

## Magazines

ANDREW THACKER

The importance of magazines to the development of modernism in America has long been acknowledged. One of the first works of American literary history to assess the relationship between magazines and modernism was *The Little Magazine: A History and a Bibliography*, compiled by Frederick J. Hoffman, Charles Allen, and Carolyn F. Ulrich (1947).<sup>1</sup> The book combined around 500 short bibliographic entries with a 200-page historical essay, which discussed some individual magazines (*Poetry*, *Others*, and *The Little Review*), as well as chapters on topics such as regionalism and political directions. Much subsequent debate upon magazines and modernism in American has been shaped by this volume's concerns and questions: as Suzanne Churchill and Adam McKible suggest, Hoffman, Allen, and Ulrich "established the parameters of American little magazine studies . . . and its continual utility to generations of scholars stands as a testament to its insights."<sup>2</sup> In particular, the definition of the "little magazine" as something that published experimental or radical "artistic work which for reasons of commercial expediency is not acceptable to the money-minded periodicals or presses" remains crucial to how such periodicals are understood today.<sup>3</sup> Curiously, although foundational for studying American magazines and modernism, Hoffman's volume rarely uses the term "modernism," preferring instead to employ the term "avant-garde" or the Anglicized form, the "advance guard" magazine. In itself, this may just reflect the uncertainties surrounding how the term "modernism" was being understood at the time, as the New Critics had yet

<sup>1</sup> Frederick J. Hoffman, Charles Allen, and Carolyn F. Ulrich, *The Little Magazine: A History and a Bibliography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947).

<sup>2</sup> Suzanne W. Churchill and Adam McKible, "Introduction" to their edited *Little Magazines and Modernism: New Approaches* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2007), 3–18, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Hoffman, *Little Magazine*, 2.

to firmly establish its particular definition and related canon for the term. However, as we will discuss later, the relation between modernism and the avant-garde in America is a revealing topic when considered through the lens of its magazines.

Churchill and McKible argue, however, that Hoffman's influence has not been without its problems, for its preferences, shaped by the critical orthodoxies of the 1940s, have meant that "the contributions of African Americans, political radicals, and women are . . . neglected, belittled, or misunderstood."<sup>4</sup> Another blind-spot of Hoffman is the exclusion of any discussion of modernism in other types of magazines, such as the "smart" magazines (*New Yorker*, *Smart Set*, *Vanity Fair*) or in middlebrow magazines as discussed elsewhere in this volume (see Hammill's Chapter 5). One final drawback concerns the periodization of magazines and modernism that Hoffman employs. Although this volume paid some attention to magazines in mainland Europe and rather more attention to British and Irish magazines, its central focus was upon publications from the US: although its chronological bibliography commences in 1891, it skips rapidly over two decades in five pages, before an entry for *The Masses* (1911–17), the New York magazine of radical art and politics, signals a closer attention to publications from the 1910s onwards. This tends to promote a certain kind of American exceptionalism by failing to trace the very notion of the "little magazine" to currents within the European periodical press from earlier in the nineteenth century. Remy de Gourmont, for instance, produced an early bibliography of the many French "petites revues" in 1900.<sup>5</sup>

Hoffman's volume also does little to suggest how the flourishing of the "little magazine" in the US from the 1910s onwards, in publications such as *The Little Review* (1914), *Poetry* (1912), and *The Seven Arts* (1916), did not emerge *ex nihilo*. There was an enormous expansion of magazine culture in mid- to late nineteenth century, as noted in the pioneering work by the historian of the press, Frank Luther Mott, whose unfinished five-volume *A History of American Magazines* (1930–68) defined the field. The classic "modernist magazine," devoted to aesthetic experimentation and cultural opposition to the mainstream, however defined by Hoffman and others, thus emerged out of this longer ensemble of periodical culture and, in particular, owed much to a particular kind of publication that emerged in the 1890s. In Mott's fourth

<sup>4</sup> Churchill and McKible, "Introduction," 9. Another criticism is with the categories used to distinguish magazines; see Robert Scholes and Clifford Wulfman, *Modernism in the Magazines: An Introduction* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 55–9.

<sup>5</sup> Remy de Gourmont, *Les Petites Revues, Essai de Bibliographie* (Paris: Librairie du Mercure de France, 1900).

volume, on the period 1885–1905, among chapters on magazines concerning engineering (“Journals for Telephone and Postal Workers”) and agriculture (“Hog and Sheep Journals”), there is a short section on “Ephemeral Bibelots,” which Mott notes “formed a curious and not unimportant feature” of magazine in the 1890s.<sup>6</sup> These magazines, variously known as “fadzines,” “freak periodicals,” or “chapbooks,” peaked in “number and queerness” in 1896 but are of interest, suggests Mott, because they “were the forerunners of the ‘little magazines’ of a later date.”<sup>7</sup> Sometimes small in circulation or physical size, often linked to the voice of a single individual editor or small coterie, and sometimes dedicated to publishing non-mainstream work, it is here that we discern the origins of the more well-known American little magazines of the early twentieth century.

