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American Little Magazines of the 1890s and the Rise of the Professional-Managerial Class

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The craze for “fad magazines” (“fadazines,” we called them) was at its high noon. It was in that miraculous year of our Lord, 1896, and whoever could get possession of a printing press in the United States was helping to burden the news-stands with monthly rubbish, filled with cheap satire and sententious pretension. Art was running amuck through Posterdom, Literature was staggering blindfold, in a drunken spree, and every dog was having his day in journalism.

Gelett Burgess
Bayside Bohemia

WHILE THE 1890S IS LARGELY ASSOCIATED with the “magazine revolution” and the birth of the mass-market magazine, Burgess’s comments point to the existence of the contemporaneous efflorescence of a more experimental and amateurish form of print that he calls the fadazine. His portrait of the prolific nature of the movement, one in which he, himself, participated, is hardly exaggerated. Although accounts as to numbers vary, ranging from nearly three hundred titles identified in bibliographies of the period by F. W. Faxon to the over eleven hundred claimed by Elbert Hubbard, a major figure in the movement (“Joseph Addison” 78), there were certainly hundreds of such publications issued in the period between

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1894 and 1903, all across the country, from major urban centres such as New York to smaller cities and towns, including Wausau, Wisconsin, and Muskegon, Michigan. Although these publications took their place alongside mass-market periodicals on the newsstands, they presented themselves as defiantly different from mainstream magazines in various respects. They were small in size and number of pages, artistically printed and/or oddly designed. They were linked with the “new” in literature, art, and social and cultural movements, ranging from Arts and Crafts, aestheticism, decadence, symbolism, and art nouveau to the new thought movement, the social gospel, communitarian living, health and diet fads, radical and progressive political movements, and others. Finally, they were styled as idiosyncratic and rebellious, a status frequently registered by their titles, subtitles, and mottoes. Among these were *The Freak*, *The Whim*, *The Knocker*, and *The Iconoclast* (Faxon, *Ephemeral Bibelots*, “A Bibliography”). *The Wet Dog*, meanwhile, touted itself irreverently as “a paper for those with money to burn” and *Pot-Pourri* was “an illustrated vagary of paper and ink conducted by a freak” (Faxon, “Ephemeral Bibelots” 126, 125). In addition to Burgess’s terms, fad magazine and fadazine, this new and unusual print phenomenon went by other names like freak magazine, fadlet, ephemeral, and bibelot, including, occasionally, the term now more commonly used, little magazine. Although these magazines tended, in the period, to be regarded as all of a piece, defined predominantly by their bold appearance and rhetorical posturing, it is helpful to distinguish among three key forms: “aesthetic” little magazines, “periodicals of protest,” and “hybrid” magazines. Aesthetic little magazines were those devoted wholly or predominantly to literary and/or artistic subject matter. This class included magazines featuring a mix of fiction, poetry, and critical essays and commentary, as well as ones of a more specialist nature, such as those focusing on the graphic arts or bibliophilic and book collecting interests. *The Chap-Book*, a magazine founded by Harvard undergraduates, was the best known of this type, setting the standard for the type as well as initiating the little magazine movement as a whole. By contrast, “periodicals of protest,” a term taken from the subtitle of the leading publication of this type, *The Philistine*, were those wholly or predominantly concerned with social and/or political topics or alternative lifestyles and movements. Hybrid magazines, meanwhile, combined literary and artistic interests with topical political, cultural, and/or social commentary.

Despite their prolific nature and the obvious ways in which they anticipate the experimental, avant-garde, and radical modernist little magazines of the 1910s and 1920s, these 1890s American precursors have suffered

from scholarly neglect. On the one hand, in the context of periodical and media studies, which have centred on the explosion of mass media in this period, little magazines are easily overlooked. On the other, modernist literary studies have been largely steered by Charles Hoffman, Frederick Allen, and Carolyn Ulrich's landmark history and bibliography of little magazines, which, in declaring that the 1890s American publications of this type "were not very inspiring" (7) and including only three titles from this period, ensured their critical neglect for some time. Scholarship on little magazines following from this publication has largely focused on those that conform to the aesthetic and socio-cultural criteria associated with high and avant-garde Modernism.

The recent materialist, digital, and interdisciplinary turns in scholarship across the humanities, however, have set the stage for a reconsideration of the broad range of magazines of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The differing, but equally productive, interests in materiality in cultural studies and book history scholarship and, more recently, in digital humanities have influenced the way literary scholars think about magazines. At the same time, work on new media has provided a new frame of reference and a critical vocabulary for considering "old" media. The result has been a surge in research on, and, equally notably, new digital resources and publications for the study of, modern magazines that include the Modernist Journals Project and the Modernist Magazines Project, the three-volume *Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Little Magazines*, and the *Journal of Modern Periodical Studies*. The American little magazines of the 1890s have garnered some attention as part of this broader scholarly trend.¹ Understandably, given the difficulty of accessing many of these titles and the paucity of research on them, much of this work has focused on exceptional individual titles and on situating them in relation to known literary movements and genres.

