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## MODERNISM IN TRANSITION: THE EXPATRIATE AMERICAN MAGAZINE IN EUROPE BETWEEN THE WORLD WARS



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The importance of the little magazine in the history of modern American art has long been acknowledged. In their landmark 1946 study of the subject, Frederick Hoffman, Charles Allen, and Carolyn Ulrich maintained that little magazines "introduced and sponsored every noteworthy literary movement or school" that appeared in the United States from the years immediately prior to the first world war (Hoffman, Allen, and Ulrich 1946: 1-2). They argued convincingly that a developing modern American literature was both fostered by and helped revitalize a tradition of literary periodical publication in the United States that extended well back into the nineteenth century. Their claim also emphasized the importance for American art of the watershed years between 1900 and 1914. In this time, Americans abroad like T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and Gertrude Stein confronted the developments of a modern European art; subsequent events in the United States like the Armory Show of 1913 foreshadowed the arrival of Francis Picabia and Marcel Duchamp in New York before the end of the decade. These happenings facilitated the cultural encounters frequently desired by the editors of little magazines, encounters that altered the course of American art forever.

The changes that ushered in a modern art in Europe had been discernable for more than fifty years, as European cities like Berlin, London, Paris, Prague, Vienna, and Zürich became important cultural centers for successive generations of artists interested in producing work that responded effectively to the modern world. European periodicals played a role in promoting movements and spreading ideas across the continent, but little of this

material found its way to the United States. The expatriation to Europe of artists from America is as old as the republic itself, but in the crucial period that followed the first world war an unprecedented number of Americans looked with curiosity once more to Europe, following the most recent example of Eliot, Pound, and Stein. What Hoffman, Allen, and Ulrich could only suspect in the 1940s was that these Americans abroad found little magazines the most effective forum for their work, potent weapons by which to confront the conservatism of art in the United States with examples and adaptations of innovations readily apparent in Europe. Pound served as a good exemplar: he had already made use of small English and American literary magazines himself, well before the arrival of the new wave of expatriates following the war.

It was from among these later expatriates, however, that figures would emerge who would go further by actually editing their own publications abroad. Titles like *Broom*, *Secession*, and *This Quarter* spent much of the 1920s hoping to promote the work of expatriate Americans to an audience in their native United States; these magazines would also import to their homeland the sometimes daring and exotic art of young Europeans, a wealth of material the potential impact of which had only been suggested by the scattered examples that appeared in magazines edited in America. By the middle of that decade, however, an American named Eugene Jolas concluded that the enthusiasm that had marked these expatriate publishing ventures had waned. He believed that while political concerns threatened to overtake interest in aesthetic innovations throughout the western world, the battle for truly modern forms in America had not yet been won. Even though American writers in Europe seemed to be on the verge of achieving a great fulfillment of their own artistic aims, the threat was renewed that this achievement might pass unnoticed in the United States. In response, Jolas established *transition* in Paris, a magazine that sought to uncover the most innovative work being undertaken by writers of all nations, a magazine that sought to present an encyclopedic cross-section of that material to anyone who was still largely indifferent to the innovations of modern art. For this reason, the story of *transition* helps chart developments seen in American and European art at what is now read as a critical moment of high modernism; as the largest and most important expatriate American magazine in this period, it underlines the entrenchment of an artistic program in the United States that we now recognize as modernism itself. That said, the achievement of any single publication must be judged within the context of the larger movement that fostered the artistic ambitions of Americans living abroad between the world

wars. For all of these bold publishing ventures helped make hospitable to Americans the foreign centers of modernism, the teeming cities that nurtured the modern.

Just before the first world war, Ezra Pound wrote to Amy Lowell that London was "the only sane place for any one to live if they've any pretense to letters" (Paige 1950: 33). Following the example of Henry James, who settled in London rather than Paris, Pound arrived in the English capital in 1908. But while he had gone to Europe to search for the *paradiso terrestre*, the poet also held out hope for a great artistic awakening in America. He foresaw an "American Risorgimento", an uprising to "make the Italian Renaissance look like a tempest in a teapot". American art had "the force [...] and the impulse", and a magazine in the United States could help provide "the guiding sense, the discrimination in applying the force". Thus he began his association with Harriet Monroe's *Poetry*, with a letter written in August 1912. He concluded that her plan for a publication appeared "not only sound but the only possible method. There is no other magazine in America which is not an insult to the serious artist and to the dignity of his art".