In a recent volume on this neglected corpus, Kirsten MacLeod has argued that such magazines are “something more than humble precursors to their modernist counterparts.”<sup>8</sup> MacLeod details many fascinating instances of the development of the “little magazine” formula, in magazines such as *The Knight Errant* (1892) and *M’lle New York* (1895), and assesses figures such as Gelett Burgess, who developed a “Bayside Bohemia” on the West Coast in four little magazines, including the “assertive modernity” of *The Lark* (1895), printed on bamboo paper, and the single-issue *Le Petit Journal des Refusées* (1896), printed on wallpaper in the shape of a trapezoid.<sup>9</sup> Many of these magazines were influenced by their European precedents. Whether or not we decide to analyze these “ephemeral bibelots” as something more than just precursors to later modernist little magazines, it is clear that elements and features of these earlier periodicals, whether in terms of aesthetics or politics, did influence many subsequent American periodicals. Equally, the concern for formal innovation on the page or in its “periodical codes” is another feature that links the earlier and later formations.<sup>10</sup>

In order to structure this short account of a vast body of material, this chapter focuses upon three periods of American literary history: the 1910s and

<sup>6</sup> Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines*, vol. IV 1885–1905 (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957), 386.

<sup>7</sup> See F. W. Faxon, *Ephemeral Bibelots: A Bibliography of the Modern Chap-Books and their Imitators* (Boston: Boston Book Company, 1903). Hoffman’s volume gave scant attention to this corpus. Mott, *History*, 388.

<sup>8</sup> Kirsten MacLeod, *American Little Magazines of the Fin de Siècle: Art, Protest, and Cultural Transformation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018), 5.

<sup>9</sup> MacLeod, *American Little Magazines*, 141.

<sup>10</sup> For the concept of “periodical codes,” see “General introduction” to Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker, eds., *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, vol. 1: *Britain and Ireland 1880–1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1–26, pp. 5–9.

World War I; the immediate postwar years and the 1920s; and finally, the 1930s and into World War II. Each section will concentrate upon a single “little magazine” that best seems to illustrate some of the central concerns of the period, while also mentioning briefly some of the myriad other magazines that appeared. Thus, the first section will concentrate on *The Little Review* and the second on *Broom*, finishing with one on *Partisan Review*. One particular theme that unites all three titles was their transnational connections, demonstrating how American little magazines were always interlinked to other international modernist formations.

### *The Little Review* (1914–29)

The 1910s saw the first flourishing of modernist magazines in America, developing the model and the tone of some of the earlier “ephemeral bibelots.” Production was often concentrated in the bohemian quarters of cities such as Chicago and New York in publications such as Harriet Monroe’s *Poetry* (Chicago, 1912), Marius de Zayas’ magazine of the visual arts, *291* (New York, 1915), and Alfred Kreymborg’s poetry periodical, *Others* (New York, 1915). These were joined by magazines of cultural criticism such as *The Seven Arts* (1916) and *The Soil* (1916), and the multiple outputs of Guido Bruno promoting Greenwich Village bohemia, such as *Bruno’s Weekly* (1915) and *Bruno’s Bohemia* (1918). Another important magazine emanating from Greenwich Village was *The Masses* (1911), associated with many radical figures attending Mabel Dodge’s salon.<sup>11</sup> Arguably, one of the most significant of the magazines of this decade was *The Little Review*, which combined avant-garde aesthetics and political radicalism, and which outlasted many of its rivals.

*The Little Review* was founded as a monthly by Margaret Anderson in Chicago in 1914 and edited along with her partner Jane Heap from 1916, until its demise when based in Paris in 1929; it was to become a paradigm example of the avant-garde magazine in America. Poorly funded and defiantly non-commercial in its editorial policy, it held a commitment to publish, in Anderson’s words, “material that would have been accepted by no other magazine in the world,” a policy trumpeted by one of its masthead slogans: “Making No Compromise with the Public Taste.”<sup>12</sup> A good place to begin to

<sup>11</sup> For an overview, see Steven Watson, *Strange Bedfellows: The First American Avant-Garde* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1991).

<sup>12</sup> Margaret Anderson, *My Thirty Years’ War: The Autobiography Beginnings and Battles to 1930* (New York: Horizon Press, 1969), 28.

understand magazines is by locating a manifesto or early editorial statement that indicates the aims and scope of the publication, and Anderson's words in the first issue are no exception. The aim of the magazine was

to produce criticism of books, music, art, drama, and life that shall be fresh and constructive, and intelligent from the artist's point of view . . . Criticism that is creative – that is our high goal. And criticism is never a merely interpretative function; it is creation; it gives birth! . . . To be really interpretative – let alone creative – criticism must be a blend of philosophy and poetry . . . Also we mean to print articles, poems, stories that seem to us definitely interesting, or – to use a much abused adjective – vital. Our point of view shall not be restrictive; we may present the several judgements of our various enthusiastic contributors on one subject in the same issue . . .

Feminism? A clear-thinking magazine can have only one attitude; the degree of ours is ardent!

Finally, since *THE LITTLE REVIEW*, which is neither directly or indirectly connected in any way with any organization, society, company, cult or movement, is the personal enterprise of the editor, it shall enjoy that untrammelled liberty which is the life of Art.<sup>13</sup>

Anderson's editorial offers an instructive blueprint to what was to become the defining concerns of *The Little Review*. Although often praised for publishing original creative material, the magazine was also significant for its attention to philosophy and criticism, particularly in the innovative mode of its "Reader Critic" column. The magazine's editorial policy of publishing "vital" and "definitely interesting" material, unrestricted by groups or movements, signaled its avant-gardist intentions (though it took a few years before this aspect fully flourished). The editorial also signals its engagement with politics, endorsing an "ardent" feminism and, in the notion that art represents "untrammelled liberty," we also see the impact of Emma Goldman's anarchism, a key intellectual influence upon Anderson.

