

Our third decade will have to be judged with the tolerance perspective affords the critic. Measurement of its value cannot be made according to the standards it set up for itself. Intellectually it was a unity of disparate elements, a parade of mutually exclusive theories, an anthology of recalcitrance. It had all standards and no standards. It has been the most exclusively "literary" of all decades of the century; that is, its intellectual sponsors derived many of their judgments from books and magazines, and out of them compiled more books and established more magazines. It was a time of experiment, tolerant of contradictions and of indiscriminate effusions. The energies were not channelized, and efforts to synthesize were smashed by strong personal differences or editorial mismanagement.

Harold J. Salemsen sums up the experimentalism of the twenties for us in *Tambour's* seventh issue. For the moderns, whatever their persuasion, "art is but a projection of the artist's personality into the world about him, or if we wish, an interpretation of the outside world as related to the artist. In this, modernism has been but a romanticism distinguished by its form."

"Modernists" (that is to say, experimentalists) have been wholly preoccupied with form; this has led to an exhaustion of form, and some new aesthetic direction is necessary. It is necessary to add "matter" to the various "manners" with which the writers of the twenties have experimented. We need, above all, a new point of view, which goes beyond the artist himself: "We demand that the artist look at his day with the point-of-view of his day, as he understands it, and without making us feel his presence in it."²²

The pressure of events was to furnish a new "matter" for writing in the thirties.

²² "Essential: 1930 (A Manifesto)," *Tambour*, VII, 5-7 (1930).

THE TENDENZ MAGAZINE



CHAPTER VI

At first glance the overwhelming variety and diffusion of enthusiastic but adolescent activity discourages any effort at giving it any order whatsoever. The difficulty of "presentness" in any age is its preoccupation with the immediate environment, physical or intellectual. If there is any difference between the confusion of our second decade and the disorder of the third, it must be sought in efforts which some of the magazines of the latter period made to fashion a synthesis from diverse materials. Beginning with the later years of the war, some men sought for an underlying meaning, of which the diversity of expressions was merely the surface appearance.

The *tendenz* magazine is, therefore, an important clue to the literature of the twenties. Its aim was first to recognize, second to state, the forward direction of our thought and culture; and, finally, to predict or advocate the ultimate ends and aims of our literary aspiration. Men who piloted such magazines over rough seas were in a sense the "dictators of thought"; and, like most dictators, they were met with criticism civil and uncivil, and led troubled lives. It was a time of assessment of democratic values; and it was the poet's task to state these values clearly, the critic's to draw them together.

The *tendenz* magazine is a peculiar result of the age. Its product was the critical philosophical essay, companion piece to the creative work found in its pages. Its purpose is primarily to sponsor thinking on a number of issues and to give original thinkers a place of publication. Hence it is editorially more vocal than other types of little magazines, though it may not have a policy any more consistent than, or even as consistent as, its fellows. It is by means of these magazines—the avant-garde magazines of criticism and philosophical discussion—that the

major intellectual tendencies of the period may be examined. As we shall see, magazines like *The Seven Arts*, *Broom*, *Secession*, and *S 4 N* did support the young, new writers' claim for a hearing; but this was not their only interest. One other distinguishing characteristic these magazines have: their contributors were generally interested in ideas themselves and in the relationship which held between these ideas as they are expressed in philosophy, applied in psychology, and altered and represented in literature. They point to the intellectual future and, on the basis of what they see in contemporary life, suggest one or several tendencies which they feel the world and man must follow. Hence their criticism is often philosophical or sociological, rather than aesthetic. This fact sets them apart from magazines of criticism, whose chief concern is with the analysis of works of art in themselves and with various speculations concerning the nature of the arts.

In times more settled than ours, such magazines might well have echoed tradition or defended and explained it. But there was no general body of "believers" who subscribed unanimously to a self-containing system of thought. There are contradictions and inconsistencies to be found, therefore, in these magazines. As a matter of fact, one magazine, *S 4 N*, attempted to formulate an editorial philosophy from the idea of disagreement and difference—claiming that thought is in general "fluid" and adoption of any one body of thought excludes all others, making intellectual progress difficult and almost impossible.

It is as exciting to follow the winding, errant paths which these magazines took as it is to look at the changes in literary method itself. For the editors of these magazines had their differences of opinion and their quarrels; and the history of ideas in the twentieth century is as varied and bewildering as is the history of the literary art. The first of the magazines we wish to examine is one which belongs to the second decade of the century; but its history is so definitely a part of the career of the *tendenz* magazine that chronology can be safely overruled.

II

New York's *Seven Arts* flashed across the literary horizon for only a year, from November 1916 to October 1917. In that twelvemonth it powerfully stirred American thought and made a lasting name for itself. James Oppenheim, the editor, and his two associates, Waldo Frank and Van Wyck Brooks, were the leading spirits of a group that saw in

the late teens an awakening of national self-consciousness, a restless yearning for a finer vision of destiny than the land had previously known. They saw these evidences of America's coming of age in the new poets who were monthly being promoted by *Poetry*, and they were alert enough to see that there were many young men—as yet all but unknown—eager to express themselves in the drama, the novel, the short story, and criticism.¹ A letter addressed to these unknowns in the summer of 1916 defined *The Seven Arts*' ambitious hope of drawing together and synthesizing their thought:

"It is our faith and the faith of many, that we are living in the first days of a renascent period, a time which means for America the coming of that national self-consciousness which is the beginning of greatness. In all such epochs the arts cease to be private matters; they become not only the expression of the national life but a means to its enhancement.

"Our arts show signs of this change. It is the aim of *The Seven Arts* to become a channel for the flow of these new tendencies: an expression of our American arts which shall be fundamentally an expression of our American life.

"We have no tradition to continue; we have no school of style to build up. What we ask of the writer is simply self-expression without regard to current magazine standards. We should prefer that portion of his work which is done through a joyous necessity of the writer himself.

"*The Seven Arts* will publish stories, short plays, poems, essays and brief editorials. Such arts as cannot be directly set forth in the magazine will receive expression through critical writing, which, it is hoped, will be no less creative than the fiction and poetry. In this field the aim will be to give vistas and meanings rather than a monthly survey or review; to interpret rather than to catalogue. We hope that creative workers themselves will also set forth their vision and their inspiration.

"In short, *The Seven Arts* is not a magazine for artists, but an expression of artists for the community."²

The high hope was richly rewarded. The result of this appeal brought forth an amazing number of fine writers, men who shortly were to dominate the milieu. *The Seven Arts* receives the credit for crystallizing in the public consciousness such American names as Sherwood Anderson, John Dos Passos, Eugene O'Neill, Randolph Bourne, John Reed, Van Wyck Brooks, Waldo Frank, and H. L. Mencken, and the Englishmen, D. H. Lawrence and J. D. Beresford. Most of these were

¹ James Oppenheim, Editorial, *The Seven Arts*, 1, 52 (November 1916).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.

printed frequently. Other names were made known through critical discussion. Ernest Bloch and Leo Ornstein wrote on their music and Marsden Hartley on his painting. And various articles by the editors commented on little known European writers who have since become prominent.