Published in Chicago, *Poetry* was a deathblow to the literary pretensions of genteel, commercial magazines in the United States. In his first letter, Pound acknowledged that *Poetry* should concentrate on American poets, among whom he still counted himself and his expatriate brethren, but he also maintained that loyalty to these writers should never "mean a blindness to the art". For this reason, Pound suggested that the magazine "must keep an eye on Paris", for example, and that if Monroe wanted "poetry from other sources than America", he might "be able to be of use". In his role as foreign correspondent for *Poetry*, Pound arranged the appearance of Americans like T. S. Eliot and Robert Frost; he sought from poets of all nationalities "experiments that seem serious, and seriously and sanely directed toward the broadening and development of the art of poetry". But his overwhelming desire to "support American poets —preferably the young ones who have a serious determination to produce master-work" led Pound to consider founding his own magazine in London. While he suggested to Monroe that it was not "any of the artist's business to see whether or no he circulates", he confessed that he too had been "nevertheless tempted, on the verge of starting a quarterly" (Paige 1950: 9-11). Pound's uneasiness reflected some acknowledgment of a traditional divide between editor and publisher, on the one hand, and artist on the other. One of the primary functions of the little magazine had been to challenge this distinction, and while it took Pound more than a decade to actually bring forth his own review, his work with

other magazines on behalf of young artists served to bring down barriers to modern literature in the publishing world.

*Poetry* was, in many ways, too conservative a venture to fulfill all of Pound's needs. In the same manner that he collaborated with Monroe on her publication, Pound became involved with magazines like the *Dial* and the *Little Review*. He told Margaret Anderson that he wanted "an official organ", a medium for his "regular appearance" and the promotion of writers he admired (Paige 1950: 106-107). Sometimes, as in the case of Alfred Kreymborg's *Others*, Pound would simply petition American magazines to include his submissions. Critically, he grew to take a more active role with such English magazines as the *New Freewoman*, soon published with Richard Aldington as the *Egoist*, where Pound was installed as literary editor; most importantly, he collaborated on *Blast* with Wyndham Lewis. He mentioned founding his own magazine again in a letter to Marianne Moore in December 1918. "I hope to start a quarterly here before long", he wrote, and "part of the funds are in hand". Truthfully, financial conditions were not right for any such new endeavor in England, and Pound admitted to Harriet Shaw Weaver that "the cost of printing" was "soaring" in London, and even an established magazine like the *Egoist* was forced to "retrench at all points" (Paige 1950: 144). In any case, Pound had by this time soured on London, long ago concluding that "England is dead as mutton" (Paige 1950: 24), so he set off to Paris in the early 1920s. In the meantime, he was concerned about the fate of the American writer, and he still envisioned a role for the little magazine in fostering talent. He asked Harriet Monroe, "How can the blooming provincial poet be expected to keep a pace unless we set it?" (Paige 1950: 35).

While he was no provincial poet, Harold Loeb bought a share in a New York bookstore after the armistice, in part, so he could learn more about contemporary writing and publishing. With the wealth of both the Loeb and the Guggenheim families behind him, this prospective literary man decided that he might start his own magazine. "I wanted to write, had always wanted to write", he later admitted, "and a magazine would give me an incentive as well as an outlet" (Loeb 1959: 3-4). Besides nine thousand dollars in seed money, Loeb had an additional advantage: he shared a house with Alfred Kreymborg, who had established himself as a discerning little magazine editor during the previous decade with the *American Quarterly*, *Glebe*, and *Others*. Loeb was ambitious enough for both men; there were many magazines publishing in the United States, and there were even many that "were devoting much space to experimental poetry, prose, and painting", he

admitted, but he wished to concentrate on younger, unheralded figures. With Kreymborg as co-editor, Loeb devised a plan to publish his magazine in Rome. "As far as I knew, no one had ever published America's young writers in old Europe", he later reflected, "where it was supposed in certain circles that American literature had stopped with Edgar Allan Poe" (Loeb 1959: 6).

Would *Broom*, as the new magazine was christened, be a magazine for European readers unacquainted with contemporary letters in the United States? Loeb's observations underlined his own uncertainty about the audience he might engage. Like many Americans who went abroad during the 1920s, he held an equivocal view of his European hosts. Indeed, one of the reasons why even expatriate American magazines with commercial aspirations failed to sustain themselves between the wars was simply because few ever developed effectively an audience among European readers, in spite of their idealistic intentions to serve the widest possible readership. Kreymborg claimed that he too saw *Broom* as "a splendid opportunity to introduce lesser known Americans to European circles" (Kreymborg 1925: 362). But while American writing would need an international stage if it was ever to scale the heights envisioned by Ezra Pound, most American editors, including Pound himself, proved themselves most concerned with shipping magazines back home. As Loeb viewed it, *Broom* could develop in one of two ways: it could either appear "in small editions of a few hundred, just enough copies to fill the subscriptions wheedled from friends and would-be contributors, plus enough extra copies to supply the few avant-garde bookshops", or it could be produced for "a broader audience, in editions of several thousand". He perceptively noted that the first option could never generate revenue; the magazine would appear only until the initial money ran out. The second option required greater short-term risk, but it promised a chance of the profitability that might sustain *Broom* indefinitely (Loeb 1959: 13-14). Unfortunately, Loeb chose the second option. Operating on this greater scale, the magazine lost a thousand dollars a month from the time it first appeared in November 1921; by the next spring, Loeb had discharged his co-editor, banking the salaries he had used to entice Kreymborg and his wife to Europe. In truth, the partnership between the two men was never satisfactory, for Loeb suspected that Kreymborg saw him as little more than a "wealthy backer" who was a "dullard" in literary matters (Loeb 1959: 94).