The first issue of the magazine demonstrates some of these claims, with an article on Henri Bergson, reviews of a book on Nietzschean drama, and another on a forgotten nineteenth-century feminist. However, readers today might be surprised to find a letter and review article on John Galsworthy, as well as an article on Rupert Brooke's poetry, both figures rarely associated with experimental modernism. Indeed, much of the poetry is rather uninspiring, such as George Soule's sonnet, "The Major Symphony."<sup>14</sup> As with many other American little magazines that emerged in the 1910s, the gradual dominance of

<sup>13</sup> "Announcement," *Little Review* 1.1 (March 1914): 2. <sup>14</sup> *The Little Review* 1.1 (March 1914): 13.

material that could recognizably be classified as modernist takes some time: *Poetry*, for example, the magazine founded by Harriet Monroe in 1912 (also in Chicago), also published much in early issues that could easily be described as traditional (see, for example, the exclamatory “Under Two Windows” by Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer in the second issue).<sup>15</sup> Perhaps only Alfred Kreyborg’s New York magazine of poetry, *Others* (1915), offered a consistently “modernist” feel to its contents (established in the first issue by Mina Loy’s “Love Songs”).<sup>16</sup> As with many similar publications in the 1910s, therefore, *The Little Review* took some time to find high-quality material that represented faithfully Anderson’s initial editorial vision.

When the magazine finally closed in 1929, Jane Heap’s editorial claimed they had published some “23 new systems of art . . . representing 19 countries,” indicating the outcome of an unrestricted editorial vision.<sup>17</sup> Even if this is hard to calculate, over its lifetime the magazine became prominent in promoting free verse, Imagism, Dada, and Surrealism (particularly from 1921 onwards), and achieved lasting fame for first serializing James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. Alan Golding distinguishes three main periods in the life of the magazine: 1914–17 saw the early years of the magazine and was strongly linked to the burgeoning cultural work of the Chicago Renaissance; 1917–22 saw the magazine move to New York, and was marked by the appearance of Ezra Pound as foreign editor; finally, in 1923–9 the magazine was printed in Paris, where Anderson was living, although much of the editorial work was carried out by Heap in New York who steered the contents of the magazine toward more visual material.<sup>18</sup>

There are only a few signs in early issues of attention to the European avant-garde, as with the publication of extracts from Marinetti, leader of the Italian Futurists, in November 1914.<sup>19</sup> The activities and ideas of Goldman’s anarchism are frequently covered, often in articles authored by Anderson. Many contributors to the first phase of the magazine were writers and artists of the Chicago Renaissance, such as Floyd Dell and Margery Currey. Golding notes, however, that many of these figures started to drift away from the magazine by the end of 1917.<sup>20</sup> Early in 1915 the magazine started to publish

<sup>15</sup> See *Poetry* 1.2 (November 1912): 44–6. <sup>16</sup> See *Others* 1.1 (July 1915): 6–8.

<sup>17</sup> Heap, “A lost renaissance,” quoted in Margaret Anderson, *My Thirty Years’ War*, 273.

<sup>18</sup> See Liesl Olson, *Chicago Renaissance: Literature and Art in the Midwest Metropolis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017); Alan Golding, “*The Little Review* (1914–29),” in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, vol. 2: *North America, 1894–1960*, ed. Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 61–84, p. 64.

<sup>19</sup> F. T. Marinetti, “War, the only hygiene of the world,” *Little Review* 1.8 (November 1914): 30–1.

<sup>20</sup> Golding, “*The Little Review*,” 68.

more discussion of *vers libre* and examples of Imagist poetry (such as John Gould Fletcher and Amy Lowell): a *vers libre* prize contest was launched in June 1916 (and won by H. D.). The magazine, as with many others, began to experience financial problems, with revenue from minimal advertising and a circulation of something between 1,000 and 2,000 issues, barely enough to cover costs.<sup>21</sup> In addition, Anderson began to lament the quality of the material sent to the magazine, writing in August 1916 that the “tragedy” of the magazine was that in two years of publication it had not come “near its ideal,” and warned that “we shall have Art in this magazine or we shall stop publishing it.”<sup>22</sup> The next issue almost enacted this threat as the first thirteen pages were blank, with the message that “*The Little Review* hopes to become a magazine of Art. The September issue is offered as a Want Ad.”<sup>23</sup> As Golding argues, this “formal and rhetorical gesture” was an instance of the magazine’s avant-garde strategy of “discomfiting readers, writers, and commercial and social institutions.”<sup>24</sup>

Rather than an indication that *The Little Review* was now about to disappear, the blank pages signaled a change of editorial direction and relocation of the magazine in New York from March 1917. In April it announced Ezra Pound as foreign editor of the magazine, entailing that “a great deal of the most creative work of modern London and Paris will be published in these pages.”<sup>25</sup> The names of T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, and Wyndham Lewis are mentioned as instances of these changes; equally important was the redesigned front cover (with more use of color) and, from June 1917, a new subtitle, “A Magazine of the Arts,” and a bold new slogan devised by Pound: “Making No Compromise with the Public Taste.”<sup>26</sup> Over the next year work by Pound, Eliot, and Lewis appear in almost every issue, culminating in the serialization of fourteen episodes from Joyce’s *Ulysses* in March 1918 onwards, a publication overseen directly by Pound.<sup>27</sup> When the magazine was taken to court in 1921 for publishing allegedly obscene material from the novel, it confirmed its status as the prime purveyor of the “untrammelled liberty” of modernist expression.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>21</sup> For an overview, see Golding, “*The Little Review*,” 69–70.