But before we examine the exciting first number, let us glance at the editors.

James Oppenheim was the oldest of the motivating trio, all of whom—as most little magazine editors have been—were under thirty-five. Born in St. Paul, Minnesota, of financially well established Jewish parents, young Oppenheim soon moved to New York, where he lived the remainder of his life. When he was six years old his father died, and within a short time the family found itself in straitened circumstances. The bitter odds against which he gained a few years of extension work from Columbia University foreshadowed a life of misfortune. To keep alive, the poet was soon forced to write sentimental magazine stories, drudgery for a mythically inclined temperament. His serious need for expression had to find release at infrequent intervals until 1916. And so, when he was offered the opportunity of founding *The Seven Arts* with Waldo Frank, a joyous hope of release sprang up.³ The magazine, richly subsidized by Mrs. A. K. Rankine, removed the haunting specter of poverty, promised a work which he could enjoy, and offered a yearly salary of around \$5,000.⁴ He took up his duties with enthusiasm.

Waldo Frank was a cofounder and the associate editor (in reality, managing editor)⁵ of the magazine. Well educated, imaginative, and possessor of a good deal of practical newspaper experience accumulated after taking a Master's degree at Yale in 1911, Frank was to a large extent responsible for the form and direction of the magazine.⁶ Van Wyck Brooks (who had not yet become an associate editor), Kahlil Gibran, Louis Untermeyer, Robert Frost, Edna Kenton, David Manners, and Robert Edmond Jones heartily seconded Oppenheim and Frank in their attempt to build up a magazine as *An Expression of Artists for the Community*.

In the initial issue, as in those to follow, there was a primary concern with critical material. Romain Rolland wrote on "America and the Arts," Peter Minuit examined the status of our architecture. "Lazy

³ Dumas Malone, ed., *Dictionary of American Biography*, New York, 1934, xiv, pp. 46-47.

⁴ Letter, Waldo Frank to Charles Allen, July 25, 1937 (unpublished).

⁵ *Ibid.*, November 30, 1937.

⁶ Fred B. Millett, *Contemporary American Authors*, New York, 1940, p. 360.

Verse" was severely censured by Oppenheim. Floyd Dell expressed his thoughts on "Shaw and Religion," Louis Untermeyer on the dance, and Paul Rosenfeld on "The American Composer." Van Wyck Brooks, Waldo Frank, and Allen Upward also wrote articles. Robert Frost, Jean Starr Untermeyer, Kahlil Gibran, and Amy Lowell contributed verse. Stories by Josephine Baker and Berry Benefield, and Louise Driscoll's one-act play, "The Child of God," finished out the issue of 95 well printed pages—a somewhat smaller issue than the later average of 125 book-size leaves.

The Seven Arts group came together with the purpose of directing the new spirit towards an objective. America must slough off its terrifying preoccupation with material values, react against the emotional sterility, the imaginative barrenness which Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology* so clearly revealed.⁷ Such new artists as Sherwood Anderson in this country, and John Davis Beresford and D. H. Lawrence in England, must develop. They must be capable of suggesting to an emotionally starved nation the possibilities of a richer way of life, the need for intuition, and poetic responsiveness. They must give to the nation's outlook a vision which would honor the complete man rather than the person whose single obsession was property and its value.⁸

The Seven Arts was knifed by war chauvinism and editorial conflict before it could find many of these artists, but the message was heard and from our vantage point we can see that the magazine influenced American letters and thought profoundly.

During the magazine's year of life there were no fewer than two dozen articles, poems, and editorials written by Oppenheim, Frank, and Brooks—all designed to drive home to the average of 5,000 buyers⁹ the need for a new national art and life. Though the American scene was examined from different angles by these three men, their writings revealed a close correspondence of outlook. Brooks persuasively reiterated in his numerous arguments his central theme that "Our ancestral faith in the individual and what he is able to accomplish (or, in modern parlance, to 'put over') as the measure of all things has despoiled us of that instinctive human reverence for those divine reservoirs of collective experience, religion, science, art, philosophy, the self-subordi-

⁷ Van Wyck Brooks, "Toward a National Culture," *The Seven Arts*, I, 538 (March 1917).

⁸ Waldo Frank, "Vicarious Fiction," *The Seven Arts*, I, 302 (January 1917).

⁹ Letter, Frank to Allen, July 25, 1937 (unpublished).

nating service to which is almost the measure of the highest happiness."¹⁰ Frank, the cultured and prophetic rebel, found that America needed "above all things, spiritual adventure. It needs to be absorbed in a vital and virile art. It needs to be lifted above the hurry of details, to be loosed from the fixity of results."¹¹ Not quite as graceful as his two colleagues when it came to exposition, but just as sincere, Oppenheim aspired "as our fathers' fathers did, for something beyond ourselves, which we may love or hate, and to which we may so give ourselves that life acquires an interest, an intensity, a fine rigorous quality that tests us athletically and brings all our submerged powers into play. We aspire to be alive in every part of ourselves." All of these men agreed, too, in their hatred of absolute industrialism. Oppenheim expressed their common feeling when he cried, "Human nature has stronger and angrier hungers than an unrelieved industrialism can meet: and a race that has gone out time and again to suffer and to die for ideas and symbols, for abstract conceptions like 'freedom' and 'democracy,' for visions like that of the Grail and of God, cannot now be content alone with factory-work, or business, or the flat metallic taste of money."¹²

The call for spiritual revolution was linked with an advocacy of social revolution. The editors were definite socialists and among the first supporters of the new Russia, though, as Frank points out, this support was more lyrical than argumentative.

In addition to the heavy salvos of Oppenheim, Brooks, and Frank, there were hard-hitting articles by others who had already acquired some degree of fame. John Dewey wrote "In a Time of National Hesitation"; H. L. Mencken in one of his most brilliant moments exposed the inner thoughts of the supervirtuous who had counted the "lewd" words in Dreiser. Bertrand Russell wondered whether nationalism was moribund. The critic and aesthete, Willard Huntington Wright (who later became famous as "S. S. Van Dine"), did several articles, and Carl Van Vechten had much to say about music. Dreiser, always ambitious for big things, made a long study of a wide subject: "Art, Life, and America." There was an article on the new artistic stirring in Spain; the author, a young unknown, signed himself "John R. Dos Passos."

With *The Seven Arts'* critical predilections in mind we can thoroughly understand the editors' admiration for the fiction of Lawrence,

¹⁰ Brooks, "Toward a National Culture," p. 540.

¹¹ Frank, "Vicarious Fiction," p. 302.