Rome cannot be judged a cultural center for modernism, but Loeb was determined to use his location in Europe to his advantage. He believed that he "could recognize America's significant aspects more easily by living abroad for a while and observing them from a distance" (Loeb 1959: 8). In their first

number, Loeb and Kreymborg proclaimed the magazine "a sort of clearing house where the artists of the present time will be brought into closer contact". They promised that the "path-breaking artist will have, when his material merits it, at least an equal chance with the artist of acknowledged reputation" ("Manifesto I" 1921: n.p.). The writing of such manifestos would define the little magazines of this period, and as much as possible *Broom* attempted to live up to these professed aims. But in spite of contributions from Conrad Aiken, John Gould Fletcher, Amy Lowell, Marianne Moore, Gertrude Stein, Wallace Stevens, and Louis Untermeyer, its earliest numbers are now judged as rather conservative. Loeb was a hesitant editor; he was slow to put his mark upon the magazine through the writing of editorials, and *Broom* lacked identity and direction. Short on bombast, he hoped the "glamour" of the carefully printed and sometimes elaborate publication would be enough to engage readers until his "ideas crystallized" (Loeb 1959: 77).

In the meantime, this "international magazine of the arts published by Americans in Italy", as it was billed, captured the attention of the expatriates who were assembling in Paris, American writers like Matthew Josephson. Like many other literary hopefuls in the United States, Josephson found himself at the end of the war working in the newspaper trade. His friend Malcolm Cowley later observed that in those days "young writers couldn't buy luxuries even on the installment plan. They didn't want to advertise or sell them or write stories in which salesmen were the romantic heroes". These were the writers, then, who looked abroad immediately after the war. "Feeling like aliens in the commercial world", Cowley concluded, "they sailed for Europe as soon as they had enough money to pay for their steamer tickets" (Cowley 1961: 6). In this fashion, Josephson found his way to Paris in 1921, and he fell in immediately with a circle of Americans publishing the magazine *Gargoyle*. Edited by Arthur Moss, one of the earliest expatriates to arrive from Greenwich Village after the armistice, this short-lived venture was the first magazine brought out by an American abroad, and it is noteworthy because it followed faithfully international developments in art seen in the French capital. Without the sort of financial backing enjoyed by Harold Loeb, *Gargoyle* breathed for little more than a year, and by the time Josephson found himself in its orbit it was already struggling to generate enough revenue to continue. In a November 1921 letter to his friend Kenneth Burke, Josephson mentioned that a fellow expatriate named Gorham Munson had become associate editor of the magazine, and the two men hoped to make it less "Villagery", so that *Gargoyle* might "try to get circulation purely on artistic merits". He also complained casually that the first number of *Broom*

to reach Paris appeared "rather indecisive", a sentiment not inconsistent with Loeb's own assessment, and that the whole Italian operation seemed "like very weak coffee after the advance notices" (Matthew Josephson Papers 2: 30). Over the next few weeks, Josephson and Munson discussed the idea of starting their own review, perhaps a publication to rival *Broom*. With this in mind, Munson struck out for Vienna with five hundred dollars. The culture of the Austrian capital had been reshaped over the previous forty years by an interesting interplay of artistic impulses both conservative and experimental. But while the city itself would have been of interest to a young expatriate American, Munson also discovered that a twenty-four page magazine could be printed there for up to five hundred readers for little more than twenty dollars (Munson 1985: 163). Hence, *Secession* was born.

In its first numbers, the new magazine took direct aim at its competitors. The *Dial* required "its pretenses abandoned" (Munson 1922a: 24); the *Little Review* was "like a rudderless ship blown about in all directions by breezes from the left of Paris or London or Chicago"; *Broom* was "a cacophony", a magazine with "the principle of the general merchandise store. Have everything in stock, what one customer doesn't want, another will" (Munson 1922b: 30). *Secession* had bombast; what it did not have was an editor committed to the expatriate life. Munson announced from the beginning, "The Director pledges his energies for at least two years to the continuance of *Secession*". A little magazine established for a brief run can be very effective, as Munson acknowledged when he claimed that "beyond a two year span, observation shows, the vitality of most reviews is lowered..." (Munson 1922c: n.p.). But while he would not abandon the magazine, he longed to go home after only a year abroad, and he realized that to continue *Secession* in the United States would be impossible with the money he had. As a result, he devised a plan by which Josephson would assume responsibility for editorial matters and printing in Europe; he and Kenneth Burke would control editorial matters and distribution in New York.

