MODERNIST ART IN A “QUALITY” MAGAZINE, 1908–1922

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ABSTRACT

This article traces the fortunes of modernist visual art in Scribner’s magazine from 1908 to 1922, as different voices approve and disapprove of Impressionism and other modes of modernist visual art.

We all know how modernism flourished in the “small magazines”—as Ezra Pound called them—though we may need reminding that verbal modernism was not the only mode that was developed and defended in these magazines. Visual art was there, too, in The New Age, Rhythm, Blast, Coterie, and in the later years of The Little Review, as well as in many other such periodicals. We know quite a bit about that. What we know less about is the extent to which modernist art penetrated the larger magazines of the era, reaching wider audiences and thus gaining greater public acceptance. Following modern art in a magazine like Scribner’s allows us to see a bit deeper into the process of acceptance—and the prejudices that hindered such acceptance. I have chosen the year 1908 as a beginning, because the first mention of Cézanne in any American magazine happened in Scribner’s in 1908, and I have ended with 1922 because the first images by Matisse and Picasso had appeared in Scribner’s, and the dialectical process of the magazine’s acceptance of modernist art had reached a point of stability by that time, as indicated by a notice that appeared that year in the section called “Interesting Art Exhibitions in New York.”
This art section first appeared in the magazine in 1917, when *Scribner’s* began educating its readership about Impressionism, but its attention to other modes of modernist art grew slowly. We can mark this progress by noting that a van Gogh show at the Montross Gallery was mentioned in the issue of October 1920—and van Gogh was a pivotal figure in the acceptance of Post-Impressionism. Though the Montross had been operating since 1908, and showing works of a distinctly modernist character from 1915 on, the gallery’s name had never appeared in *Scribner’s* until November of 1917, when the new section on art exhibitions began to appear. After that, the gallery was mentioned regularly, with the key entry for our purposes appearing in October 1922: “Modern Paintings by a group of American artists are the attraction at the Montross Gallery.” This casual mention of modern art as an “attraction” occurs at the end of a period in which the fortunes of modern art in *Scribner’s* fluctuated wildly, and that is the story I hope to tell on this occasion. This is not the whole story of the acceptance of modernist art in America, by any means, but it is an interesting piece of that story, which is visible now mainly because of the digital edition of the magazine from 1910 to 1922, provided by the Modernist Journals Project, which has made the full magazine, with advertising and other contents, widely available, and has made possible searches that facilitate such research.

*Scribner’s* was not a mass-market magazine but one of a group known as “quality magazines” that included the *Atlantic Monthly, Century, Harper’s, the Review of Reviews, and World’s Work*. This means that the circulation of *Scribner’s* was not in the millions, but it was large, peaking at around 200,000 early in the years we are considering. In his history of the Scribner publishing house, Roger Burlingame describes the magazine’s readership this way:

Readers of *Scribner’s* (and this was true for the other first-line monthlies *Harper’s*, the *Century*, the *Atlantic*) were a solid group, almost a club. They treasured their copies, filed them, often bound them and ranged them on shelves along with their most precious books. They took the trouble to write careful, praising, critical, or controversial letters to editor and authors every month. The magazine became required reading in schools and colleges. They were traditions in thousands of homes. The copy on the drawing-room table was a mark of distinction for the family. The file became a topical history of national culture.
During these same years, most little magazines seldom reached circulations much above one thousand. They were important advocates of modernist literature and art, but they cannot tell us how the wider public was persuaded to accept modernism. We can, however, learn something about this process by looking at how modernist art fared in a journal like *Scribner’s*.

Modernism in visual art was, of course, a complex phenomenon, with many variations. The first form of visual modernism was Impressionism, which gained acceptance after fierce resistance from the art establishment. Resistance to modernism then shifted to Post-Impressionism, or Expressionism, as exemplified by Cézanne and his followers. As Expressionism moved toward greater abstraction, resistance continued, with Cubism, Futurism, and Vorticism coming in for their share of abuse. In the period we are considering, the more abstract modes of modernism were never fully accepted in *Scribner’s*, but some of the work of Picasso and Matisse was actually praised in the magazine. Visual modernism, in one sense, began before Impressionism, as certain artists moved from historical and religious subjects to the representation of modern life, as Baudelaire pointed out in his famous essay on Constantin Guys (“Le Peintre de la vie moderne”). But the major shift that we recognize as modernist is a move away from emphasis on what was represented toward the manner of representation itself. Impressionism was a form of representation, a way of depicting scenes and people, but it also called attention to its mode of production and forced the viewer to be aware of the artifice involved. The later modes of modernist visual art kept extending this process, reducing the importance of what was represented and emphasizing the vision of the artist.