¹² Oppenheim, Editorial, *The Seven Arts*, 1, 504-505 (March 1917).

Anderson, and Beresford. These men may not have been the great artists which the magazine called for; but they were striving in the direction of greatness, probing into man's emotional make-up as well as into his intellect. Frank, in an appraisal of Anderson, held that his significance lay in the fact "that he suggests at last a presentation of life shot through with the searching color of truth, which is a signal for a native culture,"¹³ a culture, the author goes ahead to insist, which could never have grown out of a purist intellectualism such as dominated Henry James. For James was too much content with probing man's intellect, representing intellect as the whole man.¹⁴

Neither Frank nor anyone else in *The Seven Arts* group claimed Lawrence or Anderson or Beresford as first-rate artists. What the editors did assert was that such writers pointed towards a complete understanding of man, an understanding which would take into account the human belly as well as the head—the instincts as well as the conscious reasoning. Frank made no claim for himself, of course, but he was attempting in his short stories much the same thing as Lawrence, Beresford, and Anderson.

Lawrence, Anderson, Frank, and Beresford were not titans, even in their *Seven Arts* period, but among the twenty-nine stories printed in the magazine we find ten of great merit written by these four men. There were "Bread Crumbs" and "Rudd" by Frank; Lawrence's "The Mortal Coil" and "The Thimble"; "Escape," "Little Town," and "Powers of the Air" by Beresford; and four of Anderson's powerful sketches: "Queer," "The Thinker," "Mother," and "The Untold Lie." These were the pieces that were largely responsible for bringing their authors to the American public consciousness.

Of the twenty-nine stories printed in *The Seven Arts* twenty-eight were considered distinctive by Edward J. O'Brien.¹⁵ A *Seven Arts* discovery, Frederick Booth, helped build this imposing record. American letters lost one of its most promising young men when Booth left New York for Florida, was heard from only a few times after 1920, and finally completely vanished from the literary scene.

But before we leave the magazine's short story record let us have a look at its prime novelty, Eugene O'Neill's first short story, "Tomorrow." It is a good tale, despite the rather melodramatic structure. A young Scottish blueblood, Jimmy Anderson, marries an exquisite girl

¹³ Frank, "Emerging Greatness," p. 73.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ A calculation based on the ratings given in the 1916 and 1917 volumes of Edward J. O'Brien's *Best Short Stories*.

and goes with her and the British to subdue the Boers. Jimmy, returning one day from the interior, finds his young wife *flagrante delictu* with a staff officer, is heartbroken, deserts his moneyed family, becomes a drunkard, and, after many years of trying to catch again a vision of life's meaning, commits suicide. To be sure, this is a familiar framework, but the deft exploring of the sensitive, complicated Jimmy makes an acceptable story. Mr. O'Neill will not allow reprints of "Tomorrow," and this is too bad, for the tale deserves to be better known.

If *The Seven Arts* could have survived the war hurricane it might have continued indefinitely to urge its ideal of a new America. But the editors, particularly Oppenheim, stood in violent opposition to America's participation in the war. Oppenheim was fiery in his denunciation. He poured out one vitriolic editorial after another in favor of the American pipe dream of isolation from Continental squabbles; he encouraged John Reed and Randolph Bourne to write a series of articles carrying such titles as "This Unpopular War"; he defended *The Masses* against the espionage act; and finally, so hard-hitting was his attack, he brought down on his head the wrath of his magazine's sponsor, Mrs. Rankine. Convinced by her "proper" friends that the editors were pro-German (they were not), she withdrew her subsidy.¹⁶

"However, we could have gone on," Waldo Frank has said. "Many wealthy men and women, such as Scofield Thayer who later bought *The Dial*, urged us to continue and offered substantial help; but the insistence was that in this case Oppenheim should not be the titular editor, but all three of us together. Oppenheim refused to relinquish absolute authority in form. And on that, the thing foundered. My friends urged me to go on, without Oppenheim; but the draft and a severe illness prevented me from acting at once—and later on I agreed with Brooks that 'the time had come to write books.' My *Our America* [1919] was the first result of that withdrawal from the magazine field."¹⁷

Thus the magazine died with its task barely begun.

Oppenheim found himself socially ostracized, rapidly becoming a spiritual and physical wreck. Misfortune was again dogging his tracks; finally in 1932 he became seriously ill of tuberculosis.¹⁸ During his black later life he must often have experienced a bleak depression of spirit as he saw the nation return to "normalcy," and advance the motto "two cars in every garage" as the highest ideal of civilization.

¹⁶ Letter, Frank to Allen, November 30, 1937 (unpublished).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Malone, *Dictionary of American Biography*, xiv, pp. 46-47.

III

Vienna, Berlin, Reutte, Brooklyn, New York—all played host to the group review *Secession*. Gorham Munson was editor, or Director, as he preferred to style himself, of the magazine's eight greatly discussed issues. From the spring of 1922 to the spring of 1924, *Secession* boisterously promoted such men as Wallace Stevens, Malcolm Cowley, Hart Crane, Waldo Frank, Slater Brown, Matthew Josephson, and Kenneth Burke—authors on an experimental tangent which appealed to Munson.¹⁹ Though every writer published had appeared a few times previously in *The Dial* and other little magazines, it was *Secession* that drew like-minded American experimentalists under one banner, clarified and focused, and to some extent directed, a trend that had been indicated several years before by *Glebe* and *Others*.

Secession, edited by and for the new generation, was typical of many of the 1920 *tendenz* magazines. Like most of the group magazines it was a queer mixture of juvenility, arrogance, and good sense. Like many another, it throws light on the formative years of several writers now famous, and serves to crystallize the temper of a muddle-headed, high-spirited period.

Munson became interested in literary matters in 1916, while still at college. Inspired by *The Seven Arts*, and its introduction of Waldo Frank's and Van Wyck Brooks's work, the young man sought out the literati of Greenwich Village. It was not long before he fell under the influence of *Pagan* and *Little Review* talk and met Hart Crane.

Munson was still in New York in 1919,²⁰ deep in the intellectual confusion in which many of the young would-be writers found themselves. They were shouted at from all sides. Mencken advised seeing a circus, Hamilton Fish suggested catching a Red, Harding recommended normalcy. Then there was the new literature, more and more introverted and emotional. For the young writer these were the years of floundering indiscrimination, with ideas and attitudes quickly adopted and as quickly dropped. Munson in rapid succession was a socialist, "a supporter of the Soviets," an anarchist.²¹ The "yewth" burnt their Racine in July, their Keats in October, their Dreiser and Anderson by Christmas. And when Dreiser and Anderson had been repudiated there was nothing to do but concoct a theory of one's own.