Details of the subsequent disagreement between Munson and Josephson are steeped in expatriate lore, and separate accounts can be found in numerous memoirs of the day. Traditionally, little magazine editors have had difficulty sharing control of their publications, especially when great distances complicate attempts at communication. With *Secession*, the material that was subsequently included in the magazine and that which was left out suggested to Munson that Josephson was circumventing their original agreement. Munson later claimed that Josephson had to take full responsibility for the contents of the third and fourth numbers of the

publication; John Brooks Wheelwright assisted from Europe in the printing of the fifth and sixth numbers, but he too did not undertake the task to Munson's satisfaction. The magazine that featured the work of Hart Crane, e. e. cummings, Malcolm Cowley, and William Carlos Williams disbanded soon after. Indeed, Cowley later used the *Secession* incident to repudiate the existence of a "lost generation" of expatriate Americans between the wars. "They were never united into a single group or school", he concluded, speaking of the Americans who went abroad. "Instead they included several loosely defined and vaguely hostile groups", and "all of them differed constantly with all the others" (Cowley 1961: 6-7).

Josephson was unable to devote himself fully to Munson and *Secession*, in part, because he had developed a real loyalty to *Broom*. Before he set up his own magazine, Munson actually approached Loeb with an offer to replace Kreymborg. However, it was Josephson who eventually became associate editor after Loeb tired of Rome and relocated in Berlin, beginning with *Broom* 3: 4 (November 1922). Of all the Americans in Europe at this time, Josephson had one of the most pronounced interests in the work of experimental European writers. In his first months in Paris, he wrote Kenneth Burke, "Since I have assumed the living standards of a very poor man, I have joined the camp of the Dadaists". It would be wrong, of course, to suggest that Josephson followed slavishly the European paradigms being worked out around him. Indeed, in the same letter he admitted of the dadaists that "looking at a mass of their reviews gives you vertigo". But he did find them "young" and "stimulating", and he held out hope "that some of them will crawl out from under their rubbish and begin to work in earnest" (Matthew Josephson Papers 2: 30). He would eventually reject this art outright, but in the early 1920s he suggested to the readership of *Broom* that there was some benefit to be found among the most maverick artists with whom he surrounded himself. It was not that any single movement could provide an archetype for the American artist, but rather that through their work "a strong impetus has been given to unlimited experiment with form, to a greater daring and more penetrating humor" (Josephson 1922: 269). Josephson said later that he believed that "it might be fun if we Americans, who were in Europe at the time, would start a literary movement of our own for the younger generation" (Josephson 1962: 153). It was with this spirit that Josephson threw himself into a more active role with *Broom*, for by 1923 Harold Loeb had tired of the magazine altogether, and he found that even the backing of his generous relatives had its limits. Berlin, the center of a burgeoning modernism in the late nineteenth century, was now truly

overshadowed by Paris after the war, and Loeb moved to France to write a novel. In time, Josephson took *Broom* back to New York for its final numbers, brought forward with the assistance of Cowley and Slater Brown. One of its last battles was over the objections raised to its content by the United States post office. Determined that "by virtue of its extraordinary career in the art capitals of Europe [...] *Broom* has acquired a particular bent for rejecting that which is dull and worthless", these final numbers appeared more spirited than the magazine's tentative beginnings (*Broom* in America 1923: n.p.).

Cowley wrote that at that time "the exiles of art came straggling home by twos and threes, year after year" (Cowley 1961: 171). Indeed, the mid-1920s was, according to Josephson, the time during which many expatriates returned to settle into more respectable employment. But the Europe they left behind did have Paris as its undeniable seat of modern creative achievement. After the war, Eugene Jolas travelled to Lorraine, but when financial necessity drew him away from his family there, he did not return to his newspaper work in New York; instead, he plied this trade in the French capital. What he found there struck him profoundly. "Paris today is doubtless the cerebral crucible of the world", Jolas wrote in the Paris *Tribune*. "Nowhere does the visitor from America face such a plethora of ideas, revolutionary concepts, boldly destructive philosophies, ferociously new aesthetic principles..." (Ford 1972: 96). Jolas noticed with interest that writers working in English had a number of little magazines at their disposal. Most notably, Ford Madox Ford brought his British sensibilities to bear in publishing the *transatlantic review*. Unfortunately, financial difficulties made its influential run necessarily short. Equally promising at the time, however, was the appearance of *This Quarter*, founded in the city by expatriate American Ernest Walsh.

