6

AFTER APOLLINAIRE

SIC (1916–19); *Nord-Sud* (1917–18); and *L'Esprit Nouveau* (1920–5)

SIMON DELL

This account could begin in many places, yet in each case it would be with the same figure: Guillaume Apollinaire. Of the various anecdotes concerning the poet, the following best serves my purposes. The narrator is Adrienne Monnier, recalling in 1940 one war from the time of another, and her first glimpse of Apollinaire, in the company of Paul Léautaud. The scene is Monnier's bookshop on the Rue de L'Odéon.

> Apollinaire had returned from the front, with a serious head wound. I had never seen him, but God knows I had certainly heard Breton talk about him. Someone in the bookshop said to me, 'That's Apollinaire'. I looked closely at this fat man in uniform, with his pear-shaped head a little like *père Ubu*, though bandaged with a strange little leather strap. The two men stood a while at the shop window, pointing at various books and grimacing, then they moved on. Three minutes later the door suddenly opened and Apollinaire came in, spluttering at me: 'All the same, it's a bit much not to have a single book by a soldier in this window!'[1]

Here Monnier allows Apollinaire two roles; he is a poet much admired by younger writers such as André Breton, yet he appears, quite literally, as a soldier. And he first

[1] 'Apollinaire revenait du front, gravement blessé à la tête. Je ne l'avais vu, mais Dieu sait si j'en avais entendu parler par Breton. Quelqu'un dans la librairie me dit: "C'est Apollinaire." Je regardai attentivement ce gros homme en uniforme, à la tête en forme de poire, assez père Ubu, couronné d'une curieuse petite lanière de cuir. Les deux hommes restèrent un bon moment devant la vitrine, pointant du doigt plusieurs livres et faisant force grimaces, puis ils passèrent. Trois minutes après, la porte s'ouvrit brusquement et notre Apollinaire entra en m'aspergeant de ces mots: "C'est tout de même un peu fort qu'il n'y ait pas un seul livre de combattant dans cette vitrine!" ' Adrienne Monnier, *Rue de L'Odéon* (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1960), 58. Unless otherwise stated, translations are the author's own.

confronts Monnier not as a poet but as a soldier, quick to rebuke a civilian for neglecting his comrades. In Monnier's vignette, Apollinaire's roles are quite compatible. Literature is part of the war effort and whatever authority Apollinaire has will be used to ensure that hapless booksellers remember the fact. Moreover, his authority as a poet is now seemingly inseparable from his status as a wounded veteran.

Clearly, anecdotes do a certain kind of cultural work; otherwise they would not be rehearsed by writers, lazy or otherwise. The work of Monnier's vignette is the imbrication of authority and its visibility; Apollinaire, uniformed and obviously wounded, is first glimpsed through the bookshop window and it is the content of the window display, and what is not visible, which vexes him. Yet, in turn, this visibility should be properly understood. Monnier's vignette, like all vignettes, is best regarded as evoking a general condition through a specific instance. That general condition is the literary field as transformed by the outbreak of war and in this field Monnier's instance is highly specific; avant-garde figures such as Apollinaire remained marginal, and only partially visible. Thus when Gérard de Lacaze-Duthiers came to survey the literary scene in 1918, very little attention was accorded Apollinaire, *SIC*, and *Nord-Sud*.[2] The older avant-gardes of Symbolism and, more distantly, Romanticism were given pride of place and Paul Charrier's *La Caravane* and Maurice Wullens's *Les Humbles* were given the most expansive treatment. Nevertheless, for modernists, Apollinaire retained his authority; in what follows I shall argue that the editors of *SIC*, *Nord-Sud*, and *L'Esprit Nouveau* were concerned with his authority and with visibility, and, as a result, all would seek to attach his name to their projects.

Both *SIC* and *Nord-Sud* were to feature the work of Apollinaire and both also embraced the work of a younger generation, including Breton, Louis Aragon, and Paul Dermée; yet despite such commonalities, these publications had quite different agendas. *SIC*, under the direction of Pierre Albert-Birot, would foreshadow Parisian Dada and Surrealism. As Albert-Birot would remind anyone who cared to listen, the very term 'surrealist' was coined by Apollinaire to describe a play produced under the auspices of *SIC*.[3] Yet if this magazine was one example of what Apollinaire termed 'the new spirit', *Nord-Sud* was quite another. Whilst *SIC* addressed 'sounds, ideas, colours, forms', *Nord-Sud* was styled as a 'literary review' and was intended to have a tighter focus. Its director, Pierre Reverdy, was hardly a

[2] Of 38 pages, only 3 were dedicated to *SIC* and *Nord-Sud* in Gérard de Lacaze-Duthiers, 'La Jeune Littérature et la guerre', *La Revue* (Apr., May, June 1918), 49–61, 264–76, 450–8. For *SIC* and *Nord-Sud*, see (May 1918), 274–6. This emphasis also reflects a pacifist position at odds with the patriotic stance of Apollinaire.

[3] Whilst this usage is the one which gave currency to Surrealism, Apollinaire first used the term in print with reference to the ballet *Parade*. See Guillaume Apollinaire, '[Parade]', *Oeuvres en prose complètes*, vol. II (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1991), 865.

Dadaist and believed *Nord-Sud* was to answer a need for 'structure' and 'organization'. In turn, these terms were to become the watchwords of *L'Esprit Nouveau*, the magazine first directed by Paul Dermée but ultimately under the control of the proponents of 'Purism', Amédée Ozenfant and Charles-Edouard Jeanneret.

Yet to describe these magazines as participating in a struggle over Apollinaire's language is not just to restate an opposition between the Purism of *L'Esprit Nouveau* and a nascent Surrealism; it also broaches the larger question of the relationship between modernism and the avant-garde. *SIC* and, in a different way, *Nord-Sud* may be understood to belong to a lineage of 'little magazines' stretching back to the pre-war period of *Les Soirées de Paris* and forward to *La Révolution surréaliste* (see Chapters 5 and 10). In contrast, *L'Esprit Nouveau* may be viewed as an attempt to introduce certain principles of modernism to a broader audience. Thus these three magazines represented three different ways for modernism to imagine its public.