¹⁹ Gorham Munson, "The Fledgling Years, 1916-1924," *The Sewanee Review*, xl, 31 (Spring 1932).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

That was exactly what the youngsters did—with the help of the French.²²

Harold Stearns had recommended the Café du Dôme.²³ There scintillating sparkle might start one on a good train of thought. Stearns sailed, beginning a hegira in which many of the young artists were to take part. Munson was one of the first to go. A few of them ran away with a pretended or real disgust for their native land;²⁴ most of them were simply seeking excitement and adventure.

The first foreign months brought Director Munson into the company of his old friend, Man Ray. Ray introduced Munson to most of the exiles, and to many of the French literati, particularly the dadaists.²⁵ And so Munson found himself ready to join in the great American sport of reforming letters, flinging insults, challenging opposing critics to fist fights, and founding little magazines.

It was Matthew Josephson who whetted Munson's latent desire for a review. And it was Malcolm Cowley who wrote the article which fired Munson with the idea of a *tendenz* review. Writing for the "Literary Review" of the New York Evening Post, Cowley pointed out that there were certain young writers, as yet but little known, all under twenty-five, who were diverging from the main stream of American letters. Cowley argued that "This Youngest Generation" needed to be brought together in a single magazine. Their influence would thereby spread, their thought clarify. The new rebels, Cowley suggested, were Kenneth Burke, E. E. Cummings, Dos Passos, Foster Damon, and Slater Brown. Munson saw that the idea was a good one, and he enlarged the list to include Cowley, Josephson, Hart Crane, Waldo Frank, William Carlos Williams, Wallace Stevens, Mark Turbyfill, Yvor Winters, and Marianne Moore, with a sprinkling of dadaists. Secession was founded not so much to find new writers as to sponsor a group, several of whom had first shown their hands in *Others*.

Munson was twenty-six in 1922. He was just a trifle too solemn to enter wholeheartedly into the boisterous life of the exiled Americans. He may have been a little bewildered by some of his fellow exiles' avocations. It was while "following the dollar," as young Malcolm Cowley merrily had called it,²⁶ that Munson decided to start a magazine. Where the dollar bought the most, Vienna, was naturally the best

²² *Ibid.*, p. 46.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

²⁴ Parry, *Garrets and Pretenders*, pp. 331-32.

²⁵ Munson, "Fledgling Years," pp. 28-29.

²⁶ Cowley, *Exile's Return*, p. 92.

place to begin. He took a dingy hotel room, and with the very considerable help of Josephson, began editing *Secession*. The first issue cost \$20.²⁷

But before we plunge into the whirling secessionist scene—before we consider Munson's accusation that Matthew Josephson was a literary fakir, before we judge the charge that Malcolm Cowley was a betraying rascal, and before we decide once and for all who won the famous Munson-Josephson fisticuffs match at Woodstock, we had better take a closer look at the literary philosophy held by the group.

In 1928 Munson brought out *Destinations, A Canvass of American Literature Since 1900*. This analysis divides our modern letters into three main streams. There was the "Elder Generation," represented by the neoclassic critics, Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More.²⁸ The "Middle Generation" found its impetus in such spirits as Mencken, Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson, and Carl Sandburg, all, according to Munson, "romantic emotionalists," all reacting against a neoclassical humanism and against the Gene Stratton Porter sentimentalism which dominated the Mauve Decade and the fifteen years following. *Secession* was designed to sponsor the more intellectual "Younger Generation," men of various philosophical outlooks, but bound together by an interest in fine craftsmanship and by their reaction against a blatant emotionalism.²⁹ This younger crowd, including most of the *Secession* names we have mentioned, might also claim such writers as Ernest Hemingway, Glenway Wescott, and Allen Tate. *Secession*, in seceding from the "Middle Generation," promised a group that was to be the "Maker of a Rainbow."³⁰

The first issue made a splendid beginning. The 22 well printed, book-size leaves contained work by Malcolm Cowley, Louis Aragon, Apollinaire, Will Bray (Josephson's pen name), Tristan Tzara, and an article by Munson attacking *The Dial's* "aimless catholicity." In "A Bow to the Adventurous" the Director set forth rather cockily the magazine's purpose. We quote the last paragraph: "Secession exists for those writers who are preoccupied with researches for new forms. It hopes that there is ready for it an American public which has advanced beyond the fiction and poetry of Sinclair Lewis and Sherwood Anderson and the criticism of Paul Rosenfeld and Louis Untermeyer."³¹

²⁷ Munson, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

²⁸ Munson, *Destinations: A Canvass of American Literature Since 1900*, New York, 1928, p. 2.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³¹ Munson, "A Bow to the Adventurous," *Secession*, I, 19 (April 1922).

The editor also explained his theory that *Secession* should be discontinued after two years.³³ Two years, five years, the time element varies, but there is no question that most little magazines do have a limited period of usefulness. Editors are prone to lose their rebel spirit or fail to realize when their job is accomplished.

July saw the appearance of the second number, an amusing concoction of high seriousness, comedy, and satirical impertinence, including poems by Cowley, E. E. Cummings, a cover design by Ludwig Kassák, stories by Josephson and Burke, and an article by Slater Brown.

Munson, in this second number, made pertinent observations on magazines: "Interstice between Scylla and Charybdis" classified the little magazines into three types: personal, anthological, and group. The personal magazine, represented by *The Little Review*, "displays the personal weaknesses of its editors: an aggressiveness often resulting from insufficient education, a combative recognition of stupidities it is better to ignore than to waste energy upon, an insufficient respect for the value of literary traditions, general uncertainty as to just where they are sitting or where they are going next, a haphazard taste, a tendency to be imposed upon by a blindalley strangeness. . . ."

"The usual occupant of the editorial chair of a personal magazine is a mental gypsy, picturesque, enlivening—undisciplined, indiscriminating."³⁴

Then there was the anthology classification. *Broom* was selected as the horrible example: "Broom joined the anthology classification. Its doing so was the final disappointment which made *Secession* inevitable. It accepted the principle of the general merchandise store. Have everything in stock, what one customer doesn't want, another will."³⁵ Of course the group magazine was the thing. "It [*Secession*] will make group-exclusions, found itself on a group-basis, point itself in a group-direction, and derive its stability and correctives from a group."³⁶

Came midsummer and Munson decided to go back to America. A co-editor was needed to handle the European affairs. Josephson was naturally selected, for he had helped in the arrangements for starting the review and had supplied well over half the writing for the first two issues. And a third editor was necessary in order that any disagreement might be settled by vote. Kenneth Burke, Josephson's friend, was

³³ Munson, "Fledgling Years," p. 33.

³⁴ Munson, "Interstice between Scylla and Charybdis," *Secession*, II, 31-32 (July 1922).