These critical contexts form the backdrop for my recuperation of the broader little magazine movement of the period here in this article and in a larger project that situates these publications in the social, cultural, and literary contexts of the period. Produced, in Burgess's account, by "whoever could get possession of a printing press" (25), which, as it happens, was a lot of people, these magazines may certainly fail to inspire enthusiasm if approached from a literary critical perspective. They benefit, however, from an approach informed by cultural studies and media history. This

1 See, for example, Bergel; Brinkman; Drucker, "Bohemian," "Le Petit Journal"; Evans, "Ephemeral Bibelots," Introduction; MacLeod, "Art for America's Sake," "The Fine Art of Cheap Print," *American Little Magazines*; Weir.

essay documents the rootedness of this genre in the mediamorphosis and sociomorphosis of the period, providing an overview of the socio-cultural context for the emergence of the American little magazine of the 1890s, its relationship to existing and emerging media forms, and its legacies in terms of cultural and media history.

The term mediamorphosis, referring to the manner in which media evolve and adapt in relation to each other, originates in Roger Fidler's work on new media (29) and has been influential for new modernist studies and its interest in the major transformations to and developments of new media and technologies at the turn of the twentieth century (Ardis, Churchill, Latham). In the American context, this period can also be understood as one of what might be called sociomorphosis, because it was a moment that marked a significant social transformation as the Gilded Age gave rise to the progressive era and a professional-managerial class emerged. The American little magazine of the 1890s was a product of both transformations. It was part of the larger expansion of print, deriving from existing and emerging media forms. The little magazine's relationship to other media in the period is best conceptualized as "remediation" in the sense theorized by David Bolter and Jay Grusin, who argue that a medium, by its very nature, remediates; it "appropriates the techniques, forms, and social significance of other media and attempts to rival or refashion them" (65). In thinking about the ways in which little magazines remediate other existing and emerging forms, however, it is important to recognize the *socialized* nature of remediation, as Raymond Williams does in his conceptualization of changes in media as social transformations (159, 160). In this respect, the little magazine was important also to the sociomorphosis of the period, serving as a means for an emerging social class to express, define, and debate its literary, artistic, social, and political values and interests. It did this not only through content but also, significantly, through strategic processes of remediation, whereby the new media form derived cultural value and meaning through an appropriation and adaptation of other forms.

Sociomorphosis and mediamorphosis

Anyone who can hold a pen, no matter how awkwardly he holds it, and who can pay a printer, or get credit from a printer, may say what he likes in print nowadays. "Print," therefore, has lost much of its dignity and power, for any youth just out of college, or any freshman just in college, may have his own organ.
"Fad Magazines"

A consideration of the social context for the emergence of American little magazines of the 1890s reveals a striking difference between them and their modernist counterparts. While the modernist little magazine has been characterized as a product of an artistic and literary intellectual elite, its precursor was a largely middle-class phenomenon. It was produced mainly by and for men and women of a developing professional-managerial class, many of whom, certainly, were part of an intellectual or cultural elite, but one that was much more broadly defined. These producers of and contributors to little magazines, whom I call little magazinists, were born into and came of age in a period that marked a transition from genteel to progressive values and the rise of a professional-managerial class that included doctors, lawyers, teachers, medical men, engineers, architects, corporate managers, and government workers, as well as an increasingly professionalized cadre in a number of literary, artistic, and intellectual domains, including journalists, writers, editors, advertising men and women, and commercial artists.²

The middle class of this era was one that, as numerous social and cultural historians have documented, sacralized art and was invested in self-culture, self-improvement, and social reform (Lears, Trachtenberg, Levine). These interests prevailed through both the genteel and progressive eras, although the shift that intellectual historian Warren Susman has identified from a culture of character (which valued the self as private, moral, and serious) to a culture of personality (in which the public, charismatic, self-expressing individual came to the fore), affected the way these values manifested themselves (273–78). The valorization of culture and investment in self-culture and reform underpinned the popular middle-class movements and trends of the era: the zeal for Arts and Crafts; Chautauqua schools as a means of self-education; reform-oriented movements such as socialism, the social gospel, and Christian socialism; alternative social, religious, political, medical, health, and lifestyle trends, including the new thought and communitarian living; local literary and artistic clubs, groups, and societies for the middle classes; and an avid interest in the written word, which engaged middle-class Americans not only as consumers but also as producers, through scrapbooking, amateur printing, and amateur

