selected Poems* in 1994.⁸⁷

The debates about realism and aestheticism re-emerged amidst the revival in cultural Marxism after 1968, while the debates about the early modern in *Cambridge Left* can justifiably be seen as the precursors of cultural materialist approaches to Shakespeare in the 1980s.⁸⁸ In retrospect, the role of the magazines in the formation of Cambridge English seems quite minor and relatively parochial except in relation to that movement's relationship to the broader history of English modernism. In that respect, it is the active contemplation of alternative modernities that seems most important. With the apparent triumph of liberal capitalism at the beginning of the twenty-first century, such debates have died down.⁸⁹ But it is unlikely that the current epoch is any more complete than 1934. Our own seeming lack of alternative futures is likely to be an illusion that will mask new points of contact with the unfinished business of the early 1930s. The aesthetics of incompleteness found even in forms as ephemeral as undergraduate magazines can make a valuable contribution to a cultural history of the twentieth century that suggests we were not always going to get to here—and here is not where we are likely to stay.

⁸⁷ Charles Madge's *Of Love, Time and Places: Selected Poems* (London: Anvil, 1994) have recently been the focus of renewed interest: see *New Formations*, 44 (Autumn 2001) special issue, 'Mass Observation as Poetics and Science'.

⁸⁸ For example, Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (eds), *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985).

⁸⁹ Although see Andreas Huyssen, 'Geographies of Modernism in a Globalizing World', in Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker (eds), *Geographies of Modernism: Literatures, Cultures, Spaces* (London: Routledge, 2005), 6–18.

ART AND POLITICS IN THE 1930s

The European Quarterly (1934–5), *Left Review* (1934–8),
and *Poetry and the People* (1938–40)

PETER MARKS

Introducing the anthology *History in Our Hands*, Patrick Deane argues that the modern critical take on the literature of the 1930s depends on a ‘package of cultural myths and icons, political commonplaces and “representative” texts’.¹ Yet the anthology registers plurality rather than homogeneity, generating possibly competing interpretations of its contents. In fact the 1930s remains contested ground, its myths, icons, commonplaces, and texts being regularly changed and re-evaluated. Encyclopedic and influential overviews such as Samuel Hynes’s *The Auden Generation* (1976) or Valentine Cunningham’s *British Writers of the Thirties* (1988) contend with works whose titles foreground dispute and revision: *The 1930s: A Challenge To Authority* (1978), *Recharting the Thirties* (1996), and *Rewriting the Thirties: Modernism and After* (1997), among others.² In the last of these, Keith Williams and Steven Matthews challenge what they label ‘the persistent aftermyth of the thirties as a homogenous anti-modernist decade’. Instead, they propose that the decade was ‘more accurately a troubled but symptomatic transitional phase between modernist and postmodernist writing, arts and politics, a complex mutation that defined itself within, and in some ways against, the wider background of popular writing and mass culture of the time.’³ In all these assessments, politics remains the recurrent

¹ Patrick Deane, ‘Introduction’, in *idem* (ed.), *History in Our Hands: A Critical Anthology of Writings on Literature, Culture and Politics from the 1930s* (London: Leicester University Press, 1998), 3.

² Samuel Hynes, *The Auden Generation: Literature and Politics in England in the 1930s* (Pimlico: London, 1976); Valentine Cunningham, *British Writers of the Thirties* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); John Lucas (ed.), *The 1930s: A Challenge to Orthodoxy* (Sussex: Harvester, 1978); Patrick Quinn (ed.), *Recharting the Thirties* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1996); Keith Williams and Steven Matthews (eds), *Rewriting the Thirties: Modernism and After* (Edinburgh: Longman, 1997).

³ Williams and Matthews, ‘Introduction’, in *idem* (eds), *Rewriting the Thirties*, 1.

element, apparently setting the decade apart from the aesthetic experimentation that defines modernism. The 1930s has been labelled 'The Red Decade', when left-wing ideology insinuated its way into aesthetic discussion and practice, or, more ominously, tried to determine discussion and practice. This chapter resists that reading, exploring how three periodicals, *The European Quarterly*, *Left Review*, and *Poetry and the People*, dealt with changing political circumstances and ideas by taking account of social developments without entirely submerging the aesthetic in the political.

In parliamentary terms, the 1930s was closer to Paul Foot's assessment of it as 'The Grey Decade'.⁴ The election of the first ever Labour Government in May 1929 promised a fundamental national move to the Left. In October, however, Wall Street crashed, the aftershock sending devastating ripples across the Atlantic and around the globe. Within six months 1.5 million were unemployed in Britain, a figure that doubled again by the spring of 1931. By then, the country had a new government. Ramsay MacDonald resigned as Prime Minister, forming a National Coalition government, which in the 1931 General Election won 558 of 614 seats. Under MacDonald (1931–5) and Conservatives Stanley Baldwin (1935–7) and Neville Chamberlain (1937–1940), conservative interests essentially ruled throughout the decade and beyond. 'Red' was the colour of opposition, not of power. Even then, the radical elements were surprisingly few. Henry Pelling notes that the 1931 crisis in the Labour Party caused Communist Party membership to double, but the 'total was still insignificant,' and a 'Communist Party of only 6,000 seemed almost ludicrous'.⁵ The party failed to win a seat at the 1931 General Election, and although Willie Gallacher did secure West Fife in 1935 (the first Communist Party success since 1924), nationally the party won 0.1 per cent of the vote, less than the Scottish National Party.⁶ Essentially, the various left-wing parties (including the rump of the Labour Party MacDonald had deserted) were marginalized, and impotent. Yet Conservative hegemony never dispelled the menace and foreboding that enveloped the decade, justifying Cunningham's claim that '[a]t every phase of the 1930s there was good reason for grimly sensing and declaring a crisis, things going wrong, something up.'⁷

Modernism's place in this politically unstable environment was problematic. Britain's cultural soil was not particularly fertile for modernist experiment, but central figures such as T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, and Wyndham Lewis respectively still published works as significant as *Murder in the Cathedral* and parts of

⁴ Paul Foot, *The Vote: How It Was Won and How It Was Undermined* (London: Penguin, 2006), 283–305.

⁵ Henry Pelling, *The British Communist Party: A Historical Profile* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1975), 67.

⁶ Because of the outbreak of war, there would not be another General Election until 1945.

⁷ Cunningham, *British Writers of the Thirties*, 36.

Four Quartets; *The Waves* and *Three Guineas*; and *The Revenge for Love*. From the early 1930s, though, anthologies such as *New Signatures* (1932) and its follow-up, *New Country* (1933), promoted a generation of young writers who publicly rejected modernism. Michael Roberts, the editor of both, declared that the older generation produced 'esoteric work which was frivolously decorative or elaboratively erudite',⁸ and that works by emerging writers 'represent a clear reaction against esoteric poetry in which it is necessary for the reader to catch each recondite allusion'.⁹ Roberts and many of his contemporaries sought to produce a more politically engaged or socially responsive literature than that which had dominated the previous decade's aesthetic high ground. But there was no simple template for how to create such literature, no overarching ideology that might be applied or could be agreed upon, and the three magazines this chapter considers reflect diversity rather than standardization. They functioned in, and helped maintain, a rich cultural environment, one of competing approaches that produced arresting and varied work.

The overlapping lives of these journals chart some of the changing political circumstances in Britain and Europe: *The European Quarterly* ran to four issues between May 1934 and February 1935; *Left Review* appeared monthly from October 1934 to May 1938, while *Poetry and the People* survived from July 1938 to August 1940. The first *European Quarterly* came out barely a year after Adolf Hitler was elected German Chancellor, and one commentator suggests that in part it was a response to the frightening dangers the Nazis embodied.¹⁰ The opening 'Comment' stresses the need for communication between Britain and Europe to help deal with the 'growing political, economic and cultural chaos', and 'the prospect of new and even more terrible disasters to come'.¹¹ The second number carries 'An Analysis of Hitlerism',¹² the third an article calling on Britain to engage with European problems.¹³ The fourth and final issue analyses the Balkans, declaring that European peace cannot be guaranteed until that region is stabilized.¹⁴ In the early 1930s such problems were not widely acknowledged, or seen as British concerns; by the time they were, *The European Quarterly* had ceased publication. *Left Review* was established as an organ of the British Section of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers, and its pages initially resonated with debates on the possibilities and shortcomings of Socialist Realism, first espoused internationally

⁸ Michael Roberts, 'Preface', to *idem* (ed.), *New Signatures: Poem by Several Hands* (London: Hogarth Press, 1932), 11.

⁹ *Ibid.* 12.

¹⁰ Peter Butter, *Edwin Muir: Man and Poet* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1966), 133.

¹¹ Unsigned 'Comment', *The European Quarterly*, 1:1 (May 1934), 1. All references from *The European Quarterly* are taken from the Kraus Reprint (1973).

¹² 'N.B.', 'An Analysis of Hitlerism', *The European Quarterly*, 1:2 (Aug. 1934), 65.

¹³ 'A Continental', 'Great Britain and Europe', *The European Quarterly*, 1:3 (Nov. 1934), 129.

¹⁴ Arsen Wenzelides, 'The Balkans and the Peace of Europe', *The European Quarterly*, 1:4 (Feb. 1935), 209.

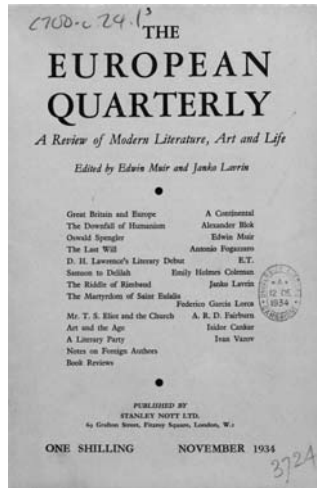


Fig. 74. Cover of *European Quarterly* (Nov. 1934)

at the All Union Congress of Soviet Writers held in Moscow in August 1934. The journal also engaged in Popular Front activity supporting the Soviet Union and countering European fascism, and its energies were employed during the Spanish Civil War (1936–9), a conflict that galvanized writers and activists of all persuasions. Before that war had ended, though, *Left Review* itself was gone. Four months after its closure Neville Chamberlain returned from Munich with empty promises of ‘peace in our time’. *Poetry and the People* was launched in the gap between these events. It aimed to cultivate and publish poetry written by ordinary workers and to stimulate the appreciation of poetry by the general population. Like *Left Review*, it responded to the turbulent political circumstances, a November 1938 editorial declaring that ‘every ounce of our energy must go to resisting the oppression of our Spanish brothers’. By late 1939 it attacked the preparations for war as preconditions for the imposition of fascism by conservative forces within Britain. Ultimately, though, the ‘Hitlerism’ *The European Quarterly* had warned of half a decade earlier proved an inescapable threat that absorbed *Poetry and the People* over its remaining year.

The European Quarterly

When *The European Quarterly* began in 1934, war was merely the worst of many prospects. The new journal had modernist affiliations, its editors Edwin Muir and Janko Lavrin having worked on A. R. Orage’s *The New Age*. Muir, a Scot, was at one time its subeditor, also contributing short pieces titled ‘We Moderns’ and ‘Our

Generation' under the pseudonym 'Edward Moore'.¹⁵ Some of these were collected in his first book, *We Moderns* (1918). Two later collections of critical essays, *Transition* (1926) and *The Structure of the Novel* (1928), analysed the work of Joyce, Woolf, Eliot, and Lawrence; Muir thought Eliot a better critic than a poet, and disliked Lawrence's nihilism.¹⁶ Despite this critical interest, Margery McCulloch detects Muir's constitutional and aesthetic 'apartness from modernist influences',¹⁷ placing him in the German Romantic tradition. Nevertheless, she detects the influence of Eliot's voice in Muir's poetry of the 1930s.¹⁸ The other editor, Janko Lavrin, a language professor, was a cosmopolitan European who settled in England after the Russian Revolution. He contributed frequently to *The New Age*, particularly on the work of Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, and Ibsen.¹⁹ Muir notes that Lavrin 'had been everywhere', and had advised Muir and his wife, Willa, to go to Prague in 1921.²⁰ They returned to Britain in the late 1920s, after translating a range of European literature. In 1933 Muir attended a PEN conference in Dubrovnik, witnessing a fierce debate about the persecution of Jewish writers under the new Nazi regime. The official German delegation walked out after the German Jewish writer Ernst Toller was allowed to speak. Butter argues that perhaps as a result Muir decided to establish a periodical to keep open channels between Britain and Europe.²¹ Lavrin was similarly disposed, and *The European Quarterly* aimed to supply British readers with insights into important developments in Europe of which readers were ignorant, functioning as a meetinghouse for discussing British and European literature, criticism, and culture.

Its first number situates the periodical's concerns within a historical perspective, arguing that the 'real meaning of such events as the [First] World War and the Russian Revolution has been more or less voluntarily ignored'.²² The current sense of crisis brought on by this ignorance had led to political, economic, and cultural chaos, with potentially worse to come. In order to help avert these dismal prospects, the *Quarterly* proposed to circumvent communication barriers 'which lie between the ordinary citizen and the literature and culture of a foreign people'. Readers are told that the journal will deal with 'the vital problems of our age—particularly as they are reflected in art and literature', and will attempt to establish a sympathetic

¹⁵ A name search of 'Edward Moore' on the Modernist Journals Project website at http://dl.lib.brown.edu:8080/exist/mjp/mjp_search.xq reveals the range of Muir's contributions.

¹⁶ For critical appraisals of these works see Margery McCulloch, *Edwin Muir: Poet, Critic and Novelist* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), 73–8.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* p. xv. ¹⁸ *Ibid.* 10.

¹⁹ As with Muir, a name search of the Modernist Journals Project website at http://dl.lib.brown.edu:8080/exist/mjp/mjp_search.xq discloses Lavrin's contributions.

²⁰ Edwin Muir, *An Autobiography*, with a new introduction by Lord Grimond (London: Hogarth Press, 1987), 176.

²¹ Butter, *Edwin Muir*, 133.

²² Unsigned 'Comment', *The European Quarterly*, 1:1 (May 1934), 1.

contact between the intellectual life of this country and that of the Continent by the publication of contemporary work drawn from the various literatures. It will also try to supply material from the work of great writers and thinkers of an earlier generation who are still relatively unknown in this country. Explanatory and critical articles will deal with contemporary European movements in literature and the arts.²³

The issue carries translations of work from Russian, Spanish, Czech, and German writers by a range of translators, underscoring Muir and Lavrin's expertise and interest in European languages and literature. Also included are pieces by British or British-based writers: Muir's idiosyncratic comparison of Calvinism and Marxism; Lavrin's critical essay on the poet Sergei Essenin; A. T. Cunningham's examination of 'Recent British Poets'; two poems by George Barker and one by C. M. Grieve (more famous as 'Hugh MacDiarmid'); Maxwell Fry's essay in 'The Spirit of the New Architecture'; and Jessie Chambers's article 'The Literary Formation of D. H. Lawrence', published under the non de plume 'E.T.' This rich transcontinental mix exhibits no common ideological leaning, nor any specific aesthetic programme. Throughout its brief existence the *Quarterly* promoted eclecticism rather than a prescriptive aesthetic or political line, and pledged 'to help a little towards the realization of [the European] spirit; and that is its sole policy.'²⁴

This desire to transcend national and political boundaries did not mean that the journal ignored political questions. Muir's essay leads off the contents proper of the first number, attempting to trace important and worrying resemblances between Communism and Calvinism. Muir's own brand of socialism was non-Marxist, and while he saw the significance and attractive energy of Bolshevism (which he uses interchangeably with the terms 'Marxism' and 'Communism') his perception of Calvinism's malevolent power in Scotland informs a suspicion of Marxism's motives and likely impact. Muir detects worrying parallels: the 'central scripture, the water-tight system, the determinism assuring ultimate victory, the practical and realistic temper, the unity of aim rejecting everything which lies beyond its scope—literature for instance—the direction of that aim towards the advancement of a chosen class, the rigid internal discipline.'²⁵ This assessment performs the neat rhetorical trick of linking a dynamic political philosophy and practice to what the journal's readers would have considered a repressive and outdated religion. Muir briefly propounds the virtues of Social Credit, also championed by Orage and *The New Age*, but his key target is Marxism. Politics gets only oblique references in the rest of the issue, so that the Russian critic M. Gershenzon's piece 'On Human Values', for example, argues against a relatively unspecified modern standardization of thinking and feeling that attacks 'freedom, directness,

²³ Unsigned 'Comment'.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Edwin Muir, 'Bolshevism and Calvinism', *ibid.* 5.

and freshness in contemplation'.²⁶ The journal as a whole links freedom to variety in thought, emphasizing the need for communication between peoples, as well as rejecting political or aesthetic orthodoxies.

Consequently, the rest of the first number is engagingly eclectic, one of the main contributions being Lavrin's essay on Russian poet Sergei Essenin, which places him alongside Vladimir Mayakovsky as one of 'the two dominating figures in the crop of poets or poetasters produced in the first decade of the bolshevist regime'. Lavrin distinguishes between 'the voice of the peasant and the village' (Essenin) and the herald of the new regime, 'the rising proletarians' (Mayakovsky). He charts Essenin's move to Moscow, his subsequent lionization and decline into self-destructive bohemianism, and his eventual realization that Soviet modernization had transformed his inspirational home village beyond recognition. Essenin would abandon his literary experiments in 'imaginism', an approach with connections to Futurism, and return to a style closer to that of Pushkin. The poet's despair eventually led him to suicide, a finale partly predicted in the poem that accompanies the article, which contrasts the 'little thatched hut I was born in' to 'these crooked alleys of Moscow'.²⁷ The next article, Jessie Chambers's 'The Literary Formation of D. H. Lawrence', one of three selections from her book *D.H. Lawrence: A Personal Record*, published the following year, paints less a portrait of the artist as alienated genius than as a young bookworm.²⁸ Chambers traces Lawrence's development from reading *Little Women* through to Nietzsche and beyond, and in the following two numbers recounts Lawrence's student days and his introduction to London's literary world, the result of Chambers sending his early work to Ford Madox Hueffer at *The English Review*.²⁹ The first instalment on Lawrence is followed by two distinctly European voices: Franz Kafka's short story 'First Sorrow' and the Czech symbolist Otakar Brezina's poem 'The Wine of the Strong'. Kafka might well have been known by some British readers of the *Quarterly* as a consequence of the Muirs' translation of *The Castle* (1930) and the collection *The Great Wall of China* (1933). Brezina, who had died in 1929, was likely to be unfamiliar, as would Ramón María Del Valle Inclán, whose short story 'Luck', translated from the Spanish, is also included. All three are introduced in a 'Notes on Foreign Authors' page.³⁰

Closer to home, A. T. Cunningham employs the *New Signatures* and *New Country* anthologies to discuss 'Recent English Poets'.³¹ Cunningham articulates

²⁶ M. O. Gershenzon, 'On Human Values', *ibid.* 17.

²⁷ Janko Lavrin, 'Sergei Essenin: A Study of the Literature of Revolutionary Russia', *ibid.* 25. Essenin in fact died in Leningrad.

²⁸ Jessie Chambers, 'The Literary Formation of D. H. Lawrence: Some Personal Reminiscences', *ibid.* 36–45.

²⁹ Ford Madox Ford gives a different account in '...and D. H. Lawrence', in *The Bodley Head Ford Madox Ford*, vol. i (London: The Bodley Head, 1962), 320–7, esp. 320–1.

³⁰ 'Notes on Foreign Authors', *The European Quarterly*, 1:1 (May 1934), 63.

³¹ A. T. Cunningham, 'Recent English Poets', *ibid.* 53–8.

the standard reading of the generational split in 1930s poetry, arguing that in contrast to their predecessors, contemporary poets consciously tackle pressing social issues. 'The reaction is now in full swing', he contends, 'against the crabbed criticism of those who thought poetry could be made out of allusions to the poetry of the past, against the verbal constipation of Ezra Pound and the verbal chaos of James Joyce.'³² Cunninghame is no booster for this new generation, though, judging that while 'sparing us the mystification of Mr. Eliot', the younger poets 'deny us the mystery (the magic, or call it what you will) of the most poignant and best of his poems'. Eliot still stands as a yardstick, then, although Cunninghame also asserts that while the anthologies may not contain poetry as 'recondite as "The Waste Land" . . . some are as prosaic and dull and consequently pretentious as "Sweeney Agonistes"'.³³ He considers that the turning away from the esoteric requires that poetry 'must say something, and much of what the young poets are saying is communist in ideology'.³⁴ This assessment agrees with Michael Roberts's own line in *New Country*,³⁵ although we might now read some of these pronouncements as youthful expressions of leftish leanings rather than of communist ideology. Cunninghame himself adopts a sceptical tone, suggesting that '[t]here is a boy scout air about their communism,' a term George Orwell uses six years later in 'Inside the Whale'.³⁶ Where Muir warns against the inevitable closing down of the free mind under communism, Cunninghame remains sanguine, even if he queries the seriousness of young poets professing it. Whatever Muir's own reservations about communism, the *Quarterly* remained willing to publish alternative political positions.

A more immediate political threat is identified in 'An Analysis of Hitlerism', which opened the second, August 1934, number. Written by a recent occupant of Berlin, 'N.B.', it locates the menace of German National Socialism in a set of vivid antagonisms: to Marxism, to Jews, and to 'Versailles'ism'. N.B. reports on the Nazi persecution of Jews and other 'foreign' groups and movements. Nazism entails the 'hatred of the hostile countries surrounding Germany; wounded national pride; economic and financial chaos; fear of the future, of poverty and particularly of Bolshevism; and finally frustrated ambitions of a self appointed "super nation"'.³⁷ This perceptive and prescient article indicates how *The European Quarterly* functioned as a conduit for informed assessments and comment often unvoiced in Britain at the time. N.B. ties this account to questions of cultural survival, suggesting that just as Christianity had saved Roman civilization from

³² Cunninghame, 'Recent English Poets', 54.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.* 56.

³⁵ Michael Roberts, 'Preface', to *idem* (ed.), *New Country: Prose and Poetry by the Authors of New Signatures* (London: Hogarth Press, 1933), 9–21.

³⁶ With Auden, Spender, and others, Orwell claims, 'we have got out of the twilight of the gods [Eliot and others] into a sort of Boy Scout atmosphere of bare knees and community singing' ('Inside the Whale', in Peter Davison (ed.), *The Complete Works of George Orwell*, vol. xxii: *A Patriot after All* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1998), 86–115, esp. 99).

³⁷ 'N.B.', 'An Analysis of Hitlerism', *The European Quarterly*; 1:2 (Aug. 1934), 67.

German barbarians, the 'impending catastrophe' requires 'a *supra-national* wave of inner values which shall save culture from civilised barbarity'.³⁸ Where modernists in the 1920s might look back on a relatively tranquil time before the First World War, or attempt to comprehend the heap of broken fragments created by that conflict, writers in the 1930s looked ahead to an equally horrendous prospect.

Against this chilling political analysis, Muir's critical essay 'The Contemporary Novel' notes that *Ulysses*, published almost twelve years before and then considered as 'the end of the novel, and as the beginning of a new prose literature', has had little influence. Muir considers Joyce's novel a work of genius, but argues that it 'has more or less fallen into the past. The same is true of the novels of Mrs. Woolf and Mr. Huxley'.³⁹ This temporal aspect has wider ramifications, Muir suggesting that '[a]most all the original work in fiction during the last twenty years—except perhaps the most original of all—has been decisively conditioned by the historical sense.' Coincidentally, the novel has become a 'changing organism. . . no longer an absolute convention, but a process, a relative thing'.⁴⁰ These fluid conceptions of time and the novel underpin the current situation where 'the insistence is on change rather than on what is changeless, on potentiality rather than finality'.⁴¹ While Muir appreciates the artistic and imaginative achievement of the 'time novel' epitomized by *Ulysses*, he argues that such works destroy 'the traditional organic absoluteness of the present and of human character and fate',⁴² creating characters always on the verge of being, and a sense of life that is shapeless and meaningless. Hermann Broch's *The Sleepwalkers* (which the Muirs had translated) marks an exception: a time novel with a sense of the changelessness of existence. For the most part, though, contemporary fiction deals with potentiality rather than finality, and this explains for Muir why the 'modern novel is so tentative, and why it so quickly goes out of fashion'.⁴³ Kafka's *The Castle* provides his counter example to Joyce and Woolf. He considers this enigmatic work 'perhaps the most original' because it exhibits 'no sense of historical time at all. The whole action takes place in a timeless world, and the eternal categories of providence and fate are the only determining ones.' Muir reads *The Castle* as a protest against the philosophy of flux, adding prophetically that 'although its effect has been small till now, one feels that it is bound to grow'.⁴⁴

The second *Quarterly* extends the journal's catalogue of European writers, including translations of a literary sketch of London by Dostoevsky, short stories by the Polish writer Zofja Nalkowska and the Serb G. Bozhovitch, and 'A Personal Confession' by Soeren Kierkegaard [*sic*].⁴⁵ A note on the Dostoevsky piece describes

³⁸ Ibid. 69.

³⁹ Edwin Muir, 'The Contemporary Novel', *The European Quarterly*, 1:2 (Aug. 1934), 70.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 71.

⁴¹ Ibid. 72.

⁴² Ibid. 74.

⁴³ Ibid. 76.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Fyodor Dostoevsky, 'Baal', 77–87; Zofja Nalkowska, 'Motherhood', 97–105; Soeren Kierkegaard, 'A Personal Confession', 115–20, in *The European Quarterly*, 1:2 (Aug. 1934).

it as 'highly interesting but little known', while Kierkegaard himself needs an introductory note explaining that while he 'is a highly interesting figure in modern European thought, he is practically unknown in this country.' These examples fulfil the journal's brief to maintain communication across national barriers, providing British readers with exotic but little known fare. They display a small part of the diversity of European literary and cultural life that, if not modernist in the strictest sense, certainly is modern in orientation. And these points hold true for the other major expository piece in this number, Lavrin's critical essay 'Sex and Eros (On Rozanov, Weininger, and D. H. Lawrence)'.⁴⁶ Lavrin examines the work of the 'Russian thinker and publicist' Vassily Rozanov and 'the Jewish renegade' Otto Weininger, suggesting that their 'utterly unreconcilable' views on sex offer ways of understanding the work of Lawrence.⁴⁷ The second instalment of Jessie Chamber's reminiscences in the same issue offers another approach.

The third and fourth numbers of *The European Quarterly* continue this assortment of European literature in translation, examinations of an aspect of European politics, and critical essays on contemporary British literature. Number 3, for example, includes an article by 'A Continental' arguing that Britain 'has now become the chief guardian and trustee of white civilisation',⁴⁸ Alexander Blok's 'The Downfall of Humanism', A. R. D. Fairburn on T. S. Eliot and the Church, and Bulgarian Ivan Vazov's 'A Literary Party' (translated from the Bulgarian). There are stories by Antonio Fogazzaro and Zofja Rygier-Nalkowska, and Federico García Lorca's 'The Martyrdom of Saint Eulalia', translated from Italian, Polish, and Spanish respectively. Muir contributes an essay on Oswald Spengler, Lavrin one on Rimbaud. Elgin Mellown would later appreciate 'a selection of material that was truly in advance of its time and not merely novel or meretricious'.⁴⁹ Despite these aesthetic and intellectual qualities, however, the *Quarterly* would last only one more issue. Peter Butter argues that its relatively short life had much to do with the problem of finding an audience, the fact that it 'aroused some interest abroad, but very little in Britain, where almost the only subscribers were Jews and Germans'.⁵⁰ Mellown offers another explanation, suggesting that the editors felt they had achieved all they wanted with the journal, and so closed it down.⁵¹ Perhaps, but there is no notice to that effect in the last number. Muir does not mention the journal at all in his autobiography. The only thing we can be sure of is that since its demise *The European Quarterly* has largely disappeared from scholarly consciousness.⁵²

⁴⁶ Janko Lavrin, 'Sex and Eros (On Rozanov, Weininger, and D. H. Lawrence),' *The European Quarterly* 1:2 (Aug. 1934), 88–96.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 88.

⁴⁸ 'A Continental', 'Great Britain and Europe', *The European Quarterly*, 1:3 (Nov. 1934), 131.

⁴⁹ Elgin W. Mellown, 'The European Quarterly', in Alvin Sullivan (ed.), *British Literary Magazines: The Modern Age, 1914–1984* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986), 174.

⁵⁰ Butter, *Edwin Muir*, 133.

⁵¹ Mellown, 'European Quarterly', 176.

⁵² Neither Hynes nor Cunningham mention it; Mellown and Butter provide rare assessments.

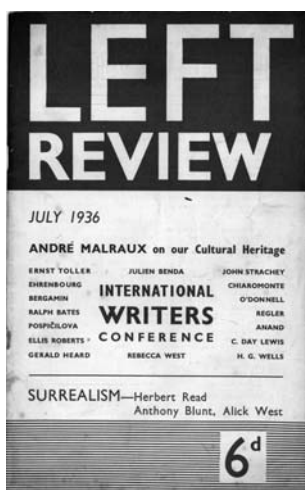


Fig. 75. Cover of *Left Review* (July 1936)

Left Review

By contrast, *Left Review*, which first appeared halfway through the *Quarterly*'s short run, still commands a controversial place in analyses of thirties literature. For its critics, such as Julian Symons, *Left Review* mostly published propaganda of a sort that only 'becomes literature when it is produced by an artist of genius who feels himself to be part of a revolutionary movement. In England no such movement existed.'⁵³ Supporters like E. P. Thompson argue that, despite its faults, it was responsible for an 'enlargement of sympathies' in the 1930s and notable for 'originality of themes (as compared with any literary movement of the 1920s)'.⁵⁴ Tellingly, while Symons and Thompson offer conflicting assessments of *Left Review*'s achievements, both use the label 'movement' in describing it, Symons emphasizing the political element, Thompson the literary. *Left Review* in many ways evoked a political and a literary movement, consciously striving to use literature and related activities as agents of political and cultural change. Established as the journal of the British Section of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers, it modelled itself on such groups as the John Reed Clubs in America, and aspired to be 'a focus for "revolutionary writers" of all classes in Britain'.⁵⁵ One of its animating figures, the poet and critic Edgell Rickword, later defined 'revolutionary literature' as that which 'expressed and reflected the actual struggle of the

⁵³ Julian Symons, *The Thirties: A Dream Revolved*, rev. edn (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), 75.

⁵⁴ E. P. Thompson, 'Left Review', in *idem*, *Making History: Writings on History and Culture* (New York: New Press, 1994), 229.

⁵⁵ Andy Croft, *Comrade Heart: A Life of Randall Swingler* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 46.

down-trodden, as it were, or could convey by realistic treatment, reportage, their actual conditions and communicate their humanity and the plight of their position in a flourishing society'.⁵⁶ Rickword edited the journal from January 1936 to June 1937, after an initial period from October 1934 when Amabel Williams-Ellis, Tom Wintringham, Montagu Slater, and, briefly, Alick West (July–December 1935) formed an editorial collective. The writer and critic Randall Swingler succeeded Rickword in July 1937, and his biographer, Andy Croft, comments that those who worked on *Left Review* aspired to 'create a popular, intellectual and artistic alliance that could help defend "the best achievements of human culture" against Fascism, imperialism and war'.⁵⁷

Croft's description captures something of the journal's origin and motives, but in this instance rather elides its Communist affiliations. Communist Party influence on the slant and output of *Left Review* is contentious: all its editors were party members, and Symons argues that while they 'did not lack sensibility or talent . . . [they] thought it right that this talent should be fitted into a Communist pattern'.⁵⁸ Hynes suggests that *Left Review* was part of a larger development including *The Daily Worker*, and that '1934 was the year in which British communism formally addressed itself to the arts',⁵⁹ while Adrian Caesar argues that under Swingler *Left Review* became 'more and more dominated by the Communist Party and its line'.⁶⁰ Croft instead insists that 'although no reader could have been under any misapprehension as to the political provenance of *Left Review*, Swingler, like Rickword before him, did not use the pages of *Left Review* to advance the claims of Communism or the cause of the Communist Party'.⁶¹ The array of writers published in *Left Review* over its lifetime who were not members of, or allied to the Party, gives some credence to Croft's view; certainly the journal was no propaganda sheet. The issues that filled its pages, such as the Spanish Civil War, working-class conditions, fascism and imperialism, were general concerns across the political Left (and beyond). Pamela Fox's view that the *Review* was 'dominated by middle class radicals'⁶² gestures to the fact that, as Croft acknowledges, important sections of the Communist Party apparatus 'were always, consistently, discouraging of the achievements of the Party's "cultural workers"'.⁶³

Left Review advocated the Communist line most overtly in praise of the Soviet Union as a model society, the place where the ideal conditions for advanced

⁵⁶ John Lucas, 'An Interview with Edgell Rickword', in Lucas, *The 1930s*, 5.

⁵⁷ Croft, *Comrade Heart*, 46. ⁵⁸ Symons, *The Thirties*, 74.

⁵⁹ Hynes, *Auden Generation*, 152.

⁶⁰ Adrian Caesar, *Dividing Lines: Poetry, Class and Ideology in the 1930s* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 209.

⁶¹ Croft, *Comrade Heart*, 64.

⁶² Pamela Fox, *Class Fictions: Shame and Resistance in the British Working Class Novel, 1890–1945* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), 46.

⁶³ Croft, *Comrade Heart*, 80.

literature were being established. The very first piece was Louis Aragon's 'Waltz', in part lauding 'the unbelievable total of 1,200 mixings [of concrete]' at the Tcheliabinsk tractor work.⁶⁴ Williams-Ellis's positive report on the Soviet Writers Congress of August 1934 proclaimed that 'the whole of Russia listened,'⁶⁵ and Georg Dimitrov's 1935 speech to the Soviet Writers' Association declared that the 'atmosphere in the Soviet Union, the very air we breathe, is that of creation,' while elsewhere 'revolutionary writers are at grips with exceptional difficulties.'⁶⁶ Christina Stead's account of the June 1935 international congress of Writers in Defence of Culture singled out the Soviet Union as the only country where progressive writers were not persecuted, in exile, or marginalized.⁶⁷ Other articles lauded Soviet literature, the freedoms of writers in the USSR relative to those in Britain, Moscow theatre, the position of women in the USSR, and the Moscow Trials.⁶⁸ The November 1937 issue was devoted to the twentieth anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution. Bernard Bergonzi later described such items as 'simplistic sentimental Russophilia', a clear example of which might be the article 'Lenin Extempore', published in December 1934:

If [Lenin's] experiment is pushed through to the end, if the other countries follow his teaching, if this great communist experiment spreads all over the world, we shall have a new era in history . . . we shall have an era in human history of which we can now have no conception.⁶⁹

The author was no Communist apparatchik, but George Bernard Shaw.

The third number, published in December 1934, established some of the foundations for literary and political action. It carried part of a statement by the British Section of Writers' International declaring 'a crisis of ideas in the capitalist world today not less considerable than the crisis in economics,' adding that 'the decadence of the past twenty years of English literature and the theatre cannot be understood apart from all that separates 1913 and 1934. It is the collapse of a culture.' In response, the association calls on writers who (a) see fascism as 'the terrorist dictatorship of dying capitalism' and want to 'struggle [with] the working class for a new socialist society'; (b) 'who, if members of the working class, desire to express in their work more effectively than in the past, the struggle of their class';

⁶⁴ Louis Aragon, 'Waltz', *Left Review*, 1:1 (Oct. 1934), 3–5.

⁶⁵ Amabel Williams-Ellis, 'Soviet Writers' Conference', *Left Review*, 1:2 (Nov. 1934), 16–28.

⁶⁶ Georg Dimitrov, 'Dimitrov to Writers: A Speech before the Soviet Writers' Association', *Left Review*, 1:9 (June 1935), 345.

⁶⁷ Christina Stead, 'The Writers Take Sides', *Left Review*, 1:11 (Aug. 1935), 453.

⁶⁸ See, respectively, T. H. Wintringham, 'Who is for Liberty?', 1:12 (Sept. 1935), 482–7; Montagu Slater, 'The Turning Point', 2:1 (Oct. 1935), 15–23; Andre Van Gysegem, 'Moscow Theatre', 2:3 (Dec. 1935), 108–12; Karl Radek, 'The Position of Women in the U.S.S.R.', 2:3 (Dec. 1935), 131–5; T. A. Jackson, 'The Moscow Trial', 3:2 (Mar. 1937), 116–18.

⁶⁹ George Bernard Shaw, 'Lenin Extempore', *Left Review*, 1:3 (Dec. 1934), 51–2.

and (c) 'who will use their pens and their influence against imperialist war and in defence of the Soviet Union, the State where the foundations of Socialism have already been laid.'⁷⁰ Several months earlier in Moscow, the Congress of Soviet Writers had set out the essentials of Socialist Realism, which aimed to chart the inevitable triumph of the workers' revolution, and which denounced the decadence of avant-garde literature. Karl Radek flailed Eliot for his 'fascist declarations', and Joyce's methods were judged 'utterly worthless' relative to the approach and products of Socialist Realism. Maxim Gorky made the more general condemnation that European literature wallowed in a 'state of creative impotence'.⁷¹ As I have argued elsewhere, though, *Left Review's* deference to things Soviet did not translate into the blanket adoption of Socialist Realist principles by the journal's editors or contributors.⁷² Indeed, vigorous exchanges under the banner 'Controversy' lit up subsequent numbers of *Left Review*.

Modernism provided one point of reference, then, in these debates, which more generally suggest a lively and relatively wide range of left-leaning views in the journal. Take an early sample issue, February 1935: it opens with Spender's 'Writers and Manifestoes', which argues for intellectual freedom, contains a brief but passionate call from Langston Hughes for writers to protest at the imprisonment of Jacques Romain, 'the finest living Haitian writer', and includes such items as Osbert Sitwell on 'The Next War', Ralph Fox on 'How Men Live', and Hamilton Fyfe on 'The Press and Mass Hysteria'. There are drawings by James Fitton and James Boswell, who, with James Holland, regularly provided strongly satirical illustrations.⁷³ The 'Controversy' section runs statements from Lewis Grassic Gibbon, Hugh MacDiarmid, Douglas Garman, and Shelley Wang, while Montagu Slater reviews Spender's *Vienna* and Alec Brown and John Lehmann contribute book reviews. Compared to *European Quarterly*, the range of views might seem narrow, but this difference emphasizes the distinct functions periodicals took on; *Left Review* spoke to a committed audience willing to engage actively with current social and cultural issues. The fact that the *Quarterly* appeared only every three months for one year, while *Left Review* was published monthly for four years, intensified those differences. *Left Review* could react to changing conditions, tracking developments over time, and modifying its position accordingly. Surviving for four years proved the journal was capable of retaining a paying audience.

⁷⁰ 'Writers' International (British Section) Statement', *Left Review*, 1:3 (Dec. 1934), 75.

⁷¹ These views, published as *Problems of Soviet Literature* (1935), were later republished as *Soviet Writers Congress 1934: The Debate of Socialist Realism and Modernism* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1977). Radek's comments on Eliot are on p. 115, on Joyce on p. 154; Gorky's assessment of European literature appears on p. 40.

⁷² Peter Marks, 'Illusion and Reality: The Spectre of Socialist Realism in Thirties Literature', in Williams and Matthews (eds), *Rewriting the Thirties*, 23–36.

⁷³ Examples of Boswell's work for *Left Review* appear at the back of Lucas, *The 1930s*.

The size of that audience is difficult to calculate. Asked about circulation in June 1935, Ralph Fox revealed that 'we print 3,500 and sell 3,000. This is, I believe, a larger circulation than that of any of the literary magazines except one.' Fox admits, though, that sales in the universities are 'not yet satisfactory' and that 'Cambridge is worst.'⁷⁴ Circulation does not translate arithmetically into readership, but it seems safe to assume that more people read some part of *Left Review* than bought it. Even so, only sales produce revenue, and, as with most periodicals, the relatively small circulation meant that funding was always precarious. After a year, the journal appealed to its readers for £250 'to put the paper on a sound footing and to enable it to increase its circulation'. Readers were informed that the only wages paid were for distribution, and that contributors and editors gave their services for free.⁷⁵ By the beginning of 1936, these pressures caused *Left Review* to institute Edgell Rickword as editor. Whether the change of editorship increased the actual size of the audience, several commentators judge that Rickword's sophisticated editorial and critical skills improved the quality and variety of material.⁷⁶ He had edited *The Calendar of Modern Letters* in the 1920s, and Craig Werner considers that his standing in the literary community 'expanded the range of contributors markedly'.⁷⁷ The July 1936 issue, for example, contained work by André Malraux, Romain Rolland, and Bert Brecht [*sic*] from the International Writers' Conference held in London the previous month, while a supplement on art included Herbert Read on Surrealism, paintings by Miró and Magritte, and a piece titled 'Rationalist and Anti-Rationalist Art' by a brilliant young art critic who decades later would be exposed as a Soviet spy: Anthony Blunt.⁷⁸

This broadening of *Left Review's* offerings also reflects the developing Popular Front movement to combat the increasing threat of fascism and the prospect of war. Accordingly, *Left Review* under Rickword widened its focus beyond the party line, beginning a series of articles, for instance, on major literary figures considered from the perspective of leftist literary theory. Among these were pieces by Jack Lindsay, Rex Warner, and C. Day Lewis respectively on Shakespeare, Swift, and

⁷⁴ Ralph Fox, in *Left Review*, 1:9 (June 1935), 366–9. Croft (*Comrade Heart*, 46) suggests that *Left Review* was 'soon selling over five thousand copies a month', but gives no source for this figure.

⁷⁵ Appeal for Funds, *Left Review*, 1:12 (Sept. 1935), 482.

⁷⁶ Craig Werner, 'Left Review', in Sullivan (ed.), *British Literary Magazines*, 219. Chris Hilliard, 'Producers by Hand and by Brain: Working-Class Writers and Left-Wing publishers in 1930s Britain', *Journal of Modern History*, 78 (Mar. 2006), 44.

⁷⁷ Werner, 'Left Review', 219.

⁷⁸ Andre Malraux, 'Our Cultural Heritage', 491–6; Romain Rolland, 'Beethoven's Politics', 497–504; Bert Brecht, 'The German Drama: Pre-Hitler', 504–9; Herbert Read, 'SURREALISM-Dialectic of Art', pp. ii–iii; Anthony Blunt, 'Rationalist and Anti-Rationalist Art', pp. iv–v, *Left Review*, 2:10 (July 1936).

Gerard Manley Hopkins.⁷⁹ The December 1936 issue was devoted to the Popular Front, and included Sylvia Townsend Warner's article 'Barcelona',⁸⁰ signalling a central issue for *Left Review* over its remaining years: the Spanish Civil War and its ramifications. Franco's overthrow of the elected Popular Front government in July 1936 energized the broad political Left and Cunningham devotes a chapter of his study to the war, judging it the 1930s event that seems 'to enact and encapsulate its dominant themes and images'.⁸¹ The war also demanded action, not simply cheering from the sidelines: six *Left Review* contributors (Ralph Fox, John Cornford, Charles Donnelly, John Sommerfield, Tom Wintringham, and Ralph Bates) went to fight in Spain; Fox, Cornford, and Donnelly were killed. The conflict also produced one of the most significant efforts associated with *Left Review*: a questionnaire sent to British writers and later published as a *Left Review* pamphlet, *Authors Take Sides*. Organized by Nancy Cunard and published over the names of Louis Aragon, W. H. Auden, Heinrich Mann, Pablo Neruda, Stephen Spender, Tristan Tzara, and others, it declared that 'now, as certainly never before, we are determined or compelled, to take sides. The equivocal attitude, the Ivory Tower, the paradoxical, the ironic detachment, will no longer do.' Writers were asked: 'Are you for, or against the legal Government of Republican Spain? Are you for, or against, Franco and Fascism?' Of those who replied, 5 were for Franco, 127, 'from Samuel Beckett and Cyril Connolly to Rebecca West and Virginia Woolf',⁸² were for the Republican government. Croft reveals that the pamphlet 'sold five thousand copies in a fortnight (two thousand of which were sold through W. H. Smiths)'.⁸³ Despite this interest and commitment, the war ended with victory for *Left Review's* enemies.

Another distinctive feature of early *Left Reviews* were competitions to discover literary talent among the workers. These were based on the Writers International aim to promote writing by that class. The competitions were organized by Williams-Ellis and were meant to encourage workers to draw on their own experiences or perspectives. In the first competition, workers were given a street scene 'and the portrayal of a vigorous but not particularly violent movement of 30/40 people' and asked to describe events from another viewpoint.⁸⁴ The unconsciously patronizing aspect of this task was underscored by the fact that the scene was taken from Williams-Ellis's own novel, *To Tell the Truth*. Entries proved too dependent on the original material, so the next competition asked potential writers to describe 'either an hour or a shift at work'.⁸⁵ Reporting on this competition, Williams-Ellis

⁷⁹ Jack Lindsay, 'William Shakespeare', *Left Review*, 3:6 (July 1937), 331–9; Rex Warner, 'Jonathan Swift: Defender of Liberty', 3:5 (June 1937), 267–72; C. Day Lewis, 'Gerard Manley Hopkins', 3:3 (Apr. 1937), 172–5.

⁸⁰ Sylvia Townsend Warner, 'Barcelona', *Left Review*, 2:15 (Dec. 1936), 812–16.

⁸¹ Cunningham, *British Writers of the Thirties*, 419. ⁸² Croft, *Comrade Heart*, 68.

⁸³ *Ibid.* 68–9. ⁸⁴ Amabel Williams-Ellis, 'Not So Easy', *Left Review*, 1:1 (Oct. 1934), 41.

⁸⁵ Amabel Williams-Ellis, 'Our Readers Get to Work', *Left Review*, 1:3 (Dec. 1934), 74.

regretted 'that certain picturesque jobs were not described,' including those of lorry and bus driver, sailor, and fisherman. Nevertheless, she claimed, the selected entries provided 'fresh material' for contemporary writers. Her comments betray a certain confusion about the aim of the competitions: were they meant to encourage writers from the working class who might otherwise find no outlet for their efforts, or were they meant to offer *Left Review's* mainly middle-class (if left-leaning) readers and contributors a glimpse of the 'picturesque' life of workers? The answer might be both, of course, but while Williams-Ellis's motives were genuine, and she was willing to offer critical advice, the hint of manipulation remains. *Left Review* chose topics such as 'Strike', or 'An Encounter' or 'School Days', for the competition, and established the criteria for selecting entries for publication. As Pamela Fox comments, the criteria insisted upon "concrete" writing which shows rather than tells'.⁸⁶ The strictures these criteria applied were criticized at the first contributors conference in April 1935, Alick West contending that, while he thought the idea of the competition a good one, 'workers are not simply individuals with five senses, whose writing must touch these senses; they are creators of a new social order, and their writing a part of that creating.' He adds that he is complaining not about 'the appearance of patronage, but the fact of patronage. The editors should work out a new means for guiding it.'⁸⁷ Chris Hilliard notes that the writers' competitions 'were Williams-Ellis's pet project', and once 'the more discriminating Rickword' took over the editorship in January 1936 'the number of competitions was cut back, and fewer highly commended entries made it into print. Under Swingler, the competitions were abandoned altogether.'⁸⁸

The value for and impact of these competitions on working-class writing remains debatable. Interviewed in the 1970s, Rickword identified Julius Lipton as one of the competition's notable discoveries.⁸⁹ Valentine Cunningham also mentions Lipton in his assessment that, although the competitions 'attracted a lot of hostile criticism . . . they none the less winkled out a deal of new fiction-making talent'.⁹⁰ Hilliard is less enthusiastic, suggesting that 'in addition to the drawback of their perceived aesthetic failings', one of the reasons why Swingler dropped the competitions from *Left Review* was that the submissions 'did not contribute to the kind of socialist literature Swingler had in mind'. As Hilliard comments, for Swingler a concentration on individual suffering was defeatist 'because it took the individual [rather than class] as its central term'.⁹¹ It seems that workers were unable or unwilling to produce the type of literature *Left Review* editors thought they ought

⁸⁶ Fox, *Class Fictions*, 54.

⁸⁷ Alick West, in 'Contributors' Conference', *Left Review*, 1:9 (June 1935), 368.

⁸⁸ Hilliard, 'Producers by Hand and by Brain', 44.

⁸⁹ Rickword, in Lucas, *The 1930s*, 5–6.

⁹⁰ Cunningham, *Auden Generation*, 305–6.

⁹¹ Hilliard, 'Producers by Hand and by Brain', 44.

to be writing. This disjunction between writers and editors plays out through what Fox labels 'a set of literary standards at odds with the solicited material'. While the competitions set out to foster and discover talent, Fox considers that 'they primarily provided the *Left Review* editors with a forum for cultivating working-class "taste".' By 'alternately praising and berating the amateur writers in post-competition reports', she adds, the editors 'established nearly impossible criteria'.⁹²

Swingler was the last of *Left Review*'s editors and ironically 1938's May Day issue was its final one. Not, Swingler argues counter-intuitively, at a point of decline, but at the height of the journal's success. He explains that the Editorial Board believes it needs to expand in order 'to cope adequately with the job and the opportunities that press so urgently upon us',⁹³ and ends with the call that those involved in *Left Review* must give:

all our energy in support of a wider project, which can reach a vastly greater number of people, and establish in the popular mind that principle which has been the working basis of *Left Review* throughout its history, that the vitality of the whole culture depends on the unity of interest of a whole people, and the opportunity for free expression of their unity and will.⁹⁴

The reasons for its demise are murky. Hilliard notes that Swingler 'said later that he was looking for a commercial publisher for *Left Review* in 1938 because the party was trying to increase its control of the journal.'⁹⁵ Croft writes that Swingler found it difficult to run a monthly magazine with limited funds and circulation in the face of the rapidly deteriorating political situation, and since Communist Party funding was not available, he turned to Allen Lane of the recently formed, and hugely successful, Penguin Books.⁹⁶ Allen Lane had expressed interest in bringing out a revamped journal under the auspices of Penguin, and the final *Left Review* carried his article 'Books for the Million...'.⁹⁷ The prospect of the type of mass circulation that Penguin promised, including bookshop sales, was a massive lure, but ultimately negotiations came to nothing, and the proposed magazine never appeared.⁹⁸

⁹² Fox, *Class Fictions*, 54–5.

⁹³ Randall Swingler, 'Editorial', *Left Review*, 3:16 (May 1938), 957. ⁹⁴ *Ibid.* 961.

⁹⁵ Hilliard, 'Producers by Hand and by Brain', 42. For this information Hillard references Andy Croft, 'Authors Take Sides: Writers and the Communist Party, 1920–56', in Geoff Andrews, Nina Fishman, and Kevin Morgan (eds), *Opening the Books: Essays in the Social and Cultural History of British Communism* (London; Pluto, 1995), 97.

⁹⁶ Croft, *Comrade Heart*, 76.

⁹⁷ Allen Lane, 'Books for the Million...', *Left Review*, 3:16 (May 1938), 968–9.

⁹⁸ See Croft, *Comrade Heart*, 76–7.



Fig. 76. Cover of *Poetry and the People* (Sept. 1938)

Poetry and the People

As *Left Review* wound up, a less significant but still noteworthy magazine emerged, this time from that great cultural phenomenon of 1930s Britain, the Left Book Club.⁹⁹ Founded by publisher Victor Gollancz in 1936 to disseminate left-leaning non-fiction, the Club by 1939 had 57,000 members who pledged to buy the Book of the Month, and who could purchase an array of supplementary books at reduced prices. The Club's massive success led to dozens of discussion groups throughout Britain, a newsletter, and public rallies on key political issues; the Club became a political force. Another feature was a set of spin-off groups devoted to fiction, theatre, and poetry, the last of which created its own *Left Poets' News Sheet*. As Croft notes, this was re-launched in July 1938 as *Poetry and the People*,¹⁰⁰ an attempt to revitalize the rich and lengthy connection with the cultural life of ordinary British people. More than this, *Poetry and the People* aimed to encourage and publish poetry by workers. Such aspirations energize an early editorial that calls upon all those 'who understand and can explain what is happening in our times' to inspire the 'key section of the people, "the working class, with its intimate knowledge and understanding of the basic social and economic realities."' The editorial continues that one of the best ways of inspiring the working class is through 'poetry and song

⁹⁹ John Lewis, *The Left Book Club: An Historical Record* (London: Gollancz, 1970); Ruth Dudley Edwards, *Victor Gollancz: A Biography* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1987).

¹⁰⁰ Croft, *Comrade Heart*, 77. Croft's account of *Poetry and People* (especially 78–80, 111–12, and 122–3), though only a small part of Swingler's story, is one of the few scholarly mentions of the journal.

which go straight to the human heart and at the same time stimulate thought. We want to rouse a burning indignation and hatred of capitalism,' at a time when capitalism is 'taking on Fascist forms' and plunging 'mankind headlong into war'.¹⁰¹

These sentiments and this stance link the journal to *Left Review* and the Left Book Club. Stalwarts of the earlier journal such as Swingler and Lindsay made regular contributions to *Poetry and the People*, and other writers associated with *Left Review* also aided the later magazine. This included giving talks on poetry to *Poetry and the People* discussion groups. The November 1938 number, for example, advertises Montagu Slater speaking on 'The Subject Matter of Poetry', Charles Madge on 'Poetry and Everyday Life', Louis MacNeice on 'Poetry's Many-Sidedness', and C. Day Lewis on 'Byron'.¹⁰² Based in London, *Poetry and the People* attempted to create regional clusters of poets and those interested in poetry, along the lines of the Left Book Club strategy of local discussion groups. By March 1939 cells were functioning (in alphabetical order) from Antrim, Bexley Heath, Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, Grimsby, Hastings, and seven other suburbs and cities up to Surbiton, with correspondents in 'Australia, Canada, Ceylon, USA, and USSR'.¹⁰³ The catchment area is impressive, but the journal itself was a decidedly amateurish production. The first fourteen issues were typed and duplicated rather than printed, and ran to twenty pages. The initial cover was hand-drawn, giving *Poetry and the People* the appearance of a school poetry magazine. Its price, three pence, potentially made it affordable to the workers it wished to attract, but also reflected its crude production values. As Croft notes, 'After the high standards of design which Swingler had enjoyed at *Left Review*, twenty poorly duplicated pages inside a hand-drawn cover represented a serious step backwards.'¹⁰⁴ *Poetry and the People* would not be professionally printed until its fifteenth number. But it was not trying to emulate the essentially middle-class style, nor attract the predominantly middle-class audience, of *Left Review*. Its title announced the desire to connect poetry with the masses, and so to activate dormant social forces. As the November 1938 editorial proclaims, 'We have the possibility of becoming the most powerful poetry movement this country has ever seen.'¹⁰⁵ The distance between potential and reality is captured by a notice on the same page, that the 'London Section is in urgent need of a typewriter, whether as loan or as a gift'.¹⁰⁶ This gap hardly makes *Poetry and the People* unique, for all periodicals are leaps of faith, usually requiring the unpaid efforts of many unseen committed workers. And these efforts did find an audience, for by the end of the first year the journal 'was selling a thousand copies a month'.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰¹ Unsigned 'Editorial', *Poetry and the People*, 3 (Sept. 1938), 2–3.

¹⁰² Notice, *Poetry and the People*, 5 (Nov. 1938), verso of 'Contents'.

¹⁰³ Notice, *Poetry and the People*, 9 (Mar. 1939), 1.

¹⁰⁴ Croft, *Comrade Heart*, 78.

¹⁰⁵ Unsigned 'Editorial', *Poetry and the People*, 5 (Nov. 1938), 3.

¹⁰⁶ Notice, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Croft, *Comrade Heart*, 79.

The contents themselves were often a mixture of poetry, commentaries on changing political circumstances (and the place of poetry in relation to them), calls for political activism, and more historically oriented pieces showing that poetry had long reflected and commented on social reality. The January 1939 issue indicates some of the journal's flavour. It begins with an editorial focusing on the Spanish Civil War, a central concern of the journal from its inception. An epigram on class follows, along with two poems by the young writer Idris Davies, 'Black Tips' and 'Collier Boy'. 'Black Tips' deals with the ugliness of workers' environments, but is addressed to a 'visitor' who is asked to look at them and then 'let not die | The anger they breed in your heart.' 'Collier Boy' exposes the plight of the 'nipper' sent to work half a mile down a coal mine, and ends with the cry: 'Sing his praises, bards of Britain, fit your metre to his tread. . . . Salute him, statesman, bankers, merchants, salute him fleet on Britain's tide.'¹⁰⁸ The fifth instalment of Jack Lindsay's critical study, 'Neglected Aspects of Poetry', explores 'the problems meeting us when we turn to re-evaluate past poetry in terms of our deepening social consciousness'.¹⁰⁹ W. T. Nettlefold then offers satirical 'Hints to the Millions of Prospective Poets Who Would Rather Write than Earn An Honest Living', encouraging all those who ignore his hints to 'send your verse to the Editor of Poetry and the People, for all contributions are welcome.'¹¹⁰ R. Gardner contributes the poem 'International Brigade', on the Spanish Civil War, and Roy Hartkopf 'The Story of William Conway Pearson', about a young man falsely imprisoned for robbery. William Montgomerie's 'Glasgow' follows, before an extended call for readers, as well as associated poetry groups, to build on the achievements of 1938 and to 'work for continuous progress'.¹¹¹ Day Lewis's talk on Byron gets reviewed, including the fact that '[m]ore than 120 attended, making a record meeting.' Readers are told that the gathering 'was symbolic of the progress the Group has made during a year of constant work. Now, onward during 1939!'¹¹² Before beginning that work, they receive an excerpt from the left-wing Unity Theatre's pantomime 'Babes in the Wood', including this musical account of a woman whose lover does not want to wed or have children: 'My girl she said "Defeatist, you're a traitor to the cause, | My children won't be fighting in imperialistic wars, | My children won't be cannon fodder waiting to be killed: | They'll be workers in the Britain that the working class can build."¹¹³ If not all the poems reach great heights or explore significant depths, the fact that they are published at all is crucial, encouraging other workers to send their efforts in.

¹⁰⁸ Idris Davies, 'Black Tips', *Poetry and the People*, 7 (Jan. 1939), 4; 'Collier Boy', 5.

¹⁰⁹ Jack Lindsay, 'Neglected Aspects of Poetry V', *ibid.* 6.

¹¹⁰ W. T. Nettlefold, 'Hints to the Millions of Prospective Poets Who Would Rather Write than Earn An Honest Living', *ibid.* 8–10.

¹¹¹ '1939', *ibid.* 14.

¹¹² *Ibid.* 16

¹¹³ Geoffrey Parsons, 'Let Her Stay-Let Them', *ibid.* 17

Tension between quality control and the flow of contributions troubles all periodicals, but the particular remit of *Poetry and the People* increased the strain, for its target contributors did not fit the identikit images of poets. Walter Ford addresses these conflicting forces in 'Poetry and Who Cares Anyway', noting that the editors had been inundated with poems, disproving 'the common idea that no one is interested in poetry nowadays except a few score people who appear chiefly in cliqueish monthlies'. Against this positive take on the number of contributions to the journal, he reveals that '[w]hile interest is keen and widespread, the general level of achievement is disappointing. Most of the great volume of poetry we receive is, frankly, worthless as poetry.'¹¹⁴ Such harsh judgement might seem likely to put off prospective poets, but perhaps reflects a concern that runs through the magazine, that poetry has been the preserve of an effete and mutually congratulating middle class. Worker poets, by contrast, would expect and prefer criticism that was blunt but honest, and necessary for them to learn their trade. *Poetry and the People*, in a sense, created poetic apprenticeships through which unskilled poets could develop their craft. Just as importantly, displaying their output signalled to others that while becoming a published poet might be gruelling, the journal's existence meant that it was not impossible. As proof of this, Ford's admonitory article is surrounded by seventeen poems by fourteen different poets.

Through much of 1939, the Spanish Civil War remained a chief political concern, especially in terms of editorial space. But the poetry itself addressed a broad selection of cultural and social issues within the compass of left-wing concerns: the conditions of workers; the threat of fascism and the complicity of capitalism in its rise; the increasing likelihood of war; the lessons of history; and the prospects in a world transformed by socialism or communism. In this regard the Soviet Union counted as a model: holidays to the USSR were advertised,¹¹⁵ and in June 1939 the editorial compared Britain to the Soviet Union, a place where 'they have something to be proud of, something to live for, something to sing and write about. But we must not forget that... we too can liberate ourselves to build a newer and finer world. Remember it was a poet who said... "You are many, they are few."' ¹¹⁶

The rapid collapse into war meant that these hopes were set aside for more pressing concerns, and the combined July–August 1939 number was the last before the outbreak of fighting. It contained several poems registering a sense of the inevitability of conflict, but from the perspective of those who fear that the great threat comes from their own political leaders, who will use the fight to impose fascism on their fellow-Britons. So, Ray Hartkopf's 'Lines on First Seeing the Photographs of the Twelve ARP [Air Raid Precautions] Dictators in the Press' attacks the twelve

¹¹⁴ Walter Ford, 'Poetry and Who Cares Anyway', *Poetry and the People*, 8 (Feb. 1939), 14.

¹¹⁵ 'Holidays in the USSR', *Poetry and the People*, 9 (Mar. 1939), 16.

¹¹⁶ Unsigned editorial, *Poetry and the People*, 12 (June 1939), 2.

‘good tory faces . . . sworn to fight for profit’ and registers how workers are ‘fed up with dictators and their fancy Fascist tricks,’¹¹⁷ while A. P. Brand declares that ‘we are waiting for the first word that will close the presses | The first detachment of order, the first halt in the song | The first of the crooked crosses | Appearing overnight on the printed handbill or the wireless orator’s tongue.’¹¹⁸ What sets this apart from many other premonitions of war is that the orator’s tongue will be a native one.

The next issue of *Poetry and the People* did not appear until November 1939, two months after the beginning of war. This gap resulted from the substantial revamping of the journal: it was professionally printed rather than duplicated, and its cover carried a cartoon by ‘Island’ showing a small figure chained and dancing on a typewriter whose keys are pushed by giant fingers. All the remaining covers would be illustrated. A lengthy editorial makes the case for poetry’s continued importance, especially given that ‘the only literature and art permitted to survive is that which persuades us to close our ears and eyes to reason and to follow blindly the warmongers.’¹¹⁹ And yet, as a note reveals, very few poems have been received, a worrying decline given that circumstances demand ‘the working classes must be more vocal than ever, and more emphatic.’¹²⁰ The number of poems would pick up slightly, but after February 1940 the journal would appear only sporadically in May, July, and finally, September. An editor’s note in that number explains that because of ‘Defence Regulations, several poems have had to be omitted and others held over until the next issue.’ There would be no next issue, for *Poetry and the People* was absorbed into a new literary journal. This involved something of a coup, Swingler setting up a holding company that gave him access to *Poetry and the People*’s paper ration. The magazine Swingler envisaged in a letter to Rickword was a very different creature: ‘The paper will cover architecture, medicine, education, art, literature etc, and the general plan is to devote the space to four or five quite substantial pieces per month.’¹²¹ Its ungainly title, *Our Time: Incorporating Poetry and the People*, gestures to connections between the two periodicals, but its true forerunner is *Left Review*. *Poetry and the People* was brought to an end not by the forces it feared, the cultural fascists within Britain, but by its allies, who saw it as the means to their own ends.

¹¹⁷ Ray Hartkopf, ‘Lines on First Seeing the Photographs of the twelve ARP Dictators in the Press’, *Poetry and the People*, 13–14 (July–Aug. 1939), 4.

¹¹⁸ A. P. Brand, ‘Poem’, *ibid.* 10.

¹¹⁹ John Isserlis, ‘Editorial’, *Poetry and the People*, 15 (Nov. 1939), 2.

¹²⁰ Unsigned note, ‘Organisational’, *ibid.* 15.

¹²¹ Randall Swingler, undated 1940/1 letter to Edgell Rickword, quoted in Croft, *Comrade Heart*, 123.

Conclusion

Taken together, *The European Quarterly*, *Left Review*, and *Poetry and the People* argue against homogeneity across left-leaning periodicals; nor do they represent the totality of left literary thought. The degree of 'lean', in each case, was distinct, and could be adjusted to the changing circumstances. Of the three, *The European Quarterly* undoubtedly had the most substantial links to modernism in terms of personnel, lineage, content, and commitment to European connections, as well as in its attention to aesthetics over political or social issues. Still, it did not deny the emerging realities of the time, and its early call to combat the terminal threat of fascism registers political awareness and historical prescience. Readers of *Left Review* were in no doubt of its basic political position and direction, even if the coordinates were adjusted during the turbulent middle to late 1930s. In broad terms, the *Review* documents the turning away from 1920s aestheticism towards a more politically engaged literature in the 1930s, especially by younger writers. But this reading of difference needs to incorporate the fact that texts as monumentally modernist as *Ulysses* and 'The Waste Land' address social realities, while approaches such as Socialist Realism entail aesthetic choices and strategies. And the reaction of many *Left Review* contributors against modernism was based on extensive knowledge of key writers and texts. In some ways, modernism provided the necessary thesis against which *Left Review* could propose its antithesis. Even *Poetry and the People* acknowledged the existence of Eliot, seen in a 1940 review of Christopher Caudwell's *Illusion and Reality* as the exemplar of 'escapist' bourgeois poetry.¹²² This hardly rates as a sophisticated analysis of modernism (not that it was meant to be), but indicates how periodicals such as *Left Review* and *Poetry and the People* worked within, and in opposition, to a prevailing environment that still bore modernist influences. If Eliot personified modernist illusion, the contributors to *Poetry and the People* saw themselves firmly embedded in reality. Taking their line from Marx, they recognized that, through poetry and political action, the point was not merely to interpret the world in various ways, but to *change* it. Individually, these journals might not have changed the world substantially, but collectively they helped stimulate contentious, intelligent, and imaginative critical debate. In a world where culture itself was endangered, that was no small achievement.

¹²² John Belsey, review of Christopher Caudwell, *Illusion and Reality*, *Poetry and the People*, 17 (Feb. 1940), 23–4.

POETRY THEN

Geoffrey Grigson and *New Verse* (1933–9), Julian Symons
and *Twentieth Century Verse* (1937–9)

STAN SMITH

Eclectic, dynamic, iconoclastic

In a 1964 retrospect Cyril Connolly classified the ‘little magazines’ of the interwar years as of two kinds, ‘dynamic’ or ‘eclectic’:

Some flourish on what they put in, others by whom they keep out. Dynamic magazines have a shorter life and it is round them that glamour and nostalgia crystallise. If they go on too long they will become eclectic although the reverse process is very unusual. Eclectic magazines are also of their time but they cannot ignore the past nor resist good writing from opposing camps. The dynamic editor runs his magazine like a commando course where picked men are trained to assault the enemy position: the eclectic is like an hotel proprietor whose rooms fill up every month with a different clique.¹

Described by him as ‘slim, unpretentious, inexpensive and devoted purely to poetry and reviews about poetry’, the thirty-four bimonthly issues of *New Verse* which ran from January 1933 to 1939, with a short-lived second series in its final year, were definitely in Connolly’s ‘dynamic’ class, dominated by the personality, preferences (and strong aversions), and the take-no-prisoners polemic of its curmudgeonly editor, Geoffrey Grigson. The journal continued to exercise a considerable posthumous influence on British culture through the *New Verse* anthology published in 1939 and variously reprinted thereafter.² As Connolly observed, ‘best known for his polemic

¹ Cyril Connolly, ‘Little Magazines’, *The Evening Colonnade* (San Diego/London: First Harvest/Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), 371.

² *New Verse: An Anthology Compiled by Geoffrey Grigson* (London: Faber and Faber, 1939; 2nd edn, with an additional Preface, 1942).



Fig. 77. Cover of *New Verse* (Jan. 1933)

against the Sitwells on the one hand, the middlebrows on the other, and for his Auden double number', Grigson's 'strictly little magazine attracted some of the best work of Auden, Spender, MacNeice, Dylan Thomas and many others, though some of the reviews were too personally spiteful'.³ Grigson was notorious for his caustically confrontational approach to poetry. In their spoof villonaid in *Letters from Iceland* (1937), 'Auden and MacNeice: Their Last Will and Testament', the two poets wrote of leaving 'to Geoffrey Grigson of *New Verse* | A strop for his sharp tongue before he talks.' But Grigson's cantankerousness was a crucial part of his journal's appeal, to both readers and contributors. As Connolly observed, '*New Verse* commanded the best poetry of the Thirties because the poets respected him.'⁴ Julian Symons's bimonthly, *Twentieth Century Verse*, one of several 'stimulating successors in the same slim format',⁵ appeared from 1937 until 1939, when the onset of war put an end to both publications. Though he printed many of the same writers as Grigson, Symons's editorial approach was more relaxedly eclectic, in Connolly's definition:

An eclectic editor feels he has a duty to preserve certain values, to reassess famous writers, disinter others. A truly dynamic editor will completely ignore the past: his magazine will be short-lived, his authors violent and obscure. The eclectic will be in constant danger of becoming complacent and middle-brow. . . . Dynamic magazines usually start with a fixed amount of money to lose and lose it; contributors are often unpaid and 'names' are not sought for to increase circulation: the editors are usually under thirty and may soon go off the boil. No magazine can be more

³ Connolly, 'Little Magazines', 380.

⁴ *Ibid.* 372.

⁵ *Ibid.* 380

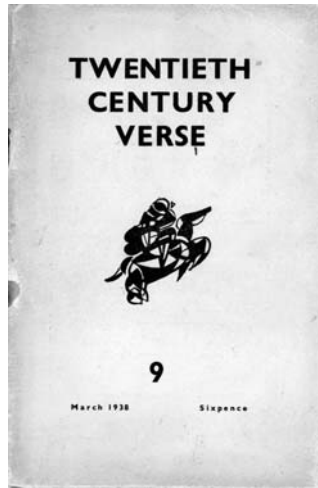


Fig. 78. Cover of *Twentieth Century Verse* (Mar. 1938)

intelligent than its editor and the limitations of an editor will gradually impose a ceiling.⁶

Both journals were certainly, in his words, ‘the pollinators of works of art’, and, in the collectivist climate of the 1930s, the kind of production without which ‘literary movements and eventually literature itself could not exist’, which ‘brings writers together, even the most isolated, and sets them influencing their time and when that time is past, devotes a special number to them as a last tribute’.⁷ None of the special numbers of these two journals, however, constituted obsequies for dead or dying writers, except that *New Verse’s* Autumn 1938 double number on ‘Commitments’ (*New Verse* 31–2) contained Charles Madge’s satiric mock obituary, ‘In Memoriam T. S. E.’ (its title camping it up in Gothic script), and Grigson’s own acerbic dismissal of ‘Miss Laura Riding, a most peculiar dead poet... dead because she is neutral, living in a kind of Nowhere, in between things, like a bead which has slipped down between boards’.⁸ This late issue, like all its predecessors, remained firmly focused on the future of poetry in an uncertain world. Herbert Read’s ‘Open Letter to the New Director of the BBC’ for example, seen by some as a seed of the postwar Third Programme, urged ‘the power of the radio to revive poetry as a spoken art’.⁹ An essay by Spender on ‘The Left Wing Orthodoxy’ called for ‘a new Realism’ in poetry and claimed that ‘most well-known British

⁶ *Ibid.* 371–2 ⁷ *Ibid.* 371.

⁸ Charles Madge, ‘In Memoriam T. S. E.’, *New Verse*, 31–2 (Autumn 1938), 18–21; [Geoffrey Grigson], ‘First of All, Miss Laura Riding’, *ibid.* 24–6.

⁹ Herbert Read, ‘An Open Letter to the New Director of the B. B. C.’, *ibid.* 10–11.

writers are now aware that the whole tradition which they represent' and 'the liberal assumptions of progress and freedom which form the so respectable background of most bourgeois literature today, are being challenged by the violent and destructive methods of power politics.'¹⁰ A somewhat cryptic prose parable by Auden, possibly on the Munich Crisis, was balanced by the overt admission, in a 'Statement' by a poet as dedicatedly unpolitical as Louis MacNeice, that, while 'propaganda . . . is not the poet's job,' and he must remain 'synoptic and elastic in his sympathies', nevertheless 'The poet at the moment will tend to be moralist rather than aesthete.'¹¹ A short, unsigned 'Topical Note' by Grigson poured scorn on Masfield and Blunden for lauding Chamberlain's Munich 'diplomacy' with poems in *The Times*. (The following week, Grigson mocked, Blunden's 'crisis poem' was even 'translated into Latin'.¹²) Even in its last days, *New Verse* maintained the angry and irreverent contestation with establishment culture which continued to expand its sales, despite doubling its price to six shillings and sixpence for its final year. In the same combative spirit the last number of *Twentieth Century Verse* (18, June–July 1939) addressed the whole issue to the relations between 'The Poet and the Public'.

As its reputation grew, issues of *New Verse* were snapped up almost as soon as published. Number 14, the special issue on Hopkins (a personal passion of Grigson's, on whom he later wrote a book), it was proudly announced in *New Verse* 19, had sold out and was no longer available, along with issues 1 through 5. The Auden double issue in November 1937 (*New Verse* 26–7) described stocks of *New Verse* 18 (December 1935), devoted to 'Poets and the Theatre', as exhausted, while those of other numbers were said to be 'low'. Readers were reminded that *New Verse* 18 was 'historic as the number in which Miss Edith Sitwell acquired that now inevitable short title of hers, the *Old Jane*'.¹³ Among other items, this issue contained articles on 'Eliot and Auden and Shakespeare' by Humphrey Jennings, Eliot's reflections on 'Audiences, Producers, Plays, Poets', MacNeice's account of Yeats's drama, and a piece by Rupert Doone, 'What about the Theatre?', which elicited Grigson's subsequent unsigned editorial critique of Group Theatre 'amateurism' and '"groupishness"', 'pretending only to be serious . . . pretending to have a group feeling purpose', in practice 'as distressingly second-rate as the Old Vic'.¹⁴

The Auden double number rapidly became a collector's item. Already by March 1938, *New Verse* 29 could announce that only 'a few copies' remained. Celebrating

¹⁰ Stephen Spender, 'The Left Wing Orthodoxy', *New Verse*, 31–2 (Autumn 1938), 12.

¹¹ Louis MacNeice, 'A Statement', *ibid.* 7.

¹² [Geoffrey Grigson], 'Topical Note', *ibid.* 9.

¹³ 'Perhaps You Have Missed', *New Verse*, 26–7 (Nov. 1937), 47. The comment occurs in a review of *The Year's Poetry 1935*, 'The worst rubbish comes from that old Jane, Edith Sitwell' (*New Verse*, 18 (Dec. 1935), 22).

¹⁴ [Geoffrey Grigson], 'Poets and the Theatre', *New Verse*, 26–7 (Nov. 1937), 2.

Auden's thirtieth year with responses from over twenty contemporaries, some as perfunctory as Masfield's grudging one-liner, 'All good wishes for the success of your tribute to Mr. Auden', the special number did not merely 'salute... the first English poet for many years who is a poet all the way round', as Grigson put it in his front page declaration.¹⁵ Characteristically, the same opening sentence added the parenthesis: '(though we do not forget all that can be said against him)'.¹⁶ The issue was primarily a manifesto for a whole new way of relating poetry to the pressures of the time, for which Auden was the stalking horse. Unlike the authors who 'stick in those curious years when the limitations of Eliot and Pound were made into a system because their virtues were considerable and rare', Grigson wrote, 'Auden does live in a new day. He is solid enough, poke him where you will, not crumbling like fudge. He is traditional, revolutionary, energetic, inquisitive, critical, and intelligent,' with a 'broad power of raising ordinary speech into strong and strange incantation'.¹⁷

With its twelve-page checklist of the poet's published writings, a shrewd marketing ploy, the number was notable for Christopher Isherwood's 'Notes on Auden's Early Poetry', Spender's 'Oxford to Communism', Louis MacNeice's teasing open letter to his fellow poet, Kenneth Allott's 'Auden in the Theatre' (which elicited a robust counterblast from MacNeice in *New Verse* 28 to its attack on the Group Theatre), and Edgell Rickword on 'Auden and Politics', dissociating himself, as a card-carrying Communist, from 'the aloofness' of the bourgeois intellectual, on behalf of 'the flat ephemeral pamphlet'.¹⁸ It is, however, Grigson's own extended essay, 'Auden as a Monster', that stands out, with its delight in a poet who 'does not fit', is 'no gentleman', who 'does not write, or exist, by any of the codes, by the Bloomsbury rules, by the Hampstead rules, by the Oxford, the Cambridge, or the Russell Square rules', 'a monster', sitting on 'the dangerous side of the frontier', and 'so rude to the infinite'.¹⁹ This is, nevertheless, no injudicious hero worship, for Grigson also acknowledges that 'the lines of his development are twisted and obscure', that 'he writes plenty of verse which is slack, ordinary, dull, or silly'; but, in an era 'of bewildered mediocrity, triviality and fudge... It is much to Auden's honour that he is so entirely and successfully a poet.'²⁰ Grigson no doubt took the point of Dylan Thomas's jealously iconoclastic parting shot, aimed as much at Grigson's evangelism as at Auden's premature elevation: 'P.S.—Congratulations on Auden's seventieth birthday.'²¹

¹⁵ 'Sixteen Comments on Auden', *ibid.* 23–30; [Geoffrey Grigson], 'The Reason for This', *ibid.* 1.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 1.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Edgell Rickword, 'Auden and Politics', *ibid.* 22.

¹⁹ Geoffrey Grigson, 'Auden as Monster', *ibid.* 13, 14, 16.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 16–17.

²¹ Dylan Thomas, *ibid.* 25.

Poetry, politics, polemics

Adrian Caesar has sought to ‘demolish’ Grigson’s claim in the journal’s last issue that ‘*New Verse* came into existence because of Auden’,²² rejecting, on a simple statistical analysis, Grigson’s assertion that he published more of Auden’s poetry than of any other writer. Grigson himself, as Caesar demonstrates, was the poet most copiously represented over the six years of the journal’s existence. If one adds in the poems of the otherwise elusive ‘Martin Boldero’, who—in the face of Grigson’s mockery—Edith Sitwell proposed, almost certainly correctly, to be a Grigson persona, then Grigson’s contribution to the journal far exceeds that of Auden.²³ Nevertheless Auden was ubiquitous in the pages of *New Verse*, the litmus test for all other work published there. ‘Audenesque’, the title of a review by Gavin Ewart in *New Verse* 7, was a recurrent mantra, though editor and contributors scrupulously distinguished between the bogus and the authentically ‘Audenesque’. Grigson dismissed Day Lewis’s ‘Audenesque images’ in *Noah and the Waters* as ‘fake Auden’, ‘utilitarian fantasies, lacking the incantatory force and emotional value which images would have in a good poem by Auden’.²⁴ Humphrey Jennings even rebuked Eliot’s *Murder in the Cathedral* for its ‘Audenesque tricks’.²⁵ Ewart’s poetic pastiche, ‘Audenesque for an Initiation’,²⁶ was reprinted in the 1939 *New Verse Anthology*, more for its titular manifesto, one suspects, than for any intrinsic merit.

Caesar observes that *New Verse* was ‘neither propagandist nor left-wing’, despite this assumption being a ‘major bulwark of the literary-historical mythology of the 1930s’.²⁷ Grigson certainly never made any such claim. While Symons professed to be a ‘Trotskyist’ at the time, albeit of an armchair nature, Grigson wrote pointedly in *New Verse* 28, after rebuking a publisher who had suggested to him a ‘Popular

²² Adrian Caesar, *Dividing Lines: Poetry, Class and Ideology in the 1930s* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991). Grigson’s valedictory claim comes in a proudly enthusiastic response to ‘the moral and imaginative weight and tenderness of Auden’s poems’ in *Journey to a War*, which he clearly felt to have vindicated his early faith in ‘This strange creature, this monster out of Birmingham and the middle-classes’, insisting that ‘all who have believed in Auden are by this time a hundred times justified’ (Geoffrey Grigson, ‘Twenty-Seven Sonnets’, *New Verse*, 2 NS (May 1939), 47).

²³ Grigson purported to reject the claim in a sarcastic commentary in issue 19; however, he does not include any work by Boldero in his 1939 *New Verse* anthology, which confirms Sitwell’s suspicions, though he does publish poems by both Gavin Ewart and ‘E. V. Swart’, whom one might have thought to be a pseudonym of Ewart’s. The cover of *New Verse* 19 inserts, after Boldero’s name, the parenthesis ‘(by kind permission of the old jane)’. In fact, Sitwell was quite correct. In his autobiographical memoir, *The Crest on the Silver* (London: Cresset Press, 1950), Grigson reveals that his mother’s maiden name was Boldero (18).

²⁴ [Geoffrey Grigson], ‘Two Whiffs of Lewisite’, *New Verse*, 21 (June–July 1936), 17.

²⁵ Humphrey Jennings, ‘Eliot and Auden and Shakespeare’, *New Verse*, 18 (Dec. 1935), 6.

²⁶ Gavin Ewart, ‘Audenesque for an Initiation’, *New Verse*, 6 (Dec. 1933), 12–13.

²⁷ Caesar, *Dividing Lines*, 107–8.

Front' of verse-reviewers to ensure that '*all verse by poets with the angels ought to be reviewed kindly*' (his italics), that 'We are not Trotskyists, but we should like to know more about the arrest of Boris Pasternak.'²⁸ He admitted, late in the decade, to Fabian sympathies, but he was much more directly in a tradition of Tory anarchism. What both journals insisted on throughout their runs was the necessary but relative autonomy of poetry, in a world which it was nevertheless obliged urgently to address.

Under the heading 'WHY', Grigson expounded his unapologetic opposition to mass culture in the first issue:

The object of *New Verse* needs expansion in no complex or tiring manifesto. Poets in this country and during this period of the victory of the masses, aristocratic and bourgeois as much as proletarian, which have captured the instruments of access to the public and use them to convey their own once timid and silent vulgarity, vulgarising all the arts, are allowed no longer periodical means of communicating their poems.

Despite these echoes of Leavis's and Eliot's anti-democratic rhetoric, *New Verse* found the academicism of *Scrutiny* and the elitism of the *Criterion* equally unacceptable. Rather, it was in fostering an environment where good creative writing could flourish that the journal found its rationale. Amidst what Grigson called 'the poisonous and steaming Gran Chaco of vulgarity, sciolism and literary racketeering'

New Verse... has a clear function. When respectable poems... are being written and forced to remain in typescript, it can add itself as a publishing agent... It favours only its time, belonging to no literary or politico-literary cabal, cherishing bombs only for masqueraders and for the everlasting 'critical' rearguard of nastiness, now represented so ably and variously by *The Best Poems of the Year*, the Book Society, and all the gang of big-shot reviewers. *New Verse* does not regard itself as a verse supplement to such periodicals as the *Criterion* and *Scrutiny*. There is no 'poetic' and therefore no supplementary experience; poetry by its words (to borrow a metaphor of Eliot's) and so by itself drives roots down to draw from all human experience. If the poem is only one organism in the creation of which those experiences are collected, concentrated, transmitted, it is the chief one; and one (incidentally) in such an ulcerous period as our own we can serve magnificently. So *New Verse* believes.²⁹

New Verse 2 in March 1933 announced that the first issue had sold well, which 'validates trust that both need and public for it exist'.³⁰ By contrast, *Twentieth Century Verse* appears to have had a shaky start. Published from January 1937 until

²⁸ [Geoffrey Grigson], 'Remarks', *New Verse*, 28 (Jan. 1938), 14–15.

²⁹ Geoffrey Grigson, 'Why', *New Verse*, 1 (Jan. 1933), 1–2.

³⁰ [Geoffrey Grigson], 'Politics: and a Request', *New Verse*, 2 (Mar. 1933), 1.

1939, its first issue had apparently only nine subscribers. Nevertheless, Symons felt able to report in the second issue in March 1937 that:

No. 1 has been received well, with praise and blame from the right quarters . . . [A] few readers seem to think, because the words 'civilised' and 'minority' are mentioned together, that we wish to be exclusive, to cultivate poetry in air as rarefied as possible, sufficiently rarefied not to be breathed by any except the most subtle minds. This is not so.³¹

Following Grigson's precedent, Symons insisted that his magazine was 'not run as an advertising campaign for any literary clique or party; our object is to print good poems, preferably by young poets: and the criterion of a good poem is simply the editor's personal and humanly fallible taste.'³² In response to the 'well-worn, difficult question . . . what are our politics?', he described *Twentieth Century Verse* as 'not a political magazine', adding that 'we do not admit that poetry need be concerned with politics; though, of course, we may print poems which show a definite political attitude. We expect to be told that this reply is evasive, but to discuss in detail poetry and politics is to tread worn, and we believe barren ground.'³³

Opinions in both journals varied with the contributors, and with the changing temper of the times. Roy Fuller, reviewing Rex Warner's *Poems* in *Twentieth Century Verse* 4 (June–July 1937), interpolated a glowing testimonial to the report of a recent Communist Party of Great Britain congress which 'gave at times the actual shock of poetry . . . the document of men and women sharing in the essential life of their period', 'controlled by a theory demanding unlimited development in every side of human activity'.³⁴ A year later, H. B. Mallalieu, reviewing Herbert Read's *Poetry and Anarchism* in July 1938 (*Twentieth Century Verse* 11), saw the book as an 'interesting symptom of the time', in which 'Intellectuals losing faith in Communism, particularly certain aspects of the Stalinist regime, seek a personal statement that will bypass history.'³⁵ Stephen Spender, whose steady progress leftwards was monitored with interest throughout the decade, dismissed Louis Aragon's *Red Front* in *New Verse* 3 as 'a propagandist poem', which, 'in spite of its effective cinematographic imagery', sought merely 'to breed in people a superstitious belief in the necessity of murders and reprisals': 'Before the revolution the intellectuals preach violence which to them has a merely pictorial significance, but after the revolution they are horrified at the force they have let loose. . . . Readers of this poem should compare it with any speech by Hitler.'³⁶

³¹ *Twentieth Century Verse*, 2 (Mar. 1937), no pagination.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Roy Fuller, *Twentieth Century Verse*, 4 (June–July 1937), no pagination.

³⁵ H. B. Mallalieu, *Twentieth Century Verse*, 11 (July 1938), 76.

³⁶ Stephen Spender, *New Verse*, 3 (May 1933), 25.

By the time of his essay on 'The Left Wing Orthodoxy' in *New Verse* 31–2 (Autumn 1938), Spender was invoking Aragon's call for the Left to reconsider the position of the writer in the modern world and, 'in public penance for his surrealist days', his 'demand that writers should be realists', concluding that 'Not the least disconcerting, but comforting, feature of today is to discover that in the matter of the Spanish War nearly every serious writer, whatever his opinions, is passionately on our side.'³⁷

Lewis and Leavis

If both journals took Auden as a touchstone, he was also often linked to the man he designated 'that lonely old volcano of the Right', Wyndham Lewis. Lewis's work was enthusiastically reviewed in both journals as it appeared. His outsider's stance towards the literary establishment was regularly presented as exemplary. A lengthy review by Gilbert Armitage in *New Verse* claimed that Lewis's *One Way Song* 'compels us to modify, *pro tanto*, our current conception of poetry', and spoke forcefully of his relevance to 'a time like the present, saturated with politics': 'The peculiarity, the novelty, of the present age, as Mr. Lewis sees it . . . consists in the invasion of all departments of life and thought by politics, to such an extent that the primary classification of any human product or activity is as Left or Right *politically*.'³⁸ He was exemplary because 'It is against this unnatural and usurping dichotomy that Mr. Lewis's "Enemy" campaigns are waged', proclaiming "'A plague o' both your houses" . . . to capitalist Capulets and communist Montagues alike', and taking up 'a position of isolated independence in the politics of the politicised art of today'.³⁹

In the first issue of *Twentieth Century Verse*, Hugh Gordon Porteus's article 'Auden Now' drew a parallel between Lewis's 'Enemy' ('accused of taking too much interest in "life" . . . the most noble fault', in contrast to 'the simple naiveties of surrealism' in 'our eclectic time'), and Auden's poetry, in the best sense journalistic, 'news that stays news', a 'parable art', 'obsessed, as only a man of power can be by the problems of power; the corruption of power and the subtle disguises'.⁴⁰ Symons's 'Notes on *One Way Song*', in a special double number devoted to Lewis (*Twentieth Century Verse*, 6–7, November–December 1937), invoked Auden and Eliot as comparable figures (the issue also carried Eliot's review of *The Lion and the Fox* and Gilbert Armitage on *The Wild Body*), and affirmed that the word "Revolutionary", as applied to Lewis, has no meaning: he is revolution, just as he is

³⁷ Stephen Spender, 'The Left Wing Orthodoxy', *New Verse*, 31–2 (Autumn 1938), 16.

³⁸ Gilbert Armitage, 'The New Wyndham Lewis', *New Verse*, 7 (Feb. 1934), 12, 14.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 14.

⁴⁰ Hugh Gordon Porteus, 'Auden Now', *Twentieth Century Verse*, 1 (Jan. 1937), no pagination.

order. He is any pair of opposites,' for 'a balance, an opposition' was necessary to his view of life.⁴¹ Porteus's article 'Eyes Front' (the military command an instruction to the artist to keep his eye on the object) and Symons's editorial shared the conviction that Lewis was 'the only artist today who is a social force', and as such, a model for the journal's own practices:

A little magazine is a searchlight that may often be focused accurately on the good and the false, finding merit and touching plague-spots that bigger and clumsier beams miss. Nothing like a 'movement' is intended: if poets and some readers can be convinced that it is their duty as much as ever in 1937 to look with an alert scepticism on the contemporary scene and to test with some concrete touchstones the miscellaneous wares offered, by poets as much as Prime Ministers, for their consumption, not much more than that can be hoped. It is not certain that much more is desirable.

There is no man alive who knows better than Mr. Lewis the necessity of these touchstones; there is no other respected figure in the literary world to-day who has anything like his width of vision. To ask 'What has Lewis to do with poetry' is irrelevant: he has everything to do with poetry. Just as he has everything to do with painting and with novel-writing. It is a tribute to this width of vision, this ceaseless preoccupation with viable ideas, that although seventeen people have expressed opinions about Lewis here, some facets of his work remain untouched.⁴²

Lewis's 'influence' was beyond question, the source, among other things, of the 'agreeable snootiness betrayed by some of the younger contributors' to the issue. His 'influence in a less general, more literary, sense' lay in 'his ability to communicate ideas, combined with an extraordinary vitality and final toughness (that toughness essential to a man of genius who declares war on ignorance and pedantry, stupidity and folly) that makes Lewis the most valuable and interesting writer of our time.'⁴³

Lewis responded to the whole issue in characteristic mode. His words are worth reproducing at some length:

What a quantity of friends 'the enemy' has nowadays! I am a little abashed. No company, this, for a public enemy. I am very much afraid you have compromised me! I have perused these articles rather in the way a notorious bandit would a show of many-happy-returns and other obliging messages, at his birthday breakfast-table in his hide-out. . . .

And, by the way, I am not a 'counter-revolutionary' . . . Almost by nature, I am the pure revolutionary: like Godwin, say. In me you see a man of the tabula rasa,

⁴¹ Julian Symons, 'Notes on *One Way Song*', *Twentieth Century Verse*, 6–7 (Nov.–Dec. 1937), no pagination.

⁴² Hugh Gordon Porteus, 'Eyes Front', *ibid.* no pagination.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

if ever there was one. . . . My mind is ahistoric. It would welcome the clean sweep. It could build something better, I am sure of that, than has been left us by our fathers that were before us. Only I know this is quite impossible.

This is the heart of what is, apparently, a political mystery—I have learnt my lesson, and in spite of being the pure revolutionary I am a bit of a realist too. Hence my extraordinary broadmindedness in politics, for instance. Otherwise I should be a man after Lenin's heart.

Have you ever known a politician on the Left or on the Right, who did not dislike art? . . . Art functions in the abstract—like the Cahots [*sc.* Cabots] it 'speaks only with God,' that's no use to politics.

Look here, as I am among friends. I will tell you something. I have been much deceived in politicians and I will never write another line for or against any of them.⁴⁴

As a sign of Lewis's continuing importance, Ruthven Todd's checklist of his works filled seven pages of *Twentieth Century Verse* 9; however, not all readers welcomed the respect paid to him. *Twentieth Century Verse* 10 (May 1938) reported, under the heading 'Dirty Dogs', that several subscribers had not renewed because of the Lewis issue, regarding him as a 'nasty man'. Nevertheless, it also reported, the number had sold well, and only a few copies were left, adding that it considered the journal 'well free of these (naïve or vicious) intellectuals, who ten years ago would have yapped praise of Lewis in between lamp-posts and up every dark alley'.⁴⁵

Despite sharing F. R. Leavis's critique of mass society, neither journal espoused what they saw as his narrowly prescriptive orthodoxy. Todd's review of *Revaluation* in *Twentieth Century Verse* 2 (March 1937) commented acidly that 'Mr Leavis seems to have a distaste for the vigorous talents (such as Messrs. Grigson, Lewis and Auden) because they disturb the even tenor of the service in the cathedral of criticism', and mocked the 'hushed atmosphere' in all the Cambridge critics, including Empson and Richards, like some 'Sunday School outing of all the old clichés, all dressed up and nowhere to go'.⁴⁶ Grigson's editorial for *New Verse* 4 (July 1933), 'The Danger of Taste', responded ungraciously to Leavis's recent praise for the journal with the 'plain criticism' that *Scrutiny*, while 'the one Christian in darkest Africa', was nevertheless 'too adolescent, too self-righteous, too ready to accept the naiveties of ledger-criticism informed with a little sour yeast of Eliot and Lawrence', setting up 'taste as a humanist idol'.⁴⁷ Grigson acknowledged that the *Scrutiny* camp was 'sincere', only to add 'but sincerity by itself is not a very useful thing. Talking about taste does not create it.' Leavis was too much the critic and academic, he wrote, who 'prefers the faults of the poems of Mr Auden and

⁴⁴ Wyndham Lewis, 'A Letter to the Editor', *ibid.* no pagination.

⁴⁵ [Julian Symons], 'Dirty Dogs', *Twentieth Century Verse*, 10 (May 1938), 45.

⁴⁶ Ruthven Todd, 'Unleavened Bread', *Twentieth Century Verse*, 2 (Mar. 1937), no pagination.

⁴⁷ [Geoffrey Grigson], 'The Danger of Taste', *New Verse*, 4 (July 1933), 1–2.

Mr Spender to their merits', unable to 'recognize creative generosity until years have passed; one likes to think how stiffly he would have reviewed Lawrence's early novels.'⁴⁸ Grigson's conclusion that 'If *Scrutiny* is not to be the perfect body-builder for prigs it must change its formula'⁴⁹ arose directly from his own commitment to the 'creative generosity' of his preferred contributors, for which *New Verse* was to provide the vehicle. The evangelical tone shared with Leavis was, however, probably the most recurrent aspect of Grigson's activities. A single copy, he reproached potential readers in the journal's first issue, could be bought for the price of ten Players, a library borrowing of *Angel Pavement* (a dig at the middlebrow J. B. Priestley, a recurrent butt), or a bus fare from Piccadilly Circus to Golders Green. But its 'stratospherically high' ambitions, he added, could be realized only by the active 'support and recommendation' of its readers.⁵⁰

Likes, dislikes, and loathings

If the talent Grigson and Symons identified and propagated in the 1930s was largely, though not exclusively, on the Left, this was not because of a political predisposition on the part of the editors, but because the pressure of the time had driven writers to such positions, as Spender's essay in the 'Commitments' number indicated. It was their poetry, and not their politics, which interested both editors. The front page editorial, 'Politics and a Request', in *New Verse's* second issue, for example:

warned again that *New Verse* has no politics. 'New' does not mean a deterministic end or postulate an unplanked-ditch between present-future and the whole past. It means only fresh, contemporaneous, new written, and we shall work to find verse to which these epithets belong, to publish criticism which is of value and not only of propaganda value. Individualism is required. If there must be attitudes, a reasoned attitude of torism is welcomed no less than a communist attitude. This is not two-faced, since poetry is round and faces all ways.⁵¹

Symons, modestly not discussing his own journal in his chapter on little magazines in *The Thirties: A Dream Revolved*, proposed a different antithesis from Connolly's, implicitly aligning himself with Grigson in contrasting *New Verse* with the orthodoxly Communist *Left Review*. Between them, he wrote, these two journals 'represent the aesthetic impulses of the period in their most extreme form'.⁵² However, 'No other editor of the decade was so sharply intelligent as Geoffrey Grigson.'⁵³ The career Communist Michael Roberts, vilified by Grigson in *New*

⁴⁸ [Grigson] 'The Danger of Taste', 2. ⁴⁹ Ibid. ⁵⁰ Grigson, 'Why', 1–2.

⁵¹ [Geoffrey Grigson], 'Politics: and a Request', *New Verse*, 2 (Mar. 1933), 1.

⁵² Julian Symons, *The Thirties: A Dream Revolved* (London: Faber and Faber, [1960] rev. 1975), 71.

⁵³ Ibid.

Verse 20 (April–May 1936), as ‘an unremarkable stodge’,⁵⁴ was, Symons reports, ‘a regular target’ of Grigson’s invective, not on political but on poetic grounds:

The poems that appeared in little magazines passed through the sieve of a mind deeply distrustful of all generalizations that led away from the particular, of all poems constructed out of rhetorical feeling rather than out of direct observation. It was a logical consequence of this attitude to condemn the ‘nauseating concern for *poetry*’ which Grigson found in Michael Roberts’s introduction to the *Faber Book of Modern Verse*.⁵⁵

Yet Grigson could combine censure with generosity. As Symons points out, George Barker, of whom Grigson asked, in a review headed simply ‘Nertz’, ‘Why has anyone published, does anyone praise, does anyone read, the verse of Mr. George Barker?’, nevertheless continued to be published by him on a regular basis, despite accusations that he was ‘turned in on himself in a morbid narcissism, loving himself, and anxious to be loved, in order to preserve his own self-importance’.⁵⁶ Barker’s ‘Elegies Number One and Two’ indeed received pride of place in the January 1939 new issue. According to Symons’s generous tribute, ‘the influence of *New Verse* was very great, within its narrow area’, reflecting:

an unspecific feeling, even among some of the poets castigated, that Grigson was doing something useful. His choice of poems showed by omission the kind of thing to be avoided, and this is almost the most valuable thing a young poet can learn in any period. Reading again the complete file of *New Verse* for the six years of its life one finds no poems written in truly dead Georgian language, comparatively few that are pretentiously obscure, but a good many (this was the chief weakness of *New Verse*, as of Auden) that are trivial. . . . [T]here was a certain poetic style, based on careful observation and deliberately elegant choice of epithet, associated with its younger contributors: a style labelled by its opponents bourgeois objectivism.⁵⁷

Grigson and Symons published many of the same writers—in addition to the ‘Auden Group’, what Symons here calls ‘all the little Audens, Day Lewises and Spenders taking up their appropriate poetical-political positions.’⁵⁸ Alongside established poet–critics such as Herbert Read and Allen Tate, the ‘younger contributors’ to these magazines included Dylan Thomas, Edwin Muir, William Empson, George Barker, Gavin Ewart (whose precocious nine-page ‘Phallus in Wonderland’ appeared in *New Verse* 3 when its author was still a 16-year-old public schoolboy), Bernard Spencer, Roy (R. B.) Fuller, Kathleen (K. J.) Raine, Keith (K. C.) Douglas, Ruthven Todd, Rex Warner, Francis Scarfe, and the briefly fashionable John Pudney. Christopher Caudwell had already died in Spain when his ‘Three Poems’

⁵⁴ Geoffrey Grigson, ‘Anthology-Making’, *New Verse*, 20 (Apr.–May 1936), 26.

⁵⁵ Symons, *The Thirties*, 71. ⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 72. ⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 72–3 ⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 73.

appeared in *New Verse* in January 1939.⁵⁹ Kenneth Allott, better known after the war as an anthologist and man of letters, contributed poems and criticism to both magazines.

Norman (J. N.) Cameron was praised in a Grigson review in *New Verse* 19 for being 'a natural poet, with all the virtue, and all the limitations, of the spontaneous amateur', writing 'a genuine pure poetry in opposition to the bogus pure poetry of imagism, or of William Carlos Williams'.⁶⁰ Symons also disparaged the 'fake Imagist-Objectivist Dr. William Carlos Williams'.⁶¹ Despite frequent strictures on what Grigson dismissed in his 1939 preface to the *New Verse Anthology* as 'the pure bogus modernism' associated with 'so much American poetry',⁶² from Horace Gregory's six-page survey 'Poetry in America' (*New Verse* 4) onwards, both magazines maintained an unparochial interest in transatlantic writing.⁶³ October 1938 saw a special double number of *Twentieth Century Verse* (12–13) on US poetry, a major feature of which was a set of responses by leading American poets to editorial 'Enquiries'—a new, interactive dimension to poetry journalism pioneered by Grigson's 'Six Questions on Poetry' addressed to a number of poets in *New Verse* 11 (October 1934). Samuel French Morse wrote critically (*Twentieth Century Verse* 8) of Wallace Stevens's so-called 'anti-Marxist errors', offering 'not a very pretty picture of Utopia', 'a trash-can at the end of the world', but, claiming that 'His politics became more active with time, and more sound', concluded

⁵⁹ Auden, who took his review copy of Caudwell's *Illusion and Reality* to Spain, described it in *New Verse* 25 (May 1937) as 'the most important book on poetry since the books of Dr. I. A. Richards'. The review was followed by a short unsigned notice, presumably by Grigson, of Auden's *Spain*, which Caudwell's book had clearly influenced, describing it acutely as 'not very new Auden, but . . . an organic, grave, sensible and moving statement, more reasonable and more free of bigotry than any other political poem written for some years', *New Verse*, 25 (May 1937), 20–2.

⁶⁰ Geoffrey Grigson, 'Elements of Verse', *New Verse*, 19 (Feb.–Mar. 1936), 17.

⁶¹ Julian Symons, *Twentieth Century Verse*, 9 (Mar. 1938), 20.

⁶² Geoffrey Grigson, *New Verse Anthology*, p. 23.