SIC: Sons, Idées, Couleurs, Formes

A commonsensical interpretation of magazine publishing might suggest that individual publications are vehicles for the expression of the views of particular groups. The case of *SIC: Sons, Idées, Couleurs, Formes* (Sounds, Ideas, Colours, Forms) suggests quite the contrary. The magazine was launched by Albert-Birot in January 1916 (Fig. 6.1) when he had neither a programme nor a cenacle; far from being a vehicle for the expression of these, *SIC* was to be the means of generating them. As much is clear from the content of the first issues of the magazine. With the exception of a few lines sent in by soldiers from the trenches, and a musical score by Mme Albert-Birot, the content of the first three issues appears to have been the work of the editor alone. The significant exception was the reproduction of a work by Gino Severini in the second issue. Severini and Albert-Birot had studios in the same building and their wives knew each other; as a result, Severini came to support *SIC* and put Albert-Birot in contact with Apollinaire.[4] The latter then sent Albert-Birot his new poem 'L'Avenir' (The Future) for the fourth issue of *SIC*. And so the magazine began to perform its role; as the early runs of 500 copies found a readership Albert-Birot gradually established his visibility within the Parisian avant-garde.[5]

Here *SIC* could be argued to have performed two quite reciprocal roles through its programme, when this was eventually articulated, and through its pattern of circulation. Albert-Birot's initial success with *SIC* was the result of a temporal conjunction. The outbreak of war had severely curtailed avant-garde activity in Paris;

[4] See Pierre Albert-Birot, 'Naissance et Vie de "SIC" ' (Birth and Life of 'SIC'), *Les Lettres Nouvelles*, 7 (Sept. 1953), 848–9. This remains the best source of information on the magazine; yet see also Arlette Albert-Birot, 'Avant-Dire' (Before Speaking), *SIC* (Paris: Editions Jean-Michel Place, 1980).

[5] For details of printing and print run see Albert-Birot, 'Naissance et Vie', 846.

Fig. 6.1 Cover of *SIC*, 1 (Jan. 1916)

yet, in turn, by 1915 this had also created new opportunities.[6] Albert-Birot recog-
nized this quickly enough; his first, abortive project was to have been entitled sim-
ply *1915*.[7] And his programme as finally set forth in *SIC* was directly addressed to
the contemporary. The programme was 'nuniste', derived, as he explained, from the
Greek 'nun', meaning 'now', 'the present'.[8] In effect, this present was constituted of
familiar patriotic slogans and a defence of Cubism and Futurism. As such it was
flexible enough and permitted *SIC* to shelter not only Apollinaire and sundry
Futurists such as Luciano Folgore and Francesco Balilla Pratella, but also a number
of younger poets including Dermée and Reverdy. Yet paradoxically the 'nuniste'
emphasis on the contemporary was by 1916 *passé*, for in many respects Albert-Birot
was simply reviving the avant-gardism of the pre-war period.[9]

If *SIC* was largely parasitic on established discourses it was also parasitic on thei
means of circulation. In fact, the former was a condition for the latter. To acces
existing networks, Albert-Birot had to align his editorial content with a set o

[6] For an overview of this situation see Kenneth E. Silver, *Esprit de Corps: The Art of the Parisia Avant-Garde and the First World War, 1914–1925* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989). For patterns survival and demise see De Lacaze-Duthiers 'La Jeune Littérature'. And for a survey of related mag zines see Yves Chèvrefils Desbiolles, *Les Revues d'Art à Paris, 1905–1940* (Paris: Ent'revues, 1993). F the context of *SIC* see Michel Sanouillet's *Dada à Paris* (Paris: Jean-Jacques Pauvert, 1965); this wo remains indispensable for the study of this period.

[7] Albert-Birot, 'Naissance et Vie', 846.

[8] Anon. [Pierre Albert-Birot], 'Le Nunisme', *SIC*, 6 (June 1916), unpaginated.

[9] For an account of the pre-war avant-garde and its relationship with novelty and contemporane see Jeffrey Weiss, *The Popular Culture of Modern Art: Picasso, Duchamp, and Avant-Gardism* (N Haven, CT/London: Yale University Press, 1994).

expectations and assumptions. His chronicle 'Etc.' was one means to this end; for here he could refer to various snippets of literary gossip and thereby at least project a dialogue with other magazines, such as Ozenfant's *L'élan* (see Chapter 5).[10] And he could also make regular reference to the patrons of such magazines—for example, the couturiers Paul Poiret and Germaine Bongard.[11] In doing so, Albert-Birot repeated the tactic of earlier avant-garde magazines, which had survived through trafficking between cultural producers in Montparnasse and fashionable consumers on the Right Bank. This was precisely the nexus which Ozenfant exploited.[12] Thus when Albert-Birot published a note on the outlets for *SIC* it featured a range of galleries and bookshops in the 6th arrondissement, including Monnier's, and also the boutiques of the 8th arrondissement.

Albert-Birot, then, was an effective organizer and an energetic publicist. This much was swiftly noted, sometimes with admiration although frequently with disapprobation.[13] Albert-Birot's energy was perhaps put to most effective use in providing a platform for others, not least, of course, for the wounded Apollinaire.[14] Yet this role was largely dependent on the absence of other platforms. As other modernist magazines began to appear in 1917 and 1918, Albert-Birot was increasingly marginalized: with 'nunisme' he had staked a claim to the moment, and that moment passed quickly.[15]

Nord-Sud: Revue Littéraire

Pierre Reverdy's title *Nord-Sud* (North-South) was derived from the *Métro* line linking Montmartre and Montparnasse and thus signalled an ambition to link various elements of the Parisian avant-garde. Yet Reverdy would display none of Albert-

[10] Thus a poem Apollinaire published in *L'élan* is referred to in 'Etc.', *SIC*, 3 (Mar. 1916), unpaginated.