2 This concept was developed first by John and Barbara Ehrenreich. Although there has been debate as to whether to see the professional-managerial class as a distinct class, class faction, or a contradictory position existing between labour and capital, it is a useful category for understanding the rise of intellectual workers in the period. It is a concept that has been used by Richard Ohmann, Janice Radway, and Joanna Levin, for example, to inform their work on reading and literary cultures of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

authorship. These cultural interests and ideals, however, were matched by considerable material interests. Indeed, the cultural history of the period can be read in terms of how America's middle class sought to harmonize the competing interests of culture and commerce and of elitist and democratic values. The tensions inherent in pursuing this end are perhaps best exemplified in the American Arts and Crafts movement. As Eileen Boris argues, the movement embodied the middle class's "fear and hatred of class conflict, its own loss and redefinition of autonomy and independence, its creating of rebels within its own midst. The idealistic, optimistic spirit of the crafts movement reflects the class that turned to arts and crafts as a solution and escape from the industrial world it did so much to forge" (208). In the American context, Arts and Crafts did represent a successful mediation between culture and commerce because its practitioners, as Wendy Kaplan argues, were far less ambivalent about the relationship between art and industry, seeing "no contradiction between championing both the handcrafted and the improvement of the mass-produced" (306). Little magazines, which were one manifestation of the broader Arts and Crafts movement, operated similarly, and in them there is a curious blending of cultural elitism, populism, and commercial market savvy.

It was this social background that informed the little magazinists of this period, many of whom were not, as were most of their modernist counterparts, part of the literary and artistic elite. Rather, they came from the full range of professions outlined above, including less obviously literary, cultural, or media roles, such as doctors and lawyers.³ It was a period in which, as the commentator on "fad magazines" notes, an educated and economically empowered elite, very broadly characterized, was able and eager to express themselves in print. The American little magazines of the 1890s, then, with their general paucity of figures who would come to have importance in canonical terms, were less a purely literary and artistic phenomenon than a cultural one. Their importance, rather, lies in their status as a vehicle of cultural expression for a professional-managerial class with an investment in the consumption and production of print as a means of self-culture and self-expression.

Opportunities for this emerging professional-managerial class to express themselves in print were enabled by the mediamorphosis that occurred in tandem with this sociomorphosis, bringing into being new technologies and the development of new, and an expansion of existing,

3 Digital resources for local, regional, and national histories, archives, and periodicals have enabled me to garner information about the social contexts of little magazinists.

media and media-related industries that adapted and evolved in relation to one another. Legislation, such as the passing of the International Copyright Act in 1891, contributed also to professionalizing the fields of authorship and commercial art and to the growth of media. Mass-market magazines may have been the most obvious product of these new conditions, and Ohmann convincingly argues for their importance in shaping middle-class identity in the period (160). These conditions also, however, enabled the rise of little magazines, which served a similar purpose for the professional-managerial class that was at the centre of this cultural shift and these developments in media. Tellingly, these publications took a far more intimate form than mass-market magazines. They were, as little magazinist Gelett Burgess noted, a medium of “*personal* expression” (19 emphasis added). If mass-market magazines enabled the mobilization of a professional-managerial class identity, little magazines gave voice to the interests of this class in individualism, personality, and self-realization. The dominant mode of discourse in them, consequently, was highly self-reflexive and self-referential, personal and intimate, and this quality served as one of the defining features of the medium.

While the little magazine may have been a means of personal expression, its status as a magazine gave it a public face in keeping with the outward-facing ethos of the emerging culture of personality. Its personal, idiosyncratic, and often informal quality served strategically to address like-minded souls. Although these publications were often initially based around local and regional coteries, little magazinists aimed to extend their network nationally and, in some cases, internationally, in ways that exceeded their more insular and elitist modernist counterparts. First, unlike most modernist little magazines, which tended to rely on a subscription-based circulation model, their precursors embraced the newsstand, which, in this period, was becoming a major force in magazine circulation. Second, little magazinists actively engaged in expanding their networks within the little magazine community and beyond. They exchanged advertising space with like publications, referenced each other in editorials, made contributions across the range of little magazines, and so on, in what amounted to a promotion of the field. Little magazinists also made efforts to expand and engage a readership beyond a little magazine coterie. Much of the appeal of the little magazine rested on its status as an affordable but choice print object, the frisson of its reputed radical and risqué nature, and the manner in which it engagingly invited readers into a bohemian intellectual realm. Brad Evans, for example, has argued that self-referentiality and self-reflexivity were part of the challenge and

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charm of these magazines, encouraging readers to acquire a sensitivity “to the rapidly changing modern ... scene” and to be in the know about this exclusive world (“Ephemeral Bibelots” 136). Little magazines, also, however, engaged readers in more direct ways, offering memberships, for example, as in the case of *The Philistine’s* American Academy of Immortals, *The Papyrus’s* Society of Papyrites, or *The Ghourki’s* Tribe of the Ghourki. Ultimately, circulations for American little magazines of the 1890s were impressive, averaging often between three and five thousand, with some publications eventually exceeding ten thousand, or, in the case of *The Philistine*, over one-hundred thousand.⁴ The enthusiasm for extending their networks rendered these magazines more successful, on the whole, than their modernist counterparts, for which circulations of over three thousand were rare (Perkins 323).