⁶³ More surprisingly, *New Verse* 22 (Aug.–Sept. 1936) carried, along with a poem by Pablo Neruda, six pages of folk poetry from the Bastar tribal cultures of central India, with an explanatory note by one of the translators, W. V. Grigson, at the time Revenue Secretary to the Nizam's Government in Hyderabad, and author in 1938 of *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*. Later Sir Wilfrid, and presumably a brother or other close relative of Geoffrey, W. V. Grigson was an early champion of the rights of Indian tribal peoples, and was appointed in the early 1940s to investigate the condition of the province's aboriginal tribes. Further translations of Bastar poems by him appeared in issue 24. In issue 19, Geoffrey Grigson had already reviewed enthusiastically as 'intrinsically delightful and topically instructive' an anthology of Gond folk poetry edited by Shamrao Hivale and Verrier Elwin, and had promised future publication of 'literal versions of some of the longer dance poems of the Gonds of Bastar State' (17–18). A similar impulse to embrace folk forms lies behind the special ballad number of *Twentieth Century Verse* 4 (June–July 1937), edited by John Garrett, Auden's co-editor for *The Poet's Tongue*.

with an approving quotation of 'The Men that are Falling'.⁶⁴ Grigson's hostile review of Stevens's *Ideas of Order* and Hugh MacDiarmid's *Second Hymn to Lenin* (*New Verse* 19, February–March 1936), entitled 'The Stuffed Goldfinch', may have suggested a certain English insularity in dismissing the former as 'the finicking privateer, prosy Herrick, Klee without rhythm, observing nothing, single artificer of his own world of mannerism, mixer-up of chinoiserie, recollections of light in Claude, sharp sound in Mozart, trinkets of culture', and the latter as '77 pages of unvarying twitter . . . a moulting, maundering chiff-chaff . . . highbrow doggerels'.⁶⁵ The response to other modernists was more mixed. In his six-page review in *New Verse* 5, 'The Methodism of Ezra Pound'. Grigson found *A Draft of XXX Cantos* 'less satisfactory than they should be', but declared nevertheless that 'the writing is often magnificent'; Eliot and Pound, he wrote, 'display in their poetry the evils of exaggerated and decadent Humanism', and 'I miss in the Cantos the extreme physical shock which cursory inexperienced reading finds at once in an incident or image in Dante.'⁶⁶

The one-line sting in the tail of this review added, of a poet who was at the time the much-lauded protégé simultaneously and improbably of both Leavis and Sitwell, 'Mr Ronald Bottrall if he likes can follow on his scooter.'⁶⁷ But, though Grigson saw through what he elsewhere called the 'Tottenham Court Road modernistics by Mr Ronald Bottrall',⁶⁸ he was less discriminating about some other derivative pseudo-modernists. Thus, that pasticheur of Eliot and Auden, Frederic Prokosch, was repeatedly plugged, and singled out in issue 22, in an unsigned review called commandingly 'Buy This Book', as one whose 'talent' was likely to 'take him much higher than most of the English or American chickweeds',⁶⁹ while *New Verse* 29's front cover gave a fanfare welcome to what was proudly announced in large bold capitals as Prokosch's 'ODE: AN EIGHT-PAGE POEM'.⁷⁰

Appearance in *New Verse* did not however guarantee privileged treatment. Reviewing John Pudney and Randall Swingler in *New Verse* 7 (February 1934), for example, Grigson wrote that contributing 'a poem or two . . . would not excuse complimenting them kindly with lies or half-lies', and went on to indict both books, in a mounting denunciation, as 'dull', 'ill-read', derivative, lacking in rhythm and auditory imagination, observing only the obvious, turgid, insipid 'like stale water', to conclude: 'Mr. Swingler certainly, Mr. Pudney perhaps, should give up poetry for politics or prose.'⁷¹ Rayner Heppenstall, reviewed in *New Verse*

⁶⁴ Samuel French Morse, 'Man with Imagination', *Twentieth Century Verse*, 8 (Jan.–Feb. 1938), no pagination.

⁶⁵ Geoffrey Grigson, 'The Stuffed Goldfinch', *New Verse*, 19 (Feb.–Mar. 1936), 18–19.

⁶⁶ Geoffrey Grigson, 'The Methodism of Ezra Pound', *New Verse*, 5 (Oct. 1933), 20–2.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 22. ⁶⁸ Geoffrey Grigson, *New Verse*, 28 (Jan. 1938), 23.

⁶⁹ [Geoffrey Grigson], 'Buy This Book', *New Verse*, 22 (Aug.–Sept. 1936), 16–17.

⁷⁰ *New Verse*, 29 (Mar. 1938), 1.

⁷¹ Geoffrey Grigson, 'Two First Books', *New Verse*, 7 (Feb. 1934), 20.

18 (December 1935), was dismissed as ‘absolutely a BORE. . . . A sluggish bore, a Hopkins-Binyon bore, a tangle of pimple laurels bore, a really I do not know Sir James Frazer bore.’⁷² In case this was insufficient, the review added, with characteristic Grigson excess, ‘He is also a yearning, blind, deaf, word-gargling, 1930 book-bedded, prose-snipping, egg-bound bore,’ and concluded with a P.S. that, since ‘this bore’ declares us as one of the places his poems first appeared, ‘we declare that only one ever appeared in *New Verse* and we’re sorry for that.’⁷³

Honest doubt: Surrealism

Among now forgotten but significant contributors to these magazines were the Canadian poet and scholar A. J. M. Smith, the American Hugh Chisholm, the modernist Joseph Gordon Macleod, Bernard Gutteridge, and the Surrealist painter and poet Philip O’Connor. Though both journals made space for O’Connor, George Barker, and David Gascoyne, as well as for Dylan Thomas, usually identified with Surrealism in the 1930s, Grigson seems to have been more open to the possibilities of this movement than Symons, whose editorial line tended to the censorious. Symons’s editorial, ‘Against Surrealism’, in the April–May 1937 issue of *Twentieth Century Verse*, for example, urged that the movement ‘should be allowed to die quietly’: Wyndham Lewis had already disposed of it in *The Diabolical Principle* and *Men without Art* as ‘a movement of “literary” painters and poets who use words as if they were separate blobs of colour to be stuck on a canvas’, and ‘any crackpot can write a poem that may be called surrealist’.⁷⁴ In response to its transformation into a political movement, he reaffirmed his conviction that art was made by individuals, not groups. Grigson, however, having printed Gascoyne’s translations of Hans Arp and Eluard, and Cameron’s version of Rimbaud’s ‘Drunken Boat’ in *New Verse* 21 (June–July 1936), also published in the same issue, under the heading ‘Honest Doubt’, some ‘questions about Surrealism’, signed J.B., for which the journal hoped to have ‘authoritative answers’ in the next number.⁷⁵ In the event, these were held over because of illness, though the next issue did call attention to the *International Surrealist Bulletin*, as well as taking a dig at Herbert Read’s ‘pedantic pill-box of SUPER-REALISM’.⁷⁶

Despite such reservations, both journals carried not only various ‘Surrealist’ and semi-Surrealist poems but more than one extended discussion of the movement.

⁷² [Geoffrey Grigson], ‘Air Gun’, *New Verse*, 18 (Dec. 1935), 20. ⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ [Julian Symons], ‘Against Surrealism’, *Twentieth Century Verse*, 3 (Apr.–May 1937), no pagination.

⁷⁵ J.B., ‘Honest Doubt’, *New Verse*, 21 (June–July 1936), 14–16. ‘J.B.’ was actually Auden. It is reprinted in W. H. Auden, *Prose 1926–1938*, ed. Edward Mendelson (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), 135–7. Mendelson speculates that Auden’s nominated initials ‘stand for John Bull’ (763).

⁷⁶ [Geoffrey Grigson], ‘“Honest Doubt”’, *New Verse*, 22 (Aug.–Sept. 1936), 15.

As early as *New Verse* 6 (December 1933), Grigson had published Gascoyne's translations of Eluard, Pierre Unik, Ribemont-Dessaignes, and Giacometti's concrete 'Poem in Seven Spaces'. This issue also contained an extended and largely sympathetic article, 'Surrealism for the English', by Charles Madge, a regular contributor as both poet and critic. Encouraged by some remarks of André Breton, Madge sought to find native sources for Surrealism in Edward Young, the author of *Night Thoughts*. Madge reviewed Gascoyne's *Short Survey of Surrealism* somewhat equivocally as 'really admirable' in *New Verse* 18 (December 1935), though he complained about its prose style, and observed, astutely, that, after 'the days of the Bastille', 'Surrealism is now in its academic period—the period of explanation and anthologies—the wider public'.⁷⁷ The same issue contained three poems by Dylan Thomas, a poem by Gascoyne, and Gascoyne's review of collections by Eluard and Hugh Sykes Davies, which described the latter's volume as 'a curious and often exciting book, worth reading more than once', while doubting that he and Barker were really Surrealists.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, a year later, in advance of the London International Surrealist Exhibition, which was organized by Davies and Gascoyne, *New Verse* 20 (April–May 1936) carried a seven-page essay by Davies on 'Sympathies with Surrealism'.

Mass Observation, defamiliarization

One of the most interesting convergences in *New Verse* was signalled in the lengthy article by Charles Madge which provided title and thematics for issue 24 (February–March 1937), 'Poetic Description and Mass-Observation'. Madge, who was both sympathetic to Surrealism and actively involved with Mass Observation, took three passages, from a novel, a history, and a Mass Observation report, to exemplify his contention that MO was 'a technique for obtaining objective statements about human behaviour . . . an interchange of observations being the foundation of social consciousness'.⁷⁹ Such statements:

produce a poetry which is not, as at present, restricted to a handful of esoteric performers. The immediate effect of MASS-OBSERVATION is to de-value considerably the status of the 'poet.' It makes the term 'poet' apply, not to his performance, but to his profession, like 'footballer' . . . The process of observing raises [the observer] from subjectivity to objectivity. What has become unnoticed through familiarity is raised into consciousness again.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Charles Madge, 'Air Gun', *New Verse*, 18 (Dec. 1935), 20–1.

⁷⁸ David Gascoyne, 'On Spontaneity', *New Verse*, 18 (Dec. 1935), 19.

⁷⁹ Charles Madge, 'Poetic Description and Mass-Observation', *New Verse*, 24 (Feb.–Mar. 1937), 3.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

It's possible, though unlikely, that Madge is consciously echoing, if only at second hand, the ideas of Shklovsky and Brecht on defamiliarization. More probably, this is a coincidence arising from a widespread 1930s interest in anthropological and collectivist points of view. The Surrealist techniques of creative juxtaposition and 'free association', represented in the same issue by a collage of disconnected poetic observations by Philip O'Connor, converge with the undeniably Audenesque in Madge's account, in the subsequent issue (May 1937), of the 'Oxford Collective Poem', which, he wrote, offered 'another angle on a possible connection between MASS-OBSERVATION and poetry', since 'the main function of the Observer is to *describe* the components of social behaviour in an objective, scientific fashion' while disclosing the 'hinterland, the background of social fantasy'.⁸¹ Twelve Oxford undergraduates, Madge reported, collected, over a month, images from everyday experience, newspaper photos, incidents from films, encounters in the street, etc. When they detected overlaps, or 'a strong common feature in a whole series of slightly-differing images', they 'tried to abstract the essential details and so form a single image'.⁸² They then selected the six most recurrent images, from which each constructed a single pentameter line for each of them. Voting on the most preferred lines, the twelve were then despatched to write a poem each, based on the lines, and reconvened to revise collectively each of the anonymously submitted poems. Unsurprisingly, the final product, 'much more a collective account of the Oxford [*sic*] than of any single person in the group', revealing, according to Madge, poetry's 'intimate relation to social landscape', in the 'sense of decay and imminent doom which characterises contemporary Oxford',⁸³ is a rather convincing pastiche of the Audenesque, which should be reprinted in every anthology of 1930s poetry. As Gavin Ewart's 'Cage Me a Harrisson' noted in *Twentieth Century Verse* II, 'From every word that falls from Auden's mouth | Mass-observations grow, a bit distorted'.⁸⁴

Symons, reviewing Hart Crane in January–February 1938 (*Twentieth Century Verse* 8), wrote that 'The poet is or ought to be, the perfect unconscious "mass-observer"; a mass in one.'⁸⁵ Grigson himself sought to distinguish Mass Observation 'as a technique for studying the behaviour of human beings in civilisation', from its founder and apostle, Tom Harrisson, whom he attacked on several occasions, accusing him, in an unsigned notice 'Science and Mass-Observation: Poets and Poor Tom' (*New Verse* 29, March 1938), of wilfully misrepresenting Auden and MacNeice and of 'arous[ing] feelings against poets on the ground that they oppose Mass-Observation, and prefer Art and Death to Life', in 'a

⁸¹ Charles Madge, 'Oxford Collective Poem', *New Verse*, 25 (May 1937), 16.

⁸² *Ibid.* 17.

⁸³ *Ibid.* 16, 18, 19.

⁸⁴ Gavin Ewart, 'Cage Me a Harrisson', *Twentieth Century Verse*, II (July 1938), 65–6.

⁸⁵ Julian Symons, 'Hart Crane', *Twentieth Century Verse*, 8 (Jan.–Feb. 1938), no pagination.

pile of dotty and emotive language', 'podgier and more ridiculous than Ezra Pound's'.⁸⁶

Objects versus 'objectivism'

In a heartfelt piece of advice to intending poets in the 'Commitments' double number, 'Lonely, But Not Lonely Enough', Grigson wrote that 'Fidelity to what we can see of objects is the beginning of sanity':

[I]t is fatal to treat the exterior world as a kind of handwriting, the only use of which is to make the interior world legible. The world of objects is our constant discipline. Desert it, and you become the mouth under the short moustache on the last night of Nuremberg. By his fidelity to what he can see of objects and what he wishes to use of objects you can test a writer.⁸⁷

An insightful discussion of Coleridge's political thought in the same issue, 'Poetry, Objects and Beliefs', developed the argument. It was spelt out more practically in the preface to the *New Verse* anthology, which stressed the need to avoid 'poetic inflation', 'vagueness and subjectivity of illustration', and to write in 'terms and images commonly understood', with attention directed 'outward on to natural facts and forms', 'to observe well, and—it is Auden's terminology—to be good reporters'. It is a good thing, he continued, for writers to subject themselves 'to the discipline of objects, and events' in an 'explicable, if not . . . a calculable and an orderly, universe'.⁸⁸ After Yeats and Eliot there were no better poets in England than Auden and MacNeice, because 'Both have this exact, material view. . . . Both make familiar use of objects', and are 'able to impart ideas through objects'.⁸⁹ The view that governed *New Verse* was the conviction that world and poem and mind were 'explicable in material terms', not 'magic' ones.⁹⁰

This is the approach, equally discernible in *Twentieth Century Verse*, which, according to Symons, hostile critics had labelled 'bourgeois objectivism'. That noun has occasioned more than a few misunderstandings of the impetus of both magazines. The misperception probably originated with Horace Gregory's hardly enthusiastic account in *New Verse* 4 of Louis Zukofsky's *Objectivist Anthology*, which, he said, bore the mark of Pound's and Carlos Williams's influence, and seemed:

more than anything else . . . an afterthought of Imagism, and to represent a need for further experimentation at a time when such needs have already become

⁸⁶ [Geoffrey Grigson], 'Science and Mass-Observation: Poets and Poor Tom', *New Verse*, 29 (Mar. 1938), 16–18.

⁸⁷ Geoffrey Grigson, 'Lonely, But Not Lonely Enough', *New Verse*, 31–2 (Autumn 1938), 16.

⁸⁸ Grigson *New Verse Anthology*, 15.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 20, 21.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* 22.

exhausted in mere note-taking, with an atmosphere which was that of an arc-welded clique, a group locked in a room with all the windows shut and the calendar on the wall showing the date of December 1922.⁹¹

A pedigree of this kind was hardly likely to find favour with Grigson, or to justify the claim by Alvin Sullivan in 1986 that *New Verse* represented a version of 'British Objectivism' derived from the American model.⁹²

Cliques, claques, rackets

Grigson reserved his fiercest venom for literary gangs of any kind, whether bohemian or establishment, saying of *The Year's Poetry 1935*, for example, that 'The book certainly does "represent" the piping posturing feebleness of the high-brow underworld' and describing its editors, which included John Lehmann, as 'the Dismal Trinity'.⁹³ The heading of *New Verse* 21's report that it had been 'smacked' by *Poetry* (Chicago) for "'rancor, petulance and personal indecencies"' and "'slapdash impertinence"' indicated its robust response to a coterie journal characterized by what it called 'paralysed senility' and 'corpse poetry': 'Why Not Die?'⁹⁴ Unlike most of his contemporaries, Grigson never bought into the idea of a 'MacSpaunday' quartet, as he made clear in a review in *New Verse* 2 (March 1933) of Michael Roberts's *New Country* anthology, asking 'What joins these writers except paper?' Roberts, he says, "'usses" and "ours" as though he were G.O.C. a new Salvation Army or a cardinal presiding over a Propaganda', and substitutes a politically inspired sentimentality for genuine art: 'Too conscious of "novelty", too aware that he is "modern", a member of a "generation", Roberts... offers correct feeling, but... he offers also platitude... sincere ineptitude and dish-cloth vulgarity of idea and expression.'⁹⁵ Grigson was more generous than subsequently about Cecil Day Lewis, whose *Magnetic Mountain* was also under review, conceding that it contains 'good verse', but observing that he is 'too able to wither himself as a poet by being politically active'.⁹⁶ Subsequent critiques of Day Lewis were more brutal, adding fashionable fellow-travelling and sycophantic self-promotion within the cultural establishment to his specifically literary failings. In *New Verse* 21 (June–July 1936) Grigson described him as 'a politician, a bewildered moralist, and

⁹¹ Horace Gregory, 'Poetry in America', *New Verse*, 4 (July 1933), 14–15.

⁹² *New Verse*, Alvin Sullivan (ed.), *British Literary Magazines: The Modern Age 1914–1984* (Westboro, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986), 292. There is a good discussion of this issue in Caesar, *Dividing Lines*, 107–8, 113–15.

⁹³ [Geoffrey Grigson], *New Verse*, 18 (Dec. 1935), 22.

⁹⁴ [Geoffrey Grigson], 'Why Not Die?', *New Verse*, 21 (June–July 1936), 21–2.

⁹⁵ Geoffrey Grigson, 'Faith or Feeling', *New Verse*, 2 (Mar. 1933), 15–16.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* 16–17.

also a man of letters with unconfessed and vulgar ambitions',⁹⁷ a case supported by an impressive list of Day Lewis's various ineptitudes. *New Verse* 25 followed Auden's review of Caudwell and the notice of Auden's *Spain* (with its pointed note, 'All royalties on its sale go to Medical Aid for Spain') with a report headed 'Day Lewis Joins Up', which records not the latter's enlistment for Spain, but his joining 'the selection Committee of the Book Society', acidly observing that:

The Book Society is a Limited Company pimping to the mass bourgeois mind and employing 'distinguished' members of the literary underworld, *adopters* of literature as a profession. . . . On this Committee, Mr Day Lewis no doubt will be Change, Revolution, Youth, the Rising Generation. But this ends his stance as the Poet writing thrillers . . . and establishes him as the Thriller Writer, the Underworld Man, the yesterday's newspaper, the grease in the sink-pipe of letters who has been posed for ten years as spring water.

The report concludes with a chilling Stalinist metaphor: 'Mr. Day Lewis and his Legend are now liquidated. . . . We can get along without him.'⁹⁸

Even Auden himself didn't escape laceration if he appeared to have, at least momentarily, sold out to the establishment. *New Verse* 28 (January 1938) reported on an 'anonymous exhibit' at the London Surrealist Exhibition which contained the press-cutting 'Auden Receives Royal Medal', and went on to confirm that this was indeed the case, commenting 'It may be true that the joke is much more on the medal than it is on Mr Auden', but still 'there is no good reason for taking the Royal Medal, all the same. We rather regret that Mr Auden has taken it.'⁹⁹ Symons likewise dismissed Auden's 'Putty Medal' in *Twentieth Century Verse* 9 (March 1938) as having no significance 'outside contemporary art-politics'.¹⁰⁰ This kind of response was emulated by other contributors. Thus Stephen Spender (a man to be knighted after the war) wrote in 'The Left Wing Orthodoxy' in August 1938 of 'the extent to which belonging to the Left is becoming a career':

I don't blame Mr. Day Lewis for his job on the Book Society or Mr. Auden for his Gold Medal. Literary life is largely a contemporary racket, and if one goes in for it, I suppose one can't be squeamish. All the same, it's worth pointing out that Left Wing writers are subject to just the same kind of temptation as the late Mr Ramsay MacDonald, visiting Buckingham Palace.¹⁰¹

But, *pace* Caesar's revisionist critique, the Audenesque was indeed the spirit of the age, and these two little magazines did much to promote what was best and

⁹⁷ [Grigson], 'Two Whiffs of Lewisite', 17.

⁹⁸ Geoffrey Grigson, 'Day Lewis Joins Up', *New Verse*, 25 (May 1937), 23–4.

⁹⁹ 'Remarks', *New Verse*, 28 (Jan. 1938), 14.

¹⁰⁰ Julian Symons, 'Briefly', *Twentieth Century Verse*, 9 (Mar. 1938), 19–20.

¹⁰¹ Stephen Spender, 'The Left Wing Orthodoxy', *New Verse*, 31–2 (Autumn 1938), 14.

most worth preserving in a low dishonest decade. As Grigson wrote in his valedictory issue: 'Auden is now clear, absolutely clear of foolish journalists, Cambridge detractors, and envious crawlers and creepers of party and catholic reaction and the new crop of loony and eccentric small magazines in England and America. He is something good and creative in European life in a time of the very greatest evil'.¹⁰²

John Lehmann, the editor of *New Writing*, dismissed as one of a 'Dismal Trinity' by Grigson, could have added *Twentieth Century Verse* to the assessment in his 1955 retrospect, *The Whispering Gallery*:

The best that Auden and MacNeice and their contemporaries contributed to *New Writing* and *New Verse* in the brief, agitated, exciting and tragic period between Hitler's rise to power and the outbreak of the Second World War, stands for judgment as art independently of all topical considerations. 'Occasional verse,' said Dr Johnson, 'must be content with occasional praise'; but I firmly believe that when their occasional verses have long been lost in the turbulently running waters of our time, the poets of the 'thirties will still be remembered by poems that for imaginative vitality, intellectual backbone and innovating technical resourcefulness—for the creative power of the word—have certainly not been excelled, and only rarely equalled, by their successors.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Grigson, 'Twenty-seven Sonnets,' 49.

¹⁰³ John Lehmann, *The Whispering Gallery* [1955], rpt in *In My Own Time: Memoirs of a Literary Life* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969), 166–7.

A NEW PROSE

John Lehmann and *New Writing* (1936–40)

FRANÇOISE BORT

The new generation: Modernity and novelty

When John Lehmann launched *New Writing* in 1936 at the age of 29, his personal evolution and destiny epitomized undercurrents affecting the wider modernist literary sphere. For he belonged to the first generation educated under the influence of the inventors of modernist aesthetics. He and fellow Etonians like Cyril Connolly had read T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and all the major figures of the modernist canon throughout their teens. While a student at Trinity College, Cambridge, he approached Virginia Woolf's circle through her nephew Julian Bell, a student at King's College. Both men had discovered their vocation by way of George Rylands, a young don at King's College, who was manager at the Hogarth Press, and first reader and dedicatee of Lehmann's sister's first novel *Dusty Answer*.¹

In 1936, Lehmann had already acquired considerable experience as an editor of contemporary literary works. In 1931, he succeeded George Rylands at the Hogarth Press and soon found himself in an emblematic conflict with Leonard Woolf about the way to deal with his own generation's desire to get published. Within two years Lehmann had brought to the Hogarth Press a number of fellow authors who craved to find their own place in a publishing market conquered by the previous generation. Christopher Isherwood and William Plomer were, for example, indebted to him. It was Lehmann's idea to produce what he saw as 'an anthology' of poets of his generation, in which the Cambridge poets Julian Bell, William Empson, and Richard Eberhart were associated with the Oxford-based Spender and Auden, and two poets already among the Hogarth poets, Cecil Day Lewis and William Plomer. The resulting volume, *New Signatures*, a joint venture and landmark for

¹ Rosamond Lehmann, *Dusty Answer* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1927).

them all, was published in 1932 with the help and editorship of Michael Roberts and turned out to be a visiting card, spelling out their generation's contribution to poetry.²

Lehmann's experience at the Hogarth Press and his confrontation with Leonard Woolf help delineate the debated frontier between high and late modernisms. As he later recalled:

We all represented a reaction against the poetry that had hitherto been fashionable, not merely the already damned Georgians but T. S. Eliot as well, and those who were trying to follow in the footsteps of the French Surrealists . . . we were united by a desire to assimilate the imagery of contemporary life, even when writing about nature (as Julian and I did).³

Lehmann saw *New Signatures* as a search for 'a new intellectual and imaginative synthesis, which would be positive and not pessimistic in its attitude to the problem of living in the twentieth century', and recalled his eagerness to 'make the sluggish public sit up and take notice'.⁴ His generation had striven through the war years as children and adolescents, and their early twenties had been marked by the failure of the General Strike, the Great Depression, and the rise of fascism in Italy and Germany. These major events opened new fault lines in both individual and collective experience, urging young writers, whose lives seemed inseparable from history, to face the problem of the ethical basis of their work. In the early 1930s, Ezra Pound's battle cry to 'make it new!' was therefore taken up again by these newcomers, ready to challenge the original innovators and to claim novelty as now a necessity. As Tyrus Miller puts it: 'Late modernist writers were divested, by political and economic forces, of the cultural "cosmos"—the modernist "myth", in its most encompassing sense—in which the singular works of high modernism seemed components of an aesthetically transfigured world.'⁵ For his part, Lehmann never ceased to advocate what he called 'a more co-ordinated interpretation of the world', to be carried out 'with the help of the X-rays of the poetic imagination'.⁶

New Writing was therefore less a sequel to previous modernist magazines than a means by which a younger generation could impose their own views on the role of literature and so assert their new sensibility. Similarly, Lehmann's reasons for leaving the Hogarth Press after two tense years alongside Leonard Woolf did not emanate from a radical conflict but rather from a growing confirmation of some

² Michael Roberts (ed.), *New Signatures* (London: Hogarth Press, 1932).

³ John Lehmann, *Thrown to the Wolves* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1978), 19.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Tyrus Miller, *Late Modernism: Politics, Fiction and the Arts between the World Wars* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 14.

⁶ John Lehmann, 'The Heart of the Problem', *Daylight* (1941), 137.

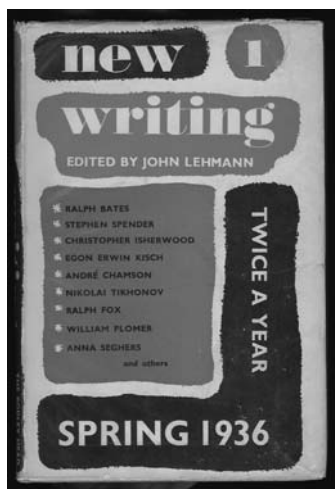


Fig. 79. Cover of *New Writing* (Spring 1936)

profound misunderstanding between generations. His professional intercourse with Woolf convinced him that his own generation lacked any suitable support among existing authorities. His memoirs provide extensive testimony to the sense of isolation that led him to conceive the project of a magazine. At the age of 20, he had seen his sister Rosamond abused by hundreds of letters sent by readers denouncing the immorality of *Dusty Answer*, while an equivalent number of generally younger readers raved about Rosamond's consonance with the zeitgeist. Lehmann became aware therefore of what he called 'the experience and feelings of our own generation, our sense of being cut off from the past by the war and endowed with unique sensibility and revolutionized values we did not expect our parents' generation to understand; and everything else seemed cold, artificial or sententious after I had read *Dusty Answer*.'⁷

The entirely unexpected scandal of the novel, whose violence and trauma Lehmann shared, revealed a chasm between its two readerships. Even those among an older generation who seemed most sympathetic, like Lytton Strachey, defended *Dusty Answer* on the grounds of the aesthetic quality of the style, and not for the specific experience and sensibility that it expressed.⁸ Misunderstanding accumulated long before the exchange of arguments with Virginia Woolf communicated through her *A Letter to a Young Poet* and 'The Leaning Tower'.⁹

Yet the most striking element in the birth of *New Writing* was the parentage that Lehmann identified in the midst of contemporary modernist magazines. Far

⁷ John Lehmann, *The Whispering Gallery* (London: Longmans, Green, 1957), 131.

⁸ Michael Holroyd, *Lytton Strachey: The New Biography* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1994), 569.

⁹ Virginia Woolf, *A Letter to a Young Poet* (London: Hogarth Press, 1932); *eadem*, 'The Leaning Tower', *Folios of New Writing* (Autumn 1940), 11–33.

from being inspired by any of the numerous literary periodicals already existing in 1936, Lehmann resorted to his great-grandfather and uncle, Robert and William Chambers, and to *The Edinburgh Journal*, as models for his own enterprise. Ignoring the immediate precedents such as *Criterion* or *Coterie*, he intended to equal the entrepreneurial courage and innovative spirit of his ancestors in creating a magazine that could respond to the expectations of new readers as well as to the needs of young authors. He was preoccupied with the need for his generation at large, authors and readers alike, to find some space of their own, some channels of expression, rather than simply to promote a crop of new talents or aesthetic trends. This aspect of Lehmann's motivation, namely his recognition of a distinct, though numerous readership, played a central part at the outset of the magazine and had a considerable impact on many aspects of *New Writing's* ensuing life.

Lehmann's only apparent concession to familiar modernist models lay in the presence of a manifesto in the opening pages of *New Writing* 1. But the word 'manifesto' may be rather misleading in describing such a low-key version, which in some ways reads more as an anti-manifesto. Lehmann's subdued call for young authors to find their own voice does nonetheless seek a redefined space for literature.

MANIFESTO

NEW WRITING will appear twice yearly, and will be devoted to imaginative writing, mainly of young authors. It does not intend to concern itself with literary theory, or the criticism of contemporaries.

NEW WRITING aims at providing an outlet for those prose writers, among others, whose work is too unorthodox in length or style to be suitable for the established monthly and quarterly magazines. While prose will form the main bulk of the contributions, poetry will also be included.

NEW WRITING is first and foremost interested in literature, and though it does not intend to open its pages to writers of reactionary or Fascist sentiments, it is independent of any political party.

NEW WRITING also hopes to represent the work of writers from colonial and foreign countries.¹⁰

These neutral tones paradoxically convey the most daring policy of the magazine: to give a young age group the lead over purely artistic tendencies or politically aligned groups. In the long preparatory phase, Lehmann was attentive to the limited scope of existing reviews, and had clearly anticipated the success of a magazine that would be based, paradoxically, on sharing its own uncertain orientation. His memoirs tell how he perceived *New Writing* as a space open to novelty, where the spirit of the new generation could at last produce its own self-image.¹¹

¹⁰ John Lehmann, 'Manifesto', *New Writing*, 1 (Spring 1936), p. v.

¹¹ Lehmann, *The Whispering Gallery*, 232–65.

The 'ingenious, multi-coloured poster-jacket devised by Edward Young' that covered the eight first cloth-bound issues, published between spring 1936 and winter 1939, advertised the magazine as a serialized anthology of would-be classics.¹² Lehmann's self-conceived missionary work came to the reader in a surprisingly luxurious format of 200 pages per number. The original contract was agreed with The Bodley Head, owing to Lehmann's former experience with the firm. He and Denys Kilham Roberts had co-edited *The Year's Poetry* in 1934 and 1935, and it was Roberts who recommended him to Allen Lane, then head of the firm. Lane changed Lehmann's first project of a relatively cheap 160-page quarterly into a half-yearly publication, with a guarantee of three numbers sold at six shillings, twice the price that Lehmann had planned. The firm was to pay the latter £60 per issue to cover editorial expenses and contributors' and translators' fees. But the amount of at least £4 (equivalent to £100 today) which Lehmann guaranteed to contributors and salaried readers who were employed to select manuscripts¹³—such as his sister Rosamond, whose taste he depended on in the first years of the magazine—brought the cost of every issue far above the allotted £60 and a great deal of private money (from Lehmann and his mother) was absorbed in the first years of the magazine's life.

Such details, combined with the tone of the manifesto, point to some constitutive traits in the magazine's identity. The firm's prudent investment and limitation of financial hazards had some advantage. It secured Lehmann a larger share of editorial control than he had enjoyed under what he called 'Leonard Woolf's eagle eye'. A degree of independence was necessary for him to evaluate what he and his immediate circle of friends had so far only conjectured. Stephen Spender and Christopher Isherwood had pleaded against an official advisory board and joined what Lehmann called his 'shadow committee', which also included William Plomer, Ralph Fox, and Rosamond Lehmann: friends he could trust for support and frequent contributions.¹⁴ *New Writing* was therefore directly established on a new editorial basis, noticeably different from Leonard Woolf's. In particular, Lehmann was not invested with full powers, but appointed by his peers on the grounds of his acknowledged susceptibility to the emerging new spirit.

The title that was eventually chosen was further evidence of the magazine's search for its own identity. The 'shadow committee' had first thought of *The Bridge* for a title: 'as a symbol of the work we wanted [the magazine] to do in bringing together writers of our own class and writers from the working class, writers of our own country and writers from abroad.'¹⁵ But they finally opted for one of their first ideas, promoting the vaguest but most open-minded objective. The first numbers were to

¹² Ibid. 236.

¹³ The *New Writing* archives of the John Lehmann Fund of the Harry Ransom Humanities Center, University of Texas at Austin, show that the amount went up to £10 during the war.

¹⁴ Lehmann, *The Whispering Gallery*, 235.

¹⁵ Ibid. 233.

provide contributors and readers alike with a sketch of the magazine's personality. The list of contributors, placed immediately after Lehmann's foreword, insisted on the youth of the writers who were presented not by way of their education or literary background, but by their experience of the world and their competence as observers of contemporary changes. Thus George Orwell appears as 'a government official in Burma' and a 'volunteer in Spain, where he was wounded';¹⁶ V. S. Pritchett's biographical notice specifies that he 'left school at the age of sixteen during the war of 1914–1918, and first earned his living in the leather and photography business. He then went to France, where he sold feathers and theatre tickets.'¹⁷ In a more serious tone, number three is dedicated to Ralph Fox, 'who was killed defending in action those ideas which inspired his finest writing, on 2 January, 1937, as he led the International Column into action at Cordova.'¹⁸ The bedrock of action and experience on which this generation intended to found their conception of writing eventually permeated every page of the magazine. The Spanish Civil War, especially, which was extensively evoked through many prose accounts and poems, soon after its outbreak, and often remembered after the conflict, gave the magazine its hallmark as a staunch anti-fascist paper.

Lehmann's only contemporaneous source of inspiration came from France. As far as British magazines were concerned, he estimated that the *Left Review* was concentrating too exclusively on political and social objectives and had adopted a too restrictive Marxist stance, keeping most of the young generation at bay, whereas *The Criterion* and *The London Mercury*, were alike inadequate outlets for young talents. He declared himself far more inclined to follow 'the literary side of Barbusse's anti-war movement',¹⁹ and admired *Monde* and *Vendredi*, which proved it was possible for a magazine to combine political analysis with stories and reportage. Some of their contributors, such as Paul Nizan, André Chamson, Jean Giono, and Louis Guilloux, whom Lehmann contacted before he launched his magazine, were to feature in its table of contents throughout the late 1930s and 1940s. Lehmann wanted to see authors defend anti-fascist ideology not through abstract debates on Marxist doctrine, but through the channel of common, everyday experience and a sensitive personal response to social realities.

One of the first widely noticed contributions came from Berlin in 1936, where Christopher Isherwood had gone to live. He sent Lehmann a short story, 'The Nowaks',²⁰ which helped define and shape a new prose style, halfway between autobiography and reportage: a form of documentary that *New Writing* developed as a new literary genre and in which personal sensibility was combined with political consciousness and historical understanding. Isherwood described Germany as a desperate, frustrated society, and did so without any sophisticated or

¹⁶ *Folios of New Writing* (Autumn 1940), 8.

¹⁷ *New Writing*, 2 (Autumn 1936), p. viii.

¹⁸ *New Writing*, 3 (Spring 1937), p. vii.

¹⁹ Lehmann, *The Whispering Gallery*, 232.

²⁰ Christopher Isherwood, 'The Nowaks', *New Writing*, 1 (Spring 1936), 8–37.

explicit political concepts, through the evocation of a lower class family deprived of a father figure, confronting the mother's slowly declining health, and trying to face a dark future. The method of filtering political reality through individual perception was common to a number of contributions, including discussions of England's mining districts, Russian post-revolutionary society, emerging social structures in China, New Zealand's cultural consciousness, and many important tendencies of the time. Thus it built up for readers the heart-felt basis of a real international consciousness. Lehmann later confessed to a 'megalomaniac idea' he had cherished at the time, of creating 'a new international literature',²¹ and his belief in the power of imaginative prose to suggest a brotherhood between victims of oppression.

The term 'imaginative writing' occurs again and again in Lehmann's calls for contributors. He asserts the orientation of the magazine in the form of a warning: '*New Writing* asks prospective contributors to remember that it is devoted to imaginative writing, and can therefore have no place for literary theory or the criticism of contemporaries.'²² The essay as a genre was at first clearly banished from the magazine's pages until the pre-war context made the introduction of direct debates inevitable, as well as plain declarations of principles on the role of authors against fascism. Spender tackled the genre in autumn 1937, in a report on the International Congress of writers in Spain, entitled 'Spain Invites the World's Writers', where he quoted André Chamson's cry of alarm during one session: 'le devoir d'un écrivain est d'être tourmenté'.²³

The number for autumn 1938 radicalized the new orientation with a whole section devoted to essays and criticism, all in relation to the responsibility of writers and the defence of humanism. This reorientation would be confirmed by further issues and coincided with a change of publishers: a so-called 'new series' was launched under the auspices of the Hogarth Press after Lehmann's return to the Press as financial partner. Later he analysed this new phase as a change in his conception of the magazine due to practical experience, a growing awareness of 'the difference between a literature that is an interpretation of its time, and one that transforms it'.²⁴

The somewhat tortuous career of the magazine under three different publishers in the first three years of its existence may give an idea of Lehmann's obstinacy in promoting not only the works of his generation but also the new conception they had of the writer as a social agent, acting directly on social mentalities and collective conscience. The change of sponsors was disguised by a continuous format, a remarkable uniformity of jacket design, and a steady price of six shillings until

²¹ Lehmann, *The Whispering Gallery*, 242.

²² *New Writing*, 4 (Autumn 1937), p. vii.

²³ Stephen Spender, 'Spain Invites the World's Writers', *ibid.* 250.

²⁴ Lehmann, *The Whispering Gallery*, 250.

the first months of the war forced the Hogarth Press to adjust prices and length in line with the cost of paper and paper quotas.

The new methods

The major characteristic of the magazine was certainly its capacity to change and adapt, not only to its various publishers but also in response to its readers' expectations. This principle of mobility was inscribed at birth, one might say. Lehmann was travelling between Paris, Vienna, and London when the first issue was planned, sending letters to and receiving advice from Isherwood then living in Amsterdam and incidentally visiting Portugal, while the rest of the 'shadow committee' was scattered across Europe. The first contract with The Bodley Head was interrupted because of a sudden crisis caused by the departure of Allen Lane.²⁵ The poet Edgell Rickword much admired by Lehmann, then a chief editorial adviser for the Marxist inspired Lawrence and Wishart, prompted the firm to sponsor the magazine.²⁶ The next three issues of *New Writing* were published without any break in the numbering and general design, by which time Lehmann had given up a parallel project: to see his new sponsors 'publish a "*New Writing Library*" of novels, autobiographies and books of poems by the authors [he] had come across in [his] explorations of the magazine'.²⁷ When the short-term contract came to an end, Lehmann actually found himself liberated from ideological pressure: 'a publishing house with the political ties that bound Lawrence and Wishart could never have carried the project through, or have continued to give me a free hand indefinitely.'²⁸

The new terms of Lehmann's partnership with Leonard Woolf, signed in April 1938, fixed a trial period of two years after which he was supposed to own Virginia Woolf's share, namely half of the Press, and to become Leonard's equal. Negotiations proved strenuous before they were altogether interrupted by Julian Bell's death on the Madrid front. Lehmann ended up buying half Virginia Woolf's share instead of the whole of it, thus retaining a quarter of the Press, and resumed his job as manager with 'the idea of making *New Writing* the centre of actual book publishing for the works of our generation'.²⁹ The new episode in the life of the magazine persuaded Lehmann to quit travelling, leave Vienna where he then resided and settle in London, a few doors down from the Press's new headquarters

²⁵ Allen Lane had created Penguin Books in 1935 as an imprint of The Bodley Head and decided then to separate from the latter.

²⁶ Lawrence and Wishart, created in 1936, resulted from the merger of Martin Lawrence, the official press of the Communist Party, and Wishart Ltd, a family-owned liberal and anti-fascist publisher. It published literature, political economy, working-class history, and the classics of Marxism.

²⁷ Lehmann, *The Whispering Gallery*, 309.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Lehmann, *Thrown to the Woolfs*, 57.

on Mecklenburgh Square. The new partnership lasted until 1946, a period during which *New Writing* expanded more than ever.

The so-called 'constant element'³⁰ through all these years was Lehmann's faith in his own independence as spokesman of his generation and decision-maker on the magazine's destiny and identity. His genius as an editor, and the exceptional longevity of the magazine, rested on a permanent re-shaping and adjustment of its contents, based on the belief that 'a living publication should grow as life itself grows and changes'.³¹

The new series produced by the Hogarth Press was just one new start among many. In 1940, after the third issue of the new series, Lehmann modified the title into *Folios of New Writing*, which was retained for the next four issues until autumn 1941. Numbering disappeared to be replaced by the date of publication. As usual, Lehmann introduced these changes in a foreword that took the form of a personal letter entitled 'Dear Reader', in which he credited the readers' attachment to the magazine for what seemed to him a rebirth:

In the Christmas number, I announced the death of *New Writing*. In the early days of the war, it seemed to me that *New Writing* could scarcely hope to survive: against the bombs, the calling up of writers, the scarcity of paper, the difficulties of transport, and, as much as anything else, the transformation of thought and feeling total warfare would bring with it. . . . *Folios of New Writing* will be different in many ways, partly because the war brings new technical problems to be solved, but also because it is bound to change men's minds. In spite of that, I think you will find our guiding principle remains the same: to create a laboratory where the writers of the future may experiment, and where the literary movement may find itself.³²

The title of the hardbound publication was transformed yet again at the end of 1941, in the hope that the magazine would survive despite the disruptions of war. For just one issue it became *Daylight*, which Lehmann proclaimed as an entirely new project conceived by 'a group of English and Czech authors' whose aim was 'to reaffirm a belief that the culture of Europe is fundamentally one'. The spirit of *New Writing* remained clearly identifiable in the foreword, especially the importance accorded to imaginative writing as the vehicle for political consciousness:

a bridge still needed to be built between [British people and their European allies] in those things that touched their lives more deeply; in the things of the mind and the imagination, books, painting, music, the theatre and poetry. It seemed to [the editors] that if they could learn to understand one another, to collaborate and to

³⁰ The title that Lehmann chose for the chapter devoted to *New Writing* in *The Whispering Gallery*.

³¹ *New Writing*, I NS (Autumn 1938), p. ix.

³² *Folios of New Writing* (Spring 1940), 5.

give mutually in those things, the bond might even be more valuable and more lasting than any political accommodation of the moment.³³

Such a kinship soon suggested to Lehmann a hybrid version of the two overlapping projects: *New Writing and Daylight* lasted till the end of 1946, and consisted of eight issues identified only by their date of publication, with roughly biannual frequency in 1942, 1943, and 1944, ending up in an annual publication from 1945 to 1946. The particularly stern appearance of *Folios of New Writing* was succeeded by a variety of jacket designs signed by William Chappell, Keith Vaughan, and Lawrence Gowing. These noted a return to the use of colour and promoted a sense of surviving creativity through the most dismal years of the war. On this occasion change was imposed by the war and a sudden pre-eminence in the magazine of US and Commonwealth authors over European writers in translation resulted from curtailed postal services with occupied countries. Lehmann also announced serialized contributions, not only in the expected field of fiction but now also in the fields of political reflection, criticism, art history, and reviewing. The 1946 issue of *New Writing and Daylight*, the first to be published by the newly hatched firm of 'John Lehmann Limited'—and last of the series—marked the end of the magazine in book form. But the concept of *New Writing* was not dead yet.

The originality of the magazine lies in the dual existence which enabled it to encompass the 1940s and challenge its closest competitors. At the same time, in another expression of this double identity, the successive book-form versions of *New Writing* appeared to have little in common with the forty-one pocket-format issues of *The Penguin New Writing* published by Allen Lane between the end of 1940 and 1950. In 1939, Lehmann was contacted by Allen Lane, freshly alerted by a volume entitled *New Writing in England*, published the same year in New York for the Critics Group Press. It consisted of a selection of articles written by Lehmann in 1938 for a Moscow propagandist publication known as *International Literature*. The founder of Penguin Books now asked him to supervise a two-volume pocket anthology of the most significant contributions to *New Writing*. A 150-page Pelican Book with a blue cover, *New Writing in Europe*, appeared in January 1941—though dated 1940—while the originally planned anthology soon evolved into a parallel, more accessible version of the current Hogarth imprint of the magazine: *The Penguin New Writing* 1 appeared at the end of 1940 in a red cover, with the list of contents on the front and several advertisements on the last pages and back cover.

This was a totally new cultural environment for the publication. But the most surprising element is that the two versions not only peacefully coexisted, but

³³ *Daylight* (1941), 5. The single volume, announced as 'Volume I', was co-edited by J. Lehmann and Jiri Mucha.

mutually reinforced each other's popularity. Paper shortages prevented Leonard Woolf from seriously objecting to the Penguin version of the magazine. Paper quotas were calculated on the basis of the amounts used by publishing firms in one year before the regulation. Each number of *The Penguin New Writing* was allotted five tons of paper, which meant the exact equivalent of what the Hogarth Press received for a whole year. The first issue proved instantly successful, due to the renown of the book-form version and was immediately reprinted, totalling 80,000 copies. The circulation of the following two issues was reduced to 55,000 copies because of aggravated paper rationing. By the end of 1941 the circulation stabilized at 75,000 copies: a figure hardly comparable to the circulation of *New Writing's* closest competitor, Cyril Connolly's *Horizon*, launched in 1939, which never exceeded 8,000 copies until its extinction in the same year as the *The Penguin New Writing*.

Prices of *The Penguin New Writing* rose from 6*d.* in 1940 to 9*d.* in 1944 and eventually 2*s.* 6*d.* and 3*s.* 6*d.* in 1950, a peak which still represented half the cost of the first book-form issues of 1936.³⁴ Generally speaking, the price of the pocket version remained one-tenth of the current book version. The pocket magazine, which was originally planned to be a monthly publication, remained so throughout 1941, but the war soon imposed a strongly chaotic rhythm, with an average of three or four issues per year till the end of the conflict. Sales figures reached 100,000 copies for the first post-war number, issue 27, before the success seemed to diminish. There were only two issues in 1946, and sales decreased to 80,000 in 1947, and 40,000 in 1949 as the magazine grew thinner and was downgraded from a quarterly to a biannual. In his foreword to issue 40, Lehmann announced the death of the magazine, describing a rather puzzling situation:

Though its circulation is still remarkably high for something exclusively devoted to literature and the arts, it is not high enough to make both ends meet; if the Publisher was to be spared the worst kicks, it seems, even rarer appearances were necessary; but that, on the other hand, meant the loss of too many ha'pence for the Editor, who also believes that a magazine with the aims of interpreting and stimulating the contemporary literary scene must strike with greater regularity and frequency. Faced with this dilemma, both have decided that a quick end is better than a lingering exhaustion.³⁵

However, Lehmann's concern over his contract with authors, artists, and readers was to prolong the magazine's function:

³⁴ Early prices as well as estimates of equivalents in today's currency have been kindly communicated by Steve Hare, of the Penguin Collectors' Society.

³⁵ *The Penguin New Writing*, 40 (1950), 7.

The urgent, desperate question, however remains: what will take the place of *New Writing*? Already the creeping frosts have claimed *Horizon* and *Life and Letters* as their victims, and a number of other less talked about magazines that performed a specialized but valuable function. *World Review* has deserted the strait path of literature; soon there will hardly be any address at all to which a young poet or writer of short stories can send his MSS in the hope of advice and publication,—and that immediate and so necessary setting of roots that publication can give. Such a state of affairs cannot be endured for long, because healthy literature demands a centre of growth and ferment, of appreciation and criticism by intelligent and imaginative standards.³⁶

The anxiety expressed in these lines gives an idea of the actual mission Lehmann intended to carry out through the various forms of his magazine. Significantly enough, he referred to *New Writing* as a generic name, and not specifically to the pocket version which was dying out. The final sentence, in this last foreword, also illustrated one major characteristic of the way he fulfilled his mission. When he wrote ‘And now let the curtain go up for the last performance’, readers definitely knew that a real presence and companionship was about to be withdrawn.

The new talents

Reliable descriptions of the magazine’s contents and some further accounts of its evolution through the fourteen-year lifespan are found in Adrian Wright’s recent biography of John Lehmann as well as in John Whitehead’s introduction to the *New Writing* Author-Index, a basic tool specifically devised for scholarly research.³⁷ Both accounts insist on the considerable number of translations and foreign countries with which the magazine was eager to familiarize readers. It introduced them to French prose and poetry through translations of Sartre, Gide, Supervielle, Aragon, Giono, Nizan, and Guilloux. Pasternak and Tikhonov were frequent contributors. Spanish prose and poetry were represented by Cernuda, Alberti, Lorca, and Hernández. Excerpts from Brecht’s plays, poems by Seferis and Cavafy, selections from Leopardi, Silone, and Brancati, and from Czech authors like Mucha, Nezval, and Brusak showcased literature from the rest of Europe. Chinese authors, like T’ien-Yih, Ping-Chei, and Hsüeh-Yin, frequently appeared as well. The cosmopolitan bias was consistently conveyed too in the prominence granted to China, Russia, Czechoslovakia, and the Commonwealth at large, not to mention Europe. A ‘European Library’ significantly featured among the very

³⁶ *The Penguin New Writing*, 7–8.

³⁷ See Adrian Wright, *John Lehmann: A Pagan Adventure* (London: Duckworth, 1998), 87–107; and Ella Whitehead, *John Lehmann’s ‘New Writing’: An Author-Index, with an ‘Introductory Essay’* by John Whitehead (New York: Edwin Mellen, 1990), 1–29.

first series set up by Lehmann, a decade later, when he created his own publishing firm.

What has to date concerned scholars less is the figure of the artist in general and the idea of the author in particular that permeated Lehmann's editorship. The sense of movement and mobility, expressed in the combination of a permanently travelling gaze allied to an ever-evolving spirit, gradually sketched a new persona of the artist as a social figure. *New Writing* thereby participated actively in a remodelling of the artist's role, public image, and mode of communication. The magazine served not only as a 'bridge' between artists and readers or between cultural identities and did more than simply promote new authors and *New Writing*. Rather it emphasized how writing for a magazine became part and parcel of the artist's commitment to a new way of writing and a new conception of the craft of letters.³⁸

To begin with, the magazine sought to transform the author's aura, making it less dependent on a creative muse than on the author's hyper-presence, of which the editor himself was a leading example. Lehmann's 1936 manifesto proved to be a first address in a long, almost uninterrupted series that evolved into actual conversation and partnership. Sales figures and echoes from readers' letters were occasionally mentioned in the editor's forewords and used as stepping stones to renewed dialogue. Details on the fluctuating number of manuscripts from unknown authors, or news from current contributors were exploited to convey a sense of closeness and commitment. Also, Lehmann's frequent appearances in its pages were soon reinforced by a photograph portrait and a longer biographical notice in the first pocket-format issues: *New Writing in Europe*, and *The Penguin New Writing* issue 1. The editor featured as master of ceremonies, guide to new cultural territories and a wanderer, in a portrait which condensed his ideal vision of an author. The layout of the page seemed at the same time to melt the photograph in the text placed below it, with the words 'The Author' serving both as a caption for the portrait and a title for the dizzying biographical notice:

The Author

As founder and editor of *New Writing* has travelled all over Europe in search of material and is in touch with young authors from India to America. Was for many years in Vienna previous to the Anschluss and probably knows that city better than many Viennese themselves. Is an authority on the international control of the Danube and author of *Down the River*, a study of Austrian and Danubian problems; *Evil Was Abroad*, a novel; *Prometheus and the Bolsheviks*, a travel book about the Caucasus; two volumes of poetry; and is the editor of *The Penguin New Writing*. Has contributed many travel guides illustrated with his

³⁸ Lehmann's concern with the social role of authors is traceable through all his own contributions to the magazine and later in *The Craft of Letters in England: A Symposium* (London: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), an edited volume of thirteen essays—eight of which were by former *New Writing* contributors.

own photographs to the *Geographical Magazine* (London), *Travel* (New York) and other publications, and has worked as a literary critic for a number of periodicals. In 1938, John Lehmann became General Manager and Director of the Hogarth Press, the London publishing firm founded by Leonard and Virginia Woolf.

The new generation pictured themselves as actors of history in the making, through a deeper form of editorial and authorial involvement. From 1938 onwards, *New Writing* informed its readers about stage productions in Peking, Moscow and Paris, Budapest and Prague, using photography as a way of showing art in the making and artists at work. Authors' portraits often accompanied their texts as complementary expressions of their personalities. The names of Malraux, Mayakovski, Plomer, Graham Greene, George Orwell, George Barker, V. S. Pritchett, Dylan Thomas, Ignazio Silone, André Chamson, William Chappell, Alun Lewis, Jiri Mucha, Cecil Day Lewis, Wystan Auden, Stephen Spender, and Christopher Isherwood were soon transformed into familiar faces through thoughtful and casual portraits.

Lehmann's ideal vision of the author's persona explains, clearly enough, why none of the women contributors had their portraits included in the pages of the magazine. In a list of approximately five hundred names, women represented slightly less than one-tenth, with a number of already relatively famous names, such as Virginia Woolf, Elisabeth Bowen, Edith Sitwell, Rosamond Lehmann, Kathleen Raine, and Anna Seghers. Yet Lehmann did also open the magazine to unknown women writers: Dorothy Bussy, Julia Strachey, Annabel Farjeon, Beatrix Lehmann, and Barbara Cooper (John Lehmann's secretary) for example, not to mention a few dozen totally unknown names.

New talents were also not confined to the printed part of the magazine. Photos and illustrations fulfilled a significant part of the objective, placing artistic life on an equal footing with ordinary life. Ballet dancers, actors, and actresses mingled with Mexican popular marionettes or dance-floor crowds in Brighton. In this way, social behaviours gradually came into focus through essays complemented by photos. Only in the early war numbers did the photo insets dwindle, sometimes to nothing, then to reappear the moment circumstances again allowed, both in cloth-bound and pocket formats.

Photography clearly became a prominent vehicle for bringing art and remote artistic productions to every reader, making artists familiar company. Snapshots taken in workshops and studios, during theatre and ballet rehearsals, photos taken on film sets, photos of paintings and sketches by Derek Hill, Mary Kessel, Robert Buhler, of mural paintings by Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell, or recent works by Picasso, Lucian Freud, and Kokoshka combined with excerpts of unfinished novels, essays in progress, sociological approaches to jazz and Russian theatre, fictionalized reportage, travel diaries, reflective accounts of major cultural events—all these were included. Theatre was by far the most permanent subject in photograph insets as

well as in the essays, the reason being that it was 'the most socially dependent of all arts'.³⁹ Among the first photos to appear in 1938 there were, in one emblematic example, snapshots of street scenes taken in London to illustrate an essay on 'Literature and the East End' by Willy Goldman, born in Stepney twenty-eight years earlier and said to have 'left school at the age of fourteen to earn his living in the Docks, in the engineering and clothing industries'.⁴⁰ The 'man in the street' was thus being hauled on to the literary stage, both as a subject and as a prominent object of interest. Photography was there to provide evidence and convince him of his active participation in history both in the making and in the process of being written.

Lehmann's 'author' appeared as a new breed of wanderer, an artist among others, casually changing literary genres and countries alike, mixing with purely occasional contributors, and sharing literary space with the man in the street. Enlightened journalism became an ideal, clearly beckoning to all, and spreading a flavour of adventure: a tendency which sounds curiously consonant with recurring references to the English Romantics. Byron's involvement in Greece and Wordsworth's reflections on the French Revolution served as models of commitment.⁴¹ MacNiece even compared Shelley reading Rousseau to Spender reading Marx, so that this generation's wanderlust appears as a worldwide amplification of the Grand Tour in a more socially orientated guise.⁴²

Far from having discarded all aura, the new talents seemed to display a revised definition of the artist: no longer physically remote or irretrievably erratic, but morally accountable to the masses, and endowed with a prominent mouthpiece. Lehmann clearly considered art in general as the essence of humanism and a catalyst of political consciousness. His magazine became a way of using all modes of writing to stimulate the reader's conscience and collective responsibility. Anonymous articles, for instance, and articles signed with pseudonyms, exemplified a renunciation of the old-fashioned aura. Under the names of 'Jack Marlowe' for John Lehmann and 'Robert Pagan' for William Plomer, the 'Author' apparently downgraded himself to the rank of an occasional contributor—such as Wogan Philipps, for example, who signed a unique lifetime contribution and personal testimony: 'An Ambulance Man In Spain'. But conversely we might think that this diminution of the 'author' was aimed at promoting the standpoint of 'Everyman' as being most worthy of interest. The new aura lay in the faculty of authors and artists to dissolve in the masses, share struggles and pains, and stand out to bear witness, using their art and powers of expression to inscribe the present in history.

³⁹ Karel Brusak, 'The New Dramatic Space', *Daylight* (1941), 78.

⁴⁰ Willy Goldman, 'Literature and the East End', *New Writing*, 1 NS (Autumn 1938), 77–86.

⁴¹ John Lehmann, 'Foreword', *New Writing and Daylight* (Winter 1942–3), 6; Edgell Rickword, 'André Malraux: The Path to Humanism', *New Writing*, 1 NS (Autumn 1938), 147.

⁴² Louis MacNiece, 'The Tower that Once', *Folios of New Writing* (Spring 1941), 39–41.

The new readers

Lehmann's pre-war volume of poems, *The Noise of History*, clearly prefigured his ambition to participate in history. Judging by his appearances in *New Writing*, he did not seem to have considered himself as an author versed in editing, but rather to have viewed editing as a higher form of authorship—which gave his magazine the value of a master work, a chronicle of present times, carried out through instalments, as it were, in a kind of saga whose characters and heroes were fellow authors and defenders of a conception of humanism. Some of these heroes were mourned in the pages of the magazine. Alun Lewis and Sidney Keyes, notably, were evoked in a significantly serialized essay entitled 'The Armoured Writer', which ran for five episodes between 1942 and 1944. In the opening one, Lehmann prophesied the coming of what he called 'the modern tragedy', as if he were playing the part of a 'Chorus':

The modern tragedy will be filled, like every great tragedy in every epoch, with the recognition of imperfection; it will see the evil springing from a capitalist society at a time when its internal struggle is at its most ferocious; but it will see also the errors of the other side, of those who wish to bring the new society to birth, where men by seeking good, and by trying to force others into their dream, do worse evil; it will see the innocent guilty also by laziness and blindness; it will point to the distributed guilt and the fatal necessity which impels the whole process of modern war and peace; it will uncover the general dissatisfaction with the conditions of our artificial civilization which lies below the surface manifestations of revolution and international war; above all it will look for the human in every action and every process. Only by refusing to grind the axe of any political or religious or scientific group can it fulfil the highest function of art, and be itself, as it were, the cathedral for an age that has broken up all the old settled shapes of belief, that must turn to art or die.⁴³

The question of belief, a haunting one for Lehmann in all his essays, is traceable throughout his work as editor. *New Writing* represented his most practical form of humanism, in its attempt to stimulate and develop new modes of conscience among artists and readers: 'When I launched *New Writing*, I believed prose to be much more important for my purpose than poetry. It was in prose that the idea of "an effective brotherhood born between victims of oppression" and the "sense of broader comradeships" was most clearly to be traced.'⁴⁴

These words, partly borrowed from friends, signal a remarkable divide from the previous generation. Both Lehmann and his sister Rosamond used the word 'web' as opposed to 'coterie' or 'group'. Lehmann never referred to mutually elected

⁴³ John Lehmann, 'The Armoured Writer', *New Writing and Daylight* (Summer 1942), 156.

⁴⁴ Lehmann, *The Whispering Gallery*, 253.

or selected members, nor did he ever wish to address an elite among readers. He seemed to conceive contributors and readers as members of a brotherhood of opinions which he kept trying to expand, in a way that ignored notions of 'inside' or 'outside'.

William Plomer, in his memoirs, expressed a similar sensibility when he spoke of 'the Grand Chain', borrowing the image from a figure in the dance called 'Lancers', to suggest the process of making acquaintance and developing literary connections: the intimacy of love or friendship counting less than the common attention paid to the music, or the combination of individual mobility and collective harmony. Speaking about the early 1930s, he echoes Lehmann's own conception: 'I have said that I lacked a circle to re-enter, but the word "circle" is distasteful, with its suggestion of clique or coterie, and I have an innate disinclination for hunting in a pack.'⁴⁵ Lehmann's 1936 manifesto was an attempt to cast such a net of assumed solidarity worldwide. And this net he strove to look after unflinchingly, sometimes in a very down-to-earth manner, as when asking wartime readers to leave *The Penguin New Writing* numbers in a post office so that their pages could be enjoyed by 'men and women in the services'.

The general physiognomy of the magazine, with chapter divisions always responding to the necessities of the times, obviously addressed flesh and blood readers. Section headings such as 'Voices from all the fronts', 'World at war', and 'The living moment' speak for themselves. After the war and well after the end of *New Writing*, Lehmann kept referring to what he called 'a body of intelligent readers who care for literature seriously as part of life'.⁴⁶ Editing, for Lehmann, was never limited to selecting and arranging texts in order to attend to literature's youthful looks and garments. He seems rather to have been responding to the expectations of readers who he imagined were as anxious as he was about the future of literature, who kept expecting news about art, and whom he occasionally addressed individually, forgetting the term 'Foreword' in his introductory pages and starting out exactly as he would have tackled a letter, with 'Dear Reader'.

And in the end, the reader may very well be the cornerstone of the various comradely differences between Lehmann and his main competitors: Cyril Connolly (editor of *Horizon*); and later a group of four—Edwin Muir, Denys Kilham Roberts, Cecil Day Lewis, and Rosamond Lehmann—the co-editors of *Orion*.⁴⁷ Connolly glorified the 1920s which he baptized 'the heroic era', as opposed to the 'disastrous decade' of the 1930s, proclaiming that he saw 'nothing so positively

⁴⁵ William Plomer, *At Home: Memoirs* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1958), 57.

⁴⁶ Lehmann, *The Craft of Letters in England*, 4.

⁴⁷ *Orion: A Miscellany* (London: Nicholson and Watson) was a very short-lived magazine, which counted only four issues—1 and 2 (1945), 3 (1946), and 4 (1947), which was edited by Denys Kilham Roberts alone.

sickening in a title' as the adjective 'new', and lamenting 'the infiltration of literature by the destructive influences of Surrealism and politics'.⁴⁸ *Horizon* and *Orion* both had recourse to the same authors as *New Writing*, making the comparison with the latter particularly fruitful. What precisely distinguished Lehmann's enterprise was the exceptional importance he accorded to readers as essential partners. Connolly yielded to the temptation of artistic egotism and seemed preoccupied with the necessity of building a sanctuary for good authors. Quality was his chief concern. As for the editors of *Orion*, they clearly gathered to fight their own depressed mood and to support artistic creation after years of despair, whereas Lehmann saw the war as one more reason to tighten bonds between readers and writers, and to turn towards a form of practical humanism. His wartime 'Forewords' were tormented by a single, permanent obsession concerning creativity and the future of literature. But to him, the future of literature did not mean the mere preservation of what Connolly considered 'good' literature. It rested rather on his awareness of the artist's responsibility 'in the collapse of traditional religion, in the silence of the creative religious impulse, . . . to make a world of true symbols, and to find a new myth for mankind to inhabit.'⁴⁹

Lehmann never ceased to ponder social ties, spiritual survival, or the ability of artists to bear witness to the contemporary pains of humanity. In his postscript to 'The Leaning Tower: Replies', which happened to be published a few weeks after Virginia Woolf's death, he tried hard to soothe the arguments and bruised sensibilities of Edward Upward, B. L. Coombes, and Louis MacNiece, calmly accepting Woolf's misjudgements on the question of the readers' expectations.⁵⁰ Lehmann's way of selecting texts for readers stood in pure contradiction to Woolf's views which he characterized as the attitude of 'a sympathetic observer'.⁵¹ The question of quality, therefore, as far as *New Writing's* achievements as a literary magazine are concerned, should not ignore the quality of Lehmann's ambition itself. He always privileged texts 'to be looked through rather than to be looked at'.⁵² When he published anthologies of *New Writing*, years after the end of the magazine, he did not propose a selection of first-class literary texts but rather a nostalgic reminder of what the magazine had meant to a whole community of authors and readers when the texts were first published, recalling momentous experiences shared in times of

⁴⁸ See Cyril Connolly, *The Modern Movement* (London: A. Deutsch, H. Hamilton, 1965), 45, 67; and Stephen Spender's account of Connolly's opinion in *Journals 1939-1983*, ed. J. Goldsmith (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), 51.

⁴⁹ John Lehmann, 'The Search for a Myth', *The Penguin New Writing*, 30, 145-6.

⁵⁰ John Lehmann, 'A Postscript', *Folios of New Writing* (Spring 1941), 42-6.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* 44.

⁵² The formula, which suits *New Writing's* general policy so well, was worded by one of its contributors and close friend of Lehmann's: Roy Fuller, in 'Poetry: Tradition and Belief', *The Craft of Letters in England*, 87.

anxiety.⁵³ He later often evoked these years of shared expectations, when a whole generation were in a comparable search for some prophetic anticipation of their fates. What was really new in *New Writing*, perhaps, after all therefore, lay not so much in the texts themselves as in Lehmann's invention of a particularly intimate and dignified form of dialogue with his readers.

⁵³ Lehmann edited seven anthologies of *New Writing* between 1946 and 1985: *Poems from New Writing 1936–1946*, with Roy Fuller as co-editor (London: John Lehmann, 1946); *French Stories from New Writing* (London: John Lehmann, 1947); *English Stories from New Writing* (London: John Lehmann, 1951); *Best Stories from New Writing* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1951); *The Pleasures of New Writing: An Anthology of Poems, Stories and Other Prose Pieces from the Pages of New Writing* (London: John Lehmann, 1952); *Penguin New Writing 1940–1950: An Anthology* (London: Penguin Books, 1985); *Celebration: Anthology of New Zealand Writing from the Penguin New Writing Series* (London: Penguin Books, 1985).

‘NATIONAL PAPERS PLEASE REPRINT’: SURREALIST MAGAZINES IN BRITAIN

Contemporary Poetry and Prose (1936–7), *London Bulletin*
(1938–40), and *Arson: An Ardent Review* (1942)

ROD MENGHAM

The period of the key British Surrealist magazines ran from 1936 to 1942. *Contemporary Poetry and Prose*, edited by Roger Roughton, came first with ten issues appearing between May 1936 and autumn 1937; it was replaced, effectively, by *London Bulletin*, edited by E. L. T. Mesens, with twenty issues appearing between April 1938 and June 1940. *Arson*, the last in the trio of publications considered here, concentrated its fire on a single issue in March 1942; its editor Toni del Renzio was responsible later in the 1940s for several related publications, but none which took the form of a continuation of the magazine. The year 1936 is quite late in the history of Surrealism to be making a start, twelve years after the publication of André Breton’s first manifesto, and even six years after publication of the second. As a result, the British presentation of Surrealism was able to reflect the full range of concerns that had evolved in Francophone Surrealism over a period of a decade or more; it bundled together materials relating to both the ‘crisis of the subject’ and the ‘crisis of the object’ without necessarily provoking awareness of the historical sequence accompanying the switch of agenda from one to the other. The political attunement of British avant-garde writing since the late 1920s ensured a ready engagement with the idea of the ‘surrealism of everyday life’ that had been propounded in Breton’s second manifesto of 1930, influencing the withdrawal from techniques based on automatic writing and a corresponding gravitation towards anthropological forms of investigation.

Contemporary Poetry and Prose: The people's surrealism

Among those writers whose attraction to Surrealism was first evident in earlier publications such as the Cambridge magazine *Experiment* (1928–31), there was clear evidence of absorption with cultural history, rather than with individual psychology.¹ (See Chapter 25.) Conversely, when *Contemporary Poetry and Prose* began to appear, its youngest contributors, David Gascoyne and Roger Roughton, both aged nineteen, showed more affinity with the 'pure psychic automatism' characteristic of Francophone Surrealism in its early stages. Roughton combined the spontaneous absurdism of a Dada-influenced poetic with a radical political sensibility. As Michel Remy has pointed out, 'each line, which sounds as if uttered from the proletariat's pulpit, shares the same derision of laws and conventions.'² Roughton was a militant member of the Communist Party whose unswerving loyalty to Soviet ideology became ever more difficult to square with the demands of a Surrealist aesthetic. He found himself in an increasingly isolated position after reproaching Breton in the November 1936 issue of *Contemporary Poetry and Prose* for attacking the Moscow show trials and the Soviet Union in general.³ At a time when many Surrealists were more sympathetic towards Trotskyism than Stalinism, Roughton was viewed as a renegade whose editorship of the most important Surrealist journal was something of an anomaly. And yet his working definition of Surrealism must have been extremely flexible, given the wide range of work that he published. There was a preponderance of material translated from French, and substantial contributions by the key English Surrealists, David Gascoyne and Humphrey Jennings, but there were also regular appearances by writers as diverse as Dylan Thomas, E. E. Cummings, William Empson, George Barker, Kenneth Allott, Gavin Ewart, and Francis Scarfe.

There is no doubting Roughton's catholicity as poetry editor, or the generosity of his attention to different cultures; he was an eagerly speculative compiler of materials, capable of bringing together Wallace Stevens, Isaac Babel, and a traditional Greenland fable in the same issue (issue 3, July 1936). But as political commentator, he was stentorian and unbiddable, and used the pages of most issues of his magazine to launch various ethical challenges and political litmus tests at his sophisticated readership. Both principled and non-negotiable, and mixing appeal with condemnation, these urgent reminders of the need to discredit 'non-intervention' often took the form of extended rhetorical questions. The bulletin

¹ See my essay 'Bourgeois News: Humphrey Jennings and Charles Madge', *New Formations*, 44 (Autumn 2001), 26–33, for an account of 'Cambridge Surrealism'; also, Jason Harding, 'Experiment in Cambridge: "A Manifesto of Young England"', *Cambridge Quarterly*, 27 (1998), 287–309.

² Michel Remy, *Surrealism in Britain* (Aldershot: Lund Humphries, 1999), 107.

³ Roger Roughton, 'Eyewash, Do You?: A reply To Mr Pound', *Contemporary Poetry and Prose*, 7 (Nov. 1936), 137–8.

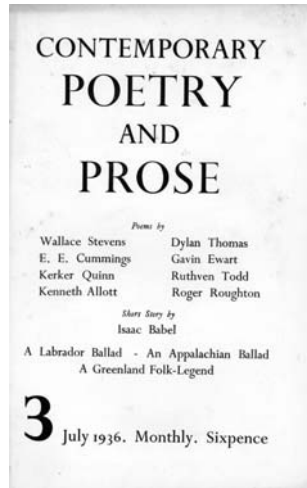


Fig. 80. Cover of *Contemporary Poetry and Prose* (July 1936)

‘Fascism Murders Art’, prompted by the assassination of Federico García Lorca, culminates with an interrogative to which there is only one answer imaginable: ‘The communist Minister of Education in the democratic Spanish government appoints Picasso director of the great Art Museum of the Prado; the Spanish fascists murder Lorca. Fascist or anti-fascist: which is it to be?’⁴

By far the most visually arresting feature in the entire run of *Contemporary Poetry and Prose* was a two-page insert in issue 7, issuing an uncompromising demand on behalf of ‘The Surrealist Group in England’ for the National Government of Great Britain to make the ‘only possible reparation’ for its previous duplicity and ‘anti-democratic intrigue’ by providing:

ARMS

for the People of Spain

The stridency of the typography as well as the phrasing helps to draw attention to the visually muted style found elsewhere in the magazine. Roughton’s rather functional attitude towards the presentation of text is in keeping with his total indifference towards illustration. This is in marked contrast to the priorities of *London Bulletin*, which always featured paintings and sculptures on display in those exhibitions current at the time of publication. The degree to which *Contemporary Poetry and Prose* seemed almost to flaunt its aversion to the visual was clear from the ‘Double Surrealist Number’ of June 1936, timed to coincide with the epochal ‘International Surrealist Exhibition’ at the New Burlington Galleries; not only did

⁴ Roger Roughton, ‘Fascism Murders Art’, *Contemporary Poetry and Prose*, 6 (Oct. 1936), 106.

it fail to reproduce any relevant images, or any image at all, it even refrained from any direct mention of the visual media, despite the vital role that these had played in the historical development of Surrealism.

If Roughton was stirred to make a special effort with regard to visual presentation only in connection with the more political, polemical registers in the language of his magazine, this must be owing partly to the publishing environment in which he operated, and even to its geography. As Michel Remy has observed, the editorial address of *Contemporary Poetry and Prose*, was the Arts Café at 1 Parton Street; this was opposite the Parton Street Bookshop, headquarters of the poetry publisher, the Parton Press, but also in the immediate vicinity of the left-wing publishing house Lawrence and Wishart at no. 2, as well as the offices of the Workers' Theatre Movement and the Student Labour Federation. One month before Roughton commenced publication, *Left Review* also established its office there.⁵ There can have been no more concentrated admixture of radical politics and aesthetic innovation in the whole of London, and although sales patterns would have made Roughton aware of the specialized interests of his niche market audience, the daily contact with political activists concerned more immediately with a mass cultural agenda seems to have inflected his desire for wider understanding of the political scope of Surrealism and its potential social impact. There is in fact a serious ambition hidden behind the apparently jocular instruction that rounds off one of his more successful poems: 'National papers please reprint'.⁶

One of the most distinctive aspects of Roughton's publishing programme concerned the attempt to locate Surrealism in terms of its relationship with other traditions of writing. Breton had led the way in identifying the most likely forerunners in terms of style and subject matter, turning Rimbaud and Lautréamont, for example, into Surrealists *avant la lettre*. Both writers received faithful representation in *Contemporary Poetry and Prose*, Lautréamont to the tune of seventeen translated pages.⁷ But Breton had also ventured to suggest a genealogy for Surrealism in English literature, giving pride of place to Lewis Carroll. Roughton's own choice of English-language texts from earlier centuries was orientated exclusively towards representation of the popular, oral tradition. The ballad was a resurgent form in the left-wing poetry of the 1930s, partly because it represented the voice of the people and a cultural legacy whose communal nature seemed to be guaranteed by the anonymous authorship of many of the most familiar examples. In a striking juxtaposition, Roughton launched the first issue of his magazine by setting poems and stories by Dylan Thomas, William Empson, David Gascoyne, Gavin Ewart, E. E. Cummings, and himself, alongside the traditional English ballad 'Little

⁵ See Remy, *Surrealism in Britain*, 73.

⁶ Roger Roughton, 'Animal Crackers in Your Croup', *Contemporary Poetry and Prose*, 2 (June 1936), 36.

⁷ In issue 6 (Oct. 1936), 106–13 and issue 9 (Spring 1937), 7–17.

Musgrave'. The latter text not only holds its own in this company, but outdoes them in respect of its dream-like quality, its dramatization of the conflict between desire and inhibition, and its bizarre violence. The version used by Roughton concludes with the following stanza:

He took her by the lilywhite hand
 And led her in the hall,
 And cut her breasts from her breast-bone
 And kicked them against the wall.⁸

The unfortunate wife of Lord Darnel has just given the wrong answer to the question 'Which do you like the best of the two, | Little Musgrave or me?' The question is asked after Lord Darnel has sat his wife on his knee, the very image of parental arbitration. This confusion of roles is no less transgressive than the deliberate flouting of taboos in the following text, 'The Burning Baby', a short story by Dylan Thomas that turns its clergyman protagonist into an incestuous murderer. Thomas's fiction is organized around folkloric motifs, giving it an aura of continuity with earlier traditions, despite its many authorial idiosyncrasies. Roughton's selection from among the many variants of 'Little Musgrave' serves a similar emphasis. Instead of re-publishing a medieval version that would suggest the desire for authentication, the imagining of an origin, he opts for an Appalachian version taken down in the twentieth century, effectively celebrating tradition as a focus for continuous transformation. A significant number of the English ballads reprinted in other issues are similarly remote from source, having been recorded in Labrador, Tennessee, Louisiana, and New South Wales. The opposition between originality and imitation, between unrepeatability and the poetics of the version, is at the root of the fundamental disagreement between Herbert Read and Humphrey Jennings over the appropriate cultural genealogy for Surrealism.

Jennings's review of *Surrealism*, a collection of essays edited by Read, appeared at the end of issue 8 of *Contemporary Poetry and Prose*. It takes issue especially with Read's understanding of Surrealism as renewing the principles of Romanticism, and attempts to create a bridgehead between Surrealism and Classicism, which Jennings sees as having been hijacked by a 'classical-military-capitalist-ecclesiastical racket'—a formulation that incorporates certain characteristics of Eliotic modernism.

Jennings's own poetic practice utilizes modernist techniques of collage and derives its material from a wide historical range of pre-existing texts, but does so in conjunction with a left-wing political agenda, an attachment to popular forms and iconography, and a revaluation of the cultural unconscious. It also embodies a vision of Surrealism that is unmistakably English in its sense of tradition and its range of references. The conceptual conflict between Read and Jennings

⁸ 'Little Musgrave', *Contemporary Poetry and Prose*, 1 (May 1936), 9.

encapsulates one of the most important organizing tensions of English Surrealism, and it is therefore unsurprising to find its traces equally in *Contemporary Poetry and Prose* and in its successor, *London Bulletin*.

***London Bulletin*: The changing image**

The *London Bulletin* was launched in April 1938, not very long after its editor, E. L. T. Mesens, gave up working for the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels in order to manage the London Gallery. The first issue carried the longer title of the *London Gallery Bulletin*, which gave a clear idea of its function as a means of amplifying the ideas reflected in the programme of exhibitions. The first of these was a show of work by the Belgian artist René Magritte, and the contents of the first issue of the magazine revolved around this event, with black and white illustrations of seven of the paintings, critical texts by Herbert Read and Humphrey Jennings, and a poem entitled 'René Magritte' by Paul Eluard (translated by Man Ray). Throughout its existence, the *London Bulletin* was anchored to the visual arts, reflecting the shared vigour of Mesens, Penrose, and Jennings in organizing and mounting a series of exhibitions showcasing both English and International artists, many of whom had a commitment or an affiliation to Surrealism. The accompanying texts were often secondary to the business of showcasing the visual materials, giving individual issues of the magazine the appearance and character of exhibition catalogues. Critical texts were usually introductory or expository in their approach, while the choice of poetry was mostly governed by direct reference to the work of painters and sculptors, even when the extent of the reference was only clear in the wording of the title. Mesens, a Belgian poet who had first visited London for the International Surrealist Exhibition of 1936, was introduced to the readership in a note by Alberto Cavalcanti. He was to become an arbiter of artistic innovation, which he applauded in various aspects of modernism, including Expressionism, Cubism, and Constructivism, while reserving his most emphatic approval for surrealist experimentation. Although he was later embroiled in fractious debates about the political direction of the movement during the 1940s, his editorship of the *London Bulletin* was accommodating to a range of different tendencies, and he gave a great deal of freedom to his assistant editors, George Reavey, Humphrey Jennings, and Roland Penrose, whose influence upon the tenor of individual issues is clearly evident. Mesens seems to have accepted the continuing authority of André Breton, unlike his predecessor Roger Roughton, and his successor Toni del Renzio, editor of *Arson*, but this Francophone solidarity did not prevent him from making room for independent voices, such as that of Herbert Read, who opened the first issue with an interpretation of Magritte that specified the formal integrity of his work: 'the modern artist is free to create his own symbols, to exercise the metaphorical

activity without restraint. I say “without restraint”, but there is always the restraint which is the unity of the work of art.’⁹

Read’s anarchistic dislike of political discipline is here translated into an engagement with the aesthetic discipline of Magritte’s practice, but this detachment from the material stubbornness of the painter’s fascination with contemporary bourgeois rituals and institutions contrasts strongly with the opening text of the second issue, a note by André Breton broadcasting a report of Freud’s arrest in Vienna. Oddly, this note is succeeded, on the same page, by a second contradicting the first, stating flatly that the original rumours have proved to be untrue, and that the real situation is one in which the distinguished psychoanalyst is being kept ‘under watch’. This juxtaposition of assertion and counter-assertion amounts to a performance of topicality and responsiveness to changes in the political climate. The air of disengagement that envelops Read’s article in the first issue is dispelled immediately by Breton’s imitation of going live in the form of a communiqué. The *London Bulletin* (with the word *Gallery* now dropped) is exactly what it says it is, a bulletin with genuine news value. Breton strikes a note of urgency sustained in other forms by the poems of Hugh Sykes Davies and Humphrey Jennings, whose texts on pages 7 and 8 of the second issue eschew the self-communing oneirism of Paul Eluard’s poem about Miró on page 4, in order to sabotage the process of aesthetic detachment, reaching out imaginatively into the social space occupied by the reader:

KEEP YOUR FILTHY HANDS OFF MY FRIENDS USE THEM ON
YOUR BITCHES OR
YOURSELVES BUT KEEP THEM OFF MY FRIENDS
AND ANYTHING YOU SEE WILL BE USED AGAINST YOU.¹⁰

These words dramatize precisely what is at stake in being under arrest, and make very little distinction between this condition and that of being ‘under watch’. Humphrey Jennings’s prose poem on the following page encodes the sense of physical threat more subtly by carefully measuring the uneventful, transforming the unremarkable into a series of portents: ‘Down goes the window and out go the old gentleman’s head and shoulders, and there they stay for I suppose nearly nine minutes.’¹¹ In case the absurdity of such images be attributed to mere artistic legerdemain, Jennings gives them a source outside the limited scope of painting—‘In some pictures I have recognized similar effects’—identifying Surrealism as the form of an encounter with the world of everyday phenomena that changes them unforgettably.

⁹ Herbert Read, ‘Magritte’, *London Gallery Bulletin*, 1 (Apr. 1938), 2.

¹⁰ Hugh Sykes Davies, ‘Poem’, *London Bulletin*, 2 (May 1938), 7.

¹¹ Humphrey Jennings, ‘Prose Poem’, *ibid.* 8.

The second issue responds to no fewer than four exhibitions, of work by Miró, Piper, Picasso, and Geer Van Velde. It is actually in the attempt to grasp the nature of what is happening in the work of the least familiar of these artists, Van Velde, that the most convincing statements of principle are fashioned, both in the critical prose of George Reavey and in the poetry of Brian Coffey. Coffey employs symmetrical phrasing and patterns of stress to convey the dynamic equilibrium reinforcing the value of an art practice forever testing the relations between psychological projection and receptivity:

What is behind him is seen
by what he holds with his eyes
what is before him is seen
by what he holds from his eyes¹²

The slight adjustments of prepositional items are the pivot around which the opposing concepts of individual creativity and shared receptivity are brought into motion. Reavey pursues a very similar line of thought but insists on the degree to which individual creativity can only ever gloss over the world's resistance to form, the extent to which meaning undergoes constant metamorphosis not as a subjective experience but as a common condition:

In his world the familiar immediate object ceases to exist, and the new reality appears unfamiliar and disquieting. In it man is affirmed as a being-in-himself, as a *psyche* triumphantly annihilating objective reality. But even this triumph is too premature and immediate; it is merely another mask beyond which lurk the terrors of the immeasurable *Ungrund*, the dark, irrational and inexpressible abyss. Such are the perspectives, the depths, miraculously expressed in terms of pure colour rather than in those of symbol or dream image.¹³

Reavey downgrades the claims of symbolism in favour of the significance of colour, revising the assumption of Herbert Read about the focal importance of imagery in Surrealist art, placing more weight on what both subject and object are imbued with literally. The de-emphasizing of individual subjectivity, unthinkable after publication of Breton's first manifesto, but inevitable after publication of the second, is explored even more systematically in the poems of Djuna Barnes and Antonia White that open the third issue of the magazine.¹⁴ Barnes's contribution

¹² Brian Coffey, 'The Painter Van Velde', *ibid.* 16.

¹³ George Reavey, 'Geer Van Velde', *ibid.*

¹⁴ Breton's first and second manifestos were published in 1924 and 1930, respectively. The first manifesto had emphasized the liberation of the individual unconscious mind, laying heavy stress on the importance of dreams and on the exploitation of automatic writing methods. The kind of writing produced during this phase of French Surrealism was likely to consist of highly subjective examples of what Breton referred to as 'pure psychic automatism'. The second manifesto showed much more interest in the surrealism of everyday life, in the attempt to discover where 'surreality resides in reality

is entitled 'Transfiguration', in seeming conformity with the almost universal surrealist routine of metamorphosis, but actually imagining the complete unravelling, the total reversal of cultural history:

To Moses's empty gorge like smoke
Rush inward all the words he spoke.¹⁵

Just as Reavey subordinates imagery to colour, in Barnes's poem the imagery is dependent on the specific possibilities of the medium, in this case a cinematic medium, since the most surrealistic aspects of the imagery are almost certainly influenced by the technical possibility of reversing reels of film. On the same page, Antonia White's poem 'The Crest' evokes a much more archaic medium, in a series of visual epitomes that have the character almost of heraldic emblems constructed through a baroque procedure of paradox and reversal:

Under the tree, tasselled with bleeding flesh
The phoenix builds herself a nest of ice;
The condor struggles in the spider's mesh,
The apple chokes the snake in paradise;
And, like a rose impaled upon its thorn,
The fox is spitted by the unicorn.¹⁶

It is notable that both poems adhere to strict rhyme schemes; they embrace conventions with very deep roots. While both are aimed at dismantling inherited versions of identity, they do so while asserting the value of a shared idiom for thought, rather than devising a wholly private and exclusive language. It is almost as if Barnes and White are responding to the programme outlined by Jennings eighteen months earlier in *Contemporary Poetry and Prose*, where he challenged Herbert Read, proposing a genealogy for Surrealism with its roots in Classicism rather than Romanticism. Both Read and Jennings contribute to the third issue of *London Bulletin*, and it is remarkable how both re-enter the debate, although there is no direct confrontation between them, and in Read's case the debate may now be with himself. In a short essay on the work of the Danish painter Rita Kernn-Larsen, Read provides a description of the role of the imagination that has implications for Surrealist practice in general: 'The imagination is a focus introduced into the vague field of the unconscious. Its lenses pan over this opaque chaos. Suddenly stop; range into the moving shadows; contract, concentrate. The image is found

itself'—in material reality and in a public, social world. The writing of this phase showed less concern with a crisis of the subject and more concern with what Breton referred to as a 'fundamental crisis of the object'.

¹⁵ Djuna Barnes, 'Transfiguration', *London Bulletin*, 3 (June 1938), 2.

¹⁶ Antonia White, 'The Crest', *ibid.* 2.

and registered.¹⁷ The writing quickly outgrows the function of description to become a demonstration in its own right of a form of attention, one that does not authenticate an individual sensibility, but replicates the kind of imaginative activity made available generally by the constraints and permissions of a particular medium, a particular technology. Jennings, who was, after all, assistant editor for the issue in which Read's essay appeared, might have been offering a commentary on its hybridizing of the biological and the mechanical, and of the psychological and the behavioural, in his own text 'The Iron Horse', which includes a revealing contextualization of a lengthy quotation from Freud:

The point of creating pseudo-machines was not as an exploitation of machinery but as a 'profanation' of 'Art' parallel to the engineers' 'profanation' of the primitive 'sacred places' of the earth. 'Only in one field has the omnipotence of thought been retained in our own civilization, namely in art. In art alone it still happens that man, consumed by his wishes, produces something similar to the gratification of these wishes, and this playing, thanks to artistic illusion, calls forth effects as if it were something real.' (Freud, *Totem and Taboo*)¹⁸

Jennings's own practice shows a constant awareness of the temptations and pitfalls of individual wish-fulfilment in art, recognizing the need to substitute for this illusoriness an engagement with 'something real'. That engagement takes the form of a response to shared historical experience, and the response takes the form of a comparison between different perspectives on this experience. For Jennings, it is the changes in technology itself that provide the most profound historical experience of modernity, as well as controlling the mode of responding to them. All his work in different artistic media—writing, painting, photography, film—repeats this focus on the confrontation and cooperation between humanity and the machine, a cooperation whose history often involves the predication of humanity as pseudo-machines, and the predication of machinery as pseudo-humans. In retrospect, it seems inevitable that the following double issue (4–5) of *London Bulletin* for July 1938 should have been organized around the exhibition curated by Jennings, Mesens, and Arthur Elton, entitled 'The Impact of Machines'. Jennings adds to the list of works on display a short anthology of texts that bear witness to the encroachment of the machine age between 1797 and 1871. These provide in literary form an historical equivalent to the Mass Observation reports that Jennings was simultaneously co-editing with Charles Madge and Tom Harrison.¹⁹ As Kevin Jackson points out, this compilation was effectively the germ of Jennings's most

¹⁷ Herbert Read, 'Rita Kernn-Larsen', *London Bulletin*, 3 (June 1938), 18.

¹⁸ Humphrey Jennings, 'The Iron Horse', *ibid.* 28.

¹⁹ See 'Bourgeois News', in Charles Madge, *Of Love, Time and Places: Selected Poems* (London: Anvil, 1994), 32.

sustained project, the unending research into the advent of the machine age that was only published after his death as *Pandaemonium*.²⁰

It is reasonable to assume that, from this time onwards, he was engaged in the prodigious task of researching *Pandaemonium* whenever his many other projects were not claiming priority. Roland Penrose, reminiscing about his friendship with Jennings—‘brilliant and enthralling’—wrote: ‘I remember meeting him more than once in the street, always immaculately dressed but carrying a heavy dilapidated suitcase. Asked what he had inside it, his brief answer was “Pandaemonium”.’²¹

The individual texts published in *London Bulletin* also reveal the principles of composition on which Jennings’s own prose poems are based. The excerpt from a letter by Fanny Kemble, dated 1835, includes several phrases that were inset in the text of ‘The Boyhood of Byron’, first published in *Contemporary Poetry and Prose* in December 1936.²² The citations show the historical basis for the choral effect of the prose poems, and of their multiple perspectives which converge on the object, rather than the subject, of perception. The following issue of *London Bulletin*, number 6 (October 1938), carries a text by Jennings that subtilizes further the relations between technology and perception, between memory, anticipation, and the photographic medium, by analysing the lament of a National Gallery attendant:

‘They come in here and put their hands over the mouth and nose of a Rembrandt, and then say “Who does *that* remind you of?”’ . . . No doubt the appearance of Rembrandt in this kind of story (rather than say Titian) is due to his connection with photography . . . Freud (‘Psychopathology of Everyday Life’, p. 203) says that the feeling of *Déjà Vu* (‘Who does that remind you of’) ‘corresponds to the memory of an unconscious fantasy’. The camera is precisely an instrument for recording the object or image that prompted that memory. Hence the rush to see ‘how they came out’.²³

Jennings’s close understanding of the camera as an instrument for recording objects that are always in some sense already framed, always the object of alternative perceptions, in another time or another place, their meaning anterior or posterior, informs the complexity of a textual practice whose use of collage is never simply the reflex of one sensibility but the means of implicating several, and the medium for making one text the prompt for memory in another. The history of Surrealism

²⁰ Humphrey Jennings, *Pandaemonium: The Coming of the Machine as Seen by Contemporary Observers*, ed. Mary-Lou Jennings and Charles Madge (London: André Deutsch, 1985).

²¹ Kevin Jackson, *Humphrey Jennings* (London: Picador, 2004), 205.

²² For example: ‘the flying white breath and rhythmical, unvarying pace, between these rocky walls, which are already clothed with moss and ferns and grasses.’

²³ Humphrey Jennings, ‘Who Does That Remind You Of’, *London Bulletin*, 6 (Oct. 1938), 21–2.

in Britain can hardly be appreciated without a recognition of the conceptual centrality of technologies used not simply to represent bare objects, but which represent objects filled with and surrounded by fantasies and memories, desires and inhibitions, whose source is in the cultural unconscious.

One of the most successful projects to combine the use of photography to record communal experience as well as scenery and objects, together with a poetic text that hovers alongside this imagery, attaching an almost whimsically personal frame to what is effectively anthropological material, is Roland Penrose's *The Road is Wider than Long: An Image-Diary from the Balkans, July–August 1938*. A six-page excerpt from this appeared in the seventh issue of *London Bulletin* (December 1938–January 1939). It stands in marked contrast to the other major contribution to the same issue, Grace Pailthorpe's magisterial essay on 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism'. Pailthorpe was a talented painter and psychoanalyst who together with Reuben Mednikoff embarked on an intense and elaborate series of mutual analyses based entirely on the scrutiny of art works, and written up with impressive cogency:

The unconscious is a master in its own form of art and its creations have qualities similar to those demanded of any form of art, whatever the media. It tells its story perfectly; with economy of language and with associations that convey the maximum effect. It gives only those details necessary for the complete understanding of its moods. It tells a perfect short story. Simplicity, directness and lucidity are its aims. It conforms to all that has vitality, perfection of rhythm and composition—and it cannot be ignored because it is truth expressed with vitality.²⁴

What is strange about the exactitude—almost a terminological exactitude—of this extended proposition is that it refers not to anything written, not to a poetics, but to an entirely visual language. What is more, the close readings that Pailthorpe offers of several Mednikoff paintings offer interpretations of imagery alone. The short story constructed by the analyst reaches back into the history of the individual psychology in order to establish the temporal relations, the before and after, of significant events and their after-effects, rather than the spatial relations of the work of art and of the relations between the painting and the viewer.

The aesthetic priorities and discursive contexts of the contributions by Penrose and Pailthorpe are quite distant from one another, although both reflect aspects of a Surrealist agenda that developed and shifted over a period of fifteen years in the Francophone world. In Britain, during the period between 1936 and 1939, the full range of articulations is presented almost simultaneously, and in *London Bulletin*, this effect of synchronism is owing in large part to the editorial inclusiveness of E. L. T. Mesens. Mesens is nowhere more inclusive than in his editorial policy for the 'Living Art in England' exhibition and double issue of *London Bulletin*

²⁴ Grace W. Pailthorpe, 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism', *London Bulletin*, 7 (Dec. 1938–Jan. 1939), 15.

presented in January–February 1939. Most of the magazine was devoted to illustrating examples of work by the thirty-six artists involved, of whom only twelve were identified as Surrealist, while the remainder named themselves variously as constructivists, expressionists, ‘abstracts’, and independents. This catholicity was in keeping with the permissiveness expressed in theory in one of the most polemical contributions to *London Bulletin*, the essay ‘Towards an Independent Revolutionary Art’, by André Breton and Diego Rivera, published first in French in issue 6, and then in English in issue 7. The relevant passage is clearly orientated towards disapproval of official cultural policy in the Soviet Union: ‘If, for the development of the material productive forces, the revolution has to establish a planned and centralised *socialist* regime, then in the sphere of intellectual creation it should from the very beginning set up and assure an *anarchist* regime of individual freedom.’²⁵

This statement is imbued with historical irony, since Breton himself was notorious for expelling heretics from the various Surrealist groupings he had any influence over. Mesens was attracted to the idea of pluralism that Breton was paying lip service to, but was equally attracted to the idea of strong leadership that Breton actually lived up to. It was the contradictoriness of this position, coupled with Mesens’s own attempt to exert his authority over the British Surrealists, that led soon after to major disagreements with Toni del Renzio, editor of *Arson*, the third in the trio of Surrealist magazines that this chapter is concerned with.

Arson: Among the ruins

Del Renzio did not actually arrive in England until 1940, having pursued a course of anti-fascist activity first in Italy, then fighting for the POUM (Workers Party of Marxist Unification) militia in Spain, and finally joining the Surrealist milieu of Paris, before crossing to England soon after war broke out.²⁶ Mesens was one of the first people he sought out and consulted over the launching of a new journal that would rally British Surrealists around a clear agenda for wartime projects. Mesens expressed his approval at first—or so it seemed to the newcomer—and for this reason his name appears among those to whom *Arson* is dedicated. But the dedication extends also to artists living in no fewer than seven countries, as well as to ‘Sade, Rimbaud, Lautréamont, and Lenin in the concentration camps of heaven’.²⁷ This map of the living and dead reflects equally a desire for recruitment and a personal mythology, and is an inflexion of del Renzio’s editorial style, which tends towards an imperative mood and an emphatic diction, reminiscent of the pugnacious idioms of Wyndham Lewis’s *BLAST*:

²⁵ André Breton and Diego Rivera, ‘Towards an Independent Revolutionary Art’, *London Bulletin*, 7 (Dec. 1938–Jan. 1939), 31.

²⁶ See Remy, *Surrealism in Britain*, 224–7.

²⁷ *Arson: An Ardent Review* (London, 1942), 1.



Fig. 81. Cover of *Arson: An Ardent Review* (1942)

It is not without significance that this month, [March²⁸ . . . should witness in 1942, the appearance of a *spectral review*, glowing with its own light. It is a Surrealist review, testimony of a vital life lived among the ruins not only of bombed houses but of exploited people.

Its contributors are alight, ignited by the spontaneous combustion of the imagination's flaming spectres. They are violent, ardent and without humility. Above all, they are combustible. Their eyes shine in the dark, projecting the living beams of their own

ARSON²⁹

Del Renzio's adherence to Breton's own style of authoritarianism is implied by his irascible prose and foreseeable perhaps in the content of *Arson's* opening feature, an interview between Nicolas Calas and Breton, in which the latter names the most prominent Surrealist heretics, characterized as those who have renounced 'in a masochistic and exhibitionist manner their own testimony, becoming champions of a cause quite contrary to that which they began serving with great fanfare'.³⁰ With the arrival of *Arson*, the schisms and recriminations of Francophone Surrealism become ordinary currency in the English milieu, with Mesens, J. B. Brunius, and Penrose attacking del Renzio for *arrivisme* in the pages of *Horizon*, and del Renzio counter-attacking in the subsequent issue, with a denunciation of his three detractors for their defence of the renegade Paul Eluard.³¹

²⁸ Del Renzio alludes to the Ides of March and the assassination of Julius Caesar.

²⁹ Toni del Renzio, editorial, *Arson*, 1.

³⁰ Nicolas Calas, 'New York Interview with Breton', *ibid.* 3.

³¹ Remy, *Surrealism in Britain*, 225–6.

The greater part of *Arson* is devoted to the illustration of paintings by a narrow range of artists together with extended commentary and the writing of associated fantasy productions. The recurrent figures are Giorgio de Chirico, André Masson, John and Robert Melville, Conroy Maddox, Eileen Agar, Emmy Bridgwater, Edith Rimmington, Marguerite Salle, and del Renzio himself. This is an eclectic and independent-minded selection that alters the perception of English Surrealism, especially in its textual manifestations, as the preserve of male artists. The textual responses to individual paintings are spirited but of little analytical value, consisting largely of narratives operating at a tangent to pictorial details, or of vivid accounts of related dreams. Del Renzio's own response to the paintings of Emmy Bridgwater is typical in this respect, little more than the opportunity for departure into fantasy narrative, a style of textual production quite open about its freedom from obligation: 'We do not see these pictures. We hear their cries and are moved by them. Our own entrails are drawn painfully from us and twisted into the pictures whose significance we did not want to realise.'³² The matter-of-factness with which the relationship between painting and viewer is assumed to require a form of violent assault captures something pervasive in the atmosphere of the magazine as a whole. The dominant discursive mode is evident in a series of textual graffiti: fateful epigraphs, menacing aphorisms, aggressive sound bites: 'I affirm, without the slightest hesitation, that poetry *begins* with the transformation of the Parthenon into an arsenal and *ends* with the blood of Marat spilt by Charlotte Corday. N[icolas].C[alas].'³³

The arrangement of these bulletins at regular intervals, ensuring a staccato effect in the rhythm of reading, as well as the use of larger and bolder typefaces to guarantee a more hammer-like delivery, are of course clear indications of editorial attitude. But del Renzio is also the author of a number of these summary judgements, disposed around the pages of his review like a series of ritual curses in their own inflammatory cartouches, and released at intervals like little capsules of poison:

Penguin New Writing. Edited by John Lehmann

On a perusal of the issues so far published we are convinced of Mr Lehmann's ignorance of two terms:

a. *new* b. *writing*³⁴

Daylight Edited by John Lehmann

WE PREFER THE NIGHT
TO SUCH A LEHMANN WE WOULD PREFER A PRIEST
EVEN³⁵

³² Toni del Renzio, 'The Uncouth Invasion (the Paintings of Emmy Bridgwater)', *Arson*, 24.

³³ *Arson*, 22.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 31.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

Del Renzio employs humour to a degree that throws into relief the relative sobriety of *Contemporary Poetry and Prose* and *London Bulletin*. Humour is an important element in the Surrealist repertoire, but del Renzio uses it routinely and with a casualness that often defuses its potential for genuine subversion. His waspish comments run the risk of eliding serious analysis for the sake of a series of cheap laughs. He signs off editorially with a typically sweeping pronouncement on the artistic inadequacies of his contemporaries: 'N.B. It will be noticed that no poetry is printed in these pages for the simple reason we do not believe there is a single line approaching the nature of poetry being penned in English.'³⁶

This breezy contempt would consign to oblivion the entire contents of *Contemporary Poetry and Prose*, which is weighted conspicuously towards the manifestation of the surreal in poetry above all. There is no ignoring del Renzio's talent for agitation, or the liveliness of his prose, but *Arson* accelerates the decline of British Surrealism as a vital cultural activity which had achieved an effective group mentality for a limited number of years. The catcalling and infighting help to dismantle the structure of mediation for Surrealist ideas and projects in Britain, despite the continuing energy of many individual writers and artists.

³⁶ Ibid. 32.

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IX

BEYOND THE METROPOLIS



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INTRODUCTION

The magazines in this section have one thing in common: their physical and ideological distance from a London-based literary culture or, more precisely, a received modernist canon. For all their intrinsic differences, they define themselves, that is to say, against a dominant formation. Gordon Craig's general project to found in Florence a new 'Art of the Theatre', principally through the magazines *Mask* and *Marionette*, was less antagonistic in this respect than other examples, but it is clearly more European than English in its orientation. Laura Riding's *Epilogue*, also, though a seemingly isolated and individual case, is explicitly opposed to currents in London-based or metropolitan modernism. The most obvious examples of this oppositional or alternative stance, however, were those concerned to found or recover a distinctively national art or literature. The Welsh, Scottish, and Irish magazines share this general commitment. However, the Irish case, as Frank Shovlin's discussion shows, takes quite a different course, since the Irish 'little magazines' and other publications friendly to literary innovation and the making of a new national culture set themselves less against British domination than against a repressive hegemonic culture and morality in Ireland. The battle here is more an internal one, between an avant-gardist impulse or the more moderate call for a more liberal artistic and cultural regime, which could claim W. B. Yeats, James Joyce, and Beckett as its own, and an isolationist and conservative national ideology opposed to the modern or new on essentially moralizing grounds.