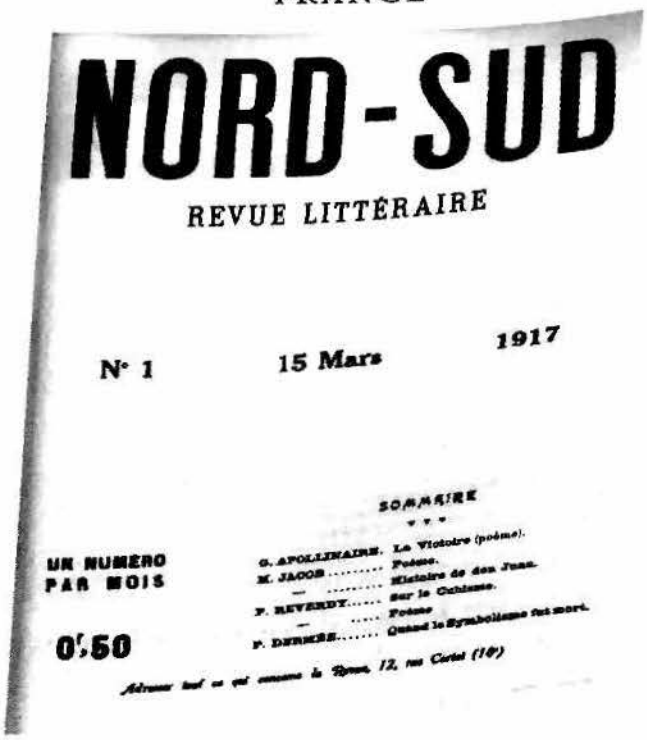
[11] Albert-Birot's acquaintance with Poiret is recorded in 'Etc.', *SIC*, ibid. unpaginated. An exhibition at Bongard's is referred to in 'Etc.', *SIC*, 4 (Apr. 1916), unpaginated. And so on.

[12] For Ozenfant's links with Bongard see his *Mémoires: 1886–1962* (Paris: Seghers, 1968), 91 ff.

[13] In his Preface to Albert-Birot's *Trente et un poèmes de poche* (Thirty-One Pocket Poems), Apollinaire introduced the younger poet, equivocally, as a 'pyrogène' [pyrogen]: Guillaume Apollinaire, *Oeuvres poétiques* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), 684. De Lacaze-Duthiers was dismissive: see 'Jeune Littérature', 274. Of later commentators, Sanouillet nicely balances acknowledgement of Albert-Birot's managerial skills with disdain for his literary ones: *Dada à Paris*, 65–6.

[14] Apollinaire had completed the first poem he sent Albert-Birot just a week before being wounded. The latter secured an interview with Apollinaire when he was still convalescent at the Italian hospital on the Quai d'Orsay. See 'Les Tendances nouvelles: Interview avec Guillaume Apollinaire' (New Tendencies...), *SIC*, 8, 9, 10 (Aug., Sept., Oct. 1916), unpaginated.

[15] The final joint issue of *SIC* was 53–4 (Dec. 1919). By this date *Littérature*, edited by André Breton, Philippe Soupault, and Louis Aragon (see Chapter 10), was established as the principal modernist magazine.



NORD-SUD

REVUE LITTÉRAIRE

N° 1 15 Mars 1917

UN NUMERO PAR MOIS

0f,50

SOMMAIRE

G. APOLLINAIRE. La Victoire (poème).
M. JACOB ..... Poèmes.
— ..... Histoire de don Juan.
P. REVERDY..... Sur le Cubisme.
— ..... Poèmes
P. DERMÉE..... Quand le Symbolisme fut mort.

Fig. 6.2 Cover of *Nord-Sud*, 1 (15 Mar. 1917)

Birot's pliability in pursuing this course. If Albert-Birot published a magazine in order to find a public, Reverdy, in contrast, published a magazine whilst remaining wary of the pitfalls of publicity. This is perhaps only implicit in the first numbers of *Nord-Sud* but it was to become increasingly, and bitterly, evident over the course of the magazine's brief life.[16]

The first issue of *Nord-Sud* (Fig. 6.2) indicated Reverdy's ambition to reorganize literature: in a careful juxtaposition of texts, an opening statement pledging allegiance to Apollinaire was followed by Dermée's essay 'Quand le Symbolisme fut mort...' (When Symbolism Died...), which in turn was succeeded by Reverdy's 'Sur le cubisme' (On Cubism), the essays establishing principles then exemplified in poems by Apollinaire, Reverdy, and Max Jacob.[17] Thus for the first issue Reverdy had already secured important collaborators and developed a coherent programme, as was evident in the continuities between his essay and that of Dermée. In the

[16] *Nord-Sud* ran for 16 issues, dated from Mar. 1917 to Oct. 1918. The print run seems to have been 200: see Etienne-Alain Hubert's introduction to the reprint of *Nord-Sud* (Paris: Jean-Michel Place, 1980), p. xii. Reverdy had found a patron in the couturier Jacques Doucet, who agreed to support a magazine. The poet's position was thus slightly less precarious than that of Albert-Birot. See François Chapon, *Mystères et splendeurs de Jacques Doucet, 1853–1929* (Paris: J. C. Lattès, 1984), 224 ff.

[17] The pledge to Apollinaire, with its embrace of reorganization, has the initials N.S. appended to it. However, the drafts and notes for the first issue make it clear that the text was by Apollinaire: see Hubert's notes in *Nord-Sud*, p. i. These notes and Hubert's introduction to the reprint are scrupulous, yet need to be supplemented by the same editor's work for Pierre Reverdy, *Nord-Sud, Self defence et autres écrits sur l'art et la poésie (1917–1926)* (Paris: Flammarion, 1975).

latter, the poem was conceived as an object where all parts have 'their place strictly determined by their function and importance . . . the object matters here and not this or that element' ('leur place strictement déterminé selon leur function et leur importance . . . l'objet importe ici et non tel ou tel de ses éléments').[18] And equally for Reverdy, 'there is in cubism the means of constructing the picture whilst only taking account of objects as elements and not as [they appear in perspective] anecdotally' ('il y a dans le cubisme les moyens de construire le tableau en ne tenant compte des objets que comme élément et non au point de vue anecdotique').[19] Reverdy draws out the parallel between his account and Dermée's by concluding 'cubism is painting itself, just as today's poetry is poetry itself' ('le cubisme est la peinture même autant que la poésie d'aujourd'hui est celle qui est la poésie même').[20] These essays used familiar terms; for example, the status of the object in modern painting had been rehearsed in Albert-Birot's 'dialogues nuniques'.[21] What distinguishes the accounts in *Nord-Sud* was the accent placed on the autonomy of the work of art, an autonomy secured by unity, be it lyrical or pictorial.