<sup>22</sup> Anderson, “A real magazine,” *Little Review* 3.5 (August 1916): 1–2.

<sup>23</sup> *Little Review* 3.6 (September 1916): 1. <sup>24</sup> Golding, “*Little Review*,” 71.

<sup>25</sup> ‘Surprise!’, *Little Review* 3.10 (April 1917): 25.

<sup>26</sup> Jane Heap credited Pound with the slogan; see “The public taste,” *Little Review* 7.2 (July–August 1920): 33.

<sup>27</sup> On this, see Claire Hutton, *Serial Encounters: Ulysses and The Little Review* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

<sup>28</sup> For the *Ulysses* trial, see Paul Vanderham, *James Joyce and Censorship: The Trials of “Ulysses”* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998).

Over the next few years Pound's stated aim to make the magazine an "official organ" for these modernist friends seems to have succeeded.<sup>29</sup> The contents of the magazine were often oriented around other European authors that Pound promoted: the February 1918 issue was almost entirely devoted to a critical account by Pound of modern French poets; a special issue on Remy de Gourmont appeared in February 1919; and the November 1918 issue announced its contents, half-jokingly, as "Devoted chiefly to Ezra Pound." However, amidst the European inflection that Pound brought to the magazine, there were also issues advertised as "American Numbers": the June 1918 copy, for instance, contained work by Sherwood Anderson, Djuna Barnes, Amy Lowell, and Wallace Stevens; a similar set of figures appeared in the December 1918 "American Number," along with poems by Marianne Moore and Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven. The baroness, a leading figure in the New York Dada movement, was a frequent contributor to *The Little Review* from 1918 onwards, and her provocative experimental works occasioned much debate within the pages of the magazine.<sup>30</sup> Before 1921 the baroness was the only writer or artist published in the magazine who represented the international movement of Dada and/or Surrealism. In these New York issues we see *The Little Review* begin to cement its reputation for publishing avant-garde work that forged transnational links between America and European modernist cultures. Looking back, Anderson accurately commented that the move to New York had enabled the magazine to become the "international organ I had planned."<sup>31</sup> *The Little Review's* move to Paris in 1923 made it even more of an "international organ" of modernism and the avant-garde, particularly in its expanded coverage of the visual arts, and the European movements of Dada and Surrealism. Often overlooked in scholarship on the magazine, this period was important for the way in which Jane Heap worked to disseminate knowledge of the European avant-garde in American cultural circles.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Ezra Pound, *Pound/The Little Review: The Letters of Ezra Pound to Margaret Anderson*, ed. Thomas Scott and Melvin J. Friedman (New York: New Directions, 1988), 6–7.

<sup>30</sup> See the exchange of essays by Jane Heap, Evelyn Scott, and the baroness, entitled, "The art of madness," in the *Little Review* between December 1919 and January 1920. See also Irene Gammel, *Baroness Elsa: Gender, Dada, and Everyday Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002).

<sup>31</sup> Anderson, *My Thirty Years' War*, 136. <sup>32</sup> See Golding, "Little Review," 82–4.



*Broom* (1921–4)

*The Little Review*'s relocation to Paris in 1923 was part of a wider trend in the story of American modernism, that of the exodus of writers and artists to Europe in the years following World War I. Seeking, as Malcolm Cowley put it, "salvation by exile" from the perceived Puritan and mechanistic world of the US, many Americans became expatriates in European cities such as Paris or Berlin, hoping to imbibe a continental air of experimentation and cultural radicalism.<sup>33</sup> Finding living to be relatively cheap in Europe because of the strong dollar, several such exiles founded small presses and "little magazines": for example, in Paris Arthur Moss and Florence Gilliam started *Gargoyle* magazine in 1921, followed by Ernest Walsh's *This Quarter* (1925–32), and Harold J. Salemsen's bilingual, *Tambour* (1929–30).<sup>34</sup> An important later manifestation of this phenomenon was American-born Eugene Jolas' *transition* (1927–38), another Paris-based production that heavily promoted Joyce's *Work in Progress*, while mixing Surrealism and the radical politics of the period, a combination summed up in the famous 1929 manifesto, "The Revolution of the Word."<sup>35</sup>

*Broom* (1921–4) belongs to this same milieu of transatlantic periodical exchange, with its founder, Harold Loeb, leaving New York along with associate editor, Alfred Kreymborg, for Paris in 1921. Unlike *The Little Review*'s impecunious finances, *Broom* benefited from Loeb's inherited wealth; the new magazine also drew upon Kreymborg's experience of editing earlier little magazines, *Glebe* and *Others*. Although they collected material from writers and artists based in Paris, *Broom* was never published there. Instead this most peripatetic of little magazines first appeared in Rome (because of the favorable exchange rate in Italy) before moving after a few issues to Berlin (an even more favorable exchange rate), then finally returning to New York. The magazine's subtitle was initially, "An International Magazine of the Arts Published by Americans in Italy," which might lead a reader to believe the magazine shared similar interests to *The Little Review*. However, Loeb later claimed that his magazine aimed to differ from *The Little*

<sup>33</sup> Malcolm Cowley, *Exile's Return: A Literary Odyssey of the 1920s* (London: Penguin, 1994), 74.