On occasion, in the Scottish or Welsh examples, the nationalist stance assumes a polemical anti-Englishness, though, by that token, it remains a relational position. For the most part, however, the cause of a national cultural identity took more complex forms than a straightforwardly defiant opposition or rejection. A number of magazines came in this way to raise the problem of how national identity, with its specific geographical boundaries and cultural affiliations, especially to an 'authentic' tradition and language, could be affirmed and yet avoid a narrow and reactionary jingoism. In a sense this is the problem of how nationalism can be modern. The examples here show plainly that the dominant could not simply be ignored, but more than this, they present the terms on which this relation could be negotiated: that is to say, the ways in which the the prevailing culture of 'Englishness' was acknowledged or subsumed or recast to the advantage of a

more fully embedded and progressive nationalism. This lead, as Hopkins and Craig show, to the claim, for example in the magazine *Wales*, that Celtic roots underlie a wider idea of *British* culture, thereby effectively discounting ‘English’ nationality or, as in J. D. Fergusson and *Scottish Art and Literature*, that Celtic affinities support a wider network across continental Europe. The Celtic ‘fringe’ in these arguments becomes a more central source of cultural vitality linking Scotland and Wales as nationally accented movements in a pan-European community. We might think, in this context, of the earlier ‘Celtic revival’ or ‘Celtic twilight’ in Irish culture too (see Chapter 6) but in the later period, again marking out the Irish case, the magazines *Klaxon* and *To-Morrow* wished to supplant the romantic associations of Celticism with an experimental art appropriate to a modernizing world. They were disappointed. The ushering in of the Irish Free State, seen by some as ‘a modernist “event” in its own right’, had seemed in 1922 to promise a new era, but the Free State proved in the event at best cautious and at worst coercive. The Catholic Church prompted a culture of censorship which led to the official Censorship of Publications Act of 1929. Its broad interpretation of ‘indecenty’ and ‘obscenity’ determined, says Shovlin, that literature was officially judged ‘more by religious affiliation than by aesthetic quality’. Only the more pragmatic editorial policies of *The Irish Statesman* and *The Dublin Magazine* could survive and still give some support to new writing or, in *Ireland To-Day*, to the new medium of film—at a time when the Church led a mounting campaign against the foreign invasions of ‘immodest literature, vulgar cinema and jazz music’.

Many magazines of course directly took up the questions of nationalism and internationalism in their pages. In the Scottish case, for example, Neil Gunn, a leading figure of the Scottish Renaissance movement in the 1930s, used *The Scots Magazine* to defend nationalism from its assumed identification with fascism and violence. For Gunn, as for Christopher Murray Grieve (Hugh MacDiarmid), nationalism and internationalism were balanced, mutually supportive positions, and, as such, a protection against their possibly reductive reactionary implications. A further important contributor was James Huntington Whyte, who founded *The Modern Scot* in 1930. Whyte opposed the idea of a national essence and instead proposed a ‘civic nationalism’ which suggested national identity was not a given, now lost and to be rediscovered, as conceived by MacDiarmid and others, ‘but a corporate sentiment that is moulded by history’. The question of essence and authenticity, on the one hand, and a dynamic, collectively negotiated, even internally multiple national identity, on the other, continued to govern this discussion.

The magazines might not have solved these matters but they are a crucial vehicle for their expression. In different ways too they did not simply comment on but enacted these issues: in the circumstances of their production, distribution, and reception, their editorial positions, contents, and contributors, and their perception of modernity and the central question of the use of language.

A very material aspect of the production and distribution of periodicals concerned the operation of the market and, within it, the role of publishers and magazines in providing an outlet and readers for a nationally inspired art and writing. Here, as in other respects, there were independently mounted projects but also more negotiated two-way arrangements and sometimes a continued dependence on London-based activities. Thus, as if to set down an ideological marker, Keidrych Rhys established the Druid Press in Caermarthen, and Gwyn Jones the Penmark Press in Cardiff, specifically in order to print *Wales* and *The Welsh Review*, respectively. At the same time, however, they benefited from being advertised in London-based magazines, notably in *Life and Letters Today*, which had its own special issues on regional national literatures, and from New Books in Parton Street, London, which distributed *Wales* and Dylan Thomas's *18 Poems* as well as other British and American magazines. Hopkins indicates that it was through these conduits that Gwyn Jones, Dylan Thomas, and others found a welcoming London audience essential to the reputation of the writers and the mission and survival of the magazines themselves.

Scotland felt the rivalry of London on this front more keenly than Wales or Ireland, since, by the period of the First World War, it had lost the authority exercised in the nineteenth century by such Scottish-based journals as *Blackwoods* and *The Edinburgh Magazine*. This sense of a newly marginalized status not surprisingly turned editors and writers to the form of the independent, combative, and campaigning 'little magazine': none more so than the indefatigable Hugh MacDiarmid (Christopher Murray Grieve), who championed the cause of a Scottish renaissance through a series of short-lived magazines and news-sheets—*Northern Numbers*, *The Chapbook*, *The Scottish Nation*, *The Northern Review*, *The Scots Magazine*, and *The Modern Scot*—all in the 1920s. MacDiarmid returned to the fray with *The Voice of Scotland* in 1938, which had a broken run until 1955, but otherwise he too had to find other outlets, including Eliot's *Criterion*, which published his *Second Hymn to Lenin*. It is clear too, in a marked form of a common paradox, that MacDiarmid's cause, however international, was expressed principally through his own example or persona and by way of considerable self-promotion. Other campaigners active in a later period included J. D. Fergusson and the publisher William MacLellan, who published *Scottish Art and Letters* (1944–50) for which Fergusson was art editor, and in this same post-war period, *The New Scot* (1945–59) and *The Scottish Journal* (1952–4). These examples confirmed, too, how a Scottish-based magazine and publisher with a declared Scottish agenda was a necessary part of the cause of national cultural independence. In the words of William MacLellan's introduction to Fergusson's *Modern Scottish Painting* (1943), their purpose was to recognize a unique Scottish tradition and way of life which 'can be harmoniously woven into the tartan of world culture'.¹

¹ John Duncan Fergusson, *Modern Scottish Painting* (Glasgow: William MacLellan, 1943), Preface.

The prevailing cultural climate in Ireland acutely affected the very production and survival of magazines posing any challenge to authority. Shovlin points to two symptomatic instances concerning the magazines *Klaxon* and *To-Morrow*. A. J. 'Con' Leventhal began the first magazine in order to publish his review of Joyce's *Ulysses* after this had been rejected by *The Dublin Magazine*, the reason being that the printers had refused to prepare the text. *Klaxon* lasted only one issue and was followed by the equally short-lived *To-Morrow*, itself soon to close after the furore which greeted its opening item, 'The Madonna of Slieve Dun', a short story in which young girl, after being raped, believes her pregnancy is the result of a divine visitation. Both examples illustrate the nature of the threat these magazines presented to the dominant moral and political order.

The further questions of language, of modernity, and of modernism were bound up with each other. Patrick Geddes, the inspiration for *Evergreen* (1895–7) and much that followed in the Scottish 'Renaissance', had advocated a return, says Craig, to 'Celtic forms of social organisation, almost obliterated by industrial modernity'. In similar vein *Wales* opposed urban modernity in the belief, as Hopkins puts it, that 'English colonisation has visited modern evils on an essentially pastoral culture.' In their attitude to language, Scottish, like the Welsh, and earlier Irish publications looked also to non-English forms: to Gaelic, 'plastic' or 'synthetic' Scots or to past figures in a Scottish or Welsh or Irish literary tradition. At the same time, however, they had to contend with James Huntington Whyte's argument in *The Modern Scot*—with the evidence of Yeats in mind—that the English language was an inescapable and eminently useable medium. *Wales* and *The Welsh Review* similarly recognized that the Welsh writers they meant to promote 'wrote largely in the language of what many compatriots felt was a colonising power' but found an answer in *Wales*'s resolve that 'Though we write in English, we are rooted in Wales.'² Even the unswerving Hugh MacDiarmid, once more, wrote in Braid Scots, Scots-English, and English, self-consciously echoing the multilingual dimension of many European modernists.

English literary culture was similarly dismissed (Bloomsbury was superficial, class-ridden, and effeminate) at the same time as there were echoes, adaptations, affinities, and negotiated settlements with English-based and European modernisms. Thus, Hopkins writes of the 'specifically modernist aspirations' of Dylan Thomas's 'Prologue' in *Wales* and of Nigel Heseltine's sequence of six 'Poems' being heavily influenced by *The Waste Land*. Craig describes *Scottish Art and Letters* and Fergusson as representing 'a key Scottish response to the nature of modernism, founded upon celtic roots'; Neil Gunn is said to fuse 'the Celticism of the first Scottish Renaissance with the new Imagist-inspired poetics of the second'. And MacDiarmid's clear debt in *In Memoriam James Joyce* was by his own reckoning to be set alongside such as Baudelaire, Eliot, and Pound.

² *Wales*, 1 (Summer 1937), n.p.

Cairns Craig draws a positive conclusion from this seeming crisis of identity: that Scotland was a country with three linguistic and cultural traditions, and that this plurality exposes the limitations of a modernist aesthetic founded on a single and unitary tradition as advanced by T. S. Eliot. His argument has a broad application but depends, as we can see, on the peculiarities of different national histories and contemporary circumstances. In Ireland, the concern with political and cultural issues tended to govern any advance in art and writing. The response of Seán O'Faoláin's *The Bell* to the hardened circumstances of the 1940s, when the maintenance of Irish neutrality meant the introduction of stricter new censorship laws, was to appeal for an honest and truthful depiction of the realities of the modern world. *The Bell's* 'modernism' was a modernism of content, its aesthetic a realist one which gravitated towards documentary journalism. We might find comparable developments elsewhere, in John Lehmann's *New Writing* for example; nonetheless, one senses an air of disappointment in this struggle. Artistic innovation and independent critical opinion were not dead: O'Faoláin had signed off as books editor of *Ireland To-day* with a call to its readers to recognize the truth of their Anglo-Irish identity and he continued the argument for a cosmopolitan European identity in *The Bell*; Samuel Beckett had been published in *The Dublin Magazine* and *Irish Statesman*—and one is reminded throughout this episode of the example of Joyce in exile and the manifold sources and contexts of his modernism. For Irish magazines in Ireland, however, the opportunity for experiment and any question of isms, as Frank Shovlin suggests, would have to wait.³

Edward Gordon Craig and Laura Riding seem far removed from nationalist causes and to belong more to the type of the artist in exile. Both developed individualistic and highly innovative aesthetics in their respective ideas for the theatre and poetry. Craig moved to Florence to establish 'A School for the Art of the Theatre' at the Arena Goldoni, and there produced two journals *The Mask* (1908–28), and *The Marionette* (1918–19). He sought total control over all aspects of the journals (though in truth he was significantly aided by his companion, Dorothy Nevile Lees), deploying them as a virtual 'utopian stage', as Taxidou writes, to elaborate a theory of performance which was never to take place. In effect *The Mask* was his own masked performance with the sixty-five pseudonyms he adopted in its pages as its cast.

The two magazines edited by Laura Riding and Robert Graves, *Epilogue* and *Focus*, were compiled in Majorca, far from the metropolis. Riding's own commitment, like that of Craig, was to art, or to an ideology of art, rather than to any specific social cause or purpose. At the same time *The Mask* and *Epilogue* shared something with nationalist movements and magazines, firstly in their distance,

³ It is perhaps a curiosity that one of the most subversive and experimental of Irish writers in the period, Flann O'Brien, wrote a column for many years under the pseudonym, Myles na gCopaleen, in that most mainstream of Irish periodicals, *The Irish Times*.

and in Riding's case, strong opposition to tendencies associated with mainstream English-based literary culture and, secondly, in their connection with alternative European settings and networks. Craig's *Arena Goldoni* and *The Mask* were very deliberately conceived, Taxidou explains, as an 'attempt to relocate his project in relation to the experimentation taking place at the time on the Continent'. His career was threaded with the names and ideas on theatre, dance, and the mask circulating amongst the European avant-garde. He drew on the Arts and Crafts and Book Beautiful tradition, worked with W. B. Yeats, and in particular explored the work of Heinrich von Kleist, whose *Über Das Marionettentheatre* (1810) appeared in one of its first English translations in *The Marionette*. These sources in European Romanticism Craig combined with the form of the manifesto and modernist ideas on the body and scenic spatialization such as had appeared in the Russian journal *Mir Isskustva* (*The World of Art*) (1895–1904) edited by Sergei Diaghilev. In addition Craig formed an alliance with the Italian Futurists, publishing F. T. Marinetti's 'Futurism and the Theatre: A Futurist Manifesto' in *The Mask* in its first English translation in 1913. The result was a hybrid 'Romantic modernism' with, at its core, an idea of the mask and dehumanized but unmechanical puppet or *Übermarionette*, a substitute for the human actor and emblem for the total work of art which Taxidou describes as 'oddly anti-modern and curiously anti-theatrical'.

Laura Riding's thinking on art and reality rested on the principal idea of the poet as truth-teller in a realm above the contingency of history. As Mark Jacobs explains, the magazine *Epilogue*, in both its name and cover illustration, was intended to signify a scene or period after the action of a drama, or by extension historical action—one thinks of Craig's comparable remove, pitched at the moment before an actual performance. At the same time of course the title *Epilogue* describes Riding's own preferred position after the event, a time of deliberate reflection and strenuous concentration on the meanings of words, opposed all the while to the prevailing emphasis of the modern age on criticism which she attributed to the influence of T. S. Eliot. Eliot and Joyce amongst notable modernists were found wanting. *The Waste Land* was 'breathless with scholarship' but 'is not breathless with intellect'; Joyce was condemned for 'universalizing his sense of personal triviality'.⁴

If in some ways this was an isolated and eccentric position, it was a bold and confident one, founded on the belief that the poet and poetry's 'time-surviving truth' presided over all matters, including the range of topics such as crime and crime fiction, history, philosophy, drama, politics, and communism surveyed in the magazine. Her position, logically enough given her view of a shift in emphasis in contemporary life to personal relations, found support in a company of like-minded friends and collaborators who combined to produce *Epilogue* (1935–8) and *Focus* (1935), published by Riding and Robert Graves's Seizin Press

⁴ This critique continued the position first articulated in Laura Riding and Robert Graves, *A Survey of Modernist Poetry* (London: Heinemann, 1927).

simultaneously in Deyá on Majorca and in London. The press, the magazines, the friends (amongst them James Reeves, Len Lye, John Aldridge, Katherine Burdekin, Norman Cameron, Kenneth Allott, Alan Hodge, and Jacob Bronowski), and the common ethos and beliefs comprised a cultural formation in its own right. Only when events in Spain in the mid-1930s forced Riding, Graves, and the others to leave Majorca—when in effect history caught up with and interrupted the timeless time of the poet—did Riding feel the need to confront political reality in the fourth and last volume of *Epilogue*, which became *The World and Ourselves*, a compilation of sixty-five letters written in response to the international crisis leading to the Second World War.

Neither Gordon Craig nor Laura Riding belong convincingly to ‘English’ modernism or to any regional or national configuration. Rather they found a place in a respectively self-created community or self-generated network within the broader nexus of the European avant-garde: the ‘paranational’ formation Raymond Williams describes which would allow for what we might call Riding’s ‘anti-modernist modernism’ or Craig’s ‘Romantic modernism’. The cosmopolitan affinities with Europe expressed by some of the Welsh, Irish, or Scottish magazines might suggest that they too can be described as belonging to such a ‘paranational’ formation. At the same time, any characterization along these lines would have to take account of the particularities of the relevant national cultures and the influence of the English-based example, and thus, in these cases especially, of the many tensions shaping any paranational modernist cultural identity.

WALES (1937–9), *THE WELSH REVIEW* (1939–40)

CHRIS HOPKINS

In a classic analysis of the parallel development of Welsh writing in English and his own writing,¹ *The Dragon has Two Tongues: Essays on Anglo-Welsh Writers and Writing* (1968), Glyn Jones recalls the Welsh literary milieu which produced the two magazines of his youth, *Wales* and *Welsh Review*:

In 1934... I first met Dylan Thomas. In 1936 I received a letter... signed Keidrych Rhys... *Wales*, the first literary magazine of any standing, and standards, for Welshmen writing in English, had not then appeared, and Keidrych, its founder and editor, was looking around for suitable contributors. He had heard of me... through Dylan, whom he had met in London, and what he had seen of my work made him think I might be the sort of poet he intended to publish in *Wales*.

One of the rare intellectual and artistic meeting places in South Wales in the early thirties was the Three Valleys Festival of music... Late one night in 1935, when I was returning to Cardiff by train from this festival, I spoke for the first time to two other writers [Jack Jones and Gwyn Jones]... In 1939 Gwyn founded and edited the *Welsh Review*... which, like *Wales*, intended to publish the work of Welshmen writing in English.²

This account suggests the origins of the two magazines: both articulated themselves as places where an energetic, distinctive yet submerged and youthful literary voice could make itself better heard. Both were aware from the beginning of paradoxes in the identities of the writers for whom they wished to be a forum, a group who

¹ Now the preferred term for what was during the period of these two magazines called (though this was in itself an innovation) 'Anglo-Welsh' writing.

² *The Dragon Has Two Tongues: Essays on Anglo-Welsh Writers and Writing* (London: Dent, 1968), 33–4, 34–5. An article by Elwyn Davies similarly recalls the Welsh literary milieu of the period ('The Magazine That Never Was', *The Anglo-Welsh Review*, 81 (1985), 97–106).

strongly felt themselves to have a clear national identity, but who wrote largely in the language of what many compatriots felt was a colonizing power, one which had wrought appalling destruction on the landscape, language, economy, and culture of Wales. Equally, Glyn Jones gives a sense of how individual writers, some with reasonably established publishing records, others at the beginnings of their careers, felt a powerful need to come together to create for themselves a recognized literary/national identity through these magazines. While the homely meetings suggest a self-made group, the mentions of London connections suggest ambitions too in a possibly more cosmopolitan arena (Glyn Jones says rightly that 'Keidrych's poets certainly knew what was going on in the poetical worlds both of London and New York'³). Indeed, Sally Roberts Jones suggests that London connections and an English market played a vital part in the fortunes of many writers who contributed to these magazines and perhaps by implication to the survival of the magazines too:

The nineteen thirties were a good time for writers from the Celtic fringe; Ireland had a high profile, and . . . Scottish writers . . . too had their outlets in the wider world, while even Wales had its moment in the sun . . . Magazines such as *Life and Letters Today*, the *Adelphi*, even *Poetry Chicago* published the poems and stories of Glyn Jones, Dylan Thomas and their fellows, and they found a welcoming audience in London.

This was probably just as well, since it is difficult to see how that generation could have established their careers solely (or, indeed, at all) in Wales. There was an audience for a certain kind of Welsh writing in English.⁴

Clearly, too, the magazines wished to define themselves as gatekeepers of certain standards and types of literary and cultural value, as we see from several of Glyn Jones's references to quality and kind, as in the above: 'first literary magazine of any standing, and standards' and 'I might be the kind of poet he intended to publish in *Wales*.' There seems little doubt that both magazines, while wishing to be a home for Welsh writers in English, also envisaged a mode of creative expression which gave them stylistic membership of an artistic metropolitan avant-garde. The dynamic between a modern metropolitan English style and Welsh pastoral modes of understanding Wales's own recent history may well be a defining feature of these magazine's relation to the kinds of modern writing they chose to publish. This essay will consider the physical design and format of these magazines, along with the kind of issues Glyn Jones here introduces: their origins, factual history, missions, 'self-fashioning' and distinctiveness, their conceptions of modernism, and of the

³ Jones, *The Dragon has Two Tongues*, 137.

⁴ Introduction to the CREW (Centre for Research into the English Literature and Language of Wales) website, 'Painting in the Open Air—an Annotated Bibliography of the Anglo-Welsh Short Story', Part 1. Accessed 12 December 2006. Available at URL: http://www.swan.ac.uk/english/crew/SRJ_BIBAWSS.

literary magazine, their editorial policies, whom they published, their relationships to other magazines, and their political and cultural projects.

The two magazines had parallel publishing fortunes: both were simultaneously in print before the war during 1939–40, when they ceased publication, and then overlapped again for several years after 1944. *Wales* produced its first issue, with the part identification ‘Summer 1937’, at a price of ‘One Shilling’. Issue 2, however, appeared as ‘August 1937’, to be followed by 3, ‘Autumn 1937’. Next came issue 4, March 1938, 5, ‘Summer 1938’, 6–7, ‘March 1939’, 8–9 ‘August 1939’, 10, ‘October 1939’, and finally 11, ‘Winter 1939–40’. There was also a ‘Wartime Broadsheet’ 1 (undated, but presumably from 1940); printed on a single quarto sheet, this broadsheet printed six poems and clearly envisaged further editions. The slightly erratic approach to part identification suggests a degree of improvisation, not uncommon for small magazines (‘the world of the Little Magazine is . . . tied to life by the merest thread’⁵). Broadly, the magazine was probably conceived as a biannual, but a further issue was inserted when possible and a number of one-off decisions taken. Thus there were three issues in the first year of publication, two in the second, and, again, three during 1939 (or four or five or six, if one takes into account the two double issues, and issue 11 which spanned 1939–40). Issue 8–9 was headed ‘Eistedfodd edition’ which presumably motivated its double issue status, and it is, indeed, longer than any other issue, though not twice the length; issue 6–7 is shorter, its double issue status perhaps lent by the inclusion of ‘Franz Kafka—two Unpublished Fragments’, as advertised in its banner, even though these were short texts. By issue 11, there were reasons beyond those affecting the usual literary magazine for uncertainty, and though a further issue was referred to in issue 11 as due to appear on ‘March 25th, 1940’, this, alas, did not appear. *Wales* did reappear before the end of the war, with issues in 1943–4, and then resumed publication with further issues between 1949 and 1958. *Welsh Review*, edited and founded by Gwyn Jones had only one pre-war series, and was perhaps more professional and confident in its general approach, with regularly spaced monthly issues from February to December 1939, and again in 1944–5 and 1948–9. Both magazines owed their existence to the initiatives of individuals who collected together groups of sympathetic, aspiring, and largely Welsh contributors. This individual initiative is exemplified by the fact that in the case of both magazines, their editors had to found small presses to print them, since there were then no ‘dedicated English-language publishers’ in Wales.⁶ Thus, Keidrych Rhys established the Druid Press in Caermarthen, and Gwyn Jones the Penmark Press in Cardiff specifically in order to print *Wales* and *The Welsh Review*. Both presses survived after the war,

⁵ Roland Matthias, ‘The Lonely Editor: A Glance at Anglo-Welsh Magazines’, in his *A Ride Through the Wood: Essays on Anglo-Welsh Literature* (Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan: Poetry Wales Press, 1985), 289.

⁶ See CREW ‘Annotated Bibliography of the Anglo-Welsh Short Story’, Part 1.

the Druid Press, later publishing R. S. Thomas's first collection (*Stones of the Field*) in 1947 and the Penmark Press publishing Gwyn Jones's *The Buttercup Field*, in 1946.⁷

In the case of *Wales* contributors included, in Glyn Jones's summary, Dylan Thomas, Vernon Watkins, Idris Davies, Margiad Evans, Rhys Davies, Emyr Humphries, and Caradoc Evans, as well as the non-Welshmen [*sic*] James Hanley, Hugh MacDiarmid, George Barker, Julian Symons, Philip O'Connor, and D. S. Savage.⁸ In the case of *Welsh Review* Jones listed Geraint Goodwin, Jack Jones, Alun Lewis, W. H. Davies, Huw Menai, Ernest Rhys, Wyn Griffith, Brenda Chamberlain, and, in translation, Kate Roberts.⁹ Glyn Jones omits some contributors, focusing on those he felt established a significant reputation as 'Anglo-Welsh' writers. To his list of *Wales* authors could be added the regular contributors Ken Etheridge, Ewart Evans, Charles Fisher, Nigel Heseltine, and John Prichard, as well as more occasional figures such as Robert Herring, Goronwy Rees, Ruthven Todd, and Llewellyn Wyn Griffith.

These writers were mainly youthful ('the younger progressive Welsh writers', says the text on the subscription form to issue 1), most with literary reputations to make or sustain. Both periodicals provided them with very welcome and regular publication opportunities. Before the two Welsh magazines were launched, the young Glyn Jones, at least, had found a limited niche for his work in Ireland: 'There was no Anglo-Welsh magazine in existence then . . . so I sent three pieces to the *Dublin Magazine*, edited by Seumas O'Sullivan, who accepted them with some enthusiasm, although he explained he was unable to pay for them.'¹⁰ Contributors to *Wales* and *Welsh Review* also published their work in many other contemporary 'little magazines' ('I spent my school holidays at that time in London picking up obscure "little magazines" that I could send my work to'¹¹), and the Anglo-Welsh magazines did their best to support their peers. Thus *Wales 2* carried as its final page an advertisement for issue 5 of Julian Symons's *Twentieth Century Verse*, listing the authors featured in that edition and the fact that the first four issues could still be obtained (more suitable than the first advert the magazine carried in issue 1, for a holiday house for rent in the Wye Valley¹²). For both the current issue and the previous issues of *Twentieth Century Poetry* the advertised authors included a number also connected to *Wales*: Keidrych Rhys himself, Philip O'Connor, Ruthven Todd, Glyn Jones, Gavin Ewart, and Dylan Thomas. Issue 3 quadrupled the amount of

⁷ There seems to be no substantial discussion of the Druid or Penmark Press available; the Druid Press is referred to in passing in the biographical entry for Keidrych Rhys in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (online edition), 2007.

⁸ Jones, *The Dragon has Two Tongues*, 34.

⁹ *Ibid.* 35.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 31.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 35.

¹² In fact this was an advertisement placed by Margiad Evans—sent in with her review of Glyn Jones's short story collection, *The Blue Bed*. See John Harris, '“Not a Trysorfa Fach”': Keidrych Rhys and the Launching of *Wales*', *The New Welsh Review*, 3:3 (Winter 1990), 31.

advertising carried, with adverts on its last four pages. Two of these notices, one from Faber and Faber advertising the important 1937 Anglo-Welsh publication *Welsh Short Stories*, and one from 'New Books, 4 Parton Street... Postal Trade a speciality', look at first like more commercial propositions, while the remaining two adverts draw attention to two plays 'of colliery life' by *Wales* contributor Ken Etheridge, which had been awarded British Drama League prizes in 1936 and 1937, and to another 'little magazine', *Programme* (issue 22), edited by Denzil Dunett at Corpus Christi, Oxford. In fact, 'New Books' had also become the distributors of *Wales* by issue 3, and their advert, as well as featuring a simple but strikingly modernist orthography which arranged its central text in a descending diagonal from the top left to bottom right of the page, also drew attention to the other 'little magazines' it distributed, *New Directions* and *Contemporary Poetry and Prose* and to its recent notable publications, Dylan Thomas's *18 Poems* and a translation of Kafka's *Metamorphoses*. The point is a simple one: these magazines did their best to support their authors through drawing attention to their work and by support for other literary magazines (there was probably no revenue involved: Meic Stephens suggests the payment was in kind through mutual advertising 'quid pro quo'¹³), and by encouraging subscribers to take more than one such periodical. Subsequent issues carried advertisements for 'little magazines' including *Life and Letters To-Day* (edited by Robert Herring), *Seven*, *Poetry*, *The Voice of Scotland* (edited by Hugh MacDiarmid), *Townsman*, and, less expectedly, *Right Review*. *Life and Letters To-Day* was the most regular advertiser, with a notice in the majority of pre-war issues of *Wales* and of *The Welsh Review* as well.¹⁴

Wales

The periodicals' self-conceptions were variously expressed. The first number of *Wales* immersed the reader immediately in a creative text ('Confident, ear-catching and barely comprehensible'¹⁵), rather than starting with any statement about the purpose of the magazine. The text is Dylan Thomas's 'Prologue to an Adventure', and that title and that text were presumably signalling several things about the nature of this magazine, as too was the choice of author, since, as John Harris observes, 'unquestionably Dylan Thomas was the jewel in the Anglo-Welsh

¹³ Meic Stephens, '“The Third Man”: Robert Herring and *Life and Letters To-Day*', *Welsh Writing in English*, 3 (1997), 162.

¹⁴ *Life and Letters To-Day*, indeed, also published so many of the writers featured in both *Wales* and *Welsh Review* that Glyn Jones gives it an honorary Welsh status in his 'Bibliographical Note' on Anglo-Welsh writing at the end of *The Dragon Has Two Tongues*. There were five St David's Day numbers of *Life and Letters To-Day* between 1940 and 1948 devoted to Welsh writing—see Stephens's substantial note, '“The Third Man”', 157–69.

¹⁵ Mathias's description in 'The Lonely Editor', 299.

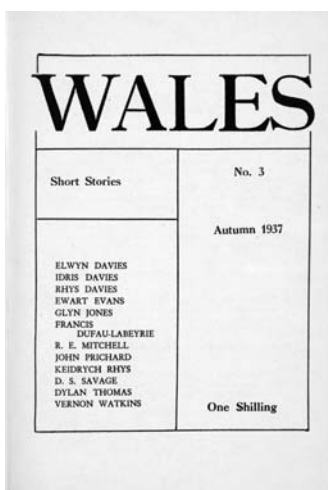


Fig. 82. Cover of *Wales* (Autumn 1937)

crown'.¹⁶ In fact, the 'Prologue' actually starts on the cover, which prints half of its first sentence above the names of the eleven contributors to that issue, breaking off at a point where it is possibly but not clearly complete: 'As I walked through the wilderness of this world, as I walked through the wilderness, as I walked through the city with the loud electric faces and the crowded petrols.' On turning over the cover, this sentence is repeated together with its completing clauses and followed by the remaining five pages of Thomas's text. 'Text' seems the right word, both because the generic nature of the text is difficult to determine and because it has allusions to biblical, prophetic texts (including a character called Daniel, and an apocalyptic conclusion). The element of surprise deriving from the plunge into the 'Prologue' on the cover, followed by its repetition (and the text is, anyway, repetitive) is reinforced by the disorientating continuation of the narrative and by its surreal and sexually explicit content:

As I walked through the skyscraping centre... the tempter of angels whispered over my shoulder, We shall be naked but for garters and black stockings, loving you long on a bed of strawberries and cream, and the nakeder for a ribbon that hides the nipples.¹⁷

The bewildering journey through a lurid wilderness which is city, pub, and brothel, and in which all temptations are manifestations of the devil seems designed to *épater*

¹⁶ Harris, '“Not a Trysorfa Fach”', 28.

¹⁷ Dylan Thomas, 'Prologue to an Adventure', *Wales*, 1 (Summer 1937), 2. All references to issues of *Wales* between 1937 and 1940 are to the continuously numbered one-volume reprint of the first eleven issues by Frank Cass in 1969.

les bourgeois through both style and content, but also to suggest that this is the underworld of the bourgeois society where 'Destruction slept', where people hurry by 'on the narrow errands of the world, time bound to their wrists or blinded in their pockets'.¹⁸ The first person speaker and the character Daniel seem to be artists travelling through this world: 'what is the colour of the narrator's blood?' demands a voice which may come from a loudspeaker, and from which, 'a wooden voice', calls for 'Brandy for the pilgrim and the dreamer'.¹⁹ At any rate, only these two figures survive the drowning of the city: 'Daniel and I stood alone in the city. The sea of destruction lapped around our feet.'²⁰ They are perhaps true prophets beside the fake prophecy of the loudspeaker, which a wave catches in its mouth, sucking up 'the wood and music'.²¹ This text seems to promise readers of *Wales* a journey into the underworld, but also a cleansing mission beyond, thus promising both shock and redemption. The adventure to which this startling text is prologue is presumably the artistic adventure of the new magazine in a hostile world (the texts which follow in *Wales* 1 do not all live up to the sinfulness or obscurity promised by Dylan Thomas: some tend to the more straightforwardly lyrical and/or clearer social themes).

For a plainer statement about intentions, readers of *Wales* had to wait until the final page of issue 1 on which was printed a subscription form. Three-quarters of this was taken up by what is clearly a manifesto, with the characteristically insistent paragraphing and gnomic phrases of the form, beneath the subheading, 'An independent pamphlet of creative work by the younger progressive Welsh writers'. The adjective 'progressive' here presumably suggested that the magazine was broadly leftist and artistically experimental. The text which follows focuses centrally on issues of nationality. It is worth quoting in full:

British culture is a fact, but the English contribution to it is very small. Mac-Diarmid told the Scots that they could gain nothing by joining forces with the English and aping their mannerisms.

There is actually no such thing as 'English' culture; a few individuals may be highly cultured, but the people as a whole are crass.

Welsh literature is carried on, not by a clique of moneyed dilettantes, but by the small shopkeepers, the blacksmiths, the non-conformist ministers, by the miners, quarrymen, and the railwaymen.

The Kelt's heritage is clear as sunlight, yet the burden of English literature has also fallen upon him. The greatest of present day poets are Kelts.

We publish this journal in English so that it may spread far beyond the frontiers of Wales, and because we realise the beauty of the English language far better than the English themselves, who have so shamefully misused it.

We are beyond the bigotry of unintelligent fascist nationalism.

¹⁸ Thomas, 'Prologue to Adventure', 1, 5

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 4.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 6.

²¹ *Ibid.* 5.

In case the English should claim our contribution for their own, we produce this pamphlet, calling it 'Wales' in defiance of parasitical adoption.

Though we write in English, we are rooted in Wales.²²

The notice mounts a strong critique of the very idea that there is any genuine 'English' culture, asserting instead that the national culture of the United Kingdom is better termed 'British culture' because it largely stems from Celtic inspiration. The argument draws inspiration from Scottish nationalism (and implicitly from Irish nationalism), citing MacDiarmid's view that English culture had nothing solid to lend. The next move in the argument appears to make a concession to the fact that there are cultured individuals in England, but in fact, this is to draw attention to another defect of English culture: its limitation to a small elite and the (resulting?) crassness of the bulk of the population. The following sentence reinforces the idea that in England 'culture' is a minority taste, and, anyway, merely a hobby for the rich. This sets up the contrast with Welsh culture which is represented as democratic and organic, being part of the lives of the several types of workers of Wales; while the 'Keltic heritage' is clear, the English have so mismanaged their culture that they even have to rely on Celts for any real continuation of their literature. Nevertheless, the English are so addicted to colonization that the title of the journal is itself a defence against an expected theft of its cultural achievements. However, lest the journal is thought to be narrowly (Welsh or in general?) nationalist, there is the disclaimer of any connection to 'unintelligent fascist nationalism'.

The trenchant critique of English culture helps to clear the ground for the short and finally stated but actually central argument: 'Though we write in English, we are rooted in Wales.' There need in this context be no suspicion that the English language of these creative writers is a sign of betrayal. The journal may do English culture some good (it certainly seems to need an infusion), but it fully realizes the weakness of English and the contrasting strength of Welsh culture. This journal comes from Welsh experience, not English (though the additional motive given that the journal is to be published in English so that it may spread beyond the borders of Wales suggests that the English language does have some artistic attractions too). The manifesto does not make any direct statement about aesthetic preferences; the listed creators of a strong Welsh culture ('small shopkeepers, the blacksmiths, the non-conformist ministers . . . miners, quarrymen, and the railwaymen') suggest on the one hand a certain continuity with older traditions and on the other a democratic base among modern industrial workers, as much as any specifically modernist aspirations of the kind suggested by the style of Dylan Thomas's 'Prologue'. However, Thomas's prologue perhaps does share the manifesto's feeling that English, or anglicized, culture, if that can be equated with

²² Last page of issue 1. The adverts or other papers at the end of each issue were not paginated.

the ‘Prologue’s’ nightmarish urban milieu, is feeble and ripe for destruction: ‘As I walked through the wilderness of this world . . . that winter night before the West died.’²³ At the conclusion of Thomas’s piece, fake urban culture is submerged beneath resurgent natural forces: ‘the glass lights on iron went out, and the waves grew down into the pavements.’²⁴ It is, of course, not necessarily the case that magazines have an entirely agreed agenda, and as John Harris acutely points out, correspondence between some of the principal figures behind *Wales* and other cultural commentators suggests that there were indeed some fissures. Harris quotes from Goronwy Rees’s letter to Keidrych Rhys:

Can we speak of ourselves as rooted in Wales when so much of the *Idiom* in which *Wales* is written is that of contemporary English letters of the most fashionable and Bloomsbury kind . . . If, as you say, you really are of the People, you must write a language that the people can read.²⁵

Harris also quotes a letter from Dylan Thomas which is unenthusiastic about the political and nationalist dimension of *Wales* to which Keidrych was increasingly committed: ‘the contents should be, in the best sense, “contemporary”, new and alive and original. I do not think it should be stridently Welsh in tone or approach; that is, that Welsh politics should not enter into it.’²⁶ Peter MacDonald Smith’s observation that ‘the first series of *Wales* forebore to distinguish between politics and literature’²⁷ nicely suggests that the magazine did not in its published form draw attention to or clarify such fissures (he also finds, like Goronwy Rees, an uncertain mapping between aesthetic preferences and political intentions).²⁸

In *Wales* 1, the ‘Prologue’ was the only prose piece of creative writing (though there were two book reviews at the end), the following seventeen texts all being poems. Many of these works which lay between ‘Prologue’ and Subscription are unified by a similarly strong apocalyptic vein, often drawing on a contrast between the once unspoiled rural and the violence and squalor of modern city life. This does indeed seem rooted not only in all too realistic fears about the present and future, and in fears of urban modernity, but also in a Welsh cultural perception that English colonization has visited modern evils on an essentially pastoral culture. Thus in Glyn Jones’s poem ‘Scene’, which immediately follows ‘Prologue to an Adventure’, the speaker throughout contrasts once or still rural parts of Wales with its industrialized areas:

²³ Thomas, ‘Prologue to an Adventure’, 1. ²⁴ *Ibid.* 6.

²⁵ Quoted in Harris, ‘“Not a Trysorfa Fach”’, 29. The letters are those in the National Library of Wales’s Keidrych Rhys collection.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Peter MacDonald Smith, ‘Poetry, Politics and the Use of English: The Periodicals and the Anglo-Welsh Tradition’, *New Welsh Review*, 1:3 (1988), 64.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

This is the scene, let me unload my tongue,
 Discharge perhaps some dirty water from my chest.
 The north swells bunioned with Pumlimon whose
 Side leaks water like some rusty old
 Boiler's brickwork. . . .
 Circuited thus my crumpled country lies.

The speaker knows that rural lives are possible still in Wales: 'I might have been and liked it, born like you | Westward, or north beyond the crooked coalfields.' But he belongs to the coalfields, 'I grieve above five valleys leaning | suppliant against my unstruck rock.' However, if there is grief, there also seems to be pride in his birthplace in the somewhat ambivalent lines:

I hear my heart speak to the bleaky sky,
 Coal and the valleys were my lucky egg,
 As though some bird should scribble his short song.²⁹

The word 'scribble' might suggest that the bird has marred or carelessly transcribed his song, but perhaps this is a comment on the relative imperfection of the heart's speech: there is a love for this scene with its contrast between the effects of coal and the natural landscape, and it is this which may give this poet his song.

Similar effects can be found in further poems in the issue. Nigel Heseltine's sequence of six 'Poems' is heavily influenced by *The Waste Land*, with its opening line, 'Alone in the waste places', and its parodic quotations evoking the hollowness of contemporary culture, mixing different voices and contrasting modern life with nature and tradition:

O were I born in Greenland's shore
 Guin[n]ess is good for you
 Sing baby sing . . . please

 fresh daffodils . . . all fresh cut
 read the quality newspaper
 BACH is so spiritual my dear³⁰

Some of the themes of English modernist poetry are imported here through the homage to Eliot, but equally those concerns map quite well onto genuinely Welsh interests in the impact on Wales of modern, mass-produced, English (and American) culture. The contrast is important in much of the poetry published in this first issue as well as in later ones.

²⁹ Glyn Jones, 'Scene', *Wales*, 1 (Summer 1937), 7–8.

³⁰ Nigel Heseltine, 'Poems', *ibid.* 11–12.

In Idris Davies's 'Interlude' the setting is London ('now that man prepares for doom'), but the poem's speaker brings 'a bullfinch on my thumb':

O happy boy on my London thumb,
Sing for an hour when sunset drapes
The riverside with strange embroidery,
And pipe your loudest when the placards scream
Of disasters and dictators and cinema-stars and drugs.³¹

Llewellyn Wyn Griffith's urgent 'Madam Rumour' is similarly haunted by thoughts of the decay of a once fertile land:

here, now, in this dowered land
where children grow to idleness and youth dies
into empty days on the pavement, here.³²

And so is Keidrych Rhys's penultimate (and MacNiece-like) poem in the issue, 'Cartoon Done in Something Will Be Done Week':

For Wales is far from beaten yet, my boy
While we all sign and save
Quaker Oats coupons for the grave

Come back a spring
Said the foreman of the oilworks
Not a bloody cuckoo cried Dai's song.³³

The two final pieces of the issue, reviews of two recent publications, show a related sense of the emptiness of contemporary (English) culture and of the difficulties of representing Wales without it being distorted by the English. Thus Aneirin Ap Gwynn's sarcastic review, titled 'No Errata: No High Spots', of H. I. Bell's *The Development of Welsh Poetry* (Oxford University Press) alleges, in a highly idiomatic form, that Welsh poetry is portrayed in the volume as part of a marginal and archaic culture:

Mr H. Idris Bell, the Keeper of the MSS. and Egerton Librarian, British Museum . . . is apologetic, which cuts no ice with us, as the blurb proclaims it as the authoritative goods. Grandpa and young Mr David Bell help with translations, all archaic; Islwyn, a modern: thus [:] 'Lo, above time's cloudy ramparts, / o my soul, behold the land' . . . Cynan, Prosser Rhys, Saunders Lewis, the only vigorous

³¹ Idris Davies, 'Interlude', *Wales*, 1 (Summer 1937), 17.

³² Llewellyn Wyn Griffith, 'Madam Rumour', *ibid.* 19.

³³ Keidrych Rhys, 'Cartoon Done in Something Will Be Done Week', *ibid.* 26.

element in Modern Welsh Poetry aren't quoted... Still this rehash might have some value to the scoffers and Anti-Kelts, as the lists are at least accurate.³⁴

Modern Welsh-language poets are here the victims of old men and English misrepresentation. So too Glyn Jones in his review of Rhys Davies's novel *A Time to Laugh* draws attention to the difficulties Welsh writing in English faces because of its Welshness:

As Welsh writers go Rhys Davies is undoubtedly a bigshot, a good bit of a pioneer, one of the first to get the valleys across on the English in the face of indifference, prejudice and a good deal of press-engendered hostility.³⁵

(One notices particularly the phrase 'get the valleys *across* on the English'.)

After this striking opening issue, *Wales* 2 (August 1937) in many ways continued the abrasive tone of issue 1's final reviews, though it began, in a formal sense, more conventionally than 1, by opening with an unsigned editorial headed 'As You Know'. At times this gives a more straightforward rationale for the magazine's existence than anything in issue 1, though, as its title might suggest, it also uses allusion and sarcasm to illustrate the obstacles which Welsh writing in English faces:

The present-day problems of the real Welsh writer are many, varying tremendously from those of others writing across our frontier... What do we want to do? Without money, it is hard to answer. If we are given a reasonable chance we hope to print work by our younger writers—an opportunity denied them in the English Literary Map of log-rolling, cocktail parties, book clubs, knighthoods, O.M.s, and superannuated effeminacy in Bloomsbury editorial chairs.

Wales is to provide publishing opportunities for Welsh writers who cannot operate in the peculiar world of English literary culture, represented here as superficial, class-ridden, and 'degenerate' (that is, both elderly and effeminate—the homophobic slur also being repeated later in the editorial: 'Granted there is a certain amount of pansy competition'³⁶). By contrast, the editorial suggests that *Wales* will print works of real literary merit, avoiding both the mock-aesthetic English literary establishment and the more democratic-seeming, but actually equally fake 'standardized individuality—Priestley's jolly, beer-drinking workingman'.³⁷ The final paragraph similarly seeks to distance the magazine from the fatal attractions of mass culture (represented not as effeminate like 'high' culture, but as 'feminine', and thus similarly inferior to the implicit clear-thinking masculinity with which the editorial associates the magazine's cultural mission). This rhetoric builds up to the final understated appeal to readers who want to help a minority culture to survive:

³⁴ Aneirin Ap Gwynn, 'No Errata: No High Spots', *ibid.* 28.

³⁵ Glyn Jones, review, *ibid.* 30.

³⁶ 'As you know', *Wales*, 2 (Aug. 1937), 37.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

We are told Mr Bernstein finds that the patrons of his cinemas like Gary Cooper and Norma Shearer best . . . The women preferred: (1) Society Drama, (2) Thriller-Adventure, (3) Musical Comedy, (4) Love-Romance, (5) Comedy, (6) Historical, (7) War. It all seems so very simple.

Again we ask for your support if we are to survive.³⁸

The editorial also 'recorded' some reactions to issue 1 (one suspects the editor takes some pride in having met the hostility which any self-respecting avant-garde magazine should provoke):

Criticism of No. 1 was seldom tonic. We've been accused of trying to be 'European' . . . We've been labelled WELSH POETS (before vaguely used for the Hopkins influence) trying to found a Sound School against the purposeless Life of Meaning; accused of staging an irish [*sic*] renaissance of violent racial hatred, with a smokescreen of the resurgent Nationalism of 'rural' areas.³⁹

However, the final page of issue 2 also printed more conventionally positive praise of the magazine from three papers, *The Welsh Nationalist*, *South Wales Evening Post*, and *The Western Mail*, and there was a further round-up of 'Opinions of Wales No. 1' on the opening page of issue 3, including Caradoc Evans's well-known response: 'I like its note and courage. It is easily the best thing that has come out of Wales. It is nice to look at a list of contributors without a *Parch* [minister]', and the *Liverpool Post*'s patronising, 'Very amusing about the English.'⁴⁰

The Welsh Review

For *Wales* the above editorial was a unique event in its pre-war issues, whereas *Welsh Review* carried an editorial in every issue. In this respect, *Welsh Review* 1 was more conventional than *Wales* 1, opening with a statement about its purpose and rationale by its editor, Gwyn Jones:

For more than ten years there has been talk in Wales of a journal for the English-speaking Welshman and here it is . . . Three questions have been put to me often these last months. Why is the Review to be entirely in English? What is its intellectual standard? What is its attitude towards questions of the day?⁴¹

Perhaps understandably, given that the editorial marks *Welsh Review* as a new, original, and necessary venture, this takes no notice of the existence of *Wales* for the

³⁸ 'As you know,' *Wales*, 2 (Aug. 1937), 37.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 35.

⁴⁰ Unnumbered page preceding p. 81.

⁴¹ First sentence quoted is the third sentence of the editorial. Gwyn Jones, Editorial, *The Welsh Review*, 1:1 (Feb. 1939), 1, 4.

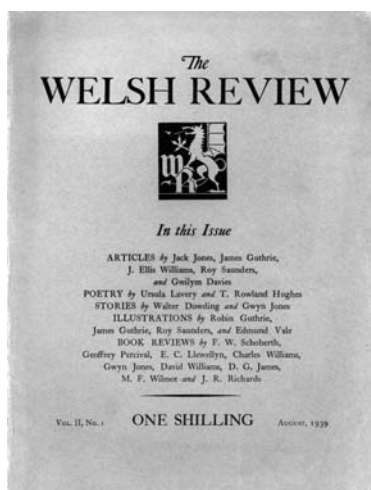


Fig. 83. Cover of the *Welsh Review* (Aug. 1939)

previous three years.⁴² The lucid, measured discussion at once signals a different tone from the provocative, sarcastic, and elliptical style of commentary in *Wales*'s manifesto, single editorial, reviews, and notices, while its subtitle, 'A Monthly Journal about Wales, its People, and their Activities', suggests a broader focus than the mainly literary ones of *Wales*. The editorial goes on to a careful discussion of the three questions posed. There is a notable stress, in several of the answers given, on the economic necessities which underlie the production of such a magazine. Thus one answer as to why the magazine is wholly in English is that while 'there are many arguments against a bilingual magazine[,] this one is sufficient: such an experiment would be doomed to swift and utter financial failure.'⁴³ Equally, the timeliness of a new Welsh magazine is also a matter of supply:

It is a new journal for a new day, and one impossible of realization before the emergence during the 1930's of a considerable number of new writers of ability—and sometimes more than ability.⁴⁴

This concern with the practicalities of launching a successful literary magazine in no way prevents the editorial from also suggesting that it has high aspirations and a cultural mission, but it is nevertheless keen to lay bare its marketing concerns—the challenges which may be surmountable given sufficient support.

Thus there are other reasons given for the English language medium:

⁴² As Roland Matthias observes, 'Curiously, it makes no mention whatsoever of Keidrych Rhys's *Wales*' (Matthias, 'The Lonely Editor', 300). John Harris comments that Gwyn Jones 'remained firmly outside the circle of *Wales*, thoughts turning to his own literary periodical' (Harris, "Not a Trysorfa Fach", 29).

⁴³ Jones, 'Editorial', 4.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 1.

It is perhaps the most spectacular manifestation of the mental activity of the district [South Wales] [*sic*] that the last few years have seen the emergence of a group of young writers (young in age or work) who for the first time are interpreting Wales to the outside world... They are as diverse as the land that gave them their rich if ragged heritage, but I believe firmly that they will soon be recognised as the most valuable leaven in English literature since the Irishmen opened insular eyes at the beginning of the century.⁴⁵

There was some common ground here with *Wales's* manifesto, in that Welsh writing and its beneficial effect on English culture is compared to the impact of Celtic culture more generally. However, there is a much more positive sense of interpreting Wales to England and beyond than in the comparable passages from *Wales* discussed earlier. The editorial also has a strong sense of what the magazine can do for Wales, and why Anglophone Welshmen [*sic*] need it:

If they have lost their language they have not lost their nationality, and fiercely resent any suggestion that they have... I have been told the greater the success of the WELSH REVIEW the worse it will be for Wales... the opposite is true. Can any work be more useful to Wales, as things are, than to keep the English-speaking Welshman bound to their homeland? And can it be done better than by fostering and encouraging in what we expect to be a large following an awareness of their Welshness?⁴⁶

Such a mission seems to be especially important under current pressures from the threat of war, economic crisis, and centralization, when 'migration and the industrial depression, the War Office invasion of Wales and the increasing regimentation of our lives, threaten more and more the subtle flavour of minorities'.⁴⁷

The editorial's response to its own second question about its intellectual standards is also notably calm compared to the aggressive claim for artistic identity in the *Wales* editorial. It appears to engage at first in precisely the kind of distinctions of taste and class, mass and elite culture, drawn on by the *Wales* editorial, through engaging with the notion of classification by 'Brow': 'I have been asked by potential readers and contributors, what is our standard? Or, better still: what is our height of brow?' (5). Where *Wales* tried to distance itself through sarcasm from what it represents as the effete English 'highbrow' and the allegedly mock democratic 'middlebrow' of J. B. Priestley, Gwyn Jones here gives a much more nuanced answer:

What is our height of brow? The matter has never troubled me. Briefly, we speak to and for men and women of mind. Not necessarily to those of remarkable education or attainment, but to all those interested in values and not unwilling to think. This rules out nobody except those who, at one end of the scale or the

⁴⁵ Jones, 'Editorial', 1.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 4.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 5.

other, will in any case never bother to read us. There are dons who despise not detection, and colliers who tackle Kant; and in Wales more than any other place it will not do to equate that abstraction 'the man in the street' with a flabby-minded sloucher around the racing papers... Familiarity with the phenomenon can never prevent astonishment at the reading and fervour for good things of the mind displayed by our fellow countrymen in the mines and quarries.⁴⁸

The replacement of the commonly invoked thirties hierarchy of low-brow/middlebrow/highbrow with 'men and women of mind' was an incisive counter-move against such a rigid and essentially exclusive schema.⁴⁹ Men and women of mind are not sociological types or abstractions, but individuals with an openness to thought. The argument suggests that this broad and informal range of thinking people is particularly to be found in Welsh culture, with its democratic interest in learning.⁵⁰ Indeed, Gwyn Jones points out that he is himself from 'a mining home'. This may suggest a more receptive cultural climate in Wales than in England, but does not exclude the possibility that there too is a potentially broad readership for such a magazine. The first *Welsh Review* editorial, then, did draw on some similar ideas to those in the *Wales* manifesto and editorial, but to very different effect, suggesting the possibility of broad interest rather than giving readers the (perhaps invigorating) feeling of being members of an endangered minority of intellectuals.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ There has been some interesting recent work bearing on the development of hierarchies of taste conceived in terms of 'brows' (high, low, and middle) in both the USA and Britain (the term having somewhat differing histories in the two cultures). For general relevant discussions see Sean Latham's *Am I a Snob?: Modernism and the Novel* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003); Lawrence Levine's *Highbrow, Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); Herbert Gans, *Popular Culture and High Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1974); John Guillory's *Cultural Capital* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); and Peter Macdonald's *British Literary Culture and Publishing Practice 1880-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). There has also been work focusing on specific authors or kinds of writers, including, for example, Jane Dowson's, 'The Listener and the Myth of the Middlebrow', *Working Papers on the Web*, 6, June 2003 (<http://extra.shu.ac.uk/wpw/>); Nicola Humble's, *The Feminine Middlebrow Novel, 1920s to 1950s: Class, Domesticity, and Bobemanism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001); and Jennifer Shepherd's, 'Marketing Middlebrow Feminism: Elizabeth von Arnim, the New Woman and the Fin-de-Siècle Book Market', *Philological Quarterly* (Winter 2005), 105-31. See also Mary Grover: *Cultural Embarrassment and Middlebrow Authorship: The Ordeal of Warwick Deeping* (London: Associated University Presses, 2008).

⁵⁰ See Jonathan Rose's chapter on 'The Welsh Miners' Libraries' for discussion of the institutions which tended to support in many ways a democratized intellectual culture in Wales from the nineteenth century onwards in his *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Class* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2001), 237-55.

As for its stylistic preferences, this opening *Welsh Review* editorial is again more explicit than corresponding non-fiction passages in *Wales*:

The WELSH REVIEW is not the mouthpiece of a coterie... Above all, the Editor does not regard himself as a steam-roller appointed to flatten out the styles and opinions of his contributors. It will be found that next month's poems are strikingly different from this month's. You may think them better, because more experimental; you may think them worse. The attitude of the WELSH REVIEW is that it prints poetry, not a sectional notion of poetry. And so with our other creative work.⁵¹

In a way this states a preference for a broad and mixed aesthetic, but equally it also points out that it will publish experimental poetry and fiction. There is also an important statement about the magazine's wish to relate to Welsh culture in all forms, including the Welsh language: 'Although conducted in English [it] will recognise the unique importance of the Welsh language and the distinctive national culture inseparable from it.'⁵² Translations of works in Welsh were particularly sought—confirming the magazine's aspirations to bring all Welsh culture into its purview, especially so that any gap between Welsh-speaking and English-speaking Wales be diminished. This desire also fitted well with the outward-looking intention to draw the attention of English readers to Welsh culture broadly defined, since though there was much publication of Welsh language fiction and poetry in Wales, this was not generally translated.

This brief statement about aesthetics leads to another statement about the magazine's willingness also to publish factual material of public concern: 'such surveys of matters of importance as the one in this issue and the next on Public Health.'⁵³ Finally, and surely connectedly, the editorial discusses the magazine's attitude to current events and politics. The section opens with a modest-sounding disclaimer, 'I have little to say about our political standpoint,' but goes on to support 'humanitarian' values and democracy, 'which with all its... criminal dilatoriness and corruption, is infinitely better than totalitarianism of the right or the left.'⁵⁴ However, in recent times democracy has produced merely the 'freedom to go workless and ill-shod'.⁵⁵ The editorial then lists several examples of current abuses of so-called democracy, including the lack of any public control over the 'jumping profits' of armament manufacturers, and unconstitutional and imperial forms of oppression in Northern Ireland and Jamaica. In short, the stated political sympathies of the magazine were very much liberal-left. Indeed, the magazine depends for its continuation on a 'co-operative effort' from its readers. As for *Wales*, but even more explicitly, the importance of active engagement with the magazine by its readers and subscribers as a *sine qua non* was to be a running theme. Issue 2

⁵¹ Jones, 'Editorial', 5–6.

⁵² *Ibid.* 7.

⁵³ *Ibid.* 6

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

saw an 'important change in format' simultaneously implemented and announced, designed to make sure that there would be future issues: the 12 point font of issue 1 was reduced to 10 point, delivering the equivalent of '10 extra pages of reading matter' and thus giving readers, the editor assured, excellent value for their subscription (though it also made the journal look more conventional with content taking precedence over style).⁵⁶ The editorial in 1:6 (July 1939) observes that 'these are not good days for literary journals. The publishers of books say these last nine months are the worst they have ever known,'⁵⁷ while that to 2:1 (August 1939) not surprisingly acknowledges that things have got even worse over the past month: 'The WELSH REVIEW has weathered a bad storm . . . first and foremost we need subscribers.'⁵⁸

Welsh writing in context

Both *Wales* and *Welsh Review* had a reasonably consistent (but differing) internal organization. Thus *Wales* generally printed poetry and short stories first and then concluded with two or so book reviews and, after issue 1, with an author bibliography in its series of 'Bibliographies of Modern Welsh Authors' (the first, in issue 2, devoted to Caradoc Evans). *Welsh Review* always started with an editorial and always included a piece towards the conclusion about the international situation, called 'Beyond Our Frontiers'; there were often too, in addition to short book reviews, quite substantial essays on cultural or literary topics, such as John Cowper Powys's 'Welsh Culture' and 'Mulciber's' 'The Future of the Industrial Novel in Great Britain'.⁵⁹ *Welsh Review* was much more interested in theatre than *Wales*, carrying a number of pieces about Welsh small theatres, and was also distinguished from the other magazine in regularly printing woodcuts and engravings (the editorial in 1:3 specifically said that the magazine 'would welcome more illustrators'⁶⁰). Artists included Reynolds Stone, Brenda Chamberlain, who also published poetry in the magazine, and her husband, R. John Petts.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Though the font size in 1:1 did give a clearer and much more attractive reading experience, this was clearly felt to be much less of a priority than doing his best to ensure the magazine had a future.

⁵⁷ Gwyn Jones, Editorial, *The Welsh Review*, 1:6 (July 1939), 305.

⁵⁸ Gwyn Jones, Editorial, *The Welsh Review*, 2:1 (Aug. 1939), 3

⁵⁹ John Cowper Powys, 'Welsh Culture', *The Welsh Review*, 1:5 (June 1939), 255–63; and 'Mulciber', 'The Future of the Industrial Novel in Great Britain', *The Welsh Review*, 2:3 (Oct. 1939), 154–8.

⁶⁰ *The Welsh Review*, 1:3 (Apr. 1939), 121.

⁶¹ See Meic Stephens's entry in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (online) for a brief account of her career, including her involvement with a small press, in the thirties and forties.

Both magazines were generally socially minded and progressive and much of their content, poetic, fiction, and non-fiction reflected concerns with the consequences, especially for Wales, of current crises in economics and politics and the probability of another war (though the advert-like full-page political notice carried by *Wales* at the end of issue 2 was only repeated once—it proclaimed simply, using an effective variety of font sizes, style and spacing: ‘26% of Welshman Unemployed | BREAD IS DEARER | England Spends 1500 millions on ——— WAR ———’).⁶² However, in the main, *Welsh Review* tended to engage with politics in more direct ways than *Wales* in its substantial non-fiction pieces and features, though this may partly have been because by the time of its first edition war looked more immediate than ever. Roland Mathias comments that the regular features ‘suggested that *Welsh Review* was aiming at a continuity which the vaguely radical outbursts of *Wales* had disregarded’, though he also feels that the creative work did not always have the same direct political engagement as the non-fiction pieces.⁶³ For both magazines, the outbreak of war was a calamity in political, cultural, and practical terms. *Wales*, 1:10 (October 1939), carried the magazine’s second political notice, again on its final page, which parodied a theatre advert: ‘*Now running* | Repeat Performance of the Stupendous Success— | “The War to End War”’ (an acknowledgement to the ILP was printed at the bottom in very small type).⁶⁴

Issue 11, the last pre-war number, as it turned out, carried the subtitle ‘Future Veterans?’ above the title page list of contributors. As mentioned earlier, the next issue, ‘which will appear on March 25th, 1940’, did not appear (Contents page issue 11). Instead a single-page *Wales Wartime Broadsheet No. 1* was published, presumably around March 1940. This printed poems by Llewellyn Wyn Griffith, Davies Aberpennar, William Empson, Glyn Jones, and D. Kighley Baxendall, all bearing, unsurprisingly, on the war. The *Broadsheet* packed as much as it could into its format—there was a list of contents at the head and a subscription notice at the foot, which was headed ‘How You Can Help the “Welsh Renaissance”’. It contained instructions and exhortations in one sense familiar, but in other ways more desperate and more concise, about subscribing and also urged ‘support for those magazines, *Life and Letters To-Day*, *Horizon*, *Heddiw*, *Seven*, *Now*, *New Directions* etc., which are giving our young fighting writers a platform’. It made the inclusive appeal: ‘Whatever your job send us your next poem * But remember: PAPER is scarce; STAMPS come hard.’ There was, however, no further broadsheet. Readers of *Welsh Review* did get some, if brief, warning of its (temporary) demise in

⁶² Both the political notices and ‘posters’ are discussed by Peter Macdonald Smith in ‘Poetry, Politics and the Use of English: The Periodicals and the Anglo-Welsh Tradition (3)’, *New Welsh Review*, 1:3 (1988), 63.

⁶³ Matthias, ‘The Lonely Editor’, 300.

⁶⁴ Presumably the notice was based on an ILP leaflet or poster, but it is not clear how closely.

the form of a slip pasted onto the front page of 2:4, which stated that *Welsh Review* 'will cease publication with the November number'. Presumably neither magazine was allocated a paper ration and therefore had no choice but to close. *Welsh Review* had, at least, had a chance in the editorial of its penultimate number to make a statement about the relationship between the magazine's work and the war: 'The *Welsh Review* stands for just those values of creativeness, tolerance, goodwill and understanding that we are fighting this war to maintain.'⁶⁵ At the same time, its final pre-war editorial suggested that the magazine was likely to speak against dangers arising from within, when it criticized the insensitive placing of English-speaking evacuees in Welsh-speaking households without any thought about how this might work for those concerned and noted that, as always, 'the Englishman is a coloniser of inescapable efficiency'.⁶⁶

Changes in the later editions of the two magazines published in the period are concisely summed up by Peter MacDonald Smith:

Wales appeared in three series and very diverse these series were: between 1937 and '39, the magazine was given over mainly to poetry... Its stance was modernist, its style iconoclastic. When its second series appeared in the last years of the war (1943–1949) the feel for controversy had gone, and with it the priority for poetry... and the magazine's drift was social rather than literary... The *Welsh Review* appeared in two series. Its first... offered prose on a variety of topics of Welsh interest, mainly with a radical and contemporary bite... Its second series (1944–48) appealed to the general but educated reader.⁶⁷

The two magazines had an enormous impact on the development of Welsh writing in English and, in parallel, on the development of a large number of talented Welsh writers in English. Both motivated the uses of a thirties modernist aesthetics mainly in poetry, drawing on T. S. Eliot and Auden, but also at times in prose. In both genres, modernist techniques and ideas were deployed to relate to a particularly Welsh context, with textual fragmentation and modern urban/pastoral contrasts often pointing to a specific cultural and colonial experience. Gwyn Jones, reviewing the achievement of *Welsh Review* in its first volume, could justifiably claim that it was significant:

The first touchstone is quality... A list of big names is in itself no guarantee of superlative quality... but those who have read our pages month by month will, I am sure, not put down to editorial complacency my claim that our contributors have produced between them a journal second to none of its kind in Great Britain.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Editorial, *The Welsh Review*, 2:4 (Nov. 1939), 127.

⁶⁶ Ibid. 184.

⁶⁷ Peter MacDonald Smith, 'The Making of the Anglo-Welsh Tradition (i)', *New Welsh Review*, 1:1 (Summer 1988), 61.

⁶⁸ Gwyn Jones, Editorial, *The Welsh Review*, 1:6 (July 1939), 297.

Between them, *Wales* and *Welsh Review* can be said to have provided a place where a new literary tradition, that of Anglo-Welsh writing, or as it is now better named, Welsh writing in English, with its complex relations to two cultures and languages, could develop its voice. If there were influences from English socially responsible and/or surrealist veins of thirties modernism, there was also much in the magazine's work which stemmed from a particularly Welsh experience, both in the poetry and in the short story which was so important to Anglo-Welsh writing. Glyn Jones points to the remarkable new cultural productivity to which both magazines contributed:

In 1917 the body of contemporary work to choose from . . . presupposed by an anthology, just did not exist. Keidrych Rhys's *Modern Welsh Poetry* appeared during the next war, in 1944, and in the intervening twenty-seven years a very considerable amount of verse written in English by Welshmen had appeared, both in individual volumes and in such periodicals as *Wales*, *The Welsh Review* and *Life and Letters Today*.⁶⁹

The two Anglo-Welsh magazines, *Wales* and *The Welsh Review* . . . published stories by . . . Dylan Thomas, Caradoc Evans, Nigel Heseltine . . . Rhys Davies, Geraint Goodwin, Llewellyn Wyn Griffith, Gwyn Jones and Margiad Evans. It was in this climate of interest and encouragement that many of the early Anglo-Welsh of this century began their writing careers.⁷⁰

Peter McDonald Smith rightly sees the two magazines as establishing a genealogy for the literary periodical in Wales, and, using Glyn Jones's imagery, gives a strong sense of just how profound and enduring was their achievement, despite their struggles to survive:

Before 1937 . . . there was little talk of an Anglo-Welsh poetry, none at all of a tradition. Glyn Jones (b. 1905) remembers writing his early poems from 'the dead centre of a vast poetic wilderness, a sort of moon-scape, chilly, twilit, deserted, almost featureless'. The wilderness began to take shape in the late thirties. Two years after Rhys's *Wales*, Gwyn Jones brought out *The Welsh Review*. From *The Anglo-Welsh Review*, to *Poetry Wales*, from *Mabon* to *Planet*, these six magazines have done more than merely publish the English poets of Wales. They have given these poets a sense of cohesion, taming and shaping the wilderness, and investing their work with the cachet of a tradition.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Jones, *The Dragon has Two Tongues*, 136.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 53.

⁷¹ Smith, 'The Making of the Anglo-Welsh Tradition (i)', 61. The quotation from Glyn Jones is from a Letter to *Poetry Wales*, 7:3 (1971), 7.

FROM REVOLUTION TO REPUBLIC: MAGAZINES, MODERNISM, AND MODERNITY IN IRELAND

The Klaxon (1923), *The Irish Statesman* (1923–30), *The Dublin Magazine* (1923–58), *To-Morrow* (1924), *Ireland To-Day* (1936–8), and *The Bell* (1940–54)

FRANK SHOVLIN

Introduction

Once the three modernist Titans of Beckett, Joyce, and Yeats are removed from the equation, not a great deal has been written about modernism and Irish writing. The critical assumption has been, for good reason, that while an avant-garde experimentalism thrived in continental Europe throughout the 1920s and 1930s, it is difficult to trace any such tendency in Ireland. John Wilson Foster notes that ‘Ireland is not charted in Bradbury and McFarlane’s geography of Modernism, nor Dublin enrolled among its cities.’¹ Terence Brown, one of the few critics alert to the range of possible—and sometimes apparently contradictory—ways to look at Irish modernism, sees in the Irish literary magazines of the period a particular unwillingness to embrace the modern. Brown writes of ‘an absence of that urge to make it new which so informed the manifestoes, treatises and prophesies which had publicized modernist ambition since early in the century.’ As an example he cites *The Dublin Magazine* of the 1930s which, though publishing experimental poetry by writers like Lyle Donaghy and Samuel Beckett, had about it an air of artistic

¹ John Wilson Foster, ‘Irish Modernism’, in *idem, Colonial Consequences: Essays in Irish Literature and Culture* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1991), 45. And see Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane (eds), *Modernism 1890–1930* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976).

conservatism. 'The shock of the new', continues Brown, 'is absorbed in the general atmosphere of cultivation and informed, self-consciously urbane taste.'²

As far back as 1867 the polymath Richard Robert Madden pointed to Irish exceptionalism when it came to the question of periodical publication: 'It would be a folly to contrast the progress of periodical literature in Ireland with that of England, with any useful result without reflecting on the political condition of the former country, and the fortunate circumstances of the latter.'³ The same strictures apply to the period under consideration here, those difficult, protean decades after the Anglo-Irish and Civil Wars. While British magazines emerging from the 1920s like T. S. Eliot's *Criterion* and John Middleton Murry's *Adelphi* were chiefly concerned with debating issues of an aesthetic nature, Irish magazines in the same period had the task of questioning issues of identity, of attempting not just to uncover new talent or to set the artistic tone, but to define the culture of a new nation.⁴ James Devane, in a 1936 essay for *Ireland To-Day*, was clear on how he saw the role of the 'little magazine' in the new state: 'Until we create within that English medium a native periodic and cultural press, native readers, we shall be a Yorkshire, a Lancashire, a few isolated counties within a British culture.'⁵ Newness in a political and national sense, then, was at least as important to the editors I will discuss as was newness in art and writing.

Wyndham Lewis's *BLAST* (1914–15) is perhaps the best known and most celebrated British modernist magazine. Its aggressive, insistent approach to art and life is reflected in its explosive title. A similar desire to be heard and noticed is evident in the titles of four of the six magazines considered here: *The Klaxon* (1923), *To-Morrow* (1924), *Ireland To-Day* (1936–8), and *The Bell* (1940–54). The other two titles, *The Irish Statesman* (1923–30) and *The Dublin Magazine* (1923–58), though more muted in title and tone, nonetheless made some intriguing modernist intercessions over the course of their existence. It is unsurprising that the modernizing, revolutionary urge evident in contemporaneous British magazines like *Left Review* (1934–8) and *Fact* (1937–9) should be crystallized in an even more powerful way in the magazines of a country not yet twenty years old, straining to be recognized and noticed above the din of a world hurtling towards a second catastrophic world war in twenty-five years.

² Terence Brown, 'Ireland, Modernism and the 1930s', in Patricia Coughlan and Alex Davis (eds), *Modernism and Ireland: The Poetry of the 1930s* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1995), 27, 28.

³ Richard Robert Madden, *The History of Irish Periodical Literature, from the End of the 17th to the Middle of the 19th century, Its Origins, Progress, and Results; with Notices of Remarkable Persons Connected with the Press in Ireland during the Past Two Centuries*, 2 vols (London: T. C. Newby, 1867), i. 82.

⁴ For a thorough and intriguing discussion of the jousting between Eliot and Middleton Murry see David Goldie, *A Critical Difference: T. S. Eliot and John Middleton Murry in English Literary Criticism, 1919–1928* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

⁵ James Devane, 'Nationality and Culture', *Ireland To-Day*, 1:7 (Dec. 1936), 16.

Despite Brown's feelings about the anti-modernist tendencies of *The Dublin Magazine* and of cultural life generally in post-revolutionary Ireland, he does see some overlap between modernism and nationalism. 'Both responded', he argues, 'to a perceived international crisis and sought in history explanations for, and solutions to, the challenge of the present moment.'⁶ He concludes his essay by making an intriguing comparison between one of the canonical texts of conservative Irish-Irelandism, Daniel Corkery's *Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature* (1931), and T. S. Eliot's manifesto, *Notes towards a Definition of Culture* (1948).⁷ Certainly in the case of the Irish literary periodical of this period there is a marked intersection between literature and politics, an intersection commented on by Richard Kearney:

some of this country's most inventive thinking and writing over the last one hundred and fifty years was produced in cultural journals such as *The Nation*, *The United Irishman*, *The Irish Statesman*, *An Claidheamb Soluis*, *The Bell* and others—journals which refused the polarization of literature and politics into opposed discourses and believed that the struggle for a new national identity was best served by combining imaginative creativity with a keen sense of social commitment.⁸

Kearney is correct in seeing the Irish literary periodical as a genre holding interest for both the political and the literary scholar, and it is this combination of disciplines and concerns that makes the journal such a powerful means of understanding Irish cultural and historical trends.

Young guns: *The Klaxon* and *To-Morrow*

Terence Brown considers 1922, the year in which *Ulysses* was published and the Irish Free State came into being, as an interesting intersection between literary and historical modernism.⁹ Patricia Coughlan and Alex Davis have described the foundation of the Free State as 'a modernist "event" in its own right'.¹⁰ While the emergent Free State is ordinarily associated with social and political conservatism—a conservatism reflected in its periodicals as much as in its public life—there emerged within this cautious new polity a small group of angry and impatient young writers eager to tear up the old rule book of Celtic revivalism and push for a fresher and more cosmopolitan artistic practice. Two notable examples of this vigorous protest are *The Klaxon* (1923) and *To-Morrow* (1924), fugitive and short-lived journals organized around small cliques of avant-garde Irish writers.

⁶ Brown, 'Ireland, Modernism and the 1930s', 38.

⁷ See *ibid.* 39–41.

⁸ Richard Kearney, *Transitions: Narratives in Modern Irish Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 250.

⁹ See Brown, 'Ireland, Modernism and the 1930s', 24.

¹⁰ Patricia Coughlan and Alex Davis, 'Introduction', in Coughlan and Davis (eds), *Modernism and Ireland*, 13.



Fig. 84. Cover of *The Klaxon* (1923)

T. S. Eliot, when launching *The London Magazine* some thirty years after the failed experiments of *The Klaxon* and *To-Morrow*, wrote that the first function of a literary magazine, ‘is to introduce the work of new or little known writers of talent’.¹¹ For young Irish writers like Francis Stuart, Liam O’Flaherty, and F. R. Higgins, seeking a forum in the years after revolution, there was a definite impatience and dissatisfaction with the publishing options available to them. An older generation of writers like AE, Susan Mitchell, and Seumas O’Sullivan had, by 1923, reached a settled maturity in artistic development. They were indebted to a Celtic twilight aesthetic, an aesthetic which had, in the eyes of many, run its course. For all that, writers such as these played a crucial role—AE and Mitchell through their running of *The Irish Statesman*; O’Sullivan with his *Dublin Magazine*—in encouraging emerging young talent in the Free State. But for many, this encouragement was not coming with sufficient speed, urgency, or radicalism, and it is from this disgruntled group that the first two journals I wish to discuss emerged.

The Klaxon: An Irish International Quarterly carries in its subtitle a signpost to the desires of an emerging post-revolutionary generation of Irish writers.¹² Described by Tom Clyde as ‘Ireland’s first (and last?) fiercely Modernist magazine’, *The Klaxon* was intended as a quarterly but made only one appearance.¹³ At its helm was a writer calling himself L. K. Emery, a pseudonym for A. J. ‘Con’ Leventhal. Leventhal, born in 1896 to a Dublin Jewish family and educated at Trinity College,

¹¹ T. S. Eliot, ‘A Message’, *The London Magazine*, 1:1 (Feb. 1954), 16.

¹² I am grateful to Dr Martin Dyar for helping me to source *The Klaxon*.

¹³ Tom Clyde, *Irish Literary Magazines: An Outline History and Descriptive Bibliography* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2003), 179.

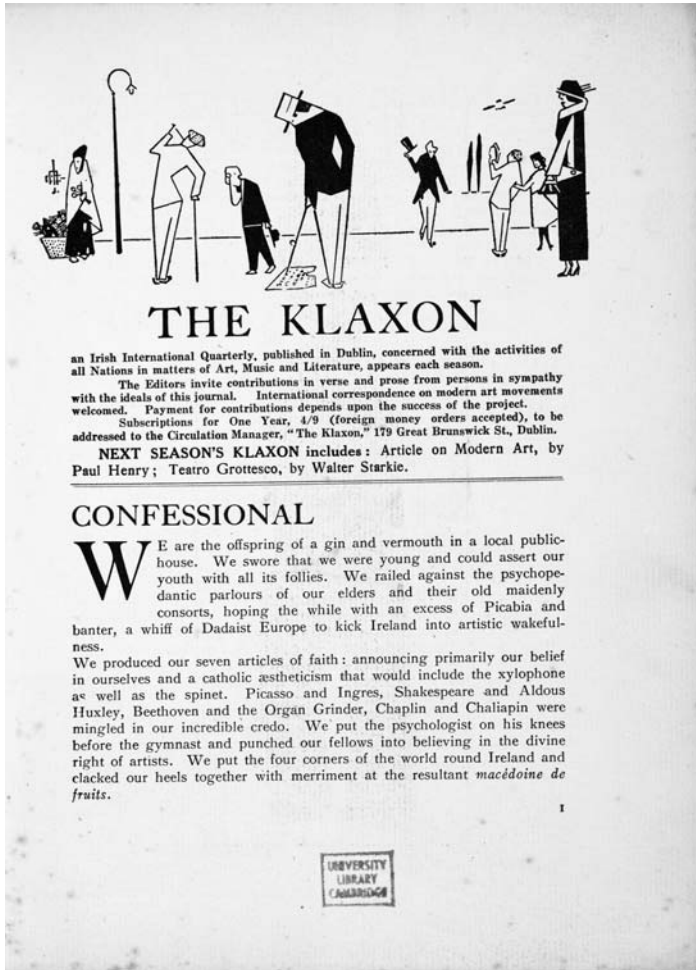


Fig. 85. Title page of *The Klaxon* (1923)

Dublin, was an early Irish advocate of Joyce's *Ulysses*, and in subsequent years a friend and secretary to Samuel Beckett. Having had a lengthy review of *Ulysses* turned down by Seumas O'Sullivan at *The Dublin Magazine*, Leventhal formed his own periodical and gathered about him a number of writers with modernist and experimentalist tendencies. In addition to publishing the enthusiastic review of *Ulysses*, Leventhal also wrote a tongue-in-cheek editorial manifesto titled 'Confessional' in which he advertised his belief in a modernist aesthetic and attacked his country for its tired traditionalism:

We are the offspring of a gin and vermouth in a local public-house. We swore that we were young and could assert our youth with all its follies. We railed against the

psychopedantic parlours of our elders and their old maidenly consorts, hoping the while with an excess of Picabia and banter, a whiff of Dadaist Europe to kick Ireland into artistic wakefulness . . . **‘YOUNG MEN MUST NOT INVEST IN SAFE SECURITIES’** says Cocteau in block capitals. We fling our speculative bonds on the waters and assert our lustiheaded youth.¹⁴

Immediately following this short editorial is another brief commentary from F. R. Higgins titled ‘Beauty Energised’ in which a decisive break is declared from Revival aesthetics: ‘We cannot become part of the group, in whom the fire of art is smoked into cinders, with a continual flow of exacting conversation. Like our Gaelic stock we are bred of the sun, of the mountain-top; the twilight for us, in our aristocratic remoteness, is just the purple smoke of the day’s fire.’¹⁵ In that insistence on the autonomy of the individual and in the distancing from the Celtic Twilight, there are echoes of James Joyce’s youthful credo, ‘The Day of the Rabblement’. Whether this influence is intended is not clear, though Joyce is the presiding, if absent, eminence behind this journal. *The Klaxon* was brought into being, after all, with the sole purpose of Leventhal’s essay on *Ulysses* being published.

‘The Ulysses of Mr. James Joyce’ is an intelligent, prescient, and measured essay which does not share the undergraduate pugnacity of *The Klaxon*’s editorial. It is a model of modernist observation in which Leventhal voices his concern about the mediocrity of the world. ‘This is an age of glib tongues and cheap ink,’ he writes. ‘Commercialism swings its iron hammer on all things, and art has not escaped.’ *Ulysses* is an antidote to such staleness and has gathered about it all that is good about the modern mind. It thus becomes part of a modernist movement encompassing a variety of arts:

Mr. Joyce is essentially the product of his age, or perhaps, as with all genius, a little ahead of it. In him we find collected all the strivings of the modern world. That which stands out most is the kinship between him and the modern painters. This year’s pictures at the Salon d’Automne have precisely the same effect as *Ulysses* on the conventional mind. It calls the true ugly, because truth comes in the shape of a squatting lady with an abundance of fat. If convention permits the regarding of nudes, then let them be as remote from reality as possible. But the revolution had to come. Artists could not be content to live in a world of inhibitions. Freud had begun to look at psychology in his own particular way.

Leventhal goes on to compare *Ulysses* with the work of the Dadaists and concentrates on the long, surrealist ‘Circe’ chapter. Though clearly in awe of the work, he is not entirely uncritical. ‘To seek a logical explanation of everything that takes place in this too long chapter,’ he writes, ‘would be an idle occupation.’ No direct

¹⁴ L.K.E., ‘Confessional’, *The Klaxon*, 1:1 (Winter 1923–4), 1–2.

¹⁵ F.R.H., ‘Beauty Energised’, *ibid.* 2.

attack is made on Irish Puritanism but it is made clear repeatedly that artistic enlightenment is to be found in France:

Naturally his reception in Paris was more cordial, for all the greatest French writers look upon life with their eyes open. In these parts we are in the position of the pupil of Carrière who asked his teacher how he could attain excellence in painting. *Choose your subject, said Carrière, close your eyes, and paint what you see.*¹⁶

As inoffensive as this may read to us now, for Ireland in 1923 it was strong stuff, powerful enough for Leventhal to write it using a pseudonym and for *The Dublin Magazine* to refuse to print it.

Among the other contributors to *The Klaxon* were Francis Stuart (then publishing under the name H. Stuart), Percy (Arland) Ussher—who provided a not uncontroversial English translation of the opening section of Brian Merriman's bawdy eighteenth-century Gaelic classic, *Cúirt an Mheán Oíche*—and Thomas MacGreevy. Of this list MacGreevy is the most immediately recognizable name to students of Irish modernism. As a friend to both Beckett and Joyce in Paris of the late 1920s and early 1930s he formed part of a small but influential group of exiled Irish artists and was a contributor, along with people like Beckett and William Carlos Williams, to the still influential exegesis of Joyce's 'Work in Progress', *Our examination round his factification for incamination of work in progress* (1929). MacGreevy's experimentalist poetry was praised by Beckett and his interests ran to both literary and visual arts.¹⁷ It is on this latter category that he writes for *The Klaxon* in defence of the Irish Cubist Mamie Jellett. While Leventhal was restrained in criticism of his country's conservatism, MacGreevy was less forgiving: 'Miss Jellett is the first resident artist to exhibit a cubist picture in Dublin, and our critics are as hopelessly at sea in front of her work as her benighted predecessors were about Picasso and Othon Friesz and Matisse in 1912.' Yet while recognizing Paris as the centre of artistic innovation MacGreevy is not as Francophilic as his editor:

Mastery cannot be taught. That is why Miss Jellett does not need to go back to Paris. She, too, has learned all that France can teach her, and her future depends upon herself. So far as the aesthetic value of her work is concerned, it is of no consequence whether it is done in Paris, in Dublin, or in Ballydehob.

The essay, and *The Klaxon*, finishes with an unexpectedly nationalist and Anglophobic flourish in which MacGreevy declares that 'Our art teachers are in the grip

¹⁶ Laurence K. Emery, 'The Ulysses of Mr. James Joyce', *The Klaxon*, 1:1 (Winter 1923–4) 15, 16, 19, 20.

¹⁷ For an interesting discussion of MacGreevy and *The Klaxon*, see Tim Armstrong, 'Muting the Klaxon: Poetry, History and Irish Modernism', in Coughlan and Davis (eds), *Modernism and Ireland*, 43–74.

of the English tradition—the worst of all traditions in painting,’ and calls for the replacement of Dutch and English masters hanging in the National Gallery with Irish artists like James Barry and George Barrett.¹⁸

Several of the writers involved with *The Klaxon* re-emerged the following summer to contribute to a new monthly literary journal titled *To-Morrow*. Priced at a very reasonable sixpence and printed as a tabloid, *To-Morrow* was spoiling for a fight from the outset. It is now famous in Irish literary history because of the refusal of Irish printers to work on it because of the presence on the opening page of the first issue of Lennox Robinson’s short story, ‘The Madonna of Slieve Dun’, in which an innocent country girl, after having been raped on the feast day of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, believes herself, like her heroine, Mary, to be with child as a result of divine visitation. In a profoundly Catholic and moralistic young country, the story is clearly meant as a gauntlet thrown at the feet of Church and State, and subsequent cries of innocence must be viewed as disingenuous. The story had serious knock-on consequences, not only spelling the end for *To-Morrow*, which produced just one more issue, but for Robinson who lost his job with the Carnegie Library Service. It was a lesson not lost on Robinson’s young friend, Michael O’Donovan, who from thenceforth published only under his pseudonym of Frank O’Connor.

But ‘The Madonna of Slieve Dun’ is, in fact, only one part of a journal designed to confront and to offend. It is no accident, surely, that the poem W. B. Yeats chooses to submit to the first issue, ‘Leda and the Swan’, also involves a rape, or that Liam O’Flaherty’s short story ‘A Red Petticoat’ revolves around sexual blackmail on a remote western island. A quick glance at the editorial confirms for the reader the sense that here is a new Ireland keen to stress its independence both from conventional Catholic control and from the artistic rules of the past:

We are Catholics, but of the school of Pope Julius the Second and of the Medician Popes, who ordered Michaelangelo and Raphael to paint upon the walls of the Vatican, and upon the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, the doctrine of the Platonic Academy of Florence, the reconciliation of Galilee and Parnassus . . . What devout man can read the Pastorals of our Hierarchy without horror at a style rancid, coarse and vague, like that of the daily papers? . . . We condemn, though not without sympathy, those who would escape from banal mechanism through technical investigation and experiment. We proclaim that these bring no escape, for new form comes from new subject matter, and new subject matter must flow from the human soul restored to all its courage, to all its audacity.¹⁹

¹⁸ Thomas McGreevy, ‘Picasso, Mamie Jellett and Dublin Criticism’, *The Klaxon*, 1:1 (Winter 1923–4), 23, 25, 26. ‘Mc’ was preferred to ‘Mac’ at this early point in MacGreevy’s career.

¹⁹ H. Stuart and Cecil Salkeld, ‘To All Artists and Writers’, *To-Morrow*, 1:1 (Aug. 1924), 4. There has been some speculation that W. B. Yeats was the author of this editorial. See, for example, Clyde, *Irish Literary Magazines*, 180.



Fig. 86. 'Cinema' from *To-Morrow* (Sept. 1924)

The declaration that 'technical investigation and experiment' are to be condemned does not chime with the contents of the journal which is almost everywhere unorthodox. Among the contributors was Joseph Campbell, recently released from a stretch in prison for his support of the anti-Treaty Irregulars in the Civil War of 1922–3. Alex Davis has commented elsewhere on Campbell's Imagist borrowings and on T. S. Eliot's praise for his *Earth of Cualann* (1917).²⁰ And here, too, in his poetic sequence based on unhappy wartime experiences, there is a marked move away from romantic revivalism and towards a starker, formally looser poetry:

²⁰ Alex Davis, 'The Irish Modernists and Their Legacy', in Matthew Campbell (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Contemporary Irish Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 77.

It was a time of trouble—executions,
 Death, searches, nightly firing, baulked
 escapes—
 And I sat silent, while my cellmate figured
 Ruy Lopez' Gambit from the 'Praxis.'
 Silence.
 Best fitted with our mood: we seldom
 spoke.²¹

Poems from Francis Stuart, Blanaid Salkeld, and Charlotte Arthur are similarly experimental, though F. R. Higgins's contributions still have about them a recognizably pastoral and westward-looking impulse more readily associated with the Revival.

When it comes to the question of artistic innovation and cultural credo, then, *To-Morrow* seems at times to be hopelessly confused. Francis Stuart, having declared his suspicion of modernity in the editorial for issue 1, then goes on to write on the centrality of atomic physics to any future understanding of the world, be it artistic or otherwise. 'The Atomic Theory may come to be the root of many new philosophies,' writes Stuart, who goes on to call for a thoroughgoing revision of received philosophical ideas:

Before we can accept such a philosophy we want our minds cleared of many centuries of dross. We have heard the cry of 'Back to Kant!' That is the cry of a mind in a blind alley, which has to go back before it can go on. The Atomic Theory seems to have shown us, if it has shown us anything, that we are in a blind alley, or perhaps, to use a more enlightening metaphor, are walking round and round in a circle like the positively charged electrons of the atom itself.²²

It is tempting to see in Stuart's manifesto an early influence on Flann O'Brien's comic masterpiece *The Third Policeman*, written by 1940 but not published until 1966, in which the central tenets of atomic theory are used to hilarious ends in the setting of a rural police station. It is difficult to find evidence, however, that any other Irish writer was paying attention.

But it would be wrong to dismiss *To-Morrow* out of hand as the ramblings of a bunch of young cranks. Con Leventhal (again writing under the pseudonym L. K. Emery), the key mover behind *The Klaxon*, also became involved with the *To-Morrow* group and provided a cogent review of Liam O'Flaherty's novel *The Black Soul* (1924). The review suggests that O'Flaherty is making a bold break with the recent past in writing a hard, elemental novel utterly different from anything produced by the Revival which, in Leventhal's view, had singularly failed

²¹ Joseph Campbell, 'As I was among the Captives', *To-Morrow*, 1:1 (Aug. 1924), 2.

²² H. Stuart, 'A Note on Jacob Boehme', *ibid.* 5.

to produce a fictional masterpiece. 'Mr. O'Flaherty', writes Leventhal, 'has rid himself of the "malaise" of the century. He is not afraid of passion or of instinct. He is not conscious of complexes or inhibitions.' Leventhal then concludes by comparing O'Flaherty favourably to one of early modernism's key figures: 'It is rather the comprehension of the surviving instincts of our primordial life and the sudden urge we feel to return to them, or something like them, that matters. Knut Hamsun has already done for the soil what Liam O'Flaherty has now done for the sea, but the latter is the intenser artist.'²³

O'Flaherty saw *To-Morrow* as a useful tool to gather about him a school of like-minded young geniuses to assist him on his rise to the top. A letter of April 1924 to his friend and supporter, the influential reader for Jonathan Cape, Edward Garnett, is expansive about future possibilities. In it O'Flaherty foresees a sort of literary coup d'état against the old guard of the literary revival:

I licked all these swine here into a cocked hat. I wound them all round my fingers. I got AE to give me a thundering review. I got all the old women to praise me. Now that I have fooled them all I am telling these damned intellectuals what I think of them in choice scurrilous language. I have gathered a group of faithful followers about me and am starting a monthly paper called *Tomorrow*.²⁴

It is difficult to take O'Flaherty seriously here. Other than his one story in issue 1, he has no other evident involvement, and if the magazine does have one central figure it is Francis Stuart, husband of Iseult Gonne and son-in-law of Maud Gonne. It was almost certainly these connections that landed 'Leda and the Swan' for the journal and also saw Iseult contribute to the second and last issue. Yet O'Flaherty's letter is symptomatic of a rebelliousness in the Dublin air. *The Klaxon* and *To-Morrow* were interesting if short-lived manifestations of this rebel spirit, but the Free State was in no mood to accommodate such youthful straining. If writers were to be heard they would have to find more cautious and respectable forums: it is at this point that AE and Seumas O'Sullivan come to the fore.

Holding the fort: *The Irish Statesman* and *The Dublin Magazine*

Both *The Irish Statesman*, a weekly periodical more directly concerned with politics and agriculture than with literature, and *The Dublin Magazine*, a cultural quarterly modelled on *The London Mercury*, were founded in 1923 by the already well-established Irish literary figures, George Russell (AE) and Seumas O'Sullivan (James Sullivan Starkey), respectively. By comparison with *The Klaxon*

²³ L. K. Emery, 'A Primitive', *To-Morrow*, 1:1 (Aug. 1924), 7.

²⁴ Liam O'Flaherty to Edward Garnett (n.d. [April 1924]), *The Letters*, selected and ed. A. A. Kelly (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1996), 88.

and *To-Morrow* these were conservative publications, but in their longevity and range of vision they have a good deal more to tell us about modern Irish culture than their shorter-lived competitors. O'Sullivan's cautiousness, as we have seen, was directly, if unknowingly, responsible for the emergence of *The Klaxon*. After initially accepting an article from A. J. Leventhal on *Ulysses*, he subsequently rejected the essay after a threatened strike by his printers, the Dollard Printinghouse. When the *To-Morrow* group attempted a similar liberal venture in 1924, they came up against the same problem as O'Sullivan when the printers refused to work on Lennox Robinson's 'Madonna of Slieve Dun' and they were forced to turn to printers in Manchester. *To-Morrow* disappeared after just two issues. Given that such de facto censorship existed in the country it would be unfair perhaps to blame O'Sullivan for the pragmatism with which he turned Leventhal away. There were no hard feelings: Leventhal later went on to be one of *The Dublin Magazine's* staunchest allies, becoming its theatre critic throughout the 1940s and 1950s and writing O'Sullivan's obituary in the final issue.

The whole issue of censorship, both of the unofficial variety enforced by prudish printers and of the official kind increasingly promoted by the State after the 1929 Censorship of Publications Act, is an important ideological battleground for both *The Dublin Magazine* and for *The Irish Statesman*. O'Sullivan's anxiety, evident through his occasional editorials and his choice of articles, regarding the Irish people's readiness to accept a singular, monolithic version of the nation's birth is almost certainly directed at the Irish Ireland philosophy that had gained considerable momentum since the end of the Civil War and which fed the calls for even greater censorship. This philosophy, which was associated chiefly with figures such as D. P. Moran, the journalist and editor of *The Leader* newspaper, and Daniel Corkery, the Gaelic League activist and successful writer, asserted the need for a purely Gaelic and Catholic civilization. Moran, wanting to protect Ireland from the influence of the foreign press, was an active supporter of literary censorship and by the mid-1920s *The Leader*, in conjunction with the Catholic Truth Society, had brought the issue to the forefront of Irish politics. In an article of May 1925 *The Leader* warned of the consequences for the nation should foreign influences continue to be imported: 'the disorganisation and disillusionment of very recent years has not only weakened the feeling against filthy papers, but like the fashion for objectionable dancing, the appetite for dirty papers, we fear, has grown.'²⁵

By the summer of 1928 a new Censorship of Publications Bill, attempting to broaden the interpretation of the terms 'indecent' and 'obscene' in existing legislation, was before the Oireachtas. In an issue of that year, O'Sullivan issued a carefully worded editorial on the subject. The article begins in an actively pro-censorship and pro-government manner:

²⁵ Quoted in Michael Adams, *Censorship: The Irish Experience* (Dublin: Scepter Books, 1968), 21.

The question of the censorship of literature is from the standpoint of legislation altogether a moral one. Our law-makers don't want to prohibit literature. They want to encourage it. But they do definitely want to prevent the unlicensed circulation of debasing and degrading publications of any sort. So far, their aim is excellent, and must receive the sympathy and support of every normal individual.

These comments are tempered, however, by a strongly worded conclusion that warns against a blanket censorship against all forms of literature:

The only concern of *The Dublin Magazine* with this subject is its relation to literature in its higher aspects of a creative art . . . As it is quite inconceivable that any man of genius would consent to act as a pimp or spy upon the work of his peers, the whole idea of censorship for creative literature is puerile, barren and futile from its very basis.²⁶

O'Sullivan's ambivalent stance on the subject is repeated a year later in Alec Brown's article 'The Good Censor'. Given that figures as diverse and as influential as George Bernard Shaw, Oliver St John Gogarty, Ezra Pound, and W. B. Yeats were actively campaigning against Irish censorship, the publication of such an article went against the grain of contemporary artistic consensus and points to a political and moral conservatism in O'Sullivan's editorial style.

'The Good Censor' partly takes the form of an attack on *Ulysses* and a defence of those who censored it. 'It is unquestionable', writes Brown, 'that one of the most distressing products of intense civilisation (multiplication of petty comforts, and of so called conveniences), in its urban centres, is the production of the *essentially vulgar and drab* lower middle class type of Leopold Bloom.' 'The book', he continues, 'should therefore have attracted the censor's attention especially for its characters and its general atmosphere, as likely to have a deleterious effect on the work of other writers.'²⁷ He accepts that a government-run office of censors may not be the ideal solution and proposes a censorship run by writers who will act as moral guardians for Irish literature. In such a scheme, he sees the 'little magazine' as having a role to play: 'The foundation for this corporate body of writers, moreover, already exists. It begins in that spontaneous consultation that goes on round every literary periodical.'²⁸ As it happened, government paid little attention to the debates and objections raised in periodicals and in the summer of 1929 a harsh new Censorship of Publications Act became law. In subsequent decades the worst fears of those writers who had argued against censorship became reality and almost every Irish literary figure of note had work banned in his native country.

²⁶ Seumas O'Sullivan, 'Editorial', *The Dublin Magazine*, 3:2 NS (Apr.–June 1928), 1, 1–2.

²⁷ Alec Brown, 'The Good Censor', *The Dublin Magazine*, 4:2 NS (Apr.–June 1929), 28.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 30.

One such writer was Francis Hackett, whose novel *The Green Lion* was banned in 1936 on the grounds of indecency. The hero of the novel is the son of a Catholic seminarian and passages in the book are critical of the Jesuit education system. The banning of *The Green Lion* was an especially harsh manifestation of thirties' censorship and prompted the seventy-three-year-old Hackett to leave Ireland permanently and take up residence in Denmark. His last literary act before leaving the country was to publish an article in *The Dublin Magazine* under the title 'A Muzzle Made in Ireland'. 'The Censorship law is repugnant to every instinct of a free man,' wrote Hackett, 'ignorant in its conception, ridiculous in its method, odious in its fruits, bringing the name of self-governing Irishmen into contempt.' The sense of betrayal and disgust in the direction that post-revolution Ireland had followed is powerfully captured. The article stands as perhaps the single most acerbic attack on Irish literary censorship, expressing as it does Hackett's deeply felt frustration and embarrassment with a country whose official evaluation of literature was determined more by religious affiliation than by aesthetic quality. For all the outspokenness of the article, however, it is interesting that O'Sullivan insisted Hackett remove a reference to contraception before publishing the piece.²⁹

O'Sullivan's caution should not be mistaken as straightforward conventionalism, however: *The Dublin Magazine* played a very important role in publishing new Irish writing over the course of its thirty-five years of existence. While much of this work was traditional and orthodox, the experimental and avant-garde was also accommodated as is clear from the consistent publishing in the 1930s of Beckett poems such as 'Alba', 'Gnome', and 'Cascando', Anna Akhmatova translations by Blanaid Salkeld, and appreciative essays on Joyce by Padraic Colum. Certainly the typical article, poem, or story remained a little staid, even old-fashioned, but O'Sullivan was a gifted talent spotter and was more willing to take an editorial risk than is often allowed by his critics.

AE, similarly, had an eye for young artistic talent, and censorship and the fight against it are as central to *The Irish Statesman* as they were to *The Dublin Magazine*. AE, the *Statesman's* editor, though a political conservative and a lifelong believer in the more mystical and romantic aspects of revivalism, was a keen supporter of new writing. Twenty years previously his *Irish Homestead* had been the first to publish James Joyce's short stories and now, in the early years of the Free State, he again sought out young talent. Many of those writers involved in the *To-Morrow* episode were published by AE. The two journals intersected in notable fashion when the *Statesman* of 5 July 1924, published a letter from the editors of *To-Morrow* apologizing for the non-appearance of the paper which had been advertised in the previous week's issue. Explaining the situation with the Robinson

²⁹ On this issue, see Frank Shovlin, *The Irish Literary Periodical 1923–1958* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 51–2.

story, they announced that they were ‘compelled to look outside Ireland for printers who will not interfere with the contents of a paper published in the interests of the arts’.³⁰

In the following issue Robinson wrote in to clarify his reasons for writing the story and to excoriate those who would limit freedom of expression. The letter evinces the disillusionment with the new state felt by many younger writers:

We are surrounded by bad art, bad politics, bad religion. My friends who have started *To-Morrow* believe in the immortality of the soul; they are certain that it is the absence of this belief that makes possible bad bishops, bad politicians, bad artists. The purpose of their paper is the overthrow of the unbelievers.³¹

For all of Robinson’s outrage, however, it is reasonable to imagine that AE would not have considered publishing an incendiary story like ‘The Madonna of Slieve Dun’. Concerned that *The Irish Statesman* might suffer the same fate as *To-Morrow*, he refused to publish Yeats’s essay in response to the controversy, ‘The Need for Audacity of Thought’; the piece was published ultimately in *The Dial* of February 1926 and in *The Criterion* of the following April. In later years of his editorship AE fought harder than anyone against the imposition of literary censorship. But, like Seumas O’Sullivan, he was a pragmatist and understood the strength of public feeling about religious matters better than many of the young firebrands he did so much to nurture.

The tremors of the *To-Morrow* affair continued to be felt for months after the journal’s demise and reactions to its failure form the most interesting public debate about modernist aesthetics in Ireland of the 1920s. Another of those whom AE encouraged and who was a contributor to both *To-Morrow* and to *The Klaxon* was F. R. Higgins. Much of Higgins’s early verse appeared in *The Irish Statesman*. When his collection *Island Blood* was published in 1925 AE wrote an enthusiastic foreword, and Higgins dedicated his next collection *The Dark Breed* (1927) to his mentor, whom he described as ‘most generous of givers’.³² If a great deal of Higgins’s poetry appeared in the *Statesman*, some striking and neglected contributions are present in the form of his letters to the editor. One such letter, written in collaboration with his friend Austin Clarke, posits some intriguing reasons for the changing aesthetic practice in the early years of the Free State. Titled ‘Art and Energy’, the letter may have been written partly in response to a review the previous week of Liam O’Flaherty’s first collection of short stories, *Spring Sowing* (1924). While written in admiring tones, the reviewer was reluctant to fully endorse O’Flaherty’s technique. ‘There seems something merciless in all literature nowadays,’ noted the reviewer, ‘an uprising of character hard and fierce, and our Irish writers are not out of the

³⁰ The Editors of *To-Morrow*, ‘*To-Morrow*’, *The Irish Statesman*, 2:17 (July 5, 1924), 526.

³¹ Lennox Robinson, ‘*To-Morrow*’, *The Irish Statesman*, 2:18 (July 12, 1924), 555.

³² F. R. Higgins, *The Dark Breed: A Book of Poems* (London: Macmillan, 1927), p. v.

current.³³ But Higgins and Clarke did not agree and were determined to endorse this emerging spirit in post-independence culture:

We are glad that Liam O'Flaherty has expressed enthusiastically a point of view that seems to us more real and productive, more virile and, therefore indicative of the new generation, than the dim and moral speculations of our younger brothers in the craft. It is realised that a new movement in Irish letters must take cognisance of the primal emotions of our time. Passionate events have changed the mind . . . It is necessary to be objective, elemental, to rejoice in primary colour and in the hard sun. Is not this intensity a reverberation of the present world emotion?

These are views similar to those espoused by Leventhal in his *To-Morrow* review of *The Black Soul* in which O'Flaherty was compared favourably with Hamsun. While acknowledging the importance of their literary forebears, Clarke and Higgins reject what they perceive as the overly stylized poetics of the Literary Revival: 'We cannot ignore the fine technique that has been our fortunate inheritance; yet we realise the dangers of preciousness, calling to mind the fact that poets, who handle their words as a miser his farthings—grow mean in spirit.'³⁴ This letter is one of the first documents to broach the idea that a new and modern literary aesthetic is needed in a country which has just emerged from revolutionary tumult.