Dermée had offered a definition of lyrical unity as the conclusion of his essay: 'We wish to fashion works which exploit the freedom won by our predecessors whilst *bringing together the most diverse and apparently the most disparate elements*' ('Nous voulons constituer des œuvres qui utilisent les libertés conquises par nos prédécesseurs mais en *rapprochant les éléments les plus divers et en apparence les plus disparates*').[22] The unity of a poem is achieved in balancing such elements. In Reverdy's poetry at this date this was done through such means as enjambment rather than through metre or rhyme, which would be judged as merely forms of 'external constraint' ('la contrainte extérieure').[23] Over the course of 1917 Reverdy sought to purge his work of all such constraints and of all that was merely anecdotal. Alongside the poems he published in *Nord-Sud*, this much was made explicit in the texts 'Essai d'esthétique littéraire' (Essay on Literary Aesthetics), and 'L'Emotion'.[24] In the latter essay Reverdy drew a characteristically firm distinction between the personality of the artist and the personal means they might exploit; he insisted that it was only these personal means which were significant in the creation of the work. Reverdy followed this essay with one of his poems, 'Avant l'orage' (Before the Storm), as a demonstration of his own means. In this poem, particularly as set in

[18] Paul Dermée, 'Quand le Symbolisme fut mort . . .', *Nord-Sud*, 1 (15 Mar. 1917), 3.

[19] 'Pierre Reverdy, 'Sur le cubisme', ibid. 6.

[20] Ibid. 7.

[21] See *SIC*, 5, 6, and 7 (May, June, and July 1917). For a discussion of Reverdy's text and its lineage see Christopher Green, *Cubism and Its Enemies: Modern Movements and Reaction in French Art, 1916–1928* (New Haven, CT/London: Yale University Press, 1987), 158 ff.

[22] Dermée, 'Quand le Symbolisme fut mort . . .', 4; italics in original.

[23] Ibid. 3.

[24] Pierre Reverdy, 'Essai d'esthétique littéraire', *Nord-Sud*, 4–5 (June–July 1917), 4–6; and 'L'Emotion', *Nord-Sud*, 8 (Oct. 1917), 3–6.

Nord-Sud, enjambment and indentation produce balanced hemistichs. The balance ensures equivocation as the sense of each line may be inflected by those preceding and those following. Of course, such inflection is part of the general business of poetry, but in Reverdy's case it becomes the principal business. This ensures that the hemistichs remain 'éléments'; they are to be held in balance but not settled into fixed relationships. Such fixity, in either poetry or painting, would result merely in description, that is, anecdote. To counter the anecdotal Reverdy arrived at a theory of the image as the pure creation of the spirit: 'It is born not of comparison but of the coming together of two more or less distant realities' ('Elle ne peut naître d'une comparaison mais du rapprochement de deux réalités plus ou moins éloignées').[25]

Reverdy was uncompromising in the pursuit of his ideals and in the pursuit of his antagonists; *Nord-Sud* was to serve him in both respects. Alongside the poems and the theoretical reflections were various polemics, rebuttals, and refusals. Thus Reverdy was quite correct when he later described *Nord-Sud* as his 'means of attack' ('organe de combat').[26] For Reverdy poetry and pugnacity could be mutually supportive; yet it is important that they are not aligned too closely. His desire to write a pure poetry did not entail a purging of his readership. The rejection of anecdote and anything that smacked of the *fait-divers* was hardly an appeal to the lowest common denominator but it was not thereby inherently elitist. Thus, in the early essays in *Nord-Sud*, Reverdy's reader was unspecified but attentive. However, by the final issues of the magazine the reader had been submerged or was at least no longer a figure Reverdy addressed directly. Instead, the poet was now pitted against a public, with the latter conceived only as a mass, demanding concessions of the artist.[27] By this stage, Reverdy had clearly lost his taste for the role of magazine editor and all it involved. In effect, the poet now found himself alone; and unlike Albert-Birot, he found that this suited him.[28]

[25] Pierre Reverdy, 'L'Image', *Nord-Sud*, 13 (Mar. 1918), unpaginated. The theory of the image was, of course, to be taken up by Breton and the Surrealists; Aragon, for one, clearly understood the relationship between this theory and Reverdy's earlier accounts of poetry: see his review 'Les Ardoises du Toit, par Pierre Reverdy' (The Slate Roof by Pierre Reverdy) *SIC*, 29 (May 1918), unpaginated. For the broader context see Etienne-Alain Hubert, *Circonstances de la poèsie: Reverdy, Apollinaire, surréalisme* (Paris: Klincksieck, 2000), 11–29.

[26] Pierre Reverdy, 'L'Esthétique et l'esprit' (Aesthetics and Spirit), *L'Esprit Nouveau*, 6 (Mar. 1921), 671. For details on Reverdy's various battles see the editor's notes in Reverdy, *Nord-Sud, Self defence*, 273–303.

[27] See Pierre Reverdy, 'Note', *Nord-Sud*, 16 (Oct. 1918), unpaginated. Hubert notes that this text was directed against Apollinaire, with whom Reverdy had fallen out (Reverdy, *Nord-Sud, Self defence*, 295). This would condition his account of the public but only to a degree.

[28] See Pierre Reverdy, 'Certains avantages d'être seul' (Certain Advantages of Being Alone) *SIC*, 32 (Oct. 1918), unpaginated. Doubtless Reverdy's combative character had something to do with this isolation but this should not be overstated. Nor should the poet's decision in 1926 to retreat from Paris to Solesmes be interpreted teleologically, to suggest that he had always had a predisposition for solitude. This would be to judge *Nord-Sud* a failure in advance.