<sup>34</sup> Important American small presses in Paris included Robert McAlmon's Contact Editions, Bill Bird's Three Mountains Press, and Gertrude Stein's Plain Editions; see Hugh Ford, *Published in Paris: American and British Writers, Printers, and Publishers in Paris, 1920–1939* (London: Garnstone Press, 1975).

<sup>35</sup> See Douglas McMillan, *transition: The History of a Literary Era 1927–1938* (London: Calder and Boyars, 1975).

*Review*, charging that the earlier publication “tended to repeat the same names over and over. No longer was there novelty in publishing T. S. Eliot or James Joyce, Mina Loy or Marianne Moore.”<sup>36</sup> And, unlike Anderson’s magazine, Loeb would pay contributors. While *The Little Review* sought to bring European modernism to the attention of American readers through the work of Pound and Heap, *Broom* took a slightly different approach to the issue of transnational exchange.

The reason Loeb later gave for his trip to Europe indicates this approach: “whatever priority Europe might have had in the past, the new world was taking shape in these United States. And I believed I could recognize America’s significant aspects more easily by living abroad for a while and observing them from a distance.”<sup>37</sup> This belief was reinforced by an article in the first issue of *Broom*, “America Invades Europe,” by Emmy Veronica Sanders. Both continents, suggests Sanders, will profit from regular “cultural contact” since America is not a “materialistic monster” from which Europeans need to recoil.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, there were currents in American cultural and intellectual life – Sanders mentions the Young America critics Randolph Bourne and Waldo Frank, whose work had energized the magazine *The Seven Arts* (1916–17) – that desired to transform the country away from a land “made of the Puritan, by the Puritan, for the Puritan, remade of the Machine, by the Machine, for the Machine.”<sup>39</sup> *Broom*’s vision of American culture aimed to diverge from “the extreme left wing of literary America – as represented e.g. by the *Little Review* and *Contact*.”<sup>40</sup> *Broom* thus tried to position itself as part of a new voice in American modernism in the postwar years, a voice less tied to the political thrust of magazines such as *The Little Review* and *Masses*.

Perhaps the key question for *Broom* – as for many of the expatriate American writers and artists in the interwar years – was whether its conception of American culture and identity was altered by its encounter with Europe. Of the twenty-seven articles and illustrations in the first issue, around eight are recognizably by Europeans, all of which are visual material, including work by Picasso, Andre Derain, and Juan Gris. But the placement of

<sup>36</sup> Harold Loeb, *The Way It Was* (New York: Criterion Books, 1959), 6.

<sup>37</sup> Loeb, *The Way It Was*, 7–8.

<sup>38</sup> Emmy Veronica Sanders, “America invades Europe,” *Broom* 1.1 (November 1921): 89.

<sup>39</sup> Sanders, “America invades Europe,” 90–1.

<sup>40</sup> Sanders, “America invades Europe,” 89. *Contact* (1920–3) was a magazine edited by Robert McAlmon and William Carlos Williams, and was informed by Williams’ notion of American localism. Sanders’ description of these magazines as “left wing” may seem odd but perhaps indicates how *Broom* wished to distance itself from publications of the 1910s where politics and art were more intertwined.

Joseph Stella's iconic image of the Brooklyn Bridge on page 2 acts as a visual counterweight to the presence of the European avant-garde, nostalgically reminding *Broom* readers of home while abroad. Loeb himself noted that he chosen it for the magazine's frontispiece because it was "terrifically American," emphasizing a strain of American cultural nationalism that gained prominence later in the magazine's history.<sup>41</sup> Poetry and prose was overwhelmingly by fairly established figures in American letters, including Conrad Aiken, Amy Lowell, and Louis Untermeyer. There was also a rather vague manifesto, written by Kreymborg (and disliked by Loeb), which spoke of *Broom* as "a sort of clearing house where the artists of the present will be brought into closer contact."<sup>42</sup>

From these fairly tepid beginnings, however, the magazine began to explore its European environment in rather more interesting ways. One of the most striking features of its twenty-one issues was the use of different artists to illustrate its covers, many of which drew upon the visual vocabulary of abstraction that dominated European modernist art after the war. Here we see the magazine's engagement with the European avant-garde: of the fourteen artists used to illustrate the front cover, only two were American born, and one of these, Man Ray, was working in Paris in the 1920s (the other was Edward Nagle). Prominence was granted to key figures in the European avant-garde: the Futurist Enrico Prampolini and the Russian constructivist, El Lissitzky, both provide three covers each for the magazine. The Cubists Fernand Léger and Juan Gris provide three covers between them, with lesser-known European artists providing many of the others.