Francis Stuart, *To-Morrow's* guiding hand, writing in the next week's issue, objected to the stance of 'Art and Energy', rejecting the notion that war could alter the course of literature: 'No movement, either in life or art, has ever sprung or been moulded but gradually from within. The mind is changed only by the mind.'³⁵ But the matter did not rest there and debate over the appropriate literary forms for the new state continued to enliven the letters pages over the following months and years. AE was moved to editorialize on the subject in April 1926 when he looked back on the course of Irish literature over the previous quarter century:

Irish literature has had the most astonishing transformations within twenty-five years. About the beginning of this century it had won international recognition as the most idealistic literature then being created. The conception of the Irish genius as imaginative, poetic and mystical, had hardly become established abroad when at home the younger Irish writers were in revolt against the idea of their elders, and now Sean O'Casey, James Joyce and Liam O'Flaherty are winning for Ireland the repute of a realism more intimate, intense and daring than any other realism in contemporary literature.³⁶

³³ S.L.M., 'Review of Liam O'Flaherty, *Spring Sowing*', *The Irish Statesman*, 3:7 (Oct. 25, 1924), 215.

³⁴ Austin Clarke and F. R. Higgins, 'Art and Energy', *The Irish Statesman*, 3:8 (Nov. 1, 1924), 237, 238.

³⁵ H. Stuart, 'Art and Energy', *The Irish Statesman*, 3:9 (Nov. 8, 1924), 270.

³⁶ AE, 'Notes and Comments', *The Irish Statesman*, 6:4 (Apr. 3, 1926), 89.

Others were not as willing to depart from past glories. Walter Starkie, for one, in a review article of January 1928, surveys with regret the effect of military conflict on Irish literature:

Ever since the years of Revolution in Ireland literature has ceaselessly reflected the sorrows and pessimism of sensitive writers whose minds are tossed in a surging sea of doubt and uncertainty. We are living in an age of crude realism, and it is only on rare occasions that the poet hears the goblins piping in dusky glen or watches the fairy fires on the mountain.³⁷

Among the more notable products of this post-revolutionary ferment, and writers of what Starkie would term 'crude realism' were Frank O'Connor, Peadar O'Donnell, and Seán O'Faoláin, who would themselves become key figures in the next wave of Irish literary magazines as represented by *Ireland To-Day* and *The Bell*.

The Bombshop: *Ireland To-Day* and *The Bell*

From Nietzsche's declaration, 'I am dynamite,' to Wyndham Lewis's *BLAST*, explosiveness forms a central motif in the history of modernism. For the editors of Ireland's most innovative 'little magazines' of the 1930s and 1940s respectively, explosions were more than metaphorical. By the age of twenty-three, Seán O'Faoláin, founding editor of *The Bell*, had taken part in two wars, one against the British and one against his countrymen. The experiences garnered as a combatant were to stay with him for the rest of his life and informed much of his fiction. Nowhere is this influence plainer than in his first book, *Midsummer Night Madness & Other Stories* (1932), a collection which quickly fell foul of the Censorship Board, thus starting O'Faoláin's long personal struggle against the Irish censors. Leo, the young IRA volunteer at the centre of the story 'The Bombshop', rails against Church and country in frustration as he wastes his youth mixing the chemicals to produce high explosives to fight the Black and Tans:

The whole Irish church is on the Augustine tack. They herd us in, they circumscribe us, they herd us up the gangway to Heaven, they take us by the scruff of the neck and shove us into Heaven whether we like it or not. They always did it, so overcome by the fear of Hell-fire that they have no time for the love of the Christlight.³⁸

³⁷ Walter Starkie, 'Literature and Life: The Fantastic in Literature', *The Irish Statesman*, 9:21 (Jan. 28, 1928), 479.

³⁸ Seán O'Faoláin, *The Collected Stories*, 3 vols (London: Constable, 1980), i. 116.

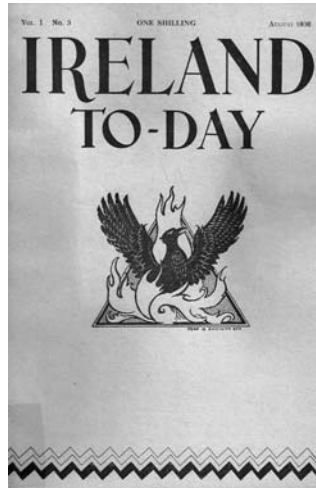


Fig. 87. Cover of *Ireland To-day* (Aug. 1936)

Such a passage was certain to raise the ire of the censors in Ireland of the 1930s, but to write it was a characteristically brave, or reckless, move by O'Faoláin and typical of an outlook that he would carry into his journalism.

Throughout the 1930s the power of the Catholic Church became increasingly visible in government policy; the Eucharistic Congress of 1932, celebrating fifteen-hundred years of Christianity on the island, was attended by hundreds of thousands of citizens drawn from every county; the campaign against the foreign corrupting influences of immodest literature, vulgar cinema, and jazz music reached new heights. In 1937 a new constitution, grounded in Catholic social principles, was accepted by the people. But there were other, more fugitive, aspects of Irish life in the 1930s which have not been given the attention they deserve. As in Britain, the political struggle of Right versus Left was a pressing factor. One manifestation of this fight was the emergence in 1936 of a journal titled *Ireland To-Day*.

Ireland To-Day represented a concerted attempt by Irish artists to fight against the increasing introversion and chauvinism of the Free State. The correct blend of emphases in the cultural periodical was a question to which T. S. Eliot had turned in rather different circumstances some ten years before the establishment of *Ireland To-Day*. In the first editorial of *The New Criterion* (1927–8) he appealed for a broader understanding of what constitutes literature: 'I have seen the birth and death of several purely literary periodicals; and I say of all of them that in isolating the concept of literature they destroy the life of literature.' Consequently, his views on what ought to constitute an effective review took on a decidedly historicist look: 'A review should be an organ of documentation . . . Even a single number should attempt to illustrate within its limits, the time

and the tendencies of the time.³⁹ It is a statement which, if applied to *Ireland To-Day*, takes on added power within the contexts of the Irish cultural scene of the 1930s.

The anonymous editor of *Ireland To-Day* was James L. 'Jim' O'Donovan, a former bomb maker and Director of Chemicals with the IRA during the revolutionary years.⁴⁰ It is not clear what prompted O'Donovan to start publishing a little magazine, but it is likely that his friendship with a group of Dublin-based film enthusiasts may have convinced him of the need for a high-quality cultural forum to combat the dominance of right-wing religious publications such as *The Rosary* and *The Messenger*. *The Dublin Magazine*, though continuing to publish poetry, short stories, and reviews of a high quality, was not broad enough in its interests and had not, for instance, yet come to terms with the advent of cinema as an artistic medium. *Ireland To-Day's* most important artistic innovation was the regular column on film written by Liam O'Laoghaire. Through this forum, O'Laoghaire frequently pleaded for the advancement of cinema in Ireland, bemoaning the fact that the country lagged very much behind others in its attitude to film. In contrast to some of the more chauvinistic writers for the journal, O'Laoghaire advised his readers to turn their attention to Europe for salvation: 'The only way in which this vicious uniformity can be broken is by the showing of the best continental work here in Dublin.'⁴¹

In order to raise the profile of the magazine, Seán O'Faoláin was recruited as Books Editor. O'Faoláin was, by 1936, a rising literary star. The year saw the banning of yet another of his books, a novel, *Bird Alone* (1936), thus increasing his reputation as a controversialist and adding to his frustration with Irish censorship culture. When, after five issues, O'Faoláin resigned over O'Donovan's secrecy and unwillingness to delegate, another of O'Donovan's associates, Edward Sheehy was taken on to run the book review section. O'Faoláin's final issue sees him responding to those who would promote an isolationist Ireland, like Daniel Corkery and James Devane, and appeal for Ireland to embrace European modernity and to turn to its writers for leadership:

O'Casey, Yeats, Joyce, O'Flaherty, O'Connor, McNamara, Somerville and Ross, Colum, Synge—not any one alone, but all together, have presented a picture of Ireland to the world. These men and women have no axe to grind. They look at Irish life and they present it, recreated with integrity in its essential truth. Dr. Devane and the rest of the yearners say: 'No, Ireland is not like that.' They are exactly like the audiences who hissed Synge and attacked O'Casey. They hate the

³⁹ T. S. Eliot, 'The Idea of a Literary Review', *The New Criterion: A Quarterly Review*, 4:1 (Jan. 1926), 3, 2.

⁴⁰ For a discussion of O'Donovan's background and editorship of *Ireland To-Day*, see Shovlin, *The Irish Literary Periodical 1923–1958*, 67–95.

⁴¹ Liam Ó Laoghaire, 'Things to Come, 1936–37?', *Ireland To-Day*, 1:4 (Sept. 1936), 66.

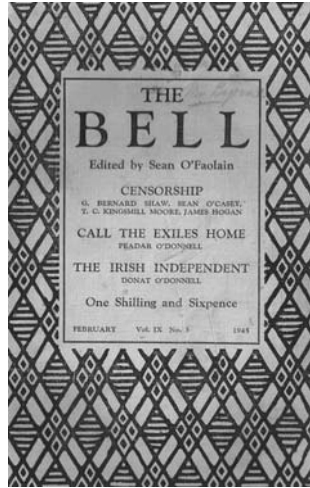


Fig. 88. Cover of *The Bell* (Feb. 1945)

truth because they have not enough personal courage to be what we all are—the descendants, English-speaking, in European dress, affected by European thought, part of the European economy, of the rags and tatters who rose with O’Connell to win under Mick Collins—in a word, this modern Anglo-Ireland.⁴²

This desire to present Ireland as it was rather than as it ideally ought to be was a hallmark of *Ireland To-Day*. As such, it examined issues like rural depopulation, the Dublin slums, the plight of migratory workers, and the mistreatment of political prisoners. But O’Faoláin’s argument, for all its force, had little effect on Devane or on the Free State’s isolationist government. In the issue of December 1936, Devane was calling for the banishment of jazz and the establishment of an Irish film industry, ‘even though it be made by one man with a camera taking shots of seagulls off Loop Head’.⁴³

It would be inaccurate, however, to present *Ireland To-Day* as retrograde and insular. Its very willingness to publish O’Faoláin’s attack on Irish-Ireland is testament to a liberal worldview, as is its consistent championing of Republican Spain during the Spanish Civil War—a stance resented by the Irish Catholic hierarchy and which led to an unofficial boycott of the magazine in Irish newsagents. Certainly, there is little evidence of literary modernism at play in *Ireland To-Day*’s pages, but, as with its British counterparts—magazines like *Left Review* and *Fact*—there is a sense that the times are too serious for poetry to thrive, and the journal becomes increasingly politicized towards the end of its run.

⁴² Seán Ó Faoláin, ‘Commentary on the Foregoing’, *Ireland To-Day*, 1:5 (Oct. 1936), 32.

⁴³ James Devane, ‘Nationality and Culture’, *Ireland To-Day*, 1:7 (Dec. 1936), 17.

Many of those writers who came together to form *Ireland To-Day* re-emerged two-and-a-half years later in O'Faoláin's *The Bell*. But the end of *Ireland To-Day* meant the disappearance of Jim O'Donovan from the Irish literary scene. After the magazine's closure O'Donovan actively renewed his association with the IRA and was a leading planner behind the organization's 1939 bombing campaign in British cities. During the early years of the Second World War he became an agent for German military intelligence and was interned in the Curragh Camp from 1941 to 1943. While O'Donovan was unable and unwilling to leave behind his militant credentials, O'Faoláin, long disillusioned with the IRA, turned his attentions in 1940 to founding his own 'little magazine': *The Bell*, over the following fourteen years, would go on to become the most influential and important Irish literary periodical of the twentieth century. The new monthly's inclusive credo mirrored *The Irish Statesman*. 'Whoever you are', declared O'Faoláin in his first editorial, 'Gentile or Jew, Protestant or Catholic, priest or layman, Big House or Small House—*The Bell* is yours.'⁴⁴ O'Faoláin had had his first short story, 'In Lilliput', published in the *Statesman* and had been impressed by the journal's presence in the library at Harvard where he spent time as a graduate student:

In the great Widener Library at Harvard University, there is a reading room. Thousands upon thousands of young American students pass through it year after year. All around the walls, stacked six feet high, are the periodicals of every country in the world. Every day for three years I used to sit in that reading room. There was only one Irish magazine—AE's *The Irish Statesman*. That is now gone and the voice of every country in the world, except Ireland, speaks to those thousands of young men who are the future professionals and big business executives of the United States.⁴⁵

This was a lacuna that O'Faoláin set to put right.

O'Faoláin was particularly keen to have his old friend Frank O'Connor involved with the new venture and persuaded him to become Poetry Editor and to provide a monthly forum for new Irish poets. The relationship between the two Cork writers was a stormy one and O'Connor's involvement with the magazine did not endure long. The following letter from O'Faoláin to O'Connor is revealing of the determined and practical way that O'Faoláin went about creating a cultural niche for *The Bell*:

We must work with the material available. If I can get William O'Dwyer of Sunbeam Hosiery to give me £50 for *The Bell* in advertising by writing to him as a literary man, on behalf of literary men, and putting it up to him that it is *his* job to help letters, then I am doing good work. He is, of course, flattered, and I

⁴⁴ Sean O'Faoláin, 'This is Your Magazine', *The Bell*, 1:1 (Oct. 1940), 9.

⁴⁵ Sean O'Faoláin, 'Dare We Suppress That Irish Voice', *The Bell*, 3:3 (Dec. 1941), 175–6.

play on that. If I can get O'Leary of Cahill's to give £50 to the Academy (in the teeth of the Church) I don't care what little vanity or anything else comes into it . . . If I can get *The Bell* to take in every sort of person from Kerry to Donegal, and bind them about you and me and Peadar and Roisin do you not see that we are forming a nucleus? Take the long view—bit by bit we are accepted as the nucleus. Bit by bit we can spread ideas, create *real* standards, ones naturally growing out of Life and not out of literature and Yeats and all that. It is going to take years and years.⁴⁶

O'Connor, however, did not have the patience or the tolerance of O'Faoláin, and as the forties wore on he spent more of his time working for the BBC and avoiding Ireland completely.

Throughout *The Bell*'s life efforts were made to break the government policy of isolationism and to provide a cosmopolitan outlook. O'Faoláin occasionally wrote a 'One World' editorial focusing on international affairs and certain issues of the magazine were devoted solely to foreign matters of interest. Pieces by writers as diverse as Erwin Schroedinger, Cecil Day-Lewis, and Abdul Aziz of the Indian National Congress were featured. This push for cosmopolitanism was, however, hampered by strict new censorship laws introduced in the interests of maintaining the integrity of Irish neutrality. The new laws affected *The Bell* in a number of ways. In 1944, for example, the censors prevented O'Faoláin from publishing an editorial about difficulties surrounding the exiled Czech Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk's visit to Ireland. O'Faoláin threatened to relocate the magazine to Belfast. An article on Judaism by Con Leventhal in which the author attacked German anti-Semitism was so heavily censored that O'Faoláin pulled it from publication.⁴⁷ The Irish government could not, its argument ran, be seen to condemn or to tolerate condemnation of the Nazi regime.

As early as the second issue of *The Bell*, O'Faoláin clarified the type of article he desired from contributors: 'Do not write articles on abstract topics.'⁴⁸ This insistence on portraying the realities of Irish life manifested itself in the broad range of documentary pieces published each month. Titles such as 'I Went to America', 'I Become a Borstal Boy', 'A Day in the Life of a Dublin Mechanic', and 'What it Means to be a Unitarian' became an important part of *The Bell*. O'Faoláin's clearest statement regarding this commitment to a documentary realist aesthetic came in a 1941 editorial entitled 'Attitudes'. In this piece he writes of the sacrifices inherent in such an approach: 'We have printed things, at times, that were not of the first literary standard because they were real and true, and we would always lean primarily towards reality and veracity rather than towards a superficial literary

⁴⁶ Quoted in Maurice Harmon, *Sean O'Faolain* (London: Constable, 1994), 145.

⁴⁷ See Dónal Ó Drisceoil, *Censorship in Ireland, 1939–1945: Neutrality, Politics and Society* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996), 185.

⁴⁸ Sean O'Faoláin, 'For the Future', *The Bell*, 1:2 (Nov. 1940), 5.

perfection.' Such sacrifices are necessary, however, in a broader project of infusing the young nation with cultural confidence:

Really, what distinguishes *The Bell* from like periodicals in other countries is that where you have a long-stabilised, and therefore complex, form of life, journalism becomes almost wholly critical, notional, palliative, advisory, reformist. Where the forms of life are still in their childhood, as here, the journal is indeed a day-by-day record of each achievement and its chief critical function is to discover and appraise along those lines.⁴⁹

For O'Faoláin, journalism became a replacement for literary realism between 1940 and 1946. While the fertile decade of the 1930s for the periodical in Britain was brought to an abrupt end with the outbreak of war, O'Faoláin, given the freedom of Irish neutrality, was in a position to adapt British left-wing revolutionary realism for his own cause of chastising the new Ireland and encouraging a drive towards pluralism and modernization.

O'Faoláin felt under pressure to emulate the efforts of Yeats, Lady Gregory, and the generation of the Literary Revival. *The Bell's* founding editor bemoaned the lack of artistic vibrancy in the Dublin of 1940. It was a city which had, twenty years previously, become a cultural capital but which had now descended into mediocrity: 'no sooner does any man attempt, or achieve, here, anything fine than the rats begin to emerge from the sewers, bringing with them a skunk-like stench of envy and hatred, worse than the drip of a broken drain.'⁵⁰ It was all a bitter disappointment to the man who had once been willing to die for his vision of a new Ireland. When O'Faoláin finished his period as editor of *The Bell* it was with a sense of failure and of regret. Despite all his polemical efforts, de Valera's Fianna Fáil were still in power, the Catholic Church reigned supreme, and cultural and economic isolationism continued to hold sway over Irish life. The figure of Yeats weighed heavily on O'Faoláin's mind:

Indeed Yeats would not much care for this magazine (and I should not blame him), where politics and social problems intrude, and there is much that he would think purely on the 'surface of life.' It may be that as he did—and was sorry for it—we have gone too much into the arena, come too close to the battle.

O'Faoláin, as a young revolutionary, had hoped for much, but the new Ireland had delivered little. He would have liked to edit a magazine 'as full of poetic visions of ideal life, noble theories, interesting aesthetic ideas as Yeats, say, put into *Samhain*'.⁵¹ Given the stagnant nature of mid-century Irish cultural life, however, this aim proved impossible. To produce such a magazine would, in the Ireland of

⁴⁹ Sean O'Faoláin, 'Attitudes', *The Bell*, 2:6 (Sept. 1941), 6, 12.

⁵⁰ Sean O'Faoláin, *An Irish Journey*, ill. Paul Henry (London: Longmans, Green, 1940), 299.

⁵¹ Sean O'Faoláin, 'Signing Off', *The Bell*, 12:1 (Apr. 1946), 2.

the 1940s, have been to ignore the very real problems faced by the state. O'Faoláin had the intelligence to recognize that in such circumstances *The Bell* required a different lead and so he handed over editorial control to the socialist Peadar O'Donnell in April 1946.

For O'Donnell, as for O'Faoláin, the need to look at the development of the nation with clear-eyed accuracy provided a key dynamic in his term as editor. Unlike O'Faoláin, O'Donnell tended to stress the material rather than the aesthetic strains pressing on the Irish writer and on his environment:

We started off with the legend of a magazine of creative fiction. We found Irish life just could not use that legend . . . A country wasted by the flight of its youth as ours is, a flight entirely without impulse to high adventure but forced by the general level of home earnings could not fail to score its drab features on the pages of any magazine resting on it.⁵²

In such a world debates over the direction that Irish fiction, poetry, and the visual arts might take seemed redundant. Modernism, classicism, realism, romanticism would all have to wait for better times to be scrutinized, chosen, or rejected by Ireland's 'little magazines' and their readers.

⁵² Peadar O'Donnell, 'Signing On', *The Bell*, 12:1 (Apr. 1946), 5.

MODERNISM AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN SCOTTISH MAGAZINES

The Evergreen (1895–7), *Scottish Art and Letters* (1944–50), *The Scottish Chapbook* (1922–3), *The Northern Review* (1924), *The Scots Magazine* (1924–), *The Modern Scot* (1930–6), *Outlook* (1936–7), and *The Voice of Scotland* (1938–9, 1945, 1955)

CAIRNS CRAIG

In 1914 Scotland was centre to an extensive publishing empire: companies such as Nelson's in Edinburgh and Collins in Glasgow ran huge printing plants for their own publishing business—including, in the case of Nelson's, a series of French classics produced in Edinburgh but marketed entirely in France. In 1915, Nelson's had offices in New York, Dublin, Paris, Leipzig, Toronto, and Bombay, and Nelson's factory in Edinburgh could produce 200,000 books per week.¹ The major journals that had shaped Scotland's nineteenth-century dominance of the literary marketplace—*The Edinburgh Review* and *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*—were still being published, and new journals for specialist audiences—such as *Mind*, the journal of philosophy and psychology—continued to promote specifically Scottish intellectual traditions. In the following decades, however, publishing activity became increasingly focused in London and Scottish publishing in the interwar years suffered the same fate as many other Scottish industries excessively geared to the needs of Empire. From the founding of the *Edinburgh Review* in 1802, Scotland had been at the centre of British literary culture;² by

¹ See David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery (eds), *The History of the Book in Scotland*, vol. 4 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 73.

² A centrality underlined by the influence of the Scottish universities on the emergence of the discipline of English literature. The first modern academic posts in English Literature were in Scottish

the end of the First World War the country's marginality was being confidently affirmed by T. S. Eliot in a review of Gregory Smith's *Scottish Literature: Character and Influence*, provocatively entitled 'Was There a Scottish Literature?'³ For Eliot, Scottish literature did not constitute 'one of the five or six (at most) great organic formations of history', and did not offer a tradition such that its writers 'are related so as to be in the light of eternity contemporaries, from a certain point of view, cells in one body'.⁴ This failure of Scottish 'tradition' was to provide the germ from which Eliot's founding statement of modernist aesthetics, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', was constructed a few months later, following an equally dismissive review of Yeats as 'an alien mind': to protect the modernism of the London Americans, the Irish and the Scots had to be thrust resolutely back to the margins.

The Evergreen

Eliot's rejection of both Irish and Scottish traditions as possible foundations for a modernist literature points, however, to what they had in common: the examples of Burns, Scott, and Carlyle revealed to the young Yeats the possibility of building a national literature in—or on the edges of—English; and for the first generation of Scottish modernists in the 1890s, Celticism was as crucial as it was to the emergence of Irish modernism. In Edinburgh in the 1890s Patrick Geddes (1854–1932)—biologist, sociologist, urban planner, and independent publisher—promoted Celticism in his journal *The Evergreen* (see Chapter 5) of which four issues appeared between 1895 and 1897, corresponding to the four seasons; since its subtitle, however, was 'A Northern Seasonal' and its epigraph 'Four seasons fill the measure of the year; | There are four seasons in the mind of man', four issues were sufficient for its purposes. The first issue in spring 1895 was divided into thematic sections—'Spring in Nature', 'Spring in Life', 'Spring in the World', and 'Spring in the North'—which set the structure for subsequent issues, each decorated with woodcuts in an art nouveau style embellished with Celtic decorations. *The Evergreen* aimed to overturn the 1890s fashion for 'decadence' and create the conditions for a 'Renaissance' that would turn humanity's attention back 'from urban to rural, from fever to fresh air'.⁵ This was, however, no sentimental retreat from the city—'cities there are and must be, and it is in cities that much of today's work and

universities—John Nicholl at the University of Glasgow in 1862 and David Masson at the University of Edinburgh in 1865—and when English Literature was adopted into the curriculum of English universities it was largely under the influence of the Scottish university tradition—see Chris Baldick, *The Social Mission of English Criticism 1848–1932* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).

³ T. S. Eliot, 'Was There a Scottish Literature?', *Athenaeum*, 4657 (1 Aug. 1919), 680–1.

⁴ *Ibid.* 680. ⁵ Patrick Geddes, *The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal: Spring* (1895), 13.

breadwinning must needs be done';⁶ rather, it was the application to contemporary society of the theories of evolution developed by Geddes (and co-author, J. Arthur Thomson), in *The Evolution of Sex* (1889). Geddes disputed the interpretation of Darwin that emphasized individual struggle for survival: instead, he promoted a conception of evolution based on cooperation:

Science, working honestly within its own region, has perceived in good time how false to natural fact the theory was, and has lately vindicated for Nature a more logical method and a nobler character. It has shown how primordial, how organically imperative the social virtues are; how love, not egoism, is the motive which the final history of every species justifies; how fostering, not ravening, is the pioneer process in the ascent of life. The practical inference has been quickly made: that a rule of conduct—'Each for himself!'—which is not half good enough for the beasts, has but little relevance to human intercourse and social action.⁷

Consequently, he envisaged evolution bringing urban life back into the order of nature—'the social organism must integrate, or perish of its own energies'⁸—and thereby root it in the traditional life of the community:

Nature, whether you drive her out with a pitchfork or with material progress, never ceases trying to come back. We can never quite lose a kindly feeling toward the old memories and the old menage of the race, unless ourselves be lost altogether. The desire of them is an organic inheritance of the heart, and the need of them haunts our spirit in every generation.⁹

Since the Celtic represents in Scotland the natural history of the race, 'love of country is not a lost cause'¹⁰ but the medium of a return to a healthful sociality rooted in the traditions of the folk. John Duncan (1866–1945), a major visual artist of the Celtic movement, figured the 'Anima Celtica' in an etching which combined book and sword, blind bard and tragic hero, all under the hand and around the head of a meditative female figure, and beneath the epigraph:

The visioned stories read, the book is closed—
 The Past has been and shall not be again.
 She dreams! . . . Yet comes to her, disarmed, deposed,
 A wide new kingdom in the minds of men.¹¹

As a spiritual inheritance, the Celtic past can stimulate a Scottish cultural 'Renaissance' in which Celtic forms of social organization, almost obliterated by industrial modernity, will reveal themselves in harmony with the underlying principles of evolution.

The possibility of such a 'Scots Renaissance' was outlined by Geddes in the first issue of *The Evergreen* in an obituary for John Stuart Blackie (1809–95),

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid. 11.

⁸ Ibid. 12.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid. 15.

¹¹ Ibid. 107.

Professor of Greek at the University of Edinburgh, campaigner for the preservation of Gaelic and sometimes described as ‘the last great Scotsman’.¹² For Geddes, Blackie’s funeral had brought face to face with each other the religious traditions of Scotland—‘Free Kirk and Auld Kirk uniting in the historic Kirk’—and its Celtic traditions, called forth by ‘the pipes, as they led the procession slowly out, giving the “Land o’ the Leal” a new pathos’:¹³

For here were interpulstating all the wildness with all the majesty of Celtic sorrow, the eerie song of the northern winds and the road of western tides. The sigh and wail of women, the pride and lament of chiefs, gathered of old into bardic monologue and chorus, were all in this weirdest, wildest, most elemental music. So again pealed forth the chant of Ossian over an unreturning hero amid the undying moan of Merlin for a passing world.¹⁴

These older Scotlands are juxtaposed with a modern Scotland in which a majority of Scots are ‘conscientiously educating their children outside every main element of the local and popular culture’, in a world of ‘routine-fixed intellect and frozen heart against which Blackie’s very extravagances were part of his testimony’.¹⁵ This ‘ice-pack of frozen culture’¹⁶ will be broken by a renewed Celtic fertility, given symbolic expression in Fiona Macleod’s poem of ‘The Bandruidh’—‘the Druidess; commonly, the Sorceress; poetically the Green Lady, i.e. Spring’, who holds a dialogue with the various ‘airs’ of the Scottish landscape:

With woven green branches.
All of the quicken
The Bandruidh waveth
The soft Airs nigh.

THE BANDRUIDH

Come, air of the mountain, what news of the mountain,
Does the green moss cling to the claw of the eagle?

THE MOUNTAIN AIR

The green moss clings to the claw of the eagle.

THE BANDRUIDH

Come, air of the hill-slope, what news of the hill-slope,
Does the red stag sniff at the coming of green?

THE UPLAND AIR

The red stag sniffs at the coming of green.¹⁷

¹² See Stuart Wallace, *John Stuart Blackie: Scottish Scholar and Patriot* (Edinburgh; Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 8.

¹³ *The Evergreen: Spring*, 131.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 133–4.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 135.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 98.

Unfortunately, the reference to Ossian in the eulogy to Blackie proved all too relevant to Geddes's promotion of Fiona Macleod, who turned out to be the female alter ego of another of his contributors, William Sharp (1855–1905), their intimate relationship unconfirmed until Sharp's death. That this feminine inheritor of Celtic tradition turned out to be a fiction did not, however, prevent her having a very real impact on the literary culture of Scotland and Ireland in the 1890s: as Yeats noted in his diary, 'we were all under the shadow of the Fiona myth.'¹⁸ The enthusiasm with which her poems, stories, and letters were greeted is testimony to the need for an alternative tradition that could provide a critique of current modernity, while providing an alternative route to a future modernity.

Both Sharp and the fictional Macleod continued as contributors to *The Evergreen* through its year-long cycle, their relationship symptomatic, perhaps, of Geddes's efforts to find connections between apparently discordant areas of intellectual and creative activity. Articles on 'The biology' of each of the seasons would sit beside others on 'The Moral Evolution of Sex', on 'The Megalithic Builders', on 'Pastorale Bretonne', and on 'La Littérature Nouvelle en France', as well as translations from Irish-Gaelic by Douglas Hyde, and retellings of Irish myths by Standish O'Grady, or accounts of Scottish historic buildings such as 'The Tron and St Giles'.¹⁹ In a farewell in the *Winter* publication in 1896–7, the editors declared that 'the absence of mechanical order' in the publication 'cannot but obscure, at least to many, the element of organic unity, not yet manifest in form and substance, but working in life and growth'.²⁰ They insist that what they have sought is 'to express a certain conception of science and literature and art. To see the world, to see life truly, one must see these as whole... Our arts and sciences are but so many specialised and technical ways of showing and seeing the many scenes and aspects of this great unity, this mighty drama of cosmic and human evolution.'²¹

Scottish Art and Letters

The Evergreen may only have lasted for a year, but its form of Celticism, composed equally of evolutionary science and cultural revival, was to have an impact on the arts in Scotland for the next half century. It received powerful expression in the work of its leading graphic contributor, John Duncan; it helped inspire journals such as *The Celtic Review*, which lasted from 1904 till 1916, and *The Pictish Review*

¹⁸ W. B. Yeats, *Memoirs* (London: Macmillan, 1972), 105.

¹⁹ Respectively, *The Evergreen: The Book of Summer* (1896), 73–88; *The Book of Winter* (1896–7), 142–53; *The Book of Spring* (1895), 77–8, 92–6; *Summer*, 36–40; *Winter*, 101–5; *Spring*, 129–30.

²⁰ *The Evergreen: The Book of Winter* (1896–7), 155. ²¹ *Ibid.* 156.

of 1927–8; it helped shape the Celtic elements in the novels of Neil Gunn and the pan-Celticism which Hugh MacDiarmid adopted in the 1930s; and it lies behind the Celticism of Scotland's most prominent modernist artist, J. D. Fergusson (1874–1961). Fergusson, whose career had been focused in France both before and after the First World War, returned to Scotland in the late 1930s and formed a close association with the publisher William MacLellan, who published *Scottish Art and Letters*, for which Fergusson was art editor from 1944 to 1950. It was one of several journals of the post-war era dedicated to 'Scottish reconstruction', including *The New Scot*, which appeared in five volumes from 1945 to 1959 and *The Scottish Journal* (subtitled 'The Popular National Monthly'), which promoted modern Scottish art in a populist format from 1952 to 1954. Because of Fergusson's engagement with early modernist art in pre-war Paris, however, *Scottish Art and Letters* represents a key Scottish response to the nature of modernism. If Paris had been modernism's capital, it was, for Fergusson, because Paris was the capital of a Celtic culture: 'to go to Paris was the natural thing for the Scot... it doesn't seem to have occurred to the modern Scot that the Scottish Celt, when in France, was among his own people, the French Celts.'²² For the first issue of *Scottish Art and Letters*, Fergusson wrote an essay on 'Art and Atavism: The Dryad', which is an autobiographical account of how he produced one of his most famous works, a wooden sculpture entitled *The Dryad* (1924). Its inspiration was a visit from Scottish artist Charles Rennie Mackintosh, who brought Fergusson a 'a small flower pot with two slim intertwined twigs, two leaves near the bottom and two or three at the top' because, he said, 'it's so like you'.²³ Mackintosh's gift combined in Fergusson's recollection with the shape of a bagpipe in Glasgow's Kelvingrove museum and formed the inspiration for his sculpture, combining modernist experiment with Celtic tradition, and contemporary abstraction with those forms of Celtic—or Pictish—art which were celebrated in *Scottish Art and Letters* by George Bain in an article into which images of paintings by Fergusson and S. J. Peploe were inserted in order to underline the continuity of Celtic tradition with Scottish modernism.²⁴ Fergusson had been art editor of Middleton Murry's modernist magazine *Rhythm*, published from 1911 till 1913, and, indeed, one of Fergusson's most famous paintings is entitled *Rhythm* (see Chapter 13). In 'Art and Atavism' Fergusson looked back to the emergence of modernism as it was 'taken up later and systematized'²⁵ by the Celticist theories of Metzinger and Gleizes, who promoted the notion of Cubism as the expression of a Celtic, rather than a Latin, French culture. For

²² J. D. Fergusson, *Modern Scottish Painting* (Glasgow: William MacLellan, 1943), 69.

²³ J. D. Fergusson, 'Art and Atavism: The Dryad', *Scottish Art and Letters*, 1 (1944), 48.

²⁴ George Bain, *Scottish Art and Letters*, 4 (1949), 27–40. Bain's theories of Celtic art were published in several volumes as *Celtic Art, the Methods of Construction* (Glasgow: William MacLellan, 1944).

²⁵ Fergusson, 'Art and Atavism', 47.

Fergusson, modernist experiment is only made possible by the recovery of Celtic roots.²⁶

From *The Evergreen* in the 1890s to *Scottish Art and Letters* in the 1940s there is a continuous emphasis in Scotland on those Celtic roots of international modernism. As the editorial of the first issue of *Scottish Art and Letters* expressed it, 'the atavistic unconscious represents a formidable extension to the individual's experience, and it is not surprising that most of the world's best artistic work proves on examination to be, not cosmopolitan, however international its appeal, but racial and national in the most uncompromising way.'²⁷ Returning to Celtic sources could not, for most writers, mean a return to Gaelic as the language of Scotland's modernist literature: the title of Geddes's magazine, however, indirectly indicated a different route into Scottish traditions since, as Geddes noted in 'The Scots Renaissance', *Evergreen* had been the title of Allan Ramsay's collection of older Scottish poetry published in 1724 as part of the effort to maintain a distinctively Scottish culture after the 1707 Union with England. The 'evergreen' tradition in Scotland included Scots as well as Gaelic, and if Scots as a literary language produced no great poet in the century after Burns's death, the publication between the 1830s and the 1890s of the complete works of the Scottish medieval 'makars'—Dunbar and Henryson most prominently—gave Scottish writers access to a rich alternative to the traditions of English poetry.

The Scottish Chapbook

This possibility, merely hinted at in *The Evergreen*, was to become the basis of a second wave of the Scottish revival, orchestrated by the poet-publisher Christopher Murray Grieve (1892–1978) on his return from the First World War. As a journalist working for a local newspaper, *The Montrose Review*, Grieve had direct access to the Scottish press—he announced in the *Review* the fact that the county of Angus held 'the foremost place . . . in the new stirrings in Scottish letters'²⁸—and access to the technology to produce his own publications. Ventures such as *Northern Numbers*, which explicitly modelled themselves on the 'group-poetry developments' that had 'been a marked feature of recent British publishing' and sought to 'do for some of the leading tendencies in contemporary Scottish poetry what the "Georgian Poetry" series had done for a particular group of mainly-English poets',²⁹ were initially

²⁶ See Mark Antliff, *Inventing Bergson: Cultural Politics and the Parisian Avant-Garde* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 106 ff., who notes that the *Rhythm* group in Paris was closely associated with those promoting a Celtic nationalist vision of both France and of Cubism.

²⁷ Editorial, *Scottish Art and Letters*, 1 (1944), 4.

²⁸ Angus Calder, Glenn Murray, and Alan Riach (eds), *The Raucle Tongue*, vol. 2 (Manchester: Carcanet, 1997), 390.

²⁹ *Northern Numbers: Being a Representative Selection from Certain Living Scottish Poets* (Edinburgh/London: T. N. Foulis, 1920), 'Foreword'.

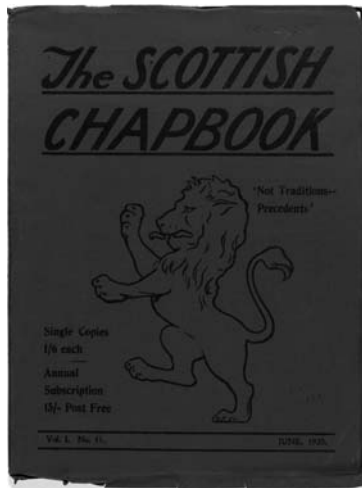


Fig. 89. Cover of *The Scottish Chapbook* (June 1923)

published by the Edinburgh publisher T. N. Foulis but by the third volume, in 1922, were being ‘Printed by James Foreman, at the “Review” Press, Montrose and Published by C. M. Grieve at 16 Links Avenue, Montrose’. From that address, in August 1922, Grieve launched *The Scottish Chapbook*, in which, in his first editorial he both acknowledged and disparaged his predecessor in the 1890s:

[it was] said ‘of the forgotten “Evergreen”, that, while the organ of a band of social reformers in one of the poorest quarters of Edinburgh, it also touched an international note, and kept up the spirit of the best ideals in literature and art.’ Naturally, this being so, it speedily became defunct, and the movement of which it was the organ scarcely outlasted it. ‘It is no exaggeration to say,’ Sharp also wrote no longer ago than 1896, ‘that at this moment there are more than a hundred Gaelic singers in Western Scotland whose poetry is as fresh and winsome, and, in point of form as well as substance, as beautiful as any that is being produced throughout the rest of the realm.’ He must have imagined that miraculous band in some inconceivable moment of transition between himself and ‘Fiona Macleod.’ They were never heard of before, nor afterwards . . . The Scottish literary revival proved to be a promise that could not be kept.³⁰

Though Grieve used the same page size as Geddes’s journal its presentation was, by comparison, stark: its title stood forth in gothic lettering that might gesture to the folk culture of the original ‘chapbooks’ but otherwise the pages were as undecorated as the pages of *The Montrose Review*.

³⁰ C. M. Grieve, Editorial, *The Scottish Chapbook, A Monthly Magazine of Scottish Arts and Letters*, 1:1, 4.

The aims of the magazine were set out as ‘The Chapbook Programme’:

To report, support, and stimulate, in particular, the activities of the Franco-Scottish, Scottish-Italian, and kindred Associations; the campaign of the Vernacular Circle of the London Burns Club for the revival of the Doric; the movement towards a Scots National Theatre; and the ‘Northern Numbers’ movement in contemporary poetry.

Grieve’s journal intended to achieve a *real* Scottish revival—later distinguished as the Scottish *Renaissance*:

To insist upon truer evaluations of the work of Scottish writers than are usually given in the present over-Anglicised condition of British literary journalism, and, in criticism, elucidate, apply, and develop the distinctively Scottish range of values.

To bring Scottish Literature into closer touch with current European tendencies in technique and ideation.

To cultivate ‘the lovely virtue’.

And, generally to ‘meddle wi’ the Thistle’ and pick the figs.³¹

This ambitious if ambiguous agenda seems not immediately to have caught the public imagination. By issue 3 there is an air of desperation in the editor’s commentary: under the title of ‘Finding our Feet’—translated into Scots as, ‘*Ye Maun Creep Afore Ye Ging*’—he declares that: ‘“The Scottish Chapbook” has not yet been put upon that thoroughly sound foundation necessary to enable it fully to realise its programme. It is still creeping. Help it to *GO*.’³²

That desperation is matched by the adverts for his own publications in the final pages of issue 3: ‘Is “Northern Numbers” to Continue?—’ its headline demands and, after announcing that Grieve will publish its third series himself, defiantly insists, ‘Surely Scotland Will Not Let This Venture Fail.’³³ It is the *cri de cœur* of a man stretching his own capacities to their limits to transform himself from local reporter into leader of a national cultural revival: as well as the annual *Northern Numbers*, begun in 1920, and the monthly *Chapbook*, launched in August 1922, by May 1923 Grieve was also editing a weekly newspaper, *The Scottish Nation*, whose first page declared purposefully—under the banner, ‘EVERY TUESDAY’—that ‘Scotland must be freed from the predominance of English influences in every direction.’³⁴ It was as if, from his council house in Montrose, Grieve had taken personal responsibility for providing Scotland with the full range of publications that war and economic decline had eroded. Grieve’s role, however, was not merely as publisher. As well as an editorial, the first issue of *The Scottish Chapbook* included a poem by C. M. Grieve, ‘A Moment in Eternity’, and, under the title of ‘Modern

³¹ Ibid. p. iii.

³² C. M. Grieve, *The Scottish Chapbook*, 1:3, p. iii.

³³ Ibid. 88.

³⁴ C. M. Grieve, *The Scottish Nation* (8 May 1923), 1.

Scottish Bibliographies’, a discussion by Grieve of the work of Scottish poet John Ferguson. In addition, Grieve provided a review of Maurice Gauchez’s *Histoire des Lettres Françaises de Belgique* and an unsigned attack on J. M. Barrie under the title ‘No mere whurr’. A note also informs readers that ‘Mr C.M. Grieve, editor of “The Scottish Chapbook”, is contributing a series of weekly articles on “A Scottish Theory of Literature” to the “Aberdeen Free Press”.’³⁵

It was also in this issue, however, that Hugh M’Diarmid first appeared as the author of ‘Nisbet, an Interlude in Post War Glasgow’, a dialogue whose central character bears the name of a friend of Grieve’s, John Bogue Nisbet, killed in the first battle of Loos on 13 April 1915.³⁶ That Nisbet is resurrected to continue his life in Glasgow in the aftermath of the war at the same time that Grieve attributes his writing to one Hugh M’Diarmid is hardly accidental. The Grieve who grieves over the loss of his friend can only resuscitate him to a new literary life by also translating himself from the accidental survivor of war, Christopher Murray Grieve, into the historically necessary literary personality of Hugh M’Diarmid. Both are transformed into artists who refuse to accept the conditions of the modern world: ‘I am constitutionally incapable of rendering any more to Caesar. Nothing is his and that’s all he’ll get from me.’³⁷ Into Nisbet’s mouth is put an apocalyptic aesthetic: ‘There’s no arguing about it. All forms of literary and artistic expressions, equally with other phenomena of intellectual and spiritual activity, have reached in our western civilisation the point beyond which they can go no further. Western Europe, with America, has exhausted her energies, as Greece, Rome, Assyria, Babylon.’³⁸ As the last character exits, ‘[The End]’ is followed without any clear typographical break by an ‘announcement’:

JUDGE NOT THAT YE BE NOT JUDGED:—I have pleasure in announcing that Mr Hugh M’Diarmid will contribute to our October issue a lengthy dramatic monologue in the Doric, entitled ‘Following Rebecca West in Edinburgh’,—written apropos Miss West’s recently-published novel, ‘The Judge’.³⁹

The forthcoming arrival of M’Diarmid as a ‘Doric’ writer seems to *flow* directly from Nisbett’s sense that modern civilization ‘has exhausted her energies’, and the monologue, when it appeared in the next issue, comes in the form of a third person report—in English—of a Doric diatribe against Rebecca West’s failure to express the nature of Edinburgh:

I dinna blame the lassie. Let her scuttle aff intae the appen furth. This aidle-hole’s nae place for the likes o’ her. It’ll tak a *man* tae write about Edinburgh, as it sud

³⁵ *The Scottish Chapbook*, 1:1, 12.

³⁶ See Alan Bold, *The Letters of Hugh MacDiarmid* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1984), 10.

³⁷ C. M. Grieve, ‘Nisbet, An Interlude in Post War Glasgow’, *The Scottish Chapbook*, 1:1, 18.

³⁸ C. M. Grieve, ‘Nisbet, An Interlude in Post War Glasgow’ (continued), *The Scottish Chapbook*,

1:2, 48.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

be written aboot, an he'll need the Doric tae get the fu' aifer. Wemmen are a' verra weel i' their way . . . but Edinburgh'll tak an almark like Joyce—a scaffie like Joyce.⁴⁰

By the time the conscientious reader reached this demonstration of the power of the Doric, however, s/he would already have encountered one of Hugh M'Diarmid's earliest Scots poems, 'The Watergaw', on the issue's opening page, where it had been transposed from its first shy appearance in a Dunfermline newspaper a month earlier.

Grieve's transformation into M'Diarmid also accompanies the transformation of the 'Georgian' impulse of *Northern Numbers*, with its generational inclusivity, into a more radical campaign to place vernacular Scots at the centre of modernist Scottish literature:

He was purposely using many obscure words . . . As keen students of the Vernacular will appreciate, he was making scores of little experiments in Doric composition and style even as he spoke—subtle adaptations of ancient figures of speech to modern requirements, finding vernacular equivalents for Freudian terminology—all infinitely difficult work but infinitely necessary if the Doric is again to become a living literary medium. His perfect knowledge of Ross's 'Helenore,' Duff's Poems, the Maitland Poems, Douglas's Vergil, and the like, stood him in splendid stead; . . . If any Doric enthusiasts think this is easy enough let them try to translate a paragraph or two treating of introverts, extroverts, complexes and specific aboulias into 'gude braid Scots'—and if they do not think this necessary, let them cease to talk of reviving the Doric. Such a revival depends upon the Doric being brought abreast of modern civilisation in every respect and detail.⁴¹

If early Scottish modernism was built on the recovery of Scotland's Celtic culture, the 'high modernism' of the 1920s was founded on the recovery of the Scots of a late medieval state as yet independent of England and uncorrupted by English. It is a marker of how fragile this possibility was that Grieve not only hid himself behind the persona of M'Diarmid but published under his own name in the same issue poems such as the sonnet 'The Rhythm of Silence', which addresses 'a lonely bird in space' in an ironic version of nineteenth-century romantic nature poetry:

O bird whose flight the rhythm of silence is,
Sole melody of earth that soars so high!

O bird that poiseeth in the grey Inane
Thou knowest that no song is heard above
Save thy dumb hymn: and can'st returning bear

⁴⁰ C. M. Grieve, 'Following Rebecca West in Edinburgh', *The Scottish Chapbook*, 1:3, 72.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 70.

No olive branch to my soul's ark, O Dove!⁴²

That this same issue also contained 'five sonnets' entitled 'Scots Catholic Choir', one of which is by Grieve himself, and which were claimed to be 'illustrative of neo-Catholic tendencies in contemporary Scottish literature',⁴³ indicates the extent to which Grieve was experimenting in the *Chapbook* of 1922–3 with a variety of poetic identities with which he could challenge the modern world.

The reinvigoration of Scots might have been central to the agenda of the newly born M'Diarmid, but a large proportion of the work Grieve published fell into traditional Scottish categories: 'The Calling of Bride' by Isobel Wylie Hutchison in issue 4 might have been by Fiona Macleod, and 'Blanche and Jock' by A. Milne (issue 10, May 1923) is exactly the kind of bucolic Harry Lauder narrative which M'Diarmid would excoriate in *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle* (1926). Indeed, Lauder himself decorates the back page of the first issue of *The Scottish Chapbook* in an advert for 'Waterman's Ideal Fountain Pens', as though his 'inimitable' style cannot be suppressed by the flow of the Grieve/M'Diarmid pen. After May 1923, however, when the weekly *Scottish Nation* began to absorb Grieve's propagandistic energy, the later issues of *The Scottish Chapbook* were devoted almost entirely to poetry and consequently became much more effectively the voice of a modernist revolution in Scots. William Soutar, for instance, had appeared as an English-language poet in the first issue ('The Quest') and again in the fifth issue ('Christmas Eve')⁴⁴ but emerges in September–October 1923, as a Scots language poet,

When the müne was fu' last nicht
'Am shair I met the deil himself⁴⁵

If traditional rather than modernist Doric poets like Marion Angus appear both early ('The Lilt': 'Jean Gordon sits weavin' a' her lane | Twinin' the threid wi' a thocht o' her ain') and late ('The Little One'),⁴⁶ a new set of voices begin to appear in the middle part of 1923. Neil Gunn's 'O, Sun!' fuses the Celticism of the first Scottish Renaissance with the new Imagist-inspired poetics of the second:

I have seen a black adder
Pour out his cold-blooded length
From unfrozen earth,
And, in lascivious arabesque
Lie gleaming-coiled,

⁴² C. M. Grieve, 'The Rhythm of Silence', *The Scottish Chapbook*, 1:3, 79. ⁴³ *Ibid.* 74.

⁴⁴ William Soutar, 'The Quest', *The Scottish Chapbook*, 1:1, 12; 'Christmas Eve', 1:5, 126.

⁴⁵ William Soutar, 'Triolets in the Doric', *The Scottish Chapbook*, 1:2, 29.

⁴⁶ Marion Angus, 'The Lilt', *The Scottish Chapbook*, 1:2; 'The Little One', 1:9.

Sun-drunken, by matted roots
 Of the wild rose tree.
 Crawling from out the hinterland
 Of earthy gloom,
 Past the cold stones
 Of dreams and old desires,
 Comes my soul to the roses
 Like a black adder.⁴⁷

And Edwin Muir's 'Ballad of the Flood' evokes the world of early Scots poetry and allegorically applies it to modernity:

The Ark span like a cockle shell,
 Ran east and then ran west.
 'Noo God save us,' auld Noah cried,
 'The world is sinking fast.'⁴⁸

But even in this context, on the opposite page to M'Diarmid's 'The Huntress and Her Dogs', whose English title is defiantly displaced by its opening lines—'Her lichts o' yellow hair | Flee oot ayont the storm'⁴⁹—the (English) poetry of George Reston Malloch continues to claim a place:

With words we drape the bare antique
 Of truth, a perishing garland give,
 With wonder of fair words we seek
 To make embroidery move and live
 Upon the frozen marble limbs
 Whose beauty through the veiling swims,
 And breeds the lust of truth.⁵⁰

The Scottish Chapbook had provided Grieve with a vehicle for promoting the work of Hugh M'Diarmid, whose poems appear in every issue after the first appearance in October 1922, but as the magazine foundered in 1923 a modernist breakthrough based on Scots was by no means certain: the final issue announces a book entitled 'The New Makars', dedicated to the work of 'new poets of unquestionable merit in the Scottish Vernacular', which 'it is intended' to publish 'if sufficient support is forthcoming'.⁵¹ The volume never appeared.

⁴⁷ Neil Gunn, 'O, Sun!', *The Scottish Chapbook*, 1:12, 329.

⁴⁸ Edwin Muir, 'Ballad of the Flood', *ibid.* 341.

⁴⁹ 'Hugh M'Diarmid' [C. M. Grieve], 'The Huntress and Her Dogs', *ibid.* 350.

⁵⁰ George Reston Malloch, 'She Dissects the Flower', *ibid.* 351.

⁵¹ *The Scottish Chapbook*, 2:2, 28.

The Northern Review, The Scots Magazine, and The Modern Scot

Even Grieve's enormous industriousness could not sustain his many publishing ventures. *The Chapbook* ended in October 1923; *The Scottish Nation* survived only till two days before Christmas 1923; *Northern Numbers* did not reappear after 1922. Undaunted, Grieve launched *The Northern Review* in May 1924 as a monthly, with MacDiarmid appearing as a Scots dramatist in the first of a series entitled 'Little Scots Theatre', intended to compensate for Scotland's apparent lack of a theatrical tradition. The major contributors continued to include Muir, Gunn, and Soutar but Grieve's associate editors, Dr G. P. Insh and Alexander McGill, were active in providing responses to contemporary events—such as the reunion of the Scottish churches—and detailed critical accounts of topics such as 'Theatre before the Union' and 'The Literature of the Irish Revolt'. Even by the second issue, however, the editor was having to apologize for delayed production and the fourth issue quotes praise for the *Review* from the previously much mocked Sir J. M. Barrie, 'to whom we look up as one on a great height'. Despite Barrie's support, *The Northern Review* had gone the way of its predecessors by September 1924. Further plans to launch a new quarterly in 1925—*Scots Art*—foundered, after which debates about Scottish art had to find space in political journals such as the *Scots Observer*, edited from 1926 to 1934 by William Power (author of *Literature and Oatmeal: What Literature Has Meant to Scotland*, 1935); or in *The Scots Independent*, founded in 1926 and subsequently the weekly newspaper of the Scottish National Party; or in the pages of *The Educational Journal of Scotland*, where MacDiarmid published a series of essays on Scottish literary history between 1925 and 1927 (eventually collected as *Contemporary Scottish Studies*, 1975). In 1932 Grieve returned to editorial activity with the political periodical *Free Man*, but it is symptomatic of the state of Scottish publishing that, as MacDiarmid, he had to publish his communist-inspired poems in the pages of T. S. Eliot's *Criterion*. Equally telling is the fact that Neil Gunn, who became the leading figure of the Scottish Renaissance movement in the 1930s when Grieve had retreated to the isolation of the Shetlands, had to use the pages of *The Scots Magazine*, a populist journal aimed largely at tourists and Scottish exiles, for his contributions to the development of the Renaissance. The title *The Scots Magazine* had been in existence since 1739, but was re-launched in 1924 by the St Andrew Society of Glasgow before being taken over in 1927 by Dundee-based publisher D. C. Thomson, famous for their presentation of a 'Kailyard' vision of Scotland. Perhaps because his work was largely set in the Highlands, Gunn was able to use its pages regularly to promote the agenda of the Renaissance movement. Increasing despair both at the condition of Scottish culture and at the public response to the Renaissance is evident in an early intervention in 1928, a reply to an article which had mocked MacDiarmid's agenda of 'Not Burns, Dunbar':

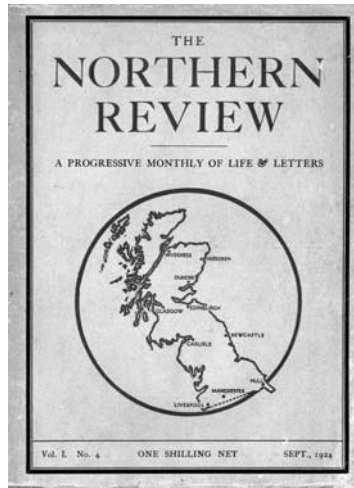


Fig. 90. Cover of *Northern Review* (Sept. 1924)

Artistically in the modern world Scotland doesn't exist. No music, no drama, no letters, of any international significance. Why is this all-round sterility so complete, so without parallel in the life of any modern nation? Should not an honest attempt be made to answer that question before attacking the very movement that is trying to do so?⁵²

Throughout the 1930s and 40s, Gunn used *The Scots Magazine* for such defences of the Renaissance movement, and also to defend 'nationalism' from its assumed identification with fascism and violence. For Gunn, as for Grieve/MacDiarmid, nationalism and internationalism were not opposed value systems; they not only depended on one another but, properly balanced, defended us from the other's negative potentialities: 'The small nation has always been humanity's last bulwark for the individual against that machine [of standardization], for personal expression against impersonal tyranny, for the quick freedom of the spirit against the flattening steam-roller of the mass.'⁵³ Nationalism, for Gunn, requires the recognition and not the denigration of other national cultures because culture 'emerges in the nation, is the nation's flower' and 'the more varieties, the more surprise and pleasure for all. For nationalism in the only sense that matters is not jealous, any more than music is.'⁵⁴ The need for such a defence of the 'national' underlines how rapidly the cultural nationalism of the 1920s had come to be understood in terms of the international crises of the 1930s.

⁵² Neil Gunn, 'Defensio Scotorum', *Scots Magazine* (1928); quoted in Alistair McCleery (ed.), *Landscape and Light: Essays by Neil Gunn* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987), 150.

⁵³ Neil Gunn, 'Nationalism and Internationalism', *ibid.* 179.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 179–80.

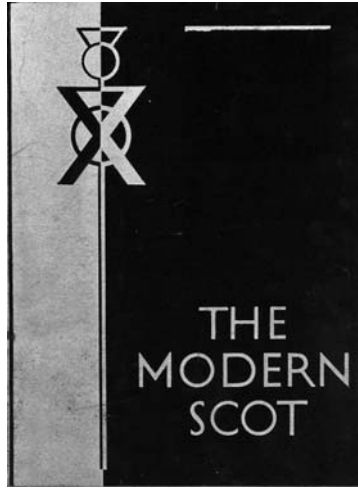


Fig. 91. Cover of *The Modern Scot* (Apr. 1932)

The relation of the national to the international was to dominate the pre-eminent modernist magazine in Scotland of the 1930s, *The Modern Scot*, founded in the spring of 1930 by James Huntington Whyte, a wealthy American resident of St Andrews, who declared it to be ‘the organ of the Scottish Renaissance’. As well as giving space to a variety of different kinds of nationalists—from C. M. Grieve’s (by then) communist variety to the romantic nationalism of Compton MacKenzie—Whyte devoted a series of editorials between 1932 and 1934 to the definition of modern nationalism:

Scotland is in the unhappy position of having to acquire the political status of nationhood in the teeth of the opposition of English and Scottish Imperialists and is being asked for proof of its right to that status. What constitutes a nation? And is Scotland a nation? The voices of so many self-styled Nationalists conflict in their answer to the first question that there is some excuse for hesitation in bothering to put the second. Yet it is a simple answer: a nation is a social group sharing a corporate sentiment engendered by a historical process.⁵⁵

Opposing the language of a rediscovered national ‘essence’, Whyte proposed what would now be described as a ‘civic nationalism’: ‘national identity is not a concrete thing given to a people in its beginnings, but a corporate sentiment that is moulded by history.’⁵⁶ The consequence was a radical overturning of what had been the foundations of the Renaissance as inspired by MacDiarmid: ‘hence the unreality of the arguments of those Scottish Nationalists whose chief desire is to recapture

⁵⁵ James Huntington Whyte, Editorial, *The Modern Scot*, 2:4 (Jan. 1932), 266.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 267.

pre-union traits we have lost.’⁵⁷ For Whyte, ‘European culture has thus been cast in certain moulds, and it is the prime concern of the modern Nationalist to see that the moulds are not broken in the name of Bolshevism, international finance, or any of the other similar factors likely to wipe out individual as well as national individuality.’⁵⁸ Equally, he challenged those who defined the nation by its traditional language: in the case of Ireland, for instance, he noted that many refused to acknowledge Yeats because he wrote in English, but ‘to the question of whether Irishmen are to write in English or in Irish, the answer is that most writers have no choice in the matter. By the time the poet can ask himself: “Do I want to write in Irish or English?” he has already received the education that answers the question for him.’⁵⁹ As a consequence there is no escape from English as a part of Irish culture, since ‘What is called the “Irish consciousness” is largely the national memory, and in that memory W. B. Yeats and the rest of the members of the Irish Academy must in the future have a place; Ireland will never be able to wipe out the memory of its English-speaking past.’⁶⁰ Unafraid to criticize his own contributors (an editorial notes that ‘the Nationalist’s criticism of literature is so often wide of the mark—C.M. Grieve is led to search for marks of Scottishness in the work of Norman Douglas, and even finds them!’⁶¹), Whyte’s agenda was to ‘enable Scotsmen to function satisfactorily as artists in Scotland and, willy-nilly, they will produce Scottish art.’⁶²

Nonetheless, Whyte remained committed to promoting those who had initiated the Renaissance movement in the 1920s: the first issue included Edwin Muir, Hugh M’Diarmid, and Neil Gunn, and an article by Major C. H. Douglas, whose economic theories of ‘social credit’ were espoused by many as the ‘national’ alternative to failed capitalism and its totalitarian antagonists. And the issue of spring 1932 included Muir, McDiarmid [*sic*], Ruaraidh Erskine of Marr (the Gaelic-language nationalist), William Soutar (previously a contributor to the *Chapbook*), and Naomi Mitchison (‘A Socialist Plan for Scotland’), one of the few women writers in the Renaissance movement who continued to write beyond the end of the 1930s. *The Modern Scot’s* insistence that a nationalist art could also be an art at the forefront of contemporary ‘international’ developments was reflected in the summer 1931 issue, which had an article on ‘Apocalypse and D. H. Lawrence’ by Scottish writer Catherine Carswell (whose biographies of Lawrence and of Robert Burns were much debated); and the January 1932 issue had a poem by W. H. Auden (‘Birthday Ode’), a short story by Herman Hesse (‘The Cyclone’), and an essay on the ‘The Long Poem’ by Herbert Read (who was, briefly, a lecturer at the University of Edinburgh); and the January 1933 issue had an article on ‘The Anti-Humanism

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* ⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 269. ⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 284–5.

⁶⁰ James Huntington Whyte, ‘The Basis of Modern Nationalism’, *The Modern Scot*, 3:4 (Jan. 1933), 285.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* 286. ⁶² James Huntington Whyte, *The Modern Scot*, 2:2 (July 1931), 103.

of T. E. Hulme' (by A. T. Cunninghame). For Whyte, the key issue facing modern art was to 'reconcile the democratic vernacular cultures of today with the classical ideals' of Europe's cultural past—to be, therefore, at once the representative of a national culture and 'a good European'.⁶³

How such a reconciliation was to be managed in Scotland was unclear—as unclear as was the development of MacDiarmid himself. A review of MacDiarmid's *Second Hymn to Lenin* and *Scots Unbound and Other Poems* in January 1933 found MacDiarmid's recent poetry 'a disappointment' because of its similarities to 'the work of those pedestrian English and American gentlemen who find traditional verse-forms "bankrupt"'.⁶⁴ MacDiarmid's finest verse, the review noted, 'has been written in that wonderful medium which he had labelled "synthetic Scots," but some of the most successful [new] poems... are in English (like *A Moment in Eternity*) and it is open to question whether some of the other nominally Scottish ones, which in reality contain very little Scots, might not have been better printed in English.'⁶⁵ These different poetic possibilities pointed to different versions of what a Scottish Renaissance might mean:

Mr MacDiarmid seems to be standing at the cross-roads. One leads towards superficial and prosaic discussion in clipped Scots-English, like *Hymn to Lenin*, that might be written in emulation of the stuff that fills the pages of *transition*, the *New Review* and other publications of expatriated Americans; another towards straight-forward lyrics in English, strongly tinged with mystical feeling; another towards 'pure poetry' in very Braid Scots.⁶⁶

Whatever Whyte's doubts about MacDiarmid's direction he remained 'the Scottish poet of richest promise since Burns' and Whyte continued to give Grieve a platform for his analysis of Scottish culture, even when Grieve used it to challenge Whyte's 'civic' nationalism by insisting on a return to Gaelic as the true foundation of Scottish culture. In 'The Caledonian Antisyzygy and the Gaelic Idea', appearing over two issues in July 1932 and January 1933, Grieve attempted to unite the theories of his own earlier Renaissance, based on 'the many profoundly penetrating phrases in which G. Gregory Smith describes the prime quality of Scottish literature', such as 'a zigzag of contradictions', and the Celtic foundations on which Geddes's Renaissance had been built.⁶⁷ For MacDiarmid, however, the contemporary 'Gaelic Idea' is called forth by what he saw as the contemporary destabilization of international cultural relations:

The old balance of Europe—between North and South—has been disrupted by the emergence of Russia. How is a quadrilateral of forces to be established?

⁶³ James Huntington Whyte, *The Modern Scot*, 2:2, 103. ⁶⁴ James Huntington Whyte, 'Wither Away', *The Modern Scot*, 3:4 (Jan. 1933), 350. ⁶⁵ *Ibid.* ⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 355.

⁶⁷ Hugh MacDiarmid [C. M. Grieve], 'The Caledonian Antisyzygy and the Gaelic Idea', *The Modern Scot*, 2:2 (July 1931), 143.

England partakes too much of Teutonic and Mediterranean influences; it is a composite—not a ‘thing-in-itself.’ Only in Gaeldom can there be the necessary counter-idea to the Russian Idea—one that does not run wholly counter to it, but supplements, corrects, challenges, and qualifies it. Soviet economics are confronted with the Gaelic system with its repudiation of usury which finds its modern expression in Douglas economics. The dictatorship of the proletariat is confronted by the Gaelic Commonwealth with its aristocratic culture—the high place it gave to its poets and scholars.⁶⁸

Grieve might assert that ‘this Gaelic Idea has nothing in common with the activities of An Commun Gaidhealach’ (organizers of the annual ‘Mod’, celebrating Gaelic culture), and ‘no relationship whatever with the Celtic twilight’ but what he was returning to was the cultural alternative which had animated the earliest stirrings of Scottish modernism.⁶⁹ Grieve’s refusal of a ‘civic’ nationalism and appeal to racial and linguistic foundations—underlined by his insistence that ‘Hitler’s “Nazis” wear their Socialism with precisely the difference which post-Socialist Scottish Nationalists must adopt . . . class-consciousness is anathema to them, and in contradistinction to it they set up the principle of race-consciousness’—reveals the unresolved tensions running through Scotland’s cultural nationalism in 1930s.⁷⁰

Outlook and The Voice of Scotland

Whatever the achievements of the Scottish Renaissance in terms of poetry, painting, and music—*The Modern Scot* of April 1932, for instance, published the score of Francis George Scott’s setting of a section from MacDiarmid’s *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle*⁷¹—Scottish culture seemed trapped in the grip of a Depression as profound in psychological terms as it was severe in economic terms. The need for economic and political change was acknowledged by the amalgamation of *The Modern Scot*, in 1936, with the nationalist political journal, *The Scottish Standard*, under the title of *Outlook*—a title which in itself pointed back to Geddes’s Outlook tower in Edinburgh in the 1890s. In its initial policy statement, the editor David MacEwan outlined the problems faced by the nationalist cause:

We believe that the political and cultural movements in Scotland today have ultimately the same object—prosperity for Scots of all classes and freedom wherein

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 152. ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ ‘Hugh MacDiarmid’ [C. M. Grieve], ‘The Caledonian Antisyzygy and the Gaelic Idea’, *The Modern Scot*, 2:4 (Jan. 1932), 333.

⁷¹ Francis George Scott, *The Modern Scot*, 3:1 (Apr. 1933), 56 ff.



Fig. 92. Cover of *Outlook* (Apr. 1936)

their native genius can fully develop . . . There are some who hold that nothing short of a Soviet Scotland will effect the radical changes in the life and thought of the people so widely desired. Others maintain that no political change of any sort is necessary or desirable. All that is needed, they seem to say, is a re-orientation of our view-point, a greater concentration on things Scottish within the framework of the present system.

It may seem an impossible aspiration to hope, through the medium of a monthly magazine, to reconcile these parties, to urge them to recognize that they are both inspired by a love of their native land, and that this single factor is sufficient warrant for their co-operation.⁷²

MacEwan might assert the need for cooperation between nationalists—because they are merely concerned with ‘different aspects of the same problem’⁷³—but *Outlook* could only maintain the illusion of such cooperation by narrowing the range of its creative contributions. It was more socio-political than *Modern Scot*, and tended more towards literary criticism than to new creative productions. Thus in its first issue there is a seven-page essay by David Daiches on ‘Dialect and the Lyric Poet’, praising the achievements of poets whose work in Scots ‘raises them to a level they could not attain to in English in the present state of English poetry,’⁷⁴ but only two pages devoted to poetry in Scots (three ‘variations’ by William Soutar, and ‘Melodie d’Amour’ by Robert Garioch). In its second issue there are six-page articles on ‘Literature: Class or National?’ by Lennox Kerr and on ‘A Literature without a Language’ by Edwin Muir, but only two short poems (by William Jeffrey

⁷² David MacEwan, *Outlook*, 1:1 (Apr. 1936), 7.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ David Daiches, ‘Dialect and the Lyric Poet’, *ibid.*

and Stuart Hood). Although prose writers such as George Friel and J. F. Hendry, who would become significant novelists in the 1940s and 50s, published some of their earliest work in *Outlook*, its focus on Scotland's institutions rather than its artists—typical features include 'The Future of Adult Education' or 'What the B.B.C. Could do for Scottish Music'—was perhaps the result of its dependence on advertising revenue and therefore its need to appeal to a more general readership, one to which its monthly listing of Scottish events such as the 'National Fat Stock Club Show' and 'the Peebles Amateur (Open) Gold Tournament' might appeal.

Nonetheless, *Outlook* ceased in January 1937, leaving a space which was to be filled by a journal edited 'by Hugh MacDiarmid' rather than C. M. Grieve. *The Voice of Scotland* was launched in the summer of 1938 and five issues were published before it had to be suspended by the outbreak of the Second World War, having reached volume 2, number 1. It then recommenced in December 1945 with volume 2, number 2 as though the war had never happened, a defiance of history which was repeated when volume 5, number 3 was published in June 1949 and volume 5, number 4 followed in January 1955. *The Voice of Scotland* was very much the vehicle of Grieve's assertion of MacDiarmid's significance in Scottish and international modernism and his editorials regularly poured scorn on those who challenged his agenda or his achievements. In the first issue in 1938, for instance, he attacked the editor of *The Scots Observer*, William Power, as a writer with an 'utter and most disabling lack of knowledge of life as it presents itself to the vast majority of the Scottish people—the working class'; a lack which 'is a great disability that is shared to the full by the great majority of contemporary Scottish writers of any little reputation, and it completely invalidates their work'.⁷⁵ Similarly, the 'Editorial' of January 1956 attacked Maurice Lindsay, whom MacDiarmid had himself published in *The Voice of Scotland*, but who had unenthusiastically reviewed MacDiarmid's *In Memoriam James Joyce*:

It is no doubt in keeping with the Saltire Society's conception of how to promote the interests of Scottish literature that a book like MacDiarmid's *In Memoriam James Joyce* should be entrusted in the *Saltire Review* to this squirt. And it is certainly in keeping with Lindsay's nature that he should have had no hesitation in accepting the job, although he must have known he was utterly incapable of doing any justice to such a book. Indeed, apart from a few characteristically impudent (and irrelevant) remarks he proved incapable of saying anything at all.⁷⁶

By comparison, MacDiarmid cites a French critic whose review not only correctly identifies the aesthetic of MacDiarmid's work but 'goes on to place *In Memoriam* in its proper company—Baudelaire, Eliot, Pound, Empson'.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Hugh MacDiarmid, *The Voice of Scotland*, 1:1 (June–Aug. 1938), 27.

⁷⁶ Hugh MacDiarmid, 'Editorial', *The Voice of Scotland*, 4:4 (Jan. 1956), 2–3.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* 7.

As well as re-publishing the views of those who praised his work, MacDiarmid not only published poems addressed to himself (by Norman MacCaig), and essays on his own work (by David Craig), but printed tributes to himself by Albert Mackie, given on the occasion of the unveiling of a portrait of MacDiarmid, and by Dylan Thomas, addressed to a meeting of the Scottish PEN Centre.⁷⁸ Equally, MacDiarmid the poet was regularly published by MacDiarmid the editor and it was in *The Voice of Scotland* that sections of the several long poems on which he had worked in the 1930s first appeared.

The Voice of Scotland also set out to present the evidence for MacDiarmid's influence on Scottish poetry by publishing the work of a wide range of poets working in what had come to be known as 'Plastic Scots' (rather than MacDiarmid's 'Synthetic Scots'). Of those MacDiarmid had worked with in the 1920s and 30s, William Soutar appears in early issues and an extract from Sydney Goodsir Smith's *Carotid Cornucopious* is published in the March 1946 issue (to be praised by MacDiarmid in September 1947 as having 'dealt with Edinburgh as faithfully as Joyce dealt with Dublin in *Ulysses*').⁷⁹ But it is the wide range of new poets (sometimes later described as the 'second generation Renaissance poets') that *The Voice of Scotland* set out to present to its readers: Robert Garioch, Douglas Young, Alexander Scott, Thurso Berwick, J. K. Annand, all poets steeped in Scots poetry before Burns. Berwick's 'Addres til Dunbar, *fur Hugh MacDiarmid*' inverts Dunbar's 'Lament for the Makars' to offer a celebration of the new makars:

Oot o yuir well on oor seikniss
 Commis ane heill an ane gledniss,
 That lavis us oor langerie:—
 Fear o the Fiend's ane casualtie.
 Ay, Wull Dunbar aroun yuir well,
 Chauntis the lintie an rossignel
 Till nou, till syne, til aye sall be:—
 Fear of the Feind's ane casualtie.⁸⁰

This celebration of a language come back to life and capable of endless extension—'till syne, til aye sall be'—was to find many followers in the small magazines (such as *Lines Review*, *Akros*, and *Chapman*) of the Scottish publishing revival which took place, partly under the auspices of the Scottish Arts Council, in the 1960s.

⁷⁸ Respectively in *The Voice of Scotland*, Norman MacCaig, 'Hugh MacDiarmid', 5:4 (Jan. 1955); David Craig, 'Hugh MacDiarmid's Poetry', 7:1 (Apr. 1956); and Albert Mackie, 'Tributes to Hugh MacDiarmid', 5:2 (Dec. 1948).

⁷⁹ Hugh MacDiarmid, 'A Scottish Shavawaggian', *The Voice of Scotland*, 4:1 (Sept. 1947), 45.

⁸⁰ Thurso Berwick, 'Addres til Dunbar, *fur Hugh MacDiarmid*', *The Voice of Scotland*, 2:1 (June–Aug. 1939), 4.

Ironically, however, the voice of the originator of what Berwick calls *MacDiarmidrie* was himself appearing more and more often as *The Voice of Scotland* in English. MacDiarmid might still *argue* the case for Scots but increasingly he *created* in English. And, equally ironically, the arrival of a generation of poets committed to the agenda he had established in the 1920s—as well as outstanding poets in Gaelic, like George Campbell Hay, or in English, like Norman MacCaig—seemed not to convince MacDiarmid that a Renaissance had actually taken place. The first issue in 1938 began with MacDiarmid's poem 'The Glen of Silence':

Where have I 'heard' a silence before
 Like this that only a lone bird's cries
 And the sound of a brawling burn today
 Serve in this desolate glen but to emphasize?

Every doctor knows it—the stillness of foetal death,
 The indescribable silence over the abdomen then!
 A silence literally 'heard' because of the way
 It stands out in the auscultation of the abdomen.

Here is an identical silence picked out
 By a bickering burn and lone bird's wheeple
 —The foetal death in this great 'cleared' glen.⁸¹

A 'Renaissance' was necessary because a culture had died, but it is the death rather than the rebirth that dominates both MacDiarmid's imagination and the journal's conception of Scotland—it is witness to 'The tragedy of an unevolved people', where 'everything is morbid, hopeless and inert':⁸²

Set in golden letteris then this resoun
 'Pride of Earth's landis, Scotland, Europe's croun,
 Sumtyme countit the floo'er of Nationheid
 Under this stane, late lipper, lysis deid'.⁸³

Even if it were the case that 'all over the world today the younger writers of Celtic stock are spontaneously coming together—finding like tendencies and qualities in their work—and feeling themselves impelled to joint action in every sphere of arts and affairs', leading MacDiarmid to envisage 'a confederation of the Celtic nations in the form of a Celtic U.S.S.R. '; and even if contemporary poetry in Scots bears out the truth 'of Sir George MacKenzie's contention that Scots is "more massy and significant than English" '; actually existing Scotland remained for

⁸¹ Hugh MacDiarmid, 'The Glen of Silence', *The Voice of Scotland*, 1:1 (June–Aug. 1938), 1.

⁸² *Ibid.* 1–2. ⁸³ *Ibid.* 3.

MacDiarmid the mere corpse of a cultured nation.⁸⁴ So in 1945 the announcement of a possible festival in Edinburgh to which ‘every distinguished composer and executant might be attracted’ is greeted as an occasion which would only ‘emphasize the absence of their peers in Scotland itself and the better the programmes the more ghastly would yawn the abyss between them and the utter inability of the Scottish people to assimilate and profit by anything of the sort, let alone be stimulated even to try to produce anything of comparable worth on their own part’.⁸⁵ Even though ‘Scottish internationalism’ is to be preferred to and asserted against ‘English insularity’, the literary content of the Scottish tradition is minimal: ‘Literary critics in Scotland have always been as rare as snakes in Iceland—that’s one of the reasons for our creative poverty.’⁸⁶ MacDiarmid even appeals to Grieve as witness (in a radio broadcast), ‘to the almost uniformly dull and common-sensible collection of appalling buddies that constitutes our Anglicised Scottish nation today’, writers capable only of ‘this extremely inferior Anglicised substitute’ for ‘that distinctive note in poetry which is so clearly traceable all the way from Barbour to Burns’.⁸⁷

Against the failed tradition of literary criticism in Scotland, MacDiarmid held up the work of John Speirs, whose *The Scots Literary Tradition* (1940) was constructed from a series of articles in *Scrutiny*, the journal founded by F. R. Leavis (see Chapter 35). Speirs approached writers in Scots by testing them against the Leavisite standard of the quality of their language, ‘both locally and as a cumulative organic whole’.⁸⁸ Speirs’s aim was to reveal potentialities in early Scots poetry that were missing in conceptions of poetry as they had developed in nineteenth-century romanticism—a regular target of Leavisite indignation—but what his analyses actually demonstrate is the inevitable degeneration of poetry in Scots: Dunbar’s is ‘a poetry that is medieval and European and at the same time Scots’, while Burns is ‘provincial in comparison’—not because of Burns’s own character but because ‘the Scotland of Burns no longer formed part of the European background.’⁸⁹ MacDiarmid’s engagement with this Cambridge-inspired version of Scottish literature as a literature of decline survived even its strictures upon his own work—for Speirs, Hugh MacDiarmid ‘is a forlorn and isolated figure, the European background having vanished, and Scotland with it’⁹⁰—and continued when he reprinted in April 1956 an essay on his own work by David Craig, which accused him of ‘a slackness, a careless resort to cliché effects’ ignored by

⁸⁴ *The Voice of Scotland*, ‘Notes of the Quarter’, 1:3 (Dec. 1938–9), 1–3; ‘Editorial’, 5:1 (Sept. 1948), 46.

⁸⁵ MacDiarmid, ‘Editorial’, *The Voice of Scotland*, 2:2 (Dec. 1945), 29.

⁸⁶ MacDiarmid, ‘Editorial’, *The Voice of Scotland*, 6:3 (Oct. 1955), 3; ‘Editorial’, 6:4 (Jan. 1956), 3.

⁸⁷ MacDiarmid, ‘Notes of the Quarter’, *The Voice of Scotland*, 1:3 (Dec. 1938–Feb. 1939), 31.

⁸⁸ John Speirs, *The Scots Literary Tradition* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1940), 150.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 152, 153. ⁹⁰ *Ibid.* 153.

a ‘cultural patriotism eager for talent to advertise’.⁹¹ MacDiarmid responded by challenging Craig’s failure to set his work alongside that of Ezra Pound or David Jones, but in the following issue published Craig’s essay on ‘Burns and Scottish Culture’:

In a culture so thin and so badly placed as the Scottish there were few conflicts in society that did not lead to waste and confusion. Much of the national spirit, often in rabid form, went into the Low Kirk religion, but its spirit . . . was irreconcilable with the cultivated ethos . . . it led directly to the Disruption of 1843. This is another of the deep dis-unities which ran off the energies of the 18th century Scotland into dispute and partisan bitterness, anyway characteristic of the race, which made a stultifying monotony of idiom, religious, political, poetic—an inhumane extreme of partiality, in which positions defined themselves more by violence of opposition than by their positive natures.⁹²

In this cultural environment, ‘Burns and Fergusson represent, in their fragmentary way, a line of native creativity untouched by alien influences, but one which was doomed, in essential strength and in the absence of fostering conditions, to dwindle even as it reached its peak.’⁹³ MacDiarmid might quibble as to estimates of the value of his own poetry but not with the emptiness of a failed tradition against which he had to be set for comparison.

Grieve was, as publisher and editor of the era’s most significant journals, and also its most original poet, both the inspiration of Scottish modernism and its central problem. A review of *The Voice of Scotland* in the second issue of *Scottish Art and Letters* (1946) by its editor, R. Crombie Saunders, acknowledged that ‘if the outstanding fault of academic circles in Scotland is that of complacency, certainly it is not the fault of Hugh MacDiarmid,’ since ‘Mr. MacDiarmid has many hard things to say about certain individuals and organisations’ which, ‘in spite of frequent extravagances . . . are not altogether off the mark’. Nonetheless, he suggests, ‘in the present grave position of Scotland, it is irresponsible to indulge in quarrelling for its own sake, and with Mr. MacDiarmid quarrelling is too often that of a man who (in his own words) “enjoys it immensely and pursues it indefatigably”.’⁹⁴ Against MacDiarmid’s sense of the continuing inadequacy of Scottish art, the reviews section of the first two issues of *Scottish Art and Letters*, published in 1946, testify to the vitality with which Scotland emerged from the Second World War: among the works reviewed are MacDiarmid’s own biography *Lucky Poet*, Edwin Muir’s first major collection of poems *The Narrow Place*, William Soutar’s

⁹¹ David Craig, *The Voice of Scotland*, 7:1 (Apr. 1956), 14.

⁹² David Craig, ‘Burns and Scottish Culture’, *The Voice of Scotland*, 7:2, 3–4, 28.

⁹³ *The Voice of Scotland*, 8:1–2, 11.

⁹⁴ R. Crombie Saunders, review, *Scottish Art and Letters*, 2 (1946), 62.

But the Earth Abideth and *Seeds in the Wind*, Fionn MacColla's *And the Cock Crew*, and poetry collections by Douglas Young, Adam Drinan, Sydney Graham (later W. S. Graham), and Ruthven Todd, as well as J. D. Fergusson's *Modern Scottish Painting* and an exhibition of the 'New Scottish Group'. And the fact that both *Arts and Letters* and *The Voice of Scotland* could publish the work of those working in 'Plastic' or 'Braid Scots'—like Robert Garioch, Sydney Goodsir Smith, and Douglas Young—alongside those working in Gaelic, like Sorely Maclean and George Campbell Hay, and those working in English, like W. S. Graham, Norman MacCaig, and G. S. Fraser (all contributors to early issues of *Arts and Letters*)—revealed the underlying dynamic which argumentative commitments to Celticism, or to a revitalized medieval Scots, or, in the case of Edwin Muir, for an acceptance of English, had sometimes concealed: that Scotland was a country with three linguistic and cultural traditions. T. S. Eliot's definition of a modernist aesthetic founded on a single and unitary tradition could neither contain nor account for a Scottish modernism based on the necessary interrelation and interaction of those several traditions.

A NEW 'ART OF THE THEATRE'

Gordon Craig's *The Mask* (1908–29) and
The Marionette (1918–19)

OLGA TAXIDOU

When *The Mask* appeared in 1908, Edward Gordon Craig, the illegitimate son of the actress Ellen Terry and the architect E. W. Godwin, had already made an impression on the European scene (and stages) through his highly aphoristic, passionate, and idiosyncratic books and essays on the 'Art of the Theatre'.¹ His move to Italy where he established 'A School for the Art of the Theatre' at the Arena Goldoni was part of a very deliberate attempt to relocate his project in relation to the experimentation taking place at the time on the Continent. Indeed, much of this was inspired by his own earlier writings on the theatre. *The Mask* (1908–29) and *The Marionette* (1918–19) were to form part of this endeavour, recording and inflecting much of the radical climate on the various European stages from Max Reinhardt to Konstantin Stanislavsky, Isadora Duncan, and W. B. Yeats. At the same time, it was to provide Craig himself with a platform on and through which he could refine and expand his own visionary ideas for the new 'Art of the Theatre'.

Craig arrived in Florence with considerable professional experience in the theatre (from acting with Henry Irving to designing operas) and significantly with equal experience in the art of magazine production. *The Mask* was not his first attempt at a journal. In 1898 Craig had published *The Page* and had already made contributions to some of the leading journals of the Arts and Crafts movement

¹ Before his departure for Germany and later Italy Craig had directed operas and masques: *Dido and Aeneas* (1900), *The Masque of Love* (1901), *Acis and Galatea* (1902), Laurence Houseman's nativity play *Bethlehem* (1902), and Ibsen's *The Vikings* (1903). He had also published *The Gordon Craig Book of Penny Toys* (Hackbridge, Surrey, 1899), *Woodcuts and Some Words* (Hackridge, Surrey 1899), *Henry Irving, Ellen Terry: A Book of Portraits* (London: Heinemann, 1899), *Bookplates* (London: Heinemann, 1905), and *The Art of the Theatre* (London: Heinemann, 1905).

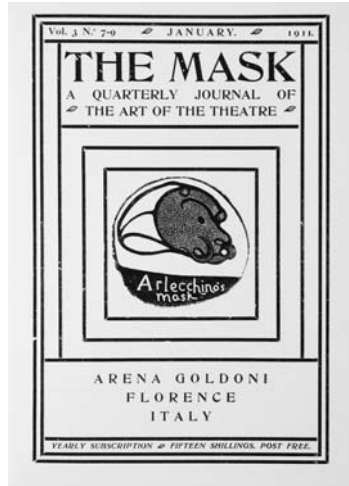


Fig. 93. Cover of *The Mask* (Jan. 1911)

like *The Dial* (1889–97), *The Dome* (1897–1900), *The Savoy* (1896), and *The Studio* (1893–1963).² (See Part II above.) This tradition of the Book Beautiful, inherited from the aestheticist 1890s, was couched in the stark and confrontational styles of the avant-garde manifesto, woven together by Craig’s notion of the art of the theatre.

As a purely *theatrical* journal *The Mask* is one of the first in the English language to advocate the art of theatre as *performance*. Craig’s modern ‘Artist of the Theatre’ was no longer the playwright, but the newly redefined figure of the director. It was through the pages of *The Mask* that Craig experimented with this notion of theatre as something other than an extension of literature. *The Mask* provided him with a constant stage, both metaphorically and literally, and it was here that some of the contradictions and ambiguities in his work were enacted. Under the guise of at least sixty-five pseudonyms, Craig wrote almost every aspect of *The Mask* from its historical and theoretical pieces to its letters page.³ This narrative act offered Craig both extreme exposure and impersonality. Notoriously difficult to work with, a shameless misogynist, and famous for actually producing very little on any physical stage, Craig found a utopian stage in *The Mask*.

² *The Page* (Hackbridge, Surrey, 1898–1901), British Library, Department of Printed Books, 2 vols. It announces itself as ‘a publication in which one finds original Poems, Prose, Music, Woodcuts, Posters, Portraits, Bookplates, and other curious things’. Craig’s most important work in *The Dome* was *Dumas Papa*, a wood-cut, 11/6, p. 63; *A Poster* and a *Pictorial Post-Card*, both from wood blocks, 11/6, pp. 253, 254. For *The Studio* see n. 10.

³ First recorded in Lorelei Guidry, *Introduction and Index to The Mask*, vol. 16 (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1968).

The term 'utopia' at once links Craig's project to the historical avant-garde, which features throughout its pages, but also to a continental radical Romantic aesthetic. Articles by and on Schopenhauer, Wagner, and Nietzsche feature prominently in *The Mask*, extending the fascination with the theatre as the ultimate *topos* (*skene*) of 'the total work of art'. The phantasmagoria and the 'theatremania' of much of late nineteenth-century aesthetics feature heavily throughout its pages.⁴ Here Craig could experiment and theorize about the theatre of the future, without having to actually engage with the mechanics, practices, and politics of theatre production.

The Mask and *The Marionette* stand as the double to Craig's books, as an extended annotation and commentary on their formulations.⁵ The books in their overwhelming and—arguably—over-written form tend to gloss over many of the theoretical entanglements that eventually led Craig to dead-ends and inactivity. While Craig's books tend to flaunt their 'newness' in quintessential modernist manner, *The Mask* and *The Marionette* introduce a bridge linking his thought with the aestheticist 1890s and help place it within the philosophical context of 'Radical Idealism', as the school was interpreted in its imported form from the Continent, chiefly from Germany. Significantly this also opened up direct connections with this tradition, particularly through the work of Heinrich von Kleist, whose influential essay *Über Das Marionettentheater* (c.1810) appeared in the pages of *The Marionette* in one of its earliest English translations.⁶ This heady cocktail is, in a sense, enacted and physicalized through the pages of these two remarkable journals. For despite the historical and philosophical context that *The Mask* and *The Marionette* created for Craig's thought, it was their emphasis on theatre, now reconfigured as *performance*, that made them truly unique. Paralleling the varied experiments of the historical avant-garde where notions of embodiment, physicalization, and spatialization became integral to the 'newness' and radical potential of the aesthetic event, *The Mask* and *The Marionette* not only propagated this 'new' art form but acted it out in their pages. In this way, *The Mask*, *The Marionette*, and the Arena Goldoni became permanent fixtures in the experimentation taking place across the stages of Europe at the time. They provided Craig with a permanent stage that helped to historicize and theorize his views and gave shape to his own identity as the newly emerging 'Artist of the Theatre'.

⁴ Theodor Adorno, *In Search of Wagner*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Verso, 1981), 91.

⁵ *The Mask* (Florence, 1908–29) is quoted here from the reprinted edition (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1967–8), but the dates given are from the original edition, i.e. *The Mask*, 1 (1908), 1; *The Marionette* (Florence, 1918–19), 12 issues, 2 vols.

⁶ Heinrich von Kleist, *Über Das Marionettentheater*, *Berliner Abendblätter* (Berlin, c.1810). The first English translation by Amedeo Foresti appears in *The Marionette*, 4 (1918).

The Book Beautiful and the manifesto

'The *Mask* is so beautiful that even for those ignorant of English it is worth subscribing to it,' boasts an advertisement in its own pages.⁷ As a periodical, which claimed to have achieved its synaesthetic goal through the unifying force of the 'Art of the Theatre', it was meant to be *seen* as well as read. And its impact was strongly felt throughout Europe at the time, as it was sold in the great metropolitan centres of modernism: Paris, Berlin, Rome, Moscow, and London. The appearance of *The Mask* as an aesthetic object was crucial to its overall project. In both propagating and acting as an example of a non-literary view of theatre, *The Mask* found precedents in the magazine culture of the Arts and Crafts movement, particularly as this was manifested in its later Art Nouveau phase at the turn of the nineteenth century. This tradition was infused with the more stark and geometrical styles of the continental manifesto (particularly those of Futurism), creating a unique blend of those two traditions, all filtered through Craig's ideas of the 'Art of the Theatre'.

The Mask's connection through Craig with the Arts and Crafts tradition in magazine design and the Book Beautiful (*The Evergreen*, *The Yellow Book*) was twofold. E. W. Godwin, Craig's father, was one of the leading influences on that period's notions of design. He was the architect of Whistler's White House, he decorated the interior of Oscar Wilde's home, and he was interested in theatre and staged Greek plays in open-air auditoria. Also, his work on stage design was published in *The Architect* in a series of articles under the general title, 'The Architecture and Costume of Shakespeare's Plays'. Craig collected these articles as early as 1897 and was later to reprint them in the pages of *The Mask*. Godwin's notions of architectural design were to provide one of the crucial frameworks for *The Mask's* theatrical dimension, where architecture is viewed as one of the defining discourses of theatrical space (in many ways parallel to the radical experiments of Adolphe Appia).⁸ Apart from this particular influence, Craig himself was directly involved with a number of periodicals published at the turn of the nineteenth century, all of which were in the Periodical-Beautiful tradition. Significantly, though, none was specifically devoted to any aspect of the theatre.

In 1898 Craig published *The Page*, a fine arts magazine very much in the vein of journals in the period: it was more or less a one-man journal, was short-lived (1898–1901), and was full of wood-engravings, sketches, and designs, with contributions

⁷ *The Mask*, 12:4 (1927), p. ii.

⁸ See Adolphe Appia, *The Work of Living Art: A Theory of the Theatre*, trans. H. D. Albright (Miami: University of Miami Press, 1969); *Texts on Theatre*, ed. Richard C. Beacham (London/New York: Routledge, 1993); for an illuminating study on the impact of Appia's ideas on modernist performance see Richard C. Beacham, *Adolphe Appia: Artist and Visionary of the Modern Theatre* (London: Harwood Academic, 1994).

from some of the same figures who wrote or designed for most of the fine arts periodicals of the period (Will Rothenstein, Henry Irving, Max Beerbohm, Martin Shaw). *The Page* was clearly not a theatre journal. However, it is interesting to note that even at this early stage Craig's notion of performance and the idea of a periodical-cum-stage inform the creation of the magazine. Thus, he writes in his 'diary', *Index to the Story of My Days*:

Being an actor, though now no longer acting, the need for appearing before the public was still curiously strong in me. Had I been training as a painter, or in any art and craft, I should certainly not have come out prematurely in any publication like *The Page*. But being actor-trained, I could only do my bit on a public stage—a curtain had to rise at a certain hour on a certain date, to rouse me. This curtain rising was the first number of *The Page*. Only a few copies were printed, and fewer were sold. I worked hard at its creation—many woodcuts, slight text. It appeared from 1989–1901—it cost next to nothing—only life.⁹

Characteristically, Craig never refers to *The Page* in *The Mask*. Like a dress rehearsal, it had served its purpose by the time he moved to Florence. His pre-*Mask* period is full of contributions in the areas of design, illustration, and advertising to various journals associated with the Arts and Crafts movement or which evolved into the main exponents of Art Nouveau. *The Dial*, *The Dome*, *The Savoy*, and *The Studio* all carried work by Craig. Of these the most long-lived and influential was *The Studio*,¹⁰ centred upon the charismatic cosmopolitan Charles Holme, who wanted to create a synaesthetic approach to magazine design which would go beyond linguistic barriers and reach an international audience. Indeed, in many ways, Holme achieved this, as *The Studio* quickly spawned a whole school of imitators such as *Art und Dekoration* in Germany and *Ver Sacrum* in Vienna. The parallels between *The Studio* and *The Mask* were not missed by contemporary commentators, as a review in *The Daily Graphic* in 1908 on the first appearance of *The Mask* clearly showed: 'From today... the *Mask*, from its headquarters in Florence, makes its first appearance here and throughout Europe, to do for the Art of the Theatre what the *Studio* has essayed to do for the arts of painting and of sculpture and of the crafts allied thereto.'¹¹

Craig's involvement with *The Studio* stretched over fifty years, starting as early as 1898 and illustrated his shift from Arts and Crafts aesthetics to a more modernist theory of theatre. In 1898, in a special issue of *The Studio* (issue 8) entitled *Modern*

⁹ Edward Gordon Craig, *Index to The Story of My Days* (London: Hulton, 1957), 191. John Russell Taylor refers to this work as 'the last direct issue of the Nineties book' (*The Art Nouveau Book in Britain* (London: Methuen, 1966), 147).

¹⁰ *The Studio* was published until 1963, continuing from 1964–7 as *Studio International*. See Bryan Holme, *The Studio: A Bibliography: The First Fifty Years 1893–1943* (London: Sims and Reed, 1978).

¹¹ Quoted in *The Mask*, 1:8 (1908), p. ii.

Book-Plates and Their Designers, Craig's work was shown as 'an artist working in the field'. In 1927, his designs were printed in an issue (issue 128) devoted to *The Woodcut of Today at Home and Abroad*. In the same year he wrote an article (in issue 138) entitled 'English Designers of Sceneries and Costumes', in which he concentrated mainly on the work of Godwin. The same issue carried some of his stage designs grouped together with those of Bakst, Derain, Goncharova, Popova, Grant, Ricketts, and Schlemmer. In 1931 (issue 149), under the general title *Modern Book Illustration in Great Britain and America*, his work appeared with that of Beardsley and Whistler. Similarly in 1951 (issue 238) *The Studio* published more of Craig's designs in an issue tracing the history of theatre design from Inigo Jones to Leon Bakst. Interestingly Craig's work features in the context of *both* book design and theatre design: the two traditions he sought to bring together on the stage of *The Mask*. At the same time, his journal appeared equally generous in its advertisements for the journals that hosted Craig's own work, thereby participating in the creation of a diverse network of publications all seemingly advocating a similar aesthetic, including *The Mask's* unique attachment to the 'Art of the Theatre'.

Its uniqueness in this setting finds echoes, however, in another influential journal of the period—the Russian journal *Mir Isskustva* (*The World of Art*) (1895–1904) published at some distance from both London and Florence. Its editor, Sergei Diaghilev, was to become one of the leading figures of European modernist theatre and later a figure much scorned throughout the pages of *The Mask*. At this early stage in his illustrious career, it is fascinating to note that like Craig's, Diaghilev's project started with the publication of a 'little magazine'. This was very much in the tradition of the one-man periodical promoting the unification of the arts later achieved with resounding success in the Ballets Russes. When Diaghilev set up his journal he was very much aware of the British tradition. In a letter to D. S. McColl he asked for an article on Beardsley.¹² Bakst, who would later design for the Ballet Russes, was greatly influenced by Beardsley and Diaghilev himself had considerable experience in book design and production. In 1900 he edited the Imperial Theatre's yearbook which he turned into a *Book Beautiful*, making it 'fuller and more splendid than it had ever been before—a landmark in the history of Russian book production'.¹³ Significantly, however, Diaghilev was able to make the shift from the page to the stage. His journal acted as a testing ground for his ideas on the new theatricality which he carried over into the Ballets Russes. Craig in some ways was striving for the same result, but was never able to accomplish it. Perhaps the longevity of *The Mask* was at least partly due to the fact that Craig's formulations rarely left the printed page. This aspect of his project, however, need not be read as a shortcoming or failure. Instead, we might view it as reinforcing the more experimental and utopian dimension of his work.

¹² See Richard Buckle, *In Search of Diaghilev* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1955), 55.

¹³ *Ibid.* 12.

If Craig failed to acknowledge the impact of *Mir Isskustva* it surely cannot be because he was unaware of it. Even if he had not seen the Russian publication, he had most certainly read about it in another journal, *The Imprint*, launched in 1913. Craig had contact with both the periodical and its editor, J. H. Mason. *The Imprint* cites *Mir Isskustva* as a fine example of magazine production and within the first few months of its publication presented a long article on the Russian journal, praising its contents and overall layout.¹⁴ This very article ends with an engraving by Craig conspicuously entitled *The Mask of Envy*.¹⁵ Perhaps the editor knew of Craig's feelings towards Diaghilev!

A month later Craig and Mason met in Weimar at the invitation of Count Kessler (known as the Red Count due to his communist sympathies). Kessler was interested in setting up a new press and was eager to draw on the experience of both men. Both Craig and Mason recorded this encounter in the editorial sections of their respective journals, and again, somewhat unavoidably, voiced their differences. Mason wrote:

In Weimar I met Mr Gordon Craig who is doing woodcuts for the Cranach Press . . . We got talking about the *Mask* . . .

As to the type, well all that is necessary is for someone to make them a present of a good type—this in an invitation—and the *Mask* will soon begin to shape itself into a good piece of typography. The *Mask* offers a splendid opportunity with its woodcuts—fascinating reproductions of old and modern drawings of rare interest and no little beauty. But technical knowledge of the manner in which the books were produced is indispensable, if their full possibilities are to be developed.¹⁶

Craig was quick to record his own response in *The Mask*: 'And it finds fault with the *Mask*, which it says is the work of "amateur printers" . . . In fact the *Imprint* looks first at the polish on the gun and afterwards tests its firing capacity.'¹⁷

It is true that *The Imprint*, although published in 1913, remained very much within the British School of Art Nouveau, emphasizing strict geometrical design, clear lines, and an overall simplicity. *The Mask*, on the other hand, moved on from that tradition and in many ways mirrors its continental counterpart. More bold and self-conscious in its presentation it allowed Craig to combine his, sometimes eccentric, views on design with his ideas on theatricality.

It is also true that Craig was working under financial and other pressures. Although he worked mainly on his own he was almost constantly surrounded by

¹⁴ *The Imprint*, 1:1 (London, 1913), 10–17.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 17. Craig's *The Mask of Envy* in *The Imprint* is a reprint of the original from *The Mask*, 1:3–4 (1908), 90.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 95. In the same issue J. H. Mason criticizes Craig's *A Living Theatre* along the same lines (121).

¹⁷ Gordon Craig, *The Mask*, 6:2 (1913), 181–2.

helpful and charismatic figures (most of them women). Some like Dorothy Nevile Lees were scholars but few had experience in printing and publishing. Publishing the journal in Florence may have opened up many exciting possibilities for the content but it did mean he was restricted when it came to practical issues like paper and fonts. However, Craig never compromised his elaborate style. His son Edward writes:

The format of the *Mask* was governed by the size of the paper, which was hand-made, cheap, and came from near-by Fabriano. The typography was dependent on what founts of type the printers had to hand. The firm of Morandi was able to produce a small quantity of Elzivere, which pleased him immensely.¹⁸

Despite these limitations, a typical *Mask* page is very impressive indeed. Craig's overwhelming and somewhat excessive sense of design is at its most apparent in the first issues of the periodical. Here the pages are packed with text and illustrations, leaving almost no blank space. Following the plant-like imagery of Art Nouveau, Craig introduced each new paragraph with a drawing of a leaf. In general, the overall appearance of each issue depended, to a certain extent, on its contents. The issues devoted to the study of the *Commedia dell'Arte*, for example, were covered in designs of *Commedia* masks, some reproductions, and others by Craig himself. The same principle shaped those issues concerned with the theatres of the so-called Orient where Craig reproduced illustrations either from other scholarly books or from manuscripts. Regarding the Oriental theatres, *The Mask* presented the most informed and sustained analysis of the theatres of China, Japan, and South East Asia to appear at the time in the English language. Indeed, Craig's work in this area was pioneering, something that was quickly picked up by W. B. Yeats, a regular contributor to *The Mask* and a collaborator of Craig's.¹⁹

The final volumes of *The Mask* (vols 12–14) were more conservative and strictly structured. These coincided with Craig's 'historicist' phase, as he tried to find past equivalents for much of the modernist experimentation at the time. In these issues, with the help of his son, Edward, he printed designs of old theatres and maps of Italian cities, and devoted many pages to research into theatre history. These seemingly extreme phases were bridged by the middle issues, which display yet another ingenious combination of necessity and aesthetic choice. Due to the war

¹⁸ Edward Craig, *Gordon Craig: The Story of his Life* (London: Gollancz, 1968), 231–2.

¹⁹ Yeats and Craig formed a life-long friendship and worked on a series of collaborations together. Craig famously designed Yeats's *The Hour Glass* for the Abbey Theatre production while Yeats contributed regularly to *The Mask* and all his books were reviewed favourably by Craig. At one point, Yeats had considered joining Craig's 'School for the Art of the Theatre'. The following gives an indication of Yeats's presence in *The Mask: The Hour Glass*, 3/4 frontispiece; 5, pp. 327–46 (play and preface printed); *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* (rev.), 8, p. 39; *Plays and Controversies* (rev.), 10, p. 90; *Plays for an Irish Theatre*, illustrated by Craig (rev.), 4, pp. 342–3; 'The Tragic Theatre' (article), 3, p. 77.