Malcolm Cowley described a publication well-suited to its title: "existing in the pure present" (Cowley 1961: 9). It is true that few magazines found the rhythm of its time so well, and Walsh quickly earned the respect of his peers. Like many of the magazines published abroad by Americans, *This Quarter* was itinerant: the editor moved it from Paris to Milan to Monte Carlo in short time. In the first number, Walsh proclaimed that his publication "exists primarily to publish the artist's work while it is still fresh" (Walsh 1925: 259). Indeed, Walsh and his collaborator Ethel Moorhead sought new manuscripts aggressively; the first two numbers featured Djuna Barnes, Kay Boyle, Morley Callaghan, H. D., Ernest Hemingway, James Joyce, Robert McAlmon, Ezra Pound, and William Carlos Williams. Walsh,

whose work had previously appeared in *Poetry*, was a good writer and critic, and these numbers contained a great deal of his material. Sadly, neither Walsh nor *This Quarter* would ever fulfil their promise. Rather prophetically, the first poem to appear in the magazine was Emmanuel Carnevali's "Sorrow's Headquarters". It begins, "The hospital waits: I, today, You tomorrow" (Carnevali 1925: 3). Within a year, Walsh was dead from the residual effects of a war injury; expatriate Americans did not expect the cold hand of the conflict to reach so far into the ensuing decade. Walsh's ambitious editorial program had little opportunity to take shape; Moorhead published a number of his works posthumously in the subsequent number along with her promise to continue. But it was not until 1929 that she handed over *This Quarter* to Edward Titus, and the revived publication never regained the standing it achieved in its abbreviated run under Walsh.

The death of Ernest Walsh not only silenced a promising literary figure, it also closed an important venue for expatriate American writers. Ezra Pound, who had been living in Rapallo since 1924, decided that the tragedy held for him a new challenge. In October and November 1926 he wrote to his father that he was "having fool ideas of starting a magazine". Remembering specifically the disputes he had with Harriet Monroe over *Poetry*, he liked the idea of having "absolOOT controll" of a magazine with "no more combinations or compromises" (Ezra Pound Papers 61: 2692). Moving quickly, Pound launched his *Exile* in the spring of 1927. While this medium offered him perhaps his greatest opportunity to speak directly to a waiting readership, there were numerous distractions that prevented him from shaping his distinct editorial platform. First of all, Pound encountered innumerable difficulties in shipping the magazine from France, where he had arranged to have it printed, to the United States for its primary distribution. This delay and the annoying pecuniary details of running a magazine tired him. Second, he decided to concentrate more on the creative side of *Exile*, putting forth some of his own *Cantos* as well as the work of Ralph Cheever Dunning, John Rodker, W. B. Yeats, and Louis Zukofsky. Pound claimed to his father, "I seem to have a sort of head of steam up [...] for the editorial part of the show (Ezra Pound Papers 61: 2692); but in the third number of the magazine he admitted that there seemed to be little "room for our editorials. Any scrap of creative work being in our eye more than lengthy discussion of what might be but is not" (Pound 1928b: 102).

Pound claimed consistently that selection was the most valid form of criticism, and more perhaps than any other American little magazine editor he left readers to assemble the critical acumen at work in the *Exile* through their

own assessments of the texts. For this reason, he would savage amateur poetasters, like an unknown Canadian versifier who complained to Pound's representative in New York that if he ever figured out what the editor wanted, he would write exactly that. "I suppose, though", he continued, "that he will take a swig of good, strong vinegar, suck a piece of lemon, and then return my ms. with a few sarcastic remarks..." (Ezra Pound Papers 42: 1790). What direct editorial guidance and encouragement Pound did give his readers was sterling. "Quite simply: I want a new civilization. We have the basis for a new poetry", he wrote. "If you have a thousand architects of great talent working ten hours a day, you cannot exhaust the new possibilities of steel structure. If you have a hundred musicians of genius working half the day and all night, you cannot exhaust the new impulse in music. Why worry? There is plenty of work to be done" (Pound 1928a: 108).

After the complications that dogged the first number, delays that cost him money, Pound entered into an agreement with the publisher Pascal Covici to bring out the magazine in Chicago. Covici believed that Pound's name would carry the *Exile*, and he hoped to use the liaison to gain the publishing rights to the poet's newer works. Unfortunately, the venture proved so unprofitable that the magazine was disbanded after four numbers, and Covici's new partnership with Donald Friede in New York scuppered the appearance of planned future works. In a fit of anger, Pound wrote his father: "*Exile* will appear when and where I see fit..." When he had collected enough material "thought to be unsaleable" by commercial publishers to "demand a new issue", he was determined to bring forth the fifth number. With a bitter "Merry Xmas", Pound signed off, but that was in fact the last heard of the *Exile* (Ezra Pound Papers 61: 2696). This is not to say that Pound himself lost interest in little magazines; indeed, he made plans to launch a new review as late as the 1950s.