L'Esprit Nouveau: Revue Internationale Illustrée de l'Activité Contemporaine

The cover of the first issue of *L'Esprit Nouveau* (The New Spirit) declared that the magazine was published by a company with a capital of 100,000 francs (Fig. 6.3). The launch of this magazine was thus rather different to the humble beginnings of *SIC* and *Nord-Sud*. Yet the declaration of *L'Esprit Nouveau*'s funding indicates not only a capacity to address a large readership, it may also be taken to signal a particular ambition on the part of the editors towards that public: *L'Esprit Nouveau* is presented as a business venture, an enterprise positioned to appeal to entrepreneurs.[29]

Fig. 6.3 Cover of *L'Esprit Nouveau*, 1 (Oct. 1920)

[29] According to Chèvrefils Desbiolles, the maximum print run of *L'Esprit Nouveau* was 3,500 (*Les Revues*, 96). The capitalization gave the magazine an unusual longevity; it ran for 28 issues between October 1920 and January 1925. To do some justice to this longevity and the range of material addressed in the magazine I have accorded it more space than the other publications under discussion.

Paul Dermée was the nominal editor of the first three issues of *L'Esprit Nouveau*; yet the project was fundamentally shaped by Amédée Ozenfant and Charles-Edouard Jeanneret.[30] Having published his own magazine, Ozenfant was already a fairly well-established figure in the Parisian avant-garde when he met Jeanneret at the end of 1917. The latter, however, had perhaps spent more time gathering experience than exerting authority; Ozenfant could be regarded as the means whereby Jeanneret completed his education.[31] Having studied with Charles L'Eplattenier in his native La Chaux-de-Fonds, and worked in the studios of Auguste Perret and Peter Behrens, Jeanneret now began to paint under Ozenfant's guidance. Their collaboration resulted in an exhibition at the premises of the obliging Mme Bongard and on this occasion they published their tract *Après le cubisme*.[32] While focused on the state of painting, the text foreshadows the programme of *L'Esprit Nouveau* in demanding a turn from disorder to order through an appeal to the laws of nature. While timeless these laws are also modern because revealed by the machine and industrial processes.[33] The Cubists may have begun the process of purifying art by moving beyond mere imitation but Ozenfant and Jeanneret were at pains to point out that this process should not be developed as abstraction, since this would result in an ornamental art.

[30] Dermée had already conceived of a project for a new magazine before meeting Ozenfant in Nov. 1919 through the offices of Fernand Divoire: see Françoise Ducros, *Ozenfant* (Paris: Editions Cercle d'art contemporain, 2002), 62. Yet he also succeeded in alienating a large section of the literary avant-garde and so was perhaps not in a good position to advance this project by himself. The title for the new magazine was proposed by Dermée, who had already published a book with 'Editions de "L'Esprit Nouveau"' on the title page. On these matters see the editor's notes in Reverdy, *Nord-Sud, Self defence*, 324–6. In the initial agreement of the collaborators, Dermée was to be editor-in-chief, Ozenfant was to be responsible for layout, and Jeanneret was to be general manager. Dermée was removed from his position after the publication of no. 3. From no. 4 onwards the journal was given the new subtitle: *Revue Internationale Illustrée de L'Activité Contemporaine*. For the context for *L'Esprit Nouveau* see Carol S. Eliel (ed.), *L'Esprit Nouveau: Purism in Paris, 1918–1925* (Los Angeles/New York: Los Angeles County Museum of Art in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001); and Museum für Gestaltung, Zurich, *L'Esprit Nouveau: Le Corbusier et l'industrie 1920–1925* (Berlin: Wilhelm Ernst and Sohn Verlag, 1987).

[31] This much is certainly suggested by a letter from Jeanneret dated June 1918 which Ozenfant quotes: *Mémoires*, 102. The bibliography on Le Corbusier (as Jeanneret was to name his architectural persona in 1920) is voluminous: see Darlene Brady, *Le Corbusier: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York/London: Garland, 1985); and Christopher E. M. Pearson, 'A Selective Bibliography of Works on Le Corbusier Published in the 1980s', *Bulletin of Bibliography*, 51 (Mar. 1994). For Le Corbusier's formation, Paul Venable Turner, *The Education of Le Corbusier* (New York/London: Garland, 1977) remains useful; yet also see Stanislaus von Moos and Arthur Rüegg (eds), *Le Corbusier before Le Corbusier: Applied Arts, Architecture, Painting, Photography 1907–1922* (New Haven, CT/London: Yale University Press, 2002). Although sometimes elliptical, Ozenfant's *Mémoires* remain the best source on the artist. The most useful secondary source is Ducros, *Ozenfant*.

[32] This first purist exhibition ran from 22 Dec. 1918 to 11 Jan. 1919.

[33] Amédée Ozenfant and Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, *Après le cubisme* (Paris: Editions des Commentaires, 1918), 25–7.

To summarize:

Having demonstrated that pure, raw sensation is but a means to great art, we allow that there is an artistic hierarchy:

Pure sensation: ornamental art.

Organization of raw sensation—pure colours and forms—: higher art.[34]

The proper organization of sensation was the task of the purist painters. Here Ozenfant and Jeanneret may have drawn on the rhetoric Dermée developed in *Nord-Sud* but their emphasis on the lessons of industry directed *Après le cubisme* beyond the lyricism of that other death notice, 'Quand le Symbolisme fut mort...'.

This much was made clear in the manifesto prefacing the first issue of *L'Esprit Nouveau*. If the title of the magazine was derived from Apollinaire's lecture 'L'Esprit nouveau et les Poètes' (1917), the manifesto has much more to say about the 'new spirit' than it does about poetry. Indeed, the manifesto states emphatically that the new magazine was not to be seen as a mere literary review. 'There are a number of literary and artistic reviews, but they are all vehicles for groups or individuals' ('Il existe des quantités de revues littéraires ou artistiques, mais toutes sont l'expression d'un groupe ou d'un esprit individual').[35] As a counter to these narrowly polemical magazines, the spirit 'which will preside over the work of this review will be that which animates all scientific research' ('qui présidera aux travaux de cette revue est celui qui anime toute recherche scientifique').[36] Specifically, the task was to adopt 'the methods of experimental psychology' ('les méthodes mêmes de la psychologie experimentale') in order to establish 'an experimental aesthetics' ('une esthétique experimentale').[37] The deductive methods of metaphysics are summarily dismissed and the project of aesthetics repositioned.