Fig. 94. Illustration for 'Mask of the Fool' by W. B. Yeats, designed by Gordon Craig, *The Mask* (Apr. 1911)

and financial difficulties, volumes 8 and 9 were reduced to a pamphlet form. This, however, allowed Craig to interact with other pamphlet printing going on at the time (1915–17) in Europe and to experiment with the harsher, more geometric forms normally associated with the manifesto while preserving an allegiance to the Book Beautiful tradition.

The spirit of the manifesto as a form that both propagates and embodies a new radical aesthetic can be felt throughout the journal and not only in its leaner war years. *The Mask* very deliberately located itself within a context of magazine manifestos that align their aesthetic radicalism within broader political projects. Although never as outspoken as its left-wing counterparts such as *Der Sturm* or *Die Aktion* in Germany, *The Mask* flirted with fascism (Craig himself later met Mussolini in an attempt to raise funds for his projects) and this aspect of Craig's work requires further investigation and critique. Craig saw in fascism the possibility of a grand theory that would at once connect his project with a grand past and provide a totalizing framework to help actualize his theatre of the future. In 1919, in his review of Arthur Waley's *The Noh Plays of Japan* (a publication which was to have a huge impact on the modernist stage), he wrote of:

These great plays, this great way of playing for a great audience! There is nothing to be said in a brief review about this sort of thing so good it is.

What the No can be to us except something sad, I, after many years knowing of it and knowing what it stood for, dare not trust myself to say.

In Italy, they will perhaps, make, one day, something heroic from the coming of Mussolini.²⁰

This conflation of Orientalism and fascism proved particularly fertile for *The Mask*, although it must be stressed that like many of Craig's scheme it was never actually realized. In these early years of fascism and before the horrors of the Second World War—for Craig as for his colleagues the Italian Futurists—fascism exerted an attraction which he was silent about in the later years of the journal and after the Second World War.²¹

The Italian Futurists proved unlikely allies in Craig's quest for the new 'Art of the Theatre'. Their fascination with technology and industrialization couldn't be further from Craig's proclaimed technophobia. However, their scorn of women and of democracy and their quest for a total work of art with utopian dimensions made them attractive to Craig; indeed, F. T. Marinetti's 'Futurism and the Theatre: A Futurist Manifesto' appeared in volume 6 of *The Mask* in 1913 in its first English translation by Dorothy Nevile Lees, Craig's chief collaborator.²² Like the general *Futurist Manifesto*, published in *Le Figaro* in 1909, it appeared at a time when not a single work of Futurist theatre had been written or performed. In his introduction to his own commentary on the manifesto, Craig writes, 'that it is not essential to our understanding in any way to mistake the Futurists as a band of wild madmen or silly fools. They are neither. They are quite serious and strong fellows.'²³ Craig's apparent embrace of Futurism began to falter, however, in the course of his article. While he believed that 'Futurismo in the Theatre can do no harm,' he ends his commentary with 'As signor Marinetti very rightly says, "The Futurists paint what they see". And as Mr. Whistler has rightly said, "the shock will be when they see what they paint."²⁴ This fascination, nonetheless, went both ways. As Michael Kirby claims in one of the first English language publications on Futurist Theatre, the Italian radicals themselves were inspired and directly influenced by Craig and his journal, particularly in their notions of scenic space and their various attempts at mechanizing the human actor.²⁵

²⁰ Arthur Waley, *The Noh Plays of Japan* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1919), rev., *The Mask*, 9 (1919), 34.

²¹ See Harry Kessler, *The Diaries of a Cosmopolitan: Count Harry Kessler, 1918–1937*, trans. Charles Kessler (London: Weindenfeld and Nicolson, 1971). Kessler describes one of his visits to the Arena Goldoni: 'Light and spare, dedicated with almost religious fervour to a single purpose in life, the rooms are like monastic cells. I cannot help feeling that this single-mindedness is, in our age, somewhat childish. It was like paying a visit to a nursery, particularly when Mrs Craig and son Teddy suddenly came out with some bloodthirsty fascist opinions' (194).

²² F. T. Marinetti, 'Futurism and The Theatre: A Futurist Manifesto', trans. Dorothy Nevile Lees, *The Mask*, 6 (1913), 188–93.

²³ Gordon Craig, article following the above manifesto, *ibid.* 196.

²⁴ Gordon Craig, *The Mask*, 5 (1912), 174.

²⁵ Michael Kirby, *Futurist Performance* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1986).

Throughout the pages of *The Mask* Craig attacks his contemporaries. These attacks were almost invariably presented in a form that combined the aesthetic concerns of the Book Beautiful tradition with the more declamatory and polemical style of the continental manifesto. Together with Futurism, there are articles on Cubism, 'Colorific Music', Max Reinhardt, Diaghilev's 'Ballet Russes', and Stanislavsky amongst others. More often than not, the 'newness' of these projects is ridiculed. 'Cubism as Old as the Pyramids' is a characteristic title of an article. Craig, however, reserves his most vehement attacks for his theatrical contemporaries: one of his articles on the Ballets Russes is called 'Kleptomania or the Russian Ballet', while Reinhardt's theatre is seen as 'merely the latest development of the stage reform initiated by Mr. Gordon Craig', and so on.²⁶

All these passionate and outspoken entanglements with contemporary movements allow us to read *The Mask* as belonging to the manifesto tradition of the historical avant-garde. This legacy is mirrored by its equally passionate attachment to the Book Beautiful tradition, making for a fusion of British and continental styles that is sometimes harmonious and at others contradictory, but always enacted through Craig's notion of the 'Art of the Theatre'. As always, too, this tension between the Book Beautiful/Art Nouveau aesthetic and the radical discourses of the avant-garde manifesto was played out on the 'stage' of the journal.

The actor or the (*über*) marionette

In keeping with the above theatrical conceit, the varied stages set for *The Mask* by the traditions of the Book Beautiful and Art Nouveau were inhabited by equally theatrical and elusive characters: puppets. *The Mask* is literally peopled by puppets in all forms and from all possible traditions. Javanese and Middle-Eastern shadow puppets, Buratini, Bunraku, Punch and Judy, and fully mechanized marionettes—not least Craig's own notorious *Übermarionette*—all feature on two main counts: on the one hand as part of Craig's historical study of theatre conventions and on the other as part of contemporary discussions on acting theories, notably the 'man or marionette' debate. For Craig, puppets appear as part of a glorious theatrical tradition of the past and as a proposal for a theatre of the future. Like most of Craig's obsessions, puppetry is presented *in extremis*. The puppet is not only seen as the perfect substitute for the living actor (and particularly the actress), but as the ultimate work of art. If theatre was to be the total art form, then the puppet would represent the total and absolute artifice. To the idealized Romantic legacy of puppets that Craig inherits from Kleist, Maeterlinck, and Oscar Wilde, he adds his own very meticulous and pragmatic study conducted through *The Mask*. However, unlike the Constructivist or Futurist

²⁶ Craig, 'Kleptomania, or The Russian Ballet', *The Mask*, 4 (1911), 97–101.

traditions, whose experiments Craig foreshadows and later parallels, there is no technology of production that informs his vision of the *Übermarionette*. For the Soviet Constructivists, Italian Futurists, and the German Bauhaus the discourses on technology (as both formal requirement and emancipatory/utopian *topos*) heavily inflected their formulations on marionettes, automata, and robots. By contrast, Craig's *Übermarionette* was steeped in the technophobia of late romanticism, more a ghost in the machine than the machine itself. Like Yeats's 'Savage God', Craig's *Übermarionette* emerges as oddly anti-modern and curiously anti-theatrical.²⁷

Here Craig was, in many ways, inflecting a German Romantic legacy that saw in the marionette's invisible threads those lines that would connect it both with oral and popular traditions and with the European literary inheritance of classicism. Craig's determining essay *The Actor and the Übermarionette* (published in the first volume of *The Mask*) can be read as a re-writing of Heinrich Von Kleist's seminal *Über Das Marionettentheater* (c.1801).²⁸

Although *The Marionette* was born out of necessity (in 1918 the Arena Goldoni was requisitioned by the Italian government and the address of both journals was reduced to a postbox in Florence), it managed to push forward Craig's ideas on the tensions between the actor and the marionette in a more playful manner. Here Craig had the opportunity to devote a whole journal to puppets. And *The Marionette* presents itself as a Comedia-type interlude of *lazzi* between the more serious 'acts' of *The Mask*, as, in effect, a temporary carnival mask, combining the playfulness, naivety, designer-conscious aesthetic of *The Page* with the more theoretically slanted *Mask*. Published in 1918, as an interval between issues 8 and 9 of *The Mask*, it deals exclusively with the lives and times of marionettes. This allows Craig shamelessly to indulge in all the narrative techniques he was hinting at in *The Mask*. The puppet-master, naturally, of this magazine-within-a-magazine is none other than the man himself, under the appropriate pseudonym of Tom Fool. The launching or 'opening night' of the journal is heralded as follows, introduced by a reproduction of a design of a Javanese shadow puppet:

Before The Curtain.

Ladies, Gentlemen, and Egoists.

Having lost our offices owing to an unforeseen burst of enthusiasm on the part of nobody, we are reduced to a box: a private box; box 444. Easy to remember . . . and they still say artists are unpractical . . . Being reduced to a Box for an office, after the luxury of the tumbledown Arena Goldoni (the coldest place in the world) it

²⁷ Yeats's aphoristic pronouncement after attending the first public rehearsal of Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi* directed by Lugné Poe in 1896. Recorded in W. B. Yeats, *Autobiographies* (London: Macmillan, 1955), 348–9.

²⁸ See n. 6.

only remains to thank nobody for his burst of enthusiasm which caused us to skedaddle. This pleasant duty executed, the Curtain may go up for all we care.

The Curtain Rises.²⁹

The character of *The Marionette* as comic *lazzo* allows it to fire often abusive comments against its audience throughout all its twelve issues, thus inflecting most of the themes it covered. In particular, *The Marionette* presents comprehensive accounts of puppet history. Although it is almost certain that Craig had enlisted the services of Dorothy Nevile Lees, the series 'History of Puppets' is signed by a certain Yorick, yet another Craig pseudonym. This Yorick also appears in *The Mask*, continuing the narrative doubling that this journal performs. Craig's 'History' tends to read and categorize puppets according to their performative features. He uses such categories as Flat Puppets, Round Puppets, Marionettes suspended from above, and Burattini and Shadow Puppets held from below, which read the puppets within a context of performative practice rather than in terms of their religious background. There is quite an extensive account of matters of handling, articulation, and materials of puppets. At the same time, the journal presents a series of translated articles by Italian scholars published for 'the first time in English by permission of the author'. Corrado Ricci's 'The Burattini of Bologna'³⁰ appears in its first English translation and Craig urges 'everyone in the New Movement'³¹ to read all of Ricci's books. This emphasis on translation in the pages of *The Mask* and *The Marionette* makes these journals pioneering and adds to the cosmopolitan dimension of Craig's whole project. The essays that Craig chose to translate and print (probably with the help of Dorothy Nevile Lees), were all to play a significant role in the documentation and theorization of puppet history. 'Japanese Marionette plays and the Modern Stage' by Oskar Munsterberg [*sic*] appeared in its first English translation and already hints at the Orientalist aspect of many of these studies. Father Mariantonio's essays 'The Marionettes of the Ancients' also made their first appearance in English, highlighting another strand in the fascination with puppets: its attachment to the 'ancients' and its enactment of the quarrel with the 'moderns'. None of these works will appear again in English until Bruce Inverarity's seminal *Manual of Puppetry* is published in 1936.³²

The Marionette ironically allowed Craig to venture into playwriting, as he felt he could produce play-texts for these inanimate creatures without compromising his

²⁹ *The Marionette*, 1 (1918), 1.

³⁰ Corrado Ricci, 'The Burattini of Bologna', *The Marionette*, 5 (1918), 131–63, taken from *I Teatri de Bologna* (Bologna, 1888).

³¹ From the above source book Craig mentions *I Bibiena . . . Architetti 1625–1780* (Milano, 1915).

³² These essays were to play a crucial role in later scholarly studies. After *The Marionette*, they would be published in English by the American puppeteer and director of the University of Washington Puppeteers, R. Bruce Inverarity in his influential *Manual of Puppetry* (London: Binfords Mort, 1936).

integrity as an 'Artist of the Theatre'. These puppet plays (*Mr Fish and Mrs Bones*, *The Tune the Old Cow Died of*, *The Gordian Knot*, and *The Men of Gotham*), called 'motions', borrowing the Elizabethan term, were all signed by Tom Fool and do not appear in any other publication.³³ Apart from these 'motions', Craig also wrote another 'sketch for a little farce for Marionettes' entitled *Blue Sky*. This was written after the publication of *The Marionette* had ceased in 1920 and appeared in *The English Review*.³⁴

This historical dimension of *The Marionette* constantly fed into Craig's aphoristic formulations on the role of puppets for his 'Theatre of the Future'. In the very first issue of *The Marionette*, he proclaimed, 'Must we drop the name puppet and call it merely the *Moving Form*, before it can command serious attention? Probably. Good, then; call it the *Moving Figure*. The Theatre of Moving Figures... is in existence not to exalt egoism but to damn it.'³⁵

In line with Craig's somewhat extreme and schematic views on acting, he first banishes the human form and then the conventions of puppetry as well. His 'Moving Figures' were further incarnations of his *Übermarionette*. Interestingly, he didn't use the term much in *The Marionette*, probably because it is in the pages of this journal that he revealed its historical trajectory. The above quotation, although utilizing the manifesto form, also links Craig's ideas on acting to the German Romantic tradition and its fascination with puppets; in particular, once more, to Heinrich Von Kleist. Although Kleist's hugely influential essay, *Über Das Marionettentheater* had appeared in 1918 in *The Marionette*, and Craig had already formulated his own *Übermarionette* theory as early as 1908 in *The Mask*,³⁶ it is very likely that Craig was familiar with Kleist's work before that. Between 1908 and 1911 he had paid a series of visits to the German director Otto Brahm to discuss the possibility of cooperation. In 1911 Otto Brahm published a book on Kleist with a section on his *Marionettes*. It would have been very difficult for Craig to avoid the impact of Kleist, felt at the time in much of the experimentation with the reconfiguration of the human form on the stage (Oscar Schlemmer also refers to and quotes from Kleist in his writings). The intertextual relationships between Kleist's *Über Das Marionettentheater* and Craig's 'The Actor and the Übermarionette' are beyond doubt; Craig himself places his work in this tradition when he translates and publishes Kleist's essay.

Both essays are based on the assumption that the human form is not the appropriate material for art. If theatre was to be the new 'secularized' art form

³³ 'Tom Fool' [Gordon Craig], *The Men of Gotham*, 1; *Mr Fish and Mrs Bones*, 12; *The Tune the Old Cow Died of*, 48; *The Gordian Knot*, 82, in the *Marionette* (1918).

³⁴ Gordon Craig, *The Blue Sky* (1920), Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin.

³⁵ Gordon Craig, *The Marionette*, 1 (1918), 9.

³⁶ Gordon Craig, 'The Actor and the Übermarionette', *The Mask*, 1:2 (Apr. 1908), 3–15. The essay was reprinted in Craig's book, *On the Art of the Theatre* (London: William Heinemann, 1911), 54–94.

of the future, the human actor had to be replaced by the idol. Marionettes were conceived in their quasi-religious facets. Craig writes:

Acting is not an art. It is therefore incorrect to speak of the actor as an artist. For accident is an enemy of the artistic. Art is the exact antithesis of Pandimonium [*sic*], and Pandimonium is created by the tumbling together of many accidents; Art arrives only by design. Therefore in order to make any work of art it is clear we may work in those materials with which we can calculate. Man is not one of these materials.³⁷

The parameter of chance proved problematic for Craig. As he mentions further on, 'man tends towards freedom' and consequently 'as a material for the theatre he is useless'. Kleist echoes the same argument in his advocacy of marionettes:

I said that however clear his paradox might be he would never persuade me that there could be more grace in a mechanical doll than in the structure of the human body. He replied that a human being was simply incapable of rivalling the marionette in this respect. Only a God could measure himself against matter.³⁸

In a rhetorical style—the philosophical dialogue—often used by Craig, Kleist talks too of the minimizing of chance and chaos with his notion of the *asymptote* of marionettes. The main limitations of the human form seem to be imposed by its very nature, by its materiality. The constant need to de-materialize the body of the actor is present in the work of both men, and Craig takes the argument even further when he claims 'If you find in nature a new material, one which has never been used by man to give form to his thoughts, then you can say that you are on the high road towards creating a new art. For you have found that by which you can create it.'³⁹

If for Kleist such a feat could only be undertaken by 'a God', for Craig it seemed less fantastic. In the role of the puppet-master both men see the totalizing power of the artistic genius. For Craig, though, this was no longer a rhetorical device; for the metaphor was materialized in the shape of the dominant director.

The Kleist essay creates a context for Craig's *Übermarionette* essay and allows us to view his work as part of a tradition rather than an aberration (one that is particularly pronounced in the Anglophone modernist canon). Both men derive a 'grand theory' from the marionette. In its extreme rendition this sees the marionette as a substitute for the actor *and* as an emblem for the total work of art. Craig's closing lines in his *Übermarionette* essay could have easily been written by Kleist a century earlier, and in a sense they were: 'I pray earnestly for the return of the Image, the *Übermarionette*, to the Theatre; and when he comes again and is but seen, he will be loved so well that once more will it be possible for people to

³⁷ Ibid. 3. ³⁸ von Kleist, *Über Das Marionettentheater*.

³⁹ Craig, 'The Actor and the *Übermarionette*', 8.

return to their ancient . . . homage rendered to existence . . . and divine and happy intercession made to Death.⁴⁰

This is the marionette as idol, as the bridge between life and death, the divine and the earthly, and with a messianic power of redemption. Here, Craig is much closer to the romanticism of Kleist than to the modernism of his contemporaries. The ‘man or marionette’ debate helped determine many modernist schools of performance and Craig was seen as one of its chief polemicists. Had his essay been written almost a century earlier, as was its predecessor, it would have been received as an instance of excessive Romanticism—in the Idealist German tradition—not ever meant to be realized. As it happened, however, Craig was writing in the early twentieth century and everyone, fans, acolytes, and critics alike, expected to see results.

For Craig, as for Kleist, the marionette did not offer a language for training actors, a system that could be reproduced and developed. It represented more an unrealizable ideal. Despite all his collections of puppets, his designs and reproductions for his journals, Craig never actually worked on designing and making an *Übermarionette* that was in line with his theoretical claims. The fact that he pronounced the actor Henry Irving (with whom he had worked and who became a father figure for him) the best example of the actor/marionette is less outrageous in this context. While Craig was reviving Irving in what looks like a regressive gesture, the Futurists, the Bauhaus, and the Russian Constructivists were experimenting with marionettes, puppets, robots, and automata, all at least partly inspired by Craig’s own writings.

Kleist’s essay helps to resolve this seeming contradiction while connecting Craig’s views on acting and theatre in general with the Idealist Romantic tradition. As expressed by Kleist, this is a tradition that conceives of marionettes in their quasi-religious context and negates the human actor, proposing an idealized abstraction in its place. The tensions that such a view encompasses remain subdued and glossed over as long as the project does not involve theatrical practice (or praxis in this case). From the moment the spatialized, embodied dimension of theatre is introduced, this ‘theory’ demands an equally passionate attachment to a ‘theory of production’. This was a step taken by the historical avant-garde in various forms (in Vsevolod Meyerhold’s *biomechanics* or Oscar Schlemmer’s *Mechanized Eccentric*), but not by Craig. And in a sense he couldn’t take this step, to the degree that he was closer to the idealized Romantic tradition than to the modernist one.

What Craig lacked, however, in terms of a ‘production theory’ for his *Übermarionette* he more than made up for through his eccentric and sometimes inspired ‘production theories’ for his two journals. The fact that he chose to feature Kleist in *The Marionette* and not *The Mask* only adds to the smaller journal’s performative quality. *The Marionette*, acting as a magazine-within-a-magazine and employing

⁴⁰ Craig, ‘The Actor and the Übermarionette’, 15.

various experimental narrative devices (mostly borrowed from the theatre), reveals Craig's historical sources and helps us to place his work within a tradition of aesthetic theory, while also elucidating the aspects of his work that appear to be contradictory or simply idiosyncratic.

'So that I wasn't always there'⁴¹

One such idiosyncrasy appears in Craig's extensive use of pseudonyms in his journals. Asked about this in an interview in 1962 he put forward the principle of impersonality, 'you see the *Mask* could do anything'.⁴² The result, of course, was quite the opposite. It made its author ever-present and all-powerful. Assuming some sixty-five pseudonyms, Craig was in control of almost every article, every commentary, every drawing, even the correspondence in the pages of his journals. Rather than 'hide the identity of the man behind it', as Craig's son writes,⁴³ *The Mask* could not have been a better promoter of that identity. These narrative strategies were in a sense already demanded by the overall aesthetic stance of the magazines themselves, particularly *The Mask*. The title of the publication not only acted as an indicator of its content, but also provided a paradigm of its procedures. For the *Mask* enacted Craig's notions of theatricality through its very physicality and the way it 'narrates' these notions. In writing *The Mask*, Craig employed narrative structures that gave form to its performative stance. As a masked writer, his use of pseudonyms seems like a logical extension of the faith that he had in the only pure form of *theatrical writing* he acknowledged: the mask. This faith in the mask as a form that not only conceals but can potentially reveal as well derives directly from the 1890s fascination with masks. In this way Craig, as the voice behind *The Mask*, both shapes and is shaped by it. It provided him with an arena to test, analyse, exemplify, and enact his ideas. In turn, this arena set up its own parameters, within which the author of the project could take on the guise of a mask himself.

The pseudonyms themselves ranged from the highly scholarly to the obviously comic and carnivalesque, and Craig went to great lengths to construct characters, biographies, and different styles for each one.⁴⁴ The most prominent was John Semar, the name attributed to the editor. Craig borrowed the name from the Javanese puppet Semar, a fact nowhere acknowledged in *The Mask*. (In all his writings on Javanese shadow puppets, Craig avoids naming them.) It is interesting to note that Semar, one of the most respected figures of the Javanese cast of shadow

⁴¹ Quoted in Guidry, *The Mask: Introduction and Index*, 8.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ See Edward Craig, *Gordon Craig*, 242.

⁴⁴ 'Biographies' of Craig's pseudonyms can be found in his notebooks, part of the Craig Collection at the National Library, Paris. Notebook 30 refers to his use of pseudonyms.

puppets, is himself in disguise. As a tramp or as a wrinkled old man, he symbolizes the all-knowing, wise figure whose ragged appearance is only there to deceive and distract. The persona Semar voices his views mainly in the editorial section of the periodical where he comments on matters of world theatre and world affairs in general.

In employing these strategies Craig was aiming for a certain suspension of disbelief in his audience/readership that could not be expected to take pseudonyms like Yoo-no-hoo, Britannicus, Edward Edwardovitch, or X.Y.Z. seriously. In a way, the more obvious the pseudonym, the more readers were compelled to apply theatrical ways of 'reading'. Such names could only be characters on a stage—in this case provided through the pages of a magazine. Craig's cunning and devout attempts to hide his identity and claim that he was merely one contributor to *The Mask* are matched by jaunty and fanciful attempts to make his cover transparent and charade-like. The following is an example of numerous announcements in the *Mask* that try hard, but not too hard, to maintain Craig's cover:

There have appeared lately more than once in the Press two erroneous statements in regard to *The Mask*: first, that it is edited by Mr. Gordon Craig at Rapallo; second, that its first eight volumes were written by him.

Such reports are incorrect.

The Mask remains in the same hands as heretofore. Its home is still in Florence, and it is edited from the first, by Mr. John Semar.


Mr. Craig continues to send as hitherto, his contributions. In regard to the second error . . . while Mr. Craig has contributed largely to them, and certainly has a capacity for work, they were not all written by him. Such a feat were surely an impossible one.⁴⁵

Impossible, perhaps, but nevertheless a feat that Craig undertook and one which became all the more urgent the more collective the project became. Far from being a one-man show, *The Mask* was, in the mechanics of its production, just such a collective project. One of its main contributors was Craig's companion in Florence, Dorothy Nevile Lees, whose contribution to *The Mask* and *The Marionette* has been greatly underestimated. As a prominent Italian scholar she made numerous valuable contributions to *The Mask* in the area of theatre history, particularly the Commedia dell'Arte, and made much new material accessible to the English-speaking public. When Craig was away (particularly during the notorious production of the Moscow *Hamlet* with Stanislavsky),⁴⁶ she would assume the role of the editor and also share many more pseudonyms with Craig. Like an understudy, she would step in when

⁴⁵ *The Mask*, editorial notes, 10:1 (1924).

⁴⁶ For a detailed and insightful analysis of Craig's cooperation with Konstantin Stanislavsky, see Laurence Senelick, 'The Craig-Stanislavsky Hamlet at the Moscow Art Theatre', *Theatre Quarterly*, 6/2 (1976), 56–122; 'Moscow and Monodrama: The Meaning of the Craig-Stanislavsky Hamlet',

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The Mask Publishers, Arena Goldoni. Florence. Italy.

Fig. 95. Announcements, *The Mask* (July 1911)

Craig was busy doing other things, including trying to save the Arena Goldoni from requisition by the Italian government. The theatre was finally requisitioned, but, solely due to Lees's intervention, all the equipment, collections, and other belongings of the school were saved. Announcing in a letter to Craig, who was in Rome, that she had managed to save the school, she also informed him that 'she was expecting a child by him.'⁴⁷ Her role was never publicly acknowledged by Craig

Theatre Research International, 6 (1981); *Gordon Craig's Moscow 'Hamlet': A Reconstruction* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982).

⁴⁷ See Edward Craig, *Gordon Craig*, 301.

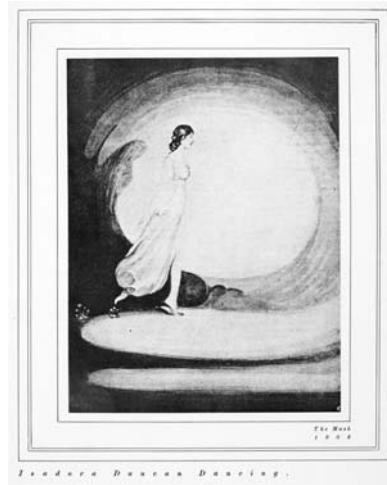


Fig. 96. Isadora Duncan, *The Mask* (Aug. 1908)

and it is mainly due to Lorelei Guidry's introduction to her *Index to The Mask* that we are aware of her.

Biographical scandals aside, Craig's 'narrative' treatment of Lees is in line with the overall gender politics of much of his work, and, of course, heavily inflects his use of these narrative masks. If anyone was practising 'impersonality' it was Lees and not Craig. The application of the mask becomes all the more necessary when addressing the issue of gender. For Craig the theatre had no place for women. This in some way continues the difficult relationship that the classical theatres of Europe (Athenian and Elizabethan) have with the female form and its representational efficacy, but also links Craig again with a certain kind of romanticism. Indeed, the sections he quotes or comments on from Schopenhauer and Nietzsche are all deeply misogynist and are used theoretically to justify his banning of women from any aspect of theatre or any form of artistic practice in general. 'One only need look at a woman's shape to discover that she is not intended for either too much mental or too much physical work,' he writes in an article entitled 'A Word about Schopenhauer and the Feminist Movement'.⁴⁸ This attitude, although in line with the virile anti-feminism of the Futurists, needs to be qualified by his long-standing relationship with Isadora Duncan as well, a relationship that has been analysed in biographical and personal terms, but not in terms of the impact that Duncan's experiments in modern dance inevitably had on Craig's notions of theatre. The mask as narrative device, with its resulting journal, in the end manages to create

⁴⁸ Gordon Craig, 'A Word about Schopenhauer and the Feminist Movement', *The Mask*, 7:1 (1914), 3.

extreme exposure for Craig and extreme invisibility for many of his collaborators, especially if they were women.⁴⁹

The Mask was definitely a *monodramatic* project. As Craig's Moscow *Hamlet* (like many other attempts) had failed to bring to life his vision of a drama that would be centred round the genius of the 'Artist of the Theatre', the only constant stage available to him was in and through the pages of *The Mask* and *The Marionette*. Whether as masked playwright, ventriloquist, puppet, or puppet-master, Craig was to be the centre of the whole affair. *The Mask* existed to present both his art and himself. It was to be the workshop that would mould the art of the theatre and its artist. In this sense the Arena Goldoni generates *The Mask* and *The Marionette*, but also the Arena Craig.

⁴⁹ See the Craig–Duncan Collection, The Dance Collection, The Library for the Performing Arts at the Lincoln Center, New York. Also see *Your Isadora: The Love Story of Isadora Duncan and Gordon Craig*, ed. Francis Steegmuller (London: Macmillan, 1974); Isadora Duncan, *My Life* (1927; New York: Liveright, 1996).

MODERNISM AS ‘UNINFECTED DISCOURSE’

Laura Riding, *Epilogue* (1935–7) and *Focus* (1935)

MARK JACOBS

Epilogue (1935–7) was a handsome octavo hardback periodical, about 250 pages in length, the front board imprinted with a John Aldridge engraving of a small stage with curtains closed and an oversized blank writing scroll centre-proscenium. Flanking the stage are screens and various props—a wine goblet on a table, a spear, a picture frame, a cloth-draped column (Fig. 97). Three white clouds float in the sky above. *Epilogue*'s editor, Laura Riding, described to Aldridge what she thought would be appropriate as an illustration, and the reasons for it, in a letter of that time:

About the *Epilogue* cover, I'm sorry it's being a trouble. The dramatic symbolism is merely this:

That the thing is called *Epilogue*, meaning that it's all about what comes after the drama of history, that although it's after history it represents happenings, though of another kind. And the three verse lines say this too. I don't want to print *Epilogue* on the cover just as a magazine name, but as a meaning to remind that *Epilogue* means a dramatic performance coming after the strict dramatic performance. So what this brings us to is that the theatre symbolism can be as unrigid as possible—anything to suggest that the play proper is over . . . the play-over idea might become slightly pictorial. Abandoned theatrical properties, perhaps a very small stage showing the post-play mess in the wings.¹

¹ From a letter held at the Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection, New York Public Library; no date, but probably March 1935. Aldridge's engraving for the *Epilogue* cover is in the style of those he had executed for Laura Riding's poem, *The Life of the Dead*, with ten illustrations by John Aldridge (London: Arthur Baker Ltd, 1933). My many thanks to Alan Clark and Elizabeth Friedmann for their help, suggestions, and advice on this chapter.

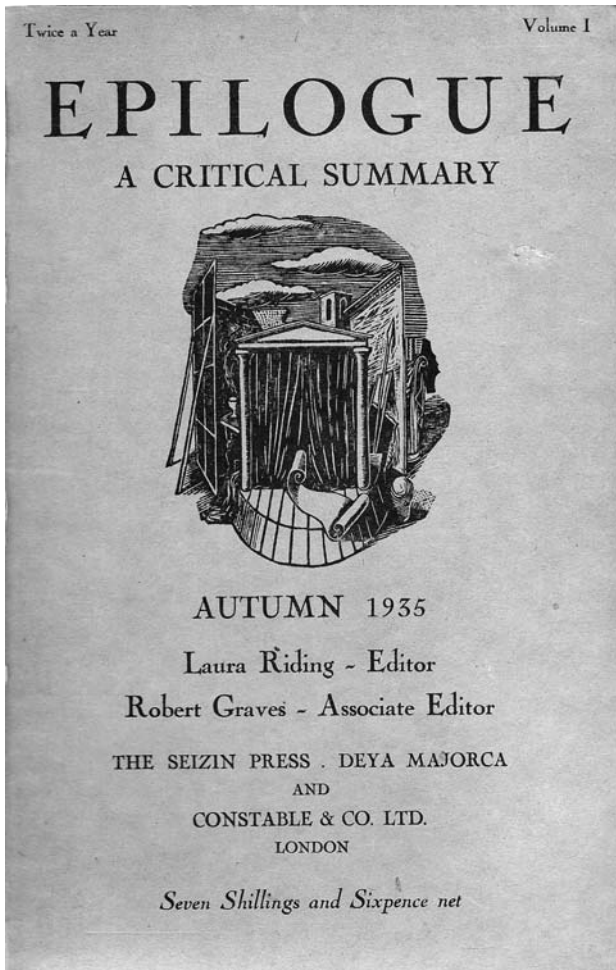


Fig. 97. Cover of *Epilogue* (Autumn 1935)

The 'three verse lines' outlining *Epilogue's* intentions are found on the verso of each volume's 'Contents' page: '*Now time has reached the flurrying curtain-fall | That wakens thought from historied reverie | And gives the word to uninfected discourse.*' *Epilogue* is predicated therefore on the concept that history is over—eschewing, however, the *fin de siècle* despair prognosticated by Mallarmé and his circle. The historical world record is not discounted, but rather posited as a sprawling indeterminacy from which finalities can be discovered and articulated. The poet's role, in any age, is to bring these finalities into focus, not to flatter or beguile a notional public:

Yes, poets are those among us who have ‘always’ existed. The ages of time represent degrees of wakefulness merely; the difference between this age and the so-called preceding ages is merely one of degree of wakefulness. Life has been lived in terms of time only as poets have not achieved full wakefulness: history represents the bad dreams of poets.²

A fine distinction is drawn here between ‘history’ and ‘time’: the valuable lessons, or ‘finalities’, learned throughout ‘time’ are retained, whereas ‘history’—the re-telling and reorganizing of time into theoretic periods from a contemporary position—is rejected. The poet is alive in time, not history, a view that distinguishes *Epilogue* from other magazines, as will be seen. According to its editor, the ‘central theme’ of *Epilogue* is ‘a time-surviving truth, and a final unity of values in this truth’.³

This different understanding of modernism is illustrated in the second essay of volume 1, entitled ‘The Cult of Failure’, which opens under the sub-heading, ‘The Rimbaud’: ‘The Rimbaud is a café, a café abroad where a certain intoxication of mind is cultivated in a certain mood of despair.’⁴ The ‘failure’ referred to in the title is poetic failure, and the essay (written by Laura Riding) goes on to caricature French literature as a ‘commercial promenade—The Rimbaud always providing the centralizing critical clue without which it would be merely a street of petty competitors in the bizarre, each provoking the other to reveal his fundamental banality.’⁵

The three regular volumes bore the joint imprint of Laura Riding and Robert Graves’s Seizin Press in Deyá and Constable in London. Each cover stated ‘Twice a Year’, but the Spring 1937 volume bore a note ‘In Apology’ facing its title page, beginning ‘Epilogue III would normally have appeared in the autumn of 1936. Events in Spain delayed its publication.’ The growing Spanish Civil War had forced Riding and Graves to leave Majorca, in early August 1936 and they relocated to London.⁶

Those ‘events’ helped bring about that the fourth *Epilogue* (1938) took the distinctive though still collaborative form of a 540-page book, *The World and Ourselves*,⁷ published by Chatto and Windus and described on its dust jacket as ‘by

² Laura Riding, ‘The End of the World and After’, *Epilogue*, 3 (Spring 1937), 1.

³ Laura Riding, *Epilogue*, 1 (Autumn 1935), 4.

⁴ Laura Riding, ‘The Cult of Failure: The Rimbaud’, *ibid.* 60.

⁵ *Ibid.* 62.

⁶ See Elizabeth Friedmann, *A Mannered Grace: The Life of Laura (Riding) Jackson* (New York: Persea Books, 2005).

⁷ A note on the verso facing the title page of *The World and Ourselves* (1938) explains, ‘This represents the fourth volume of the literary series *Epilogue*. I have thought it important at this time to suspend the work of general criticism begun in the first three volumes, and to make a special inquiry into the state of the world to-day in relation to ourselves. I hope soon to be able to renew the original programme with *Epilogue V*.’

Laura Riding and sixtyfive others'. It was edited by Riding on the basis of 'letters about the world situation' she had elicited 'from 65 people of various professions and pursuits'. Thus this symposium-based work, conceived and edited by Riding, was published in direct response to the troubled climate of the pre-war years but is contiguous with *Epilogue* and its themes. At the time Riding hoped, as in the dust-jacket, to 'renew the original programme' with an *Epilogue 5*, but no such subsequent volume was to appear.

The three volumes of *Epilogue* (Autumn 1935, Summer 1936, Spring 1937) were edited by Riding, with Robert Graves described as 'Assistant Editor' on the title page of the first volume but as 'Associate Editor' on its cover, and then as 'Associate Editor' in both places on the next two volumes. Riding's written contribution was, in quantity, roughly twice that of Graves. Other contributors included John Cullen, James Reeves, Honor Wyatt, Len Lye, Thomas Matthews, John Aldridge, Katherine Burdekin, Norman Cameron, Kenneth Allott, Alan Hodge, Sally Graves, and Jacob Bronowski, all of whom later became widely known and respected for their work in their various fields. The further contributor, 'Madeleine Vara', was a nom de plume for Laura Riding.

Several of those named, and others, were part of the small flourishing community⁸ or network, centred on Riding and Graves from late 1920s onward. Indeed, so active was the group in the year of *Epilogue's* launch that members produced four issues of their own 'private magazine, for and by friends'. These four productions, entitled *Focus I-II-III-IV*, also edited by Riding, appeared between January and December 1935.⁹

Focus was planned as an informal periodical which would publish personal statements from contributors who were for the most part known to each other—they lived in or had visited Majorca or were friends in England or elsewhere. It was intended to keep the 'circle' in touch with each other but, in addition, each contributor was encouraged to record what happened of significance in their private, if routine, lives and not merely to catch up on 'news'—'significance' here meaning the reflective conduct of themselves with others and their interactions. That element appears, for instance, alongside verbal snapshots of life at Canellun, in this extract from Robert Graves:

Work, slow. I have only written letters, and of these few to friends. One short poem, after seven versions (and recourse to Laura). Another, shorter still, after five. I find it increasingly difficult to get the proper end to a poem: starting is easy. Two of the letters were to people who wanted to reprint things of mine, of no value, in educational text-books, also of no value. I replied in the first case, yes, on condition that they sent me a copy of Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (which Laura wanted) in any cheap edition, and to the other, yes, on condition that they

⁸ *A Mannered Grace*, section 2 *inter alia*.

⁹ *Ibid.* 254–6.

sent me a copy of Philostratus's *Life of Apollonius* (which I wanted) in the Loeb Library. No reply. As though I had offended the educational publishing system by introducing the barter principle.

The press [Seizin Press] restarted work after a year's inactivity. We printed Laura's *Second Leaf*. Laura has an 'open wrist' so could not do the inking or pulling. Karl [Goldschmidt] took her place. This is the first time we have done all the composition ourselves.¹⁰

There were other reports in the letters of work in progress, such as Riding's 'book about Woman', which members of the circle had helped research (its draft, delayed by war, was eventually published six decades later), and efforts to find a publisher for James Reeves's first book of poems, *The Natural Need* (1935). *Focus* also included several poems—one of which, by 'Laura and Robert', opens the December issue, and was not republished during either of their lifetimes. It is probable that the *Epilogue* project was helped into its final form by *Focus* or at least reinforced by it. As Riding records in the February–March issue of *Focus II*: 'Early in February *Epilogue* went off to a publisher [Constable and Co.] who hasn't yet come to a decision, so to-morrow I am cabling with the idea that if it's one of those "we appreciate the distinction" answers I'll get the first issue out immediately myself.'¹¹

Of course, by this time Riding had already developed collaborative writing with Graves, and she had also edited her collection of 'found' letters (*Everybody's Letters*, 1933¹²)—again provided in part by various members of the group—but *Focus* was on a wider if homely scale. While not itself collaborative in the sense that *Epilogue* was—each letter was from an individual—*Focus* represents another facet of *Epilogue*'s spirit of mutuality, helping contributors realize themselves as part of a group working together, keeping in contact with their thoughts and ideas as well as their emotional ups and downs. In one sense it was what might now be called a networking support group.

The principles, vision, and editorial scope of *Epilogue* had been developed by Riding since 1925. The theme of the status-of-poetry is clearly anticipated in her 1928 book, *Contemporaries and Snobs*, which concentrated on defining the role of the poet *qua* poet—a definition acutely in contradistinction to that of many of her contemporaries, especially as epitomized by T. S. Eliot during his tenure as editor of *The Criterion*, whose poetry, and by implication Eliot himself, she accused of intellectual vacuity: 'Advanced contemporary poetry is thus breathless with scholarship—the *Waste Land*, a poem of four hundred and thirty-three lines,

¹⁰ Robert Graves, *Focus I, The Second Leaf* (Deyá, Majorca: Seizin Press, 1935), 5.

¹¹ Laura Riding, *ibid.* 21.

¹² *Everybody's Letters*, collected and arranged by Laura Riding, with an Editorial Postscript (London: Barker, 1933).

has one learned reference to every eight of these; but it is not breathless with intellect—there is no sign of intellect *per se* in the *Waste Land*.¹³

As for Eliot's elevating the role of the critic to somewhere just above the role of the poet, directing the poet, that is, to a 'proper' critically determined method of composition, Riding notes, for example, that, 'Mr. Eliot wrote several years ago: "Every form of genuine criticism is directed toward creation. The historical or the philosophical critic of poetry is criticising poetry in order to create a history or a philosophy; the poetic critic is criticising poetry in order to create poetry."¹⁴

And soon after, having quoted later remarks of Eliot's from the October 1926 issue of the *Criterion*, she counters that:

It is improper to advance that criticism and poetry spring from the same kinds of personal impulse, unless it is made equally clear that they must diverge at an early stage toward their respective positions. Criticism and creation do not face the same way, but face each other, criticism forgoing creation in order to be able to describe it.¹⁵

Riding consistently rejected Eliot's view, insisting on the primacy of poetry over criticism and superior to all the other arts—she saw poetry, indeed, as no mere 'art' but the means of 'truth-full' expression—and carried this personal belief of poetry into *Epilogue* itself. In each essay and poem the prime focus of *Epilogue* is upon words, the rightness of words in relation to each subject; and the subjects themselves—God, crime, philosophy, theft, anger—were chosen as those most in need of clarification. This made the magazine entirely distinct, not only from *The Criterion* but, for related reasons, from other criticism-centred journals of the period, such as *The Calendar of Modern Letters*, *Scrutiny*, and *The Adelphi*. For Riding, poetry held the same seriousness as established religion did for others: poetry, like God, is the final value to be referred to. In the 1980 Preface to the new edition of her *Collected Poems* (1938),¹⁶ looking back over what she tried to achieve in her poems but equally relevant to the pages of *Epilogue*, as we shall see, and other work of hers, she was to remark on the twinship of the functions of religion and poetry:

I was religious in my devotion to poetry. But in saying this I am thinking of religion as it is a dedication to, a will to know and make known, the ultimate knowledge, a will to think, to be, with truth, to voice, to live articulately by, the essentialities of existence.

¹³ Laura Riding, *Contemporaries and Snobs* (London: Cape, 1928), 84.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 65.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 67–8. Her views here are also to be found in adumbrated form in *A Survey of Modernist Poetry* (1928), written with Robert Graves.

¹⁶ *The Poems of Laura Riding: A New Edition of the 1938 Collection* with a new Introduction and Appendix by Laura (Riding) Jackson (Manchester: Carcanet; New York: Persea, 1980; 2001), pp. xxx–xxxii.

...I took poetry at its face-value as turning upon human life, through all the untrustable weather of time, a steadily shining countenance, promise of the words all yearned to hear from one another, a promise delivered in the eloquent appearance of being the prelude to the speaking of them.¹⁷

One might say that Riding saw poets as 'serving' poetry, just as priests 'serve' God—a Great Chain of Being, with the difference that poetry does not require an initial acquiescence in Belief: poets, of any age, are *alive* on the page.¹⁸ The first essay of the first volume of *Epilogue* is titled, significantly, 'The Idea of God'.

As Riding is keen to make clear in the prefatorial 'Preliminaries' of its first volume, everything that appeared in *Epilogue* was to be the result of 'collaborative arrangement' between editors (herself and Robert Graves) and contributors:

No one should merely 'submit' material to us: we are not interested in writing which is sent to us because its author would like to see it in print. Contributions must be the result of collaborative arrangement. Our activity is collaborative, and there can be no collaboration without an adjustment of interest to a central theme.¹⁹

All the essays are either collaborations or have footnotes and endnotes by other contributors. Even the 'primary material' of the poems, stories, photographs, and art has some collaborative element, whether of direct comment or arrangement. The pervasiveness of this element in itself would distinguish *Epilogue* from other magazines and journals of the time. In addition, it was not a 'literary' magazine in any prevailing critical or aesthetic sense:

And we are not 'literary' except in that we regard words as the most authoritative indexes of value, since they are at once the most specific and the most sensitive instruments of thought; we have no professional prejudice in favour of words as an aesthetic medium. In deciding on any text offered to us we shall be concerned not with its 'literary' merits but with its active sensitiveness to value. What is value? We do not say that this or that is value; we do not hold an opinion about value. An opinion is a special view defensively held against other special views. We have no special view. We affirm only the existence of value. We affirm a necessary final law of relation; and in saying that we affirm it we mean that it is a law in immediate effect rather than a law we should like to be brought into effect.²⁰

The quality of intellect here is immediately evident, and we are for the moment halted in our tracks. It bears little to no resemblance to the literary forays and arguments of other magazines of the day, which, by and large, championed, tracked, or

¹⁷ *The Poems of Laura Riding*, 2–3.

¹⁸ This is the general theme of the essay 'Poems and Poets', *Epilogue*, 1 (Autumn 1935), 144.

¹⁹ Laura Riding, 'Preliminaries', *ibid.* 2. ²⁰ *Ibid.* 5.

implicitly followed the theories of various critics, such as I. A. Richards and others at Cambridge, poet-editor critics such as Eliot, or the younger would-be taste-formers like Geoffrey Grigson and Julian Symons. These and the variously complex strands of theory, from Freud to the distractions of Gertrude Stein and Joyce, plus the encroachment of sciences, such as psychology, politics, and sociology, presented a perplexing critical background to poets and critics alike. Riding had carefully distinguished her whole approach from this critical ambience in earlier works such as *Contemporaries and Snobs*, *A Survey of Modernist Poetry*, and *Anarchism Is Not Enough*.²¹

The word 'intellect' has been viewed with suspicion in the twentieth century, as a snob word to be replaced by the more demotic descriptor 'intelligence', which allows for a democratic equality more suited to the era's liberal humanism, and this remains true today, but we can see even in these brief 'Preliminaries' the emphatic intellectual backbone in the modus operandi of *Epilogue*, and the line of demarcation Laura Riding drew between herself, her collaborators, and T. S. Eliot and others. As a result, the content of *Epilogue* ranges unhamperedly across a wide and varied set of 'post-historic' concerns: 'All the historic events have happened,' writes Riding, 'And we shall report them without calculating whether the reader is interested in this as against that; one more interested in Finance than in Religion or another more interested in Poetry than in Science, or another more in Politics than in Art.'²²

History, Riding means, has come to an end. The difference between writing, printing, a typewriter [or a computer] is merely one of speed, just as the horse and carriage is replaced by the car or Napoleon by the latest politician. Nothing further can change or happen but only adapt. The whole focus of life has shifted from the historic plane to the plane of purely personal existence of life with one's fellow humans. This, in Riding's view, is what poetry teaches.²³ The articles in *Epilogue* 1, for instance, move from the first surprising and extraordinary essay on God ('The Idea Of God') to 'The Cult Of Failure', mentioned earlier, to those French poets, such as Rimbaud and Verlaine, who provided much of the background and impetus to Anglo-American poetry of the early twentieth century. These essays were followed by others: on 'Germany', which focuses on Nietzsche; Riding's 'Poems and Poets', with additional essay-material by *Epilogue* collaborators Robert Graves and James Reeves on Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, and Shelley; and on art, including 'Picture-Making', 'Film-Making' by Riding and Len Lye, and 'Photography' by Ward Hutchinson. This wide range of subject-matter is

²¹ Cf. her scathing criticism of C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923), as well as the more favourable critique of Wyndham Lewis, in *Anarchism Is Not Enough*, ed. Lisa Samuels (London: Cape, 1928; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 54 ff.

²² Riding, 'Preliminaries', 2.

²³ See the whole of the 'Introduction' to *The Poems of Laura Riding* (1980).

confirmed in subsequent volumes of *Epilogue* which contain, for example, essays on crime and crime fiction, history, philosophy, drama, politics, and communism, each one linked, however, or contrasted and defined in relation to, poetry and the function of the poet. Since the poet articulates truth whereas the subjects themselves are (merely, or simply) historical—poetry is the value against which they are judged.

The opening essay in the first volume of *Epilogue*, 'The Idea Of God', sets the tone and pace. Riding's essay is written in response to questions put to her by Thomas Matthews, such as 'Does God exist? In what sense?' and 'What is God's relation to Man?' and 'Where does the female principle come into God's world?'²⁴ In her replies, she strips the 'idea' of God to its fundamentals:

'GOD' is the name given to the most 'important' human idea. In English, as in other languages, the original sense of the word is obscure. But the character of the name is the same in all languages: it is a question. 'God' is the question 'Is there something more important than, something besides, man?' Man would like to feel self-sufficient, yet he feels dependent. 'God' states the discrepancy between what man would like to feel about himself and what he actually feels; but equally it represents his attempt to make a compromise between what he would like to feel and what he actually feels. In 'God' he chooses those meanings for the 'something else' which interfere least with what he would like to feel about himself. Man says to himself: 'I like feeling the lord of my world, and yet I cannot help feeling that it is not altogether my world.' He feels that there is something else, but he does not *know* it. To know something one must identify oneself with it; and the result of identifying oneself with it is the discovery of one's precise relation to it. Man has a repugnance toward knowing what he cannot possess. He cannot possess the something else; therefore he does not know it. He places the something else at a distance where it cannot offend his feelings. He does not try to know it, only to understand it—to know it with his feelings. But in making this removal a sense of guilt remains. Perhaps he has done something untrue—something which will ultimately be held against him?

Woman is something other than man. She is the contradictory being by whom man attempts both to identify himself with the something else, and to exorcize it; and she apparently yields to the contradiction. But she is not in herself contradictory; she is the answer to man's contradictory behaviour toward the something else, which is both insulting and propitiatory. She is the answer to the question 'Does God exist?'²⁵

The resonance of this might be viewed as philosophical in cast, but, apart from the complete lack of philosophical reference, philosophy could not, or has not so far,

²⁴ Riding helped Matthews in shaping the questions. Mark Jacobs in conversation with Laura (Riding) Jackson, 1978.

²⁵ Laura Riding, 'The Idea of God', *Epilogue*, 1 (Autumn 1935), 6–7.

made the leap from the first paragraph to the second, a deductive analogical leap: If God is something different from man, the same rule applies to woman. *QED*: If man could understand woman, he could understand God. The essay then proceeds to demonstrate how man's view of woman is perfectly congruent with his view of God.

It is imperative to take note of the fact that the author of this essay is a woman, writing from a woman's point of view.²⁶ She speaks of 'man' (as a collective noun) in the literal sense. 'Man' was the author of the Bible, shaping it and God in his image. 'Woman' (in the collective sense) was no more than an appendage, 'man's' helpmeet, to employ that old-fashioned but pertinent word. The point Riding was making is that 'woman' historically (and contemporarily) is as little understood by 'man' as God is. 'Woman', like God, is also the 'something else' 'man' has not understood—she is no more than a cipher to man, and he understands her no more than he understands God. Both are irritatingly different from him and need to be either placated (worshipped) or blamed (blasphemed). The distinctions she makes in this essay and elsewhere in her work—the pointings-up of the difference of man from woman—are a crucial part of the argument which would later be quarried by Robert Graves for *The White Goddess* and other books, and thus indirectly have a widespread effect and influence on a number of poets, critics, and scholars as well as on contemporary women's studies.²⁷

Without entering into a longer purview of the tightly formulated 'The Idea of God', we can observe the categorical difference of *Epilogue* from other magazines and journals of the day. Its intellectual scope extends beyond the only apparently literary boundaries of some of its essays, as becomes clear in later sections of this particular one, for instance with its slamming indictment of James Joyce:

The lie, or universe, of Joyce, however, is indeed a lie. Its object is not cheerfulness, but insolence against truth; and it requires no magic to sustain it, only the dismal persistence of a single joke—the wilful mistake. It is a parasitic structure, availing itself of the psychological framework of Gertrude Stein's universe for support, and, for substance, of all the intellectual refuse which sober minds reject.²⁸

²⁶ See *New Verse* (1933–9), ed. Geoffrey Grigson. '[Answers to] An Enquiry', *New Verse*, 11 (Oct. 1934), 3–5. In response to *New Verse's* question, 'As a poet what distinguishes you, do you think, from an ordinary man?', Riding's witty reply began, 'As a poet, I am distinguished from ordinary men, first, in that I am a woman.' A large part of Laura (Riding) Jackson's work is founded on the distinction and, crucially, the *difference* of men from women. It is to be seen in the earliest of her poems (c. 1921 onwards). See 'Jocasta', in *Anarchism Is Not Enough*.

²⁷ But Riding's understanding is quite different. See her *The Word 'Woman', and Other Related Writings*, ed. Elizabeth Friedmann and Alan J. Clark (New York: Persea, 1993; Manchester: Carcanet, 1994).

²⁸ Laura Riding, 'The Idea of God', *Epilogue*, 1 (Autumn 1935), 36–7.

And again: 'Joyce, in using words "artistically", is making them articulate a consciousness of irrelevancy as truth—universalizing his sense of personal triviality.'²⁹

Riding, of course, had arrived at this view of Joyce, and of other moderns, such as Eliot, much earlier in *Contemporaries and Snobs*, and with Graves in *A Survey of Modernist Poetry*. *Epilogue* is developed from the principles of both books, and here she is able to put such views under a wider and more sustained scrutiny.

The essay 'Poems and Poets' in *Epilogue* 1, partly suggested by a correspondence between Riding and Jacob Bronowski, opens in a similarly rigorous vein, establishing the grounds of discussion before Graves and James Reeves write separately and critically on the Romantic poets. The first necessity is to define the problem and the proper use of criticism when poems are the subject:

The criticism of poems and poets may be called super-critical in that its material allows of more direct and complete judgement than material imbedded in the geological layers of history, on the excavation of which criticism must expend most of its energy. For in the criticism of poems and poets the material is already on the surface, and critical procedure is more obviously critical: it is in this sense that we can call it super-critical. Poets themselves do not merely lie on the surface like surviving monuments, as poems do; they walk about alive—living ghosts. And so in dealing with poets, rather than with poems, we are obliged to treat as it were *with* them, rather than *of* them. What is with poems an orderly distribution—as of intact relics which by their insistent survival deserve a fixed place in the landscape-present of finality—becomes, with poets, as it were, an emotional engagement of the self of poetry with its ghostly human selves; all the same ghost, really, in changing postures, while poems are the stable memorial individualities of this restless apparition.³⁰

Riding is dealing directly here with the distinctions she made in her previous work between poetry, poets, and poems, pointing out that the only proper critical approach to poetry is the study of poets, the poems themselves offering varied insights into the poet's values. Poetry itself is the ultimate 'value' ('We affirm only the existence of value,' as she put it in the 'Preliminaries') for which poets strive through their poems. Poetry, like God, cannot be defined but is simply 'there'—timeless human utterance, handed on from poet to poet. The critical question to ask of poets is of a moral nature, not a technical one. The question is, are they, in the context of poetry, 'good' poets. Hence, the grounds for her critical distaste for Eliot (as, *mutatis mutandis*, for Wordsworth) lay in her steadfast refusal to be hypnotized by his technical adroitness, by his professionalism, or in his striving to give voice to early twentieth-century angst. Her endeavour was to uncover

²⁹ Riding, 'The Idea of God', 52.

³⁰ Laura Riding, 'Poems and Poets', *Epilogue*, 1 (Autumn 1935), 144.

whether he contributed to human meaning (truth). *The Waste Land*, she famously remarked, is the bird-witted 'great twentieth century nursery rhyme'.³¹

Taking his lead from this essay, Robert Graves explores the difference between the poet and the person. In 'The Romantic Habit in English Poets' he begins:

The existence of a poet contains the elements poetry and history. By 'history' is meant his 'biography', in the sense of life in which he was not a poet but merely lived in his time. By 'poetry' is meant the non-human reality in which also, as well as in human biography, he has location.³²

Graves is contrasting, in other words, the ordinary life everyone lives on a day-to-day basis and the demon 'unreality' that drives the poet and which falls under the name 'poetry'. Thus:

The magnitude of Shakespeare's poetic life was the result of an unquestionable urgency forcing itself through questionable historical circumstances... The primary poems of the Renaissance—*The Faerie Queene*, Shakespeare's tragedies, *Paradise Lost*—are too large in scope to be supported by any merely human motives. Only an influence stronger than all the motives that might be deduced from biographical evidence can have made them so super-biographical in themselves.³³

In his essay 'Coleridge and Wordsworth', Graves explores this distinction to demonstrate that Coleridge was the better poet of the two because he was haunted by poetic unreality while Wordsworth relapsed into the arms of social success. In *Kubla Khan*, he points out, Coleridge 'made his most complete recantation of human reality, indulging in a luxurious wantonness that came near to devilishness'.³⁴ Wordsworth, on the other hand, 'portrayed an ideal England where duty and liberty met, a symbol of an urbanely poetical human reality'.³⁵

This supererogatory drive of poetry subsumes all other considerations in true poets, whilst it also haunts the imagination of the public at large. It is the stage of finality towards which humanity is always striving, but, fearful, simultaneously retreating from, the anticipated cost seeming too high. This is *Epilogue's* governing standard, or perception, against which all contributions were judged no matter how diverse their content seems. In *Epilogue 2*, for example, in the essay 'Crime'—a subject that might seem to be far removed from poetic considerations—after drawing distinctions between crime and sin, and contrasting the methods of various writers, such as Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler, or differences between plays such as *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, the underlying principle is exposed: readers are fascinated by crime fiction stories because they at once allow a sense of private anti-social sentiment to emerge, while at the same time they are safe because the

³¹ Riding, *Contemporaries and Snobs*, 109.

³² Robert Graves, 'The Romantic Habit in English Poets', *Epilogue*, 1 (Autumn 1935), 175.

³³ *Ibid.* ³⁴ Robert Graves, 'Coleridge and Wordsworth', *ibid.* 161. ³⁵ *Ibid.* 164.

criminal is punished. In this way readers can give vent to their sense of outrage at social tyranny while yet safely remaining members of society:

The criminal and the poet are equally abnormal because both act within their society. The poet threatens majority happiness even more than the criminal. The criminal only denies this happiness, and denial can be refuted with reaffirmation [i.e., punishment]. The poet discredits majority happiness by applying to human action standards which are more comprehensive than the standards of current opinion: current opinion is always local opinion. He makes his reader conscious that his standards are inadequate except in their locality; and his reader cannot but admit this. He cannot punish the poet; he can only ignore him.³⁶

The underlying thesis, in other words, of the 'Crime' essay is the way in which crime or criminal behaviour tests the reader's sense of social reality and the recoil from it to safety in the knowledge that it can be suppressed by punishment (natural or divine), whereas no such safety exists with the (true) poet—the reader 'can only ignore him'. This is why readers prefer the not-true, the social poets, such as Wordsworth or T. S. Eliot, whose work reaffirms social reality, even while, as in the case of Eliot, apparently despairing of it.

In the essay 'Philosophy and Poetry', by Alan Hodge and Laura Riding, the point is driven home explicitly at the outset. Philosophy, they state, 'like poetry, consists of related definitions; both are moved by an organizing force':

The results of poetry are poems; of philosophy, 'views'. A poem cannot exist, 'hold together', unless it unites its elements so firmly that they remain united: it attempts to unite only what can be permanently associated. It is for this reason that a poem seems to cover a narrower field or have a smaller content than a philosophical view. A philosophical view joins many elements in loose, temporary association, achieving not unity, that is to say permanent and appropriate association, but a verbal moderation of their contradictoriness. . . . Philosophy deals always with an inherited disorganized universe, and the philosophical view represents an act of possession of this historical totality: the organizing force of philosophy is of a proprietary nature. Poetry deals with a purified universe, and the poem represents an act of communication between chosen elements: the organizing force of poetry is of a critical nature.³⁷

This definition of poetry, of 'permanent and appropriate association' of word and thought, as the standard for professional categories of thinking such as philosophy, or elsewhere religion, history, and politics, springs directly from Laura Riding's understanding and practice in composing poems, still little understood today, in which the natural association of words plays a key part. She examined every word

³⁶ Laura Riding, 'Crime', *Epilogue*, 2 (Summer 1936), 46.

³⁷ Alan Hodge and Laura Riding, 'Philosophy and Poetry', *ibid.* 148–9.

in her poems for meaning, no word was allowed to be redundant. She brought this scrupulousness to the editing of *Epilogue*, hence the line of the poem on each volume's contents-page, 'And gives the word to uninfected discourse' in which the stress falls upon 'word'. Her editorial activity, her insistence on 'collaborative' work with contributors, is evident in every page of *Epilogue* in the attention given to words and their meanings. Getting to the crux of a word is the important starting place for each essay, as in 'The Idea of God' in which the word 'God' is first closely examined and defined in both text and endnotes. The study of words and meanings, of course, would later become the core of her work, culminating eventually in her and her husband's book, *Rational Meaning: A New Foundation for the Definition of Words*.³⁸

The various subjects in *Epilogue* were included for their congruence with this definition of the poetic. Consider, for example, a black and white photographic reproduction of a painting by John Aldridge, 'Alice in the Grotto', in the same volume (Fig. 98).³⁹

The compelling elements of this image derive from the simple composition of what is seen, whether by the painter or by the cat is left unspoken, though the perspective, beginning at the base of the nearest tree and extending forwards would seem to be more drawn from the cat's viewpoint. Everything within the picture is natural, nameable (olive trees on the hill on the left, for instance). As Riding notes:

The way in which we look at a picture differs most significantly, then, from the way in which we read a poem in the degree of patience we have, respectively, with each. A picture's effect must be instantaneous; it must not make us think. But we are prepared to spend time over a poem, to be made to think. The suggestive picture, which provokes us to linger over it, however fondly, is no picture at all; we may say that it is a pictorial poem, and as such an insult to our intelligence.⁴⁰

The ingredients of the picture, this suggests, are not composed in the sense of being manipulated to express some mood or feeling of the painter in order to make an impression on an audience but to draw attention to the naturalness of what is present: sharp light and shade, peace but with a slightly menacing sky. The eye is drawn by the perspective of the flower-bed to the sharply drawn tree at the furthest point, while the rocks on the left attract attention by their intriguing contours. There is a story to the picture, but it is not forced, and there is reality but not exaggerated. The general impression is that something important is there to be said but, because this is a painting and not a poem, it is left unsaid: reality is

³⁸ Laura (Riding) Jackson and Schuyler B. Jackson, *Rational Meaning: A New Foundation for the Definition of Words*, ed. William Harmon, introd. Charles Bernstein (Charlottesville, VA/London: University Press of Virginia, 1997).

³⁹ John Aldridge, 'Alice in the Grotto', *Epilogue*, 2 (Summer 1936), 218.

⁴⁰ Laura Riding, *ibid.* 215.

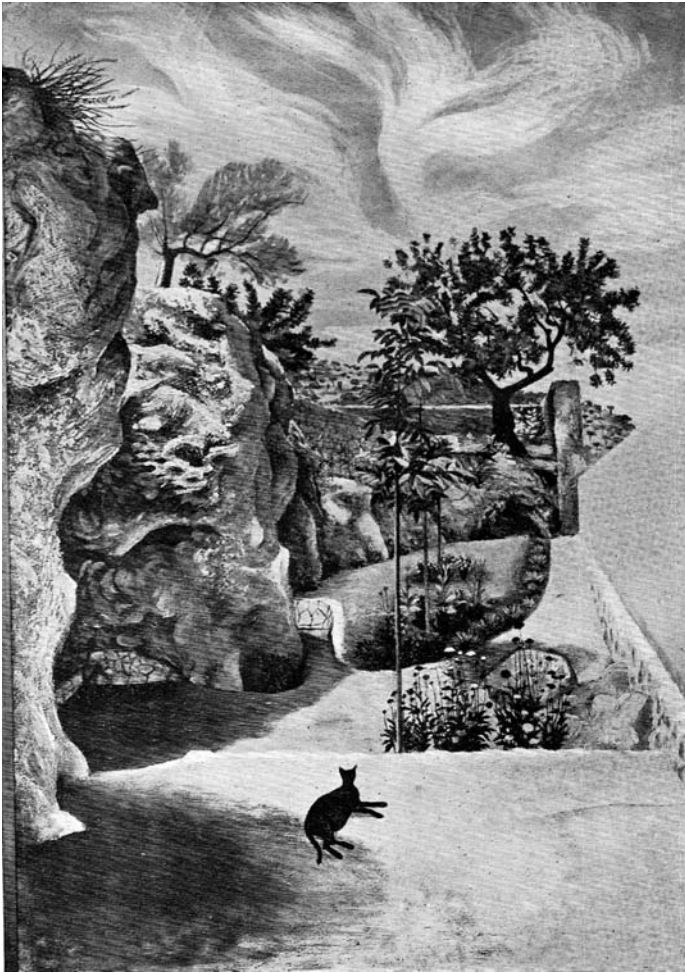


Fig. 98. *Alice in the Grotto* by John Aldridge, in *Epilogue*, 2 (Summer 1936)

drawn together but left unarticulated. Only poetry, it would seem, could give the complete story.

In *Epilogue* 3, the essay ‘Politics and Poetry’ is largely a withering critique of a number of poets and writers, from Auden, Spender, and R. H. Tawney to T. S. Eliot, who had been drawn to communism or nationalism and positions in-between for literary subject-matter.⁴¹ The 1930s, a time of political upheaval—later falling under the critical heading of the ‘Auden Generation’—was influenced by the idea of communist revolution following the First World War, the 1924 and

⁴¹ Later expanded into the book, *The Left Heresy in Literature and Life*, by Harry Kemp, Laura Riding, and Others (London: Methuen, 1939).

1929 stock market collapses, and heightened class warfare. While the urgency was real, 'Politics and Poetry' argues emphatically that it is inappropriate for poets to look to politics for an answer to their problems:

Impatience with the apparently 'abstract' results of poetry has driven many poets to politics—a desertion of truth for right: those poets to whom the success of a poem, of writing a poem, is not actual because it is not 'concretely' demonstrable. The abandonment of poetry for politics is a confession of mental youthfulness; it is not necessarily apostasy, rather an acknowledgement of intellectual failure—the failure to find immediate reality in thought.⁴²

And in a passage referring to Shelley, Auden, and Spender: 'And then the poets enter the parley, bullied into publicism by the challenge that they are ignoring "reality" and by their own vulgar embarrassment in having nothing to "show". Nothing to show? And what of poems? Or, rather, where are the poems they should be writing?'⁴³ '*A sincere political poem is an impossibility*,' the authors insist.⁴⁴

In its way, this essay offers the best exposition of how Riding and the contributors viewed the primacy of poetry in *Epilogue*—poetry as at the forefront of all professions, and by which all other professions should be judged. It describes how human thought was originally taken up by 'things' (the visible world) which 'predominated' over meanings, but gradually, after the description of 'things' was exhausted, 'We tried to be meaning rather than things (for to think is to be meaning)':

The power to describe things, to endow them with temporary significance, is our own power of change. The description of a thing makes it historical—something that was and is not; in describing it we give a sense of change to its meaningless inertia. Our power of change, applied to ourselves, is the instrument by which we reject temporal eccentricities from our integral meaning. It is the constant government of what was by what is. This power of legislation for ourselves is the power of life. . . .

Against descriptive [scientific] truth we set poetic truth, which does not consist of descriptive data but is that truth which it describes. In poetic truth, life—the change-process, the destruction of temporal and temporary appearance—is a purification which makes individual meaning increasingly identical with truth; it remains a process, non-existent when its end of purification is reached and never achieving the autonomy of significance, because it concerns only that which is not. Descriptive, or scientific, truth is in effect the definition of the not-true. . . . Truth

⁴² Harry Kemp and Laura Riding, 'Politics and Poetry', *Epilogue*, 3 (Spring 1937), 7.

⁴³ *Ibid.* 10–11. ⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 11, their italics.

is not the murder of physical reality, but the revelation of reality as structural thought—a coherent entirety of meaning.⁴⁵

Set beside such a reality, politics might seem a minor, albeit sometimes pressingly, pragmatic issue.

By the time *Epilogue 3* appeared in 1937 the atmosphere of war was beginning to make itself felt. The first paragraph of the preliminary ‘The End of the World, and After’ begins:

When people who were not poets have spoken of the end of the world, the results have always been disappointing: the world did not come to an end, we felt cheated. I do not think that we felt relieved: we love things to happen, especially when there has been some talk of them. So with talk of a Next Great War: a state of mind has developed in which people almost complain that World War has not yet come.⁴⁶

This third issue continues with and extends the themes of the other volumes, as the titles themselves suggest—‘Politics and Poetry’, ‘The Theme of Fame’, ‘From a Private Correspondence on Reality’, ‘Humour and Poetry as Related Themes’, ‘Drama’—but, as we have seen, the Spanish Civil War, which had begun in July 1936, forced Riding, Graves, and their friends to leave Majorca at very short notice: they departed on 2 August with one suitcase each. *Epilogue 3* had just been put together for publication and was sent to Constable and Co. but not before a few final additions had been made in England. As Riding wrote in ‘A Letter from England to Majorca’:

On the first Sunday of last August I left Majorca in H.M.S. *Grenville*. For years I had put off the visit to England. England was ‘there’. It has been continually visiting me in the persons of friends whom I regarded as its responsible agents. I had long felt, moreover, that it was the English language, rather than the national entity ‘England’, that was the substance of my faith that the story of the world would have a satisfactory ending, and quite soon.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Kemp and Riding, ‘Politics and Poetry’, 16–19.

Thus W. H. Auden, unwilling to conceive that a large-scale compulsion may originate in the poet, has told me that I am ‘the only living philosophical poet’—my muse is, presumably, Philosophy, as his is Politics... The nineteenth-century lament was: ‘Where is the Bard?’ The twentieth-century version is ‘Where is the Muse?’ In America: ‘Where is the Myth?’—in other words, let us invent new reasons of poetry... some exciting subject that has the reason of not having been used before as poetic material.

Collected Poems (1938), pp. xxii–xxiii. Auden, of course, later rejected his political poems.

⁴⁶ Riding, ‘The End of the World’, 1.

⁴⁷ Laura Riding, ‘A Letter from England to Majorca’, *Epilogue*, 3 (Spring 1937), 227.

Events, however, proved too turbulent for the planned fourth volume of *Epilogue* which, as noted earlier, became instead *The World and Ourselves*.⁴⁸

The World and Ourselves was written in response to the sense of the crisis of the times leading to the Second World War. In this respect, and the fact that it is centrally a direct work by Laura Riding and therefore outside the main scope of this essay, it is different from the intense scrutiny of *Epilogue* which ranged over a variety of subjects of no particular era of history, its focus being on the clarification of areas or categories of thought long left unresolved. The method of *The World and Ourselves*, by contrast, was to invite replies to a letter (there were sixty-five replies printed) seeking a solution to the international turbulence threatening to lead to war. The views sought were from a variety of people, including politicians, diplomats, and journalists, such as Dorothy Thompson, but preponderantly from poets and writers, whether those who had worked with Riding in the past, such as Graves, Hodge, Cameron, Kemp, Aldridge, or those such as Christina Stead, Edward Marsh, Lord Gorell (poet and author of a book on Keats), Willa Muir, and so on. These and others, such as Edwin Muir, would have formed the main readership of *Epilogue*. The core of the book, beginning with Riding's *in extenso* commentary on all the letters, naturally embraces the principles and discoveries of the earlier volumes, carrying them forward into the area of discussion of possible solutions for the observably emergent international crises—the 'outside' or external problems, political and diplomatic, may only be resolved by 'inside' people, 'inside' meaning thinking people as defined in *Epilogue*—but the book differs in being of an intentionally practical, pragmatic nature, concerned with problems of the world rather than those of the mind, and represents more of a pause in the work so far undertaken than a direct continuation of it. From a present-day vantage point, *The World and Ourselves* looks magnificently backwards to what Riding had accomplished in *Epilogue*, drawing upon it, while simultaneously thrusting (it can now be seen) towards her later work, after she had renounced the writing of poems, in books like *The Telling*.⁴⁹ Such a passage is the following:

We cannot answer for the millions in our own or other countries of whom we know only that they exist physically. But for the enduringness of some people we can answer: must be ready to answer, if our own lives are to take root. Whatever metaphor we use (to take root in existence, or to weave ourselves into it), it is a law of existence that we do not achieve reality merely by believing in our own reality. In existence there must have been once only one being, and that not a distinct being since there were no others from which to distinguish

⁴⁸ *The World and Ourselves* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1938), by Laura Riding and sixty-five others. Note, p. ii reads: 'This represents the fourth volume of the literary series *Epilogue*' and includes 'A Personal Letter, With a Request for a Reply (January 1937)'.

⁴⁹ Laura (Riding) Jackson, *The Telling* (London: Athlone Press, 1972; Manchester: Carcanet, 2005).

itself—in pre-existence. But conscious existence is existence consciously with others: our own personal reality depends on the personal reality we can attribute to others besides ourselves.⁵⁰

‘Reality’, ‘existence’, ‘pre-existence’, ‘being’—all reside within the work of *Epilogue* but not so overtly bracketed together as here.⁵¹ That story, however, belongs to Laura (Riding) Jackson after 1940 when the group disbanded, its members going their way on different paths and careers, and to different ends.

⁵⁰ *The World and Ourselves*, 324–5.

⁵¹ Though see especially the essay ‘From a Private Correspondence on Reality’ in *Epilogue*, 3 (Spring 1937).

X

THE CALL TO CRITICISM
AND MODERNIST DESTINIES



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INTRODUCTION

The end of the 1930s coincided with the close, within a few months of each other, of *The Criterion*, *The Cornhill Magazine*, *New Verse*, *Twentieth Century Verse*, and *The London Mercury*. It was the moment, in Robert Hewison's words, of the 'grand slaughter of magazines'.¹ Cyril Connolly and Peter Watson seemed therefore to defy all logic in starting up *Horizon* at the end of the decade. Nonetheless, as Sean Latham points out below, the name they decided upon contradicted the venture's own 'funereal air'. For the editors' intention was less to hail the prospect of a new era than to evoke a modernist aesthetic culture that was essentially collapsing, their publication aiding and abetting a mood of general gloom as Britain approached the inevitability of war and entered a period which seemed to have dispensed with the writer, let alone modernism. The 1940s, Connolly himself was to conclude, were the decade in which 'the Modern Movement unobtrusively expired'.²

It depends, we might say, in what direction you were looking. *Horizon's* gaze was evidently retrospective though its ambivalent position meant, as Latham shows, that it came in time to respond more directly to contemporary events and to detect some future for the arts beyond the British example. Elsewhere, out of *Horizon's* and some others' range of vision or sympathies, magazines such as *Seven*, Keidrych Rhys's *Wales*, and *Poetry London* (subtitled 'An Enquiry into Modern Verse') ushered in a new mood. In *Poetry London's* flamboyant and gifted editor, M. J. Tambimuttu, this was coupled as James Keery shows, with a 'new modernism', a movement Tambimuttu championed by name in the fourth and final number of the reincarnated *Poetry London—New York*. 'Tambi' saw the purpose of his magazine as talent-spotting new writing, and over the period of 15 issues in 10 years, up to 200 were given their chance in its pages or in the pages of the companion 'Editions Poetry London' and the anthology *Poetry in Wartime* (1942). His publications became the proving ground in particular for the group which came to be called the Apocalyptic and whose leading figure—though this

¹ Robert Hewison, *Under Siege: Literary Life in London 1939–1945* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977), 11.

² Connolly, cited in Sebastian D. G. Knowles, *A Purgatorial Flame: Seven British Writers in the Second World War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), p. xv.

was not a role of his own choosing—was Dylan Thomas. Tambimuttu's *Poetry London* and his new modernism of 'the universal unconscious', 'spontaneity', 'thinking and feeling'³ were dismissed and caricatured, already in the late 1930s, with a hint of racial, as well as aesthetic prejudice, by Geoffrey Grigson and Julian Symons, the editors respectively of *New Verse* and *Twentieth Century Verse* (see Chapters 27 and 37). But Grigson, the dedicated champion of W. H. Auden, did not oppose this new direction with an older modernism. Like earlier editors such as Edgell Rickword and Edwin Muir in the later 1930s, and like Connolly and those who later wrote for *Horizon*, Grigson shared the resigned sense of an ending, confronted with a situation where publication became severely limited through paper shortages and economic pressures and where writers of talent and readers with sufficient acumen and interest failed to present themselves. T. S. Eliot had remained an influence on both criticism and writing, especially poetry, throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The modernism associated with his name and, through *The Criterion* and Faber and Faber, with his male peers of the 1910s and 1920s, and an expanded company of European and younger British writers, had acquired a symbolic cultural authority which even dissenters had to acknowledge. Eliotic modernism, as we might term it, had been heralded by F. R. Leavis in the early 1930s in influential critical works and in *Scrutiny*, founded in 1932. Here, in Eliot, it seemed, was an example of literary taste and of a criticism and way of reading which a select readership might follow at a time when others felt this readership was lost. Leavis, of course, turned against Eliot and the arid cosmopolitanism he felt he represented in favour of the passion for 'life' associated with D. H. Lawrence's attack upon the deadening standardization brought on by the contemporary phase of commercial culture.⁴ Leavis did much, however, to help make Eliot the most institutionalized figure, 'a part of the establishment' in Leavis's own reckoning, of an institutionalized modernism.⁵ *Scrutiny*, and its short-lived Cambridge disciple *The Critic* (1947), also set their face against *Poetry London* and the Apocalypics.⁶

Cyril Connolly shared *Scrutiny*'s diagnosis of contemporary mass society. Any promise of a brighter future was blighted by the commodification of literary culture and the consequent degradation of the analytical and creative ability. For

³ *Poetry London*, Eighth Letter, Oct.–Nov. 1942, quoted A. T. Tolley, *British Literary Periodicals of World War II and Aftermath: A Critical History* (Kemptville, Canada: The Golden Dog Press, 2007), 120.

⁴ See F. R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition* (London: Penguin, 1962 [1948]), 34–7, and 'T. S. Eliot as Critic', *Anna Karenina and Other Essays* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1967 [1958]), 177–96.

⁵ F. R. Leavis, 'Retrospect 1950', *New Bearings in English Poetry* (London: Penguin, 1950 [1932]), 177.

⁶ Tolley cites an essay, 'The Significance of *Poetry London*', by D. J. Enright in *The Critic* which associates *Poetry London* with 'a striking uniformity of weakness' (*British Literary Periodicals*, 174).

Rickword and Grigson, if less explicitly, the defence of good literature and the business of literary appreciation fed into a leftist attitude. Leavis stopped short of this logic and in fact refuted it: 'We were anti-Marxist,' he recalled of *Scrutiny* and its contributors, 'necessarily so (we thought)'.⁷ Nor was this opposition to a perceived cultural malaise to materialize in *Horizon* as a left-wing critique of modernity. Connolly was assisted for a short while on the magazine by Stephen Spender, but, as Latham notes, he reportedly found Spender's pronounced left-wing sympathies naïve and they made little impact on the journal. As Latham shows, *Horizon* survived, amidst some internal contradictions, by avoiding any open ideological allegiance. As Connolly put it in his first editorial 'Comment' column, the aim of the magazine was 'to give writers a place to express themselves, and to readers the best writing we can obtain. Our standards are aesthetic, and our politics in abeyance.'⁸

As noted elsewhere in this volume, Connolly identified two types of magazine: a 'dynamic' type which was combative and avant-gardist (complete with the military metaphor, in Connolly's description, of assaulting the enemy), and an 'eclectic' magazine which was more like a hotel occupied each month 'with a different clique'.⁹ By 1939, the 'dynamic' magazines, so the argument goes, had all but disappeared and Connolly saw himself, says Latham, as 'a hotel proprietor, seeking to fill his rooms with the best writing he could find'. In so doing, however, he both evoked the earlier modernist magazine in *Horizon*'s stark design, lack of illustration, and highbrow contents—thereby acquiring some symbolic cultural capital by association—and appealed to a broader audience, identified in 1941 as principally young men under 40 in the military and civil service and education. The journal's circulation peaked in 1940, just before the Blitz, at 8,000 which was many times more than the average 'little magazine' could aspire to.

The residents in Connolly's hotel were impressive—though Sonia Brownell (Orwell), an editorial assistant on the magazine, increasingly deserved credit for this. Contributions included essays by George Orwell and Arthur Koestler, Jean-Paul Sartre, Lionel Trilling; poetry by Louis MacNeice, W. H. Auden, Day Lewis, Spender, Rosamond Lehmann, and Dylan Thomas; fiction by Evelyn Waugh (a whole issue in 1948 was given to his *The Loved One*), Kafka, and Truman Capote, as well as regular commentary with some coloured plates on contemporary art, most probably selected by the magazine's co-founder Peter Watson. Special issues focused on Ireland and, after the war, there were Swiss, French, and American numbers. Here was a demonstration of quality to outface the growing influence

⁷ F. R. Leavis, 'A Retrospect', *Scrutiny*, 20 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 4.

⁸ Cyril Connolly, 'Comment', *Horizon*, 1 (Jan. 1940), 5.

⁹ Cyril Connolly, 'Little Magazines', in *The Evening Colonnade* (London: David Bruce and Watson, 1973), 414.

of the mass media of radio and film. Connolly preferred the terms 'serious and popular' to 'high-brow' and 'low-brow'. If this was not enough altogether to escape the 'paradox', in Robert Scholes's adopted term, of hierarchical values governing individual artistic and mass cultural production,¹⁰ Connolly did nonetheless attempt, Latham attests, to move beyond the 'rhetoric of cultural bifurcation'. Orwell's essays (he was a major contributor) on 'Boy's Weeklies', 'The Art of Donald McGill', and 'Raffles and Miss Blandish' were significant examples of taking the popular seriously. As the magazine which was like a hotel turned into a waiting room pending the outcome of the war it also shifted its ground to include overt material on the war with, amongst other contributions, a collection of, again, simultaneously 'popular' and 'serious' Spanish Civil war posters.

In this, as in other respects, Connolly and *Horizon* were pitched between worlds. 'As the last of the self-consciously modernist little magazines', in Latham's words, 'it failed deliberately and brilliantly, resolutely looking at the receding *Horizon* of earlier decades even as it covertly welcomed the dawn of a globally reconfigured modernity.' In the process, Connolly came also to acknowledge the vitality of other literatures: the implication being, as Latham concludes, that 'the modernist mythos of radical originality and autonomy' the magazine had sought to defend was felt to have been superseded or to have passed 'into new forms organized around new audiences'.

The other magazines considered in this section show something of this reconfigured modernity and newly situated modernism. In the example of *Scrutiny*, however, this amounts as much to a consolidation and change of locale as to a new conception. In response to a questionnaire in *Horizon* in 1946 on the situation of writers and state support, the answers, which mostly rejected state patronage as a threat to creative autonomy, sketched 'the altered cultural field in which the university was to become a new kind of post-war patron' and the novel 'gain ascendance over verse'.¹¹ This might put us in both respects in mind of F. R. Leavis. His opening gambit in *New Bearings in English Poetry* published fourteen years previously at the time of *Scrutiny*'s beginning was to declare that 'Poetry matters little to the modern world.'¹² This was of course an indictment of the modern world and not of poetry, and Leavis set out to define the value and relevance of what was to become in effect the modernist 'great tradition' in the poetry of Yeats, Eliot, and Pound with Gerard Manley Hopkins as an outrider. His emphasis and impact, however, was to stem more from the social and moral claim he and *Scrutiny* made for the novel, in particular a selective tradition of the realist English novel, one which, in Leavis's hardening conviction, would answer to the example of D. H. Lawrence.

¹⁰ Robert Scholes, *The Paradox of Modernism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

¹¹ 'Questionnaire: The Cost of Letters,' *Horizon*, 14 (Sept. 1946), 148.

¹² Leavis, *New Bearings*, 13.

Leavis's project, as Matthews shows, was clearly headed in another direction than Connolly's—or Tambimuttu's, in the second respect too. It was vital for Leavis, as it was for Rickword and Grigson and Eliot, to strengthen the powers of critical discrimination among readers. It is difficult to find a magazine which did not subscribe in some way or other to this pedagogic function. But *Scrutiny* and Leavis's academic critical studies shifted this concern from the general reading public, whether high- or middlebrow, to the cultural institution of the university and the destiny of academic 'English'. It is important to understand, as Francis Mulhern has argued, that *Scrutiny* led a revolt in literary criticism against a then ingrained Oxbridge establishment ('the palsied cultural regime of postwar England', as Mulhern puts it¹³). Matthews writes here similarly of the 'self-consciously revolutionary dynamism' of the *Scrutiny* project as one which reconfigured 'the radical, even revolutionary, critical priorities of the modernist moment'. He notes too, however, how this radicalism fell into disrepute under the sway of a later orthodoxy in Marxist Literary studies, of which Mulhern's study was an example. *Scrutiny*'s 'politics', Matthews argues, did not conform to the conception of cultural politics which prevailed in the academy from the 1970s until the 1990s. He calls therefore for a reappraisal of the 'powerful cultural formation' represented by 'Scrutiny', a name referring at once to the physical journal and its contents, the core circle of co-editors and contributors, and those who acknowledged an affiliation with its redemptive tactics of reading and associated cultural criticism. Here, Matthews suggests, we find, in Raymond Williams's terms, a whole 'structure of feeling'.

At the heart of this formation was Cambridge or an ideal of Cambridge. 'Only at Cambridge', said Leavis, 'could the idea of *Scrutiny* have taken shape.'¹⁴ The journal was 'a product, the triumphant justifying achievement, of the English Tripos'. Leavis himself, along with Q. D. Leavis and regular collaborators such as L. C. Knights, Denys Thompson, and D. W. Harding, were young academics and researchers who set out to radicalize the field, inspired by the methods of 'practical criticism' introduced at Cambridge by I. A. Richards. In this emerging regime, as a newly configured University English took a new role in the cultural field, the 'Modern Movement', far from expiring, found a life beyond the supposed 'grand slaughter of magazines', governed in Britain, into the 1960s and early 1970s, by Leavis and *Scrutiny* and in its Anglo-American forms, by the figure of T. S. Eliot.

Tambimuttu was a friend and admirer of Eliot (*Poetry London*, issue 7 was dedicated to him)¹⁵ and the feeling was apparently reciprocal. He did not reject

¹³ Francis Mulhern, *The Moment of Scrutiny* (London: Verso, 1979), 8.

¹⁴ Leavis, 'A Retrospect', 4.

¹⁵ With Richard March, he also compiled the 'festschrift' *T. S. Eliot: A Symposium*, published by Editions Poetry in 1948 to mark Eliot's sixtieth birthday.

Eliot's example so much as bring a generosity to it. Many times Tambimuttu took on writers Eliot had rejected or been too cautious about publishing. Keery cites the examples of Keith Douglas and Alun Lewis. Tambimuttu's boldness entailed some risk and some unevenness but demonstrated his openness to the new. *Poetry London*, issue 10, published in February 1945 and known as *Chums*, was a memorable example of this openness to 'poems by unknown poets': 'New Blood—The Future—Time materialising' in Tambimuttu's words.¹⁶ This 'classic anthology of "the people's poetry"', says Keery, exists in partnership with Tambimuttu's partisanship and belief in a modernism revived and re-routed, as Herbert Read had argued, from the Romantics through Surrealism and to a poet such as Dylan Thomas and the Apocalypticists. *Indian Writing*, which Keery also discusses, was deeply involved in the cause of Indian independence and would seem to have followed a different and overtly political agenda, especially through the Progressive Writers' Association. For all its geopolitical difference from London, however, it established fruitful relations with John Lehmann and with *Life and Letters* under Robert Herring, a noted proponent of Apocalyptic poetry, who also produced an *Indian Number of Life and Letters*. In one striking instance of this exchange and affinity, the story 'The Shroud' by Munshi Premchand, President of the Progressive Writers' Association and advocate of new 'criteria of beauty', appeared, as Keery reports, in the Association's magazine *Naya Adab* ('New Writing') and in the Apocalyptic miscellany, *New Road 1944*.

If *Indian Writing's* view of 'progressive art' and Apocalyptic poetry to some extent ran together in this way, Keery also suggests how the influence of the second at least ran forward into later work. Thus he sees the inheritors of Apocalyptic poetry and of Tambimuttu in poets such as Andrew Crozier and Peter Riley and the series of anthologies which discovered 'a left-wing modernism': *Children of Albion* (1969); *A Various Art* (1987); and *Vanishing Points: New Modernist Poems* (2004). A new perspective is thus opened, in Tambimuttu's words, once more, upon 'The Future—Time materialising'; one in which magazines, small presses, and anthologies have played their part in shaping a revived modernist formation.

¹⁶ James Tambimuttu, 'About This Number', *Poetry London*, 10 (Feb. 1945), 9.

‘SAY NOT THE STRUGGLE NAUGHT AVAILETH ...’

Scrutiny (1932–53)

SEAN MATTHEWS

Scrutiny: A Quarterly Review was first published, in Cambridge, on 15 May 1932. Its design signalled the journal’s critical and academic affiliations, and its ambition. Its light blue covers hinted at the local connection—Cambridge University—but also recalled the deeper blue of *The English Review* of the pre-war years, under Ford Madox Ford.¹ The font and subtitle, ‘A Quarterly Review’, openly echoed T. S. Eliot’s *Criterion* and Middleton Murry’s *Adelphi*. There was also, in that shade of blue, in the disposition of title and contents, in the distinctive parallel lines crossing the page, and in the emphasis given to a substantial ‘Comments and Reviews’ section, an evocation of Edgell Rickword’s *Calendar of Modern Letters*, a model explicitly acknowledged and applauded in the opening editorial manifesto.²

¹ The light blue of the covers is the same shade as that of the Cambridge University sports teams, worn in contrast to the darker shade traditionally favoured by Oxford. See below for further discussion of the importance of ‘Cambridge English’. Mulhern refers to the ‘pale blue’ cover, as does MacKillop, and Harding to ‘pearl-grey’. Francis Mulhern, *The Moment of Scrutiny* (London: New Left Books, 1979), 45; Ian MacKillop, *F. R. Leavis: A Life in Criticism* (London: Penguin Allen Lane, 1993), 145; Jason Harding, *The Criterion: Cultural Politics and Periodical Networks in Inter-war Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 70. Leavis recounted the impact of Ford’s *English Review*, to which he subscribed whilst at school, on a number of occasions, see the Introduction to *D. H. Lawrence: Novelist* (London: Chatto, 1954), 9.

² ‘Scrutiny: A Manifesto’, *Scrutiny*, 1:1 (May 1932), 2. MacKillop suggests *The English Review* association; Harding proposes *Calendar. The Sewanee Review*, founded in 1892 and also a ‘mixed’ journal, ‘half in and half out of both literary world and university’ (MacKillop, *F. R. Leavis*, 14) concerned both to promote the contemporary and to offer literary criticism, also has a pale blue cover. Leavis knew the journal well, and published in its pages.

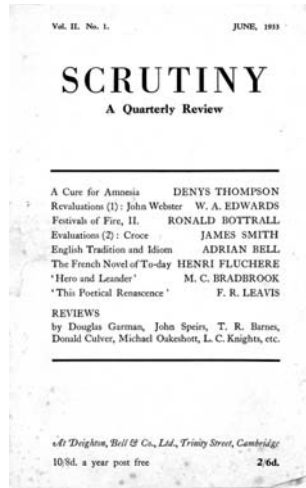


Fig. 99. Cover of *Scrutiny* (June, 1933)

It was, indeed, from the title of a regular feature in *The Calendar*, its ‘Scrutinies’ of the reputations of established writers, that the new enterprise took its name.³

Such allusions, references, and gestures were calculated. A feature of the new journal was to be its strong conception of the purpose of a literary periodical, of its role in the maintenance of a critical public, in the nurturing of cultural health. In addition to its own articulation and exemplification of this ideal, *Scrutiny* undertook regular assessments of both the contemporary and the historical periodical scene. Its very form and shape thus served to assert, by association with these precursors, its seriousness, its relation to emergent and contemporary work, and its adherence to the radical, even revolutionary, critical priorities of the modernist moment—a moment *Scrutiny* was ultimately to do so much to delineate and define.⁴ Allegiances can also be inferred from the advertisements which it carried in its early numbers, which were solicited—and offered—in the expectation of shared

³ ‘The name of our new quarterly was itself thought of as a salute and a gesture of acknowledgement—an assertion of a kind of continuity of life with *The Calendar*, whose “Scrutinies”, set critiques of the Old Guard, the modern “classics”, it overtly recalled’ (F. R. Leavis, ‘A Retrospect’, *Scrutiny* 20 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 3). See Chapter 16 in this volume for John Lucas’s account of *The Calendar*.

⁴ ‘The Modern Movement’ at this time, in *Scrutiny*, referred only to (finished) currents in the visual arts: see Richard March, ‘The End of the Modern Movement’, *Scrutiny* 8:2 (Sept. 1939), 209–14. ‘Modern’ as an adjective otherwise routinely referred simply to recent and contemporary writing; see Derek Traversi, ‘Development of Modern Italian Poetry’, *Scrutiny*, 10:2 (Oct. 1941), 143–56; F. R. Leavis, ‘Critical Guidance and Contemporary Literature’ (review of Edwin Muir, *The Present Age from 1914* (*Introductions to English Literature*, Vol. V)), *Scrutiny*, 8:2 (Sept. 1939), 227–32.

interests and readerships.⁵ The first eight numbers of *Scrutiny* carried publicity for *transition* (publishing Joyce's 'Work in Progress'); *Poetry*; *Twentieth Century*; *Cinema Quarterly*; and, throughout the second volume, *The Criterion* itself ('The publishers will gladly submit a specimen copy to interested readers of *Scrutiny*').⁶ It also contained advertisements for the publishers Wishart; Chatto and Windus; Gordon Fraser's Minority Press; and, from December, 1933, Cambridge University Press.⁷ It even included a programme for the Academy Cinema in Oxford Street '(opposite Waring's)'.⁸ A further clue to the character of the project, to the breadth of its intellectual range and appeal, is apparent in the initial list of subscribers. Advance publicity generated £40 3s. in subscriptions, at a rate of 10s. for four

⁵ L. C. Knights prepared the 'small prospectus' sent to potential subscribers. See L. C. Knights, 'Scrutiny and F. R. Leavis: A Personal Memoir', in Denys Thompson (ed.), *The Leavises: Recollections and Impressions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 71. The prospectus, a stapled octavo sheet with tear-off pro forma subscription, reads as follows:

The eternal problem of the intelligent person has always been and still is to keep himself in touch with the consciousness of his time; that is with the keenest analyses and interpretations, the most intelligent judgments. One cannot find these things everywhere... One cannot attempt the task alone... The problem must be solved communally. There must be a forum where ideas can be exchanged, and—what is of equal importance—where the intelligence and sensibility can be refreshed and nourished. That is to say, there is the necessity for a review... *Scrutiny* will be published at Cambridge, but it will not be in the ordinary sense a University journal... A pervasive interest will be what might be described as 'anthropological': there will be disinterested surveys of some departments of modern life, in an attempt to increase understanding of the way in which civilization is developing.

I am grateful to Ben Knights both for access to this document and for his advice and assistance in preparing this piece.

⁶ Of the journals, only *The Criterion* continued to advertise regularly through the 1930s, and in the 1940s only the Cambridge publishers and booksellers.

⁷ Chatto and Windus listed Q. D. Leavis, *Fiction and the Reading Public* (12s. 6d.); F. R. Leavis, *New Bearings in English Poetry* (6s.); A. P. Rossiter, *Poor Scholars: A Cambridge Novel* (7s. 6d.); and Denys Thompson and F. R. Leavis, *Culture and Environment* (3s. 6d.); and, in 1934, Basil Willey, *The Seventeenth Century Background* (12s. 6d.); and Denys Thompson, *Reading and Discrimination* (3s. 6d.). Wishart noted *The Life and Times of Anthony A Wood*, ed. and intro. Llewellyn Powys (15s.); Winifred Holtby, *Virginia Woolf: A Study* (6s.); *The Adelphi Quartos: A Series of Illustrated Essays on the Arts and Activities of Modern Life* (5s. each); and, later, F. R. Leavis, *Towards Standards of Criticism* (5s.). The Minority Press list included F. R. Leavis, *Mass Civilization and Minority Culture* (1s. 6d.); L. C. Knights, *How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth?* (2s. 6d.); Norman Angell, *The Press and the Organisation of Society* (3s. 6d.); J. Middleton Murry, *Two Essays on D.H. Lawrence* (1s. 6d.); and F. R. Leavis, *D. H. Lawrence* (1s. 6d.), and, in 1933, *For Continuity* (5s.).

⁸ The Academy Cinema's programme included Nicolai Ekk's *The Road to Life*; Karl Dreyer, *Vampyr*; Erich Waschneck, *Zwei Menschen*; Fritz Lang, *M* (German version); Lil Dagover, *Barbarina*; and 'The French comedy *Paris-Mediterranee*'.

issues, post free (*The Criterion*, at this time, was 30/- per annum).⁹ Subscribers included Virginia Woolf, T. S. Eliot, George Santayana, R. H. Tawney, and Aldous Huxley.¹⁰ Denis Healey wrote to Leavis, in 1978, 'I first began reading *Scrutiny* in the early Thirties. I imagine there must be thousands of others you have never met who would say the same.'¹¹

The first *Scrutiny* consisted of ninety-four octavo pages, containing seven articles, two poems, and twenty-nine pages of 'Comments and Reviews'. The journal followed these relative proportions throughout its existence, although its size rose to as many as 120 pages by 1936, if only to be reduced during the war years. Its initial print run of 500 copies was immediately extended by a further 250, which also rapidly sold out. Additional funding was secured by the sale to Chatto and Windus of the rights to *Determinations*, a selection of essays from the first two years of the journal.¹² During the 1930s circulation rose to a peak of around 1,400 before contracting due to wartime paper rationing, printing problems, and, at one point, the bombing of Cambridge city centre.¹³ After the war, resurgence in subscriptions, particularly from overseas, and a grant of \$2,400 from the Rockefeller Foundation—survival was otherwise entirely dependent upon subscription and advertising revenue, supplemented by occasional gifts—ensured the security of the journal, but the decision was made to cease publication in October 1953, as a result of a shortage of appropriate articles, and the dispersal or exhaustion of the core of collaborators.¹⁴ Such longevity, in the ephemeral and evanescent world of the 'little magazine' and periodical, was itself remarkable: nineteen volumes, seventy-six numbers, over twenty-one years. Further evidence of *Scrutiny's* peculiar importance was the unprecedented decision taken by Cambridge University Press, in 1963, to reprint the entire run, in a handsome edition of twenty bound volumes, with substantial indexes (quirkily, and not altogether comprehensively, compiled

⁹ MacKillop, *F. R. Leavis*, 146. The subscription rate was raised to 10s. 8d. in May 1932, then reduced again to 10s. from *Scrutiny* 6:4 (Mar. 1938). During the troubled years of the war the rate was again raised to 10s. 8d. in *Scrutiny* 12:1 (Winter 1943), and then to 14s. 8d. from *Scrutiny* 12:2 (Spring 1944), until the journal's closure.

¹⁰ Jason Harding notes that Eliot was a subscriber throughout, see *The Criterion*, 72, and adds Woolf to MacKillop's list. See also Knights, 'Scrutiny and F. R. Leavis: A Personal Memoir', 71–2.

¹¹ Quoted in G. Singh, *F. R. Leavis: A Literary Biography* (London: Duckworth, 1995), 215. Singh catalogues many of the tributes to Leavis on the occasion of his being made Companion of Honour in the New Year's Honours List, and following his death on 14 April 1978. They offer a powerful indication of the breadth of *Scrutiny's* influence beyond the academy, its reach to a general, non-specialist readership.

¹² F. R. Leavis (ed.), *Determinations: Critical Essays* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1934). See Harding, *The Criterion*, 72.

¹³ F. R. Leavis, 'Valedictory', *Scrutiny*, 19:4 (Oct. 1953), 254.

¹⁴ See D. W. Harding, 'No Compromise', in Thompson (ed.), *The Leavises: Recollections and Impressions*, 198.

by Maurice Hussey), and the proud, combative essay, 'A Retrospect', by the editor and critic with whom the journal was inextricably associated, F. R. Leavis.¹⁵

The historian of *Scrutiny* therefore faces a number of challenges. Fifty years after closure, its reputation remains charged with controversy, its influence by turns celebrated, condemned, and ignored. The sheer extent of the journal, its heterogeneity and range, resists any simple or synoptic categorization. Francis Mulhern's *The Moment of Scrutiny* (1979), which remains the only substantial record, is a comprehensive and engaging account, but his Marxist theoretical framework and socialist commitment is, in its understanding and presentation of cultural politics, fundamentally antipathetic to the journal. Assessments of *Scrutiny's* standing are similarly complicated by the predominantly negative analyses to which Leavis's life and work has been subject, analyses driven either by *ad hominem* animus or by the intrinsically hostile ideological and theoretical presuppositions of subsequent critical orthodoxies which refute the humanist bases of such work. *Scrutiny's* 'politics', which are discussed further below, simply do not conform to those definitions of the political sphere, of political action, or of the relation of politics to culture and literature, which predominated in the academy from the 1970s until the 1990s.¹⁶ Any review of the journal's achievement is also perplexed by the extent to which the very name has come to signify far more than the publication itself: *Scrutiny* stands for a range of interrelated phenomena, a powerful cultural formation. It refers at once to the journal, its contents, and its material existence, including the work published in it; to the core circle of collaborators and contributors (itself changing over time), as well as the much wider group of those openly avowing affiliation or influence; and to a whole 'movement' or 'project' in cultural criticism and education, a movement predicated on a distinctive understanding of history and of the role of the critic. In many ways *Scrutiny* represents, in Raymond Williams's terms, a whole 'structure of feeling'.¹⁷ In its early years it embodied, in its relation to the dominant class, literary, and critical cultures of the 1930s and 1940s, a range of radical, if often contradictory and uncertain, emergent forces.

¹⁵ *Scrutiny: A Quarterly Review*, 20 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963). For an account of the reissue, see Michael Black, 'The Long Pursuit', in Thompson (ed.), *The Leavises: Recollections and Impressions*, 86–90.

¹⁶ The main lines of this orthodoxy are established in Perry Anderson, 'Components of the National Culture', *New Left Review*, 50 (July–Aug. 1968), 3–58; Mulhern, *Moment of Scrutiny*; and Terry Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology: A Study in Marxist Literary Theory* (London: New Left Books, 1978). Eagleton popularized the account in his influential *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983).