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

selected, his services to begin with the fourth issue.³⁷ In 1922 and '23 Burke was one of our most promising literary figures. He was publishing in *Secession* and *Broom* the exotic fantasies that were to appear in 1924 in *The White Oxen and Other Stories*; and in several other little magazines, particularly *The Dial*, he was printing the first of his brilliant technical analyses. And so Munson sailed for America, leaving the selection of manuscripts for the August number entirely to Josephson.³⁸

The August number carried a Josephson story, "Peep-Peep-Parish," previously refused by Munson. (Josephson says he never heard of Munson's refusal of the story.) This, and the fact that Josephson did not admit in the masthead full responsibility for the number, seems to have disturbed the Director a little, but on the whole the contents were acceptable, including work by Waldo Frank, Burke, Cowley, and Phillipe Soupault—"a lively issue," as Munson called it.³⁹

Secession was now a success in Munson's estimation. It was a magazine which cost an average of \$25 an issue. These issues did not run over 32 pages, never sold many over 150 copies (about 350 copies were distributed gratis)⁴⁰ but managed, as their editor intended they should, to stir up controversy. From the first many of the 500 copies found their way into the right hands. Free magazines were sent to literary people in order that the influence on writing might be greater.⁴¹ *Secession* undoubtedly "influenced"—at least to the extent of provoking furious talk. *The Nation*, *The Dial*, *The Double Dealer*, *The Little Review*, *The Nation and Athenaeum*, the *New York Times*, and T. S. Eliot's newly founded *Criterion* reviewed every number at length. The Director was feeling pretty good, never better than just before the fourth installment appeared.

But he was fighting mad when he saw the fourth issue on a January morning in 1923. Several poems and stories from such persons as Wallace Stevens, Richard Ashton, Hart Crane, Slater Brown, and William Carlos Williams had been forwarded to Josephson in Berlin. According to Munson, Josephson wrote objecting to Ashton's poems, and had been outvoted by Burke and Munson.⁴² Josephson in a frisky mood revenged himself by changing one of the Ashton hundred-line masterpieces to a three-line aphorism.⁴³ This episode of the fourth issue rankled deep in Munson's breast, and was the beginning of open war-

³⁷ Munson, "Fledgling Years," p. 36.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Letter, Gorham Munson to Charles Allen, August 26, 1937 (unpublished).

⁴¹ Munson, "Fledgling Years," p. 36.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁴³ Letter, Matthew Josephson to Charles Allen, April 26, 1938 (unpublished).

fare between the two men. It was about this time that Josephson took a job with Broom.⁴³

Following the breakup the editors were without a European representative, and *Secession* did not appear again for several months. In the meantime Munson and Burke spread stories to the effect that Josephson was "an intellectual fakir" and discussed Paul Elmer More's dualism as "a unity through a balance of conflicting parts."⁴⁴

Meanwhile Broom's new editor was brewing big poison in Paris and Rome, with the co-operation of the young dadaist, Malcolm Cowley. It was an enormous plot that they boiled and their opportunity came when Burke and Munson finally sent over their material for the fifth number. A young Bostonian, John Brooks Wheelwright, was the *Secession* emissary, having agreed to see the magazine printed while visiting in Italy. Cowley and Josephson caught Wheelwright near Paris and convinced him that the manuscripts sent over by Munson and Burke should be largely discarded in favor of material chosen by Cowley and Josephson. At least this is Munson's story as he told it in the Spring 1932 issue of *The Sewanee Review*. The New Yorkers were mightily amazed when they saw the resulting *Secession*. Not only had stories and articles which New York had never seen been slipped in, but Hart Crane's "To Faustus and Helen" was so badly damaged that it had to be excised.⁴⁵

The charge of intercepting manuscripts and damaging "Faustus and Helen" has been denied by Josephson. He says in a letter to Charles Allen, "I don't remember intercepting manuscripts sent to Europe by Wheelwright. It is quite possible that Cowley and I out-voted Munson, who was 3,000 miles away. Weren't we editors too?"⁴⁶ Josephson was no longer an editor, and Cowley never had been, nor was to be. Josephson was something of a dadaist, adhering pretty strongly to the "nothing too serious" article of the dada credo. As Munson has charged, Josephson and Cowley probably prided themselves on their deceptiveness. This is suggested by a statement of Josephson's to Charles Allen: "We were, some of us, young sparks, and not a little malicious to each other. We thought Munson, because of his enthusiasm—but also because of his imposing, waxed, handlebar moustaches—might be of great aid to our cause. As to his poor judgment in literary matters, we thought that could be remedied by management. Naturally Munson,

⁴³ Letter, Josephson to Allen, July 25, 1944 (unpublished).

⁴⁴ Munson, "Fledgling Years," pp. 41, 49.

⁴⁵ Letter, Josephson to Allen, July 25, 1944 (unpublished).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

who is a man of spirit and determination, resented such an attitude once it became evident to him."⁴⁷ As to the charge that "Faustus and Helen" was mutilated, Josephine has this to say: "Crane sent me his poem for Broom, which I liked, set up, and printed, in *Secession* as usual two months ahead of shipping time (by freight). Then he went into tantrums, revised it extensively, wrote a poem of equal length which was to precede it as Part One, and sent me letters weeks after everything was shipped away (printed), asking me to stop press and change everything around. It was a misunderstanding pure and simple; Crane realized this afterward, and we were very good friends later. He came to see me often, and also made a ten mile trip to my house to say good-bye to me before he left on his last journey to Mexico."⁴⁸

The contradictory stories regarding the fifth number are representative of the squabbles that surrounded the publication of the sixth issue. It was a gloomy time for the Director.

Several months before *Secession* died in the spring of 1924, the exiles began streaming back to New York. Along came those two menaces to American letters, Cowley and Josephson, dragging their newly acquired Broom behind them. The last months of both periodicals were exciting; fire-spitting was the order of the day.

The growing animosity finally came to a violent and amusing climax in the fall of 1923. Munson, in the late fall, went up to Woodstock, New York, to recover from an illness. While in Woodstock he received a Cowley letter urging attendance at a forthcoming "Younger Generation" meeting. A group of *Secession* and Broom contributors would get together and do something about their elders, and they would decide something about Broom.⁴⁹ Cowley did not know quite what, as he explains in *Exile's Return*:

"We planned, for example, to hire a theatre some afternoon and give a literary entertainment, with violent and profane attacks on the most famous contemporary writers, courts-martial of the more prominent critics, burlesques of Sherwood Anderson, Floyd Dell, Paul Rosenfeld and others—all this interspersed with card tricks, solos on the jew's harp, meaningless dialogues and whatever else would show our contempt for the audience and the sanctity of American letters. We planned to pass out handbills in the theatrical district and make defamatory soap-box orations in Union Square. We planned to continue Broom as long as its capital or credit lasted. . . ."⁵⁰

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Cowley, *op. cit.*, pp. 189-90.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