These ambitions had direct consequences for the organization of the magazine. In the programme statement which follows the manifesto, the first thing the editors promise for each issue is 'a scientific study of aesthetics' ('une étude d'esthétique scientifique'), presenting robust results.[38] The editors envisage these results as progressively revealing the laws governing the creation of art; as such, the scientific reports provide the authoritative framework through which the reader is to approach the more focused analyses making up the remainder of the content of each issue. Thus the first issue of *L'Esprit Nouveau* opens with an essay on the new aesthetics by

[34] 'Résumons: | Ayant démontré que la pure sensation, brute, n'est que le moyen du grand art, nous admettons une hiérarchie des arts: | Sensation pure: art ornemental. | Organisation des sensations brutes,—couleurs et formes pures -: art supérieur.' Ibid. 19.

[35] Anon. untitled text preceding the paginated sequence of *L'Esprit Nouveau*, 1 (Oct. 1920).

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Anon. 'L'Esprit Nouveau donnera dans chacun de ses numéros' (The New Spirit Will Present in Each Issue), preceding the paginated sequence of *L'Esprit Nouveau*, 1 (Oct. 1920).

Victor Basch, 'Professeur d'Esthétique et de Science de l'Art' at the Sorbonne.[39] Suitably prepared, the reader may then proceed to texts on Seurat and Picasso, on the cinema, and on architecture. This format was to be maintained over the course of the first seven issues, with essays by aestheticians and those conjuring with some expertise in physiology and psychology, such as Charles Henry and Jules Lallemand.[40]

The essay by Basch recapitulates the recent history of aesthetics and notes the new interest in physiology. He presents disinterested contemplation as conditioned by three factors; these in turn determine the task of the aesthetician, who must study immediate sensations, the form of these sensations, and, finally, the ideas associated with these forms.[41] In pursuing this series of tasks, Basch considers the aesthetician to be moving from the inferior to the superior. Such a programme may be read as a confirmation of that of *Après le cubisme*, and Ozenfant and Jeanneret sought to emphasize this in the first essays they collaborated on for *L'Esprit Nouveau*, 'Sur la Plastique' and 'Le Purisme'.[42] Yet in these essays Ozenfant and Jeanneret are not concerned with the contemplation of sensations; this remained the province of Basch. Instead, the artists sought to analyse the production of sensations. This difference should not be understood as a banal outcome of the distinction between theory and practice; for this would be to misunderstand the larger project of *L'Esprit Nouveau*.

In the introduction to the essay on Purism, Ozenfant and Jeanneret state: 'Logic, derived from human constants, and without which nothing is human, is an instrument of control and, for those who know how to invent, a means of discovery' ('La Logique, dérivée des constantes humaines, sans laquelle rien n'est humain, est un instrument de contrôle et, pour celui qui sait inventer, un guide de découverte').[43] Here the artist is an explorer, or, in the terms already put forward in *L'Esprit Nouveau*, a researcher seeking to establish general laws. Yet the authors indicate that to establish laws is in this instance also to establish governance: 'The work of art is an artificial object which enables the spectator to be placed in the state desired by the creator' ('L'œuvre d'art est un objet artificiel qui permet de met-

[39] Victor Basch, 'L'Esthétique Nouvelle et la Science de l'Art' (The New Aesthetic and the Science of Art), *L'Esprit Nouveau*, 1 (Oct. 1920), 5–12 with the concluding section in 2 (Nov. 1920), 119–30.

[40] See *inter alia* Jules Lallemand, 'La Méthode et la Définition de l'Esthétique' (Method and Definition of Aesthetics), *L'Esprit Nouveau*, 3 (Dec. 1920), 257–67; Charles Lalo, 'L'Esthétique sans amour' (Aesthetics without Love), *L'Esprit Nouveau*, 5 (Feb. 1921), 491–9; Charles Henry, 'La Lumière, la couleur et la forme' (Light, Colour, Form), *L'Esprit Nouveau*, 6 (Mar. 1921). 605–23.

[41] Basch, 'L'Esthétique Nouvelle', 7–10.

[42] Amédée Ozenfant and Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, 'Sur la Plastique', *L'Esprit Nouveau*, 1 (Oct. 1920), 38–48; and 'Le Purisme', *L'Esprit Nouveau*, 4 (Jan. 1921), 369–86. It should be noted that Basch was not entirely happy with this use of his work: see Nina Rosenblatt, 'Empathy and Anaesthesia: On the Origins of a French Machine Aesthetic', *Grey Room*, 2 (Winter 2001), 78–97, esp. 89–90.

[43] Ozenfant and Jeanneret, 'Le Purisme', 369.

tre le spectateur dans un état voulu par le créateur').[44] However, within the framework established by Basch, such a formulation presents an immediate problem. For, as Ozenfant and Jeanneret acknowledge, whilst primary sensations are held to be universal, secondary associations are subjective.[45] An art based on the former will be merely ornamental as it will lack a properly human dimension; yet an art based on the later will be merely individualist, and will repeat the failures of Symbolism. Both fall short of the definition of art which Ozenfant and Jeanneret propose; the ornamental produces only a narrow range of sensations within the spectator and individualist art, as an art of allusions, may produce no sensations at all if the spectator is not already in close contact with the creator.[46] Addressing such shortcomings requires the purification of what Ozenfant and Jeanneret refer to as 'a plastic language' ('une langue plastique').[47] And in turn this involves the identification of those forms which hold the most universal associations. For Ozenfant and Jeanneret a list of such objects would have at its head 'man, the beings organized by man and the objects fabricated by man, especially those which one might describe as complementing the human organism' ('l'homme, les êtres organisés et tous les objets fabriqués par l'homme, particulièrement ceux dont on peut dire qu'ils sont comme les compléments de l'organisme humain').[48] And just as the human form was a product of evolution and natural selection so those common objects which responded to basic human needs were presented as the results of mechanical selection. It was above all these 'theme-objects' ('objets-thème') which constituted the subject matter of Purist painting.[49]

The Purist painter was to create images bearing 'the invariable, fundamental properties of the theme-objects' ('des propriétés fondamentales invariables des objets-thèmes').[50] This would ensure that the images were 'transmissible and universal' ('transmissibles et universelles').[51] The ambition of Ozenfant and Jeanneret was to produce an imagery which communicated directly. Their imagery would exploit laws discovered by psychology and physiology in order to place spectators in a desired state; yet as these laws were universal the resultant imagery would be of potentially limitless application, capable of communicating with the broadest possible public. If this was a fantasy of control, it was one shared by plenty of the managerial class; thus *L'Esprit Nouveau* might usefully be aligned with trade journals such as *La Publicité*, which at this date also drew on psychology in an attempt to reconfigure professional practice.