¹⁷ 'Structures of feeling can be defined as social experiences *in solution*, as distinct from other social semantic formations which have been *precipitated* and are more evidently and more immediately available. The effective formations of most actual art relate to already manifest social formations, dominant or residual, and it is primarily to emergent formations (though often in the form of modification or disturbance in older forms) that the *structure of feeling*, as solution, relates' (Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 134).

It was known, indeed was notorious, for its combative, even aggressive tone and confident critical judgements. Paradoxically, by the time of its reissue, *Scrutiny* had itself become identified culturally, critically, and above all pedagogically, as the ideological (and conservative, even reactionary) dominant, in terms of its methods (insisting on judgement and evaluation as an aspect of close reading, a position primarily derived from I. A. Richards); its understandings of history and literary tradition (which extend hints and directions from T. S. Eliot's work); its conception of the crucial importance of literature and criticism together as the bulwark against cultural and spiritual collapse (a position shared by Richards and Eliot, originating in Coleridge and Arnold); and its resistance to literary and critical models based on Marxist or indeed fascist principles (on the grounds that such preconceived ideas were anathema to any sensitive, immediate engagement with the text). This contradictory position—the Leavises themselves repeatedly complained of the irony of the situation—was at once a mark of the project's success, and an indication of the inevitable recuperation and dilution of its self-consciously revolutionary dynamism. Accounting for these apparently contradictory positions, for such a changing status and significance, is at the heart of any understanding of the importance of *Scrutiny*.

There is, nonetheless, some critical consensus as to the primary determinants and objective achievements of the journal, and the main lines of engagement are readily apparent (martial language abounds in writing both in and about *Scrutiny*).¹⁸ *Scrutiny* was centrally concerned with the systematic articulation and dissemination of critical idioms, forms, and priorities derived from the disparate currents of modernism, and it explored in detail the implications of the convulsive historical and cultural changes which had characterized the previous two decades. If we are to think of *Scrutiny* as a 'modernist magazine' it must be primarily in these terms. It differs radically in its conception and direction, therefore, from the majority of other little reviews, periodicals, and magazines with which this volume is concerned. 'Dissemination' was crucial to the *Scrutiny* project, and its influence on the establishment of a modernist canon of both literary and critical work was prodigious, above all through the journal's impact on secondary and higher education. It is this conjunction of a radical reconfiguration of literary history and of critical method deriving from the modernist moment, with an acute conviction as to the importance to the general culture (and education system) of the critical periodical, which determined *Scrutiny's* distinctive character. Appeals were made to the example of great nineteenth-century public intellectuals such as Matthew

¹⁸ For the rhetoric of this criticism, see Stefan Collini, 'On Highest Authority: The Literary Critic and Other Aviators in Early Twentieth-Century Britain', in Dorothy Ross (ed.), *Modernist Impulses in the Human Sciences* (London: John Hopkins University Press, 1994); also Chris Baldick, *The Social Mission of English Criticism: 1848–1932* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), chapter 6 'The Consequences of the Peace' and chapter 7 'Armed against the Herd'.

Arnold, Leslie Stephen, and, from within the (Cambridge) academy, Henry Sidgwick and H. M. Chadwick, as often as to the talismanic contemporary figures.¹⁹ At the same time, *Scrutiny's* critical engagements deliberately and comprehensively worked to clarify and extend the fragmentary, polemical, and frequently conflicting insights of those figures who had come to prominence in the postwar years—most notably Eliot, Murry, Richards, Ezra Pound, D. H. Lawrence, and William Empson. Much of the bulk of *Scrutiny* was concerned, in fact, with the detailed critical work directed towards redefining the significant currents and genealogies of literary tradition. This attention to the contemporary scene, and explicit fashioning of critical positions in terms of the present moment, was also, as I discuss below, a defining characteristic of the journal.

Leavis's work alone provides an index to these issues. The importance of Leavis to the *Scrutiny* project—and, in turn, of *Scrutiny* to Leavis's conception of the critical function—is incalculable, although his extraordinary commitment has often obscured the vitality, diversity, and considerable extent of the wider circle of the *Scrutiny* network of collaborators and contributors. Knights argued that Leavis 'was *the* editor of *Scrutiny*: he inspired it and, though it was very far indeed from being simply the organ of his critical opinions, as the silly name "Leavisite" suggests, he set the dominant tone'.²⁰ Leavis, indeed, did not formally join the editorial board until the third number, in November 1932, but it was certainly his influence and determination (and that of his wife, Q. D. Leavis), which lay behind the foundation and endurance of the journal.²¹ His impact was, moreover, material and practical, as well as ideological and intellectual: he provided the animating centre for the venture. The idea of founding the journal had been formulated during discussions about the parlous state of literary journalism at the regular, informal Friday 'Research Meetings' of English students, researchers, tutors, and visiting academics which took place for many years at the Leavises' home, 'The Criticastery'—6, Chesterton Hall Crescent, Cambridge (the editorial address from

¹⁹ See, for instance, F. R. Leavis, 'Revaluations (XI): Arnold as Critic', *Scrutiny*, 7:3 (Dec. 1938), 319–32; G. H. Bantock, 'Matthew Arnold: H.M.I.', *Scrutiny*, 18:1 (June 1951), 32–44; Norman Podheretz, 'The Arnoldian Function in American Criticism', *Scrutiny*, 18:1 (June 1951), 59–65; Q. D. Leavis, 'Leslie Stephen: Cambridge Critic', *Scrutiny* 7:4 (Mar. 1939), 404–19; Q. D. Leavis, 'Henry Sidgwick's Cambridge', *Scrutiny*, 15:1 (Dec. 1947), 2–11; 'A Pupil', 'Professor Chadwick and English Studies', *Scrutiny*, 14:3 (Spring 1947), 204–8; J. C. Maxwell and 'Redbrick', 'Professor Chadwick and English Studies: Comments', *Scrutiny*, 14:4 (Sept. 1947), 252–6.

²⁰ Knights, 'Scrutiny and F. R. Leavis: A Personal Memoir', 74.

²¹ Several reasons have been suggested for Leavis's omission from the initial editorial board. Since his *New Bearings in English Poetry* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1932) was reviewed in the first number, by D. W. Harding, it may have been that he saw a potential conflict. It may also have been the case, as MacKillop argues, that Leavis wanted, in the first instance, to be 'in the background', a 'back-coach' of the new enterprise, see MacKillop, *F. R. Leavis*, 147.

the fourth number).²² Leavis himself contributed substantial sums towards the costs of the publication; between £150 and £205 in 1933 alone. He was instrumental, and indefatigable, in the editorial processes.²³ He was also the journal's most prolific contributor, contributing to every number, often supplying several pieces at a time, dominating the tone and temper of the publication. The index catalogues 126 separate items under his name.²⁴ Through his teaching at Downing College, where he was Director of Studies in English from 1936 to 1963, and his lectures in the Cambridge Faculty of English, he encouraged and attracted writing from generations of graduates, and postgraduate and undergraduate students (part of the journal's force and cause was resistance to conventional hierarchies and divisions), as well as from an extensive network of critics and writers beyond the Fens.²⁵ The Index of Contributors records 140 names, of whom some 75 had been through the English Tripos.²⁶

It is, however, for the force of his ideological and intellectual authority, rather than the practical management of the publication, that Leavis is most powerfully associated with *Scrutiny*. It was his conviction of the importance of the example of *The Calendar* which lay behind the journal—he published an anthology of work from the journal, in 1933, *Towards Standards of Criticism*: 'the undertaking was not altogether free from a pedagogic incentive: the bound volumes of *The Calendar* have been serving a certain educational purpose incomparably well, and further sets are unobtainable.'²⁷ In many ways, Leavis's pamphlet *Mass Civilization and Minority Culture* (1930, reprinted in *For Continuity*, in 1933, with a number of his earliest *Scrutiny* pieces), and his collection of essays *New Bearings in English Poetry*, published in 1932 just as the journal was launched, establish the agenda and direction for *Scrutiny* (both also pay lavish tribute to *The Calendar*). In the former, Leavis drew on Arnold's case, amplified by Richards and Eliot: 'In any period it is upon a small minority that the discerning appreciation of art and literature depends: it is (apart from cases of the simple and familiar) only a few who are capable of endorsing such first-hand judgment by genuine personal

²² L. C. Knights, 'L. C. Knights', in *Cambridge Quarterly*, 'F. R. Leavis Special Issue: Reminiscences and Revaluations', 25:4 (1996), 357–60.

²³ MacKillop, *F. R. Leavis*, 146.

²⁴ Much of this work was collected in *The Great Tradition* (1947); *The Common Pursuit* (1952); and *D. H. Lawrence: Novelist* (1955). Q. D. Leavis contributed forty-two items.

²⁵ Leavis's struggles for professional recognition and advancement in Cambridge were notorious: he was not granted a full-time, permanent lectureship until 1947, and became a Reader only shortly before his retirement, in 1959. Mackillop deals even-handedly with the detail of his academic career (see 152–4). See also Anne Samson, *F. R. Leavis* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), 23.

²⁶ Index D, *Retrospect and Index*, *Scrutiny* 20, 195–211. See Mulhern, *Moment of Scrutiny*, 47. The range of contributors are discussed further below.

²⁷ F. R. Leavis (ed.), *Towards Standards of Criticism: Selections from The Calendar of Modern Letters* (London: Wishart, 1933), 2. Leavis also stressed that *The Calendar* 'might fairly be held up as a model for critical journals'.

response.²⁸ The essay ranges across contemporary culture—newspapers, Hollywood film, advertising, Book Clubs—exposing the ways in which ‘mass-production and standardisation . . . is rapidly enveloping the whole world’, concluding with an endorsement of Richards (‘whose opinion is worth more than most people’s’), quoting from passages in *Practical Criticism* which stress the critic’s and poet’s shared responsibility to the common language: ‘From the beginning civilization has been dependent upon speech, for words are our chief link with the past and with one another and the channel of our spiritual inheritance. As the other vehicles of tradition, the family and the community, for example, are dissolved, we are forced more and more to rely upon language.’²⁹ In *New Bearings*, Leavis expands upon this case—with further reference to Richards’s example—through detailed, and bold, assessments of the contemporary scene of poetry, culminating in long readings of the three poets he considered most significant: ‘Eliot, Pound, and Hopkins—together represent a decisive reordering of the tradition of English poetry.’³⁰ Eliot, he argued, ‘expresses freely a modern sensibility, the ways of feeling, the modes of experience, of one fully alive in his own age’; Ezra Pound’s poetry

is extraordinarily subtle, and its subtlety is the subtlety of the sensibility it expresses . . . It also has a representative value, reflecting as it does the miscellaneousness of modern culture, the absence of direction, of an alphabet of forms, or of any one predominant idiom; the uncongeniality of the modern world to the artist; and his dubious stature there. It offers, more particularly, a representative experience of the phase of English poetry in which it became plain that the Romantic tradition was exhausted.³¹

Of Gerard Manley Hopkins, Leavis maintained that he ‘is now felt to be a contemporary, and his influence is likely to be great . . . he is likely to prove, for our time and the future, the only influential poet of the Victorian age, and he seems to me the greatest.’³² These initial articulations were given detail and weight in *Scrutiny* in the years that followed, with Leavis’s own further writings on poetry collected, in 1936, in *Revaluation: Tradition and Development in English Poetry*.³³

Alongside Leavis, though never formally recognized on the journal’s masthead, was his wife, Q. D. (‘Queenie’) Leavis, whose indefatigable work, administratively

²⁸ F. R. Leavis, *Mass Civilization and Minority Culture* (Cambridge: Gordon Fraser, 1930), reprinted in *For Continuity* (Cambridge: Minority Press, 1933), 13.

²⁹ Leavis, *Mass Civilization*, 43–4.

³⁰ Leavis, *New Bearings in English Poetry*, 157.

³¹ *Ibid.* 67. ³² *Ibid.* 115, 156.

³³ Leavis wrote prodigiously through the period, and the articles collected in *Revaluation: Tradition and Development in English Poetry* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1936) together form a comprehensive, polemical history of English poetry. Several pieces from this period remain uncollected: see Richard Storer, ‘Leavis as Critic of New Poetry: Uncollected Reviews’, in Ian MacKillop and Richard Storer (eds), *F. R. Leavis: Essays and Documents* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 14–28.

and as a contributor, was indispensable to *Scrutiny's* survival.³⁴ Despite a long period of grave illness, and never holding an academic position, Q. D. Leavis published more than forty pieces, developing the accounts of nineteenth-century and commercial/popular fiction she had begun in *Fiction and the Reading Public* (1932), providing ground-breaking accounts of Austen, Wharton, James, Gissing, Richardson, and Forster, and an innovative sequence of articles and reviews presenting 'sociological' analyses of both literary critical and more general academic and intellectual culture: her essays on Stephen, Haddon, Chadwick, and Sidgwick emphasized the positive conception of intellectual life and community these figures represented.³⁵ The journal's longevity was also, Leavis maintained, a function of the way the circle of primary contributors drawn from Leavises' Cambridge students and colleagues was swiftly established, and from time to time renewed. The continuity of the editorial group is a function of this: Donald Culver, an American researcher associated with the English Faculty and an attendee of the Leavises' Friday gatherings, was, with L. C. Knights, a founding editor. Knights was the only editor to remain with the journal for its entire history (although he became a more peripheral figure in later years). Denys Thompson, joined the editorial board, with Leavis himself, in May 1932, resigning in September 1939, to found the journal *The Use of English* (which he edited until 1969). D. W. Harding joined the board following Culver's departure late in 1933, continuing until September 1947, when he was replaced by H. A. Mason, who continued until the journal's closure. Wilfrid Mellers joined in the summer of 1942, and served until December 1948, though he remained a regular contributor of musical criticism. With the exception of Culver, whose early enthusiasm was nonetheless crucial, these five editors were, alongside the Leavises, central to the journal's success.

³⁴ 'My wife and I bore the major burden of *Scrutiny*: for two decades we did the donkey work and had the responsibility' (F. R. Leavis, *A Selection from Scrutiny* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. xi). Q. D. Leavis recalled, 'I myself, however, have generally had to produce contributions for this review with one hand while actually stirring the pot, or something of that kind, with the other, and if I have not done my thinking while rocking the cradle it was only because the daughters even of uneducated men ceased to rock infants at least two generations ago' (*Scrutiny*, 7:2 (Sept. 1938), 210). See also Ronald Hayman, *Leavis* (London: Heinemann, 1976), 50–1.

³⁵ See, for example, Q. D. Leavis, 'The Book Society Recommends . . .', *Scrutiny*, 1:2 (Sept. 1932), 179–81; 'The Case of Miss Dorothy Sayers', *Scrutiny*, 6:3 (Dec. 1937), 334–40—'Miss Sayers belongs with Naomi Mitchison and Rosamond Lehmann (see *Scrutiny* for September, 1935, and September, 1936) and some others who are representative of the new kind of bestseller, the *educated* popular novelist'; 'Academic Case-history', *Scrutiny*, 11:4 (Summer 1943), 305–10 on A. C. Haddon's struggles to establish anthropology in Cambridge; 'Caterpillars of the Commonwealth Unite', *Scrutiny*, 7:2 (Sept. 1938), 203–14, a review of Woolf's *Three Guineas*, 'Mrs Woolf is not living in the contemporary world: almost the first thing we notice is that the author of *Three Guineas* is quite insulated by class . . . this book is not merely silly and ill-informed, though it is that too, it contains some dangerous assumptions, some preposterous claims and some nasty attitudes.'

On the masthead of the first *Scrutiny* were the names of Knights and Culver. Once Culver left for Paris, and then the United States, however, he disappeared from view.³⁶ Knights was a postgraduate researcher working on the study which was to become *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson* (1937).³⁷ He, too, was to leave Cambridge, in the autumn of 1933, for a position at the University of Manchester, but remained on the editorial board, ultimately contributing some forty pieces, primarily concerned with the sixteenth and seventeenth century, above all Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, for which he developed a form of critico-sociological approach consonant with *Scrutiny's* commitment to understanding patterns of culture and society through literary form and texture.³⁸ A committed socialist, Knights was nonetheless wary of the schematic tendencies of early Marxist literary criticism, and his regular *Scrutiny* reviews, for instance, 'Shakespeare and Profit Inflation'; 'Economic and Social Background'; 'Poetry and Politics'; and 'Marxists and History', begin to articulate what would later be characterized as 'left-leavisism': his inaugural lecture on moving to Sheffield University, in 1947, was entitled 'Literature and the Study of Society'.³⁹ Knights also contributed significantly to the journal's strand of detailed analysis of educational policy and practice (see below).⁴⁰ He was one of several *Scrutiny* contributors who also wrote for *The Criterion*, for which he was a regular reviewer in the mid-1930s.⁴¹ Thompson had been a pupil of Leavis in the late 1920s, and remained in Cambridge to research a Ph.D. 'An Economic History of English Literature from Scott to the Present Day', but was forced to abandon this for financial reasons, becoming a teacher

³⁶ Culver's last article for *Scrutiny* was 'New England Culture', a review of Van Wyck Brooks, *The Flowering of New England*, *Scrutiny*, 6:1 (June 1937), 109–15.

³⁷ Knights described the work, in his unpublished autobiography, as 'an early attempt to find significant relations between economic conditions and what Marxists called the cultural superstructure'. See Ian MacKillop, 'Knights, Lionel Charles (1906–1997)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) (<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/65193>, accessed 11 March 2008).

³⁸ Although Knights's famous essay, 'How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth?', which appeared as a pamphlet in 1933, did not appear in *Scrutiny*, work that became *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1937) and *Explorations: Essays in Criticism, Mainly on the Literature of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1951), was initially published in the journal.

³⁹ L. C. Knights, 'Economic and Social Background', *Scrutiny*, 4:2 (Sept. 1935), 203–4; 'Shakespeare and Profit Inflation', *Scrutiny*, 5:1 (June 1936), 48–60; 'Marxists and History', *Scrutiny*, 9:2 (Sept. 1940), 166–70; 'Poetry and Politics', *Scrutiny* 10:4 (Apr. 1942), 381–4.

⁴⁰ L. C. Knights, 'Will Training Colleges Bear Scrutiny?', *Scrutiny*, 1:3 (Dec. 1932), 247–63; 'Training Colleges: Repercussions', *Scrutiny*, 1:4 (Mar. 1933), 388–9; 'Scrutiny of Examinations', *Scrutiny*, 2:2 (Sept. 1933), 137–63; 'Good Intentions in Education', *Scrutiny*, 2:2 (Sept. 1933), 215–19; 'Anti-Academic Excursion', *Scrutiny*, 5:4 (Mar. 1937), 438–40; 'Modern Universities I', *Scrutiny*, 6:4 (Mar. 1938), 360–75; 'Modern Universities II', *Scrutiny*, 7:1 (June 1938), 2–4; 'Modern Universities', *Scrutiny*, 12:1 (Winter 1943), 59–64.

⁴¹ See Harding, *The Criterion*, 79–81.

at Gresham's School in Norfolk and concentrating his writing for *Scrutiny* on educational issues.⁴² He co-authored the school textbook *Culture and Environment: The Training of Critical Awareness* (1932) with Leavis, a work which became a staple of 'Leavisite' teaching in schools (reprinted three times in ten years), containing guided exercises designed 'to educate positively for humane living' because 'to train critical awareness of the cultural environment in the ways contemplated is to train in discrimination and to imply positive standards'.⁴³ Harding, also a pupil of Leavis, from his first year of teaching in 1925, and a contemporary in the English Faculty of Knights, joined the research staff of the National Institute of Industrial Psychology after graduation, becoming a lecturer in Social Psychology at LSE in 1933, later Professor of Psychology at Birkbeck.⁴⁴ A prolific contributor throughout the journal's lifetime, he did contribute articles on topics associated with psychology ('Psychology and Criticism'; 'The Role of the Onlooker'; 'Detachment from Social Norms'), but also wrote significant early assessments of Eliot and Richards, beginning to trace the ways in which these key figures shifted from the principles and course which had first inspired the *Scrutiny* project.⁴⁵ Mason, a graduate of Hull and Oxford, introduced himself to the Leavis circle in 1934, bearing an 'Oxford Letter', which was his first contribution to the journal: 'Since Oxford is blind to the cultural crisis, it is naturally not alive to the significance of those writers who have been most aware of the collapse of tradition and who have preserved in their work the threatened values.'⁴⁶ He first became a teacher at Stamford School, but was appointed, in 1949, as 'Additional Director of Studies in English'—Leavis's assistant—at Downing College, a post he held until 1955.⁴⁷ His *Scrutiny* work was striking for its range—he was amongst the first in Britain to write on Malraux, Camus, and Sartre, as well as offering analyses of Empson ('Seven

⁴² MacKillop, *F. R. Leavis*, 114; Thompson's pieces include 'What Shall We Teach?', *Scrutiny*, 2:4 (Mar. 1934), 379–86; 'How Shall We Teach?', *Scrutiny*, 3:1 (June 1934), 104–6; with Raymond O'Malley, 'Educational Experiment', *Scrutiny*, 5:3 (Dec. 1936), 225–31; 'Teaching Poetry', *Scrutiny*, 6:2 (Sept. 1937), 218–21; 'Hail Butler!', *Scrutiny*, 13:1 (Spring 1945), 72–3.

⁴³ F. R. Leavis and Denys Thompson, *Culture and Environment: The Training of Critical Awareness* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1933), 5. See Thompson, 'Teacher and Friend', in Thompson (ed.), *Leavises: Recollections and Impressions*, 44–51; Singh, *F. R. Leavis*, 45–52. See Hayman, *Leavis*, 37–8.

⁴⁴ Mulhern, *Moment of Scrutiny*, 46; MacKillop, *F. R. Leavis*, 259.

⁴⁵ D. W. Harding, 'Psychology and Criticism', *Scrutiny*, 5:1 (June 1936), 44–7; 'The Cultural Background of Intelligence Testing', *Scrutiny*, 6:2 (Sept. 1937), 144–54; 'The Role of the Onlooker', *Scrutiny*, 6:3 (Dec. 1937), 247–58; 'Detachment from Social Norms', *Scrutiny*, 6:1 (June 1937), 103–5; 'Evaluations (I): I. A. Richards', *Scrutiny*, 1:4 (Mar. 1933), 327–38; 'Mr Eliot at Harvard', *Scrutiny*, 2:3 (Dec. 1933), 289–92; 'The Rock', *Scrutiny*, 3:2 (Sept. 1934), 180–3; 'T.S. Eliot 1925–1935', *Scrutiny*, 5:2 (Sept. 1936), 171–6.

⁴⁶ H. A. Mason, 'Oxford Letter', *Scrutiny*, 3:2 (Sept. 1934), 112–16. See also MacKillop, *F. R. Leavis*, 185–6.

⁴⁷ Singh, *F. R. Leavis*, 272. See also Patrick Harrison, 'Downing after the War', in MacKillop and Storer (eds), *F. R. Leavis: Essays and Documents*, 244–63. See also MacKillop, *F. R. Leavis*, 263–4.

Types of Ambiguity has established itself as an indispensable aid to "the training of sensibility"), Eliot, Eliot's critics ("Good criticism of Eliot's poetry is hard to come by, but I would suggest that "those... who profess a faith" might re-read with profit the articles which have appeared in *Scrutiny*"), and Yeats ('it seems probable that the greater part of what has been written between the years 1892 and 1935 hasn't interested him at all'), as well as regular reviews of both contemporary poetry and the periodical scene (from his earliest contributions he displayed an encyclopedic knowledge of 'little magazines' and reviews).⁴⁸ MacKillop notes that Mason and J. P. Sullivan, editor of *Arion*, were key figures in the emergence of a "modernist" school of criticism of the Greek and Roman classics'.⁴⁹ A musicologist, Mellers was perhaps the most surprising member of the editorial group. He contributed over fifty pieces on musical topics, including reviews of record releases, assessments of musical theory, and wide-ranging accounts of classical and modern composers (major studies of Edmund Rubbra, Mahler, Bartok, Faure, Tippett, 'polyphony'), and several more on poetry and criticism (Yeats, Gurney, 'Modern Poets in Love and War').

An indication of the extent to which there was an established group of contributors beyond the core of the editors themselves can be readily demonstrated: seventy-eight of the contributors listed in Hussey's index are authors of two or more pieces, with forty-three of these contributing five or more pieces. The most prolific contributors who were not editors were first and foremost literary critics, drawn from the pool of Cambridge students and researchers. Prominent amongst these were Marius Bewley (six articles on topics in American literature and the history and theory of literary criticism); R. G. Cox (periodical culture and journalism of the nineteenth and twentieth century: Auden, Hopkins, Dylan Thomas, Shakespeare criticism); D. J. Enright (German literature); James Smith (French literature, Chapman, Jacobean drama); John Speirs (Scots literature, medieval literature); D. A. Traversi (Shakespeare, Italian literature); Geoffrey Walton (Russian culture, Cowley and the Metaphysicals, art criticism, pedagogy, and education). The extraordinary range of subjects and interests—and perspectives—the journal embraced, particularly in its early years, can also be suggested by noting that the list of occasional contributors also includes such disparate, even surprising, figures

⁴⁸ H. A. Mason, 'Les Chemins de la Liberte' (on Sartre), *Scrutiny*, 14:1 (Summer 1946), 2–15; 'M. Camus and the Tragic Hero', *Scrutiny*, 14:2 (Dec. 1946), 82–9; 'Andre Malraux and his Critics', *Scrutiny*, 14:3 (Spring 1947), 162–71; 'Albert Camus: Difficult Hope', *Scrutiny*, 14:4 (Sept. 1947), 306–12; 'William Empson's Verse', *Scrutiny*, 4:3 (Dec. 1935), 302–4; 'William Empson's Criticism', *Scrutiny*, 4:4 (Mar. 1936), 431–4; 'Elucidating Eliot', *Scrutiny*, 14:1 (Summer 1946), 67–71; 'Yeats and the Irish Movement', *Scrutiny*, 5:3 (Dec. 1936), 330–2; 'Yeats and the English Tradition', *Scrutiny*, 5:4 (Mar. 1937), 449–51; 'Poetry 1934', *Scrutiny*, 3:4 (Mar. 1935), 402–9; 'Poetry in 1936', *Scrutiny*, 6:1 (June 1937), 77–82; 'The *New Republic* and the *Ideal Weekly*', *Scrutiny*, 7:3 (Dec. 1938), 250–61.

⁴⁹ MacKillop, *F. R. Leavis*, 179. See H. A. Mason, 'Aeschylus and the Modern Idiom', *Scrutiny*, 5:4 (Mar. 1937), 453–5; 'Classics and Education', *Scrutiny*, 8:1 (June 1939), 32–5.

as W. H. Auden (six articles on topics in American literature and the history and theory of literary criticism); Edmund Blunden ('The Wordsworths and the Coleridges'); Herbert Butterfield; William Empson ('Proletarian Literature'); Ian Jack ('The Case of John Webster'); Storm Jameson ('Method and Theory of the Bauhaus'); Wolf Mankowitz ('Dylan Thomas'); A. L. Morton ('Culture and Leisure'); Michael Oakeshott ('The Claims of Politics', 'Thomas Hobbes', 'The Modern Mind', 'The New Bentham'); Norman Podhoretz ('Arnoldian Function in American Criticism'); Herbert Read ('Gropius'); I. A. Richards ('The Chinese Renaissance'); Edgell Rickword (review of T. S. Eliot's *Collected Essays*—'The intelligence displayed in the later essays might be matched by several of his contemporaries; the literary sensibility of the earlier essays is not matched by any of them'); R. H. Tawney ('The Claims of Politics'); Rene Wellek ('Kafka's Life', 'Literary Criticism and Philosophy: A Note on *Revaluation*').⁵⁰ The range of topics is startling; the achievement of attracting such contributions is the more remarkable given that authors were never paid: publication in *Scrutiny*'s pages was its own reward.

The readiness with which *Scrutiny* found support, particularly in its early years, from critics beyond the immediate circles of Cambridge collaborators, is testimony to the efficiency of its editors in soliciting material (Knights, in particular, was tireless in pursuit of copy), but also to the way in which the journal's programme clearly resonated with a significant element of the intelligentsia. The positioning of the journal in relation to the periodical and 'little magazine' field was, as we have seen, particularly effective. In the opening number the editors approved the examples of *The Calendar of Modern Letters*, *The Nation*, and, from the USA, *The New Republic*, but argued that 'the ordinary man received far less help from the better-class journals and the critics than, in a civilized community, he has a right to expect.'⁵¹ The 'help' to be provided was 'to clear up current confusions and suggest a new approach to standards'. Its own strong, self-conception of the role of critical reviews was not, however, simply a matter of abstract policy: a striking number of articles offered detailed assessments of the field, with the state of the

⁵⁰ Edgell Rickword is not listed in Hussey's index, but contributed a review of T. S. Eliot's *Selected Essays* in *Scrutiny*, 1:4 (Mar. 1933), 390–3. W. H. Auden, Edmund Blunden, 'The Wordsworths and the Coleridges', *Scrutiny*, 1:2 (Sept. 1932), 168–72; Herbert Butterfield, 'History and the Marxian Method', *Scrutiny*, 1:3 (Dec. 1932), 339–55; William Empson, 'Proletarian Literature', *Scrutiny*, 3:4 (Mar. 1935), 332–8; Ian Jack, 'The Case of John Webster', *Scrutiny*, 16:1 (Mar. 1949), 38–43; Storm Jameson, 'The Method and Theory of the Bauhaus', *Scrutiny*, 8:1 (June 1939), 81–8; Wolf Mankowitz, 'Dylan Thomas', *Scrutiny*, 14:1 (Summer 1946), 62–7; A. L. Morton, 'Culture and Leisure', *Scrutiny*, 1:3 (Dec. 1932), 324–6; Norman Podhoretz, 'The Arnoldian Function in American Criticism', *Scrutiny*, 18:1 (June 1951), 59–65; Herbert Read, 'Gropius', *Scrutiny*, 4:3 (Dec. 1935), 313–15; I. A. Richards, 'The Chinese Renaissance', *Scrutiny*, 1:2 (Sept. 1932), 102–13; R. H. Tawney, 'The Claims of Politics', *Scrutiny*, 8:2 (Sept. 1939), 163–7; Rene Wellek, 'Kafka's Life', *Scrutiny*, 7:1 (June 1938), 86–9; 'Literary Criticism and Philosophy: A Note on *Revaluation*', *Scrutiny*, 5:4 (Mar. 1937).

⁵¹ 'Scrutiny: A Manifesto', *Scrutiny*, 1:1 (May 1932), 3.

periodical culture generally serving as something of a historical barometer for the relative health of the wider literary and critical culture. Just as the literature and language of an age reveal much about quality or standard of living (*Scrutiny* fought a long battle to refuse the appropriation of such terms for a purely economic or materialistic usage), the vitality—and quality—of the public discourse of literary criticism was, for the Scrutineers, crucial to the production of creative work, since it was through the rigours of a properly critical reception, through which they might become more conscious of their relation to (in Eliot's terms) the tradition, that writers would be encouraged towards 'maturity'. 'Literary Journalism' is thus one of the largest categories in the Index, and it is a common sub-topic in other entries ('Newspaper Journalism', for instance, has a separate entry). Surveys of the contemporary and historical scene, in the UK and abroad, are a feature of the journal. A representative example is R. G. Cox's 'The Great Reviews' (in two parts), a comprehensive account of the major periodical publications of the nineteenth century, a study supplemented by 'The Critical Review Today: Prolegomena to a Historical Inquiry'.⁵² Considering Denys Val Baker's *Little Reviews 1919–1943*, Cox noted that 'there are at present far fewer literary periodicals of any weight or authority than in 1919.'⁵³ Cox encapsulated the principles which structured *Scrutiny*'s own position:

What we have instead is a mushroom growth of 'little magazines' and miscellanies hardly to be called reviews—the name ought to imply, one would think, at least a show of critical policy. These represent small groups more or less out of touch with each other and with any common centre of critical opinion. They are usually defended as at least providing a field for the exercise of new talent, but this plea is seen to be inadmissible when it is realized that in such an atmosphere a new writer achieves a coterie reputation and a market value without ever once coming up against any other standards than those of his group. When the critical periodical performed a real function it defined and made explicit standards and values implicitly acknowledged by the public for which it spoke and over which it exercised its influence and authority.

Theme, tone, and idiom are characteristic of the *Scrutiny* mode: disappointment with the ways in which contemporary performances of the critical function fail to match the work of earlier generations; concern for the implications of this failure for contemporary writing, particularly in terms of the tendency of small,

⁵² 'Literary Journalism', in 'Index A: Subjects', *Scrutiny* 20, 44–6. R. G. Cox, 'The Great Reviews I', *Scrutiny*, 6:1 (June 1937), 2–20; 'The Great Reviews II', *Scrutiny*, 6:2 (Sept. 1937), 155–75; 'The Critical Review Today: Prolegomena to a Historical Inquiry', *Scrutiny*, 14:4 (Sept. 1947), 256–68; 'Victorian Journalism', *Scrutiny*, 17:3 (Autumn 1950), 270–2.

⁵³ R. G. Cox, 'Mixed Currency', *Scrutiny*, 14:1 (Summer 1946), 59.

fissiparous groups to promote their own work, and the work of their favourites, to the detriment of a critical account of, and search for, general standards.⁵⁴

There are myriad contributions to *Scrutiny* which make similar assessments of the field: John Farelly on *The New Yorker*; Cox on 'The Critical Review Today'; Q. D. Leavis on 'English Novelists and the Higher Reviewers'; H. A. Mason 'The *New Republic* and the Ideal Weekly'.⁵⁵ F. R. Leavis regularly returned to the topic of the periodical field, his writing generally being saturated with references to current critical debate, the urgency and priority of being involved in this area, but also reflecting upon its working, is unmistakeable (in the 1950s, following the closure of *Scrutiny*, he became a regular contributor to periodicals).⁵⁶ Even at the moment of *Scrutiny*'s closure, Leavis contributed a forthright assessment of the new (Oxford) periodical *Essays in Criticism*, an article which led on to a lengthy exchange with F. W. Bateson, the new journal's founding editor, discussing the role and function of the critic and the critical journal.⁵⁷

Equally important to the *Scrutiny* project, in terms of the commitment to active intervention in the contemporary scene, was its explicit, extensive, and, in terms of the periodical culture, unique educational agenda, an agenda which itself had several distinct facets ranging from the theoretical to the extremely practical. The journal's primary achievement was, Mulhern argued, 'to mediate the establishment of a new, professionally chartered discourse on literature in the national culture; and, in the same process, to mediate the large-scale entry of a new social layer into the national intelligentsia'.⁵⁸ The 'academicization' of English studies was a

⁵⁴ 'Even if he [a writer-critic-reader] openly revolts against contemporary critical authority... he will be driven to define his position more carefully' (Cox, 'The Critical Review Today', 268).

⁵⁵ John Farelly, 'Edmund Wilson on the *New Yorker*', *Scrutiny*, 18:3 (Winter 1951-2), 229-33; Q. D. Leavis, 'English Novelists and the Higher Reviewers', *Scrutiny*, 5:1 (June 1936), 93-9; H. A. Mason, 'The *New Republic* and the Ideal Weekly', *Scrutiny*, 7:3 (Dec. 1938), 250-61.

⁵⁶ After 1953, Leavis wrote frequently for (or to) *Commentary*, *The Spectator*, *Sewanee Review*, *Universities Quarterly*, *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *Literary Criterion*, *Essays in Criticism*, and *The Times Literary Supplement*. His letters appeared in these publications, and also in *The Listener*, *New Statesman*, *The Observer*, *London Magazine*, *Encounter*, and *Essays in Criticism*. Before 1953, only eight of his letters were published outside *Scrutiny*; in the subsequent decade over forty were printed, along with two dozen essays, articles, and reviews. Between 1933 and 1953, he was involved in ten public exchanges of correspondence, six of which are in the pages of *Scrutiny*; from 1953 to 1963 there are seventeen such controversies in eleven different locations. See Stefan Collini, 'The Critic as [Anti-] Journalist: Leavis after *Scrutiny*', in Jeremy Treglown and Bridget Bennett (eds), *Grub Street and the Ivory Tower: Literary Journalism and Literary Scholarship from Fielding to the Internet* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 151-76. Also Sean Matthews, 'The Responsibilities of Dissent: Leavis after *Scrutiny*', *Literature and History*, 13:2 (Nov. 2004), 49-66.

⁵⁷ F. R. Leavis, 'The Responsible Critic: or The Function of Criticism at Any Time', *Scrutiny*, 19:3 (June 1953), 162-83. See also, 'The *Times Literary Supplement*', *Scrutiny*, 14:3 (Spring 1947), 133-4; 'An Irish Monthly', *Scrutiny*, 14:3 (Spring 1947), 134; 'The *Kenyon Review* and *Scrutiny*', *Scrutiny*, 14:3 (Spring 1947), 134-6.

⁵⁸ Mulhern, *Moment of Scrutiny*, 318.

complex process, since the term 'academic' was, within the journal, generally used pejoratively to denote arid fact-grubbing and pedantry.⁵⁹ However, it is the case that *Scrutiny* was both a medium for, and an exemplification of, the gradual professionalization, indeed institutionalization, of literary criticism. Before the 1930s, in the words of Gerald Graff, 'the phrase "academic criticism" had been a contradiction in terms', since 'scholars did research and dealt with verifiable facts, whereas critics presided over interpretations and values, which supposedly had no objective basis and therefore did not qualify for serious academic study.'⁶⁰ *Scrutiny's* uneasy relation with many academics, and the uncertainty that sometimes marked the tone of its own contributors—predominantly employed in universities but conceiving their roles as marginal and oppositional within them—derived from this tension. At the same time, *Scrutiny* insisted upon a distinctive conception of the discipline of English studies, combining scholarship crucially with judgement, to oppose what it saw as the *belle-lettrist*, journalistic (another pejorative term), and coterie tendencies within contemporary academic and newspaper criticism, tendencies which its contributors regularly castigated as a betrayal of the critical function.⁶¹

The educational agenda was closely bound up with the journal's origins in Cambridge. Leavis returned repeatedly to this point, stressing in his 1942 editorial 'After Ten Years' that 'without the base at a university, and the accompanying opportunities for recruitment, and for enlisting collaboration and support in other universities and in the academic world generally, *Scrutiny* couldn't have kept going.'⁶² It is difficult to exaggerate the practical and symbolic significance of 'Cambridge English' to the group. Over half of *Scrutiny's* contributors were graduates of what was still a relatively new discipline at university level, and especially so in Cambridge.⁶³ The first examination for the English Tripos had taken place in 1919

⁵⁹ See for example L. C. Knights: 'university teaching, from the time when English was first admitted as a "subject", has been crippled because no one thought of asking the right questions' ('Anti-academic Excursion', review of Stephen Potter, *The Muse in Chains*, *Scrutiny*, 5:4 (Mar. 1937), 438); and F. R. Leavis: 'Even as Mr Eliot quotes him and comments on him he appears as the born academic (is that what "by nature an educated man" means?), obtuse—Mr Eliot seems about to bring out the word—obtuse in his dogged and argumentative erudition' ('The Wild, Untutored Phoenix', *Scrutiny*, 6:3 (Dec. 1937), 358).

⁶⁰ Gerald Graff, *Professing Literature: An Institutional History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 123.

⁶¹ See, for example, D. W. Harding, 'The Twilight of Intelligence', *Scrutiny*, 3:3 (Dec. 1934), 314–16; or Leavis: 'as a serious critical organ, maintaining a continuity of the critical function about the level of mere journalism, *The Criterion* stood alone' ('After Ten Years', *Scrutiny*, 10:4 (Apr. 1942), 326).

⁶² Leavis, 'After Ten Years', 327.

⁶³ For the emergence of Cambridge English see Stephen Heath, 'Cambridge English', in Richard Mason (ed.), *Cambridge Minds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 20–34. Also Mulhern, *Moment of Scrutiny*, 20–34; Brian Doyle, *English and Englishness* (London: Routledge, 1989), 96; D. J. Palmer, *The Rise of English Studies: An Account of the Study of English Language*

(Leavis was one of its earliest graduates). The Board of English was only created in 1926. The emergence of Cambridge English was thus precisely contemporary with the major phase of modernist literary and critical experimentation, and figures in Cambridge central to the new subject's emergence, above all Richards, Mansfield Forbes, and Leavis himself (Empson, although formed in Cambridge, had left by the late 1920s), were powerful advocates of the difficult and marginal new work associated, above all, with Eliot and Pound (in its early phase, of the literary critical work in *Scrutiny* the analysis of poetry predominated). Richards and Leavis in particular gained formidable reputations for their controversial promotion of this work.⁶⁴ Raymond O'Malley, an undergraduate in the late 1920s, recalled being

asked to study in advance a piece from G. M. Hopkins. Hopkins was not yet widely known, and to me was quite unknown... At a time when other—salaried—lecturers now largely forgotten were directing attention to writers now largely forgotten, Leavis, unsalaried, along with I. A. Richards, was writing the syllabus for university and sixth-form literary studies today.⁶⁵

The emergence of 'modernism' as it became canonized in university curricula was thus to a considerable degree initiated and expounded by the Cambridge critics' gradual elucidation of the poetry, and amplification of the fragmentary, opportunistic critical insights which attended it. Richards's importance was, beyond the simple fact of drawing attention to this work, that he began to articulate modes of reading and analysis which might explicate it. M. C. Bradbrook, in her memoir of early Cambridge English, emphasized this point: 'Richards had been trained in philosophy and psychology; their conjunction with literary criticism was something quite new and to my generation, surrounded as we were with new and complex works—poetry by Eliot, novels by Joyce—it gave us the means to approach texts that were to us oracular but obscure.'⁶⁶ Leavis also attended Richards's lectures, as

and Literature from its Origins to the Making of the Oxford English School (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965); Bernard Bergonzi, *Exploding English: Criticism, Theory, Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 40–70.

⁶⁴ The impact of Richards's and Leavis's lectures, and their promotion of the new writing, is a recurrent feature of recollections of the period. See, for instance, Tony Inglis, 'F. R. Leavis Special Issue: Reminiscences and Revaluations', *The Cambridge Quarterly*, 25:4 (1996), 351.

⁶⁵ Raymond O'Malley, 'Charisma?', in Thompson (ed.), *Leavises: Recollections and Impressions*, 54, 59.

⁶⁶ M. C. Bradbrook, 'Nor Shall My Sword', in Thompson (ed.), *Leavises: Recollections and Impressions*, 31. Bradbrook also noted of *Scrutiny* that it 'put into general circulation the views absorbed from Forbes and Richards, giving them currency and a pedagogic slanting'. See also Joan Bennett, 'How it Strikes a Contemporary': The Impact of I. A. Richards' Literary Criticism in Cambridge, England', in Reuben Brower, Helen Vendler, and John Hollander (eds), *I. A. Richards: Essays in His Honour* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 45–59.

did Empson, whose *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, with its extended 'close readings', was a touchstone for *Scrutiny* critics.⁶⁷

Scrutiny saw this methodological current—the line through Richards and Empson—in the subject's emergence, in tandem with the urgent cultural mission ('Poetry can save us,' as Richards distinctively put it), as Cambridge English's best self, and frequently identified it as an ideal, most famously in Leavis's panegyric accompanying the reissue: 'Only at Cambridge could the idea of *Scrutiny* have taken shape . . . It was (to deepen the emphasis) a product, the triumphant justifying achievement, of the English Tripos . . . We were, in fact, that Cambridge; we felt it, and had more and more reason to feel it, and our confidence and courage came from that.'⁶⁸ *Scrutiny's* association with this ideal Cambridge came to embody a professional and methodologically coherent programme of criticism, a programme later, and carelessly, characterized as the New Criticism. The historical and contextual study associated with close reading, and the commitment to valuation, distinguish *Scrutiny's* work from the emerging formalism of the North American school.⁶⁹

The third element of *Scrutiny's* 'special educational interest' was its detailed attention to all aspects of pedagogic practice. The journal's opening manifesto declared that 'To say that the life of a country is determined by its educational ideals is a commonplace; but it is a commonplace that is passively accepted more often than it is acted upon.'⁷⁰ 'Education' is the largest topic in the 'Index of Subjects'. The experience of both teachers and learners in secondary and higher education was a recurrent concern, with numerous studies of examinations, curricula, teacher training, adult education, and government policy.⁷¹ The predominance of the topic is striking; there is rarely a number without a relevant article or review, the journal's pages being studded with titles such as 'What Shall We Teach?', 'Scrutiny of Examinations', 'English for the School Certificate', and 'How Shall We Teach?' The key members of the collaborating circle all contributed articles relating to educational issues, and in the early years the editors projected an informal 'Scrutiny Movement in Education', advertising meetings for schoolteachers who wished to share materials. A number of reviewers of the reissue of the journal noticed that it

⁶⁷ In the journal's opening manifesto, it is the fact that 'William Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity* apparently caused nothing but bewilderment in the minds of nearly all its reviewers' which exposes the desperate state of contemporary periodical culture ('Scrutiny: A Manifesto', 4). Bradbrook's assessment of Empson's criticism appeared in *Scrutiny*, 2:3 (Dec. 1933), 253–7.

⁶⁸ Leavis, 'A Retrospect', 4.

⁶⁹ For a succinct assessment of the significance of Cambridge to Leavis and *Scrutiny* see Black, 'The Long Pursuit', 98.

⁷⁰ 'Scrutiny: A Manifesto', 4.

⁷¹ F. R. Leavis, 'Advanced Verbal Education', *Scrutiny*, 6:2 (Sept. 1937), 211–17; H. A. Mason, 'Education by Book Club', *Scrutiny*, 6:3 (Dec. 1937), 240–6; Margaret Diggle, 'Required Literature Courses as a Contribution to Culture', *Scrutiny*, 16:3 (Dec. 1937), 213–18.

was appropriate that the publication coincided with the Robbins Report on Higher Education, so central were debates over education to the *Scrutiny* project. Leavis, again, proved a key figure: his *Education and the University: A Sketch for an English School* (1943; revised and expanded 1948), and the later *English Literature in Our Time and the University* (1969) derived from *Scrutiny* work.⁷²

The avowedly 'practical' commitment to educational issues was one way in which the journal conceived of political activity: 'Where literary criticism is concerned we can be immediately practical and political.'⁷³ Although most of the contributing circle were left-leaning ('a devotion to [politics] at the party level is, no doubt, somewhere necessary'), *Scrutiny* made a consistent virtue of its refusal to embrace an explicit ideological programme. The opening manifesto argued, alluding to Arnold's conception of the role of the intellectual, that the journal's role should be to offer 'a play of the free intelligence upon the underlying issues' since 'the impotence of the practical mind to do anything essential in practice is being so thoroughly demonstrated.'⁷⁴ In the febrile politicized atmosphere of the 1930s, this meant that *Scrutiny* did, nonetheless, contain a substantial number of articles concerned with the relations across literature, criticism, and politics, and 'Politics' (along with 'Marxism') provides another substantial section of the Index. Leavis's 'Under Which King, Bezonian?' was a striking, polemical refusal to 'identify *Scrutiny* with a social, economic or political creed or platform'.⁷⁵ A symposium compiled even as war broke out, in *Scrutiny* 8:2 (September 1939), 'The Claims of Politics', again pointed to a principled rejection of any imposition of a 'party line'.⁷⁶ Mulhern argues that *Scrutiny* was central to 'a discourse whose foremost general cultural function is the repression of politics', even that 'the matrix of its literary and cultural criticism and of its educational policies, of its radical and conservative manifestations alike, was one defined by a dialectic of "culture" and "civilization" whose *main* and *logically necessary effect* was a *depreciation*, a *repression* and, at the limit, a *categorical dissolution of politics as such*' (his italics).⁷⁷ Mulhern's emphasis reveals nothing more than an insistence on his own conception of political militancy, which was precisely the position against which *Scrutiny* was committed to struggle. 'Our total civilization is a very complex thing,' wrote Leavis, 'with a kind of complexity to which Marxist categories are not adequate.'⁷⁸ He emphasized the link between educational work and the journal's distinctive version of political engagement: 'A university of its very nature (or "idea"), if it is one at all, asserts a

⁷² F. R. Leavis, *Education and the University: A Sketch for an English School*, 2nd edn (London: Chatto and Windus, 1948); *English Literature in Our Time and the University* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1969).

⁷³ 'Scrutiny: A Manifesto', 4. ⁷⁴ *Ibid.* 3.

⁷⁵ F. R. Leavis, 'Under which King, Bezonian?', *Scrutiny*, 1:3 (Dec. 1932), 205.

⁷⁶ 'The Claims of Politics', *Scrutiny*, 8:2 (Sept. 1939).

⁷⁷ Mulhern, *Moment of Scrutiny*, 331, 330. ⁷⁸ Leavis, 'After Ten Years', 327.

contrary view of cultural tradition to the Marxian; a view of cultural tradition as representing the active function of human intelligence, choice, and will; that is, as a spiritual force that can direct and determine.'

The 1963 reissue of *Scrutiny* was an occasion for major reassessments of the journal's work; its reappearance was very widely reviewed. The closure of *Scrutiny* had been respectfully but not extensively remarked in the press and in literary journals, although the attention was far more substantial than for any other literary or academic periodical publication. Only *The Guardian*, of the dailies, carried a notice (by David Daiches); *The Times Literary Supplement* made no comment; indeed, there appear to have been only six articles responding to the journal's demise in periodicals and other literary journals, although there was also a respectful correspondence in *The Spectator*.⁷⁹ Comparison of reactions to the closure and to the reissue indicate that, ironically, *Scrutiny*'s influence continued to grow after its demise, and the reissue permitted the journal's availability to begin to catch up with its reputation. In 1963, there were thirty-seven separate items across the press and academic journals, including, on this occasion, a note in *The Times Literary Supplement*.⁸⁰ There are several reasons for this startling increase in attention, the most obvious being the hitherto limited availability of copies. Seymour Betsky, in *Universities Quarterly*, remarked, 'What has precluded assessment appears above all to have been ignorance of the sheer body, the quality, and the variety produced by Leavis and *Scrutiny*.'⁸¹ Commentators from abroad made similar points: J. G. Weightman, in *The Nation* concurred, 'No-one interested in English Literature needs to be told that *Scrutiny* was the quarterly review which appeared in Cambridge, England, from 1932 to 1953, and whose guiding spirit was F. R. Leavis. Not everyone, however, has read it.'⁸² In *Essays in Criticism*, Kenneth Trodd gave stark detail of the situation:

According to the British Union Catalogue, only half a dozen British university libraries bought *Scrutiny* regularly enough to have more or less complete sets, and during its life a combination of academic indifference, paper shortage, and ungenerous competition made it something easier to talk about than to have read.⁸³

The opportunity to assess *Scrutiny* as a whole was often the occasion of surprise. The range of topics, particularly in terms of Shakespeare criticism, political debate, educational discussion, and, in the journal's second decade, attention to

⁷⁹ See MacKillop, *F. R. Leavis*, 283; Mulhern, *Moment of Scrutiny*, 338.

⁸⁰ See M. B. Kinch et al. (eds), *F. R. Leavis and Q. D. Leavis: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Garland, 1989), 375–81.

⁸¹ Seymour Betsky, 'Scrutiny Rescrutinised', *Universities Quarterly*, 18:1 (Dec. 1963), 82.

⁸² J. G. Weightman, 'The Passion of *Scrutiny*', *The Nation* (7 Dec. 1963), 393.

⁸³ Kenneth Trodd, 'From the Younger Generation', *Essays in Criticism*, 14:1 (Jan. 1964), 311.

the novel, was widely remarked. Above all, however, it was force and energy of the project which, for better or worse, has consistently struck reviewers. Charles Tomlinson, for instance, argued that it 'was the air of moral exaggeration that put off many critics and writers who disliked academic and journalistic stupidities as much as Leavis did'.⁸⁴ Raymond Williams noted the same quality, but more sympathetically: 'It was the critical radicalism, even perhaps the aggressiveness of *Scrutiny* that made the first connection.'⁸⁵ The greater attention paid to the reissue was also a function of increasing prominence of the central figures in the *Scrutiny* project themselves and, as several reviewers remarked, the fact that much work from *Scrutiny* had already been republished in book form. Leavis himself had become far more of a public figure during the 1950s, in part due to the publication of *The Great Tradition* (1947), and *D. H. Lawrence: Novelist* (1955), which made his work on the novel available to a much wider audience, but also due to his prodigious writing for wide-circulation magazines and journals—the 'Two Cultures' controversy also raised him to nationwide notoriety. Other key figures in the journal's contributing circle, such as Enright, Harding, Knights, Mellers, Traversi, Smith, and Speirs, were now established and influential academic critics—even, John Holloway provocatively suggested, emerged as 'The New Establishment in Criticism'.⁸⁶

'The Left Book Club', wrote H. A. Mason in his assessment of its work, 'is a complex phenomenon: an examination of all that it involves would require several kinds of competence.'⁸⁷ The same might readily be said of *Scrutiny*, and any account can only gesture towards the myriad social, intellectual, and cultural currents which converged in the project. It is, ultimately, the stamina and conviction of the core of contributors which is most remarkable, and makes of *Scrutiny* such a unique chapter in this history. Terry Eagleton captures something of the force of the journal's example: 'No subsequent movement within English studies has come near to recapturing the courage and radicalism of their stand . . . *Scrutiny* . . . has yet to be surpassed in its tenacious devotion to the moral centrality of English Studies, their crucial relevance to the quality of social life as a whole.'⁸⁸ David Ayers, similarly, appraises the significance of the journal in terms of its embodiment of a whole movement of thought: 'The legacy of *Scrutiny* is found in the purposiveness and vigour of a continuing critical project which sees culture as the privileged site where

⁸⁴ Charles Tomlinson, 'Scrutiny Ten Years After', *Hudson Review*, 17:2 (Summer 1964), 288.

⁸⁵ Raymond Williams, 'Our Debt to Dr. Leavis', *Critical Quarterly*, 1:3 (Autumn 1959), 245.

⁸⁶ John Holloway, 'The New Establishment in Criticism I and II', *Listener* (20 and 27 Sept. 1956), 429–30, 473–4. Reprinted in John Holloway, *The Charted Mirror* (London: Routledge, 1960), 204–26.

⁸⁷ H. A. Mason, 'Education by Book Club?', *Scrutiny*, 6:3 (Dec. 1937), 240.

⁸⁸ Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 31.

social realities appear and are mediated.’⁸⁹ At the moment of *Scrutiny*’s closure, Leavis himself concluded his valedictory account of the project with a line from Arthur Hugh Clough, expressing, at best, a sense of both defiance and uncertainty as to *Scrutiny*’s achievement, ‘Say not the struggle naught avaieth ...’⁹⁰

⁸⁹ David Ayers, ‘Literary Criticism and Cultural Politics’, in Laura Marcus and Peter Nicholls (eds), *The Cambridge History of Twentieth Century Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 385.

⁹⁰ F. R. Leavis, ‘Valedictory’, *Scrutiny*, 19:4 (Oct. 1953), 255.

CYRIL CONNOLLY'S *HORIZON* (1940–50) AND THE END OF MODERNISM

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When Cyril Connolly, Stephen Spender, and Peter Watson met in 1939 to begin planning a new magazine, they batted around a number of relatively snobbish titles, each clearly trying to evoke a modernist aesthetic culture that was essentially collapsing. According to a draft advertising circular sent to the United States ‘Equinox, Germinal, Daylight, Midnight Sun, Capricorn, Western Review, [and] Phraos’ were all suggested and abandoned. Indeed, the final one on that list proved to be already in use for ‘the journal, it transpired, of a cremation society’.¹ That Connolly included this fact in his advertising is by no means surprising, since the magazine that he would edit brilliantly for the next decade retained always a funeral air, despite the apparent optimism implicit in the title eventually settled on: *Horizon*. As George Orwell argues in ‘Inside the Whale’, the 1940s saw the end of a cultural dispensation which had produced not only a revolutionary modernism but a radical expansion of the literary field as a whole. Watching the rise of fascism in Europe and with it the development of new forms of mass culture and mass mediation, Orwell glumly concludes that the writer ‘is merely an anachronism, a hangover from the bourgeois age, as surely doomed as the hippopotamus . . . [and] from now onwards the all-important fact for the creative writer is going to be that this is not a writer’s world.’² Although this essay did not appear in *Horizon*, it neatly summarizes the magazine’s editorial policy as it deliberately and sometimes melodramatically staged the end of the modernist ‘little magazine’. Indeed, when Connolly looked back on the forties, he described the decade as ‘five years of total war and five more of recrimination and exhaustion during which the Modern

¹ Cyril Connolly Collection, McFarlin Library, University of Tulsa, Series II, box 2, folder 16.

² George Orwell, ‘Inside the Whale’, *A Collection of Essays* (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1981), 250.

Movement unobtrusively expired.³ Throughout this period, *Horizon* embraces this sense of an embattled failure, both accurately surveying the rapid transformation of the literary and cultural marketplace while clinging nostalgically to an older formation rooted still in the ideals of autonomy, patronage, and elitism. Indeed, Connolly and his collaborators found themselves looking constantly from one horizon over which a heroic modernism was receding to a newly brightening one which threw their vastly transformed cultural landscape into sharp yet disorienting relief.

The horizon toward which Connolly first looked with the rest of Britain in 1939, however, brought only fear and anxiety in the shape of German bombers crossing the English Channel. The nation as a whole was resigned to the oncoming calamity of a total war which would erase any distinction between civilian and military targets. Britain seemed suddenly aware of its essentially European identity, the 'little England' once securely protected by the Channel was now suddenly exposed to aerial bombardment and mechanized invasion. As Sebastian Knowles notes in *A Purgatorial Flame*, writers like Orwell, Wells, and Auden had laid the imaginative groundwork for such a disaster and the war itself took place in 'a suspended world' characterized by 'a time of waiting' for the inevitable attack.⁴ Yet even after Britain's declaration of war against Germany on 3 September 1939, nothing much seemed to happen for a nearly seven-month period which Evelyn Waugh called 'the Great Bore War'.⁵ It was in the midst of a blacked-out London anxiously scanning the sky, however, that Connolly launched his new magazine and was able to do so precisely because the war forced him and his financial backer to abandon Paris. The idea for *Horizon* was first hatched in August when the wealthy art collector and patron Peter Watson realized the seemingly inevitable war would force him to leave the Continent and return to an England he otherwise despised as provincial and conservative. Connolly urged him to 'bring his hate to London where it could do some good'⁶ and help fund a magazine that would take up the gap left by what Robert Hewison calls the 'grand slaughter of magazines' in 1939.⁷ This was the moment, in fact, when the last of the 'little magazines' essentially disappeared and within a few months of one another *The Criterion*, *Cornhill Magazine*, *New Verse*, *Twentieth Century Verse*, and the *London Mercury* all closed. T. S. Eliot's *Criterion* had dwindled to a meagre circulation of 500 while J. C. Squire had left *The London Mercury* after being knighted, its anti-modernist passions as drained and desultory as the modernism against which it once tilted.

³ Cited in Sebastian D. G. Knowles, *A Purgatorial Flame: Seven British Writers in the Second World War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), p. xv.

⁴ Ibid. 13. ⁵ Evelyn Waugh, *Put Out More Flags* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1943), 7.

⁶ Cyril Connolly Collection, McFarlin Library, University of Tulsa, Series II, box 2, folder 16.

⁷ Robert Hewison, *Under Siege: Literary Life in London 1939–1945* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977), 11.

The rise of mass-mediated entertainments like radio and film had already begun to dampen the literary boom of the twentieth century's early decades and Ezra Pound's rallying cry, 'make it new', seemed increasingly hollow, replicated only in the patterns of a rapidly expanding commodity culture in what Auden called 'the low dishonest decade' of the 1930s.

In an essay titled 'Little Magazines' written in the 1960s, Connolly cast an eye over his own collection in order to argue that such periodicals could be divided between the 'dynamic' and 'eclectic': 'Some flourish on what they put in, others by whom they keep out. . . . The dynamic editor runs his magazine like a commando course where picked men are trained to assault the enemy position: the eclectic is like an hotel proprietor whose rooms fill up every month with a different clique.'⁸ Connolly was no one's idea of a commando (literary or otherwise), though by 1939 he had become widely known as the author of *Enemies of Promise*, a meditative lament on the impossibility of writing 'a book which lasts ten years'.⁹ The problems were multiform, he argued, but they emerged primarily from the commodification of literary culture itself, which fraudulently degraded the analytical and creative powers of language. Turning melodramatically to Addison, he condemned periodical publishing which caters to the profitable market for entertainment: 'Fleet Street is a kind of Bucket Shop which unloads words on the public for less than they are worth and in consequence the more honest literary bankers, who try to use their words to mean what they say . . . find their currency constantly depreciating.'¹⁰ 'Dynamic' magazines with their commando editors could resist this process for a time, beginning as they do, Connolly wryly notes, with a 'fixed amount of money to lose'.¹¹ Eclectic magazines, however, always run the risk of succumbing to middle-class tastes presumed to be degraded, counterfeit, and even dangerous. By 1939, however, the dynamic magazines had all but disappeared, and as Connolly contemplated the creation of a new journal, he inevitably saw himself as a hotel proprietor, seeking to fill his rooms with the best writing he could find. In doing so, he deftly traded on his own highbrow reputation to craft a magazine which might appeal to a broad audience, even if it meant compromising the lofty claims he makes in *Enemies of Promise*. Evelyn Waugh satirically includes a magazine entitled 'The Ivory Tower' in his 1943 novel *Put Out More Flags*, lightly mocking Connolly's hypocritical pretensions. The editor, himself, was well aware of the contradictions in which he had become entangled, writing to Thomas Mann that an editor 'must remain perfectly friendly and completely cynical'.¹² This becomes perhaps the most

⁸ Cyril Connolly, 'Little Magazines', in *The Evening Colonnade* (London: David Bruce and Watson, 1973), 414.

⁹ Cyril Connolly, *Enemies of Promise* (New York: Persea, 1983), p. vii.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* II.

¹¹ Connolly, 'Little Magazines', 415.

¹² Cited in Michael Shelden, *Friends of Promise: Cyril Connolly and the World of Horizon* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989), 86.

apt description of *Horizon* and its uneven yet brilliantly eclectic editorial policy. As Connolly laconically concludes in that letter to Mann, 'it is very interesting, like sitting all day under a tepid shower.'¹³

Connolly rightly understood that in an England on the brink of war, 'a magazine had to be eclectic to survive' and like Orwell he saw himself in essentially heroic terms as the embattled guardian of a collapsing culture. 'It was', he later wrote, 'the right moment to gather all the writers who could be preserved into the Ark',¹⁴ and it was this impulse as much as the hatred he shared with Watson of 'the enemies of promise' which led to *Horizon's* creation in 1939. The magazine was relatively small in size, the original order placed with the printer specifying '48pp. Demy 8vo (8½' × 5½') Magazine "Horizon" printed letterpress in black on Antique Laid Paper, thread sewn, 4pp. overlapping cover drawn on printed in black 1st page only.'¹⁵ The cover design would change consistently over the magazine's lifespan, but it rigidly avoided the photographs and color illustration of the mass-produced 'slicks' as well as other contemporaneous monthlies like *Lilliput*. Instead, its design deliberately echoed the deceased 'little magazines' like *The Dial*, *The Criterion*, and *The Little Review*, its relative simplicity staking a visual claim to the authority of literary tradition.¹⁶ Connolly's own name appeared vividly on each cover, usually just beneath (and in a larger font than) the names of the various contributors. The titles of poems and stories did not appear on the cover until after the war, effectively emphasizing the names of the writers themselves rather than their individual contributions. This kind of design further distances *Horizon* from the mass-market magazines like *Vanity Fair* and *Vogue*, both of which tended to emphasize contents over contributors. Instead, it advertises the importance of the individual creator while capitalizing on what Aaron Jaffe calls the modernist 'imprimatur' which 'sanctions the wide dissemination of elite cultural signatures in mass economies of value'.¹⁷ That is to say, Connolly sought to lend the authority and even mystique of the 'dynamic' 'little magazines' to a publication which, from the first, sought the substantially larger audience of an 'eclectic' publication. A particularly canny hotelier, he managed to fill his magazine's rooms by successfully advertising and circulating a diverse range of contributors.

The earliest advertisement for *Horizon* appeared in *The New Statesman* where Connolly himself had published a number of reviews and essays. Seeking again

¹³ Ibid. ¹⁴ Connolly, 'Little Magazines', 425.

¹⁵ Cyril Connolly Collection, McFarlin Library, University of Tulsa, Series II, box 2, folder 16.

¹⁶ Ironically, Connolly would later lament Ford Maddox Ford's decision when creating the *Transatlantic Review* to use 'an old-fashioned format to suggest a non-existent authority' ('Little Magazines', 422).

¹⁷ Aaron Jaffe, *Modernism and the Culture of Celebrity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 88.

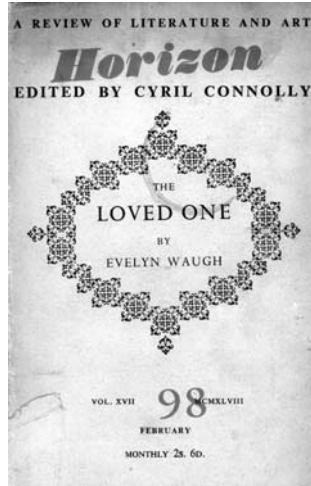


Fig. 100. Cover of *Horizon* (Feb. 1948)

to cultivate the mythology of the ‘little magazine’, it deliberately invokes its own marginal, even bohemian status:

There are two ways of launching a magazine. One is with marble offices, wide advertising, high salaries, and a press campaign which culminates in a splendid Vermont d’Honneur. *HORIZON* has chosen the other. Its offices are the back-room of a flat, unpaid themselves, the editors and their secretary grudge every guinea spent on their contributors, they have neither cocktails nor sandwichmen, and this is their first advertisement.¹⁸

The first editorial offices were indeed housed in Stephen Spender’s apartment at Lansdowne Terrace and he served as a silent co-editor until 1942. As Michael Shelden notes in his magnificent history of the magazine, *Friends of Promise*, Watson deliberately brought Spender aboard as co-editor ‘because he wasn’t absolutely sure about Cyril’ and wanted to make certain the magazine would survive if his interest suddenly waned.¹⁹ Spender, however, was already working as editor at John Lehmann’s *New Writing*, and although its demise was evident he insisted that his name did not appear on *Horizon*’s masthead. Connolly would later claim that Spender’s influence tended to push the magazine unnecessarily to the left in its early years so that it nearly became a ‘Left-wing “school magazine” with a rather naïve attitude to other writers’.²⁰ The magazine survived, however, precisely by avoiding such ideological allegiances and even Spender’s own contributions to

¹⁸ Cyril Connolly Collection, McFarlin Library, University of Tulsa, Series II, box 2, folder 16.

¹⁹ Shelden, *Friends of Promise*, 31.

²⁰ Cyril Connolly, *Golden Horizon* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1953), p. ix.

the magazine during its early years are startling for their lack of political energy and commitment. Beginning in the second issue, for example, he publishes portions of his diary which begin 'I am going to keep a journal because I cannot accept the fact that I feel so shattered that I cannot write at all.'²¹ Taking up the theme of what Knowles calls the 'literature of anticipation' written in the months before the first German attack on London, he laments in the March issue that 'I have tended to live in the past' since 'we live in a kind of vacuum now in which the events on which we are waiting have not yet caught up with us.'²² Presumably written in the same apartment which would soon become home to *Horizon*, Spender's journals become the 'mise-en-abyme' for the magazine itself—revealing the untenable position of a writer caught between a collapsing past and an inevitably violent future.

Horizon itself was legally born just after Britain's declaration of war, Watson putting his name to the contract on 18 October 1939. He initially agreed to pay for a run of 1,000 with a cover price of one shilling. Advertising fees, mailing costs, and initial (albeit relatively meagre) payments to contributors were also supplied by Watson. Connolly and Spender set immediately to work, and given the sudden collapse of the 'little magazine' market, they had little trouble securing a diverse array of contributions. Although dated 'January 1940', the first issue actually began circulating considerably earlier, a fact eagerly noted in an early advertising letter dated 23 October 1939: 'In order to provide readers with material and artists with opportunity, we are going to publish the first number of the magazine at the beginning of December.'²³ This would be the first of some 121 issues that would appear under Connolly's editorship, covering some 10,000 printed pages. It counted among its contributors some of the most remarkable writers of the 1940s and published important essays by George Orwell and Arthur Koestler, poetry by Louis MacNeice and W. H. Auden, and fiction by Evelyn Waugh and Truman Capote. Despite its editor's own cosmopolitanism, however, *Horizon* proved to be an essentially British magazine, and Connolly concluded his tenure with a series of special issues focusing on other national literatures while regretfully admitting the superiority of American literature. The more avidly Connolly reached out to an increasingly global culture, in fact, the more he seemed to realize the end of modernism meant less the end of aesthetic innovation, than its transformation into new forms organized around new audiences.

The magazine's first issue forcefully articulates the narrative of a romantically embattled modernism striving to preserve its autonomy in the face of total war and totalitarian madness. The issue opens with a roughly sketched series of 'Reclining Figures' by Henry Moore, visual studies that clearly anticipate his famous bomb shelter sketches, like *Grey Tube Shelter* (1940). On the facing page is Connolly's

²¹ Stephen Spender, 'September Journal', *Horizon*, 1 (Feb. 1940), 102.

²² Stephen Spender, 'September Journal', *Horizon*, 1 (Mar. 1940), 214.

²³ Cyril Connolly Collection, McFarlin Library, University of Tulsa, Series II, box 2, folder 16.

first 'Comment', an editorial essay which would become a regular feature of the magazine, though it appeared infrequently during the final years. At their best, these essays of varying length show Connolly's clear talents as a writer and cultural critic and the first few spell out a clear editorial policy for *Horizon*. 'A magazine', the first one begins, 'should be the reflection of its time and . . . the time we live in is archaic, conservative, and irresponsible, for the war is separating culture from life and driving it back on itself.'²⁴ Dismissing the idealistic socialism of the 1930s which had already been dealt a severe blow by the Nazi–Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, he cuts to the core of his magazine's mission:

[H]owever much we should like to have a paper that was revolutionary in opinions or original in technique, it is impossible to do so when there is a certain suspension of judgment and creative activity . . . The aim of *Horizon* is to give writers a place to express themselves, and to readers the best writing we can obtain. Our standards are aesthetic, and our politics in abeyance.²⁵

Paired with Moore's images, this first 'Comment' sets *Horizon* up as a site of almost timeless autonomy, desperately seeking to cut itself off from a historical moment in which the existence of both a democratic Europe and its life of arts and letters seem to be at stake. Indeed, in a famous and widely cited passage from this opening editorial, Connolly writes that 'at the moment civilization is on the operating table and we sit in the waiting room.'²⁶ For Connolly, *Horizon* itself was that waiting room, its contributors huddled together like Moore's famous figures, anxiously awaiting the outcome of what Herbert Read in an essay published in that first issue called the 'fatalism' of Britain's war against totalitarianism.

The magazine's initial printing sold out almost immediately and the next issue mordantly notes that those first 1,000 issues had become collectors' items. Watson agreed to a second run, eventually bringing out 2,500 copies. The print order for the second issue was, in turn, doubled, and even those 5,000 issues sold out rapidly both by subscription and in bookshops.²⁷ In the February 'Comment', Connolly first touts this success, then mounts an even more ardent defense of aesthetic autonomy couched in a problematic defense of the decision made by Auden and Isherwood to leave England for America. Their flight, he argues, is a 'symptom of the failure of social realism as an aesthetic doctrine', one which now requires writers and artists to return to the 'Ivory Tower' of the 1920s. Seeming to turn his back deliberately on the war, Connolly argues that 'writing is an art, and that it is an end in itself as well as a means to an end, and that good writing, like all art, is capable of producing a deep and satisfying emotion in the reader.'²⁸ Just as the *Little Review* promised 'no compromise with the public taste', here *Horizon* resorts to the essentially mystified

²⁴ Cyril Connolly, 'Comment', *Horizon*, 1 (Jan. 1940), 5.

²⁷ Sales figures are cited in Shelden, *Friends of Promise*, 42.

²⁸ Cyril Connolly, 'Comment', *Horizon*, 1 (Feb. 1940), 70.

²⁵ *Ibid.* ²⁶ *Ibid.*

authority of its editor's own taste. 'Names mean nothing,' Connolly writes, and 'we hope eventually that the name of the most detested best-seller or the most obscure young poet on the cover of *HORIZON* will be enough to indicate that they have written something remarkably good.'²⁹ This disingenuous argument, however, only highlights the ambiguity of the magazine's position, caught as it was between the decline of modernist aesthetics and the radical expansion of the mass media. Names may not matter, but they nevertheless do stand out clearly on the cover, their imprimatur both confirming and confirmed by the magazine itself. The 'Comment', in fact, concludes by noting that some critics had found the cover old-fashioned, precisely because it so obviously sought to borrow the authority of the defunct 'little magazines' which had invested so much in 'names'. Connolly does not deny the charge, but instead seeks to blunt its power by an anachronistic appeal to 'taste' as a neutral arbiter of cultural value rather than to the forces of commodification which he touts in celebrating *Horizon's* rising circulation.

This jealous defense of highbrow taste is part of what earned Waugh's satirical derision in *Put Out More Flags* and it develops to an increasingly high pitch in the next few issues. In March, for example, Connolly tells his readers that 'to encourage creative work', *Horizon* will essentially ignore other media like film and radio, 'and its reward is to publish work which can find a market nowhere else'.³⁰ Even as the magazine embraces this troublingly elitist image of an expiring modernism, it begins to articulate an alternative structure for making sense of the cultural marketplace. In the April issue, for example, the 'Comment' begins by first railing against Lord Beaverbrook and the popular press, invoking the same kind of language Virginia Woolf uses in *Three Guineas* when she describes the 'dejected pages of those who must live by prostituting culture'.³¹ Connolly, however, moderates this claim by attempting to separate judgments of value from questions of audience and market segment. The press, he argues, 'fosters such absurd distinctions as that between high-brow and low-brow, which has done more harm to both serious and popular art than any other false classification'.³² Highbrow and lowbrow here are cast aside as spurious attempts to attach some form of value to different modes of aesthetic production and circulation. By offering 'serious' and 'popular' literature as possible replacements, Connolly captures what Robert Scholes calls the 'paradox of modernism'—its tendency, that is, to conflate high with good and low with bad and in the process do damage to the complex circulation of the texts themselves.³³ For all its highbrow posturing, in fact, *Horizon* was and remains so important

²⁹ Ibid. ³⁰ Cyril Connolly, 'Comment', *Horizon*, 1 (Mar. 1940), 149.

³¹ Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, 1966), 97.

³² Cyril Connolly, 'Comment', *Horizon*, 1 (Apr. 1940), 234.

³³ See Robert Scholes, *Paradox of Modernism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006). Scholes employs the term 'paradox' 'to indicate a kind of confusion generated by a terminology that seems to make clear distinctions where clear distinctions cannot—and should not—be made'

a magazine precisely because it looked beyond this narrow and highly polarized model of aesthetic production. The March issue, for example, included George Orwell's essay 'Boys' Weeklies', a rich meditation on the political and ideological structures underlying this vital form of 'popular' writing. Frank Richards, the author of one such weekly, responded the next month by himself drawing upon the same rhetoric of cultural bifurcation Connolly himself at once exploits and critiques: 'From the fact that *Horizon* contains a picture that does not resemble a picture, a poem that does not resemble poetry, and a story that does not resemble a story, I conclude that it must be a very highbrow magazine indeed.'³⁴ The colloquy between Richards, Orwell, and Connolly continues for several issues and reveals the ways in which *Horizon* eludes the very constraints of modernist autonomy and taste on which it appears to be initially staked. In fact, the June issue includes a letter from Richards which appears opposite an advertisement for a pamphlet on 'Writing for the Press', suggesting just how complicated *Horizon's* own position as an ostensibly 'little' magazine had become.

The most significant challenge to the editor's rhetoric of modernist autonomy, however, came not from Richards and Orwell, but in response to Connolly's early claim that writers should essentially ignore the war and avoid simply emulating the 'war poets' of the previous conflagration. Despite the omnipresent threat, in fact, the magazine sought deliberately to isolate itself from the war in these first issues. The May 1940 'Comment', for example, notes that over a thousand contributions had already been received 'of which nine hundred have no bearing whatever on war'.³⁵ When Connolly did include a piece on war in August 1940—entitled 'Generalship Old and New' by Major General J. F. C. Fuller—it seemed a deliberate joke, Fuller's stilted prose and mind-numbing details of battlefield strategy a deliberate swipe at those who critiqued *Horizon* for its lack of political and historical engagement. At the same time, however, the magazine also began to acknowledge that modernist autonomy may itself be an insufficient response to the war and the July issue opens with a 'Letter from a Soldier' by Goronwy Rees which asserts that:

the soldier has the right, in return for his blood and his life and his despair, for the crimes he must take on himself, to ask that those most qualified, by their sensibility . . . should comprehend, analyze, illuminate, commemorate his sacrifice and suffering and the horror to which he is condemned, to understand and reveal that even in war he is a human being and not a brute too ignoble for the artist's notice.³⁶

(p. xi). Among these troubling distinctions are those between highbrow and lowbrow literature or between modernism and mass culture.

³⁴ Frank Richards, 'Frank Richards Replies to George Orwell', *Horizon*, 1 (May 1940), 346.

³⁵ Cyril Connolly, 'Comment', *Horizon*, 1 (May 1940), 309.

³⁶ Goronwy Rees, 'Letter from a Soldier', *Horizon*, 1 (July 1940), 467–8.

This letter marks a clear change in *Horizon*'s tone and Connolly himself gradually began to diminish his insistence on modernist autonomy, conceding in the 'Comment' following Rees's letter that imagination and creative writing 'depend in the last analysis on the British fleet'.³⁷ Two months later, the issue led with an essay by Clement Greenberg insisting that 'we must choose: either capitalism or democracy.'³⁸ Connolly responded subtly to such strident rhetoric by publishing a remarkable collection of Spanish Civil War posters, reminding his readers both of the potential energies of 'popular' art as well as what the 'Comment' calls 'the danger of too much insistence on ideologies in wartime'. The posters, Connolly continued, express a genuine wartime culture and assume 'a high level of taste and intelligence in their audience'.³⁹ They become emblematic of precisely the kind of 'serious' writing *Horizon* was seeking, one which emerged not merely in response to war, but which itself contained genuine value. The tone set here distinguished the magazine's wartime volumes and their struggle to find some alternative to the political vehemence of writers like Greenberg and the 'lonely and disheartening isolation' of an autonomous modernism which 'resist[s] the temptation . . . to identify with a movement or system'.⁴⁰ As Connolly disconsolately concludes in the July issue, 'the point which *Horizon* has made is that though this war is being fought for culture, the fighting of it will not create that culture.'⁴¹

In the period from 1940 to 1945, the magazine cultivated this aesthetic of embattlement, matched by its quite literal struggle to survive the increasingly dire material conditions of the war's early years. As Hitler's forces moved into Norway and Denmark, wood pulp and thus paper supplies began rapidly to diminish and a series of what would become increasingly restrictive rationing plans were introduced. New magazines were banned and *Horizon* itself survived only with the help of Harold Nicolson, an old friend of Connolly's, who had been appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Information.⁴² Advertisements in the magazine's pages urged readers to 'please tear out this page' and subscribe, since paper rationing meant that the magazine would no longer be carried in bookshops.⁴³ In September 1940, the long-anticipated German Blitz began with an attack on the London docks, prompting Connolly to write in his December 'Comment' that 'most of us who saw London lit up on the night of September the seventh by the fires of the blazing river knew that our world was being ripped up like an old sofa.'⁴⁴ Spender recalls in his memoir, *World Within World*, that

³⁷ Cyril Connolly, 'Comment', *ibid.* 534.

³⁸ Clement Greenberg, 'An American View', *Horizon*, 2 (Sept. 1940), 75.

³⁹ Cyril Connolly, 'Comment', *Horizon*, 2 (Sept. 1940), 83. ⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 152.

⁴¹ Cyril Connolly, 'Comment', *Horizon*, 1 (July 1940), 532.

⁴² See Sheldon, *Friends of Promise*, 48–9. ⁴³ *Horizon*, 2 (Sept. 1940), 143.

⁴⁴ Cyril Connolly, 'Comment', *Horizon*, 2 (Dec. 1940), 285. George Orwell too felt this same sense of radical historical break, writing that 'on the day in September when the Germans broke through and set the docks on fire, I think few people can have watched those enormous fires without

'we received letters from pilots fighting in the Battle of Britain, often saying they felt so long as *Horizon* continued they had a cause to fight for.' For these men, Spender continues, '*Horizon*, *New Writing*, and one or two other literary reviews, were the means whereby they felt that they, as well as we, survived the war.'⁴⁵ And the magazine—like the rest of the city—did indeed fight valiantly to hold up during the air campaign. The Lansdowne Terrace offices were periodically closed by bomb-damaged streets and fires, though the building escaped significant damage. The printing industry, however, suffered significant losses as warehouses and presses near Paternoster Row were attacked in December, wiping out some five million printed volumes.⁴⁶ The Curwen Press, which printed *Horizon*, sustained significant damage as well and the year's final issues were created in a roofless and badly damaged building.⁴⁷ Demand for *Horizon* had peaked about 8,000 just before the Blitz, but the conditions led inevitably to a decline which was increasingly compounded by paper rationing. In the 'Comment' for December 1942, Connolly noted that the magazine regularly sold out all the issues it was allowed to print and wondered 'how many readers of *Horizon* can understand what it is like to know that however good a magazine one edits were to be, not a single extra copy could be sold, and that, however bad, not a single extra copy could be wasted.'⁴⁸ These editorial challenges were increasingly faced by Connolly alone, as Spender gradually distanced himself from the magazine before being called up for national service in 1941. As editor, Connolly was exempt from such duties and he was increasingly assisted by a staff of assistants who managed the day-to-day operations while handling the large volume of contributions that continued to flow into the office. Initially, this work fell to Bill Makins and Lys Lubbock, both of whom would eventually be called up for civil service as well. The most important of these figures, however, was Sonia Brownell, a talented and energetic woman who remained with the magazine until its closure, eventually marrying one of its most significant contributors—an ailing George Orwell—just before his death. Connolly depended heavily on her editorial judgment and she kept the magazine going throughout the war years despite her full-time job as a government secretary.

The pages of *Horizon* during the first half of the 1940s contain an often remarkably diverse collection of materials, though they continue to display the ambiguity of Connolly's own wavering commitment to modernism's culture and aesthetic. Orwell was a regular contributor during this period, penning both reviews and essays like 'Wells, Hitler, and the World State' (August 1941), 'Rudyard

feeling that this was the end of an epoch.' See George Orwell, *Collected Essays, Journalism, and Letters* (London: Harmondsworth: 1972), ii. 273.

⁴⁵ Stephen Spender, *World Within World* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1951), 292.

⁴⁶ See Hewison, *Under Seige*, 32. ⁴⁷ Sheldon, *Friends of Promise*, 62.

⁴⁸ Cyril Connolly, 'Comment', *Horizon*, 6 (Nov. 1942), 224.

Kipling' (February 1942), 'Raffles and Miss Blandish' (October 1944), and—most notably—'Politics and the English Language' (April 1946). The January 1941 issues focuses on Ireland, with impressive contributions from writers like Seán O'Fáolain, Elizabeth Bowen, and Patrick Kavanagh. The latter's poem 'The Old Peasant' was deemed obscene by the Irish Republic, which in turn banned *Horizon*—an event noted in 'Comment' a few months later. During this period Connolly also published a translation of Franz Kafka's 'The Penal Colony', poems in French by Louis Aragon, and poetry by Spender, Rosamond Lehmann, Cecil Day Lewis, and John Betjeman. Under Peter Watson's watchful eye, the magazine's art columns flourished and almost every issue contained some comment on modern painting and drawing in addition to a series of photographic plates, many of them in color. Works by Paul Klee, Lucien Freud, Henri Matisse, Francis Bacon, and Graham Sutherland appeared as did a serial edition of Augustus Johns's *Fragment of an Autobiography*. Largely cut off from Europe, Connolly began to publish a number of works by relatively unknown American writers. The February 1943 issue, for example, contained a section entitled 'The Two Americas' which posed Eudora Welty's 'The Wide Net' against Henry Miller's far different prose study of a 'Soiree in Hollywood'. In February 1944, a significant portion of the issue was dedicated to 'A Little Anthology of American Verse' edited by Oscar Williams; it included Marianne Moore's 'In Distrust of Merit', Wallace Stevens's 'No Possum, No Sop, No Taters', and Randall Jarrell's '90 North'. Throughout the war, Connolly's 'Comment' essays often lamented the lack of original British work, turning the occasion of Sickert's death in 1942, for example, into an opportunity again to decry a naïve 'English philistinism' which, he suggests, can lead all too easily to 'fascist intolerance'.⁴⁹ Despite publishing some extraordinary work, however, the rhetoric of nostalgia pervaded the magazine from start to finish.

Even as Connolly positioned his magazine in the editorial columns as the last faltering guardian of an elitist culture of modernist taste, however, he simultaneously attempted to assess and even cultivate a surprisingly diverse readership. In January 1941, for example, he published a short set of survey questions (written by Peter Cromwell) focused on the tastes, habits, and identities of his readers then invited them to respond. The results revealed that most readers were men under the age of forty employed in a surprisingly diverse array of careers, including the military and civil service (25 per cent—not surprisingly, by far the largest group); teachers (20 per cent); students (8 per cent); and other categories ranging from policemen to secretaries.⁵⁰ It is difficult to imagine a customary 'little magazine' inquiring so closely into the lives and tastes of its readers, and the survey indicates the surprising diversity of the audience for a magazine that marketed itself to

⁴⁹ Cyril Connolly, 'Comment', *Horizon*, 5 (Feb. 1942), 74–5.

⁵⁰ 'Horizon's Questionnaire', *Horizon*, 3 (Apr. 1941), 292–6.

'one in ten thousand'.⁵¹ The minutes from a March 1940 editorial meeting also reveal that *Horizon* remained consistently aware of itself as a business enterprise, self-consciously marketing a modernist brand: 'In regard to the question of the dependence of advertisements on reviews', the minutes note, 'it is very important to plan three issues ahead so as to be able to guarantee publishers certain contents.'⁵² At this same meeting, the editors further hatched a plan to create a series of portraits featuring the magazine's most popular authors which could then be sold for a shilling. Nothing apparently came of this scheme, but it does reveal just how aware the editors were of a potential market segment dedicated to self-consciously elitist art. Connolly himself clearly agonized over this apparent contradiction, worrying in his December 1942 'Comment' that *Horizon* had already lasted too long to be a genuine 'little magazine':

Think of all the magazines there will be after the war, the new writers, the new movements, the clean sweeps, the manifestoes. And think how ridiculous *HORIZON* will look—no manifesto, no movements, a magazine which to defeat the call-up had learnt to appear without writers, which can see only in the blackout, which can comment only on disaster, or to maintain itself in a paper shortage.⁵³

Ironically, however, this editorial appears opposite an advertisement titled '*Horizon's* Christmas Present' which announces the first annual contest for the best writing to appear in the journal's pages. The results, however, were to be decided by the votes of the readers themselves in a move that seems to render Connolly's own defense of modernist taste all the more problematic. The two prizes were eventually won by Arthur Koestler for 'Birth of a Myth' and Osbert Sitwell for 'Letter to my Son', but not before Evelyn Waugh penned a satiric letter emphasizing the magazine's new-found interest in catering to the public taste. Referring to *Horizon's* cerulean covers, he writes that 'blue, decayed streaks of silliness are healthy in art as in cheese,' before proposing his own contest for the silliest contributions to the magazine.⁵⁴ In any case, the prize was not offered to public vote again and was instead awarded the next year by the editors to a group of American poems before ending silently.

Connolly was well aware of his contradictory position and even as he continued to lament the commodification of culture, his magazine nevertheless continued to publish some of the more remarkable writing of what advertising fliers from the

⁵¹ An advertising handbill headed 'To One in Ten Thousand' make this claim: 'Assuming one person in ten thousand in these islands to care for contemporary literature, we should expect a circulation of between four and five thousand. In fact, we have twice as many.' See Cyril Connolly Collection, McFarlin Library, University of Tulsa, Series II, box 2, folder 16.

⁵² *Ibid.* ⁵³ Cyril Connolly, 'Comment', *Horizon*, 6 (Dec. 1942), 370.

⁵⁴ Evelyn Waugh, *Horizon*, 7 (Mar. 1943), 214.

period called 'the inscrutable 'forties'. Although the magazine sought to avoid mere commentary on the war, a number of powerful pieces did appear describing the terrors of life on the Continent as well as the trials of those in the armed forces. In October 1943, Arthur Koestler's story 'The Mixed Transport' appeared, providing one of the first accounts of the Holocaust to a British audience. The piece follows the trials of a group of Jews bound for the concentration camps and prompted Connolly to label the twentieth century 'the Century of Fear'. Letters soon followed which challenged Koestler's graphic account, prompting him to write in response: 'As long as you don't feel, against reason and independently of reason, ashamed to be alive while others are put to death and guilty, sick, humiliated, because you were spared, you will remain what you are: an accomplice by omission.'⁵⁵ In addition to Koestler's work, the magazine also published a striking series of photographs by Cecil Beaton in 1942 as well as his 'Libyan Diary', which together detail the surrealism of desert warfare. The struggles of the homefront as well the terror of aerial bombing are also recorded in *Horizon*, perhaps most strikingly in the Alun Lewis's 1941 poem, 'All Day It Has Rained' and Stephen Spender's 'Air Raid'. As the war began grinding to its conclusion in 1944, Robin Campbell's account 'Prisoner of War' appeared as did Randall Jarrell's poem 'The Death of the Ball-Turret Gunner'. These were followed the next year by Alan Moorehead's essay 'Belsen', describing the concentration camp even as it fails to grasp fully the enormity of the violence and disaster. Such first-hand narratives were rare, however, prompting Connolly to wonder on the occasion of D-Day whether *Horizon* had lost some fundamental connection to those soldiers and airmen who had praised it earlier in the war: 'At the beginning of the war our relations with the armed forces were very close, gradually they have drifted. For as their new careers take hold we have received fewer and fewer contributions from them which are up to our standard, while in consequence we have ourselves become something of a backwater.'⁵⁶

This sense of constraint, however, was quickly moderated by the liberation of Europe and Connolly eagerly sought to get a press pass that would allow him to travel back to Paris, capital of what he called in December 1944 'the republic of letters, a republic without nationalism, without territory, without ambition'.⁵⁷ In the years immediately following the war, *Horizon* underwent a substantive transformation as Connolly focused his energy on an emerging global modernity which possessed much of the power and originality he suggested England lacked. The May 1945 'Comment' described the issue as 'an introduction to contemporary French literature' and was headlined by Jean-Paul Sartre's essay on 'The Case for Responsible Literature'.⁵⁸ A special issue printed entirely in French and entitled *La*

⁵⁵ Arthur Koestler, *Horizon*, 8 (Dec. 1943), 433.

⁵⁶ Cyril Connolly, 'Comment', *Horizon*, 9 (June 1944), 365.

⁵⁷ Cyril Connolly, 'Comment', *Horizon*, 10 (Dec. 1944), 369.

⁵⁸ Cyril Connolly, 'Comment', *Horizon*, 11 (May 1945), 295

Littérature anglaise pendant la guerre followed and as Michael Shelden notes, 'it must have seemed to many English readers that *Horizon's* subtitle could more accurately be "A Review of French Literature and Art".'⁵⁹ In these same years, however, some striking English literature also appeared, including Dylan Thomas's 'Fern Hill' and 'A Refusal to Mourn the Death by Fire of a Child in London', which led the October 1945 issue.

Following the war, paper rationing was gradually relaxed, giving Connolly some of the space he had once desperately sought, but he also seemed to have difficulty filling the magazine. For the first time, a series of themed articles began to appear, including a long run of essays titled 'Novelist-Philosophers' focused on familiar figures like Turgenev and Anatole France, but also featuring a rich piece by Robert Penn Warren on Ernest Hemingway. There was also an irregular series of travel essays which began near the war's end and continued for a number of years. The most notable contribution was perhaps Ian Fleming's 1947 piece on Jamaica, but as a whole the series was symptomatic of Connolly's own restlessness as well as his concern about the magazine's cultural isolation in England. Series like these persist for the rest of the magazine's life, concluding with 'Studies in Genius', a collection of commissioned articles in which significant writers commented on one another's work. As these kind of regular features expanded, however, the once engaging and often lengthy 'Comment' pieces dwindled and many post-war issues lacked them entirely.

Throughout the late forties, in fact, *Horizon* died an excruciatingly slow death, owing less to the absence of talent in the magazine's columns than to Connolly's gradual realization that the modernism he sought to revive had been fundamentally transformed by larger cultural forces. As in his 'Comment' for the fiftieth issue, he led the centenary 'Comment' by wondering if the magazine had, in fact, lost the initial energy which had first launched it: 'We would be rash to prophesy for *Horizon* a further existence of more than two years. This will enable us to have covered the whole of the forties and to have enslumbered the arts, like a skilled anaesthetist, into final oblivion.'⁶⁰ On the one hand, such a sentiment only further emphasizes Connolly's mastery of the rhetoric of resigned failure and he puts it to good use not just on the pages of *Horizon*, but in *Palinurus*, a 'word cycle' which appeared in 1944. England's own desperate situation following the war, on the other hand, justified this renewed sense of gloom, particularly since paper rationing was again instituted in 1947 and a fuel crisis that same year led to the complete cancellation of the March issue. His apartment in Paris restored, Watson too began to lose interest in the magazine as he directed his energy and money instead to the Institute for Contemporary Arts. As the book industry revived, Connolly began to pursue his other interests and Shelden notes that during this

⁵⁹ Shelden, *Friends of Promise*, 125.

⁶⁰ Cyril Connolly, 'Comment', *Horizon*, 17 (Apr. 1948), 235.

period a good deal of the magazine's editorial work fell to Sonia Brownell who remained deeply committed to *Horizon* and often found herself acting as editor. Indeed, her marriage to George Orwell in 1949 helped to cement the decision to close the magazine since it could no longer be sustained without her.

Among the most striking aspects of the magazine's final years was its emphasis on the condition of the writer in England. In the midst of the shortages plaguing England in 1947, Connolly placed in the September issue an advertisement headed 'Our American Begging Bowl', asking American readers to send food to the writers whose work they enjoyed reading in the magazine. This satirical stunt earned the ire of British editorial writers, but it followed a remarkable collection of materials published the previous year in response to a questionnaire entitled 'The Cost of Letters'. In 1946, Connolly sent a brief survey to a selection of writers, asking such questions as 'How much do you think a writer needs to live on?' and 'Do you think the State or any other institution should do more for writers?'⁶¹ The responses were varied and fascinating, and although Connolly notes that bestselling authors generally did not respond, there are lengthy answers from George Orwell, Elizabeth Bowen, Robert Graves, Rose Macaulay, Dylan Thomas, and V. S. Pritchett among others. Taken in the aggregate, the survey responses precisely diagnosed the radical transformations in the cultural sphere which *Horizon* sought throughout its life both to negotiate and to lament. There was growing concern about the new mass media and, as J. Maclaren-Ross notes, the positions which did pay, like 'film-script writing, the B.B.C. etc.' are 'detrimental to serious work'.⁶² Although a few expressed interest in state patronage, most rejected it as a threat to creative autonomy and began to map out the altered cultural field in which the university was to become a new kind of post-war patron and the novel gain ascendance over verse as—in Robert Graves's formulation—being 'a poet [becomes] a condition rather than a profession'.⁶³ Connolly himself replied with wry humor to his own questions, on the one hand lamenting the size and wealth of the American market, while mocking his own modernist pretensions by suggesting that a writer can survive on less than five pounds a day net only 'if he is prepared to die young of syphilis for the sake of an adjective'.⁶⁴ The modernist mythos of radical originality and autonomy which he had once so ardently defended gives way here to satirical despair about the newly configured structure of the literary field after the war.

These responses also suggest, however, that the moment for gathering a collection of writers into what Connolly once called the 'Ark' of *Horizon* had passed by the end of the war, replaced instead by a complex and highly diversified cultural marketplace in which cultural authority could no longer be lodged securely in the hands of a few elite editors and critics—if this ever was possible. This was

⁶¹ 'Questionnaire: The Cost of Letters', *Horizon*, 14 (Sept. 1946), 140.

⁶² *Ibid.* 156.

⁶³ *Ibid.* 148.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 144.

coupled, in turn, with the sudden globalization of literary culture in the years after 1945. Initially, the magazine had seemed poised to capture these emerging energies with special issues first on France and then on Switzerland. These were followed in October 1947 by an 'American Number', the product of Connolly's own trip to the United States where he was greeted as a kind of celebrity. In a single issue, he gathered poetry by Auden, Moore, Stevens, and E. E. Cummings; essays by Jacques Barzun, Marshall McLuhan, and Clement Greenberg; and an excerpt from Ellison's *Invisible Man*. Looking back over the year's contents in December, he lamented 'a year of disappointment' for British writers, with one 'long poem by Miss Sitwell, one original experiment in the form of the novel' constituting the complete 'catalogue of that branch of our literature which can be described as "experimental".'⁶⁵ It becomes increasingly clear, in fact, that Connolly was unwilling to admit that the literature emerging over the historical horizon would come not solely from the British and continental metropole, but from a much wider world. The final issues of the magazine, in fact, were remarkable precisely for the diversity and internationalism of their contents. Among the most notable writers appearing in these pages were Paul Bowles, Angus Wilson, Lionel Trilling, and Octavio Paz. A Truman Capote short story also appears—the first to be published in England—as does a lengthy excerpt from Norman Mailer's war novel, *The Naked and the Dead*. Essays by Maurice Blanchot also dot these issues, including his disquieting study of the Marquis de Sade in the final number. In many ways, these issues are richer and more diverse than anything produced during the war years, revealing Connolly's (and perhaps Sonia Brownell's) clear editorial talents. Amidst such riches, however, the 'Comment' section either remained silent or offered only brief introductions mired in the nearly exhausted rhetoric of embattled defeat which had so long punctuated the magazine.

The November 1949 number announced the journal's intention to close while holding out the possibility that it might later be reorganized. Peter Watson had earlier warned that a 'terrible showdown with Cyril is about to happen' and Sonia's marriage to Orwell already threatened the magazine's survival.⁶⁶ Circulation figures remained relatively stable, but printing costs were escalating and Connolly expressed his doubts that the public would 'pay more than half-a-crown for *HORIZON*'. Even here, he captured the contradictions of the modernist mythos he so long sought to champion, lamenting on the one hand the magazine's inability to launch 'a large campaign to make people buy it' while on the other invoking the rhetoric of the typical 'little magazine' by grumpily complaining that 'despite all the good will in the world, the public gets the magazines it deserves'. The piece

⁶⁵ Cyril Connolly, 'Comment', *Horizon*, 16 (Dec. 1947), 299.

⁶⁶ Cited in Sheldon, *Friends of Promise*, 216. Sheldon suspects that the 'threatened "showdown" with Connolly appears not to have taken place, because by the end of the summer nothing had been resolved about the magazine's future' (218).

closed, in fact, by looking back to Eliot's *Criterion*, the magazine *Horizon* initially sought to replace a decade earlier:

The swan-song of little magazines is always the same and we croak nothing now that was not recommended by Mr. Eliot in his farewell to *Criterion* in 1939...before retiring into the long-desired shade, to the satisfaction of the envious, the distress of our friends and the indifference of all but the one in every hundred and fifty thousand who constitute our world public.⁶⁷

From the beginning, *Horizon* had established itself rhetorically as the last 'little magazine'—the epitaph for an aesthetic and cultural modernism which had already been fundamentally reconfigured before its first columns appeared in December 1939. The irony and the genius of the journal lay precisely in the ability to manipulate so effectively the rhetoric of embattled and embittered failure while nevertheless presciently mapping out the contours of a rapidly shifting literary marketplace and publishing some of the richest poetry and prose of the 1940s. As the last of the self-consciously modernist 'little magazines', it failed deliberately and brilliantly, resolutely looking at the receding *Horizon* of earlier decades even as it covertly welcomed the dawn of a globally reconfigured modernity.

⁶⁷ Cyril Connolly, 'Comment', *Horizon*, 20 (Nov. 1949), 286.

THE APOCALYPTIC POETS, ‘NEW MODERNISM’, AND ‘THE PROGRESSIVE VIEW OF ART’

Poetry London (1939–51) and *Indian Writing* (1940–2)

JAMES KEERY

Between his arrival from Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) in 1938 and his return in 1949, M. J. Tambimuttu was responsible for three related operations: *Poetry London*, which ran to twenty-three numbers between 1939 and 1951; the anthology *Poetry in Wartime* published by Faber in 1942; and Editions Poetry London (henceforward ‘EPL’), which published its first books in 1943 as a subsidiary of Nicholson and Watson, and in 1947, became an independent imprint until its closure in 1951.

A number of literary editors, including Cyril Connolly, John Lehmann, Herbert Read, Wrey Gardiner, and R. A. Caton, defied the initially adverse circumstances of wartime publishing, and then thrived during the subsequent boom. Neither Connolly’s *Horizon* nor Lehmann’s *Penguin New Writing* were devoted to poetry, though both did include it. Read’s programme at Routledge included the Broadway House series of dayglo paperbacks, by J. F. Hendry and Norman MacCaig, amongst others, and the principal Apocalyptic anthology, *The White Horseman*; whilst Gardiner, like Tambimuttu, ran both a press and a magazine (Grey Walls and *Poetry Quarterly*), albeit with less charisma. Caton dispensed with charisma, but the prolific output of Fortune Press included first collections by Philip Larkin, Roy Fuller, and Christopher Middleton. Meanwhile, T. S. Eliot, in post at Faber since 1925, and with a controlling share of the poetry of the 1930s, continued to make shrewd investments. Not even the Faber list, however, compares with that of Editions Poetry London over the same period. Throughout their short association, Tambimuttu presented Nicholson and Watson with a stream of beautiful and popular books, including several innovative collaborations between poet and artist.

Both the list and the anthology grew out of *Poetry London*. The fifteen numbers for which Tambimuttu was responsible challenge comparison with any modernist

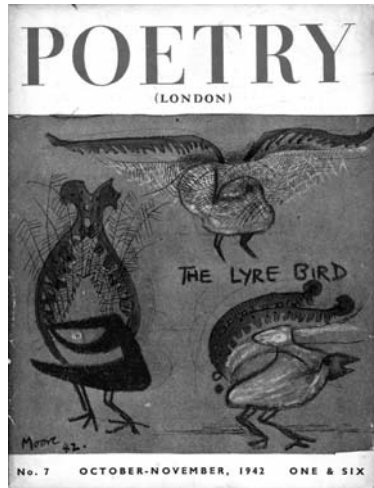


Fig. 101. Cover of *Poetry London* (Oct.–Nov. 1942)

magazine. Curiously, the one criterion by which *Poetry London* falls short has often been the principal criterion of dismissive judgements. Neither the monthly *Horizon*, sustained by a wealthy benefactor, nor *Poetry Quarterly*, a personal liability, missed a single issue, whilst the periodicity of *Penguin New Writing* was only slightly more variable. By contrast, *Poetry London* appeared twice in three months, then vanished for eighteen; returned for four bi-monthly numbers, only to vanish for another eighteen months; returned for two more numbers; then appeared twice in four years, before establishing something like a regular appearance from 1947, with two to four numbers in each of its last five years.¹ It is no reflection on its more reliable rivals that the regular numbers chronicle its decline. In its wartime context, the irregularity of *Poetry London* appears less culpable and by any other criterion, it was a magnificent achievement.

