

## The 'Little Magazine'- Definitional Issues

This paper aims to show the relevance of looking at a specific genre, the 'little magazine', from a perspective that includes practical circumstances such as location, financing and personal contacts, rather than from a purely theoretical point of view. In the past decade, 'little magazines' have received increasing attention. Renewed scholarly interest has also led to growing genre awareness, as questions of definition and delimitation are brought forward. First and foremost, the fundamental issue of how a little magazine should be understood and analyzed must be addressed. Is the little magazine a collection of individual works or is it a composite work? We argue that the most productive way of approaching the little magazine is as a composite genre – in many ways a collective space – and therefore also 'impure.' Networking is a relevant concept in this context; the genre is best understood as a collective effort that requires meeting points, contacts, financiers, publishers, translators and advertisers.

The ideas on genre advanced here spring from an ongoing research project, "Exiles in Print: Modernism and the Little Magazine in Europe 1921-1939," which studies 'little magazines' published in Europe between the wars by self-exiled Americans and Brits. Drawing on examples of these 'exiled' little magazines and by discussing various categorizations of the genre, the paper focuses on definitional choices made in the study.

The most well-known classification is the one propounded by Hoffman, Ulrich and Allen in their pioneering study from 1957. In short, Hoffman et al. describe the genre as non-commercial, avant-garde, rebellious, and experimental. Although this definition fits some little magazines, and a notable part of their content, it also excludes a great deal of material. For example, when reading the whole of a little magazine, and when studying its publishing background, it is usually evident that it is a blend, a mixture that gives the impression of collective effort and practical networking rather than individual work at the very frontline of the Arts. The personal networks behind the little magazines provide interesting and revealing information. Thus, when examining the whole output of a little magazine classified as avant-garde and experimental (for example *Broom*), much material would have to be excluded if such a definition were to be upheld.