The editors of both journals could be said to be animated by the same desire for access to the viewing subject, and even if Purist paintings and advertising hoardings

[44] Ibid. 370. [45] Ibid. 371–2. [46] Ibid. 373. [47] Ibid. [48] Ibid. 374.

[49] Ibid. The best account of this purist theory of the object, and its relationship to Behrens's *Wirkung* and Hermann Muthesius's *Typsierung*, is Francesco Passanti, 'Architecture: Proportion, Classicism and Other Issues', in Von Moos and Rüegg (eds), *Le Corbusier*, 69–97.

[50] Ozenfant and Jeanneret, 'Le Purisme', 377. [51] Ibid.

belonged in different registers, the different experiences they offered were in principle subject to the same laws. As these laws were a shared concern, it is not surprising that the publications shared contributors. Dermée wrote for *La Publicité*, offering commentary on poster design, and Lallemand, who wrote on aesthetics for *L'Esprit Nouveau*, contributed a long series of articles on psychology to the advertising journal.[52] The alignment of *La Publicité* and *L'Esprit Nouveau* indeed clarifies the project of the latter. For both publications may be read as trade journals in which the leaders in their respective fields offered their knowledge to their colleagues. This knowledge in turn was shaped by work in related fields; the editors of *L'Esprit Nouveau* were professionals of the visual and saw themselves as an elite, yet one ready and willing to collaborate with 'the elite of science and industry' ('les élites des sciences et de l'industrie'), for in fact the latter were 'the most active creators of the contemporary aesthetic' ('parmi les plus actifs créateurs de l'esthétique contemporaine').[53] *L'Esprit Nouveau*, with its broad remit and diverse range of topics, was explicitly designed to facilitate this collaboration.[54] Such a conception of the modernist magazine would be alien to Albert-Birot, and especially to Reverdy, but it was not alien to the larger project of modernism, when this is conceived as an attempt to order the environment and those acting in it. Ozenfant and Jeanneret had from the outset intended *L'Esprit Nouveau* to be the vehicle for the systematic exposition of this project. Their contract with the publisher G. Crès et cie. anticipated the reuse of material from the magazine, their plan being to collate the essays on painting, architecture, urbanism, and the decorative arts and publish them in book form.[55] In this manner the principles of Purism would be applied to the full range of visual experience, from the intimate and individual engagement with a

[52] See, e.g., Paul Dermée, 'Les Murs de France' (Walls of France), *La Publicité*, 138–9 (Aug.–Sept. 1919), 293–4. And, with Eugène Courmont, Dermée was to publish *Les Affaires et l'affiche* (Paris: H. Dunod and E. Pinet, 1922). Lallemand contributed to *La Publicité* throughout the early 1920s, writing mainly but not exclusively about psychology. He referred quite frequently to the work of Dermée. For instances of the latter see Jules Lallemand, 'La Crise economique et la publicité' (The Economic Crisis and Publicity), *La Publicité*, 154 (Dec. 1920), 519–21; and 'Pyschologie de la subconscience: Applications publicitaire' (Psychology of Subconsciousness: Applications in Publicity), *La Publicité*, 159 (May 1921), 219–21. A full-page advertisement for *La Publicité* appears in the unpaginated sequence at the back of the first issue of *L'Esprit Nouveau*. The relationship between advertising and architecture is sketched in Beatriz Colomina, *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media* (Cambridge, MA/London: MIT Press, 1994). Colomina's argument on *L'Esprit Nouveau* (118 ff. and 185 ff.) is developed in a different direction to mine.

[53] Anon. 'L'Esprit nouveau', *L'Esprit Nouveau*, 1 (Oct. 1920), 3, and anon., untitled text preceding the paginated sequence of *L'Esprit Nouveau*.

[54] Ibid. 3.

[55] See Françoise Ducros, 'Amédée Ozenfant, "Purist Brother": An Essay on His Contribution', in Daniel (ed.), *L'Esprit Nouveau*, 83. The volumes published were *Vers une architecture* (1923), *Urbanisme* (1925), *La Peinture moderne* (1925), and *L'Art decorative d'aujourd'hui* (1925).

work of art to the quotidian and collective movement through the modern city. And these principles would be given a life beyond that of *L'Esprit Nouveau*.

The first of the volumes to appear, *Vers une architecture* (Towards an Architecture), was arguably the most influential. It was issued under the pseudonym Jeanneret had adopted for his architectural practice, Le Corbusier.[56] Whilst the polemic of this volume is obviously related to that of *Après le cubisme* and the articles on Purism, the relationship of technology and universality is presented in a quite different light. The texts on Purism had hymned the virtues of industry and mechanical selection whilst remaining silent on the antiquated technology of oil painting; a similar silence was not, and could not, be maintained for an account of architecture. Instead, the argument of *Vers une architecture* is driven by the tension between architecture and engineering. For Le Corbusier, the engineer is the very embodiment of the contemporary elite and whilst engineers respond to the imperatives of mechanical selection and constantly renew themselves and their tools, architects do not.[57] 'Our external world has been enormously transformed in its outward appearance and in the use made of it, by reason of the machine. We have gained a new perspective and a new social life, but we have not yet adapted the house thereto.'[58] Such an adaption becomes, of course, the pressing task. And in the process architecture itself will be transformed. As in the arguments of the texts on Purism, modern technology will enable universality by creating standard forms, but as architectural forms they will begin to standardize the built environment. And so the physical environment will be effaced, or at least will cease to be a determining context for architectural form. Architecture, the preeminent art of place, will necessarily be reconfigured by the mass production of its components. In this regard the celebration of transportation in *Vers une architecture* takes on its full significance; boats, cars, and aeroplanes are to be admired not simply as models of design but as machines for annihilating place.[59] Le Corbusier concludes: 'Industry has created its tools. Business has modified its habits and customs. Construction has found new means.'[60] Le Corbusier demands that architects respond; a failure on their part could only result in revolution. So here the fantasy of control is fully conscious. The

[56] The articles in *L'Esprit Nouveau* were co-signed with Saugnier, one of Ozenfant's many pseudonyms and the first edition of *Vers une architecture* also bears the two signatures. Le Corbusier made himself sole author for subsequent editions.