Remediation and the American little magazines of the 1890s

Although noted as a new and unique phenomenon when it emerged, the little magazine was, as all media are, connected to other existing and emerging media. In this section, I consider the engagement of little magazines with other forms of media, noting, in particular, how they derived meaning and value through remediation. Forms considered are the scrapbook, the amateur journal, European little magazines, fine press publications, newspapers, mainstream magazines, and oral media.

Scrapbooks and amateur journals

Scrapbooks and amateur journals bear an important relationship to the American little magazines of the 1890s. From a new media studies perspective, the three forms can be understood as “analog” forms of media such as Facebook or blogs, “personal media,” means by “which people interact with media texts to express themselves socially, ... to document their lives” or to engage in creative practices (Good 559). Scrapbooking and amateur journalism were popular middle-class pastimes in the period when little magazinists were coming of age, regarded as a means of self-culture and self-improvement and an appropriately genteel form of self-expression (Helfland; Garvey; Tucker, Ott, and Buckler; Good; Harris; Spencer). Amateur printing, more specifically, was both a “means of mutual intellectual

4 Circulation figures are difficult to determine. The magazines themselves often document them, although these may be unreliable. Another key source is *Ayer and Sons Newspaper Annual*, which, although initiated to report accurate circulation figures to serve advertisers, is not always reliable in the case of little magazines, which were of limited interest to this market.

culture” and a way of making money (quoted in Spencer 3; Harris 22–23), an ideal medium, therefore, for the class that was seeking to harmonize its interests in culture and commerce. The advent in the 1860s of a cheap novelty press generated an interest in printing and circulating amateur publications—often on an exchange basis—a practice promoted through local and national amateur press associations and in schools and colleges. The little magazine emerged as a natural outgrowth of the ethos and practices of scrapbooking and amateur journalism, even while these forms were still thriving. The remediation of these forms enacted by little magazinists was in tune with the social transformations of the period, connecting the mediamorphosis of personal media with the sociomorphosis of the period. Thus, in the transition from the genteel to progressive eras and in the development of the middle class, little magazines turned private, amateur, and narrowly networked forms of personal media, which were reflective of a culture of character, into a public, semi-professional/professional mode that was in keeping with the evolving culture of personality.

If little magazines emerged, in part, out of amateur journalism as a social practice, they, in turn, influenced amateur publications of the period, demonstrating the degree to which, in Bolter and Grusin’s sense, old forms of media refashion themselves to address the challenge of the new (15). Whereas early amateur journals were crudely produced, emphasizing content over appearance, the influence of the little magazine aesthetic becomes notable in the 1890s and early 1900s. Figure 1 shows *The Chap-Book*, the most important aesthetic little magazine, alongside an amateur imitator, *The Little Chap*, issued from a military school in Manlius, New York. The covers employ the same Arts and Crafts design, while, inside, the amateur publication echoes the typographic style, design, content, and rhetorical style of little magazines. The remediation of the little magazine by some amateur journals in this period is a testament to the cultural capital that the form accrued in a short period and the degree to which an ethos of professionalism was becoming culturally engrained in practices that had heretofore been amateur.

European little magazines

If some amateur journals sought to derive prestige through an appropriation of the qualities of little magazines, little magazines, particularly aesthetic ones, did so through their association with European manifestations of the form, publications such as *The Yellow Book*, *The Savoy*, *The Century Guild Hobby Horse*, *La Plume*, *Mercure de France*, and *La Revue Blanche*. These magazines served as platforms for aestheticism, decadence,

Figure 1. (left) Cover of *The Chap-Book* 4.10 (1 April 1896). In possession of author; (right) Cover of *The Little Chap* 1.1 (April 1896). HathiTrust. Web. 2 January 2015.

symbolism, and art nouveau and were often acknowledged, in the period, as the progenitors of American little magazines, which remediated these movements for an American audience. The American publications featured some of the same writers and artists as their overseas counterparts as well as native exponents of European trends, who were often figured as imitators, “feeb[e] copie[rs]” of Aubrey Beardsley and Oscar Wilde, for example (Review of *The Chap-Book*). This content figured differently in American magazines, most significantly in the context of robust debates about the future of America’s literary and artistic culture that were divided over whether established European models should be followed or America might develop its own distinctive traditions. In the context of these debates, the association of American little magazines with their European counterparts had significant symbolic value depending on one’s position.

Influential little magazinist, Walter Blackburn Harte, for example, took a middle ground, arguing that a distinctive American literature would combine the “audacity and rebellion of America’s new generation” with avant-garde European trends (“A Résumé”). Ultimately, the combination of American youthful audacity and European avant-gardism evident in many little magazines resulted in a form that straddled high and popular culture. In this respect, the little magazines of this period were representative of American manifestations of European avant-gardism more generally, which, as critics David Weir and Michèle Mendelssohn have argued with respect to decadence, were packaged in a more popular and commercial form (Weir xvi, Mendelssohn 13).