Munson refused to attend this meeting on the plea of inconvenience; consequently Cowley asked for a written message, to be read at the meeting. Munson sent a letter condemning the group for a lack of purpose and for allowing Josephson and Harold Loeb to associate with it.⁵¹ In his *Sewanee Review* article on his generation and on Secession, Munson writes: "I had come to regard Josephson as a literary opportunist, an example of last minutism, a kind of stage player in the arts, to adapt a phrase of Nietzsche. I said these things with emphasis and called him an intellectual fakir. . . . I therefore declined to participate in any group which contained so vulnerable a member."⁵²

Cowley insists this letter was written in near blank verse, which he read "with all the intonations of a blue-jawed actor reciting a Hamlet soliloquy." The reading threw Broom's party into a half-serious, half-humorous fit. Munson's supporters cried that the rendering was unfair; the other side of the table snorted back that Munson was getting off too easily. Hart Crane and Josephson flew into a violent argument. Glenway Wescott went home. Everybody shouted.⁵³ Josephson was in such a rage that he vowed a great vengeance. The anticlimax came when Josephson decided to act on his threat. Munson was still at Woodstock, staying with William Murrell Fisher; Josephson was temporarily encamped with Slater Brown and Edward Nagle, a few minutes away from the Fisher cottage. One afternoon Josephson stormed over to the Fishers' and demanded that Munson come out for a fight. Outside the mud was deep and the day was cold, and the Director was loath to fight; yet fight he must, for Josephson was full of accumulated rage. The strange battle began with both men out of training. They were winded so quickly that the proceedings ended as an inconclusive draw, with the adversaries gasping for breath. (Josephson insists that this squabble was more of a "lark" than a serious brawl.)⁵⁴

Clear at last of "the peanut policies in which Cowley and some of his friends were trying to embroil Secession,"⁵⁵ Munson brought out the last two issues of his magazine but without the help of Burke. Number Seven included "For the Marriage of Faustus and Helen" by Hart Crane, Waldo Frank's "For a Declaration of War," a Burke story, and several poems by Yvor Winters. The eighth issue, coming at the end of

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Munson, "Fledgling Years," p. 49.

⁵³ Cowley, *op. cit.*, pp. 191-92.

⁵⁴ This interpretation is based on letters from Josephson to Allen, March 9, 1938; from Munson to Allen, January 29, 1939; and "Fledgling Years," pp. 50-52.

⁵⁵ Munson, "Fledgling Years," p. 45.

the two-year period Secession had marked for itself, was devoted entirely to Winter's discussion of poetic theory.

In a "Post Mortem" Munson summed up what he thought were Secession's accomplishments: "The stories of Kenneth Burke in which an important theory of fiction is worked to unprecedented discoveries; several poems by Malcolm Cowley which are assured of preservation in anthologies; the fierce satiric poetry of Cummings; 'Faustus and Helen' by Hart Crane; the verse doctrine of Yvor Winters, a manifesto by Waldo Frank which is the most important statement of aims since Whitman's announcements; these are some of the claims of Secession to distinction. The decade promises to be full of action in the literary arts. Secession perhaps will be known as the magazine that introduced the Twenties."⁵⁶

Looking back on Secession we are inclined to believe that it did not give us the "most important statement of aims since Whitman," and that it did not "introduce the Twenties." We are inclined to believe that it was not an important magazine in any revolutionary sense. Its critical formulations, though crystallizing a tendency, were not the first American statements of secessionism. The review discovered no new writers. But Secession was important in the sense that it reinforced and strengthened the rebel fight against the sentimental genteel tradition.

This is partly the reason for considering Secession at some length. The other reason for considering it is that with its fights, with its irregular appearances, with its financial struggles, with its subtle admixture of seriousness and juvenility, it helps clarify the giddy aspect of the little magazine story.

IV

"What of it, if some old hunks of a Sea-captain orders me to get a broom and sweep down the decks? What does that indignity amount to, weighed, I mean, in the scales of the New Testament? Do you think the Archangel Gabriel thinks anything the less of me, because I promptly and respectfully obey that old hunks in that particular instance? Who ain't a slave?"⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Munson, "Post-Mortem," a mimeographed sheet included in the bound volume of Secession, Spring 1924.

⁵⁷ A quotation from Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*. Broom, 1, back cover (November 1921).'

Broom, *Secession*, *Secession*, *Broom*—the mention of one suggests the other. Both reviews were products of the half-serious, half-playboy early twenties, and both, for the major span of their short lives, were exiles from their native shore. And, as we have seen, each was the sworn enemy of the other.

But more vital similarity is apparent as we turn the pages of these rival magazines. *Broom* asserted a catholic, eclectic interest in literature; it would publish any good writing, European or American, if the author were little known or unappreciated.⁵⁸ *Secession*, on the other hand, professed to be interested in a group, by and large an American group. Actually, however, *Broom*'s catholic taste was more talk than action. *Broom* tended to exhibit, especially in its later period, the same literary outlook as *Secession*. Such men as Malcolm Cowley, Hart Crane, and Matthew Josephson were to be found in both periodicals. In the main, *Broom* and *Secession* tell identical stories; taken together they clarify one chapter of little magazine history, and one chapter of our recent literary development.

Broom was definitely a magazine of periods. There was the Rome Period, lasting from the magazine's inception in November 1921, until November 1922. Then came a short Berlin sojourn. By March of 1923 *Broom* was preparing to go to New York, ready to heckle America with dada tactics, and to carry on a lively fight with *Secession* and the censors. *Broom* did not win a single skirmish in America, for America would not be heckled, *Secession* would not be cowed, nor the censoring authorities banished from the land. But for the moment let us look to the prenatal days of *Broom* when Harold Loeb and Alfred Kreymborg were talking in Manhattan.

In the late twenties Harold Loeb was regarded as a promising young novelist. In 1920, he was one of the proprietors of the Sunwise Turn Bookshop, located in New York's Yale-Princeton Building.⁵⁹ The bookshop sometimes published books and one of the books brought out was a volume of Alfred Kreymborg's plays. So began Loeb's friendship with the erstwhile editor and publisher of *Others*. Naturally, the possibilities of a little magazine were explored. Loeb soon found himself attempting to convert the lukewarm interest of Kreymborg to enthusiasm; Kreymborg, knowing the labor involved in publishing a little magazine, was hesitant. Finally, after Loeb had promised to finance both the magazine and Kreymborg, Kreymborg agreed to share editorial responsibility

⁵⁸ "Manifesto I," *Broom*, 1, inside back cover (November 1921).

⁵⁹ Letter, Harold Loeb to Allen, February 9, 1938 (unpublished).

with Loeb.⁶⁰ Loeb sold his partnership in the Sunwise Turn. *Broom* was under way.