The history of the magazine and its editorial arrangements after its first issue demonstrate a slightly more interesting transnational attitude. Loeb soon fell out with Kreymborg, and replaced him with Matthew Josephson, ostensibly because Kreymborg was more tied to American art, rather than the European work that Loeb had started to explore on his travels. Josephson aimed to sharpen *Broom's* internationalism, "expounding a militant modernism . . . We would become a 'fighting organ,' sponsoring the avant-garde of postwar Europe, the German as well as the French experimenters, and the youth of America."<sup>43</sup> This attempt to marry the "militant modernism" of Europe with "the youth of America" continued when, in October 1922, Loeb moved the European office to Berlin. *Broom* now published work published by Louis Aragon and Philippe Soupault, translations from Dostoyevsky, and drawings

<sup>41</sup> Loeb, *Way It Was*, 9.    <sup>42</sup> "MANIFESTO," *Broom* I.I (November 1921): 99.

<sup>43</sup> Matthew Josephson, *Life among the Surrealists: A Memoir* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1962), 188.

by Matisse. The issues in Berlin reveal a closer engagement with the culture of the city, with work from Russian émigrés living there (El Lissitzky, Ilya Ehrenburg), alongside translations from the German Dada artist, Richard Hulsenbeck, and a series of satiric drawings by George Grosz. In particular, the machine art and Constructivism that thrived in the European avant-garde of the interwar years produced something of a change in attitude toward American industrialism. Coeditor Josephson summed this up: “Living in Europe for some length of time did provide one with a new perspective on America and its evolving machine-age culture . . . . Were not the new machine-objects, created by industry, things of beauty in themselves, whether sculptures in steel or images made by a camera?”<sup>44</sup>

Toward the end of 1922 the magazine’s focus turned from these European influences to reflect upon again upon America. In an advert appearing in the December 1922 issue, *Broom* is said to be located in “old Europe” but promises that its next issue will offer “a national art as profoundly American as: BASEBALL, THE CINEMA, THE JAZZ BAND, AND THE DIZZY SKYSCRAPER.”<sup>45</sup> It lists the names of Kay Boyle, Marianne Moore, Kenneth Burke, Gertrude Stein, Malcolm Cowley, Jean Toomer, and W. C. Williams. Of these perhaps only Toomer was a genuinely new voice, with *Broom* publishing four extracts from his Harlem Renaissance classic, *Cane*. The final five issues of the magazine were published from New York, with Loeb’s European excursion completed. The contents of the issues were stalwartly American, though El Lissitzky provided the covers for two issues. Machine art was now represented as exclusively American: “The Age of the Machine in American is an age of spiritual change and growth as well as one of economic ascendancy. A new art and literature spring sturdily from the machine civilization.”<sup>46</sup> After 1923 *Broom*, however, played no part in promoting this new American “machine civilization,” as financial problems gradually overwhelmed it.

*Broom*, as befits a magazine rather than a single author, displays a polyvocal quality in its pages, switching between the subversive politics of Surrealism and Constructivism and the rather more homely rhetoric of an American cultural nationalism, sometimes within the same issue. Its transnational contact with Europe in the 1920s did, however, change the editors’ view of American modernism and modernity, and in that sense the encounter forced something of a reevaluation of their own cultural roots. This was, arguably,

<sup>44</sup> Josephson, *Life among the Surrealists*, 188.

<sup>45</sup> “The oldest and newest art of America,” *Broom* 4.1 (December 1922), endpapers.

<sup>46</sup> Advert, “The age of the machine,” *Broom* 5.1 (August 1923), endpapers.

a common feature of many expatriate magazines in the period, and was noticeable even in magazines that ostensibly were American-based. For instance, Wallace Thurman's *Fire!!* (1926), a key publication of the Harlem Renaissance, contained a short story, "Wedding Day," by Gwendolyn Bennett that drew upon her experience of Parisian nightlife. In the story of Paul Watson, a Black American boxer and musician in Paris, Bennett contrasts the more liberal treatment of Black subjects in France than in her native America, demonstrating a very different version of *Broom's* reevaluation of American cultural identity.<sup>47</sup>

### *Partisan Review* (1934–2003)

While *Broom's* final version of American modernism sought to promote the American machine as part of an era of "economic ascendancy," after the Wall Street Crash of 1929, many American little magazines in 1930s reinvented the radical politics of the prewar years. *The Masses* was relaunched as *New Masses* (1926–48), strengthened by its close links to a national network of John Reed Clubs (the discussion circle of the Communist Party of America), and was joined by many other left publications that sought to marry once again radical aesthetics and politics, such as *The Rebel Poet* (1931–2), *The Anvil* (1933–5), *The Modern Monthly* (1933–40), and *Dynamo: A Journal of Revolutionary Poetry* (1934–5). Several important writers in the period emerged in these magazines, such as Muriel Rukeyser, who published early versions of much of her first book, *Theory of Flight*, in the pages of *Dynamo*. As Cary Nelson notes, for "a brief moment in American literary history, writing poetry became a credible form of revolutionary action," and the many magazines that appeared, in a dispersed fashion all across the US, aimed to bring this material to a new readership.<sup>48</sup> Debates in these magazines often centered upon issues such as whether writers could reconcile modernist experimentation with political commitment, or the putative nature of proletarian writing.<sup>49</sup>

One of the key magazines in this period was *Partisan Review*, first edited by Wallace Phillips and Philip Rahv, and which emerged from the New York John Reed Club; in addition to publishing creative work, it foregrounded

<sup>47</sup> For discussion of this story, see Andrew Thacker, *Modernism, Space and the City: Affect and Outsiders in Paris, Vienna, Berlin and London* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), 61–5.