The seventh number, which appeared in October 1942, with a print run of 10,000, was the first product of Tambimuttu's association with Nicholson and Watson. The cover design of lyrebirds by Henry Moore, who renders their lyres in dripping red poster-paint, has a quality of lyrical humour rarely apparent in his work. With the cover of the eighth number, Moore surpassed himself, depicting two birds whose richly coloured plumage and poignantly comical strutting are dignified by the predominance of grey in the design. For all its animation, it shares something of the repose of the famous *Shelter Sketch Book* (1945)—also published by EPL.

¹ See Jane Williams (ed.), *Tambimuttu: Bridge Between Two Worlds* (London: Peter Owen, 1989), esp. Tambimuttu, 'Fitzrovia', 223–35; and Alan Smith, 'Poetry London 1939–1951', 275–90. Much of what follows is indebted to this text, and in particular to Smith.

Ironically, it was the opportunity to publish his own personal list of books which caused Tambimuttu to sideline his magazine. *Poetry London* embarked on its most sporadic run just as the imprint began to deliver. After a single number in 1943, and none in 1944, No. 10 took the form of a hardback book of 264 quarto pages, featuring nearly a hundred poets, all making their *Poetry London* debut. It seems appropriate to consider this number as a sequel to *Poetry in Wartime*, in keeping with the change of priority in favour of books. No. 11 appeared only after Nicholson and Watson had decided to pull out. Tambimuttu was given notice at the end of 1946, but allowed time to find an alternative backer. In September 1947, after Richard March, Fortune Press poet and a contributor to *Scrutiny*, had invested £5,000, EPL was registered as an independent publisher and, again, the first product of the new association was a number of the magazine, the first in its final, much less irregular run. From this point on, however, despite real achievements, both magazine and imprint were diminished things. Tellingly, cover designs are replicated (for Nos. 12–16, 17–21, and 22–3), differing only in tint. In 1949, having invested around £20,000, with losses rising, March invoked his latent power as controlling shareholder to remove Tambimuttu from the board. This led to a complete breach: *Poetry London* 16–23 were co-edited by March and Nicholas Moore, whilst Tambimuttu returned to Sri Lanka in search of capital.

Poetry London 7 is dedicated to T. S. Eliot, whose ‘last three poems’ (*Little Gidding* was in the press) set the standard by which the lyrics of ‘the younger poets’ were to be valued (not, as by *Scrutiny*, judged and found wanting).² In 1938, when he subtitled his prospectus ‘An Enquiry into Modern Verse’, and still in 1960, when he championed ‘New Modernism’ in the fourth and final number of the reincarnated *Poetry London–New York*, Tambimuttu saw his editorial activities in the context of a renewal of modernism itself. Eliot had been a generous source of support during a traumatic period, yet Tambimuttu was sufficiently independent to print a brilliant attack on his ‘Pétainism’ by George Orwell (adroitly balanced by ‘Another Reading’, commissioned from Kathleen Raine) and to contrast the publisher of renown with ‘the poet who would print his friend’s poems on a hand-press’.³ The reference is to one of Tambimuttu’s youngest contributors, the pacifist and Apocalyptic poet Peter Wells, who was printing *Poetry Folios* on an Albion Hand Press. In a public meditation on Eliot’s policy, the planning of his own list is uppermost in Tambimuttu’s mind: ‘A man of perception at a publishing house prints a few poets... He also publishes subsequent volumes of the poets (but) is now unable, owing to commercial limits, (and his just behaviour towards them in accepting subsequent books) to encourage new poets... as they “arrive”.’⁴

² Tambimuttu, ‘Eighth Letter’ (numbering out of sync), *Poetry London*, 7 (Oct.–Nov. 1942), 4, 7.

³ George Orwell, ‘T. S. Eliot: 1’; Kathleen Raine, ‘T.S. Eliot: 2’, *ibid.* 56–62; Tambimuttu, ‘Eighth Letter’, *ibid.* 7.

⁴ Tambimuttu, ‘About Contributors’, *ibid.* 64.

Tambimuttu's faith in his own 'perception' was justified. His record as an editor is even more interesting than his legendary exploits in wartime Soho, revealing a flair, amounting almost to divination, for the discovery of talent in the bud.

'You're through, you're looking at . . . Tambimuttu!'

Meary James Thurairajah Tambimuttu was born in Atchuvely, on the Jaffna peninsula of Sri Lanka, on 15 August 1915.⁵ A Tamil speaker, raised a Roman Catholic, and well educated in English, he had printed two collections of his own poems by 1936. After abandoning a degree in botany at University College, Colombo, he was briefly employed in local government, before deciding, at the age of twenty-two, to set sail for London. Arriving in January 1938, he immediately began to seek out young poets and artists, and by the spring had teamed up with Anthony Dickins, a student at the Royal College of Music, who became 'Business Manager' for the first two numbers, before joining the army. 'Late in 1938', at the end of his first year in England, Diana Gardner met the young editor who 'was to produce a completely new type of poetry magazine': 'The first number would carry established contemporary poets, but later ones were to be an open sounding-board for a new kind of poetry which had not then been heard . . . You realised at once that he was carried away by his vision.'⁶ As well as her own engravings, Gardner showed Tambimuttu a 'small photograph of a beech tree by Edwin Smith' (1912–71), now considered 'a great photographer of the English landscape and architecture, dominating this field for much of the 1950s and 60s'.⁷ Yet Smith exhibited only once during his lifetime, in the year he died. In 1938, when Tambimuttu snapped up his startlingly anthropomorphic image for *Poetry London* 1, this most unassuming of great photographers would scarcely have been visible to the naked eye.

The appearance of this first number, on 11 February 1939, with a print run of 2,000 copies, found the impresario fully fledged and taking instant celebrity in his stride: '(T)he pioneers of TV were naturally there to collect Tony and me . . . in their big bus to appear in their *Picture Page* from the famous (Alexandra) Palace . . . the next day two girls rushed up to us in a coffee place in Tottenham Court Road—"We saw you on TEEVEEE!"'⁸ A 'magazine of topical interest', *Picture Page* was the first hit show on British television. Its live celebrity interviews had 'a quirky,

⁵ 'Meary' may be a re-transliteration of 'Mary', a name sometimes given to Catholic boys.

⁶ Diana Gardner, 'Tambimuttu and *Poetry London*', in Williams (ed.), *Bridge Between Two Worlds*, 48.

⁷ Ibid. 49. See Peter Marshall, 'Directory of Notable Photographers', <http://photography.about.com>.

⁸ Tambimuttu, 'Fitzrovia', 231. Tambimuttu gives details of print runs for nos. 1–6 in a letter to Eliot dated 14 May 1941 (Faber archive).

faked element of viewer participation', with an actress pretending to take incoming calls: 'This is the switchboard of *Picture Page* . . . You want to see who? . . . Just one moment . . . You're through, you're looking at Miss Kay Stammers, the celebrated tennis player.' Hence the first television catch-phrase.⁹

Poetry London 2 appeared in April 1939, in an even larger edition of around 3,000. Only the stylized image of Tambimuttu's flowing locks was retained from the first cover, a swirl of scrolls and curlicues which looks like a hairdresser's floor.¹⁰ Now the locks floated freely on a white field, beneath the title, *POETRY*, in 72-point red capitals. It was probably Tambimuttu who redesigned it. Helen Irwin, who worked with him from May 1945, describes the 'innate sense that made him pick up a pen—even a quill—to redesign a book jacket', producing an effect 'so exactly right as to leave one jubilant'.¹¹

At the beginning of the war, Tambimuttu met Russell McKinnon-Croft, an army officer on ministerial secondment, successor to Dickins, until he, too, defected to active service. In the spring of 1940, he married Jacqueline Stanley, 'his English rose (first) wife', moving from Soho to Bloomsbury, then, in the autumn, during the Blitz, to Chelsea. 'Tambi appraised and selected unerringly, edited, rhapsodised . . . We both proof-read, talked, drank beer.'¹² But for all the proof-reading and fund-raising exploits described by McKinnon-Croft, this association produced no actual issue of the magazine. After two grim years for the book trade, 1940 saw the value of total sales fall to 'the lowest on record', and ended with the worst disaster in publishing history. St Paul's survived the second Great Fire of London, but twenty million books were destroyed. Yet recovery was so swift that 1941 saw an unprecedented boom. Despite paper rationing, an insatiable demand, from forces and civilians alike, saw total sales rise year-on-year until 1947.¹³ When, in the spring of 1941, *The Penguin New Writing* 1 sold 80,000 copies, Allen Lane set aside five tons of paper for each number. It was 'a very peculiar book' which did not sell out, but the slim volume enjoyed an obvious economic advantage.¹⁴

At the nadir of the slump, it took a gift of £100 from an elusive benefactor named James Dobie to bring *Poetry London* back to life, with a reduced print run of 1,200. The third number appeared in November 1940, introducing the motif of the lyrebird with a cover by the teenaged Lucian Freud (four years before his first exhibition). By the summer of 1941, when the sixth number appeared, the boom had begun and the print run had again reached 2,000, including 500 for

⁹ 'Sound On, Vision On', <http://www.bbc.co.uk>. First broadcast in 1936, the show was suspended during the war, resuming in 1946. There were 23,000 London licences by 1939.

¹⁰ Designed by Hector Whistler, purple-waist-coated nephew of James McNeill Whistler.

¹¹ Helen Irwin, 'Tambi', in Williams (ed.), *Bridge Between Two Worlds*, 98.

¹² Russell McKinnon-Croft, 'Der Erl-König: A Personal Memoir of Meary James Tambimuttu', *ibid.* 52–5. 'The Elf-King' is a ballad by Goethe.

¹³ Edmond Segrave, 'Review of Publishing Since 1939', in *The Author's and Writer's Who's Who* (London: Shaw Publishing, 1949), pp. xiii–xiv.

¹⁴ John Lehmann, *I Am My Brother* (London: Longman, 1960), 105.

distribution by W. H. Smith's. Costs per issue were around £40, so, at a shilling a copy, this would appear to represent sustainable success.

Unfortunately, after the break-up of his marriage that summer, in the middle of work on *Poetry in Wartime*, Tambimuttu suffered a nervous breakdown. Eliot solicited the help of his friend Mary Trevelyan, who accommodated Tambimuttu at Student Movement House, then, early in 1942, arranged for him to spend a fortnight in a private asylum in Kent, 'where he might recover sufficiently to be able to return home to Ceylon', at the expense of the Colonial Office.¹⁵ The fall of Singapore may have influenced Tambimuttu's decision 'to stay on in England and continue with *Poetry*'.¹⁶ In May, providentially, he was introduced to John Robertson, a young director whose firm had a plentiful stock of paper, but a dearth of authors. Having acquired the publishing house of Nicholson and Watson, in liquidation since 1940, Robertson invested in Tambimuttu's gifts. In the summer of 1942, he was given an office, a staff, and a free hand to exploit his uncontracted contacts. With the autumn numbers, *Poetry London* re-established itself as the foremost poetry magazine of the day. To define its significance, it is necessary to re-examine its origins.

In *The Auden Generation*, one of the canonical books on the period, Samuel Hynes begins his chapter on 1939 with an account of the 'English literary world':

Eliot's *Criterion* suspended publication in January 1939; the *London Mercury* published its last issue in April; *New Verse* stopped in May; *Twentieth Century Verse* and *Fact* followed in June... It was a time of endings, but of no beginnings, a time in which the great issues of the 'thirties, and the journals in which writers had argued those issues, were disappearing into the wings, and the stage emptied for the final scene.¹⁷

In Hynes's scenario, the stage is duly 'emptied', but there is no one waiting in 'the wings'! One must, of course, record the demise of the illustrious *Fact*, co-edited by Stephen Spender. So much as to mention the launch of *Poetry London*, however, might risk accusations of 'muddying inclusivity'. The author of this delightful phrase, in which the repressive logic of received opinion finds succinct expression, is John Fuller, who congratulates Hynes on his 'avoidance' of it.¹⁸ But nothing written on the principle that 'inclusivity' is 'muddying' will do justice to Tambimuttu, whose own guiding principle, lifted from Henry James, defined criticism as 'an irrepressible appreciation'.¹⁹

¹⁵ Letter from Philip Cox to T. S. Eliot, 11 February 1942, Faber archive.

¹⁶ Letter from Tambimuttu to Eliot, 3 March 1941 (dated in error for 1942), Faber archive.

¹⁷ Samuel Hynes, *The Auden Generation* (London: Faber, 1976), 340.

¹⁸ *Times Literary Supplement* review, cited, no date, on dustjacket of Hynes's volume.

¹⁹ Tambimuttu, 'Eleventh Letter', *Poetry London*, 11 (Sept.–Oct. 1947), 6. The quotation is from the 1908 preface to James's *The Spoils of Poynton*.

Angus Calder's *The People's War* is another deservedly canonical text, but Calder's portrait of Tambimuttu is unable to rise above biographical banter:

(Tambimuttu) . . . was . . . the high priest of a kind of literary underground which flourished in Soho at the height of the war; there were troops of would-be literary figures whom he led round the pubs night after night . . . 'Tambi's blue-black hair . . . was bobbed like a woman's . . . he talked in rapid tones with an accent that on the wireless sounded Welsh, white teeth and eyeballs flashing meantime in the dusk of his face'. Around him legends collected; he was the son of a prince in Ceylon; he had arrived in England penniless and had been befriended by T. S. Eliot; none of this was quite true, but he was certainly Oriental . . . in his attitude to the eager young poetesses who sought him out.²⁰

Tenuous would be a kind word to describe Tambimuttu's claim to descent from the kings of Jaffnapatam, but there is nothing legendary about his initial poverty, nor his friendship with Eliot. Julian Maclaren-Ross, the author of the dubious description quoted by Calder,²¹ is over-indulged by literary historians, who adopt the curious policy of chortling over his notorious unreliability then proceeding to cite him at length. A snatch of dialogue with 'Kitty of Bloomsbury' reveals both his skill as a laconic humourist and his own true opinion: 'he's a great editor. No stop laughing, he is!'²²

'Tuttifrutti: or The Worse for Poetry': An Apocalyptic movement

Contrast the above scenario with an alternative account of the 'English literary world' by Rayner Heppenstall:

There was a lot of poetic activity in the winter of 1938–9. First, there was Tambimuttu from Ceylon, starting *Poetry London*. Then there appeared a number of poets from Scotland and the North, who were bringing out a magazine called *Seven* and who were out to create an apocalyptic movement . . . They were mildly in favour of me, but Dylan Thomas was to be their *chef d'école*.²³

Heppenstall, if anything, understates the degree of activity. At their point of origin, the Apocalypse and *Poetry London* were closely interrelated, not only with each other, but also with the magazine *Wales*, at the midpoint of its first run (see Chapter 30), and with Lawrence Durrell and his Parisian associates, who produced

²⁰ Angus Calder, *The People's War: Britain 1939–45* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1969), 520.

²¹ Julian Maclaren-Ross, *Memoirs of the Forties* (London: London Magazine Editions, 1965), 137.

²² *Ibid.* As a *Poetry London* employee, Kitty Banks is otherwise unrecorded.

²³ Rayner Heppenstall, *Four Absentees* (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1960), 148–9. *Seven* was edited by Nicholas Moore, a Cambridge undergraduate, later co-editor of *Poetry London*.

an ambitious number of *Delta* for 'Xmas 1938'. Tambimuttu's prospectus reflects this excitement:

POETRY

(London)

An Enquiry into Modern Verse

- New, entertaining, alive, this is the poetry periodical that youth has been waiting for.
- Our intention in this non-party paper is to print work that poets feel they need to write rather than what they *ought* to, in order to conform to the shibboleths of certain political and literary cliques . . .
- We are interested only in *achievement* in the mode of expression called poetry; we print all who merit attention, regardless of their opinions, especially young and unknown writers . . .
- A representative selection of modern poets has been invited to appear in the first few numbers:

(overleaf)

GEORGE BARKER	H.B. MALLALIEU
ROY CAMPBELL	NIALL MONTGOMERY
*LAURENCE CLARK	NICHOLAS MOORE
DORIAN COOKE	*PHILIP O'CONNOR
WALTER DE LA MARE	GEOFFREY PARSONS
LAWRENCE DURRELL	PAUL POTTS
T.S. ELIOT	FREDERIC PROKOSCH
*PATRICK EVANS	HERBERT READ
*GAVIN EWART	*KEIDRYCH RHYS
R.B. FULLER	*D.S. SAVAGE
DAVID GASCOYNE	*STEPHEN SPENDER
B.H. GUTTERIDGE	*JULIAN SYMONS
J.F. HENDRY	GEOFFREY TAYLOR
RAYNER HEPPENSTALL	DYLAN THOMAS
*JOHN LEHMANN	RUTHVEN TODD
*LOUIS MACNEICE	*LAURENCE WHISTLER
CHARLES MADGE	W.B. YEATS

*Appearing in the first number.²⁴

²⁴ Smith, 'Poetry London 1939–1951', 280.

Twenty-four of these poets appear in *Poetry London* under Tambimuttu's editorship. The ten (in italics) who do not include Eliot and Yeats, but the appearance in the first number of de la Mare (1873–1958), Read (1893–1968), and Spender (1909–95), represents three generations of 'established' poets. It is equally clear that Tambimuttu had fast-tracked many 'young and unknown writers'. There was in reality, however, a significant change from the prospectus. Sixteen of the poets listed were contributors to *Twentieth Century Verse*, including the editor, Symons, who was not, at this stage, associated with any deleterious 'cliques'. Yet *Poetry London 2* (April 1939) contains an assault by Tambimuttu on 'Mr Symons in His Nursery', in which his 'booksy-booksy poetry' is put to the sword. The deletions from the prospectus include four of Symons's core contributors (Fuller, Gutteridge, Parsons, and Taylor), whose places were taken by Apocalyptics. The prospectus also lists five of the eight contributors to *The New Apocalypse*.²⁵ Only one is asterisked, yet all five appear in the first number of *Poetry London*. It is at this early stage that the Apocalypse movement is widest in scope. Its manifesto, drafted in Leeds in December 1938, lists twenty-seven names, including five more contributors to *Poetry London 1*.²⁶ From the outset, however, the movement crystallized around the single figure of Dylan Thomas. Describing the wartime scene in *Poetry* (Chicago) in 1953, Léonie Adams describes Thomas as 'the wondrous central luminosity'.²⁷ In 1938, his star was still rising. In fact, the earliest unequivocal assertion that 'Dylan Thomas is a great poet' is by Tambimuttu himself.²⁸

Correspondence between the Apocalyptics chronicles the same outbreak of hostilities. In November 1938, John Goodland invited Henry Treece to contribute to an anthology of 'apocalyptic' writing, defined as 'post Auden', with a dig at *New Writing* and Geoffrey Grigson's *New Verse*.²⁹ By February 1939, when Goodland wrote to reassure Treece that Grigson and Symons were nothing to worry about, the axis of evil had a new recruit.³⁰ In January, Grigson had launched a pre-emptive strike on the Apocalypse, ridiculing a 'found' item from *Seven*: 'Pre-Natal Clinic: "Henry Treece, poet, is having a book on Dylan Thomas published in the Spring"'.³¹ The sneer at Thomas's obsessional theme implies that the project is premature, if not foredoomed to abort. In solidarity, Symons withdrew a poem of his own from *Poetry London 2*. Cue Tambimuttu's demolition, compounded by

²⁵ Dylan Thomas, Hendry, Cooke, Moore, and O'Connor.

²⁶ J. F. Hendry et al., 'The Apocalyptic Manifesto', *PN Review*, 154 (Nov.–Dec. 2003), 23–5. The five were Audrey Beecham, Durrell, Barker, Read, and Heppenstall.

²⁷ Léonie Adams, 'First Poems of Celebration', *Poetry* (Chicago) (Aug. 1953), 272.

²⁸ Tambimuttu, *Poetry London*, 1 (Feb. 1939), 'First Letter', unpaginated.

²⁹ First extant letter, 12 November 1938. See James Keery, 'The Burning Baby and the Bathwater', *PN Review*, 159 (Sept.–Oct. 2004), 45.

³⁰ Letter from Goodland to Treece, 21 February 1939. Communicated by Andrew Crozier to the author, 5 December 2003.

³¹ *New Verse*, 1:1 NS (Jan. 1939), 28.

his refusal to print a reply from Symons, who promptly counterattacked in his own April number, with an outburst entitled 'Tuttifrutti: or The Worse for Poetry': 'Tuttifrutti asked for a poem . . . when the policy and character of his magazine became obvious the poem was withdrawn . . . This is a personal quarrel: but it is a matter of public interest . . . Tuttifrutti's refusal to print a reply to his attack is a sinister sort of literary fascism.'³² Grigson and Symons were themselves lampooned by a neutral observer as 'dictators' who 'bark more (even) than they bite'; but their dictatorship had run its course.³³

As noted by Hynes, the winter of 1939 was the beginning of one of the periodic mass extinctions of 'little magazines', the result of interrelated phenomena, including depression in the trade and demoralization in the wake of Munich. There was, for example, a close if not a causal link between Eliot's 'distress' at the betrayal of the Czechs in September 1938 and the closure of *The Criterion* in January 1939.³⁴ Against this background, Grigson and Symons first contemplated a merger, then gave up. 'I could no longer afford to pay the . . . printer's bill . . . If there was no room for two magazines, should we make them one? The suggestion came from Geoffrey . . . and we discussed the possibilities.' By the summer, however, both had folded, 'to be replaced poetically by the triumphant *Poetry*'.³⁵ George Woodcock, who launched the pacifist magazine *Now* in 1940, profiled Symons's 'inner circle', consisting of Fuller, Mallalieu, Savage, Todd, Rhys, and Ewart, with O'Connor, Cooke, and Lynette Roberts 'on the periphery', whilst other contributors, such as Barker and Thomas, 'never moved into the inner circle'.³⁶ All but one of these poets were listed in the *Poetry London* prospectus (and the single exception, Roberts, became a frequent contributor), but their geometrical relations are inverted. Roberts met her husband, Rhys, at a *Poetry London* party; and, according to Dickins, the idea for the magazine arose out of a café conversation with Rhys and Thomas.³⁷ Rhys's own magazine, *Wales*, was amongst the casualties of 1939, but, after a BBC broadcast in the summer of 1938 entitled 'Modernism in Wales', he continued to present Thomas as the 'central luminosity' in a constellation of Welsh modernists.³⁸ His classic anthology, *Modern Welsh Poetry*, published by Faber in 1944, included Thomas, Treece, Vernon Watkins, and numerous other poets writing in the style of the Apocalypse movement.

³² *Twentieth Century Verse*, 17 (Apr.–May 1939), 19.

³³ Symons cites a contemporary article by Hugh Gordon Porteous, but gives no reference (Julian Symons, *Notes from Another Country* (London: London Magazine Editions, 1972), 65).

³⁴ T. S. Eliot, *The Idea of a Christian Society* (London: Faber, 1939), 64. And see Chapter 14 above.

³⁵ Symons, *Notes from Another Country*, 65–6.

³⁶ George Woodcock, *Aquarius*, 17–18, guest ed. A. T. Tolley (1986–7), 51–2.

³⁷ Anthony Dickins, 'Tambimuttu and *Poetry London*', *London Magazine*, 5:9 (Dec. 1965), 56.

³⁸ Keidrych Rhys, BBC Wales, 13 July 1938. In Ralph Maud (ed.), *Dylan Thomas: The Broadcasts* (London: Dent, 1971), 283.

Thomas's involvement in this network of editors was revealed in a letter to his publisher, suggesting additions to the 'review list' for *The Map of Love* (1939): '*Seven* might be very useful, it has an important circulation in Oxford and Cambridge and other university towns . . . *Wales* . . . has a wide following here . . . *I was one of the founders of this paper*'³⁹ (my italics). His refusal to sign the Apocalyptic manifesto is often interpreted as a repudiation of the movement, but the same letter to Treece shows this to be a mistake: 'If I'm given time—you know I write slowly . . . I'd be very glad to write for *Apocalypse*.'⁴⁰ He congratulates Tambimuttu 'on the handsomest "intelligent" poetry magazine I know of'; and in another letter to Treece his partisanship is explicit: 'I saw your *Seven* article, and I'm looking forward to seeing another one in *Poetry*. Glad the first one was disliked by Grigson & Symons.'⁴¹

Another early supporter of *Poetry London* arrived from Paris just in time for 'the winter of 1938–9'. Nicholas Moore recalls that Lawrence Durrell was 'very helpful in supporting the beginnings of Tambi's own magazine', and Tambimuttu recalls 'a pre-publication visit from Larry Durrell', 'my blood-brother', whose own involvement in the Apocalypse movement is documented in Goodland's papers.⁴² Durrell's insider status is confirmed by the name of the elusive Patrick Evans, tutor to his brother Gerald, on the prospectus. Thomas's letter of support in issue 2 is accompanied by Durrell's, which praises the 'real excellence of *Poetry*' whilst sighing 'for a bucket of liquid manure to dash over (the) elegant and epicene narcissi' of *New Verse*.⁴³ The Durrells were joined in London for Christmas by Miller, bearing a consignment of *Delta: Special Peace and Dismemberment Number with Jitterbug-Shag Requiem*. Its irreverent title is given ironic poignancy by the inclusion of Karel Čapek, who was to die on Christmas Day, having refused food since the 'dismemberment' of his nation, Czechoslovakia, had been agreed at Munich. Contributors included Thomas and Moore, whilst the next and final number featured Tambimuttu. On 29 December 1938, a few days before meeting Thomas, Durrell and Henry Miller dined with Eliot. One of the topics of conversation was the imminent launch of a new magazine by 'a crazy Tamil', whom Eliot, 'in a

³⁹ Letter from Thomas to J. M. Dent, 11 August 1939, in *The Collected Letters*, ed. Paul Ferris (London: Dent, 1985), 395.

⁴⁰ Letter from Thomas to Treece, 31 December 1938, *ibid.* 348.

⁴¹ Letters from Thomas to Tambimuttu, 5 March 1939; abridged in *Poetry London*, 2, unpaginated; and to Treece, March 1939, *ibid.* 361, 369.

⁴² Nicholas Moore, 'Tambi the Knife', in Williams (ed.), *Bridge Between Two Worlds*, 57. Irwin, 'Tambi', 94. John Goodland's papers are in Cambridge University Library (CUL MS Add. 9704).

⁴³ Tambimuttu (ed.), 'Correspondence', *Poetry London*, 2 (Apr. 1939), unpaginated.

wondering whisper', described on a later occasion 'as the most courageous of the younger publishers'.⁴⁴

All this 'poetic activity' may be considered as a crisis in the complex process by which a generation of 'young and unknown writers' establish 'their chef d'école'. By 1942, Roy Fuller was seething with frustration: 'I wish *Twentieth Century Verse* were still alive to demolish these Asian and apocalyptic monsters.' Yet by 1943, according to David Daiches, the Apocalypse had 'completely replaced the Auden-Spender-Lewis formula' to 'become the mainstream of English poetry'.⁴⁵

Tambimuttu was a partisan of the new poetry, but also the most open of editors, demonstrating, in his own phrase, 'a catholicity which can always move to the level of a work which has been executed under particular laws necessary for its creation'.⁴⁶ Those who worked with him most closely had the greatest respect for his gift. In his heyday, as with the best editors, there was no one between him and his mail; and the quality of his judgement is demonstrable.

Two examples must suffice. After responding positively to a manuscript collection by Keith Douglas in February 1941, Eliot rejected it in November. In March 1942, Lehmann rejected a selection by Douglas submitted to the Hogarth Press. In July 1943, Douglas accepted an offer of publication by Tambimuttu, who also accepted his prose narrative of the desert campaign, *Alamein to Zem Zem*, in March 1944. In June, having commanded a tank troop in the assault on Gold Beach, Douglas was killed by a mortar shell near St Pierre. In February 1945, in *Poetry London* 10, Tambimuttu devoted his superb 'Tenth Letter' to Douglas's life and work. In view of Douglas's death, the scheduled collection, *Bête Noire*, was subsumed into *Collected Poems*, edited by G. S. Fraser and John Waller and eventually published by EPL in September 1951. Tambimuttu's initial response is even more remarkable: 'impressed by Douglas's poems in *Fords and Bridges*', he had written to the editor asking for his address.⁴⁷ The final number of this student magazine, another casualty of 1939, features 'Spring Sailor' and 'Poor Mary'. These are accomplished poems; but even with hindsight it is hard to see what it is in the work of the nineteen-year-old undergraduate that alerted Tambimuttu to a new voice.

⁴⁴ Gordon Bowker, *Through the Dark Labyrinth: A Biography of Lawrence Durrell* (Sinclair-Stevenson, 1996), 116. Lawrence Durrell, 'Poets under the Bed', *Sunday Times* (29 June 1983); reprinted in *Bridge Between Two Worlds*, 204.

⁴⁵ Fuller to Symons, airgraph, n.d., c. Oct. 1942, *Inventory of the Roy Fuller Correspondence with Julian Symons and Jack Clark: 1937-1992*, Texas Archival Resources Online, <http://www.lib.utexas.edu>. 'Contemporary Poetry in Britain', *Poetry* (Chicago) (June 1943), 153.

⁴⁶ Tambimuttu, 'Second Letter', *Poetry London*, 2 (Apr. 1939), unpaginated.

⁴⁷ Desmond Graham, *Keith Douglas 1920-1944: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), 117, 138-9, 145, 178-9, 217, 254-6.

Another example concerns Alun Lewis. In April 1941, following rejection by Faber, Lewis was tempted by an offer from Fortune Press, but ‘Tambimuttu told him to wait and publish his work in magazines . . . until he could net “a big publisher”’.⁴⁸ In the meantime, he took six poems for *Poetry London* and offered to publish a pamphlet of his work. *Poetry London* Pamphlets, a joint enterprise with Nicholas Moore and forerunner of EPL, was duly launched in May. In July, before a *Poetry London* pamphlet could be scheduled, *Raider’s Dawn* was accepted by Allen and Unwin, leaving Lewis ‘breathless with delight’.⁴⁹ Examples such as these show Tambimuttu operating in the area between the small presses and the established commercial concerns, with a strike-rate that borders on the uncanny.

‘New Blood—The Future—Time materialising’

Poetry London no. X is a standing joke. It’s funny, the first time you hear it, especially as told by its author, Maclaren-Ross, in his ‘highly coloured book of . . . fairytales.’⁵⁰

Meanwhile *Poetry London* had ceased to come out quarterly, indeed to appear at all . . . Tambi pleaded all the standard wartime publishing excuses: paper shortage, trouble with printers, the binding bottleneck, but none the less . . . some of the supporters . . . began to cut up rough. To keep them quiet Tambi brought out an enormous omnibus volume . . . costing the earth to buy and known to us as *Chums*.⁵¹

Besides imputations of cronyism, the joke was topical, since *Chums*, a children’s comic which also came out as an ‘omnibus’, had been killed off by the paper shortage. Much of *Chums* was written by the prolific ‘Frank Richards’, who numbered Tambimuttu amongst his fans. A bizarre item of *Poetry London* trivia is the inclusion in No. 15 of a piece of doggerel, starring a clown named Grigson, by the very same ‘Frank Richards’! When a joke becomes literary history, it’s hard to know whether to laugh or weep. According to Robert Hewison, ‘*Number Ten* . . . was known colloquially as *Chums* because Tambimuttu had tried to include everyone to whom he had made hitherto unfulfilled promises of publication.’⁵² The true story began in 1939, with an announcement in No. 2: ‘The June number will contain a large number of poems by unknown poets.’ This number did not appear, but this clearly stated intention, consistent with the prospectus and long before any embarrassing backlog of rashly accepted trash, lays Hewison’s gleefully repeated

⁴⁸ John Pikoulis, ‘Lynette Roberts and Alun Lewis’, *Poetry Wales*, 19:2 (1983), 18.

⁴⁹ Graham, *Keith Douglas*, 131–4 ⁵⁰ Tambimuttu, ‘Fitzrovia’, 223.

⁵¹ Maclaren-Ross, *Memoirs of the Forties*, 147.

⁵² Robert Hewison, *Under Siege: Literary Life in London 1939–45* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1977), 100.

slur to rest. *Poetry London* 10 was published in February 1945, but most of the contents, including many dated poems, had been compiled by the end of 1943.⁵³ The best account of its *raison d'être* was Tambimuttu's own: 'It has been the most exciting number to edit . . . here in actuality is what I have contemplated doing for five years, an anthology of poems by unknown writers. New Blood—The Future—Time materialising.'⁵⁴

Published in July 1942, *Poetry in Wartime* is itself a ground-breaking anthology of fifty poets (reduced to forty-nine in the second edition by the removal of Fuller at his own insistence). Tambimuttu's proposal to Eliot, dated 23 April 1941, stresses that it will give many poets their 'first publication in book form'. Contributors unpublished in hard covers at the time of writing included Alun Lewis, Norman Nicholson, Mervyn Peake, Kathleen Raine, Lynette Roberts, W. R. Rodgers, Terence Tiller, and Vernon Watkins. The stringent terms of reference for *Poetry London* 10 therefore exclude all fifty of these poets, as well as the rest of the eighty-four in issues 1–9.

Not everyone was impressed. D. J. Enright, future anthologist of the Movement, and a contributor to *Scrutiny* since 1942, when he had sharpened his wit on the 'not-so-new and not-so-Apocalyptic New Apocalypse', enlivened the first number of a short-lived *Scrutiny*-offshoot with an attack on '(t)his immense and turgid collection' of 'new poets', some of whom 'may be, for all we can tell from their present efforts, potentially important writers'.⁵⁵ But Enright's confidence backfires. For Tambimuttu *could* tell. Amongst the *Chums* is the not-so-adolescent R. S. Thomas (born 1913)—another Faber reject, convinced that Eliot was 'wrong to invoke the paper shortage as an excuse to turn down his verse'.⁵⁶ No. 10 appeared two years before his first collection, *The Stones of the Field*, published by Rhys's fugitive Druid Press in 1947, and over a decade before *Song at the Year's Turning* (Hart-Davis, 1955). His set of six poems included 'A Peasant', one of his most celebrated poems.⁵⁷

Patrick Kavanagh and Stevie Smith fall into the category of published 'writers who have . . . not yet appeared in *PL*'. In the far larger category of 'writers who have never before appeared in print', Iain Fletcher and Kathleen Nott went on to publish first collections, and Michael Hamburger to produce translations of Hölderlin, with EPL. Alan Ross published a pamphlet at Oxford, but his

⁵³ The date in the prelims is given as December 1944, but Smith gives February 1945 (*Bridge Between Two Worlds*, 284).

⁵⁴ Tambimuttu, 'About This Number', *Poetry London*, 10 (Feb. 1945), 9.

⁵⁵ D. J. Enright, 'Ruins and Warnings', *Scrutiny*, 11:1 (Summer 1942), 80; *idem*, 'The Significance of Poetry London', *The Critic*, 1 (Spring 1947), 3–10.

⁵⁶ Christopher Fletcher, 'Found: the Secrets of the Little Prince', *The Independent on Sunday* (6 Mar. 2005). Available at arts.independent.co.uk/books/features/article4960.ece.

⁵⁷ 'A Peasant' had appeared in the 'Welsh Poets' number of *Life and Letters Today*, 36:67 (Mar. 1943), probably despite prior acceptance by Tambimuttu.

appearance precedes his first collection, *The Derelict Day* (London: Lehmann, 1947). Patric Dickinson, Maurice Lindsay, Roland Mathias, and Leslie Norris had also published fugitive items, but all would still have qualified as ‘unknown’. The first of Elizabeth Bartlett’s many Peterloo and Bloodaxe collections did not appear until 1979.

Even the truly obscure deserve better than sneers. Google identifies the great majority, from a teenage Land Girl to ‘the one friend whom the Queen chose for herself’; and from the ITN newscaster who broke the news of J.F.K.’s assassination to the editor of the *Hemel Hempstead Gazette*.⁵⁸ Patricia Galwey turns up in the Peerage.com, Eversley Belfield in the midst of the Battle of Falaise Gap, frantically signalling to RAF pilots who were bombing Canadians. Under the name ‘Edward Candy’, Dr Barbara Alison Boodson Neville wrote medical detective novels; as a teenager, Alison Boodson’s work shows the marked influence of Thomas, but few have made anything finer of it than ‘Poem’:

(W)ould the light stagger on your darkened eyes?
 O, would the streets erupt like buds of lilac,
 wrench blossoms out of stonework, strike your lips
 to the responsive fingers—would this key
 delight the lock, bring you out into the sun?⁵⁹

The word ‘wrench’ recalls ‘(t)he force that through the green fuse drives the flower’, whilst in another of her *Poetry London* set, ‘Invitation’, Boodson picks up on Thomas’s rewiring of English nature poetry: ‘The electric lark, the spark of heaven’s joy’.⁶⁰ In *Gaudete*, Ted Hughes supplies a strikingly similar trope from the same source of power: ‘The lark sizzles in my ear | Like a fuse.’⁶¹ Number 10 stands therefore as a classic anthology of the people’s poetry, a worthy companion not only to *Poetry in Wartime*, but also to Moore’s inspiringly democratic *Shelter Sketch Book* of the same year, and a vindication of Tambimuttu’s ‘First Letter’ in *Poetry London* 1: ‘Each poet is a leaf, a significant leaf of Poetry, the multifoliate tree.’⁶²

According to Herbert Read, in a crucial BBC broadcast in 1942, the neo-romanticism of the Apocalypse movement was a saving renewal of modernism itself. This argument is a development of Read’s principal thesis, that, in Fraser’s summary, ‘what we call the “modern movement in poetry” . . . is not a break-away from the romantic tradition but a continuation . . . of it.’⁶³ Read’s exemplary neo-romantic poet was Dylan Thomas, protagonist of Tambimuttu’s

⁵⁸ Respectively, Sonia Graham-Hodgson, Joan Snelling, Antony Brown (father of BBC reporter, Ben Brown), and Hardiman Scott.

⁵⁹ Alison Boodson, ‘Poem’, *Poetry London*, 10 (Feb. 1945), 17. ⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ted Hughes, *Gaudete* (London: Faber, 1977), 78.

⁶² *Poetry London*, 1 (Feb. 1939), unpaginated.

⁶³ Herbert Read, ‘The New Romantic School’, broadcast 7 April 1942 (*The Listener*, 23 Apr. 1942), 533. G. S. Fraser, *Vision and Rhetoric* (London: Faber, 1957), 11.

most ambitious statement, 'Fourth Letter: The New Moderns', in the fourth and final number of *Poetry London—New York* (1960):

After Eliot's chief decade of poetic influence... and the doldrums that followed, it was... 'The New Moderns' who had brought back to 'objective' words their suggestive and sensuous elements... Dylan Thomas, with his increased density of words, warring images and compression, was the most vital spark.⁶⁴

This is no intemperate polemic. Tambimuttu is anxious not to exalt (in his own scrupulous phrase) 'what I have called "New Modernism"' above 'the body of "Modern Poetry"'.⁶⁵ Yet the portrayal of the 1930s as 'the doldrums' before the 1940s, a brilliant reversal of conventional judgement, and the reaffirmation of faith in Thomas, demonstrate a sustained and partisan commitment.

According to Grigson, 'Modernism's high command... was not impressed' with Thomas: 'Eliot at least was offered and considered—and then refused—a collection of his poems.'⁶⁶ On the contrary, Eliot appears to have intended to publish *18 Poems*, but procrastinated. He had the grace to admit his mistake: 'one ought to have accepted the inferior with the first-rate.'⁶⁷

Tambimuttu's 'First Letter' offers an introduction to Thomas's poem, a confident gesture in 1939. 'Poem in the Ninth Month', collected as 'A saint about to fall', is indeed about 'the feelings of a man... expecting the birth of a child to his wife'.⁶⁸ The title also alludes to the Munich crisis, which deepens the Apocalyptic resonance of 'the time-bomb town' and the nightmare image of 'herods' on the march. It is fitting that the first great poem published by *Poetry London* should be the centrepiece of a BBC broadcast on 'The Apocalyptic Poets', for which it was specially recorded by Thomas in 1943.⁶⁹

'First Letter' is also notable for Tambimuttu's sympathetic criticism of poets who are good enough to publish, but who have yet to 'sift themselves' from Thomas, an insight which reveals a sharp edge to his 'inclusivity'. In the second number, 'Night' by Glyn Jones and 'Gethsemane Poem' by Dorian Cooke flank Thomas's quintessentially Apocalyptic 'Poem' ('If my head hurt a hair's foot') like the wings of a triptych:

This shadow flesh of risen Christ...

⁶⁴ Tambimuttu, 'Fourth Letter: The New Moderns', *Poetry London—New York*, 4 (Sept. 1960), reprinted in *Bridge Between Two Worlds*, 239–40.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 241.

⁶⁶ Geoffrey Grigson, 'Recollections of Dylan Thomas', *London Magazine* (Sept. 1957), 40.

⁶⁷ Ferris, *Collected Letters*, 173 and notes; no source cited. Eliot asked for longer to consider, but Thomas's attempt to stall appears to have galvanized *The Sunday Referee*.

⁶⁸ Tambimuttu, 'First Letter', *Poetry London*, 1 (Feb. 1939), unpaginated. Dylan Thomas, 'A Saint about to Fall', *Collected Poems 1934–1952* (London: Dent, 1952), 95–6.

⁶⁹ Broadcast by Desmond Hawkins, 8 August 1943.

Naked Mary's candle wave . . .
 The angelled air, the sea is edged
 With fever where black Patmos lies . . .
 With broken hands I roll my rock
 Back on the Pasc of this raw dawn.

No. Not for Christ's dazzling bed . . .
 My dear would I change my tears or your iron head . . .
 Now to awake husked of gestures and my joy like a cave . . .
 Rest beyond choice in the dust-appointed grain,
 At the breast stored with seas . . .
 The grave and my calm body are shut to your coming as stone . . .

With tied-and-dungeon tongue . . .
 I listen down the agony and the cracked war
 And number heavens in the hell-riven man . . .
 And on the bitter rampart burn the twin world
 In sap, drowning the bright Word one sleep down
 Who grows where flesh is sown.

First printed in *Poetry London* 4, anthologized in *Poetry in Wartime* and collected in *Poems 1937–1942*, published by EPL with designs by Graham Sutherland, Gascoyne's great poem, 'A War-Time Dawn', is a paradigm of Tambimuttu's achievement. His conviction that 'New Modernism' represented 'the mainstream of Anglo-American poetry' may have looked forlorn in 1960, but it is no longer eccentric to argue that the Apocalypse is the most significant mid-twentieth-century phase of the Romantic–Modernist tradition.

Correspondence printed in No. 2 brings the ethos of *Poetry London* into focus. Herbert Palmer objects that the tone of the contents is 'most flagrantly Left-Wing', whilst Norah Cruickshank delights in a magazine which allows 'true freedom of poetic speech'.⁷⁰ From the outset, there is nothing apolitical about *Poetry London*; nor is its 'inclusivity' to be confused with indiscriminate catholicity, or worse, as by Calder: 'The Marxists had failed, politically and poetically; now let madness have its head!'⁷¹ In June 1942, Tambimuttu was invited by Orwell to do a BBC talk in the 'Open Letters' series.⁷² What Orwell probably had in mind was an apology for British socialism addressed to Indian students inclined to support the Marxist anti-imperialism of the India League and of *Indian Writing*. The legendary zany would never have been commissioned to broadcast on such a theme.

⁷⁰ 'Correspondence', *Poetry London*, 2 (Apr. 1939), unpaginated.

⁷¹ Calder, *The People's War*, 519.

⁷² Letter from Orwell to Tambimuttu, 23 June 1942 (*George Orwell: The War Broadcasts*, ed. W. J. West (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), 201).

The Apocalypse movement was in tune with the people's decade inaugurated by the fall of Chamberlain in May 1940, the date of Hendry's 'Churchillian Ode'

I listen where whispers of victory drown the sirens of anguish,
 And through the fog of murderous dreams,
 Drifting up, acrid and brown, I see the merciful,
 Miraculous dissolution of bombast and lust in an elemental Marlborough.⁷³

Contrast 'Homage to Our Leaders' by Symons, in which Churchill is trivially depicted as a 'moonface moocow chewing | A permanent cigar'.⁷⁴ Hendry draws the distinction between 'Apocalypticism' and 'Surrealism' in explicitly political terms: 'Surrealism . . . is a conglomeration of myths, corresponding to the political "order", or disorder, of anarchy. Apocalypticism represents . . . the restoration of order to myth . . . which in art should correspond to the political order of planned socialism.'⁷⁵

In the face of the rightwards drift by the principals of the Auden generation, a majority of the poets of the 1940s articulated the change of heart which culminated in 'the profoundly important peaceful social revolution of 1945'; a phrase from G. S. Fraser's *Vision and Rhetoric* (1958), an apology for the Romantic-Modernist tradition by the author of the 'Introduction' to *The White Horseman*.⁷⁶ In 'a cramping and a damping time', Fraser deplores 'the new conservatism in poetics' represented by the Movement, whose 'reaction' against the Apocalypse was more than coincidental with the return of Conservatism to political power.⁷⁷ Robert Conquest, editor of the key Movement anthology, *New Lines*, was Britain's foremost cultural cold-warrior; and even the few Movement poets who were socialists at twenty had moved to the right by the time they reached forty.

In *Poetry London-New York* 3, Tambimuttu attacks *New Lines* as proof of 'the poetic doldrums in Great Britain', turning the tables on the fastidious Conquest, who compares Apocalyptic poetry to the music of 'Negroes and . . . the disgusting caterwaulings of Tziganes', with a deft defence of all these wonderful sounds.⁷⁸ There was, nevertheless, a near-total eclipse of left-wing modernism until the revival of the 1960s, anthologized initially in *Children of Albion* in 1969; then, belatedly, in

⁷³ J. F. Hendry, *Poetry London*, 6 (May-June, 1941), 186.

⁷⁴ Julian Symons in Robin Skelton (ed.), *Poetry of the Forties* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), 20.

⁷⁵ J. F. Hendry, 'Myth and Social Integration', in J. F. Hendry and Henry Treece (eds), *The White Horseman: Prose and Verse of the New Apocalypse* (London: Routledge, 1941), 176.

⁷⁶ G. S. Fraser, *Vision and Rhetoric* (London: Faber, 1957), 155. ⁷⁷ *Ibid.* 250-1.

⁷⁸ Aldous Huxley, cited with approval by Robert Conquest, *New Lines: An Anthology* (London: Macmillan, 1956), p. vii. Tambimuttu, 'Third Letter', *Poetry London-New York*, 1:3 (Winter 1957), 45, 47.

A Various Art in 1987. Its most recent manifestation, in 2004, was *Vanishing Points: New Modernist Poems*.⁷⁹

The power of post-Movement reaction is still reflected in mainstream critical response towards both Dylan Thomas and J. H. Prynne, whose poetry began in Movement formalism but proceeded to re-open communications with the Romantic–Modernist tradition, from Wordsworth to Thomas (and from Hölderlin to Celan). The finest criticism of Prynne’s neo-vitalist poetry has focused on its ‘sheer departures from the pastoral space of ordinary, integrated perception’ and its attention to ‘the surfaces and frontiers of physical human identity’, in particular to ‘orifices’, ‘wounds’, ‘throats’, and other ‘narrowed apertures’; and to the way food ‘constitutes us as it passes through’ us. ‘Prynne’s poetry approaches closer to these edges and frontiers than perhaps any other’, with the unspecified but surely obvious exception of Dylan Thomas:⁸⁰

My throat knew thirst before the structure
Of skin and vein around the well
Where words and water make a mixture
Unfailing till the blood runs foul;
My heart knew love, my belly hunger;
I smelt the maggot in my stool.⁸¹

The famous ‘green fuse’ is one more of the innumerable ‘narrowed apertures’ with which Thomas’s poetry is riddled. Some of the interrelations between Cambridge poetry and the Apocalypse are catalogued in Iain Sinclair’s Paladin anthology, *Conductors of Chaos* (1996) which includes Hendry, Moore, Gascoyne, and Graham alongside Prynne, Michael Haslam, Andrew Crozier, Andrew Duncan, and John James. Pamphlets by Cooke and Moore have appeared in the Poetical Histories series published by Peter Riley, a contributor both to *A Various Art* and to *Bridge between Two Worlds*, who ‘saw Tambi once, at the 1974 Cambridge Poetry Festival’, at a reading by Crozier, James, and Douglas Oliver: ‘He was talent-spotting . . . just where . . . the future was poised.’⁸² Crozier is included in all of the ‘new modernist’ anthologies, from *Children of Albion* to *Vanishing Points*; and there is more than symbolism in the appearance of a poem by Riley, complete with photograph, in

⁷⁹ Michael Horovitz (ed.), *Children of Albion: Poetry of the ‘Underground’ in Britain* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969); Andrew Crozier and Tim Longville (eds), *A Various Art* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1987); Rod Mengham and John Kinsella (eds), *Vanishing Points: New Modernist Poems* (Cambridge: Salt Publishing, 2004).

⁸⁰ N. H. Reeve and Richard Kerridge, *Nearly Too Much: The Poetry of J. H. Prynne* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995), 27.

⁸¹ Dylan Thomas, ‘Before I knocked’, *Collected Poems*, 7.

⁸² Peter Riley, ‘On Not Having Known Tambi’, in Williams (ed.), *Bridge Between Two Worlds*,

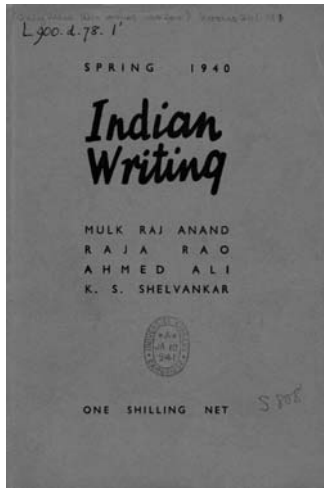


Fig. 102. Cover of *Indian Writing* (Spring 1940)

Poetry London/Apple Magazine 2 (1982), the final incarnation of Tambimuttu's lifelong project.⁸³

Indian Writing

As if in reproach to Tambimuttu, who defied them throughout, *Indian Writing* conformed to war economy restrictions even before they were imposed. In the five uniform numbers, between the spring of 1940 and the summer of 1942, a hint of devanagari script in the title lettering and a different pastel colour for each cover were the only concessions to design. *Indian Writing* carried no illustrations, and printed little poetry, which helps to explain the total lack of reciprocity with *Poetry London*. For all the excellence of some of its short stories, the strength of the magazine lay in the intelligence and immediacy of its political analyses and reviews.

Indian Writing was co-edited by Ahmed Ali (1910–94), Krishnarao Shiva Shelvankar (1906–96), Narayan Iqbal Singh (1912–98), and Alagu Subramaniam (1915–71). Ali arrived in London in 1939 in search of a publisher for his first novel, *Twilight in Delhi*, found one in John Lehmann at the Woolfs' Hogarth Press, and returned to India in September 1940. He contributed only to the first two numbers. In 1942, he was appointed BBC Director of Listener Research for All-India Radio, answerable to George Orwell, who considered him 'the best' of

⁸³ Riley, 'Kings Field', 45. Tambimuttu died on 22 June 1983.

the 'Indian writers'.⁸⁴ By 1948, after the trauma of Partition, Ali had joined the diplomatic service of the new nation of Pakistan, reaching the rank of Deputy Ambassador. Subramaniam, from Sri Lanka, became a barrister at Lincoln's Inn, and by 1950 had returned to Jaffna. According to Tambimuttu, his whimsical stories were admired by E. M. Forster.⁸⁵ Shelvankar, from Chennai, studied at the London School of Economics. In May 1940, his incisive Penguin Special, *The Problem of India*, was banned throughout the subcontinent. In 1942, he joined the staff of *The Hindu*, becoming press adviser to Nehru, and ultimately, in 1971, Ambassador to the USSR. Singh, a Sikh from the Punjab, was the author of numerous books, including a classic study of Mohammed Iqbal.⁸⁶ In the 1950s, he resumed a career with All-India Radio which had begun in Delhi before the war.

Indian Writing was a nexus, rather than a matrix. Its centre of gravity was in India, not London. It broke no new writers, nor was it formative for any of its editors or contributors, as *Poetry London* was; but its protagonists were deeply involved in the complex developments between the birth of Indian modernism and the aftermath of independence. It announced its arrival, just before the fall of France, with an apt quotation from Maxim Gorky: 'Culture is more necessary in storm than in peace.'⁸⁷ In the final number, V. K. Krishna Menon acclaims another contributor, the 'passionate anti-fascist and champion of democracy', Jawaharlal Nehru, and makes a startlingly direct appeal: 'The next step is with Britain... Release India!'⁸⁸ With Burma overrun and India facing invasion, Britain's 'next step', on 9 August, the day after the launch of the 'Quit India' campaign, was to imprison Nehru for the duration in Ahmednagar Fort.

Two significant relationships developed during the short life of the magazine. The first was with Allen and Unwin. An advertisement for the publishers in issue 1 listed four books on Gandhi, and *Changing India*, an anthology of 'Indian political and social thought' edited in 1939 by Singh and Raja Rao, another contributor; then announced its 'New India Series', for which the same editors were to be responsible. *Nehru: The Rising Star of India*, by Anup Singh, appeared on schedule, but there were no further volumes. Subsequent advertisements and reviews suggest an explanation. Eight books by Allen and Unwin are reviewed, seven of which are demolished (the exception is *The Rising Star of India*). The firm's advertisement in issue 5 offers fifteen titles from the backlist, heavily weighted towards the

⁸⁴ Letter from George Orwell to Philip Rahv, 14 October 1943, in *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, vol. ii: *My Country Right or Left 1940-1943*, ed. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), 361.

⁸⁵ Tambimuttu, 'Fitzrovia', 235.

⁸⁶ N. Iqbal Singh, *The Ardent Pilgrim: An Introduction to the Life and Work of Mohammed Iqbal*, trans. Naeemullah Malik (London: Longmans Green, 1951; rpt. by Oxford University Press, 1997).

⁸⁷ The editors, 'Commentary', *Indian Writing*, 1:1 (Spring 1940), 3.

⁸⁸ V. K. Krishna Menon, 'Prophets and Experts', *Indian Writing*, second series, 5 (Summer 1942), 269.

picturesquely poetic, deleting all but one of the objectionable texts, whilst name-checking six of the contributors to *Indian Writing*. What is now conspicuously absent is anything at all of immediate relevance. Only two texts, including *The Blue Grove: Poetry of the Uraons*, with a foreword by Arthur Waley, make it into 1940. Whilst, to its credit, the firm continued to advertise, it seems reasonable to surmise a political breach.⁸⁹ The second relationship, with Robert Herring, editor of *Life and Letters* and one of the principal promoters of Apocalyptic poetry, was more fruitful. *Indian Writing* issues 1 and 2 advertised the next number of *Life and Letters Today*, and in March 1942, Herring produced an *Indian Number*, advertised in issue 5, featuring several articles and stories by contributors to *Indian Writing*.⁹⁰

The key text, which appeared in *Indian Writing* 1, was Ali's review of *Naya Adab*, the magazine of the Progressive Writers' Association (PWA), launched in London in November 1934, in direct response both to the First Congress of Soviet Writers in Moscow the previous August and to the banning, on grounds of blasphemy, of the Urdu anthology *Angarey* in 1933.⁹¹ The organization, in which Hindu and Muslim writers made common cause against the Raj and its reactionary or fundamentalist counterparts, was so strongly anti-separatist that for the majority of these writers the eventual Partition of India and Pakistan was a calamity.

The first All India Progressive Writers' Conference was held in Lucknow in April 1936, as the Popular Front was gathering momentum in Europe. Ali delivered the keynote statement, 'A Progressive View of Art', and the talismanic Munshi Premchand surpassed Gorky in the conviction of his presidential address: 'We have to change the criteria of beauty . . . If you cannot see beauty in a poor perspiring woman, her infant asleep on a bank as she works in the field, then it is your vision that is to blame.'⁹² In his harrowing story, 'The Shroud' (translated by Ali, praised in his review of *Naya Adab* and reprinted in the Apocalyptic miscellany, *New Road 1944*), a poor perspiring woman is left alone to die in childbirth.⁹³ *Naya Adab* took

⁸⁹ Advertisements on the back cover of *Indian Writing*, 1:1 and second series, 5.

⁹⁰ Advertisements in *Indian Writing*, 1:1, inside front cover; 1:2 (Summer 1940) 68; and second series, 5 (inside back cover). Robert Herring (ed.), *Life and Letters Today*, 32:55 (Mar. 1942).

⁹¹ Ahmed Ali, 'New Urdu Literature', *Indian Writing*, 1:1 (Spring 1940), 63. Ahmed Ali, Rasheed Jahan, Mahmud Zaffar, and Sajjad Zaheer, *Angarey (Coals of Fire)* (Lucknow: Nizami, 1932). The PWA manifesto appeared in full in *Left Review*, 2:5 (Feb. 1936), 240. *Left Review* featured a number of contributors to *Indian Writing*, notably in 2:12 (Sept. 1936), with the proclamation on the cover that 'Indian Writers Face Oppression'.

⁹² Orooj Ahmed Ali, 'Sajjad Zaheer', 'Letters to the Editor', *Dawn: The Internet Edition* (15 Jan. 2006), <http://www.dawn.com/2006/01/15/letted.htm>. R. Padmanabhan, 'A Progressive Poet', *Frontline: India's National Magazine*, 15:3 (Mumbai, 7–20 Feb. 1998), <http://www.frontline.in/fl1503/15030780.htm>.

⁹³ Munshi Premchand, 'The Shroud', *New Road 1944: New Directions in European Art and Letters*, ed. Alex Comfort and John Bayliss (London: Grey Walls Press, 1944), 206–13 (cf. headnote, p. 199: 'For fear of political reprisals, the translator of this story asks to remain anonymous').

its title from *New Writing*, the fourth number of which featured a short story by Ali, the intended editor, before he broke with the PWA in 1938.⁹⁴ A majority of the group considered only socialist realism, Soviet-style, to be progressive, but the proscription of bourgeois experience was unacceptable to Ali. The dispute inspired the defiantly nostalgic evocation of bourgeois Indian society in *Twilight in Delhi*. In the event, *Naya Adab* was edited by three communists.⁹⁵

An intriguing aspect of *Indian Writing* is the tension between Ali's liberalism and Singh's uncompromising Stalinism. For Lehmann, Ali represented 'young Indian writers who held the same ideals as ourselves', whilst Singh had nothing but scorn for the 'pernicious' George Orwell, 'Professor Laski and other "socialist" pontiffs of that kidney', *Poetry London*, 'organ of a clique of writers' or *New Writing*, with its 'Primrose League' of 'pathetic' intellectuals.⁹⁶ In fairness to Singh, 'Primrose League' is a direct hit: Lehmann voted Conservative in 1945.⁹⁷

One interesting recruit to the PWA was Ismat Chughtai, regularly named as a contributor to the *next* number of *Indian Writing*, though none of her work actually appeared. She attained notoriety in 1942 as the author of 'The Quilt', which presents a lesbian encounter in the *zenana* of a wealthy Muslim household from the point of view of the terrified child narrator.⁹⁸ Chughtai was prosecuted for obscenity, together with her friend, Sadat Hasan Manto, who contributed a story to issue 3.⁹⁹ In scenes reminiscent of the Chatterley trial, the prosecution made fools of themselves and both writers were acquitted.¹⁰⁰ Interviewed in 1972, Chughtai remained unrepentantly 'progressive':

Ali is identified as translator by 'Zeno' (Safdar Mir), 'Professor Ahmed Ali and the Progressive Writers' Movement', *Annual of Urdu Studies*, 9 (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1994), 40; <http://www.urdu-studies.com/pdf/09/10ZenoProfessor.pdf>.

⁹⁴ Ahmed Ali, 'Our Lane', *New Writing*, 4, ed. John Lehmann (London: Lawrence and Wishart, Autumn 1937).

⁹⁵ Asrar ul Haq ('Majaz'), Ali Sardar Jafri, and Sibte Hasan (eds), *Naya Adab* (Lucknow: Halqa-i-Adab, 1939).

⁹⁶ John Lehmann, *The Whispering Gallery: Autobiography 1* (London: Longmans Green, 1955), 263. Narayan Iqbal Singh, 'The Problem of India', *Indian Writing*, 2 (Summer 1940), 113; 'The Choice', 3 (Mar. 1941), 172–3; 'Rilke and Others', 4 (Aug. 1941), 236.

⁹⁷ John Lehmann, *I Am My Brother: Autobiography 2* (London: Longmans Green, 1960), 294–5.

⁹⁸ Ismat Chughtai, 'Lihaaf', *Adab-e Latif*, ed. Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi (Lahore: Spring 1942). Ismat Chughtai, 'The Quilt', *The Quilt and Other Stories*, trans. Tahira Naqvi and Syeda S. Hameed (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1990; London: The Women's Press, 1991); http://www.media.opencultures.net/queer/data/indian/Lihaaf_or_The_Quilt.htm.

⁹⁹ 'Saadat Hussain Minto' (Sadat Hasan Manto), 'The Coachman and the New Constitution', *Indian Writing*, 1:3 (Mar. 1941), 156–65.

¹⁰⁰ Ismat Chughtai, 'Autobiographical Fragments', translated from her autobiography (*Kag-hazi Hai Pairahan (Clad in Paper Garments)*) (Lahore: 1981); (otherwise untranslated) by M. Asaduddin, *Manushi: A Journal about Women and Society*, 110 (New Delhi: Jan.–Feb. 1999); <http://www.indiatogether.org/manushi/issue110/ismat.htm>.

At first, the movement was certainly anti-British... after '47, we found that the people in power were the henchmen of the British... We were thinking before that as soon as the British left, we would have a heaven here. It didn't come. It hasn't yet, either.¹⁰¹

Apart from Ali, perhaps the most representative of the contributors to *Indian Writing* was Khwaja Ahmed Abbas, whose story, 'The Swallows', praised for its 'objectivity and perception' by Ali in his review, reappeared in issue 2.¹⁰² It would be difficult to match the revolutionary credentials of a writer whose grandfather had been blown from the mouth of a cannon, and who studied in his teens with Shaheed Bhagat Singh, hanged as a terrorist in 1931.¹⁰³ A lifelong socialist, Abbas won fame both as a journalist and as a film director, launching several stars, but always prepared to exploit success to finance yet another Zhdanovite flop. He wrote over seventy books, including a novel, *Inqilab*, inspired by Bhagat Singh's war-cry, 'Inqilab Zindabad!' ('Long Live Revolution!').¹⁰⁴ Politically, however, he was reputed 'the most consistent of all Nehru-ites—not excluding Nehru himself'.¹⁰⁵ For Abbas, memories of his cousin, Khwaja Ghulam-Saiyadain, as a student orator, epitomize the idealism, and the tragedy, of the PWA:

I often wonder what would have been the destiny of India—and Indian Muslims—if the communally-inclined Muslims had heeded the warning of the youthful idealist on the Aligarh University platform. Surely then there would have been no Partition, no Pakistan, no riots, no exchange of population—and no genocide in Bangladesh!¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ Ismat Chughtai and Carlo Coppola, 'Ismat Chughtai: A Talk with One of Urdu's Most Outspoken Woman Writers', *Mahfil: A Quarterly of South Asian Literature*, 8:2–3 (East Lansing: Asian Studies Centre, Michigan State University, Summer–Fall 1972), 169–88. Available at http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/ourdu/ismat/txt_ismat_interview_mahfil1972.htm

¹⁰² Khwaja Ahmed Abbas, 'The Swallows', *Indian Writing*, 3 (Mar. 1941), 85–88. Ali, 'New Urdu Literature', 63.

¹⁰³ R. G. Mathapati, 'Abbas: An Island: Director of over thirty films, 1946–1988': part 1 (Dharwad: 1998–2000); http://www.ourkarnataka.com/Articles/mathapati/abbas_mathapati.htm.

¹⁰⁴ Khwaja Ahmed Abbas, *Inqilab: First Great Novel of the Indian Revolution* (New Delhi: Jaico Publishing House, 1955).

¹⁰⁵ Abbas on himself, as perceived by others; cited by Mathapati, 'Abbas: An Island': part 2 (no reference).

¹⁰⁶ Abbas, cited by Mathapati, 'Abbas: An Island': part 1 (no reference).

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INDEX

- Abbas, Khwaja Ahmed 897
 Abbey Theatre 149, 165–8, 169, 170
 Abercrombie, Lascelles 182, 183, 186, 188, 192, 194, 195, 320, 321, 413, 421
 Aberdeen Free Press 768
 Aberpennar, Davies 732
The Academy 230
The Acorn 4, 74, 75, 120–141, 145
 Acton, Harold 449
 Adams, Christopher 306
 Adams, John 557
 Adams, Léonie 882
 Addison, Joseph 222, 858
 Addleshaw, Stanley 90
The Adelphi 6–8, 14, 15, 208, 315, 340, 343, 344, 374, 355, 356, 364–88, 396, 505, 715, 736, 811, 833
 Adelphi Centre 375–6, 378
 Adelphi Gallery 486, 489, 503
 AE, *see* George Russell
Aengus 242
 Aestheticism 36, 69, 74, 76–100, 131–4, 294, 300, 415, 486, 497, 646, 786
 Agar, Eileen 598, 702
 Aiken, Conrad 355, 422, 423, 462, 475, 483
 Ainslie, Douglas 89
 Akhmatova, Anna 748
Akros 780
 Alberti, Rafael 680
 Albion Hand Press 876
 Aldington, Richard 148, 182, 183, 189, 192, 201, 237, 265, 269, 270, 280, 282, 290, 296, 341, 342, 351, 354, 413, 419, 421, 423, 456, 462, 464, 466, 467, 475, 478, 495, 503, 510, 575, 576
 Aldridge, John 713, 806, 809, 819, 823
 Alexandrov, Grigori 526
 Alford, John 193
 Ali, Ahmed 893–7
 Allégret, Marc 512, 513
 Allen and Unwin (Publishers) 886, 894
 Allen, Charles 11, 52, 226
 Alleyn, Ellen, *see* Rossetti, Christina
 Allied Artists' Association 488, 489–91
 Allingham, William 63
 Allinson, Adrian 467, 475
 Allott, Kenneth 596, 660, 689, 713, 809
All the Year Round 36, 44
 Altamira 499
 Altdorfer, Albrecht 114
 Altick, Richard 69
 American magazines 3–4, 25
American Mercury 249, 250
 Amos, Margaret 616
 anarchism 264, 270, 274, 275, 278, 280, 311, 653
An Claidbeamb Soluis 737
 Anderson Carter, Elmer 525
 Anderson, Elliott 52
 Anderson, Sherwood 52, 250, 431, 563, 565
 Andreieff, Leonid 278
The Anglo-Welsh Review 734
 Angus, Marion 770
 Annand, J. K. 780
 anti-Semitism 407; *see also* Jews, persecution of
 Antliff, Mark 331–2
 Apocalyptic poetry 832
 Apocalyptic poets, the 827, 828, 832, 874–97
 Apollinaire, Guillaume 294, 422
Apollo 504
 Appia, Adolphe 788
The Apple 4, 456, 457, 458, 485–504
 Aragon, Louis 422, 508, 593, 635, 638, 654, 655, 680, 867
 Archdale, Helen 535
 Archer, David 597
 Archer, Esther 482, 483
 Archer's Bookshop 605
 Archer, William 193
 Archipenko, Alexander 302
The Architect 788
The Architectural Review 514
 Ardis, Ann 8–9, 10, 16, 147, 202, 203, 204
 Arens, Egmont 488, 489
The Argosy 45
Arion 845
 Arlen, Michael 237
 Armitage, Gilbert 655
 Armstrong, Martin 424
 Arnell, Charles John 583–6
 Arnold, Edward 46
 Arnold, Matthew 35, 50, 434, 838, 839, 840, 852
Culture and Anarchy 41–2
 Arp, Hans 662
The Arrow 152–75
Arson 23, 598, 688–703
 Art:
 and politics 623–46
 fine and decorative 120
 progressive view of 874–97
Art and Letters 22, 240, 315, 339, 347, 369, 456, 457, 458, 470, 473, 475, 485–504
Art and Life 445
Art and Poetry 52–60
Art and Poetry: Being Thoughts towards Nature 31, 57
 Artaud, Antonin 515
 Arthur, Charlotte 744
 The Arthur Press 561, 565

- The Artist* 90, 127
The Art Journal 137
Art News 490
 Art Nouveau 132, 133, 788, 789, 792, 795
 Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society (ACES) 126, 130
 Arts and Crafts movement 32, 69, 71, 73–4, 75, 77, 81, 84, 93,
 106, 120–141, 145, 150, 334, 486, 575, 712, 785, 788, 789
Arts and Letters 784
Arts Gazette 489
Art und Dekoration 789
 Ashwell, Lena 216
 Astor, Lady Nancy 536
The Athenaeum 13, 17, 22, 60, 108, 204, 230, 240, 241, 242,
 256, 314, 315, 339, 340, 343, 344, 364–88, 393, 416, 455,
 466, 473
 Atkinson, F. A. 174
 Atkinson, Lawrence 456, 478
 Attasheva, Pera 512, 513
 'Audenesque' poetry 592, 596, 598, 652, 664, 667
 Auden, W. H. 259, 359, 362, 385, 400, 441, 543, 568, 591, 592,
 593, 594, 596, 597, 598, 602, 618, 621, 638, 648, 650–2,
 655, 656, 657, 660 n. 59, 661, 664, 665, 667, 668, 669,
 682, 733, 775, 820, 821, 822 n. 45, 828, 829, 845, 846, 857,
 858, 861, 862, 872, 882, 885, 891
 Auriol, Jean George 515
 Austen, Jane 174, 444, 445, 842
 Austen, John 581
 Austin Petch, H. 493
 avant-garde 9–11, 15–16, 20, 29–30, 32, 71, 153, 202, 224, 248,
 263, 296, 297–8, 311, 312–13, 363, 478, 485, 494, 514–15,
 516, 520, 563, 688, 707, 712, 715, 737, 787; *see also*
 modernism
 Ayers, David 854
 Aylott and Jones (publishers) 55, 57
 Aziz, Abdul 756
- Babbit, Irving 353, 358
 Babel, Isaac 396, 689
 Bacon, Francis 867
 Bain, George 764
 Baker, Ida Constance 8, 318
 Bakst, Leon 790
 Baldung Grien, Hans 257
 Baldwin, Stanley 403, 456, 624
 Bale, J. L. 582
 Baliol Brett, Hon. Oliver Sylvain 428
 Ballantyre Press 93
 Ballet Russes 329–30, 790, 795
 Ballou, Jenny 440
 Balme, David 608
 Banfield, Ann 286
 Banham, Joanna 132
 Banim, Michael 169
 Banks, Gordon 'Dorothy' 316, 320, 329, 334
 Banse, Ewald 441
 Barbari, Jacopo de 113
 Barbour, John 782
 Barbusse, Henri 674
 Barker, Charles 384, 385
 Barker, George 359, 597, 628, 659, 662, 682, 689, 717, 881, 883
 Barlow, Jane 173
 Barnes, Djuna 695–6
 Barnes, J. S. 360
 Barrett, George 742
 Barrie, J. M. 768, 772
 Barry, Iris 192, 500, 505–6
 Barry, James 742
- Barsac, Louis 113
 Bartlett, Elizabeth 888
 Bartók, Béla 845
 Barton, Guy 604
 Barzun, Jacques 872
 Bashford, H. H. 442
 Bates, H. E. 482, 546
 Bateson, F. W. 848
 Bates, Ralph 638
 Baudelaire, Charles 394, 396, 397, 602, 710, 779
 Baughan, E. A. 523
 Bauhaus 796, 800, 846
 Bax, Sir Arnold 578
 Bax, Clifford 578, 582
 BBC 403, 534, 649, 755, 779, 871, 883, 888, 889, 890, 893
 Beach, Sylvia 511, 514
 Beardsley, Aubrey 75, 77, 79–80, 81, 83, 84, 86, 87, 91, 92, 93,
 94, 96, 99, 100, 133, 136, 415, 480, 574, 581, 790
Le Mort d'Arthur 136
 'Under the Hill' 97
 Beasley, Rebecca 456, 457
 Beaton, Cecil 869
 Beaverbrook, Lord 256, 863
 Beckett, Jane 300–1
 Beckett, Samuel 359, 593, 638, 707, 711, 735, 739, 741, 748
 Bedford Park Garden Suburb 125, 130–2
Bedford Park Gazette 130–1, 138, 139
 Beecham, N. A. 242
 Beedham, John 498
 Beerbohm, Max 89, 91, 93, 107, 110, 113, 320, 431, 432, 789
 'Be it Cosiness' 111–12
 Beetham, Margaret 607
 Beethoven, Ludwig van 566
 Beeton, Samuel 81
 Begbie, Harold 216
 Belfield, Eversley 888
 Belgium, Montgomery 360
Belgravia 36, 44
The Bell 4, 23, 711, 735–58
 Bellamy, Frank 546
 Bell and Daldy (publishers) 62
 Bell, Clive 364, 372, 373, 431, 432, 442, 449, 492
 Bell, H. I. 724
 Bell, Julian 602, 606, 616, 669, 670, 676
 Belloc, Hilaire 239, 431, 432
 Bell, Vanessa 492, 682
Beltaine 4, 149, 150, 152–75
 Benchley, Robert 525
 Benda, Julien 353
 Benjamin, Walter 599, 602
 Bennett, Arnold 146, 226, 230, 232, 233, 236, 237, 238, 343,
 344, 379, 384, 393, 400, 431, 443, 449, 470, 494, 512, 576
 Benson, A. C. 89, 216
 Benson, Stella 537, 542
 Bentham, Jeremy 846
 Beresford, J. D. 416–17
 Bergonzi, Bernard 635
 Bergson, Henri 266, 273, 280, 320, 325–8, 477, 540, 609
 Bergsonian 263, 266, 267, 305, 325–8, 343; *see also*
 modernism, 'Bergsonian'
 Berkeley, George 287
 Berlin, Isaiah 359
The Bermondsey Book 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 530–51
 Bermondsey Bookshop 530, 545, 550
 Bernal, J. D. 594, 608, 617, 618, 620
 Bernlyn, Revd Bernard Henry 216
 Bernstein, Sidney 506

- Berry, Matilda, *see* Mansfield, Katherine
 Bertram, Antony 393
 Berwick, Thurso 780, 781
 Besant, Walter 45, 48
 Betjeman, John 867
 Betsky, Seymour 853
 Bevan, Robert 492
 Bewley, Marius 845
 Bibesco, Elizabeth 441
 Bible, the 172
 bibliographic and contextual codes 207–8
 Binyon, Laurence 73, 101–2, 103, 113, 114, 116, 117–18, 119, 243, 401, 493, 576, 662
The Bioscope 505
 Birch, Frank 615
 Birnstingl, H. J. 587
 Bishop, Edward 14, 15, 51, 297, 313 n. 83
 Bishop of Durham 358
 Blackett, Basil 441
 Blackie, John Stuart 761–2
 Black, Ladbrooke 486
 Black, Misha 604
 Blackmur, R. P. 356
 Blackwell, Basil 466
Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine 29, 34, 39, 40, 230, 709, 759
 Blair, E. A., *see* Orwell, George
 Blake, William 83, 96, 97, 99, 314
 illustrations of Dante's *Divine Comedy* 95, 99
 Blakeston, Oswald 507, 512, 513–14, 515, 525, 527, 528
 Blampied, Edmund 501
 Blanchot, Maurice 872
BLAST 3, 13, 17, 19, 22, 30, 57, 70, 74, 145, 194, 199, 202, 206, 219, 221, 222, 224, 247, 263–7, 290–313, 315, 328, 341, 373, 408, 414, 460, 464, 479, 485, 494, 498, 552–4, 555, 563, 564, 567, 570, 574, 700, 736, 751
 Blatchford, Robert 213, 214, 220
 Blau DuPlessis, Rachel 280
 Blind, Mathilde 92
 Blok, Alexander 632
 Bloomsbury Group 18, 20, 266, 286, 306, 314, 315, 325, 328, 330, 336, 344, 351, 356, 364, 372, 449, 488, 491, 555, 557, 596, 605, 606, 651, 710, 722; *see also* modernism, 'and the Bloomsbury group'
 Bloxham, John Francis 90; *see also* *The Chameleon*
 The Blue Moon Press 482
The Blue Review 17, 202, 217, 219, 263, 264–7, 292, 314–36, 340, 372, 407
 Blunden, Edmund 314, 367, 384, 390, 392, 410, 413, 456, 469, 471, 472, 478, 575, 650, 846
 Blunt, Anthony 594, 602, 604, 615–16, 637
 Blunt, Frank 500
 Bodley Head press 71, 574, 580, 673, 676; *see also* Lane, John
 Bolshevism 628, 630, 775
Bolton Weekly Journal 45
 Bomberg, David 341, 408, 414, 415, 456, 478, 479, 483, 557
 Bomb Shop 341, 406, 475
 Boni & Liveright 350
 Bonnard, Pierre 492
 Bonwick, Alfred 366
 Boodson, Barbara Alison 888
 Book Beautiful tradition 23, 71, 469, 712, 786, 788–95
The Bookman 256, 513
Book Monthly 145, 238
Books 228
Books and the Public 540
 Borden, Mary 537, 546
Borderline 510, 523–29
 Bornstein, George 5–6, 202
 Bort, Françoise 595, 596
 Boswell, James 636
 Botticelli 107, 113, 116
 Bottomley, Gordon 574
 Bottrall, Ronald 661
 Boulestin, X. Marcel 320
 Bourdieu, Pierre 15, 16, 349
 Bowen, Elizabeth 258, 448, 682, 867, 871
 Bowles, Paul 872
 Boyle, William 167
Boy's Own Paper 43, 44
 Bozhovitch, G. 631
 Bradbrook, M. C. 850
 Bradbury, Malcolm 2, 3, 346, 735
 Braddon, Mary Elizabeth 36, 45
 Bradley, F. H. 285–6
 Bradley, Katherine 103
 Bradshaw, Laurence 581
 Brahm, Otto 798
 Brake, Laurel 70, 74–5
 Brancati, Vitaliano 680
 Brancusi, Constantin 302
 Brand, A. P. 645
 Branford, Frederick Victor 409, 410, 412
 Brangwyn, Frank 574, 575, 581
 Braque, Georges 615
 Braun, B. Vivian 528
 Brecht, Bertolt 593, 637, 664, 680
 Breton, André 422, 663, 688, 691, 694, 695, 700, 701
 Breughel, Peter 257
 Brezina, Otakar 629
 Bridges, Robert 107, 181, 183, 192, 193, 196, 471
 Bridgwater, Emmy 598, 702
 Brillat-Savarin, Jean Anthelme 244
Bristol Venture 218
 British Film Institute 529
 British imperialism 172
 British magazines 3, 4, 13; *see also* little magazines
 British Periodicals Ltd. 367
 Brittain, Vera 534
 Broch, Hermann 631
 Brockhurst, Gerald 501
 Brockway, Fenner 550
 Brodzky, Horace 257
 Bronowski, Jacob 359, 604, 609–10, 611, 713, 809, 816
 Brontë, Emily 444
 Brooker, Peter 263, 266, 300
 Brooke, Rupert 148, 149, 176, 183, 184, 185, 186, 188, 191, 192, 194, 195, 233, 243, 320, 405, 410
Broom 1, 20, 512, 515
 Brougham, Henry 35
 Brown, Alec 399, 636, 747
 Brown, E. R. 479
 Brown, Ford Madox 32, 56, 60, 148
 Brownell (Orwell), Sonia 829, 866, 870, 872
 Browne, Maurice 176, 177, 180, 181, 182, 185, 188
 Browne, W. Denis 320
 Browne, Wynyard 253
 Browning, Robert 62, 116
 Brown, Terence 735–6, 737
 Brugiere, Francis 515, 527
 Brunius, J. B. 701
 Brusak, Karel 680
 Bryher 428, 459, 505–29
 Buchan, John 89, 607
 Buhler, Robert 682

- The Builder* 42
 Bullen, A. H. 170
 Bunting, Basil 359
 Burdekin, Katherine 713, 809
Burlington Magazine 113, 574
 Burne-Jones, Edward 32, 61, 62, 63, 64, 110
 Burns, Robert 760, 765, 772, 775, 776, 780, 782, 783
 Bussy, Dorothy 682
 Butler, Josephine 536
 Butler, Samuel 432, 433, 436, 439, 441
 Butterfield, Herbert 846
 Butter, Peter 627, 632
 Butt, Isaac 153
 Butts, Mary 370, 441, 442, 511
 Buxton, Richard 191
 Bynner, Witter 423
 Byron, Lord 284, 585, 643, 683
 Byron, Robert 431
- Cadell, F. C. B. 324
 Caesar, Adrian 634, 652, 667
 Calas, Nicolas 701, 702
 Calder, Angus 880, 890
 Caldwell, Erskine 52
Calendar of Modern Letters 25, 315, 339, 340, 342, 344, 345, 347, 351, 355–6, 359, 373, 389–404, 455, 637, 811, 833, 834, 840, 846
 Callot, Jacques 501
 Calvinism 332, 334, 628
 Cambridge Apostles 432
Cambridge Left 17, 591, 594, 599–622
 Cambridge magazines 599–622
 Cambridge University 599, 606, 614, 831, 833
 Cambridge English 849–51
 Cambridge University Press 835, 836
 Cameron, Norman (J. N.) 660, 662, 713, 809, 823
 Campbell, Calder 60
 Campbell Hay, George 781, 784
 Campbell, John 150
 Campbell, Joseph 150, 743
 Campbell, Robin 869
 Campbell, Roy 395, 402, 431, 566, 881
 Campion, Thomas 585
 Camus, Albert 844
 Cannan, Gilbert 177, 180, 191, 193, 196, 226, 234, 316, 320, 321, 411
 Cape, Jonathan 426, 745
 Čapek, Karel 362, 884
 capitalism 289, 490, 609, 622, 635, 642, 644
 Capote, Truman 829, 861, 872
 Caradoc Press, 75, 125
 Carco, Francis 316, 317
 Carleton, William 153, 169
 Carlyle, Thomas 760
 Carpenter, Edward 91, 211
 Carpenter, Rhys 316
 Carr, Emily 334
 Carrière, Eugène Anatole 741
 Carswell, Catherine 775
 Carter, Frederick 501, 573, 575
 Carter, Huntley 280, 325
 Cartier-Bresson, Henri 602
 Casanova 96
 Case, Bertha 334
 Casement, Roger 173
Cassell's Illustrated Family Paper 39
 Castlelaw, A. C. 216
- Cather, Willa 236, 250
 Catholic Church 173, 708, 752
 Caton, R. A. 874
 Caudwell, Christopher 646, 659, 667
 Cavafy, Constantine P. 362, 423, 680
 Cavalcanti, Alberto 693
 Cavalcanti, Guido 184
 Cecil, David 430, 431
 Cecil, Hugh 430, 442
 Cecil, Mirabel 430, 442
 Celan, Paul 892
 Celticism 708, 760–5, 776, 784
The Celtic Review 763
 Celtic Revival 145, 150, 152–75, 708, 737, 740, 744
 Celtic Twilight 149, 173, 708, 738
 censorship 75, 85, 372, 430, 508–9, 517–18, 534, 708, 711, 746–9, 751, 756, 896
Century 230
Century Guild Hobby Horse 14, 23, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 79, 84, 90, 93, 120–141
 'The Guild Flag's Unfurling' 139–40
 Cernuda, Luis 680
 Cervantes, Miguel de 284
 Cézanne, Paul 316, 324, 489, 615
 Chabaud, Auguste 316
 Chadwick, H. M. 839, 842
 Chamberlain, Brenda 717, 731
 Chamberlain, Lord 169
 Chamberlain, Neville 624, 626, 650, 891
Chamber's Edinburgh Journal 38
 Chambers Jessie 234–5, 628, 629, 632
 Chambers, Robert 595, 672
 Chambers, William 595, 672
The Chameleon 74–5, 76–9, 90–1
 Chamson, André 674, 675, 682
 Chandler, Raymond 817
The Chapbook 709
 Chaplin, Charles 564
 Chapman, G. 845
Chapman 780
 Chapman and Hall (publishers) 417, 577, 579, 580, 581
 Chappell, William 678, 682
 Chardin, Jean Baptiste Simeon 486
 Chatto and Windus (publishers) 562, 808, 835, 836
 Chavanne, Puviss de 103, 110
 Chekhov, Anton 201, 371, 379, 396, 493
 Cherry, Deborah 300–1
 Chesterton, G. K. 131 n. 35, 139, 188, 253, 358, 401, 442, 539
Chicago Chap Book 52
 Childe, Wilfrid 465, 467, 495, 586
 de Chirico, Giorgio 561, 702
 Chisholm, Hugh 662
 Chiswick Press 93
The Chord 116
Chums (juvenile paper) 43
Chums 832, 886, 887
 Churchill, Suzanne W. 13, 14, 204, 225
 Churchill, Winston 270, 273, 320, 891
 Church, Richard 579
Christian Science Monitor 254
 Chughtai, Ismat 896
Cinéa 508
 cinema 458, 505–29, 579, 594, 612, 620, 753, 754; *see also*
 modernism, 'and visual culture'
The Cinema 505
Cinémagazine 508

- Cinema Quarterly* 528, 529, 735
Ciné pour Tous 508
 circulating libraries 46–7
 Čžek, Franz 502
 Clapp, Henry 52
The Clarion 213, 214, 218
 Clarion movement 220
 Clark, David R. 164
 Clarke, Austin 749–50
 Clarke, Bruce 269, 280, 283
 Clarke, Clara Savile 92
 Clark, Laurence 881
 class 32
 class journals 42
 Classicism 692, 696, 758, 796; *see also* Eliot, T. S.,
 ‘classicism’
 Clausen, George 501
 Clephan Palmer, E. 546
Close Up 14, 21, 456, 458, 459, 505–29
 Clough, A. H. 56, 855
 Clyde, Tom 153–5, 161, 738
 Cobden-Sanderson, Richard 347, 352
 Cockburn, John 216
 Cocteau, Jean 353, 362, 422, 423, 740
 Codell, Julie F. 133
 Coffey, Brian 359, 695
 Coleridge, Samuel Taylor 665, 813, 817, 838, 846
 Colette 508
Collier’s 230
 Collins, Mike 754
 Collinson, James 31, 54, 60
 Collins (Publishers) 580, 759
 Collins, Wilkie 39–41, 42, 50
 Collision-Morley, L. 371
Colour 488, 496, 497, 500, 501, 502
 Colour Publishing Company 496
 Colum, Padraic 150, 168, 173, 423, 748, 753
 Commedia dell’Arte 792, 796, 802
 Common, Jack 375, 382
 communism 272, 354, 360, 361, 566, 593, 594, 618, 620, 628,
 630, 644, 654, 814, 896
 Communist Party of Great Britain 398, 455, 518, 592, 619,
 624, 634, 640, 654, 689
 Conan Doyle, Arthur:
 Sherlock Holmes stories 70, 98
 Conder, Charles 93, 95, 110, 574
 Coney, John 501
 Confucius 278, 576
The Connoisseur 574
 Connolly, Cyril 1, 3, 340, 346, 430, 431, 432, 442, 445, 449,
 456, 593, 638, 647, 648, 658, 669, 685, 827, 828–31,
 856–73, 874
 ‘Fifty Years of Little Magazines’ 430
 ‘Little Magazines’ 858
 Conquest, Robert 891
 Conrad, Joseph 15, 91, 99, 146, 200, 228, 229, 231, 233, 235,
 236, 322, 417, 493, 542, 548
 Conservative Party 239, 624
 Constable and Co. 808, 810, 822
 Constructivism 693, 795, 800
Contact 511, 512
 Contact Editions 511
 The Contact Publishing Company 511
Contemporaries 605, 606
Contemporaries and Makers 601, 605
Contemporary Poetry and Prose 591, 597, 688–703, 718
Contemporary Review 35, 43, 58, 166, 230, 366
 Conway, Moncure 131, 134
 Coombes, B. L. 686
 Cook, Clarence 65
 Cooke, Alastair 359
 Cooke, Dorian 881, 883, 889, 892
 Cooper, Barbara 682
 Cooper, Edith 103
 Copley, John 501
 Coppard, A. E. 426, 465, 500, 548
 Corbière, Tristan 394
 Corday, Charlotte 702
 Coria, Benjamin 496
 Corkery, Daniel 737, 746, 753
Cork Magazine 153
 Cork, Richard 307
 Cornford, Frances 192
 Cornford, John 594, 603
Cornhill Magazine 36, 43, 79, 96, 200, 228, 244, 827, 857
 Corvo, Baron 89
 ‘The Coterie’ 464–7
Coterie 4, 22, 242, 248, 341, 369, 396, 414, 456, 457, 458,
 462–84, 557, 595, 672; *see also* *New Coterie*
 Coughlan, Patricia 737
Country Life 146
 Cournos, John 193, 199, 280, 478
 Cowley, Abraham 845
 Cowley, Malcolm 1, 3, 8
 Cowper Powys, John 731
 Cox, R. G. 845, 847, 848
 Coyle, Kathleen 542
 Crackanthorpe, Hubert 83, 89, 91, 93
 Craig, Cairns 708, 710, 711
 Craig, David 780, 782–3
 Craig, Edward 792
 Craig, Edward Gordon 4, 21, 145, 193, 414, 417, 424, 432, 439,
 707, 711, 712, 713, 785–805
 ‘Art of the Theatre’ 707, 711, 785–805
 Moscow Hamlet 802, 805
 theatre as *performance* 786, 787, 789
 (über)marionette 795–801
 see also *The Mask; The Marionette*
 Cranach, Lucas 113, 114
 Crane, Hart 356, 362, 396, 664
 Crane, Walter 130, 134
The Crayon 32, 65
 Crevel, René 512
Crisis 207
The Criterion 3, 13, 14, 15, 21, 23, 204, 252, 259, 288, 339–40,
 343, 344, 345, 346–63, 373, 377, 379, 381, 386, 455, 503–4,
 506, 531, 557, 560, 593, 595, 620, 653, 672, 674, 709, 736,
 749, 772, 810, 811, 827, 828, 833, 835, 836, 843, 857, 859,
 873, 879, 883
The Critic 60, 828
 Critics Group Press 678
 Croce, Benedetto 317
 Croft, Andy 634, 638, 640, 641, 642
 Crombie Saunders, R. 783
 Cromwell, Peter 867
 Crosssthaite, Arthur 316
 Crowe Ransom, John 356, 396, 472
 Crow, Gerald 465
 Crowley, Aleister 571–2, 577
 Crozier, Andrew 832, 892
 Cruickshank, Norah 890
 Cubism 148, 219, 245, 247, 263, 280, 292, 293, 299, 303, 304,
 309, 329, 479, 489, 491, 492, 521, 557, 563, 615, 616, 693,
 764, 795

- Cullen, Countee 525, 540
 Cullen, John 614, 616, 809
 Cullis, Winifred 539
 cultural criticism 552–69
 cultural formations 2, 16–21, 74, 332–36, 457
 culture:
 high vs. low 243–5, 594, 616, 729, 830, 863
 mass 244, 259, 483–4, 531, 729, 830, 858
 ‘middlebrow’ 244, 729
 Culver, Donald 842–3
 Cummings, E. E. 423, 510, 598, 689, 691, 872
 Cunard, Nancy 525, 536, 593, 638
 Cunninghame, A. T. 592, 628, 629–30, 638, 776
 Cunninghame Graham, R. B. 107, 231, 237
 Cunningham, Valentine 623, 639
 Curie, Marie 536
 Curtius, Ernst Robert 346, 349, 362
 Curwen Press 866
 Czinner, Paul 517
- Dadaism 149, 248, 342, 500, 515, 557, 597, 689, 740
 Daedalus, Stephen, *see* Joyce, James
 Daiches, David 778, 853, 885
 dailies (newspapers) 77, 212 n. 22, 216, 222, 539
Daily Chronicle 254
Daily Express 43, 216, 505
Daily Express (Dublin) 160, 171
The Daily Graphic 789
The Daily Herald 393, 417, 455, 479–80
The Daily Mail 43, 69, 77, 117, 216, 228, 230, 343, 505, 523
The Daily News 230, 546, 550
The Daily Worker 634
 Dallas, E. S. 33, 34, 42, 50
Dana 4, 150, 152–75
 Dante 99, 284, 576, 661
 Darantière, Maurice 511
 D’Arcy, Ella 89
 D’Arcy, Martin 358
 Darwin, Charles 761
Das Überbrettl 292
 Davidson, Jo 334
 Davidson, John 183
 Davies, Idris 643, 717, 724
 Davies, Rhys 483, 717, 725, 734
 Davies, W. H. 192, 231, 243, 320, 413, 416–17, 421, 424, 464, 469, 501, 576, 579, 580, 717
 Davis, Alex 150, 737, 743
 Davis, F. C. 549
 Davis, Helen 620–1
 Davison, Edward 254
 Davis, Thomas 171–2
 Dawson, Christopher 358
 Day Lewis, Cecil 385, 442, 448, 591, 603, 637, 642, 643, 652, 666–7, 669, 682, 685, 756, 829, 867, 885
Daylight 677
 Day, Susanne R. 500
 Dean, Basil 193
 Deane, Patrick 623
 Dean of Salisbury 181
 Dearmer, Percy 92
Decachord 460, 570–88
 Decadence 69, 70, 74, 76–100, 133, 760
 Delacroix, Eugène 615
 Delafield, E. M. 442
 De la Mare, Walter 177, 188, 192, 194, 233, 243, 320, 400, 413, 417, 421, 424, 469, 472, 501, 502, 557, 575, 881, 882
 Delaney, J. P. 106
 Delaphine Scull, Walter 110
 Delap, Lucy 217–18
 Del Re, Arundel 177, 179, 180, 184, 185, 191, 193
 Del Renzio, Toni 598, 688, 693, 700–3
 Delluc, Louis 508
 Demant, V. A. 358
Demolizione 292
 Demoor, Marysa 31
 Dent, Edward J. 320, 373, 374, 375
 Derain, André 316, 321, 330, 423, 474, 790
 Derème, Tristan 316
 Derriman, Robert 415
 De Ruggiero, Guido 371
Der Sturm 8, 292, 793
 Descartes, René 286
Des Imagistes 189, 195, 419
De Stijl 458, 557
 Deutsch, Barbara 423
 Devane, James 736, 753, 754
 De Valera, Éamon 757
 Diaghilev, Sergei 712, 790
The Dial (U.K.) 19, 23, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 79, 93, 101–119, 140 n. 89, 249, 468, 483, 485, 514, 516, 786, 789, 859
The Dial (U.S.) 4, 15, 52, 347, 459, 512
 dialogism, Bakhtinian 215–16, 225
Diane of the Green Van 15
 Dickens, Charles 36, 39, 373, 577
 Bleak House 39
 Pickwick Papers 39
 see also Household Words
 Dickens, Anthony 877, 883
 Dickinson & Co. 57
 Dickinson, Eric 465
 Dickinson, Patric 888
Die Aktion 292, 793
 Dieppe 94, 97, 98
 digital technology 5
 Dillon, Kathleen 333
 Dimitrov, Georg 635
 Dirac, Paul 618
 Dircks, Rudolf 91
 Disertori, Benvenuto 501
 Dismond, Geraldyn 525
 Dismort, Jessica 264, 265, 268, 291, 296, 300–1, 305, 316, 320, 334, 557, 558
 Dixon, Ella Hepworth 89
 Dixon, Richard Watson 61
 Dobb, Maurice 619
 Dobic, James 878
 Dobrée, Bonamy 239, 354, 358, 506, 440
 Dobson, Frank 558
 Dodds, E. R. 465–6
 Dodgson, Campbell 114
The Dome 72–3, 75, 101, 113–119, 140 n. 89, 160, 407, 469, 786, 789
 Donaghy, Lyle 735
 Donne, John 192, 391, 393, 431
 Donnelly, Charles 638
 Donoghue, Denis 357
 Doone, Rupert 650
 Dos Passos, John 510
 Dostoevsky, Fyodor 314, 396, 436, 627, 631
 Doubleday, Anne 537
 Dougal, Samuel Herbert 436
 Douglas, Gavin 769
 Douglas, C. H. 224, 237, 619, 775
 Douglas, Keith (K. C.) 659, 832, 885

- Douglas, Lord Alfred 90, 91
 Douglas, Norman 237, 580, 775
 Dovzhenko, Alexander 508
 Dowden, Edward 173
 Dowie, Menie Murial 89
 Dowling, Linda 72, 468
 Dowson, Ernest 91, 92, 93, 95, 96, 99, 415, 465
 Dowson, Jane 16, 457, 458, 459
Drawing and Design 514
 Drey, O. Raymond 266, 320, 321, 416, 557
 Drinan, Adam 784
 Drinkwater, John 176, 183, 185, 188, 192, 194, 320, 413, 575
 Druid Press 709, 716, 717, 887
 Drummond, John 606, 607, 619
 dualism, philosophical 286–7
Dublin Magazine 708, 710, 711, 717, 735–58
Dublin University Magazine 153
 DuBois, W. E. B. 525
 Ducasse, Isidore 281
 Du Coudray, Helene 444–5, 446
 Dujardin, Edouard 173
 Dukes, Ashley 193
 Dumas, Alexander 41
 Dunbar, William 765, 772, 780, 782
 Duncan, Andrew 892
 Duncan, Isadora 330, 785, 804
 Duncan, John 761, 763
 Duncan, Ronald 5 n. 12, 359
 Dunett, Denzil 718
 Dunhill, Thos. F. 160
 Durand, John B. 65
 Dürer, Albrecht 113, 486, 501
 Durrell, Gerald 884
 Durrell, Lawrence 880, 881, 884
 Dyson, Will 250
- Eagle, Solomon, *see* Squire, J. C.
 Eagleton, Terry 854
 Earp, T. W. ('Tommy') 393, 462, 464, 465, 466, 467, 483
 Easter (1916) 152, 391
 Eberhart, Richard 614, 669
 Eddington, Arthur Stanley 371
The Edinburgh Magazine 709
The Edinburgh Review 29, 30, 34, 35, 230, 244, 551, 672, 759
 Editions Poetry London ('EPL') 874, 875, 876, 885, 886, 887, 890
 Education Act (1870) 43
The Educational Journal of Scotland 772
 Edwardians vs. Georgians 343, 344, 384, 475
 Edwards, Dorothy 401
 Edwards, Paul 311, 458, 460
 Egerton, George 77, 89 n. 31
 Eglinton, John, *see* Magee, William Kirkpatrick
 egoism 277, 278–9, 283
The Egoist 3, 4, 5, 12, 13, 14, 22, 23, 70, 75, 145, 175, 194, 206, 221, 224, 225, 242, 264–7, 269–89, 301, 315, 340, 344, 406, 414, 416, 466, 478, 485, 489, 503, 510, 535
see also *The Freewoman* and *New Freewoman*
 Egoist Press 264, 265, 288, 510, 554
 Einstein, Albert 618
 General Theory of Relativity 371
 Eisenstein, Sergei 458, 508, 512, 513, 515, 518, 522–3, 526, 528
Battleship Potemkin 517
 Eksteins, Modris 410
 Eley, Geoff 219
 Eliot, George 35, 36, 45, 243
 Eliot, Simon 45
 Eliot, T. S. 12, 13, 14, 15, 23, 52, 59, 147, 149, 203, 204, 226, 239, 240, 247, 249, 251, 254, 255, 259, 264, 265, 281–9, 291, 296, 307, 314, 315, 339–45, 346–63, 364, 366, 371, 372, 374, 377, 384, 385, 387, 388, 399, 402–3, 404, 421, 424, 441, 462, 463, 464, 465–6, 478, 495, 503–4, 510, 531, 542, 549, 556–7, 558, 559, 563, 566, 576, 592, 593, 594, 595, 597, 600, 603, 609, 610, 612, 615, 618, 621, 624, 627, 630, 632, 636, 646, 650, 651, 652, 653, 655, 657, 661, 665, 669, 670, 710, 711, 712, 723, 733, 737, 738, 743, 752, 760, 779, 784, 810–11, 813, 816, 818, 820, 828, 830, 831–2, 836, 838, 839, 840, 841, 844, 845, 846, 847, 850, 873, 874, 876, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 889
 and tradition 284–6, 558
 Catholicism 355
 classicism 352, 353–4, 355, 357, 377
 'Last Words' 361–3
 Toryism 345, 352, 382, 385
 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' 374, 383, 558, 760
The Waste Land 15, 240, 252, 253, 255, 340, 344, 346, 347, 349, 350, 402, 403, 404, 455, 483, 549, 609, 610, 613, 646, 710, 712, 723, 810–11, 817
see also *The Criterion*
 Eliot, Vivien 349, 350–1
 Elizabethans 555
 Ellerman, Annie Winifred, *see* Bryher
 Ellerman, Sir John 509, 511
 Elliott, Eric 510
 Ellis, Havelock 91, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 357, 438, 439, 512, 579
 Ellison, Ralph 872
 Ellis Roberts, R. 429, 441, 442
 Ellmann, Richard 1
 Elton, Arthur 697
 Elton, Godfrey 192
 Eltzbacher, Paul 278
 Eluard, Paul 422, 597, 662, 663, 693, 694, 701
 Emery, L. K., *see* Leventhal, A. J. 'Con'
 Empson, William 346, 359, 362, 399, 591, 594, 598, 600, 604, 605, 606, 608, 612, 614, 616, 617, 657, 659, 669, 689, 691, 732, 779, 839, 844, 846, 850, 851
The Enemy 18, 19, 265, 311, 460, 548, 552–69
 English art 58, 456
The English Journal 224, 595
The English Review 17, 22, 100, 145, 199, 200–1, 202, 215, 217, 221, 224, 226–39, 292, 294, 315, 380, 412, 416, 417, 507, 629, 798, 833
The Englishwoman 218, 408, 417
 Enlightenment ideals 230
 Enright, D. J. 845, 854, 887
Epilogue 4, 21, 23, 707, 711, 712, 713, 806–24
Ephemeral Bibelots 69
 Epstein, Jacob 294, 302, 408, 414, 456, 492, 495
The Equinox 572
 Eragny Press 498
 Erskine of Marr, Ruairaidh 775
 Ervine, St John 416–17, 535, 542
Essays in Criticism 848
 Essenin, Sergei 628, 629
 Etchells, Frederick 291, 294, 296, 305, 558
 Etheridge, Ken 717, 718
 Eurythmics 330
 European magazines 4, 21
European Quarterly 21, 592, 596, 623–46
 Evans, Caradoc 717, 726, 731, 734
 Evans, Ewart 717
 Evans, Sir Ifor 376
 Evans, Margiad 717, 734