The year 1921 was a busy one for the Broomsters. There were manifestoes to write and circulate, publicity campaigns to prepare, writers to interview, manuscripts to collect, and arrangements to be made in Italy, where it was decided to publish the review because of the excellent paper and typographical work that could be obtained there at less than a fourth of the American cost. Loeb early hit upon the title of *Broom*, and this, along with Kreymborg's association with the magazine, titillated the curiosity of the literary world. The periodical was both well known and well thought of before it made its luxurious bow to the world in November 1921.⁶¹

For it was elaborate, this *Broom*, a "sumptuous" affair, as Kreymborg would have described it, heavy of weight, rich in color, fine in binding and printing; nothing quite like its aristocratic format had ever been seen in America. Fabriano paper was used to carry the printing and reproductions. And "sumptuous" too was the *Broom* editorial office, or rather, palace—a palace rented from a princess of the royal family, and commanding a view of half of Rome. From spacious balconies the editors—by now including Edward Storer and Giuseppe Prezzolini as associates—and their famous artist guests were wont to have afternoon tea and gaze with "chastened" eyes out over the Villa Borghese, the gardens of the Pincio, St. Peter's, and the house in which John Keats had died.⁶² A strange setting for a little magazine editorial office.

The first issue of the review was certainly a success in pageantry, a success which was due in no small degree to the Italian associate of the magazine, Giuseppe Prezzolini, who had carefully overseen the periodical's manufacture. There were 96 *Esquire*-size pages, and it was fairly typical, both as to format and content, of all the European numbers. There were elaborate reproductions of the work of such European modernist artists as Stravinsky, André Derain, Juan Gris, Albert Gleizes, Bepi Fabiano, Jacques Lipchitz and William Gropper; there were stories by J. D. Beresford, Donald Corley, and Haniel Long; and there was a great deal of poetry from Amy Lowell, James Oppenheim, Walter de la Mare, Lola Ridge, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Ezra Pound, Maxwell Bodenheim, Robert Frost, and Kreymborg. This issue, like most of the European numbers that followed, cost only \$500, in-

⁶⁰ Kreymborg, *Troubadour*, pp. 360-61.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 361-75.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 374.

cluding payment to the contributing authors.⁶³ The review sold for 50 cents a copy, \$5.00 a year.

Broom, on the cover of that first issue, carried the subheading "An International Magazine of the Arts." Its eclectic intentions were announced in Manifesto I:

"Broom is selecting from the continental literature of the present time the writings of exceptional quality most adaptable for translation into English.

"These will appear side by side with the contemporaneous effort in Great Britain and America.

"The painters and sculptors will be represented by the best available reproductions of their work.

"Throughout, the unknown, path-breaking artist will have, when his material merits it, at least an equal chance with the artist of acknowledged reputation.

"In brief, Broom is a sort of clearing house where the artists of the present time will be brought into closer contact."⁶⁴

The contents that Broom presented during its European stay do not belie the claim made in the subtitle and the above manifesto; Broom was, throughout its European experience, pre-eminently international in tone, as have been most of the experimental magazines.

The policy was to be catholic, as is implied in the last paragraph of the manifesto. Both conventional and experimental writers were to be presented—that was the plan. But talk and actual practice are likely to be two different things. The conventional writers were always in the minority after the first issue, as they were in most of the other little magazines that stressed internationalism. Experimentalists dominated the periodical. Such Broom contributors as Malcolm Cowley, Matthew Josephson, William Carlos Williams, John Dos Passos, E. E. Cummings, Jean Cocteau, Luigi Pirandello, Gertrude Stein, Kay Boyle, Jean Toomer, and Hart Crane were interested in form and words, in an intellectual approach as against the emotional. They were following the middle generation standard of Secession.

Of the contributors Hart Crane deserves special mention, for Broom and Secession, and other similar experimental periodicals, such as Bruno's *Bohemia* (which first published Crane in 1915), *The Little Review* (which did more than any other magazine to establish his

⁶³ Letter, Loeb to Allen, February 9, 1938 (unpublished).

⁶⁴ "Manifesto I," Broom.

reputation), and *The Fugitive*, *The Double Dealer*, *Measure*, *S 4 N*, *The Pagan*, and *The Modernist* were about the only outlets that Crane could find for his mystically enraptured verse until the publication of the "metaphysical" *White Buildings* in 1926. At the time of *Broom* and *Secession*, Crane had outgrown his attachment to imagism and had begun to master the passionate rhythms, explosive sounds, and hard tensions of thought and tone which were to come to such a magnificent culmination in *The Bridge*.

It is unnecessary to follow Broom from issue to issue. There were few dramatic moments while the review remained abroad—excitement came after Matthew Josephson obtained \$4,000 to back the review and moved it to New York. Kreymborg resigned as co-editor in February 1922, the break coming over a disagreement as to whether American or European experimentalists were to be stressed, Kreymborg favoring the former.⁶⁵ Lola Ridge, an inveterate contributor to little magazines, and an associate with Kreymborg during the last year of *Others*, became an editor of Broom for a time. Later, Matthew Josephson began his work with the magazine as associate editor and superintended the magazine's removal to Berlin in November 1922. After four issues in Berlin, Loeb's surplus funds were depleted.⁶⁶ Broom was threatened with extinction in spite of the fact that it had built a sizable paid circulation of around 4,000.⁶⁷ Loeb gave up and went to Paris to write novels. Josephson, to whom Broom was given, sailed for America with his newly acquired magazine.

What had Broom accomplished while in Europe? Broadly speaking, it introduced unknown or little known European writers and painters to America. Broom first presented Pirandello to the English-reading world. When Edward Storer and Loeb received permission to present *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, the review undoubtedly hit its high-water mark. The reproduction of paintings by such men as Picasso was also an important accomplishment. It was influential, too, along with *The Dial* and *Secession*, in helping to establish the reputations of several young experimental Americans.

Josephson and Cowley landed in New York, hoping to set off the fuse of the rambunctious Paris dada spirit, but they soon found themselves too worried about money matters, censors, and Gorham Munson to stir up much noise. As we have seen, the one serious attempt to get

⁶⁵ Kreymborg, *Troubadour*, pp. 380-81.

⁶⁶ Letter, Loeb to Allen, February 9, 1938 (unpublished).