The fine press book

A similar kind of cultural prestige accrued for the little magazine in its connection with the fine press book that emerged in this period as part of the “revolution in fine printing” (Thompson 1). Part of the larger zeal for Arts and Crafts as it manifested itself in America, this movement was inspired by the work of William Morris, whose book designs looked to manuscript and pre-industrial print practices. This form of bookmaking, conceived as an aesthetic and social mission to cultivate a taste for the beautiful, appealed to the developing professional-managerial class, for whom book collecting was becoming a popular pastime. The revolution in fine printing was driven by the growth of small presses across America in the 1890s and early 1900s, and it exerted considerable influence on trade and commercial printing and publishing. Little magazines were explicitly linked to this world, many issuing from small presses and jobbing shops, for which the magazine format served as a means of experimenting with layout and design as well as of promoting their other publications. Figure 2 shows pages from a Chicago little magazine, *The Rubric*, which touted itself a “magazine *de luxe*” and was produced by artists and writers associated with the Chicago avant-garde arts scene and small press publishing movement. The layout demonstrates the remediation of Morrisian book design in the magazine, which was printed on book quality paper and featured rubrication, old-style fonts, and wood engraving in the manner of Arts and Crafts printing. This remediation served expressly to distance little magazines from the vulgar realm of mass-market periodicals and was frequently reinforced in the choice of titles and subtitles. The words “book” and “booklet,” for example, appear often in titles, as in *Bradley His Book*, *The Bachelor Book*, *The Cornhill Booklet*. In other instances, titles that would resonate with aficionados of manuscript and preindustrial print

Figure 2. Pages from Young E. Allison's "On Board the Derelict." *The Rubric* 1.1 (October 1901): 10–17. In possession of author.

culture were deployed, as in *The Rubric* and *The Scroll*. This alignment with traditional, preindustrial print forms was a means by which little magazines established authority and defined themselves against mass-market print culture.

The most significant print media form for the little magazine in the context of the fine press movement was undoubtedly the chapbook, from which the most influential of these publications took its title. Most American little magazines of this period modeled themselves after historic chapbooks, featuring old style fonts, and, occasionally, woodcut or woodcut style illustrations. Figure 3, for example, shows an early nineteenth-century chapbook (*Napoleon's Oraculum*) alongside an issue of *The Chap-Book* for October 1896. This remediated chapbook format was a key defining feature of the American little magazine of this period. Notably, this format distinguished it from its European equivalents, which tended to adopt larger quarto, tabloid, or book formats, and from its mainstream American

Figure 3. (left) Historic Chapbook. *Napoleon's Oraculum and Book of Fate. Revolution and Romanticism*. Streetprint. Web. 14 December 2014. <http://crcstudio.org/streetprint>; (right) Cover of *The Chap-Book* 5.10 (1 October 1896). Cover design by Claude Bragdon. In possession of author.

counterparts. The exploitation of the chapbook form by little magazines, as Giles Bergel notes, was highly symbolic. Historically, chapbooks were a popular and populist form of print of the hand-press era, the first form of mass media; and yet, in the 1890s, the term was known to few beyond the rarefied world of book collecting in which the form was highly prized (Bergel 158). As a form that captured the contradictory ideals not only of little magazines but also of the professional-managerial ethos of the era, the chapbook in this period gestured at once to cultural elitism and populist ideals.

Choice of format could also be more explicitly politicized as, for example, when Harte invoked the “pamphlet” as an historically radical form of

print and a model for 1890s little magazines, “a form that has served the purposes of genius and freedom of thought and belief, when every door of court and church and school was barred with bars of gold and power to all non-conformists” (“Bubble” 59). Given the role of the pamphlet during the American Revolution, when Tom Paine’s *Common Sense* had been key to the promotion of independence and republicanism, the pamphlet form was particularly resonant for America. While aesthetic little magazines tended to adopt an art-for-art’s sake ethos, the radical and revolutionary symbolism of the pamphlet was linked to periodicals of protest.

The artistic poster

If little magazines derived cultural capital and political potency from their remediation of old forms of print media, they also benefited from a connection with new developments. Although photographic illustration had recently been made possible through the development of a cheap half-tone process, little magazines generally eschewed this form as vulgar. By contrast, the poster, a medium that also benefited from the development of new printing technologies in this period, was embraced by little magaz-
inists. The transatlantic poster revolution, which originated in France, marked the convergence of art and advertising and was touted as the democratization of art. Like the books produced by small presses, posters were prized by collectors and were linked to little magazines. Posters informed little magazine art and design, and the two media promoted each other. Posters served, quite literally, as advertisements for little magazines (figure 4, left), while little magazines reciprocated, promoting poster designers and sellers. Little magazines were as likely to look like posters as fine press books (figure 4, right). Indeed, the practice of changing monthly covers on magazines, initiated by graphic artist and little magazinist Will Bradley, was prevalent in little magazines before becoming standard industry practice in the twentieth century (Koch 36). Little magazines were like posters in their positioning between high and popular culture. The discourse around posters in the period promoted them as “daily art for the people” that “bridged the separation between art and commerce” (Bowles), in the same way that little magazines presented themselves as choice receptacles of literary and artistic content at a low price. Here, again, the symbolic cultural value and meaning of these new forms of media correspond to the aspirations and values of the emerging professional-managerial class and its desire to harmonize the tensions between culture and commerce.