<sup>48</sup> Cary Nelson, *Revolutionary Memory: Recovering the Poetry of the American Left* (London: Routledge, 2001), 144.

<sup>49</sup> See, for instance, the overview by Peter Marks, "The left in the 1930s," in Brooker and Thacker, *Modernist Magazines, vol. 2: North America*, 881–902.

critical and theoretical debate upon the links between modernist aesthetics and politics. Early issues contained a short story and a report on a strike by the twenty-one-year-old Tillie Olsen (then Lerner), an essay by Georg Lukács, a poem on the Soviet Union by Louis Aragon, and a forum on the question, “What Is a Proletarian Novel?.” Conflict within the American left over Stalinism, Trotsky, and the rise of the Popular Front throughout the 1930s saw the magazine begin to shift its focus toward closer intellectual engagement with modernist aesthetics: in its third issue the editors asserted that “A magazine is a form of criticism” and that they would now emphasize “creative experimentation and critical precision,” leaving political questions to other magazines, such as the *New Masses*.<sup>50</sup> In 1936 *Partisan Review* briefly merged with *The Anvil*, one of the leading journals publishing proletarian writing, a marriage between different wings of the American left that rapidly collapsed after a decline in circulation. *Partisan Review* was then relaunched in 1937 with the new subtitle “A Literary Monthly,” replacing its earlier “A Bi-Monthly of Revolutionary Literature.” A fascinating editorial indicated that the magazine had not only broken from its Communist Party roots but that it also aimed to position itself in relation to the division between a politicized avant-garde and an aestheticized modernism:

the tradition of aestheticism has given way to a literature which . . . looks beyond itself and deep into the historic process. But the forms of literary editorship . . . which characterized the magazines of the aesthetic revolt, were of definite cultural value; and these forms PARTISAN REVIEW will wish to adapt to the literature of a new period.<sup>51</sup>

The magazine thus aspired to reconcile the aestheticist tendency within modernist magazines with an avant-garde political impulse. The contents of this issue indicate the precariousness of this balancing act: we find Delmore Schwartz’s short story, “In Dreams Begin Responsibilities”; a poem by Wallace Stevens; and reviews of Zola and Kafka. There is a discernible shift to analyze European modernism rather than left politics in America – “Marxism in Limbo” turns out to be a review by Trilling of a novel by a minor Anglo-French novelist – but it is the appearance of Picasso that most strikingly indicates the magazine’s new vision.<sup>52</sup> The Picasso images were the first example of visual art in the magazine, signaling the change of editorial

<sup>50</sup> Wallace Phelps and Philip Rahv, “Problems and perspectives in revolutionary literature,” *Partisan Review* 1.3 (June–July 1934): 3–11, p. 9.

<sup>51</sup> “Editorial statement,” *Partisan Review* 4.1 (December 1937): 3–5, p. 3.

<sup>52</sup> Picasso’s “Dreams and lies of Franco” were preliminary sketches for the artist’s *Guernica*.

emphasis and an attempt to reconcile “aesthetic revolt” with revolutionary politics. A few issues later, George K. Morris wrote upon Miro and the Spanish Civil War, noting the confluence between “liberalism in politics” and “radicalism in the plastic arts.”<sup>53</sup>

Political discussion was still prominent in the magazine, but the balance shifted from the line espoused by the Communist Party of America toward Trotskyism and dissident Marxist critique. Thus the editors elicited a letter on “Art and Politics” from Trotsky and published “Letters from Prison” by Rosa Luxemburg and various articles on Marxism and criticism by Edmund Wilson. Also in 1938 the magazine published a manifesto by Diego Rivera and André Breton (in collaboration with Trotsky) proposing the formation of an International Federation of Independent Revolutionary Art, which concluded with the slogan: “The independence of art – for the revolution; The revolution – for the complete liberation of art!”<sup>54</sup> The editorial for this issue thus invited “intellectual forces” in sympathy with these aims to contact the editors. As Serge Guilbaut puts it, the magazine now tried to orient itself around “an alliance of an unspecified nature between a political avant-garde and an artistic avant-garde.”<sup>55</sup> This putative alliance is clearly signaled throughout 1938 and into 1939: extracts from Kafka appear alongside work by E. E. Cummings, Stein, Stevens, and Carlos Williams. British writers of the 1930s also appear, including W. H. Auden and Louis MacNeice.

The reorientation of the magazine’s cultural politics continued in the last two issues of 1939, both of which were dominated by a symposium on “The Situation of American Writing.” This included contributions by a wide range of authors, such as John Dos Passos, Kenneth Fearing, Katherine Anne Porter, and Carlos Williams. In the summer 1939 issue Rahv’s editorial, “Twilight of the Thirties,” pessimistically argued that the coalition between experimental modernism and political radicalism – a key feature of little magazines such as *The Little Review* or both iterations of *The Masses* – was now over: “I do not believe that a new avant-garde movement, in the proper historical sense of the term, can be formed in this pre-war situation.”<sup>56</sup> Although Rahv rejects the idea of a return to “pre-political modes of

<sup>53</sup> George Morris, “Miro and the Spanish Civil War,” *Partisan Review* 4.3 (February 1938): 31–4, p. 32.