⁶⁷ Letter, Josephson to Allen, July 25, 1944 (unpublished).

a dada show under way failed because of the quarrel which followed Cowley's reading of Munson's letter.⁶⁸

The harried Broom lasted for only five New York issues. These numbers, greatly reduced in size as compared with the European magazine, came in August, September, October, and November of 1923, and a last one in January 1924, which was never distributed because of the postal censors. Editor Josephson, along with his associates Cowley and Slater Brown, managed to find about \$500 a month for the magazine; the printer, who happened to be Josephson's brother-in-law, generously contributed the remainder.⁶⁹

Broom did not change its editorial policy under Josephson's management. A good number of European names fraternized with the American experimentalists while the magazine was in New York. No important discoveries were made, although a couple of "fantastics" were first printed. There was the "difficult" Joe Gould, who was first published by Broom. Once, after a bitter exchange of letters, he challenged Josephson to a duel.⁷⁰ Then there was Charles L. Durboraw, a Chicago paperhanger, who contributed a story called "An Awful Storming Fire, of Her and I on a Journey to the Secret of the Sun, by the Author Who Solved the Mysterious Riddle," printed in the November 1923 issue. This story aroused the ire of "Mr. Smith," the Post Office censor. "Mr. Smith" found "An Awful Storming Fire" after Broom had been mailed and he threatened to read the next number before it reached the mail.⁷¹ This he did. He found in the January number a philosophical narrative, "Prince Llan," by Kenneth Burke, which mentioned a "plural breasted woman." That was enough for Mr. Smith. Broom was banned from the mail under Section 480 of the Postal Laws. The censoring proved more than the tired nerves and the depleted pocketbooks of the editors could stand.⁷² Cowley, who was largely responsible for financing this last number, had worked for over a month borrowing the necessary money to put out the issue. It had been the editors' hope that this number of the magazine would net enough money to allow for further publication, but they now became convinced that the fight was useless.⁷³

Broom was not an important magazine in the sense that *The Little Review*, *The Midland*, *Poetry*, *transition*, and *The Dial* were important.

⁶⁸ Cowley, op. cit., p. 191.

⁶⁹ Letter, Josephson to Allen, March 9, 1938 (unpublished).

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Cowley, op. cit., pp. 194-95.

⁷² Ibid., p. 204.

⁷³ Ibid.

It was not particularly pioneering. The idea of an international magazine of the arts, introducing at once experimental European and American artists, had first been fostered by Margaret Anderson and later developed by *The Dial*. Broom did not, as we have seen, introduce any important writers, though it played its part, along with *The Dial* and *Secession*, in firmly establishing several reputations. Broom's importance lies in the fact that it was in the vanguard of an intellectual movement, in the fact that it helped win the fight against the sentimentalities of the genteel tradition.

V

The stories of Broom, *Secession*, and *S 4 N* are in many ways representative of a large majority of the six or seven hundred periodicals that have existed since around 1900. Perhaps these magazines, with their exotic flamboyancy, suggest to most people the typical little magazine. For to most critics, the little magazine spells evanescence, irregular appearance, ill-bred noise-making, ludicrous editorial squabbles, a misty combination of serious endeavor and irresponsible horseplay—in short, an amusing but disturbing spectacle. This is Alfred Kazin's view in his *On Native Grounds*, and it is the estimate of all our other literary historians. That this attitude of disparagement and humorous dismissal is not altogether justified is indubitably proved by the records of *Poetry*, *The Fugitive*, *The Hound and Horn*, *The Dial*, and several other distinguished and well mannered periodicals.

The amazing intellect of Kenneth Burke may well serve as an introduction to *S 4 N*, for he was associated in several ways with the men of *Secession* and Broom. Of all critics, Burke was best endowed for the task of handling the rapid transfer of ideas from tradition to experiment. Machinery and the subconscious were in effect cluttering up the intellectual pattern, the one gleaming, the other glowering, in their respective corners. Munson is proud of Burke's achievement in *Secession*, the development of a new "theory of fiction" which is worked to "unprecedented discoveries." Burke's fiction is comparatively unknown. His stories are a cross section of the materials of an artist whose mind grasps instantly both the concrete and the abstract values of any idea. This is the reason for their being tremendous theoretical successes and actual failures; for the narrative form and style fares poorly when it is overweighted by the constant burden of theory. But

an assessment of Burke the critic—and he is one of the best modern critics—must begin with a study of the assortment of “demonstrations” which constitute his original contribution to *Secession* and *S 4 N*.

S 4 N, like *Secession*, was founded upon the conviction that opposing points of view would by an alchemy of the spirit produce a cultural unity: “That out of a comparison of opposed viewpoints (with attendant attacks and counter-attacks, and with subsequent experimentations and reactive critiques) comes aesthetic progress.” This deliberate opposing of points of view resulted in a fascinating variety of essays, stories, and poems, but did not account for the fact that where views differ, personalities might also clash. Such is the sad and final realization of the magazine’s editor in the last number; dissatisfaction among members of the editorial board had made a continuation of the magazine unlikely. During its career, many lively critical articles were published, some of them written by former editors of *Secession* and *Broom*; some original writing (such as Cummings’ satirical poem, “Beauty Hurts Mr. Vinal”) also found its way to its pages. Something in the nature of a summary of *tendenz* writing is to be found in the double number of September 1923-January 1924, which was given over entirely to essays on the work of Waldo Frank. Frank’s place among the critics of the twenties was high; and this survey of his work is valuable at least in indicating the high regard with which he was considered.

These magazines—*The Seven Arts*, *Broom*, *Secession*, and *S 4 N*—point to a fact both interesting and disturbing. In their various ways they suggested that the need for revaluation of our culture was urgent. But their offerings were so often hindered by personal difficulties and indiscretions that they generally failed to furnish a sure or even an intelligent directive. *The Seven Arts* was perhaps the most consistently well edited and offered the best organization of critical and philosophical thought in our generation. All of these magazines, however, illustrate the search for a new intellectual and cultural incentive and for some form of synthesis of the tendencies of our time.



CHAPTER VII

PERHAPS more than anywhere else, experiment in the twenties was reflected in the forms poetry assumed and in the poet’s campaign against traditional metrics and forms. Ezra Pound’s principal battle in the early years of *Poetry* and *The Little Review* was against the “prosaic” in poetry; and he regarded the traditional respect for rhyme, stanzaic pattern, and metrics as barriers to true poetic understanding. The reasons for the poet’s revolt are not hard to find; within certain limits, and with certain qualification, they thought of the science of versification as another of the barriers which tradition had set up against individualist expression and experiment.

Our modern poets in the main looked upon the mass of Romantic verse as damaged both in form and in purpose by the requirement that the poet be insincere—that is, that he frequently substitute a conventional or traditional feeling for things for his more direct or more complex comprehension of them. Much poetry had turned out to be preaching but thinly disguised as versified sentiment. This over-all objection to the influence of traditionalism upon poetic speech was directed especially against those poets whose sentiment was not only traditional but also “literary”—that is, who borrowed their sentiments from books. This is what caused Pound to say to Harriet Monroe: “Every literaryism, every book word, fritters away a scrap of the reader’s patience, a scrap of his sense of your sincerity. When one really feels and thinks, one stammers with simple speech. It is only in the flurry, the shallow frothy excitement of writing, or the inebriety of a metre, that one falls into the easy, easy—oh, how easy!—speech of books and poems that one has read.”¹

¹ Quoted by Monroe, *A Poet’s Life*, p. 267.