Figure 4. (left) Poster for *Echo*. Print. Designed by John Sloan. In possession of author; (right) Poster-style cover of *Whims* 1.5 (February 1896). Cover design by J.K. Bryans. In possession of author.

Newspapers and mainstream magazines

Although fashioned largely in opposition to the popular press, the little magazine did bear a relationship, albeit an ambivalent one, to newspapers and mainstream magazines. The miscellaneous page of the newspaper, for example, which featured some combination of poetry, aphorisms, anecdotes, human interest stories, reports on cultural events, book reviews, editorial columns, and historical narratives, is a case in point. Figure 5 shows such a page from *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*. Notable are the newspaper's coverage of the little magazine phenomenon in "Some Fads and Fadists" (figure 5, column 1); reviews of recent fiction, including the short

stories of Ambrose Bierce, figured as a “new Poe,” and a “decadent” novel by Richard Marsh (figure 5, column 3; figure 5, column 4); poetry; and poster-style illustrations. This kind of material, and the amount of it, is in keeping with aesthetic little magazine content, which might be regarded as a reformatting of the newspaper’s miscellaneous page. Where the newspaper presented this material on one page across several densely packed columns of print, the little magazine presented it more attractively, across a number of pages, with generous spacing and margins.

This remediation of newspaper content by little magazines also applied to periodicals of protest. A number of newspapermen, for example, were also little magazinists, including popular Pittsburgh newspaper columnist, Erasmus Wilson, whose little magazine, *The Quiet Observer*, took its title from his column, and Philadelphia journalist, Louis N. Megargee, who issued *Seen and Heard by Megargee* after giving up his newspaper work. Even when the content was the same across media, however, the little magazine’s remediation had implications for meaning. Where in newspapers the voices of editorialists were competing with other types of content and viewpoints, in the little magazine they took centre stage, registering more pointedly as protest literature. A striking instance of how form transforms meaning in the move from newspaper to little magazine is Bert Leston Taylor’s parody of *The Philistine*, which appeared in instalments in his “Line O’Type or Two” column and subsequently in little magazine format. Figure 6 shows Taylor’s column as it appeared in the newspaper, while figure 7 (top left) shows detail of the column, which contains the parody. In comparing the presentation of the same content in newspaper (figure 7, top left) and little magazine format (figure 7, top right), the joke is more effective in the latter case, where it functions visually as well as verbally in its imitation of the little magazine aesthetic, a feature notable, too, in the parodied cover design (figure 7, bottom left and bottom right).

As these examples show, the little magazine presented advantages over the newspaper in terms of its framing of content, making it more distinctive and drawing focused attention to the personalities of its creators. In this way, the mediamorphosis effected in the remediation of content aligns with the new cultural ideal centred on personality that was part of the sociomorphosis of the period. The remediation of newspaper or newspaper-style content had significant repercussions for its cultural value and that of the little magazine. The more personal, intimate, and individualistic nature of communication privileged by the emerging professional-managerial class was exemplified by the little magazine and not the newspaper. For *Philistine* co-founder William McIntosh, for example,

Figure 7. (top left) Detail of the *Philistine* parody from the *Chicago Daily Tribune* 30 April 1901. Newspapers.com. Web. 19 July 2015; (top right) Text of the *Philistine* parody as appearing in the mock little magazine, *The Bilioustine*. HathiTrust. Web. 18 July 2015; (bottom left) Cover of Bert Leston Taylor's *Bilioustine*, parody of *The Philistine*. HathiTrust. Web. 18 July 2015; (bottom right) Cover of *The Philistine* March 1902. In possession of author.

it was the antithesis of the newspaper: “[The little magazine] is born of the surfeit of the big newspaper. Readers seek it out—stawed with too much for their money. And it is a hopeful sign for individuality in literature that a clean cut idea is valued over time more than the quantity of words on paper.... Tonnage has had its day in the literature of America (132).” McIntosh, here, makes a virtue of littleness and the selective remediation of the “big newspaper” that the little magazine represented. Certainly, the idiosyncratic look of the little magazine as compared with full newspaper pages, with their impersonal and uniform appearance, powerfully convey that a different kind of reading experience and connection to content will be had through the two media forms.