At the same time that Pound was at work in Rapallo, Eugene Jolas returned to France from a trip to the United States with the idea that if the conditions were right, he might start his own magazine in Europe. Originally, he and his wife intended to stay in America and take over the *Double Dealer*, a little magazine published in New Orleans. At one time, that publication had been well-received as a magazine of the American south, one of the sectional or so-called "regional" magazines that championed a twentieth-century realist fiction that Jolas had already rejected in his newspaper columns and which he countered in his own writings in favor of an approach that celebrated the power of the imagination. Although the heterogeneous cultural makeup of Louisiana was well suited to Jolas's



temperament, the southern United States in the 1920s was hardly the base from which to champion experimental American and European literature. Jolas believed that by editing a review in America, no matter how international in scope, he would be limited by what he saw as the existing partiality of his initial readership. One of the keys to *transition*'s remarkable success was that it effectively courted an international readership, the unrealized goal of many American magazines published abroad. Jolas's publication combined the bombast of *Secession* with the editorial certainty of *This Quarter*, and while it stumbled along in search of funds, it appeared on roughly the same large scale as did *Broom*. Jolas found that Paris had grown no less vital than it had been in the earlier part of the decade; he wrote that the city remained "a hotbed of literary and artistic insurrections". Examples of modern European art were still in abundance, and in spite of the absence of writers and critics like Cowley, Josephson, and Munson, the cafés were filled with other expatriate Americans who gave truth to Jolas's belief that writing in English was readying itself for an unprecedented burst of innovation. Jolas's own poetry had been published in *This Quarter*, and after the death of Ernest Walsh, Jolas concluded that a new magazine had to step in and take the initiative. In the United States, many of the best little magazines were devoting themselves to political concerns. Pound's risorgimento had not yet occurred, and time seemed to be running short. In reflection, Jolas concluded, "I felt there was a need for a review in English which would be a focal point for creative experiments of the period" (Jolas 1931: 186).

The first number of *transition* was published in April 1927, and although the magazine appeared irregularly for more than a decade, its first year of monthly numbers was in some sense its most exciting. Jolas collaborated with a co-editor, the well-known American newspaperman Elliot Paul. They believed that art could play a unifying role in the world of discord. "Of all the values conceived by the mind of man throughout the ages, the artistic have proven the most enduring," they maintained. The continuity of art "joins distant continents into a mysterious unit, long before the inhabitants are aware of the universality of their impulses" ("Introduction" 1927: 135). Initially, the magazine appeared in a small, compact form, and because of its modest size, it was somewhat limited in the visual art it could reproduce and the length of submissions it could accept. Still, these first twelve numbers featured a very impressive collection of writers and other artists. American contributions appeared from Djuna Barnes, Kay Boyle, Hart Crane, H. D., Ernest Hemingway, Man Ray, Laura Riding, Gertrude Stein, and William Carlos Williams. Important Europeans included Gottfried Benn, Léon-Paul

Fargue, André Gide, Juan Gris, Pablo Picasso, and James Joyce. Most critically, perhaps, American readers once again found themselves privy to the work of radical European artists. Just as Josephson abandoned them, Jolas found material of interest from former and current members of the dadaists (Hans Arp, Hugo Ball, Tristan Tzara, Kurt Schwitters) and surrealists (André Breton, Paul Eluard, Max Ernst, Robert Desnos).

Beyond this first year of monthly appearances, the magazine continued as a quarterly until 1930, when financial problems forced a two year suspension. Later numbers were marked by a greater enthusiasm on Jolas's part to define his editorial platform and encourage experimentation. This was accomplished through a series of critical articles provided by Jolas and his closest collaborators, as well as through the appearance of two manifestos: "The Revolution of the Word" in 1929 and "Poetry is Vertical" in 1932. But while these documents were discussed both by expatriates in Paris and by the *transition* readership worldwide, the crash of the stock market in the United States was what truly jolted American magazine publishing abroad at this time. From the early 1930s until the beginning of the second world war, *transition* had few direct competitors in Paris; indeed, it was a time during which even American newspapers abroad were forced to retrench. Some of the new little magazines that appeared in the French capital, along with the remounted *This Quarter*, were noteworthy because their editors were also interested in the questions of language that so preoccupied Eugene Jolas. Sadly, the difficult economic conditions in which publications like *Tambour* and the *New Review* appeared certainly detracted from the effect of the important aesthetic debates they carried out. These magazines were rarely active at the same time, but the frequently unanswered positions plotted out by their editors have become central concerns for scholars interested in the literature of the period. In *Tambour*, for example, editor Harold Salemsen printed a manifesto titled "Essential: 1930". Although Salemsen signed "The Revolution of the Word", he used his own magazine to raise the possibility of "The Revolution of the Idea" and separate himself from what people saw as the social ramifications of Jolas's ideas. While Salemsen claimed to have the backing of American writers in the United States and abroad, his magazine folded before they were revealed to his readers. Similarly, Samuel Putnam used his *New Review*, in part, to voice his skepticism about Jolas's work. Putnam actually launched his magazine in response to Edward Titus's running of *This Quarter*, but he promised that the *New Review*, "an international notebook for the arts published from Paris", would be "the organ of no school of movement" ("The *New Review*" 1931: n.p.).