- Evans, Patrick 881, 884
 Evans, Powys 575
 Evans, Stuart 121 n. 4
The Evergreen 4, 74, 120–141, 710, 759–84, 788
 Every, George 358
Everyman 217
 Ewart, Gavin 598, 652, 659, 664, 689, 691, 717, 881, 883
Experiment 358, 591, 592, 594, 598, 599–622, 689
Experimental Cinema 515, 516, 528, 529
 Expressionism 245, 263, 292, 293, 304, 329, 563, 693
 German 2
- Faber and Faber (publishers) 360, 362, 718, 828, 874, 883, 886, 887
 Faber, Geoffrey 352, 356, 357, 360
 Faber and Gwyer (publishers) 15, 343, 352, 353, 354
 Fabian Arts Group 210, 211, 214
Fact 736, 754, 879
 Fairburn, A. R. D. 632
 Falstaff 556
Family Herald 39, 40
 Fanon, Franz 612
 Farelly, John 848
 Farjeon, Annabel 682
 Farjeon, Eleanor 542
 Farr, Florence 159
 fascism 360, 361, 566, 592, 594, 618, 619, 626, 634, 635, 637, 638, 642, 644, 645, 646, 670, 690, 708, 773, 793–4, 856, 867
- Fassett, Irene 350, 356
 Faulkner, Charles 61
 Faulkner, Edwin 586
 Faulkner, William 52, 441
 Faure, Gabriel 845
 Fauvism 263, 264, 267, 316, 324, 325, 328–30, 334, 335, 336, 491
 Fawcett, Millicent 536
 Faxon, F. W. 12 n. 34, 69
 Fay, Frank 162, 168
 Fay, William G. 162, 168, 174
 Fedden, Robin 604
 female suffrage 199, 266, 269, 270, 271, 277, 300; *see also* feminism
 feminism 265, 268, 270, 271, 274, 275–8, 280, 442–8, 538, 543, 804; *see also* little magazines, 'and gender'; modernism, 'and gender'
- Ferguson, John 768
 Ferguson, Samuel 153
 Fergusson, John Duncan 8, 264, 266, 268, 316, 317, 319, 320, 324–36, 414, 492, 493, 501, 708, 709, 710, 764–5, 783, 784
- Fiction Bureau 45
 Field, Michael 103, 107, 110
 Field, Xenia, *see* Lowinsky, Xenia
 Figgis, Darrell 181, 182
Film Art 528, 529
Film für Alle 513
 Film Society 506, 507, 514, 516, 517, 518
Film Technik 513
Fin de siècle 33, 69–100, 146, 159, 465, 807
 and modernist journals 88
 Firbank, Ronald 495
- First World War 19, 145, 196, 200, 203, 208, 241, 242, 252, 267, 290, 292, 295–6, 307–8, 311, 313, 346, 369, 390, 391–2, 405, 408–11, 414, 456, 460, 461, 464, 478, 485, 511, 517, 530, 535, 552, 570, 572, 576, 594, 600, 609, 627, 631, 709, 760, 764, 765, 792, 820
- Fisher, Charles 717
 Fisher Unwin, T. 160
- Fitton, James 636
 Flaubert, Gustave 284, 322
 Flecker, James Elroy 188, 192, 320, 397, 402
 Fleming, Ian 870
 Fletcher, Herbert 500
 Fletcher, Ian 70, 123, 130, 131, 137, 887
 Fletcher, John Gould 148, 182, 192, 282, 303, 341, 354, 413, 417, 422, 423, 424, 456, 467, 478
 Flint, F. S. 149, 180, 181, 182, 184, 185, 188, 189, 191, 192, 193, 196, 233, 280, 282, 342, 351, 354, 371, 393, 421–2, 425, 456, 478, 580
Focus 711, 712, 806–24
 Fogazzaro, Antonio 632
Folios of New Writing 677–8
 Foot, Paul 624
 Forbes, Ernest 493
 Forbes, Mansfield 850
 Ford, Ford Madox 20, 32, 100, 145, 199–201, 203, 215, 224, 226–39, 294, 296, 298, 302, 313, 322, 425, 474, 494, 495, 542, 585 n. 72, 833; *see also* *The English Review*; Hueffer, Ford Madox
 Ford, Walter 644
 Foreman, James 766
Form 4, 15, 22, 456, 457, 458, 460, 570–88
 Formalism 341
 Forster, E. M. 177, 253, 255, 256, 258, 346, 390, 431, 432, 542, 548, 620, 842, 894
Fortnightly Review 35, 36, 43, 44, 200, 230, 507
 Fortune Press 874, 876, 886
Forward 211
 Foster, John Wilson 735
 Foucault, Michel 146
 Foulin, T. N. 766
 Fox-Bourne, H. R. 130
 Fox, Pamela 634, 639, 640
 Fox, Ralph 636, 637, 658, 673, 674
 Fragonard, Jean-Honoré 257
 France, Anatole 226, 870
 Franco, General Francisco 593, 638
 Frankau, Gilbert 547
 Fraser, Claud Lovat 414, 416–17, 501, 575
 Fraser, G. S. 784, 885, 891
 Fraser, Nancy 217, 219–20
Fraser's Magazine 36, 54
 Frazer, Sir James 662
 Fredeman, William 54
Free Man 772
 Freeman, John 243, 393, 424
The Freeman's Journal 167, 171
 Freemantle, Anne 442
The Freewoman 14, 145, 208, 221, 263–4, 266, 269–89, 292, 535; *see also* *The New Freewoman*
- French, Cecil 502, 575, 579, 581
 French Morse, Samuel 660
 Freud, Lucian 682, 867, 878
 Freud, Sigmund 460, 517, 618, 697, 698, 813
 Friel, George 779
 Friesz, Othon 316, 741
 Frost, Peter 126–7, 130, 192
 Frost, Robert 280, 422, 423
 Fry, Maxwell 628
 Fry, Roger 253, 291, 292, 324, 364, 372, 373, 388, 415, 441, 492, 555
 Fulford, William 61, 62
 Fuller, John 879
 Fuller, J. F. C. 577, 864
 Fuller, Loïe 330

- Fuller, Roy (R. B.) 654, 659, 874, 881, 882, 883, 885
 Furst, Herbert 188, 486, 496–500, 502
 Fussell, Paul 409
 Futurism 18, 19, 148, 149, 184, 186, 192, 193, 245, 247, 263,
 279, 292, 293, 298, 299, 301, 304, 305, 309, 311–12, 321,
 457, 479, 489, 540, 552, 563, 629, 712, 788, 794, 795, 800,
 804
 Fyfe, Hamilton 636
- Gabain, Ethel 501
 Gagnier, Regina 133–4
 Gallacher, Willie 624
 Galsworthy, John 226, 231, 233, 237, 239, 343, 344, 384, 401,
 417, 449
 Galwey, Patricia 888
 Gance, Abel 508
 Gandhi, Mahatma 894
 Garbo, Greta 517
 García Lorca, Federico 632, 680, 690
 Gardiner, Wrey 874
 Gardner, Diana 877
 Gardner, R. 643
 Garioch, Robert 778, 780, 784
 Garman, Douglas 391, 394–8, 400, 636
 Garman, Lorna 395
 Garman, Mary 394
 Garnett, Constance 229, 231
 Garnett, David 431
 Garnett, Edward 228, 229, 745
 Garnett, R. 89–90, 110
 Gascoyne, David 359, 597, 598, 662, 663, 689, 691, 881, 890,
 892
 Gasiorek, Andrzej 263, 264, 267
 Gattie, Walter M. 44
 Gaucher, Maurice 768
 Gaudier-Brzeska, Henri 199, 265, 267, 291, 293, 294, 296, 302,
 310, 313, 316, 414, 456, 467, 474, 478, 493, 494, 495, 501
 Gauguin, Paul 324, 489
 Gaumont Studios 513
 Gawthorpe, Mary 292
 Gay and Bird (publishers) 90
 Geddes, Patrick 123, 130, 135, 138, 334, 710, 760–5, 766, 776,
 777
 General Strike (May 1926) 398, 403–4, 456, 483, 535, 608, 670
 George, V. 185, 253
 George, Waldemar 557
 George, W. L. 416–17
 Georgian poetry 265, 267, 339, 406, 409–10, 410, 421, 461,
 464, 465, 471–3, 501, 557, 573–4, 583, 765
 vs. modernist poetry 405–6, 413–15, 602; *see also*
 Edwardians vs. Georgians
Georgian Poetry 176, 185, 186, 189, 191, 317, 320, 324, 374, 405,
 410, 413, 418, 419, 421, 423, 575
 Georgian realism 341
 Georgians 147, 176–96, 201, 266, 321, 335, 343, 344, 355, 375,
 405, 417, 426, 456, 469–70, 478, 500, 501, 594, 670; *see*
also neo-Georgians; Georgian poetry; *Georgian Poetry*
The Germ 25, 31–32, 35, 51–60, 61, 62, 64, 65, 79, 464
 German National Socialism 361; *see also* Nazism
 Gershenzon, M. 628
 Gertler, Mark 408, 492
 Ghulam-us-Saiyadain, Khwaja 897
 Giacometti, Alberto 663
 Gibbings, Robert 414, 415, 501
 Gibbons, Stella 256
 Gibson, Wilfrid 176, 180, 182, 183, 185, 186, 188, 191, 194, 195,
 196, 233, 264, 316, 317, 320, 372, 586
- Gide, André 349, 396, 512, 680
 Gilbert and Sullivan 94
 Gilbert, Stuart 611
 Gill, Eric 341, 414, 415, 417, 475
 Gillett, Gabriel 92, 93
 Gilman, Harold 487, 488, 491, 492, 493, 495
 Ginner, Charles 487, 488, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 501,
 504
 Ginner, Ruby 488
 Giono, Jean 674
Girl's Own Paper 43–4
 Gishford, Anthony 518
 Gissing, George 30, 37, 43, 44, 45, 47, 50, 90, 842; *see also*
New Grub Street
Glebe 224
 Gleizes, Albert 764
The Globe 177
 God 811–15, 816, 819
 Godwin, E. W. 785, 788, 790
 Godwin, William 18
 Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von 284
 Gogarty, Oliver St John 173, 747
 Golden Cockerell Press 417
The Golden Hind 23, 456, 460, 570–88
 Goldie, David 369
 Golding, Louis 393, 407, 411, 426, 483, 500, 501
 Goldman, Jane 340, 344
 Goldman, Willy 683
 Goldring, Douglas 5 n. 12, 145, 148, 192, 226, 228,
 229, 233–4, 292, 298, 463, 476–7, 478, 479,
 495
 Goldschmidt, Karl 810
 Gollancz, Victor 641
 Goncharova, Natalie 316, 790
 Goncourt brothers 104, 106, 116
 Gonne, Iselut 745
 Gonne, Maud 162, 163, 165, 745
Good Housekeeping 536
 Goodland, John 882, 884
 Goodman, Richard 603
 Goodsir Smith, Sydney 780, 784
 Goodwin, George 376
 Goodwin, Geraint 717, 734
 Goodyear, Frederick 316, 335
 Gordon Keown, Anna 253
 Gorell, Lord 823
 Gorky, Maxim 201, 636, 894, 895
 Gosse, Edmund 93, 95, 110, 180, 243, 249, 400, 428
 Gothic architecture 136
 Gothic Revival 132, 615
 Gould, Gerald 449
 Gould, Simon 513
 Gourmont, Remy de 13 n. 34, 196, 273, 281, 284
 Gowing, Lawrence 678
 Goya, Francisco 257
 Graff, Gerald 849
 Grafton Group 321
 Grahame, Kenneth 90
 Graham, Sydney, *see* Graham, W. S.
 Graham, W. S. 784
 Grainger, Percy 138
 Grant, Duncan 492, 682, 790
 Grant, Joy 423, 577
 Grant, Kenneth 571
 Grant, Steffi 571
 Granville, Charles, *see* Swift, Stephen
Graphic 46

- Graves, Robert 19, 149, 196, 242, 243, 351, 390, 392, 396, 401, 423, 431, 449, 462–84, 486, 500, 501, 536, 540, 575, 576, 586, 711, 712, 713, 808–10, 812, 813, 815, 816–17, 822, 823, 871
- Graves, Sally 809
- Gray, Cecil 445
- Gray, John 92, 93, 103, 104, 106, 107, 110, 116
- Great Depression 608, 609, 670
- Great Famine 149, 153
- Greenberg, Clement 865, 872
- Greene, Graham 253, 441, 457, 581, 682
- Green, G. F. 440
- Green, Paul 525
- Green, Romney 180, 181, 183, 191
- Green, Russell 462, 464, 465, 466, 467, 475, 483
- Greenwood, Arthur 366
- Gregg, Frances 546
- Gregory, Horace 660, 665
- Gregory, Lady Augusta 152, 158, 161, 166, 167, 168, 169, 757
- Gregory Smith, G. 776
- Grey Walls Press 874
- Grierson, John 529
- Grieve, C. M., *see* MacDiarmid, Hugh
- Griffin, Gerald 169
- Griffith, Arthur 158, 165
- Griffith, Lewellyn Wyn 717, 724, 731, 734
- Griffiths, Eric 606
- Griffith, Wyn 717
- Grigson, Geoffrey 359, 402, 591, 592, 593, 596–7, 605, 647–68, 813, 828–9, 831, 882, 883, 884, 889
- Gropius, Walter 846
- Gross, John 398
- Group X 457, 460, 495, 554
- Gruber Garvey, Ellen 231
- The Guardian* 853
- Guevara, Álvaro 496
- Guidry, Lorelei 804
- guilds 73–4, 126; *see also* *Century Guild Hobby Horse*
- Guilloux, Louis 674, 680
- Gunn, Neil 708, 710, 764, 770, 772–3, 775
- Gurney, Ivor 392, 394, 845
- Guthrie, James 180, 574
- Guthrie Smith, Jean 500
- Gutman, Ethel 530, 545–6
- Gutman, Sydney 547
- Gutteridge, Bernard H. 662, 881, 882
- Gwynn, Aneirin Ap 724
- Habermas, Jürgen 16, 219, 222, 537, 544
theory of the public sphere 219, 222, 530–2, 551
- Hackett, Francis 748
- Haddon, A. C. 842
- Haden Guest, Stephen 531
- Hadjiafxendi, Kyriaki 30, 31
- Hagreen, Philip 501
- Hall, Radclyffe 344, 430, 438, 443, 446, 534
- Hamburger, Michael 887
- Hamer, Robert 608
- Hamilton, Cicely 538, 542
- Hamilton, Walter 131, 294, 305
- Hammett, Dashiell 817
- Hammond, Gertrude 89
- Hammond, Mary 46
- Hammond, Paul 522
- Hamnett, Nina 462, 466, 474, 475, 493
- Hampshire, Stuart 359
- Hampton, Mark 212 n. 22
- Hamsun, Knut 580, 745, 750
- Hanfstaengl, F. 317, 486, 498
- Hanley, James 362, 717
- Harcourt, Brace 426
- Harding, D. W. 831, 842, 844, 854
- Harding, Jason 345, 606
- Hardy, Thomas 17, 30, 48–50, 85, 95–6, 192, 200, 226, 228, 229, 231, 232, 233, 237, 243, 412, 431, 432, 464, 470, 471, 500, 547, 549, 584
Jude the Obscure 95, 99
Tess of the d'Urbervilles 46
- Hare, Kenneth 500
- Hare, William (Lord Ennismore) 604
- Harland, Henry 85, 87, 88
- Harlem Renaissance 510, 540
- Harmsworth, Alfred 38, 43
- Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 69, 77
- Harris, Frank 237, 238
- Harris, John 718, 722
- Harrison, Austin 201, 236, 237, 238, 294, 416–17
- Harrison, Frederic 236
- Harrison, Ruth 357
- Harrison, Tom 598, 664, 697
- Hart, Imogen 73–4, 75
- Hartkopf, Roy 643, 644
- Hartley, L. P. 392
- Haslam, Michael 892
- Hastings, Beatrice 202, 218
- Hatcher, John 116
- Hawkins, Desmond 359
- Hayes, Father J. 216
- Hazlitt, William 35, 364
- H.D. (Hilda Doolittle) 269, 280, 342, 384, 421–2, 456, 458, 478, 508–12, 517, 521–2, 523–4, 527, 549
- Healey, Denys 836
- Hearst, William Randolph 86
- Heath, Frederick 545, 546, 547, 551
- Hebblethwaite, Eleanor 587
- Heddlw* 732
- Heeley, Wilfred 61
- Heffer's Bookshop 581
- Hegelian Absolute 285
- Hegelianism 276, 286
- hegemonic culture 17
- Heifetz, Jascha 417
- Heine, Heinrich 113
- Heinemann 417, 503
- Hemel Hempstead Gazette* 888
- Hemingway, Ernest 52, 440, 449, 870
- Henderson, Frank 341, 475, 477
- Hendersons Bookshop 406, 417
- Hendry, J. F. 779, 874, 881, 891, 892
- Henry & Co. 107
- Henryson, Robert 765
- Heppenstall, Rayner 661, 880, 881
- Herbin, Auguste 316
- Herford, Charles Harold 156, 157–8
- Hernández, M. 680
- Herrick, Robert 594, 620, 661
- Herring, Robert 429, 459, 512, 513–14, 522, 523–4, 527, 717, 718, 832, 895
- Heseltine, Nigel 710, 717, 723, 734
- Heseltine, Olive 543
- Hesse, Herman 344, 349, 775
- Hewison, Robert 827, 857, 886
- Hewlett, Maurice 177, 179, 181, 183, 184, 192, 196, 417
- Hibberd, Dominic 148, 419, 425

- Higgins, Bertram 355, 395, 397, 399, 400
Higgins, F. R. 738, 740, 744, 749–50
Hill, Brian 493
Hill, Derek 682
Hilliard, Chris 639, 640
Hillyer, Robert 384
The Hindu 894
Hindu philosophy 611
Hinks, Roger 358
Hiroshige 113
Hitchcock, Alfred 516, 526
Hitler, Adolf 360, 592, 617, 619, 625, 654, 668, 777, 865, 866
Hobbes, Thomas 846
Hobby Horse, see *Century Guild Hobby Horse*
Hobday, Charles 389, 391, 392, 394, 397, 402
Hobshawm, Eric 603, 606, 607
Hodge, Alan 713, 809, 823
Hodgson, Ralph 493
Hodgson, Stuart 550
Hoffman, F. 3, 11–13, 16, 52, 201, 226, 463
Hofmannsthal, Hugo von 362
Hogarth Press 241, 489, 536, 595, 669, 670, 675–9, 682, 885, 893
Hogarth, William 555
Hölderlin, Friedrich 887, 892
Hole, Phillippa 583
Holewinski, Jan de 493
Holland, Camille Cecile 433, 436
Holland, James 636
Holley, Horace 8
Holloway, John 854
Hollywood 515, 568, 621
Holman Hunt, William 31, 54, 57, 58, 59, 61, 63
Holme, Charles 789
Holmes, Charles J. 75, 113, 114, 118, 119, 326
Holby, Winifred 534, 535, 536, 542
homosexuality 14, 75, 76, 78, 80, 90–1, 94, 344, 443
 and homophobia 76, 82
Hood, Stuart 779
Hopkins, Chris 708, 709, 710
Hopkins, Gerald Manley 600, 638, 650, 662, 830, 841, 845, 850
Hopkins, Gerard 495
Horizon 679, 680, 685, 686, 701, 732, 827–30, 856–73, 874, 875
Horne, Herbert 103, 123, 136, 137
Horniman, Annie 163, 165, 168
Horton, W. T. 91
Hound and Horn 512, 528
The Hours Press 536
Household Words 36, 40
Housman, Laurence 103, 110, 113
Howarth, Herbert 362
Howarth, T. E. B. 614
Hsüeh-Yin 680
Hubback, Eva 538
Huculak, J. Matthew 203, 204
Hudson, Stephen, see Schiff, Sydney
Hudson, W. H. 231, 237
Hueffer, Elsie 235
Hueffer, Ford Madox 92, 181, 183, 189, 192, 196, 199, 231, 290, 292, 417, 581, 629; see also Ford, Madox Ford
Hughes, Langston 510, 636
Hughes, Linda 86
Hughes, Richard 432, 500, 501
Hughes, Ted 888
Hulme, T. E. 148, 150, 181, 182, 186, 190, 191, 193, 199, 201, 202, 219, 224, 291, 776
humanism 271
Humphreys, Richard 306
Humphries, Emyr 717
Hunter, G. Leslie 324
Hunt, Leigh 55
Hunt, Violet 235, 236, 311
Hussey, Maurice 837, 845
Hutchinson, Ward 813
Hutchison, Isobel Wylie 770
Hutchinson, M St John 373, 374
Hutton, Archdeacon William 364
Huxley, Aldous 237, 314, 340, 342, 353, 366, 370, 371, 372, 421, 431, 432, 440, 462, 465, 466, 467, 483, 494, 495, 548, 576, 579, 580, 593, 631, 836
Huxley, Julian 237, 371, 441
Huysmans, Joris-Karl 394
Huyssens, Andreas 154
Hyde, Douglas 152, 153, 160, 162, 763
 Casadh an tSúgáin 155, 161–2,
Hynes, Samuel 456, 600, 623, 634, 879, 883
Hyper-realism 149
Ibsen, Henrik 117, 149, 158, 157, 159, 431
idealism 287, 800
Ide, H. 442
Image, Selwyn 91, 93, 107, 123, 126, 136
Imagism 629
Imagism 148, 150, 185, 186, 189, 192, 194, 245, 264, 279, 281, 282, 293, 302, 303, 426, 457, 464, 478, 479, 573, 743
Imagists, the 15, 265, 339, 408, 419, 456, 660
Imago 517
Impressionism 76, 148, 292, 293, 299, 309, 486, 491, 492;
 see also neo-Impressionism
Impressionist poetry 186, 188
The Imprint 791
Impulsionism 184
Independent Labour Party (ILP) 211, 214, 221
Index of Forbidden Books 175
India League 890
Indian Independence 832, 894
Indian Writing 832, 874–97
individualism 58–9, 96, 130, 139, 170, 265, 268, 270, 275–7, 280, 343, 388, 551, 658, 765
Innes, J. D. 320
Innis, Harold 569
Insh, G. P. 772
International Magazine Co. Ltd. 539
The International Review 366
International Union of Revolutionary Writers (British Section) 592, 625, 633
interwar period 599–622
Inverarity, Bruce 797
Iqbal, Mohammed 894
IRA 753, 755
Ireland To-day 708, 711, 735–58
Irish Dramatic Movement 152
Irish Free State 455, 708, 737, 738, 745, 749, 752, 754
The Irish Homestead 150, 153, 748
Irish Independent 167
Irish Literary Society 152
Irish Literary Theatre 149–171
Irish magazines 4, 13, 21, 149–50, 152–75, 707, 713, 735–58
Irish nationalism 149, 150–1, 159
Irish National Theatre 155, 162–168

- Irish National Theatre Society 163, 164, 165–6, 168, 171, 174
 Gaelic League 150, 152, 158, 161, 162, 746
The Irish Statesman 708, 711, 735–58
 Irving, Henry 785, 789, 800
 Irwin, Helen 878
 Isherwood, Christopher 596, 651, 669, 673, 674, 682, 862
The Isis 518
- Jacket* 14 n. 37
 Jack, Ian 846
 Jackson, Holbrook 5 n. 12, 146, 201, 206, 208, 210, 211, 212, 215, 316, 401, 407, 487
 Jackson, Kevin 697
 Jacobs, Mark 712
 Jacques-Dalcroze, Émile 330
 Jaffe, Aaron 859
 James, Henry 17, 77, 85, 90, 200, 226, 229, 231, 233, 282, 322, 842, 879
 ‘The Death of the Lion’ 87
 ‘The Next Time’ 87–8
 James, John 892
 James, Norah 344, 438
 James, William 286–7
 Jardine, Grace 270, 275
 Jarrell, Randall 867, 869
 Jeffrey, William 778
 Jellett, Mamie 741
 Jennings, Humphrey 594, 598, 602, 604, 620, 650, 652, 689, 692, 693, 694, 696, 697–8
 Jepson, Edgar 264, 298
 Jerome, Jerome K. 91
 Jerrold, Douglas 239
 Jesus Christ 379, 572
 Jewish artists 407–8, 627
 Jewish immigrant communities 341, 407
 Jews, persecution of 360, 630, 869
 John, Augustus 316, 320, 489, 492, 499, 867
 John, Henry 566
 Johnson, Lionel 83, 92, 93, 99, 107, 110, 112–13, 156–7, 169, 183
 Johnson, Samuel 445, 668
 Jones, David 783
 Jones, E. B. C. 385
 Jones, Glyn 714–15, 717, 722, 724, 732, 734, 889
 Jones, Gwyn 709, 714, 716, 717, 726, 728, 729, 733, 734
 Jones, Jack 714, 717
 Jordan, Viola 508
 Josephson, Matthew 515
 Joyce, James 14, 15, 147, 150, 173, 252, 264, 269, 281–2, 322, 399, 493, 510, 511, 542, 548, 558, 563, 564–5, 567, 569, 592, 593, 594, 595, 600, 609, 610, 611, 618, 627, 630, 631, 636, 669, 707, 711, 712, 735, 740, 741, 748, 750, 769, 779, 780, 813, 815–16, 850
Dubliners 150, 153, 226
Finnegans Wake 611
A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man 70, 265, 281, 509 n. 14
Ulysses 265, 281, 283, 350, 408, 455, 483, 511, 541, 564, 593, 631, 646, 710, 737, 739, 740, 746, 747, 780
Work in Progress 351, 592, 611, 835
- Jugend* 498
Justice 213, 218
 juvenile periodicals 43–4
- Kaestlin, John 601
 Kafka, Franz 441, 592, 593, 629, 631, 716, 718, 829, 846, 867
 Kains-Jackson, Charles 90
 Kandinsky, Wassily 267, 294, 304, 305, 309–10, 316, 328–9, 489, 498
 Kant, Immanuel 729, 744
 Kapp, Edmund X. 414, 497
 Kauffmann, Reginald W. 280
 Kavanagh, Patrick 867, 887
Kavanagh’s Weekly 169
 Kearney, Richard 737
 Keating, Peter 45
 Keats, John 29, 314, 813, 823
 Keen, Ralph Holbrook 493
 Keery, James 827, 832
 Kelleher, D. L. 242
 Kelly, F. J. 442
 Kemble, Fanny 698
 Kemp, Harry V. 603, 608, 620–1, 823
 Kennedy, Bart 500
 Kennedy, J. M. 273
 Kenner, Hugh 297
 Kent, Rockwell 472
 Kernn-Larsen, Rita 696
 Kerr, Lennox 778
 Kerr, W. P. R. 421
 Kessel, Mary 682
 Kessler, Count Harry 791, 794 n. 21
 Keyes, Sidney 684
 Keynes, Geoffrey 371
 Kickham, Charles 169
 Kierkegaard, Søren 631–2
 Kighley Baxendall, D. 732
 Kilham Roberts, Denys 673, 685
Kinematograph Weekly 505
 King, Jessie 334
 Kingmill, Hugh 434
 Kinzie, Mary 52
 Kipling, Rudyard 183, 192, 401, 493, 867
 Kirby, Michael 794
 Kisby, A. A. 442
Klaxon 4, 708, 710, 735–58
 Klee, Paul 661, 867
 Kleist, Heinrich von 712, 787, 795, 796, 798–800
 Knight, Charles 36–7
 Knight, G. Wilson 359
 Knight, Laura 461, 575
 Knights, L. C. 359, 831, 839, 842–3, 844, 846, 854
 Knopf, Alfred A. 249
 Knowles, Sebastian 857, 861
 Koestler, Arthur 829, 861, 868, 869
 Kokoshka, Oskar 682
 Koteliansky, Samuel S. 371, 378, 379, 384
 Kramer, Jacob 296, 341, 408, 414, 482, 483, 494, 495
 Kramer, Sarah 482
 Kraus, Karl 281, 288
 Krazna-Krausz, Andor 513
 Kreymborg, Alfred 422
 Krishna Menon, V. K. 894
 Kyle, Galloway 178, 179, 182, 184, 188, 189
- Labour Leader* 211, 212, 213, 215, 218
Labour Monthly 619
 Labour Party 210, 535, 537, 618, 624
Lacerba 292, 294
 Lahr, Charles 482, 483
 Lall, Chaman 242, 462, 465, 466, 467, 477
 Lamb, Henry 492
 Landon, Philip 315
 Lane, Allen 595, 640, 676, 678, 878

- Lane, Hugh 493
 Lane, John 70–1, 75, 77, 80, 83, 84, 86, 91, 292, 293, 294, 312, 570, 571, 574
 Lang, Andrew 431
 Laqueur, Thomas 577
 Larbaud, Valéry 344, 349, 350, 514
La Revue universelle 354
Lark 52
 Larkin, Philip 874
 Larminie, William 171
 Laski, Harold 379, 384, 896
 Latham, Sean 5, 827, 829–30
 Lauder, Harry 770
 Lautréamont, Comte de 691, 700
 Lavrin, Janko 592, 593, 626–33
 Law, Graham 44
 Lawrence and Wishart (publishers) 676, 691
 Lawrence, D. H. 15, 19, 189, 192, 200, 202, 205, 226, 234, 235, 236, 251, 253, 267, 280, 282, 314, 315, 320, 321–3, 336, 341, 343, 344, 351, 353, 376–7, 378, 379, 384, 387, 388, 390, 396, 399, 401, 413, 421, 430, 439, 449, 482, 542, 548, 563, 565, 592, 593, 594, 600, 609, 611, 620, 627, 628, 629, 632, 657, 658, 775, 828, 830, 839
 Lawrence, Martin 676
 Lawrence, T. E. 472
The Leader 746
 Lea, F. A. 314, 315, 379, 385
 Leavis, F. R. 25, 253, 342, 345, 359, 391, 395, 400, 401, 417, 455, 600, 653, 655–8, 657–8, 661, 782, 828–9, 830–1, 836–44, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855; see also *Scrutiny*
 Leavis, Queenie, D. 434, 831, 838, 839, 841–2, 848
 Lechmere, Kate 291, 292, 300, 307
 Leeds Arts Club 201, 211, 487, 489–91, 492, 493, 494
 Lees, Derwent 320
 Lee, Sydney 501
 Lee, Vernon 90, 431, 432
 Le Fanu, Sheridan 153
Le Figaro 794
Le Film 508
 Left Book Club 641, 642
Left Poets' News Sheet 641
Left Review 17, 402, 477, 591, 592, 593, 597, 623–46, 658, 674, 691, 736, 754
 Leftwich, Joseph 408, 501
 Le Gallienne, Richard 90
 Legros, Alphonse 502
 Lehmann, Beatrix 682
 Lehmann, John 203, 447–8, 591, 595, 596, 609, 615, 621, 636, 666, 668, 669–87, 702, 832, 874, 881, 885, 893, 896
 Lehmann, Rosamond 669, 671, 673, 682, 684, 685, 829, 867
 Leicester Co-operative Printing Society Limited 605
 Lejeune, C. A. 505, 514, 523
Le Journal du ciné-club 508
 LeMahieu, D. L. 505
 Lemmen, Georges 95
 Lenauer, Jean 513
 Lenin, Vladimir 635, 700
 Leonov, Leonid 396
 Leski, Helmar 527
 Leslie, Shane 431
L'Esprit Nouveau 458, 557
 Lessore, Thérèse 493
 Levenson, Michael 9, 139
 Leventhal, A. J. 'Con' 710, 738–41, 744–5, 746, 750, 756
 Lever, Charles 153
 Leveridge and Co. 292
 Levenson, Ada 81, 90, 353
 Lewes, George Henry 36
 Lewis, Alun 682, 684, 717, 832, 869, 886, 887
 Lewis Carroll 470, 691
 Lewis Grassie Gibbon 636
 Lewis, Percy Wyndham 17, 18, 19, 71, 145, 146, 147, 148, 199, 200, 202, 203, 219, 224, 226, 234, 235, 239, 253, 254, 263, 264, 265, 267, 268, 269, 279, 281, 291–313, 328, 330, 336, 341, 343, 344, 351, 364, 391, 398–9, 402, 414, 423, 431, 440, 441, 442, 449, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 466, 475, 490, 492, 494, 495, 501, 540, 548, 552–69, 605, 611–12, 624, 655–8, 662
 Tyros 556–7
 see also *BLAST*; *The Enemy*; *The Tyro*; Vorticism
 Lewis, Sinclair 250
 Lhote, André 364
 Liberal Party 210, 236
 Library of Art 228
Life and Letters 14, 259, 340, 344, 428–51, 459, 680, 832, 895
Life and Letters Today 428, 429, 513, 527, 709, 715, 718, 732, 734, 895
Lilliput 859
 Lindberg-Seyersted, Brita 234
 Lindsay, Jack 16, 399, 637, 642, 643
 Lindsay, Maurice 779, 888
 Lindsay, Vachel 248, 422, 472
Lines Review 780
 Linklater, Eric 440
 Linton, Eliza Lynn 48–50
 Lipschitz, Jacques 557
 Lipton, Julius 639
 Lipton, Sir Thomas 216
 literary review 346–63
 Literary Revival (in Ireland) 745, 750, 757
 Literary Society 54–5
 Little Art Rooms 486, 499, 503
 little magazines 1, 2, 3, 9, 11–16, 18, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37–9, 48, 49, 64–5, 69, 70, 90, 120, 130, 145, 150, 153–4, 170, 201, 206–7, 219, 223, 224, 225, 226, 242, 266, 267, 290–313, 318, 345, 346, 349, 364, 387, 388, 406, 407, 430, 460, 462, 478, 483–4, 510, 515, 595, 599–600, 656, 671, 709, 716, 717, 718, 753, 790, 829, 830, 836, 845, 846, 860, 863, 867, 872–3
 and advertisements 6–8, 15, 84, 160, 232, 243, 248, 266, 273, 318, 343, 345, 353, 367, 368–9, 370, 371–2, 380, 417–18, 420, 428, 431–2, 439–40, 441, 442, 488, 497, 514, 557, 561, 562, 574, 579–80, 583, 604–5, 717–18, 834–5, 865
 and circulation figures 72 n. 17, 201, 206 n. 6, 222, 235, 250, 258, 293, 341, 342, 343, 349, 352, 356, 367–8, 379, 389, 428, 469, 561, 637, 642, 679, 829, 836, 861, 862, 866, 872, 875, 877, 878
 and film 512–16; see also cinema; modernism, and 'visual culture'
 and gender 4, 14, 81, 85, 92, 299–300, 370, 429, 443–51, 479, 530–1, 535–9, 543; see also modernism, 'and gender'
 and the mainstream press 16, 23, 72–5, 154–5, 530–3
 and national identity (nationalism) 707–13, 715, 714–34, 735–58, 759–84
 and politics 19, 88, 134, 149–51, 202, 254–6, 272, 460, 565–6, 591–8, 600–4, 617–21, 623–46, 652–5, 722, 730, 732, 852; see also Irish nationalism; cultural criticism
 and price 23–5, 73, 78, 90, 114, 213, 252, 258, 296, 317, 349, 352, 353, 357, 370, 375, 380, 397, 407, 462, 469, 488, 497, 509, 510, 534, 561, 604, 605, 673, 675, 679, 716, 742, 835–6, 861, 872, 879
 and self-advertisement 237–8
 and sexuality 14, 237–8, 270–3

- little magazines (*cont.*)
 and surrealism, *see* surrealism, 'British'
 and the visual arts 485–7, 819–20; *see also* modernism, 'and the visual arts'
 as luxury objects 72–3, 469, 483, 575
 definition of 11–16, 218 n. 53
 demise of 857–9, 861, 870, 872–3, 883
 'dynamic vs. eclectic' 1, 647–9, 829, 858, 859; *see also* Connolly, Cyril
 frequency of 24–5, 84, 96–7, 99, 295, 316, 375, 397, 407, 429, 462, 487, 496–7, 509, 510, 606, 625, 636, 673, 716, 760, 808, 875
 layout (format) of 297, 307, 316, 349, 370, 383, 469, 554, 561, 766, 859
 methods for analysing 21–3, 86
 origins of 33, 51–2, 65
 readers and readership 12–13, 30–1, 78, 116, 201, 210, 231, 244, 266–7, 294, 317, 339, 340–3, 349, 368–70, 372, 379–80, 385, 396, 397, 544, 580, 594, 596, 632, 637, 646, 672, 684–7, 828, 867–8; *see also* public sphere
 specialization of 42, 43, 78
 undergraduate 32, 78, 90, 125, 594, 599–622
see also literary review; modernism, 'and satire'
- Little Review* 4, 14–15, 20, 224, 248, 483, 485, 556, 859, 862
- Little Titch 556
- Lloyd George, David 229
- Lloyd, Mary 556
- Locke Ellis, Vivian 177, 178, 372, 379
- Loeb, Harold 515
- Logue, Cardinal Michael 157
- Loisy, Abbé Alfred 173
- The London Aphrodite* 16
- The London Bulletin* 598, 688–703
- The London Journal* 39, 40
- London Labour and the London Poor* 40
- The London Magazine* 738
- The London Mercury* 15–16, 22, 203–4, 240–59, 324, 342, 343, 349, 368, 373, 374, 388, 396, 416, 421, 428, 429, 430, 459, 507, 513, 514, 516, 674, 745, 827, 857, 879
- London Mercury Company 248
- Looney, J. Thomas 579
- Loos, Anita 510
- Lorimer, Emilia 184
- Lowell, Amy 148, 192, 196, 280, 282, 302, 422, 456, 478, 540
- Lowinsky, Xenia 500
- Lowry, Malcolm 611, 616
- Loy, Mina 511
- Lubbock, Lys 866
- Lubitsch, Ernst 528
- Lucas, F. L. 432
- Lucas, John 342, 344, 455, 456, 458, 473–5
- Lumsden, E. S. 501
- Lushington, Godfrey 61
- Lushington, Vernon 61
- Lutyens, Edwin 472
- Lye, Len 713, 809, 813
- Lynch, Arthur 181
- Lynd, Robert W. 174, 243
- Lynd, Sylvia 255, 542
- Lyon, Janet 2
- Lytton Strachey, Giles 364, 371, 376, 431, 432, 434, 435, 449, 576, 671
- Mabon* 734
- McAleeer, Joseph 210
- McAlmon, Robert 509, 511, 557, 558
- Macaulay, Rose 192, 580, 620, 871
- Macaulay, T. B. 35
- MacCaig, Norman 780, 781, 784, 874
- MacCarthy, Desmond 339, 340–1, 344, 386, 428–51
- McClure, S. S. 236
- MacColla, Fionn 784
- McColl, D. S. 790
- McCracken, Scott 592, 594, 595, 598
- McCulloch, Margery 627
- MacDiarmid, Hugh 17, 362, 400, 596, 628, 636, 661, 708, 709, 710, 717, 718, 721, 764, 765–84
- Macdonald, Erskine 178, 182, 189
- Macdonald, Harry 61
- Macdonald, Leila 90, 92, 93
- Macdonald, Murdo 138
- MacDonald, Miss (Lady Georgiana Burne-Jones) 62
- MacDonald, Ramsay 624, 667
- MacDonald, Sally 132
- MacDonald Smith, Peter 722, 733, 734
- McEvoy, Ambrose 320
- MacEwan, David 777–8
- McFarlane, James 2, 3, 735
- McGann, Jerome 6, 54, 70
 bibliographic codes 6, 70, 160, 202; *see also* periodical codes
- McGill, Alexander 772
- MacGreedy, Thomas 741
- MacKenzie, Compton 434, 774
- MacKenzie, Sir George 781
- Mackey, Haydn 581
- McKible, Adam 13, 14
- Mackie, Albert 780
- MacKillop, Ian 845
- McKinnon-Croft, Russell 878
- Mackintosh, Charles Rennie 764
- Mackmurdo, Arthur 74, 123, 125, 126, 133, 134, 139
- McKnight Kauffer, E. 493, 495, 497, 501
- Maclaren-Ross, Julian 871, 880, 886
- Maclean, Donald 594, 602
- Maclean, Sorely 784
- MacLellan, William 709, 764
- Macleod, Fiona 125, 138, 762–3, 766, 770
- Macleod, Joseph Gordon 662
- McLuhan, Marshall 569, 872
- Macmillan, Duncan 334
- Macmillan (publishers) 417
- Macmillan's Magazine* 44, 46
- Macnamara, Francis 192
- MacNeice, Louis 359, 362, 597, 615, 642, 648, 649, 651, 664, 665, 668, 686, 724, 829, 861, 881
- Macpherson, Kenneth 505–29
 'Matinee' 520–1
- MacShane, Frank 235
- Madden, Richard Robert 736
- Maddox, Conroy 702
- Madge, Charles 359, 594, 597, 598, 603, 608, 617, 622, 642, 649, 663–4, 697, 881
- Maeterlinck, Maurice 107, 110, 114, 159, 795
- Magee, William Kirkpatrick 171–2, 174, 439; *see also* *Dana*
- Magritte, René 593, 637, 693–4
- Mahler, Gustav 845
- Maidment, Brian 607
- Mailer, Norman 872
- Mainly About Books* 145
- Makins, Bill 866
- Mallalieu, H. B. 654, 881, 883
- Mallarmé, Stéphane 394, 415, 807
- Malraux, André 593, 637, 682, 844
- The Manchester City News* 408

- Manchester Guardian* 407, 505, 514, 524, 536
Mandell, Cyril 238
Manet, Édouard 324
manifestos 1, 2, 56–7, 65, 74, 104, 278, 290, 294, 297–8, 353, 396, 457, 478, 553, 616, 619, 636, 653, 672, 681, 685, 688, 695, 712, 729, 737, 786, 788–95, 833, 851–2, 882, 884
Mankowitz, Wolf 846
Mann, Heinrich 593, 638
Manning, Frederic 181
Mann, Thomas 321–2, 360, 858–9
Man Ray 512, 515, 693
Mansfield, Katherine 8, 177, 199, 201, 240, 247, 264, 265, 266, 267, 314–24, 328, 333, 336, 343, 344, 352, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 379, 380, 384, 461, 495, 542, 546, 850
Mantegna 113
Manto, Sadat Hasan 896
March, Richard 876
Marcus, Laura 458, 459
Mariantonio, Father 797
Marinetti, Filippo. T. 184, 193, 202, 224, 247, 292, 293, 301, 304, 540, 712, 794
‘Futurist Manifesto’ 146, 794
‘New Futurist Manifesto’ 193
see also futurism
The Marionette 707, 712, 785–805
Maritain, Jacques 353, 354, 355, 358, 362
market:
 mass 15, 30, 35, 42, 45, 50, 69–75, 77, 106, 146, 154, 231, 246, 841, 859
 segmentation 48–50
 stratification 339, 340
Marks, Peter 3, 592, 593
Marriott, Charles 497, 499, 500
Marriott Watson, Rosamund 90
Marsden, Dora 4, 12, 14, 145, 242, 264, 265, 266, 268, 269–89, 292, 406
 ‘egoist semantics’ 277–8, 286–9
Marsh, Edward 181, 183, 185, 186, 190, 264, 267, 317, 320, 335, 405, 413, 469, 583, 823
Martineau, Harriet 35
Martin, Violet (‘Martin Ross’) 753
Martin, Wallace 205, 206, 210, 222–3
Martyn, Edward 152, 155–9, 162, 163
Marvell, Andrew 586
Marwood, Arthur 228, 229, 231, 235
marxism 215, 383, 620, 622, 628, 630, 674, 829, 831, 852–3, 890
Marxist (literary) criticism 837, 838, 843
Marx, Karl 378, 646, 683
 Capital 375
Masaryk, Jan 756
Masfield, John 180, 183, 237, 400, 413, 417, 421, 441, 464, 471, 650, 651
The Mask 4, 14, 21, 22, 145, 707, 711, 712, 785–805
Mason, H. A. 842, 844–5, 848, 854
Mason, J. H. 791
Massingham, Harold J. 442, 573
Massis, Henri 354
Mass-Observation movement 597, 598, 614, 663–5, 697
Masson, André 702
Masters, Edgar Lee 422
Materer, Timothy 302
materialism 287
Mathews, Elkin 77, 84, 86, 110, 178, 185, 194, 199, 417
Mathias, Roland 732, 888
Matisse, Henri 257, 328, 330, 495, 615, 741, 867
Matthewman, S. 586
Matthews, Sean 831
Matthews, Steven 623
Matthews, Thomas 809, 814
Maud 62
Maurois, André 431
Maurras, Charles 353, 354, 362
Mauthner, Fritz 281, 288
Mayakovsky, Vladimir 629, 682
Mayhew, Henry 40
Maynard, John 540
Maynard Keynes, John 357
Mayne, Ethel Colburn 580
Mayor of Finsbury 216
May, Phil 92
 The Mechanics Journal 42
 medievalism 71, 73, 126, 136, 174
 Mednikoff, Reuben 699
 Mellers, Wilfrid 842, 845, 854
 Mellown, Muriel J. 533
 Mellown, Elgin 632
 Melville, John 702
 Melville, Robert 702
 Menai, Huw 717
 Mencken, H. L. 15, 249, 250
 Mengham, Rod 597, 598
 Meninsky, Bernard 483
 Mercure de France 200, 246
 Mercury Press 511, 523
 Meredith, George 233
 Merriman, Brian 174, 741
 Méryon, Charles 113
 Mesens, E. L. T. 598, 688, 693, 697, 699, 700, 701
 The Messenger 753
 Metaphysical Society 88
 Metta, Vasudeo 354
 Metternich, Klemens Wenzel, Prince von 444
 Metzinger, Jean 764
 Mew, Charlotte 421, 541, 546
 Meyerhold, Vsevolod 800
 Meyerstein, E. H. W. 465, 586
 Meynell, Alice 183
 Michelangelo 571
 Middle Ages 32, 284
 Middleton, Christopher 874
 Miles, Hamish 429, 440
 Miles, Susan 495
 Millais, John Everett 58, 59, 96, 99, 107
 Millay, Edna St Vincent 423, 541, 546
 Miller, David 430
 Miller, Henry 362, 867, 884
 Miller, Tyrus 670
 Miller, Christopher 604
 Milligan, Alice 153, 155, 158, 159
 Mill, James 34
 Mill, J. S. 548
 Milne, A. 770
 Milne, H. J. 372
 Milton, John 438
 Mind 759
 Minority Press 835
 Mir Iskustva (The World of Art) 712, 790–1
 Miró, Jean 593, 637, 694, 695
 Mirrlees, Hope 431
 Mitchell's Newspaper Press Directory 33
 Mitchell, Susan 738
 Mitchison, Naomi 580, 608, 775
 Mix, Katherine 86
 M'lle New York 52

- modernism 2–21, 15–16, 25, 29, 32, 51–2, 120, 125, 145, 204, 206–7, 239, 240–1, 242–5, 263, 315, 328, 332, 335, 339, 343, 344, 347, 362–3, 373–5, 388, 421, 426, 455–6, 461, 469, 477–82, 485–6, 540, 555, 564, 566, 587, 591–8, 602, 608–9, 612, 624, 631, 636, 646, 669, 670, 710, 733, 734, 758, 764, 788, 806–24, 828, 830, 838, 850, 861
- and the Bloomsbury group 428–51
- and democracy 205–25, 730
- and gender 269–89
- and mass culture 37–8, 154–5, 483–4, 828–9
- and the modern 9–11, 147, 268
- and 'newness' 592, 595, 658, 787
- and race 524–6, 540, 612
- and satire 553–6, 559, 561; *see also* Tyros; cultural criticism and theatre, *see* Craig, Edward Gordon; *The Mask; The Marionette*
- and trans-nationalism 20–1, 75, 98, 257–8, 268, 299, 300, 316, 320–1, 349, 357, 370, 458, 473–7, 516–18, 532, 535, 548, 592, 596, 627–9, 632, 680, 765, 774, 872
- and the visual arts 457–8, 485–504; *see also* surrealism and visual culture 505–29
- and sexual mores 263, 576; *see also* little magazines, 'and sexuality'
- 'anti-modernist' 713
- Bergsonian 325–8, 332, 335
- definitions of 9–11, 455
- end of 827, 856–73
- English 467, 483–4, 552, 622, 710, 713
- in Europe 21, 263, 309, 358, 460, 559, 710
- high 594, 602, 609, 620, 670, 769
- Indian 894
- institutions of 2
- Irish 735–58, 760
- literary 485, 488, 754
- materialism and 5–9
- metropolitan-based 20–1, 707, 711
- new 25, 874–97
- origins of 146–7, 264
- romantic 712, 713
- Scottish 760, 764–5, 769, 784
- socialist 487, 489–91
- modernist canon 10, 25, 264, 388, 669, 707, 838
- Modernist Journals Project 5
- Modernist Magazines Project 9
- modernist studies 5, 9, 206–7, 240 n. 1, 245
- question of historicity in 5, 8–9
- modernity 3, 29, 75, 111, 120, 138–41, 147, 204, 242, 267, 303, 373–5, 382, 521, 552–3, 570, 577, 587, 599, 602, 669–76, 708, 710, 771, 830, 873
- critique of 2, 553, 564, 569; *see also* cultural criticism
- The Modern Scot* 4, 708, 709, 710, 759–84
- Modigliani, Amedeo 302, 474, 495
- Moeran, E. J. 495
- Monde* 674
- Mond, Sir Alfred 201, 236, 237
- Monnier, Adrienne 514
- Monro, Alida 545
- Monroe, Harriet 4, 15, 149, 185, 194, 323
- Monro, Harold 147, 148, 149, 151, 176–81, 182, 183–6, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 241, 242, 339, 340, 341–4, 354, 374, 405–27, 417, 456, 478, 545, 549, 577, 583 n. 62; *see also* *The Poetry Review, Poetry and Drama*, and *The Chapbook*
- Montagu, Ivor 435, 506, 510, 518
- Montale, Eugenio 362
- Montgomery, William 643
- The Monthly Chapbook* 22, 196, 242, 248, 339, 341–2, 344, 405–27
- The Monthly Criterion* 354–7
- The Montrose Review* 765, 766
- Moore, Colonel Maurice 173
- Moore, Edward, *see* Muir, Edwin
- Moore, Henry 861, 862, 875
- Moore, G. E. 286
- Moore, George 46, 47, 48, 85, 91–2, 104, 150, 155, 156, 158, 159, 162, 173, 174, 175, 237
- Literature at Nurse* 47
- A Modern Lover* 47
- Moorehead, Alan 869
- Moore, Lesley, *see* Baker, Ida Constance
- Moore, Marianne 5, 282, 423, 512, 867, 872
- Moore, Nicholas 876, 881, 884, 886, 888, 892
- Moore, Willa 627
- Moran, D. P. 173, 746
- Morand, Paul 422
- Moran, Helen 253
- Moréas, Jean 104–5
- Moreau, Gustave 104, 110
- Moretti, Franco 21
- Morgan, Kevin 605 n. 20
- The Morland Press 574, 575
- Morning Journal* 86
- Morning Post* 134
- Morrell, J. B. 366
- Morrell, Ottoline 315, 372
- Morris, Margaret 330, 332, 333, 493
- Morrison, Mark S. 12, 37, 154–5, 200, 230, 266, 339, 341, 342, 503, 532, 544
- Morris, William 32, 61–2, 64, 71–2, 120, 126, 127, 130, 131, 134, 135, 136, 183, 482, 493, 575
- Kelmscott Press 72, 74, 90, 127, 128, 575
- Morton, A. L. 846
- Mosher, Thomas 54
- Moult, Thomas 242, 339, 341, 342, 343, 372, 405–27, 500, 501, 502, 504, 538, 540, 548; *see also* *Voices*
- Moving Picture World* 505
- Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus 661
- Mucha, Jiri 680, 682
- Mudie, Charles 47
- Muggeridge, Malcolm 239, 360
- Muir, Edwin 256, 351, 391, 400, 441, 592, 593, 626–33, 659, 685, 771, 772, 775, 778, 783, 784, 823, 828
- Muir, Willa 823
- Mulhern, Francis 18 n. 52, 831, 837, 848, 852
- Munik, Pierre 663
- Munro, C. K. 253
- Münsterberg, Oskar 797
- Murnau, Friedrich Wilhelm 528
- Murray, D. L. 372
- Murray's Magazine* 46
- Murry, John Middleton 8, 15, 19, 145, 204, 240, 242, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 292, 314–26, 333, 335, 339, 340, 342–4, 352, 355, 364–88, 414, 473, 557, 764, 839; *see also* *The Adelphi; Athenaeum; Rhythm*
- Mussolini, Benito 256, 619, 793, 794
- Myers, Rollo H. 372
- mysticism 202, 206, 208, 211, 224, 272
- Nalkowska, Zofja 631, 632
- Nash, John 461, 495, 497, 575, 581
- Nash, Paul 256, 414, 461, 492, 493, 495, 501, 575
- Nathan, George Jean 249
- Nathanson, Carol A. 334–5

- The Nation* (London) 366, 367, 370, 375, 376, 387, 516, 539, 540, 737, 846, 853; see also *The Athenaeum*
The Nation (Ireland, 1842–8) 153, 171, 256
 National Guild Socialism 208, 224
 National Literary Society 152
National Review 230, 236, 239
 National Vigilance Association 47, 95
The Nation and Athenaeum 376, 377, 380, 388, 506
 Naturalism 299, 556
Naya Adab ('New Writing') 832, 895, 896
 Nazism 516, 608, 625, 627, 630, 777
 Needham, Joseph 360
 Nehru, Jawaharlal 894, 897
 Nelson, James G. 91, 92
 Nelson's (publishers) 759
 neo-Georgians 240, 241, 242, 247, 254, 255
 neo-Impressionism 486, 492
 neo-realism 491, 495
 Neruda, Pablo 593, 638
 Nesbit, Edith 90, 542
 Nettfold, W. T. 643
 Neville Lees, Dorothy 711, 792, 794, 797, 802, 803–4
 Neville Cardus, J. F. 341, 407, 414, 415
 Nevinson, Christopher 492, 493
 Nevinson, Henry 231, 239, 253, 292, 293, 296
The New Adelphi 380, 383–4
The New Age 13, 14, 21, 22, 23, 88, 100, 145, 146, 184, 199, 200, 201, 202, 205–25, 230, 243, 265, 275, 293, 311, 315, 316, 340, 386, 456, 474, 475, 477, 490–1, 500, 507, 571, 591, 593, 626, 627, 628
The New Apocalypse 882, 884
 Newbolt, Henry 182, 190, 191
 Newbolt Report 455
 New Books 709, 718
The Newcastle Chronicle 127
New Coterie 21, 458, 461, 462–84, 584
New Country 591, 625, 629, 630, 666
The New Criterion 345, 353–5, 752
 New Criticism 12, 455, 851
New Directions 718, 732
 New English Art Club 486,
New English Weekly 5 n. 12
The New Freewoman 4, 12, 75, 145, 202, 208, 217, 264, 266, 269–89, 406, 477, 535
New Grub Street 30, 37, 43, 44, 88
 New Journalism 77, 83, 84, 85, 88, 96, 99, 216
New Lines 891
 Newman, Cardinal John Henry 172
 Newnes, George 38, 43, 69, 70, 77, 81; see also *Tit-Bits*; *The Strand*
New Numbers 14, 22, 194–6
New Path 32, 65
 'New Poetry' 145, 148, 151, 176–96
The New Republic 846, 848
The New Review 48–50, 85, 604, 776
The New Scot 709
New Signatures 385, 388, 591, 625, 629, 669, 670
The New Statesman 202, 217, 218, 219, 243, 247, 311, 367, 370, 393, 428, 432, 443, 447, 449, 535, 539, 859
The New Statesman and Nation 257; see also *The Nation and Athenaeum*
 The New Statesman Publishing Company 428
 Newton, Philip 572
New Verse 25, 359, 591, 592, 593, 596, 605, 647–68, 827, 828, 857, 879, 882, 884
New Weekly 254
The New Witness 217, 219
 the New Woman 75, 83, 92
New Writing 13, 14, 21, 591, 592, 595, 596, 668, 669–87, 711, 860, 866, 882, 896
New Writing and Daylight 596, 678
New Writing in Europe 681
The New Yorker 15, 525, 848
 Nezval, Vítězslav 680
 Nicholson and Watson (publishers) 874, 875, 876, 879
 Nicholson, Edward 64
 Nicholson, Nancy 464, 467, 470
 Nicholson, Norman 887
 Nicholson, William 113, 459, 464, 467, 468, 469, 470, 483, 492, 575
 Nichols, Robert 421, 465
 Nicolson, Harold 865
 Nietzsche, Friedrich 95, 96, 97, 99, 211, 213, 284, 474, 609, 627, 629, 751, 787, 804
 Nietzscheanism 202, 206, 214
 Nieverov, Alexander 396
 the nineteenth century 23
 and the neglect of art 101
The Nineteenth Century 85, 88
Nineteenth Century and After 230, 507
 nineteenth century print culture 23, 33–50, 77, 200
 and readership 40–1
 and signature 98–9
 Nisbet, John Bogue 768
 Nizan, Paul 674, 680
 Noble, Ashcroft 54
 Noguchi, Yone 316
 Norman, C. H. 238
 Norris, Leslie 888
 Northcliffe, Lord 511
Northern Numbers 709, 765, 769, 772
Northern Review 4, 709, 759–84
 Nott, Kathleen 887
Nouvelle Revue française 349
Now 732, 883
 Noxon, Gerald F. 604, 605, 614
 Noyes, Alfred 401
Nursing Mirror 357
 Nutall, William 257
 Oakeshott, Michael 846
 O'Brian, Flann 711 n. 3, 744
The Observer 293, 401, 505
 O'Casey, Sean 439, 441, 750, 753
 occult, the 570–3, 577
 O'Connell, Daniel 754
 O'Connor, Frank 742, 751, 753, 755–6
 O'Connor, Philip 662, 664, 717, 881, 883
 O'Connor, T. P. 145; see also *T. P.'s Weekly*
 O'Dempsey, Brigit 168
 Odle, Alan 461, 581
 O'Donnell, Frank Hugh 157
 O'Donnell, Peadar 751, 758
 O'Donovan, James, L. 'Jim' 753, 755
 O'Donovan, Michael, see O'Connor, Frank
 O'Faoláin, Seán 256, 362, 440, 711, 751–8, 867
 O'Flaherty, Liam 423, 483, 738, 742, 744–5, 749–50, 753
 Ogden, C. K. 374
 O'Grady, Standish 763
 O'Keefe, Paul 304
 O'Loaghraire, Liam 753
 Oldmeadow, E. J. 72, 101, 114–19, 160–1
 'The Editor of *The Jonquil*' 118–19
 see also *The Dome*

- Oliphant, Margaret 39–40, 50
 Oliver, Douglas 892
 Oliver, F. S. 357
 O'Malley, Raymond 850
 Omega Workshops 291, 292, 415
 O'Neill, Eugene 580
The Open Window 177–8, 180
Opportunity Magazine 525
 Orage, A. R. 5 n. 12, 88, 145, 146, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 205–25, 243, 311, 487, 490, 593, 626, 628; see also *The New Age*
 Orchard, John 59
Orion 685, 686
 Orwell, George 384, 385, 388, 393, 568, 595, 630, 674, 682, 829, 830, 856, 857, 859, 861, 864, 865 n. 44, 866, 870, 871, 876, 890, 893, 896
 Ossian 762, 763
 O'Sullivan, Seumas 173, 717, 738, 739, 745–8, 749
 O'Sullivan, Vincent 91, 95
Others 4
 Ouida 45, 88
Our Time 645
Outlook 759–84
 Ovid Press 489
 Owen, Wilfred 196, 411, 413, 456, 495
The Owl 19, 22, 23, 242, 243, 324, 456, 457, 458, 459, 462–84
The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine 32, 35, 61–5
The Oxford and Cambridge Review 273
Oxford Magazine 134
Oxford Monthly Miscellany 61
The Oxford Outlook 242, 248
Oxford Poetry 393, 466–7
 Oxford Union 64

 Pabst, Georg Wilhelm 458, 508, 517, 522, 523
Pagany 512, 515
The Page 785, 788–9, 796
The Pageant 73, 101–19
 Paget, A. 549
 Pailthorpe, Grace 699
 Pain Pauli, Charles 436
Palinurus 870
The Pall Mall Gazette 216, 230, 417
 Palmer, Cecil 580
 Palmer, Herbert E. 384, 440, 890
Palms 4
Pan 292
 Pankhurst, Christabel 270
 Pankhurst, Emmeline 536
 Pankhurst sisters 270, 277
 Parker, O. S. 274
 Parnell, Charles Stewart 152
 Paroxysm 184
 Parsons, F. Mary 442
 Parsons, Geoffrey 881, 882
 Partition of India and Pakistan 894, 895, 897
 Parton Press 691
 Parton Street Bookshop 691
 Partridge, Eric 239
 Pasternak, Boris 653, 680
 Pater, Walter 91 n. 34, 95, 96, 111, 112, 133
 Patmore, Coventry 56
 Patterson, Ian 299
 Paz, Octavio 872
 Peake, Mervyn 887
 Pearse, Padraic 407
 Pearson, Arthur 38, 43
 Pearson, Hesketh 84
Pearson's Magazine 43
Pearson's Weekly 69
 Pelican Book 678
 Pelling, Henry 624
 PEN 417, 627
 Penguin Books 595, 640, 678
Penguin New Writing 595, 678–9, 681, 685, 702, 874, 875, 878
 Penmark Press 709, 716
 Pennell, Joseph 93
 penny fiction, see writing, 'popular vs. literary'
Penny Magazine 38
 Penn Warren, Robert 870
 Penrose, Roland 693, 698, 699, 701
 Peplow, S. J. 316, 324, 334, 493, 764
 Periodical-Beautiful tradition 788
 periodical codes 5–9, 14, 15, 22–3, 70–2, 266
 internal vs. external 6, 7, 457
 periodical communities 217–21
 periodical press 33–7, 42, 69–70, 203, 216, 242, 244
 and serialization 39, 70, 96–7, 98
 Perloff, Marjorie 297
 Peruginio 571
 Peterloo Massacre 38
 Peters Corbett, David 73, 456
 Petrie, Sir Charles 239
 Petrovsky, Boris 316
 Petts, R. John 731
 Pevsner, Nikolaus 126, 141
 Phare, Elsie (E. E.) 602
 Philipps, Wogan 683
 Phillips, Stephen 188–9, 190
 Philpotts, Eden 417, 500, 586
 Phoenix Society 579
 phrenology 584
 Picabia, Francis 422, 740
 Picart Le Doux, Charles 493
 Picasso, Pablo 256, 257, 204, 316, 321, 324, 329, 494, 495, 499, 594, 615, 616, 618, 682, 690, 695, 741
The Pictish Review 763
The Pictures 505
The Picture Show 505
Pilot 166
 Ping-Chei 680
 Piper, John 695
 Pirandello, Luigi 362, 396
 Pissarro, Camille 256, 492
 Pissarro, Lucien 103, 107, 108, 110, 408, 414, 492, 493, 498
Planet 734
 Plarr, Victor 182, 183, 190, 192
 Plomer, William 565, 669, 673, 682, 683, 685
 Plowman, Max 375–6, 382, 385
 Plunkett, John 30, 31
 Plunkett, Sir Horace 173
 Podhoretz, Norman 846
 Poe, Edgar Allan 396
Poetical Gazette 178, 180, 182, 184, 185, 188
Poetry 4, 5, 15, 185, 194, 218, 294, 422, 478, 584, 600, 601, 602, 718, 835, 883
Poetry and Drama 22, 147, 148, 149, 188, 190–4, 196, 202, 217, 219, 339, 405, 419–21, 424
Poetry and the People 4, 17, 477, 591, 592, 593, 623–46
Poetry Chicago 715, 882
 Poetry Bookshop 149, 178, 185, 189, 190, 191, 196, 339, 405, 414, 419, 420, 423, 424, 425, 441, 545; see also Harold Monro
Poetry Folios 876

- Poetry in Wartime* 874, 876, 879, 887, 888, 890
Poetry London 25, 827–8, 831–2, 874–97
Poetry London–New York 876, 889, 891
 Poetry Publishing Company 583
Poetry Quarterly 874, 875
The Poetry Review 8, 23, 147, 148, 149, 178–89, 190, 191, 192, 194, 339, 405, 419, 424
 poetry revival in Britain 405–27
 Poetry Society 178–9, 182, 184, 186, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 419, 426–7
Poetry Wales 734
 Poets' Club 150
 Pollak, Felix 51
 Pollard, Alfred W. 107
 POOL publications 510, 511, 514, 525
 Pope, Alexander 402
 Popova, Lyubov 790
 Popular Front 637–8, 895
 pornography 80
 Porter, Alan 385
 Porter, Julia 132
 Porteus, Hugh Gordon 360, 655, 656
 Post-Impressionism 148–9, 245, 263, 265, 279, 291, 292, 303, 321, 324, 325, 335, 336, 479, 490, 500
 Potamkin, Harry Alan 512, 513, 515, 522, 525, 526
 Potts, Paul 881
 Pound, Dorothy (née Shakespear) 294
 Pound, Ezra 2, 15, 17, 29–30, 59, 146, 147, 148, 149, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 186, 188, 189, 191, 192, 194, 196, 199, 200, 201, 202, 219, 224, 226, 234, 235, 236, 247, 264, 265, 269, 270, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 290, 292, 293, 294, 296, 300, 301, 302, 303, 307, 309, 313, 322, 338, 342, 343, 344, 346, 350, 351, 358, 364, 410, 412, 415, 419, 422, 423, 424, 442, 478, 483, 495, 497, 500, 542, 548, 553, 556, 563, 574, 574, 576, 597, 602, 606, 610, 613, 615, 618–19, 630, 651, 661, 665, 670, 710, 747, 779, 783, 830, 839, 841, 850, 858
 'Small Magazines' 2, 49–50, 226, 234
 Powell, Dilys 431
 Powell, Frederick York 109
 Power, William 772, 779
 Powys, T. F. 482
 Premchand, Munshi 895
 Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood 18, 20, 25, 31, 32, 51–65
PRB Journal 53–4
 see also *The Germ*
 Pre-Raphaelitism 58, 106–8, 464, 500
 Prévost, Jean 512, 514
 Price, Cornell 61
 Price, Richard 430
 Prichard, John 717
 Priestley, J. B. 658, 725, 728
 printing 102–3; see also typefaces
 Pritchett, V. S. 595, 694, 682, 871
Programme 718
 Progressive Bookshop 482
 Progressive Writers' Association (PWA) 832, 895, 896, 897
 Prokosch, Frederic 661, 881
 Prothero, G. W. 30
 Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph 278
 Proust, Marcel 344, 349, 351, 362, 396, 534
 Prynne, J. H. 892
 psychoanalysis 208, 224
 public sphere 12, 16, 215, 219–21, 530–51
 vs. the counter-cultural 20
 see also Habermas, Jürgen, 'theory of the public sphere'
Publisher's Circular 43
 publishing industry 36–50, 77, 145–6
 Pudney, John 659, 661
 Pudovkin, Vsevolod 508, 512, 517, 518, 521, 522, 526
 Pulitzer, Joseph 86
Punch 81, 430
 Punch and Judy 556, 795
 puppetry, see Craig, Edward Gordon, '(über)marionette'
 Purnell Stone, Idella 4
 Pushkin, Alexander 629
 quarterly magazines 29, 34–5, 70, 84, 833
 vs. little magazines 35
The Quarterly Review 29–30, 34, 230, 294, 507
 Quennell, Peter 344, 399, 431, 439, 443, 446–9
 Quiller-Couch, Sir Arthur 416, 418
 Quinn, John 170, 240, 249, 350
 Quinn, Revd Edward 360
 Rabaté, Jean-Michel 263, 264, 268
 Radcliffe, Philip 358
 Radek, Karl 636
 Radical idealism 787
 Raine, Kathleen (K. J.) 360, 614, 659, 682, 876, 887
 Rainey, Lawrence 245, 311, 483
 Ramsay, Allan 765
 Randall, Alec 351, 354, 360
 Rand, Ayn, see Rosenbaum, Alisa
Rand Daily Mail 257
 Rao, Raja 894
 Raphael 571
 Rattenbury, Arnold 404
 Ravel, Maurice 415
 Raverat, Gwendolen 499, 501
 Rawnsley, W. F. 184, 185
 Read, Herbert 342, 343, 346, 351, 354, 358, 364, 384, 421, 423, 440, 456, 458, 467, 479, 486, 487, 489, 490–6, 503–4, 557, 576, 593, 598, 637, 649, 654, 659, 662, 692, 693–4, 695, 696, 697, 775, 832, 846, 862, 874, 881, 882, 888
 Reavey, George 614, 615, 693, 695, 696
 Rebel Art Centre 291, 292, 300, 415
 Redgrave, Michael 602, 604, 615
 Red Lion Bookshop 482
Reedy's Mirror 422
 Rees, Goronwy 717, 722, 864–5
 Rees, Richard 375–6, 379, 380–2, 384, 385
 Reeves, James 360, 620, 713, 809, 810, 816
 Reeves, John 603, 610, 611
 Reid, Forrest 580
 Reinhardt, Max 785, 795
 Remarque, Erich Maria 431, 432
 Rembrandt 499
 Remnant, Ernest 238, 238–9
 Remy, Michel 689, 691
Renaissance 501
 Renny, Peter 579
 Reston Malloch, George 493, 771
Reynold's Miscellany 39
 Reynolds, Paige 155
 Reynolds, Stephen 229
 'R. H. S.' 219, 222
 Rhymers' Club 92–3, 182
 Rhys, Ernest 92, 182, 190, 193, 717
 Rhys, Keidrych 709, 714, 715, 716, 717, 722, 724, 734, 827, 881, 883
Rhythm 8, 13, 17, 21, 56, 145, 147, 224, 263–7, 292, 314–36, 340, 372, 383, 407, 485, 557, 764; see also *The Blue Review*;
Signature

- Ribemont-Dessaignes, Georges 515, 663
 Ricci, Corrado 797
 Rice, Anne Estelle 8, 264, 266, 268, 316, 319, 320, 321, 325, 328,
 329, 330, 332, 334, 335, 336, 341, 414, 416–17, 496, 557
 Richards, Frank 864, 886
 Richards, Grant 83
 Richards, I. A. 343, 346, 364, 401, 455, 495, 600, 606, 657, 813,
 831, 838, 839, 840, 841, 844, 846, 850, 851
 Richardson, Dorothy 384, 457, 458, 495, 512, 518, 519–20, 522,
 526, 527, 580, 842
 ‘Continuous Performance’ 519
 Richardson, Stanley 605
 Richmond Bruce, 315, 356, 357
 Ricketts, Charles 19, 71, 72, 73, 75, 79, 101–119, 498
 ‘The Marred Face’ 105
 ‘The Unwritten Book’ 104–5
 see also *The Dial* (U.K.); *The Pageant*; Vale Press
 Rickword, C. H. 395
 Rickword, Edgell 340, 342, 344, 389–404, 472, 575, 591, 592,
 593, 633–4, 637, 639, 645, 651, 676, 828–9, 831, 846
 Riding, Laura 4, 21, 278, 356, 536, 540, 566, 608, 649, 707,
 711, 712, 713, 806–24
 concept of history 806–8
The World and Ourselves 713, 808, 823–4
 Riegl, Alois 305
Right Review 718
 Riley, Peter 832, 892
 Rilke, Rainer Maria 474
 Rimbaud, Arthur 396, 474, 632, 691, 700, 808
 Rimmington, Edith 598, 702
 Rivera, Diego 700
 Roberts Jones, Sally 715
 Roberts, Kate 717
 Roberts, Lynette 883, 887
 Roberts, Michael 360, 379, 382, 384, 385, 591, 592, 625, 630,
 658, 666, 670
 Robertson, John 879
 Roberts, Ursula, see Miles, Susan
 Roberts, William 291, 294, 296, 305, 306, 414, 456, 457, 464,
 478, 479, 483, 495, 557
 Robeson, Eslanda 510
 Robeson, Paul 510, 523–6
 Robey, George 556
 Robinson, E. A. 422, 549
 Robinson, Lennox 742, 746, 748–9
 Robinson, Marion 384
 Rodgers, W. R. 877
 Rodin, Auguste 117
 Rodker, John 191, 370, 408, 500, 501, 557
 Rodo, Ludovic 501, 575, 581
 Rogers, Grace E. 571, 581, 582
 Rogers, Stephen 456, 457, 460, 461
 Rolland, Romain 593, 637
 Rolleston, T. W. 173
 Romain, Jacques 636
 Romanov, Pantelimon 435
 Romanticism 25, 285, 587, 598, 692, 696, 758, 787, 796, 804,
 816, 832, 890, 892
 European 712
 German 627, 796, 798, 800
 Rhondda, Viscountess Lady (Margaret Haig) 459, 530,
 532–43, 544, 545
 Room, Alexander 517
 Rooney, William 158
 Rootham, Helen 474, 536
The Rosary 753
 Rosenbaum, Alisa 289
 Rosenbaum, S. P. 443, 446
 Rose, Andrea 54
 Rosenberg, Isaac 392, 408, 456
 ‘Ross, Martin’, see Martin, Violet
 Ross, Alan 887
 Ross, Alexander 769
 The Rossetti Archive 54, 65
 Rossetti, Christina 56, 57, 60, 183, 541
 Rossetti, Dante Gabriel 31, 32, 54–6, 58, 59, 60,
 61, 62–4, 105, 107, 110, 113, 114, 117, 177, 233,
 486
 ‘The Blessed Damozel’ 60, 63, 65
 ‘My Sister’s Sleep’ 55
 Rossetti, William Michael 31, 32, 53–60, 65
 Ross, Martin 153
 Rotha, Paul 528
 Rothenstein, John 102
 Rothenstein, William 92, 93, 103, 110, 492, 789
 Rothermere, Lady 15, 343, 347, 352–3, 356
 Roughton, Roger 360, 597, 598, 688–92
 Rousseau, Jean-Jacques 683
 Routledge (publishers) 874
 Rowlandson, Thomas 555
 Rowntree, Arnold Stephenson 366
 Rowntree, Joseph 343, 365
 Social Service Trust 343, 365–6, 375
 Rowse, A. L. 360
 Royden, Maude 536, 538
 Royde-Smith, Naomi 540, 541, 543
 Rozanov, Vassily 632
 Rubbra, Edmund 845
 Rubens, Paul 581
 Rubinstein, H. F. 580
 Ruedy, Ralph 229, 233
 Rumball, James Quilter 584
 Ruskin, John 62, 65, 120, 126, 132, 133, 136–7, 215, 364
 concept of ‘Savageness’ 136, 137
 Russell, Bertrand 237, 286, 373, 397, 430, 431, 432
 Russell, George 150, 153, 163, 171, 172, 738, 745, 748–9,
 750
 Russian Revolution 627
 Rutherford, Albert 424
 Rutter, Frank 347, 456, 458, 486–95, 498, 502
 Ryan, Frederick 171–2; see also *Dana*
 Rychner, Max 360
 Rylands, George 669
 Rypins, Stanley I. 462, 465

 Sabin, Arthur 180, 181
 Sacco and Vanzetti 535
 Sachs, Hanns 517, 522, 523
 Sackville, Lady Margaret 586
 Sackville-West, Edward 432
 Sackville-West, Vita 340, 431, 432, 549
 Sade, Marquis de 399, 700, 872
 Sadle(i)r, Michael 264, 292, 315–16, 320, 321, 325, 328, 330 n.
 52, 335, 407, 493, 498
 Sadler, Michael E. 441, 489, 490, 493, 498
 Said, Edward 612
 Sainsbury, Geoffrey 375, 385
 Saint Catherine’s Press 317
 Saintsbury, George 350, 364
 Salkeld, Blanaid 744, 748
 Salle, Marguerite 598, 702
 Salter Alfred 550
 Salzman, L. F. 314
Sambain 4, 149, 150, 152–75, 757

- Samuel, Maurice 407
 Samurai Press 176, 177, 180, 181, 185
 Sandburg, Carl 422, 540, 549
 Santayana, George 314, 371, 431, 432, 836
 Sargent, John Singer 570
 Sartre, Jean-Paul 680, 829, 844, 869
 Sassoon, Siegfried 196, 243, 390, 391, 396, 400, 410, 421, 423, 456, 467, 470, 471, 472, 494, 495, 549, 576, 586
The Saturday Evening Post 230
Saturday Magazine 38
Saturday Press 52
Saturday Review 84, 230, 370, 539
 Saunders, Helen 264, 268, 291, 292, 294, 300–1, 306
 Saunders, Max 235
 Sauvage, André 515
 Savage, D. S. 717, 881, 883
 Savage, Reginald 103, 107
The Savoy 14, 21, 74–5, 76–84, 91–100, 786, 789
 Sayers, Dorothy 247
 Scarfe, Francis 659, 689
 Scheler, Max 362
 Schlemmer, Oscar 790, 798, 800
 Schiach, Morag 443
 Schiff, Sydney 349, 374, 459, 487, 488, 494, 495, 503, 554, 556, 558
 Schiff, Violet 374
 Scholes, Robert 830, 863
 Schongauer, Martin 113
 Schopenhauer, Arthur 284, 787, 804
 Schroedinger, Erwin 756
 Schuchard, Ronald 362
 Schucking, Levin 231
 Schwartz, Delmore 361
Scots Art 772
The Scots Independent 772
The Scots Magazine 708, 709, 759–84
Scots Observer 772, 779
 Scott, Alexander 780
 Scott, Cyril 132, 138
 Scott, Dixon 193
 Scott Fitzgerald, Francis 15, 356, 580
 Scott, Francis George 777
 Scott-James, Rolf Arnold 204, 242, 253–9, 417
Scottish Art and Letters 709, 710, 759–84
Scottish Art and Literature 708
The Scottish Chapbook 759–84
 Scottish colourists 324, 325, 333–4, 493
 Scottish cultural 'Renaissance' 760–1, 770, 776
 Scottish Enlightenment 334
Scottish Journal 709
 Scottish magazines 4, 21, 707, 713, 759–84
The Scottish Nation 709, 772
 Scottish National Party 624, 772
 Scottish Renaissance 708, 709, 710, 767, 772–7, 781
 Scottish Revival, *see* Scottish Renaissance
The Scottish Standard 777
 Scott, Marion 392
 Scott, Walter 760
 Scott, William Bell 60
Scribner's Magazine 69
Scrutinies II 398–9
Scrutiny 3, 18, 25, 342, 345, 347, 359, 391, 620, 653, 657–8, 782, 811, 828–31, 833–55, 876, 887
 Sealy, Bryers and Walker (publishers) 161
Secession 20, 512
 Secker, Martin 267, 317
 Second World War 23, 52, 242, 254, 361, 376, 608, 668, 676, 713, 732–3, 755, 779, 783, 794, 823, 861
 Sedgwick and Jackson (publishers) 394
Seed 4, 514
 Seferis, Giorgos 680
 Seghers, Anna 682
 Seizin Press 536, 712, 808, 810
 Selver, Paul 474
 Sen, Nikhil N. 614
 'The Set' 61
 Seurat, Georges-Pierre 492
Seven 5 n. 12, 718, 732, 827, 880, 882, 883
 Severini, Gino 321, 495
 Seward, John 60
 Shackleton, Edith 253
 Shakespear, Dorothy 294, 296, 301, 305–6
 Shakespear and Company 514
 Shakespear, Olivia 92, 99, 282
 Shakespear, William 284, 314, 359, 546, 549, 579, 594, 620–1, 637, 650, 788, 817, 843, 845, 853
 Shand, John 384
 Shanks, Edward 192, 193, 196, 243, 251, 253, 254, 413
 Shannon, Charles 91, 95, 101–7, 110, 498
 Shannon, Roger 73, 79
 Sharp, Evelyn 87, 90
 'A New Poster' 87–8
 Sharp, William, *see* Macleod, Fiona
 Shattock, Joanne 35
 Shaw, George Bernard 94, 95, 169, 201, 211, 214, 220, 237, 535, 539, 543, 635, 747
 Shaw Hanks, Walter 506
 Shaw, Martin 789
 Sheehan, Canon 172
 Sheehy, Edward 753
 Shelden, Michael 860, 870, 872 n. 66
 Shelley, Percy Bisse 581, 586, 683, 813, 821
 Shelvankar, Krishnarao Shiva 893, 894
 Sheppard, J. T. 372, 375
 Sheppard, Richard 2
 Shipp, Herbert 500
 Shklovsky, Viktor 664
 short story, the 70, 76, 98
 Shove, Fredegond 373, 413
 Shove, Gerald 373
 Showlin, Frank 707, 710, 711
 Sickert, Walter 92, 247, 256, 467, 491, 492, 493, 567, 576, 867
 Sidgwick, Henry 839, 842
 Sigerson, George 160
Sight and Sound 529
 Signac, Paul 492
Signature 19, 264, 265, 267, 314–36
 Silone, Ignazio 680, 682
 Sime, Sidney 575
Simplicissimus 498
 Sinclair, Iain 892
 Sinclair, May 201, 234, 237, 282, 341, 357, 413, 416–17, 510, 542, 548
 Sinclair, Upton 271, 274
 Singh, Anup 894
 Singh, Narayan Iqbal 893, 894, 896
 Singh, Shaheed Bhagat 897
 Sirdar, Ikbal Ali Shah 354
 Sitwell, Edith 149, 374, 430, 463, 494, 531, 536, 541, 549, 575, 576, 650, 652, 661, 682, 872
 Sitwell, Osbert 430, 431, 487, 486, 493, 494, 495, 497, 500, 503, 512, 549, 636, 868
 Sitwell, Sacheverall 397, 434, 449, 486, 493, 494, 495

- Sitwells, the 5 n. 12, 342, 351, 421, 423, 457, 470, 503, 648
- Six Acts (1819) 38
- Skae, Hilda 538
- The Sketch* 511
- Skovgaard-Pedersen, Amy 274
- Slater, Montagu 634, 636, 642
- The Smart Set* 15, 208
- Smedley, Constance 132, 138
- Smith, A. J. M. 662
- Smith, Clara 543
- Smith, Edwin 877
- Smithers, Leonard 75, 80, 81, 91, 93, 94, 96, 99
- Smith, Gregory 760
- Smith, James 845, 854
- Smith, Janet Adam 360
- Smith, Matthew 492
- Smith, Pearsall 431
- W. H. Smiths 47, 75, 99, 267, 352, 475, 638, 879
- Smith, Stan 596, 597, 598
- Smith, Stevie 887
- Smyth, Charles 358
- Sobienowski, Floryan 316
- Social Credit 208, 224, 225, 358, 619, 628
- Social Democratic Federation 213, 214
- Social Democratic Party 220
- socialism 32, 120, 134, 135–6, 202, 206–25, 265, 270, 274, 289, 391–4, 636, 644, 777, 890
- Fabian 214, 220–1, 274
- Socialist Annual* 220
- Socialist Realism 592, 593, 625, 636, 646, 862, 896
- Society of Authors 45
- de Sola Pinto, Vivian 393
- Somerset Maugham, William 432
- Somerville, Edith 153, 753
- Sommerfield, John 638
- Sorel, Georges 353
- Soskice, David 235–6
- Soupault, Philippe 422, 515
- Soutar, William 770, 772, 775, 778, 780, 783
- Soviet Union 626, 634–6, 644, 700
- Spanish Civil War 258, 361, 400, 592, 593, 602, 626, 634, 638, 643, 644, 655, 674, 754, 808, 822, 830, 865
- Spare, Austin Osman 570–88
- Spate, Oskar 608
- The Spectator* 201, 222, 230, 237, 238, 293, 370, 401, 442, 505, 507, 539, 853
- Speirs, John 782, 845, 854
- Spencer, Bernard 596, 659
- Spencer Gore, Frederick 294, 306, 475, 492
- Spencer, Herbert 35
- Spencer, Stanley 492
- Spender, Stephen 255, 256, 360, 362, 379, 385, 440, 543, 567, 591, 593, 594, 603, 636, 638, 648, 649, 651, 654, 655, 657, 667, 669, 673, 675, 682, 683, 820, 821, 829, 856, 860–1, 865–6, 867, 869, 879, 881, 882, 885
- Spengler, Oswald 632
- The Sphere* 511
- The Spirit Lamp* 90
- Spradbury, Walter 575, 579, 581
- Squire, Harold 320, 413, 421
- Squire, J. C. 15, 16, 192, 196, 203–4, 240–259, 290, 311, 312, 342, 374, 421–2, 469, 470, 575, 857; see also *The London Mercury*
- Stahr Hosmon, Robert 54, 61, 65
- Stalin, Joseph 619, 620
- Stalinism 689, 896
- Stamp Duty 38
- The Standard* 216
- Stanislavsky, Konstantin 785, 795, 802
- Stanley, Jacqueline 878
- Stansky, Peter 126
- The Star* 216
- Starkie, Walter 751
- Stead, Christina 635, 823
- Stead, W. T. 81
- Steele, Richard 222, 371
- Steele, Tom 201, 212, 489
- Steen, Marguerite 467
- Steer, Philip Wilson 492
- Stein, Gertrude 353, 356, 507, 510, 511, 512, 531, 540, 549, 563, 566, 568, 813, 815
- Steinlen, Théophile 501
- Stendhal 284, 321
- Stephen, Leslie 839, 842
- Stephenson, P. R. 16
- Stephens, F. G. 59
- Stephens, James 177, 183, 413
- Stephens, Meic 718
- Stephen Swift and Co. 317
- Stern, Seymour 515
- Stevens, Wallace 422, 423, 596, 660, 661, 689, 867, 872
- Stewart, J. S. 465
- Stillman, William J. 65
- Stirner, Max 265, 274, 276–7, 278, 286
- The Ego and His Own* 265, 274, 276, 278
- Stock, Eliot 53
- Stone, Frank 60
- Sympathy* 60
- Stonehenge 252
- Stone, Reynolds 731
- Stonesifer, Richard 576
- Stonier, G. W. 440
- Stopes, Mary 538
- Storer, Edward 182, 191
- Storm Jameson, Margaret 201–2, 609, 846
- Strachey, Julia 682
- The Strand Magazine* 43, 70, 77, 98, 200, 230, 380
- Strand, Paul 515
- Strang, William 110, 501
- Stratford, Wingfield 434
- Street, G. S. 88
- Strindberg, August 474
- Strindberg, Frida 199, 475
- Strong, L. A. G. ('LAGS') 464, 465, 466, 467, 483, 580
- Stuart, Francis 738, 741, 744, 745, 750
- Student* 61
- The Studio* 23, 107, 120–3, 127, 469, 498, 786, 789–90
- Sturge Moore, Thomas 103, 107, 110, 182, 183, 233, 348, 350, 421, 423, 424, 432, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 575
- Subramaniam, Alagu 893, 894
- Sue, Eugène 41
- Sullivan, Alvin 3, 463, 666
- Sullivan, Edmund J. 572
- Sullivan, J. P. 845
- Sullivan, J. W. N. 366, 371, 372, 374, 378, 379, 383, 384, 386, 566
- Sumner, Heywood 126
- The Sun* 436
- The Sunday Times* 428, 444, 486
- Supervielle, Jules 680
- Surrealism 18, 19, 25, 342, 460, 515, 522, 593, 597, 598, 612, 614, 637, 662–3, 670, 686, 734, 832, 891
- British 598, 621, 688–703

- French 691, 693, 695 n. 14, 701
 Sutherland, Graham 867, 890
 Swan Electric Engraving Company 102
 Swift, Jonathan 284, 314, 637
 Swinburne, Algernon Charles 107, 174, 226, 233, 584, 585
 Swingler, Randall 592, 634, 639, 640, 642, 645, 661
 Swinnerton, Frank 320, 373, 379, 442
 Sykes Davies, Hugh 359, 594, 597, 604, 610, 611, 612, 615, 616, 663, 694
 'jazz' poetry 594, 612
 Symbolism 36, 69, 75, 101–19, 167, 184
 Symons, Arthur 75, 76, 77, 79 n. 5, 81, 84, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 98, 99, 100, 114, 117, 118, 397, 431, 432, 433, 438, 439, 441, 581
 London Nights 91
 ' Stella Maris' 91
 Symons, Julian 592, 596, 633, 634, 647–68, 717, 813, 828, 881, 882, 883, 884, 891
 syndicalism 265, 274
 Synge, J.M. 163–7, 169, 174, 175, 753
 In the Shadow of the Glen 163, 164, 165
 The Playboy of the Western World 164, 167–8, 169, 175
 Riders to the Sea 163
 Syrett, Netta 90
- The Tablet* 114
 Tagore, Rabindranath 191, 192
 Tambimuttu, M. J. 25, 827–8, 831–2, 874–97; see also *Poetry London*; *Poetry London-New York*
 Tate, Allen 356, 358, 396, 659, 673
 Tatler 511
 Tawney, R. H. 820, 836, 846
 Taxidou, Olga 711, 712
 Taylor, E. A. 334
 Taylor, E. E. 366
 Taylor, Geoffrey 881, 882
 Temple Bar 44
 Tennyson, Lord Alfred 62, 547
 Maud 62
 Terry, Ellen 785
 Tessimond, A. S. J. 385
 Thacker, Andrew 456, 457
 Thackeray, William 36, 97, 577
 Thayer, Scofield 249, 347
 Theosophical Society 211
 Thibaudet, Albert 243
This Quarter 358, 512
 Thistlewood, David 489
 St Thomas Aquinas 566
 Thomas, Dylan 362, 430, 597, 598, 648, 651, 659, 662, 663, 682, 689, 691, 692, 709, 710, 714, 717, 718–22, 734, 780, 828, 829, 832, 845, 846, 870, 871, 880, 881, 882, 883–4, 888, 889, 892
 Thomas, Edith M. 92
 Thomas, Edward 177, 190, 191, 192, 193, 196, 573–4
 Thomas, Olive 229
 Thomas, R. S. 717, 887
 Thomas, William Cave 56
 Thompson, Charles Milner 89
 Thompson, Denys 831, 842–3
 Thompson, Dorothy 823
 Thompson, E. P. 633
 Thompson, Margaret 316, 320
 Thompson, Marguerite 334
 Thomson, D. C. 772
 Thomson, J. Arthur 761
 Tickner, Lisa 300, 312, 330
- T'ien-Yih 680
 Tietjens, Eunice 312
 Tikhonov, Nikolai 680
 Tiller, Terence 887
 Tillotson, Geoffrey 360
 Tillotson, William Frederic 45, 46
 Tillyard, S. K. 141
Time and Tide 13, 23, 456, 457, 459, 460, 461, 530–51
Time Magazine 249
The Times 45, 145, 182, 216, 240, 293, 409, 441, 511
Times Educational Supplement 368
Times Literary Supplement 14, 145, 205–6, 210, 223, 244, 315, 339, 349, 350, 356, 367, 368, 374, 386, 393, 395, 396, 397, 401, 469, 534, 550, 853
Tinsley's Magazine 44
 Tippett, Michael 845
 'Tis', see Furst, Herbert
Tit-Bits 43, 44, 69, 70, 72, 210, 216, 223
 Toba Jojo 501
To-day 91, 146, 407, 459
Today 5 n. 12, 401
 Todd, Ruthven 360, 657, 659, 717, 784, 881, 883
 Toller, Ernst 627
 Tollers, Vincent 462
 Tolstoy, Leon 229, 231, 417
 Tomkinson, G. S. 125
 Tomlinson, Charles 854
 Tomlinson, H. M. 237, 379, 383, 384, 441
To-morrow 708, 710, 735–58
 Toomer, Jean 423
 Toulouse-Lautrec, Henri de 99
 Townsend Warner, Sylvia 541, 542, 546, 549, 638
 Townshend, Petrie (Dorothea) 429
The Townsman 5 n. 12, 718
T. P.'s Weekly 145–6, 210, 223, 317
 Tracy, Henry Chester 384
The Tramp 5 n. 12, 145, 146, 226
Transatlantic Review 4, 21, 200, 474, 512
transition 4, 358, 459, 512, 514–15, 562, 563, 565, 567, 593, 605, 611, 776, 835
 Traversi, Derek 834, 845, 854
 Treece, Henry 882, 883, 884
 Trend, J. B. 351, 354, 371, 375
 Trevelyan, Mary 879
 Trevelyan, R. C. 392
Tribune 228
 Trilling, Lionel 829, 872
 Trodd, Kenneth 853
 Trollope, Anthony 36, 45
 Trotskyism 689
 Tucker, Benjamin 276, 278
 Tupper, George 55, 57, 58
 Tupper, John Lucas 55, 56, 57, 59, 63,
 Turgenev, Ivan 493, 870
 Turnell, Martin 360
 Turner, W. J. 243, 401, 402, 421, 464, 468, 470, 575
Twentieth Century Literature 25
Twentieth Century Verse 591, 592, 596, 647–68, 717, 827, 828, 835, 857, 879, 882, 885
 Tye, J. R. 69
 Tynan, Katherine 153, 183
 typefaces 14, 71, 296–7, 370, 552, 690, 792
The Tyro 14, 265, 266, 311, 456, 458, 459, 460, 552–69
 Tzara, Tristan 57, 422, 593, 638
- Uglow, Jack 548
Uladh 150, 168, 174

- Ulrich, Carolyn F. 11, 52, 226
 Ulster Literary Theatre 150, 168
Ulster Magazine 153
 Ulster Theatre Society 174
 Unanimism 184, 245
 unconscious, the 287
 Underwood, Leon 257
 Unicorn Press 72, 115–16
United Irishman 163, 737
Universities Quarterly 853
 Untermeyer, Louis 541
 Upward, Allen 278, 280
 Upward, Edward 686
 Ussher, Percy (Arland) 741
- Val Baker, Denys 847
 Vale Press 71, 75, 102, 498
 Valéry, Paul 344, 349, 351, 362, 364, 394, 396
 Vallance, Aymer 127
 Valle Inclán, Ramón María del 629
 van Dieren, Bernard 495
 Van Eyck, John 574
 Van Eyck, Hubert 574
 Van Gogh, Vincent 324
Vanity Fair 15, 208, 483, 859
 Van Vechten, Carl 510, 525
 Van Velde, Geer 695
 Vara, Madeleine, *see* Riding, Laura
 Vaughan, Keith 678
 Vazov, Ivan 632
Vendredi 674
Venture 4, 591, 594, 595, 599–622
 Verhaeren, Emile 104, 192
 Verlaine, Paul 94, 95, 98, 107, 415
Ver Sacrum 789
 Vickridge, Alberta 586
 Victorianism 189, 299, 469, 555, 563, 564
 Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, Auguste 110
 Vizetelly, Henry 47, 95
Vogue 208, 505, 506, 536, 859
The Voice of Scotland 709, 718, 759–84
Voices 4, 242, 339, 341, 342, 405–27, 475, 501, 538
 Volpone 556
 'The Vortex' 199
 Vorticism 19, 74, 148, 194, 245, 247, 263, 264, 265, 293, 294, 297–313, 328, 336, 373, 408, 414, 415, 456, 457, 460, 464, 478, 479, 491, 492, 495, 498, 552, 553, 554, 557, 559, 564, 568
Votes for Women 202, 218
 Vuillard, Edouard 257, 492
- Wadsworth, Edward 292, 294, 296, 305, 306, 309, 328, 414, 415, 456, 461, 467, 492, 494, 495, 497, 499, 501, 558, 575
 Wagner, Leopold 42
 Wagner, Richard 587, 787
 Walch, J. L. 371
Wales 4, 708, 709, 710, 714–34, 827, 880, 883, 884
 Waley, Arthur 449, 575, 576, 793, 895
 Walker, Emery 126
 Walker, Ethel 492
 Walker-Smith, Derek 239
 Walkley, Arthur 164
 Wallace, Lewis 201, 211
 Waller, John 885
 Wall Street Crash 608, 609, 618, 624, 821
 Walpole, Horace 243, 809
 Walpole, Hugh 226, 239, 320, 321, 449, 493, 547
- Walton, Geoffrey 845
The Wanderer 340, 343, 385
 Wang, Shelley 636
 Warbis, Alfred 581
 Warde, Julian 272–3
 Warner, Rex 637, 654, 659
 war poetry 196, 409–13, 488, 495
 Waterhouse, Lady Audrey 561
 Waterhouse, Sir Nicholas 561, 562
 Watkins, Vernon 717, 883, 887
 Watson, Peter 827, 829, 856, 857, 859, 861, 862, 867, 870, 872
 Watson, William 90, 183, 417
 Watt, Basil 193
 Watts-Dunton, Theodore 233
 Watts, G. F. 107, 110, 113, 570
 Waugh, Alec 416, 424, 425, 579
 Waugh, Arthur 88, 417, 479
 Waugh, Evelyn 432, 439, 581, 829, 857, 858, 861, 862, 868
 Weaver, Harriet Shaw 4, 14, 242–3, 264, 265, 267, 268–71, 281, 282, 283, 288–9, 503, 535, 554
 Webb, Alfred 174
 Webb, H. D. (publisher) 125
 Webb, H. G. (publisher) 125
 Webster, John 191, 192, 846
 Wedmore, Frederick 91, 98, 107
 Wees, William 292, 293, 297
 Weightman, J. G. 853
 Weinberg, Herman 512, 527, 528
 Weininger, Otto 632
 Weintraub, Stanley 92
 Weisstein, Ulrich 304
 Wellard, James H. 549
 Wellek, Rene 846
 Wells, H. G. 90, 146, 176, 210, 226, 229, 231, 235, 236, 237, 271, 274, 343, 358, 379, 383, 384, 417, 548, 857, 866
 Wells, Peter 876
 Welsh magazines 4, 21, 707, 713, 714–34
The Welsh Review 4, 709, 710, 714–34
 Welty, Eudora 867
 Werner, Craig 637
 West, Alick 634, 639
The Westminster Review 29, 34, 35, 36, 230
 West, Rebecca 264, 269, 270, 271, 273, 279, 280, 294, 384, 534, 535, 536, 537, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 593, 638, 768
 Wharton, Edith 250, 431, 432, 542, 842
 Wheeler Wilcox, Ella 191
Wheels 5 n. 12, 248, 374, 414, 457, 475, 536, 575
 Whibley, Charles 352, 357
 Whistler, James McNeill 105, 107, 116, 132, 486, 574, 788, 790, 794
 Whistler, Laurence 441, 881
 White, Antonia 433, 437, 695, 696
 White, Arnold 216
 Whitechapel Boys 341, 408, 483, 501
 White, Ethelbert 501
 White, Gleeson 101, 107–9, 110, 113, 116
 Whitehead, Alfred North 563
 Whitehead, John 680
 White, T. H. 614
 White, Walter 510, 525
 Whitman, Walt 549
 Whittall, W. Van R. 249
 Whitworth, Geoffrey 493
 Whitworth, Michael 343
 Whyte, James Huntington 604, 708, 710, 774, 776
 Wickham, Anna 192

- Wilde, Oscar 75, 76, 79, 82–3, 85, 86, 87, 89, 90, 91, 94, 95,
103, 133, 213, 788, 795
The Sphinx 108–9
- Wilder, Thornton 548
- Wilkinson, Ellen 536
- Wilkinson, Norman 320
- Williams, Alfred 182
- Williams and Norgate Ltd. 252
- Williams-Ellis, Amabel 634, 635, 638–9
- Williams, Keith 623
- Williamson, Henry 376, 580
- Williamson, Hugh Ross 593
- Williams, Orlo 354
- Williams, Oscar 867
- Williams, Raymond 10, 12, 16–21, 32, 320, 335–6, 457,
831, 837, 854
class and class fractions 20, 32
emergent, residual, and dominant formations 17,
460
see also cultural formations
- Williams, William Carlos 13 n. 36, 185, 199, 280,
286, 356, 423, 511, 596, 660, 665, 741
- Wilson, Andrew 305
- Wilson, Angus 872
- Wilson, Norman 528
- Wingfield-Stratford, Esmè 434, 435
- Winsten, Stephen 341, 408, 409, 414, 415, 426
- Wintringham, Margaret 536
- Wintringham, Tom 634, 638
- Wishart, Ernest 395,
- Wolfe, Edward 496
- Wolfe, Humbert 449, 531, 548, 549
- Wollen, Peter 329
- Women's Hour* (BBC) 536
- Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) 270
- Womrath, Andrew Kay 92, 133
- Woodcock, George 883
- Wood, Frank Noble 584
- Woodmeald, J. E., *see* Oldmeadow, E. J.
- Woolf, Leonard 253, 403, 423, 536, 595, 669–71, 673, 676,
679, 682, 686
- Woolf, Virginia 23, 59, 146, 147, 247, 265, 286, 314, 336, 340,
343, 344, 346, 351, 353, 364, 372, 373, 399, 400, 414, 429,
431, 432, 434, 442–51, 455, 460, 510, 513, 536, 542, 543, 546,
548, 593, 595, 613, 624, 627, 631, 638, 669, 671, 676, 682,
836, 863
A Room of One's Own 443–47
see also Bloomsbury Group; Edwardians vs. Georgians
- Woolner, Thomas 32, 60
- Wordsworth, William 586, 683, 813, 816–17, 818, 846, 892
- Workers Theatre Movement 597
- World Film News* 528
- World Review* 680
- Worringer, Wilhelm 299, 305, 362
- Wratislaw, Theodore 90, 91, 93, 99
- Wright, Adrian 680
- Wright, Basil 614
- Wright, Bernard 411
- Wright, Nora 581
- writing:
popular vs. literary 30, 34, 39–40, 48–9
- Wulfman, Cliff 200, 201
- Wyatt, Honor 809
- Wylie, Elinor 541
- Wypianski, Stanislaw 316
- xenophobia 473
- xylography 458, 486, 497–9
- The Year's Poetry* 673
- Yeats, Jack B. 177, 581
- Yeats, W. B. 75, 83, 90, 91, 92, 93, 95, 96, 99, 100, 101, 103,
107, 114, 117, 125, 131 n. 36, 149, 150, 151, 152–75, 181, 183,
191, 201, 233, 236, 237, 247, 256, 258, 259, 343, 351, 384,
442, 455, 457, 575, 597, 609, 650, 665, 707, 710, 712, 735,
742, 747, 749, 757, 760, 763, 775, 785, 792, 796, 830,
840, 881, 882
Cathleen ni Houlihan 163
The Countess Cathleen 152
The King's Threshold 164
The Yellow Book 14, 23, 65, 70, 71, 72, 74–5, 76–100, 114, 115,
294, 407, 468, 469, 570, 574, 579, 788
Yorkshire Post 536
- Young, Douglas 780, 784
- Young, Edward 663, 672
- Young, G. M. 433–4, 435
- Young, James 384
- Youth* 386–7
- Zadkine, Ossip 474
- Zangwill, Israel 408, 411, 416–17
- Zola, Emile 46, 93, 95, 96, 98, 279
La Terre 47, 95
- Zukofsky, Louis 362, 665
- Zwemmer, Anton 562
- Zwemmer's Modern English Bookshop 605