This notion of the cultural superiority of the little magazine by virtue of its smallness and selectivity was also important in situating it in relation to its mainstream counterparts, especially with respect to changes wrought by the magazine revolution. The revolution was brought about by a shift from a subscription-based to an advertising-based revenue structure that enabled general monthlies to be priced at 10 cents rather than the usual 25 or 35. The more commercial nature of the magazine in this context affected, in the minds of some, the quality of the content. This attitude was notable, for example, among the editors of established genteel monthlies such as *Harper's* and *The Atlantic*, who, as Matthew Schneirov argues, regarded themselves as “cultural custodians” and were driven by a belief that “the appreciation of good art would serve to improve middle-class tastes and help ... readers to transcend the mundane world of commerce and consumption” (46, 39). With the rise of the mass-market magazine, the learned and cultivated qualities of the genteel magazine, with its long review articles, were on the wane, giving way to a lively journalistic style, short and snappy articles, gossip, timely content, plentiful illustration including half-tone photographs, short stories, and abundant advertising that characterized the new popular magazines. Genteel monthlies gradually transformed, pressured to compete with their increasingly popular and cheaper counterparts. This change left a gap in the market for elite periodicals that the little magazine could fill.

Little magazines occupied an ambivalent position in this context. The high cultural ground they garnered through an association with fine book culture, for example, suggested an affinity with genteel magazines. Indeed, in many respects, the little magazines took on the custodial role that such magazines had performed before they began refashioning themselves after mass-market magazines. This custodial role was not, however, performed in the same way by little magazines. Just as the little magazine, as

conceptualized by Harte, brought together avant-garde European styles with an American audacity and youth (“A Résumé”), it also established itself between the cultured gentility of elite mainstream magazines and the brash newness of the mass-market periodicals. Little magazinists were cultural custodians and, in the case of periodicals of protest, agents for social change for a new, young, progressive generation that constituted the emerging professional-managerial class. This positioning meant embracing aspects of the new that the mass-market magazine represented. Significantly, most little magazines cost 10 cents, a price synonymous with this new form. At the same time, although little magazines were not attractive to advertisers in the way mainstream magazines were, they were proficient at self-advertisement, engaging in new forms of marketing and self-promotion, including poster advertising, contests, subscription solicitations, giveaways, and special offers. These practices can be understood as underwritten by the commercial spirit that operated in tandem with the zeal for culture in the professional-managerial ethos of the era. Little magazines also often adopted the snappier journalistic style associated with mass-market magazines and the culture of personality rather than the weightier tone of genteel publications, even as they delivered what was represented as high cultural content. Similarly, both little magazines and the new mass-markets were alike, as Sidney Kramer has argued, in developing a more personal and intimate mode of discourse (29–30).

Oral media

This personal mode of discourse manifested itself most explicitly in editorial content, which was influenced by oral media of the day, including the public lecture, the sermon, and political oratory, as well as more informal modes, such as the fireside chat. These styles came naturally to a number of little magazinists, especially those associated with periodicals of protest, many of whom were clergymen, political spellbinders, teachers, and public lecturers. In an era before radio and television, public oratory was an important part of cultural life and was reinvigorated in the progressive era, when it was used by more people and for more purposes than ever before (Hance, Hendrickson, and Schoenberger 151). The influence of oral culture is signaled, frequently, by the titles of little magazine editorial sections. Elbert Hubbard’s *Philistine* editorial, for example, was “Heart to Heart Talks With the Philistines by the Pastor of His Flock” (or variations on this wording), a title that at once establishes the authority of the speaker while invoking the intimacy of a personal chat. Hubbard’s title served as a model for others, including Tim Thrift of *The Lucky Dog*, whose

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editorial was “Heart to Heart Communion Talks,” and Harold Llewellyn Swisher of *The Ghourki*, whose title, “Harangues to the Ghourki by the Chief of the Tribe,” took on a satirical edge. Titles of editorials in other little magazines might invoke private or communal spaces for intimate conversations, as in *John-a-Dreams*’s “By the Fireside” column and *The Philosopher*’s “Smoking Room.”

Editorial sections in little magazines could function as a testing ground for certain topics and ideas that might be remediated as lectures. This was true for Hubbard, who not only gave talks to the Roycroft community over which he presided but was also one of the highest paid lecturers of the era. These editorial sections were not long discourses on a single subject but, rather, opinionated snippets, often digressive, in a chatty, informal tone. Topics included political, social, literary or artistic matters, personal anecdotes, jokes, commendations and critiques of other magazines, and, in some cases, accounts of the trials and tribulations of the magazine itself. In many instances, the editorial was the defining feature of the magazine, constituting a significant proportion of the content—entire issues, sometimes, in the case of Hubbard’s *Philistine*.

The digressive and chatty style that characterized such content can be seen in a portion of Hubbard’s “Heart to Heart Talks” for January 1900. It begins with an attack on Mark Twain’s lecture manager for declaring Twain a genius, goes on to take issue with the loose way the term “genius” is used, before critiquing Twain’s position on Christian Science as expressed in a recent article in *Cosmopolitan*: “Mark, the genius” Hubbard writes, “is also something else. Mark is a very easy mark” (54). The discussion then digresses to Christian Scientist Mary Baker Eddy, before bringing the threads together in an irreverent finale:

Mark, like Mrs Eddy, has lived too long; and if James Brisben Walker [editor of *Cosmopolitan*] had been his friend & not been swayed into unseemliness by his passion for the dollar, he might have saved Mark the disgrace that comes from talking in public about something of which he is beautifully ignorant.