In these later years, a number of other expatriate American magazines appeared in Europe, and while their editors may have been less concerned with the aesthetic issues raised by recent developments in modern literature than was Eugene Jolas, many of them had past connections with *transition*. Whit Burnett and Martha Foley signed "The Revolution of the Word", and two years later they brought forth *Story* magazine. While they claimed that their new publication had "no theories, and is part of no movement", in its modest, mimeographed beginnings can be read the desire to explore innovations in fiction as Jolas explored innovations in poetry. The magazine was not even distributed in England and the United States, initially, and the publication sought stories "of significant merit [...] by no matter whom and coming from no matter where" (*Story* 1931: n. p.). Similarly, Syd Salt had also published in *transition*, and he resurfaced in 1934 with *Caravel*. In both cases, these magazines were published on the continent, and they reflected something of the turbulent life abroad for Americans in the 1930s. While Burnett and Foley traced a well-worn trail to Vienna, Salt found himself in Majorca. But these publications were little more than interesting exceptions; the period of growth in expatriate American publishing abroad was over for the time being. More Americans returned to the United States, and those writers who did stay in Europe were distracted by the ominous political developments they encountered.

In the period leading up to the beginning of the war, Jolas too found himself back in the United States, working for an international news agency in New York. While in America, he brought forward three so-called "New York numbers" of *transition* on a more-or-less regular quarterly schedule between June 1936 and May 1937. Like Pound, Jolas had relied on a commercial publisher for these later numbers; like Pound he now found himself at loose ends, for the Servire Press went bankrupt. Jolas discovered that the cultural circles in New York City were now dominated exclusively by the discussion of political concerns, not surprisingly, and he simply did not fit in. While he was more comfortable in France than many expatriates, he concluded that his place was in America. It is true, however, that he never belonged to the bohemia of Greenwich Village in the same manner that he belonged in Montparnasse. But towards the end of 1937, Jolas returned to Paris to arrange a permanent move to the United States, fearing the inevitable outbreak of hostilities on the continent. After surveying the political climate in France, he made arrangements to publish a "Tenth Anniversary" number of *transition*, abandoning his own apolitical nature to make this final collection of international material a defiant stand against fascism.

Literary circles in Paris had changed, as well. The most notable American magazine operating in the French capital was perhaps the *Booster*. Originally a publication of the American Country Club of France, it was taken over and surreptitiously converted into a literary magazine by Henry Miller and his friends, a familiar cast of characters including Lawrence Durrell, Anaïs Nin, and Alfred Perlès. It henceforth bore no resemblance to the original publication, however; the editors kept the name, they announced, only "because it appeals to us". Assessing the tense conditions around them and clearly led by Miller, they sought to become "a contraceptive against the self-destructive spirit of the age". The editors proclaimed, "We are not interested in political line-ups, nor social panaceas, nor economic nostrums" ("Editorial" 1937: 5). They were forced by April 1938 to use the name *Delta*, but by Christmas of that year, they brought-forward the final number. Many of the American contributors to this venture found a temporary outlet with British magazines like *Seven*, a publication that was able to carry on until 1940. The war made publishing literary magazines of any kind virtually impossible in Europe. Laura Riding and Robert Graves carried on with *Epilogue* in Spain as long as they could, but conditions there created an irregular publishing schedule. They used *Epilogue* 3 (Spring 1937) for a long and eloquent renunciation of the corruption of poetry by political concerns, written with Harry Kemp.