<sup>54</sup> Diego Rivera and André Breton, “Manifesto: Towards a free revolutionary art,” *Partisan Review* 6.1 (Fall 1938): 49–53, p. 53.

<sup>55</sup> Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 33.

<sup>56</sup> Philip Rahv, “Twilight of the thirties,” *Partisan Review* 6.4 (Summer 1939): 3–15, p. 14.

expression,” all that remains is for a “literary minority” to “warn” and “protest against the dominant values of our time” as a “dissident artist.”<sup>57</sup>

In the next issue, at the end of 1939 and with the world at war, *Partisan Review* published an influential article that outlined a new vision for what the term “avant-garde” might mean for American modernism. This was Clement Greenberg’s “Avant-Garde and Kitsch,” which defended the sense of the avant-garde as an autonomous art that was not politically engaged.<sup>58</sup> After 1945, Greenberg’s vision of an aesthetically non-political avant-garde came to dominate in the US during the Cold War, most prominently in his espousal of abstract art in the form of Jackson Pollock.<sup>59</sup> In another sense, Greenberg’s essay marked the transfer of power from a European model of the modernist avant-garde to a new American version. This is apparent in a 1941 essay by Greenberg on “The Renaissance of the Little Magazine,” a review of five new American magazines, which asserts, “There is a revival under way, it seems, in avant-garde writing in this country,” a claim that contrasts starkly with Rahv’s despair at the disappearance of the avant-garde two years previously.<sup>60</sup> Greenberg then suggests that among the reasons for this revival is the collapse of Stalinism and “the influx of writers and artists from Europe” due to the war. The US is now the new home of the avant-garde: “this country is the only important place left where it is still possible to pursue culture without the too immediate interference of events . . . . If writing as creative activity is not to disappear, it is up to us.”<sup>61</sup> Greenberg thus looks to the resurgence of the “little mag” format as an indication that America is taking up the baton of the avant-garde, but in a transformed mode: “Let us hope . . . that there will not be too much repetition of the old attitudes . . . . Not because the new is valuable just because it is new, but because the old, the conventionalized attitudes of the avant-garde are bankrupt – and the situation has changed.”<sup>62</sup>

The subsequent trajectory of *Partisan Review* was thus established. Greenberg became an editor in 1940 and by 1948 described himself as an “ex- or disabused Marxist.”<sup>63</sup> As Michael Rozendal suggests, *Partisan Review*

<sup>57</sup> Rahv, “Twilight of the thirties,” 15.

<sup>58</sup> Clement Greenberg, “Avant-garde and kitsch,” *Partisan Review* 6.5 (Fall 1939): 34–49.

<sup>59</sup> Paul Wood, ed., *The Challenge of the Avant-Garde* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 270.

<sup>60</sup> Greenberg, “The renaissance of the little mag,” *Partisan Review* 8.1 (January–February 1941): 72–6, p. 73.

<sup>61</sup> Greenberg, “The renaissance of the little mag,” 73.

<sup>62</sup> Greenberg, “The renaissance of the little mag,” 73.

<sup>63</sup> Greenberg, *Collected Essays*, vol. 2: 1945–9 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 255.



now attempted to “reclaim the tradition of the high modernist magazines.”<sup>64</sup> But rather than encourage new writers, it acted as a curator, canonizing an older set of modernists. A 1941 issue, featuring one of Eliot’s *Four Quartets* (“East Coker” had already appeared in 1940), along with Southern Agrarian Allen Tate, Greenberg on Paul Klee, and Saul Bellow, shows this shift decisively. The new articulation of aesthetics and politics in the magazine in the 1940s thus laid the ground for the New York intellectuals of the 1950s, and the magazine became transformed into a Cold War institution.<sup>65</sup> That it was to become, like a number of other magazines during the 1950s and 1960s, partially funded by the CIA through the mechanism of the Congress for Cultural Freedom is an ironic journey for a magazine with its origins in the American Communist Party.<sup>66</sup>

### Conclusion

In 1946 Hoffman, Allen, and Ulrich judged *Partisan Review* to be the best of the “leftwing literary magazines,” with its list of contributors making it “indispensable to a study of our age.”<sup>67</sup> As this chapter has demonstrated, the study of little magazines (and other forms of periodical) is indispensable to understanding American modernism. All three of the magazines considered here – along with hundreds of other magazines published in the first half of the twentieth century – tried to understand what it meant to be modern and committed to forms of avant-garde aesthetics and politics. And all three explored the nature and scope of “American modernism,” with their respective engagements with European modernism being central to these debates. The story of American modernism in its magazines has, therefore, to be framed within this wider history of transnational and international modernism and, indeed, the “world form” of the little magazine itself.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Michael Rozendal, “Rebel poets and critics,” in Brooker and Thacker, *Modernist Magazines*, vol. 2: *North America*, 903–21, p. 920.

<sup>65</sup> See Alan M. Wald, *The New York Intellectuals: The Rise and Decline of the Anti-Stalinist Left from the 1930s to the 1980s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987).

<sup>66</sup> See Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London: Granta, 1999), 337.

<sup>67</sup> Hoffman et al., *Little Magazine*, 325.

<sup>68</sup> See Eric Bulson, *Little Magazine, World Form* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017).