[57] In fact for two of the essays in *L'Esprit Nouveau* which were to be incorporated into *Vers une architecture*, Le Corbusier prefaced his text with excerpts on the elite from the programme statement of the first issue of the magazine.

[58] Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, trans. Frederick Etchells (London: The Architectural Press, 1976), 21.

[59] A number of commentators have observed that Le Corbusier's buildings stand aloof from their sites. Colomina notes that sites were sometime literally effaced, as when the images of Le Corbusier's Villa Schowb were retouched for publication in *L'Esprit Nouveau*: see Colomina, *Privacy*, 107 ff.

[60] Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, 263.

work of Le Corbusier as architect and more or less authoritarian urbanist was the attempt to realize the fantasy. Thus it should be clear that Le Corbusier's later involvement with corporatist ideologies is an extension rather than a perversion of Purist principles.[61]

From the little magazine to the mass market

In 1921, Reverdy reflected on the history of *Nord-Sud* and concluded that it was the last of its kind—a kind which no longer had a right to exist.[62] Such a judgement was perhaps tinged by Reverdy's bitterness. Yet it was the case that the 'little magazines' distributed via the likes of Adrienne Monnier would have to struggle ever harder as market forces reconfigured the French press.

During the interwar period in France the dominant form of development of the press, both economic and ideological, was that of concentration. One helped to drive the other and in both respects this entailed a shift of emphasis from the regional to the national. The economic concentration involved the rise of the large circulation press at the expense of smaller, local papers, an internal development conditioned, however, by the relationship between the press and newer media of radio and cinema. The ideological concentration involved the growth of the political party at the expense of more informal groupings of independent politicians. The electoral reforms of 1919 introduced a form of proportional representation which placed an emphasis on the political parties at the expense of individual candidates and as a result the small newspapers which served the interests of particular Deputies quickly declined in number.[63] And as this section of the press shrank, the large circulation dailies expanded their market share. These papers attempted to dominate the market by further increasing circulation and thus they diversified their coverage to appeal to a broader readership. The consequence was that political reporting occupied a smaller proportion of these papers than had previously been

[61] The context for Le Corbusier's arguments is established by Mary McLeod in ' "Architecture or Revolution": Taylorism, Technocracy, and Social Change', *Art Journal*, 43:2 (Summer 1983), 132–47. Much of her account remains compelling. However, as with a number of commentators, McLeod's discussion is ultimately directed towards Le Corbusier's later involvement with the 'Redressement Français' and with syndicalism, which has the effect of obscuring, or at least displacing, the ambitions of Purism.

[62] Reverdy, 'L'Esthétique et l'esprit', 671.

[63] For the relationship between parties and the press see Claude Bellanger, et al., *Histoire générale de la Presse francaise*, vol. III (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1972), 137–45; and Raymond Manevy, *La Presse de la IIIe République* (Paris: J. Foret, 1955), 21–2, 159–60, and 190. In Paris the number of dailies fell from 82 in 1919 to 50 in 1937: see Bernard Boilloz, 'Les Périodiques français édités à Paris de 1919–1939: Classification, description bibliographique et évolution', Doctorat de troisième cycle (Université de Paris VIII, 1978), 556.

the case and a larger proportion was now given over to features, to fashion, and to sport. The exemplary development of the 1920s was the introduction of various dedicated pages catering to these interests. In this transformation, the dailies were guided by the model of the weeklies; the latter was perhaps the most dynamic sector of the press during these years, which saw the ascendancy of the illustrated magazine and photo-journal.[64] Thus both the daily and the periodical press were transformed and organized much more directly by capital.

This reorganization did not, of course, destroy the support networks of the avant-garde, yet it did act on them. The attitudes to the public shown by the different editors of *SIC*, *Nord-Sud*, and *L'Esprit Nouveau* should be considered in the light of this development. The difference between the 'little magazines' and *L'Esprit Nouveau* was not simply between types of financial support, with the former relying on personal patronage and a restricted readership and the latter on a capitalization of 100,000 francs and a much wider circulation. For this difference was only one effect of the larger project of modernism as set out in *L'Esprit Nouveau*. As indicated above, the mass production and mass reproduction celebrated in this magazine had a range of consequences. These could be seen in the new forms of distribution which required new forms of advertising to mediate between producer and consumer, the forms which *La Publicité* was attempting to establish with the aid of psychological experiment. Yet the consequences could also be seen in Le Corbusier's new architecture, which was to be shaped by technological demands rather than the requirements and restrictions of specific sites. And finally *L'Esprit Nouveau* itself may be seen as a further consequence; it was after all styled as an international magazine, and like Le Corbusier's architecture, it was to transcend local conditions. Whilst the very title *Nord-Sud* turned the magazine around the axis of Montmartre and Montparnasse, *L'Esprit Nouveau* sought a wider readership; its engagements were to be international and not local. This ambition separated *L'Esprit Nouveau* from its immediate predecessors.

When Monnier recalled her first encounter with Apollinaire she was recalling the time when a vendor such as herself would interact directly with potential customers, disgruntled or otherwise, and without the mediations encouraged by *La Publicité*. This was also a time when an author such as Apollinaire could participate in this kind of interaction. In short, Monnier recalled publishing and bookselling as personal activities, with their own locations. Her souvenirs are gathered in a volume entitled *Rue de L'Odéon* and they do indeed record a sense of place. In quite specific ways, *SIC* and *Nord-Sud* belonged in that place. Ozenfant and Jeanneret sought to ensure that *L'Esprit Nouveau* did not.

[64] The weekly press dramatically expanded its market share in the interwar period. For example, in Paris its share rose from 42 per cent in 1919 to 62 per cent in 1937; see Boilloz, 'Les Périodiques', 360.