War could only abate temporarily the rush of expatriates, however. By the late 1940s, Paris was again awash with Americans, and the story of the magazines to which they contributed, publications like *Points*, *ID*, *Janus*, *Merlin*, and *Zero*, is interesting in its own right. These magazines did not publish the same writers who had appeared in *Broom*, *transition*, or the *New Review*. More than ever, these older figures found themselves with access to commercial publishers, and the revival of American magazines abroad saw young writers attempt to distance themselves from earlier expatriates. But the success of one publication from this later time, the *Paris Review*, best helps to frame the achievement of the expatriate American magazines that once found success between the wars. The *Paris Review* distinguished itself by marrying commerce with art in a way never seen before; it worked out a compromise with the publishing establishment that shifted the emphasis of independent publishing to forms that developed from the 1960s on the back of new technologies, from the photocopier to the internet. After the war, the whole mode of literary production changed, a revolution that accelerated through the rest of the twentieth century. The modern little magazine was no



more, replaced by new generations of little magazines that in their own fashion responded to a different world around them.

Recent critiques of the modern canon, like that of Walter Kalaidjian for example, have reminded us of the minimizing tendency in reading modernism, especially high modernism in the America, as a narrow and specific period defined by fixed historical boundaries. He begins his study by pointing out how "criticism exploits historical framing to prop up disciplinary authority, institutional force, and canonical power" (Kalaidjian 1993: 1). Kalaidjian is particularly wary of a narrow view of the period between the wars because he properly recognizes in its art a radicalism that worked against the establishment of a cultural dominant in the United States. Nowhere was this "alternative discourse of racial, sexual, class, and transnational experience" more apparent than on the pages of the little magazine (Kalaidjian 1993: 3). Because his study is not concerned with the little magazine, *per se*, Kalaidjian is less interested in what his observations say about the nature of these publications. But we can see that modern little magazine editors like Eugene Jolas, Gorham Munson, and Ernest Walsh were torn between the genuine radical impulse to resist a publishing establishment with which they retained only tenuous links and the desire to have their vision of modern art acknowledged as the cultural dominant. Figures like Ezra Pound sought on the one hand to establish this cultural dominant to respond to the conditions of the modern world, while the heterogeneous nature of the publications they used to promote their texts resisted the creation of any monolithic view of that art. That is why a single number of any little magazine is likely to contain both essays designed to enhance the critical reputations of certain writers now recognized as canonical modernists and works of genuine avant-gardists who sought to oppose the institution of art itself.

Kalaidjian's critique also serves to remind us that one must be careful in viewing the second world war as the historical terminus of the modern artistic impulse. This simply is not the case. But as assessments of American art in the first half of the twentieth century began in earnest after the war, the attitudes of younger artists, like the expatriate Americans again publishing little magazines abroad, suggested that their predecessors could indeed be read as "something", and they themselves were beginning to look less and less like what that something might be. This older group was not difficult to identify; the writers at work between the wars sought to a degree virtually without precedent to recognize their peers. So, when literary historians set about the "writing" of "modernism" in the second half of the twentieth

century, they found that their work had largely been done by the modernists themselves. One need not, indeed should not, leave this version of modernism unquestioned some fifty years later. But canonical revision must be approached methodically. Modernism, as has been acknowledged, is fond of its internal contradictions: it is easy to see why the canonical texts of the movement have been culled from the heterogeneity of little magazines. But identifying the dissenting impulses in the little magazines themselves allows contemporary scholars of modernism an opportunity to better trace its faultlines, and it provides them better access to the primary documents that trace the origins of critical concerns central to modernist debates. 

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## PUPPETS, ACTORS AND DIRECTORS: EDWARD GORDON CRAIG AND THE EUROPEAN AVANT-GARDE



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The work of Edward Gordon Craig (1872-1966) occupies an ambivalent position within British modernism. The son of Helen Terry and the architect E. W. Godwin, Craig first worked in the theatre as an actor with Henry Irving's company at the Lyceum. By 1909, having directed several operas, he was ready to abandon England and indeed one of its great theatrical families, and settle in Italy for the rest of his life.<sup>1</sup> By turning himself into an exile—a quintessential modernist stance—Craig consciously places his work within the context of the European *avant-garde*. He also distances himself from both the Victorian actor-manager tradition in the theatre and the modernist experiments in poetic drama conducted by Eliot, Yeats and later Auden and Isherwood.<sup>2</sup> His approach to the "art of the theatre" not only makes him unique within the Anglo-American tradition but it also places him alongside European figures such as Reinhardt, Stanislavsky, Meyerhold and Artaud. To see Craig's work within the context of the European *avant-garde* is to highlight some of the visionary qualities that have inspired such contemporary theatrical producers as Peter Brook. It may also point towards some of the contradictions and sometimes utopian impossibilities that Craig's theoretical work presents.

Unlike any other theatrical project in Britain at the time, Craig's work embraced all the concerns of the *avant-garde*, exploring the relations of theatre, religion and politics, connecting with the traditions of oral performance, establishing relationships with the "theatres of the Orient". While such preoccupations can be found in the poetic dramas of Eliot, Yeats or Wyndham Lewis, the whole experiment in Britain remained stubbornly