Only one glimmer of sanity is found in Mark’s article—that is where he tells of being found by a Swiss peasant who was looking for a lost ass. (57–58)

Hubbard’s homespun, vernacular style has an oral quality, one that, as one commentator of the period suggested, also characterized his public speaking style; his lectures, he said, were “in the same vein, the same style, and filled with the same sharp shafts that make the writings ... attractive”

("Hubbard Lectures" 2). Hubbard's style is typical of the ways in which little magazinists sought to personalize the medium and is more broadly reflective of the ethos of the emerging culture of personality. Oral media, then, as adapted for print were integral to establishing a key characteristic of the little magazine—the distinctively vernacular, informal tone that helped it function as a vehicle of personal expression and communication for an emerging professional-managerial class.

The American little magazine of the 1890s: alternative form of cultural capital or cultural capital in alternative form?

In *Reading for Realism*, Nancy Glazener characterizes the American little magazines of the 1890s as an alternative form of cultural capital in relation to mainstream magazines (237). Certainly, there was much in terms of literary, artistic, social, and political commentary that made them an alternative press. There is a danger in overstating this case, however, as little magazines, as I have demonstrated, drew on popular mainstream media. It might, therefore, be more accurate to think of them as cultural capital in an alternative form. The little magazine conveyed its radicalness as much, possibly more, through its form than through its content. It was at once a new form of media, yet one that derived much meaning and value through the remediation of other forms. Through these remediations, the little magazine established itself as a unique medium of communication, one that would come to be most strongly identified by its chapbook format and an idiosyncratic and personal rhetorical style. The processes of mediamorphosis in which little magazines were engaged informed, and were informed by, changing social and cultural dynamics that marked the sociomorphosis of this period. Little magazinists, in their appropriations and adaptations of the techniques, forms, and social significance of other media forms, reveal much about the cultural shift of the period, its changing values, and the emergence of a professional-managerial class: notably, the interest in harmonizing the conflicting claims of culture and commerce, of the traditional and the new, of the elite and the populist, and of an identity politics of character versus one of personality.

Thinking about American little magazines of the 1890s as cultural capital in an alternative form, and in relation to the mediamorphosis and sociomorphosis of the period, also helps to elucidate their legacy, which, from a literary critical approach, for example, has been invisible. These magazines cannot fulfill the criteria set by Hoffman, Allen, and Ulrich in terms of having "some importance in the history of modern literature" or of having "published some work of merit" (vii). Their value lies elsewhere.

First, in their place in a history of media: the little magazine of the 1890s morphed into other media forms of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Their descendants include the little magazines of the modernist era, the journal of opinion, the zine, the blog, alternative news media, Facebook, and others. Crucially, in this context, it is fruitful to use little magazines to think more carefully, in broader historical terms, about the relationship between personal forms of media and the mass media. Taken as an analog form of personal media, the practices associated with little magazines of this period, like uses of today's personal media, suggest that, as new media scholars have argued, it is possible for individualized and personal forms of media to exist within, and be enabled by, a mass media context that is understood as commercial and impersonal (Lüders, Rasmussen, Good).

Second, the legacy of the little magazines can be charted not only as part of a historical process of mediamorphosis but also in the context of the sociomorphosis of the period. Although these magazines fall well short of achieving Hoffman, Allen, and Ulrich's criteria of having published 80 percent of the most important critics, novelists, poets, and storytellers of the age (1), the cultural influence of their contributors manifested itself in more diffuse ways. A significantly large number of little magazinists, although not important in canonical literary or artistic terms, contributed in major ways to American cultural life in the twentieth century. Many would go on to have long-term professional careers in media of various types, participating, through an initial involvement with little magazines, in the broader mediamorphosis and sociomorphosis of the period, one that saw a massive expansion of media and an accompanying growth of media professionals. Little magazines were, after all, often a stepping stone for their editors and contributors to important and influential careers in print media and its related industries—mainstream magazines, advertising, publishing, printing, and the graphic arts—and this is where many of them ended up in the twentieth century. Others would go on to careers in theatre or new media, namely film and radio. Little magazines were also a medium of expression for those of the professional-managerial class who would go on to make major cultural contributions in other domains. Examples include Irving Morrow, an architect involved in the design of the Golden Gate Bridge, William Dallam Armes, founding member of the Sierra Club, Herman Schneider, founder of the co-operative education movement, Clarence Darrow, famed lawyer and leading member of the American Civil Liberties Union, and scores of other notable contributors to America's social and cultural transformation in the twentieth century.

The little magazine was central to the sociomorphosis of the period for a class that, broadly speaking, had a keen interest in expressing itself in print. It was a medium of expression and self-realization for individuals and for a class fraction that shaped, in really influential ways, the cultural life of America's twentieth century. Ultimately, these magazines were, in their way, as central to the identity formation of the professional-managerial class as Ohmann argues mainstream magazines of the period were and they were certainly bigger than Hoffman, Allen, and Ulrich have led us to think.

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