To understand the difficulties this history posed for a magazine like *Scribner’s*, we need to understand the culture of such publications. During the years 1908–22 the magazine had one person in charge of art, Joseph Hawley Chapin, who had joined *Scribner’s* in the 1890s as a young man. His main concern was selecting illustrators for poems, stories, and special features about particular places, which led him to such skilled representational artists as A. B. Frost, Ernest Peixotto, Edward Penfield, Maxfield Parrish, Jessie Wilcox Smith, Charles Dana Gibson, and F. Hopkinson Smith. He also became friendly with Howard Pyle, and frequently visited Pyle’s art school in Wilmington, Delaware, where he recruited N. C. Wyeth, Stanley M. Arthurs, Frank Schoonover, W. J. Aylward, Clifford Ashley, and Harvey Dunn as illustrators for the magazine.2
This emphasis on the representation of places and scenes from stories and poems made it difficult for both the editors and readers of the magazine to accept the notion of visual images as expressions of the artist’s mind rather than records of things in the world. And the real skill of the illustrators who worked with the magazine reinforced this resistance. During this period, for example, N. C. Wyeth published over eighty illustrations in *Scribner’s*, many of them featured as frontispieces—and Wyeth was brilliant at what he did.

The process of directing a wider public’s attention to modern art was partly accomplished by galleries and exhibitions, to be sure, but the response of the press to such shows was a part of that process. In Britain, the most important such exhibition of the era was the 1910 London show, *Manet and the Post-Impressionists*, organized by Roger Fry and Clive Bell. The way the public received that show at the Grafton Gallery was described by a reviewer in *The New Age* in November of 1910:

At the Gallery itself it is all titter and cackle; well-dressed women go about saying “How awful! A perfect nightmare, my dear!” “Did you ever? Too killing! How they can!” They are like dogs to music; it makes them howl, but they can’t keep away. Men in tall hats are funny over the exhibits, saying: “This is a horse; this is a man.” All through the galleries I am pursued by the ceaseless hee-haw of a stage duke in an eye glass.3

One of the unintended side effects of the show’s title was the connection of Manet to, essentially, the wrong set of artists. Manet was a Pre-Impressionist, the connecting link between Goya and Courbet, on the one hand, and Monet, Renoir, and Degas, on the other. The real master of Post-Impressionism, as Fry and Bell knew very well, was Cézanne, who showed the way out of Impressionism toward Expressionism for the artists who followed him. This makes Cézanne crucial for our understanding of the way *Scribner’s* dealt with modernist art, and *Scribner’s* began paying attention to Cézanne two years before the London show presented his work to the British public.

It is astonishing, really, that this rather staid American magazine gave serious attention to Cézanne almost exactly two years before Fry’s show featuring him opened in London, but this attention was due to a remarkable young man, named Walter Pach. Pach (1883–1958) was born in New York City. His father was a commercial photographer who did a lot
of work for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and young Walter often accompanied him to the museum. He became a painter himself, graduating from City College with a degree in art and then studying with Robert Henri at the New York School of Art. (Henri was a leader in what came to be called the Ashcan school of American art.) After summer trips abroad to paint, where he first encountered the work of Cézanne and van Gogh, Walter Pach moved to Paris in 1907 and became friendly with Gertrude and Leo Stein, who had recently begun their formidable collections of modernist art. This helped Pach expand his interest in contemporary European painting. Pach saw sixty Cézannes at the Salon d’Automne in 1907, an experience that led him to write “Cézanne—An Introduction,” which Scribner’s published in 1908. In this article, he called Cézanne “by all odds the strongest of recent influences in continental painting, and practically an unknown name in America!”—and insisted that the other artists in that Salon d’Automne might well have been called “followers of Cézanne.” It would be interesting to know just how Pach’s article found its way into the magazine. Lacking detailed evidence, we must assume that his New York art world connections played a part in this twenty-four-year old young man placing his critical writing so well. We should also note that when Pach published his memoirs of forty years in the world of art, Queer Thing, Painting, in 1938, the publisher was not Scribner’s but Harper’s.

Unfortunately, Pach’s article was one of the few bits of attention that Cézanne received in the magazine during the next decade. The next time his name appeared was in an advertisement, and this points to an interesting pattern in these matters. The commercial side of modernism can never be ignored. It is always there, whether through advertising or the interest of dealers and collectors, buying works of art or specially printed issues of literary works.
The ad for James Huneker's *Promenades of an Impressionist* (figure 1) appeared in the April 1910 issue of the magazine, and it can serve to remind us of the importance of James Huneker in the development of American modernism. Without getting too deeply into his biography, we should know that he was a powerful advocate of modern culture, and that his book *Egoists: A Book of Supermen* connected Max Stirner and Nietzsche to writers like Baudelaire, Ibsen, Flaubert, and Huysmans. T. S. Eliot reviewed this book favorably while still a student at Harvard, in the *Harvard Advocate* of October 1908. Huneker was best known as a music critic, but he also knew a lot about modern art and literature and wrote about them frequently. He discovered Stirner early, and situated him as a precursor of Nietzsche. Stirner's major book, *Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum* (The Only One and His Property; first published in the 1840s) was not translated into English until 1907, when Steven Byington's version, called *The Ego and His Own*, appeared in America, with the British edition coming in 1912. Byington wrote frequently for *The New Freewoman: An Individualist Review*, which shows Stirner's influence in its subtitle and later in its ultimate title: *The Egoist*. Stirner's philosophy is also plainly visible in the pages of *The Little Review*, though Nietzsche is quoted and mentioned more frequently. The modernist combination of anarchism and individualism stems directly from Stirner and touched most of the early modernists in one way or another. This is not the occasion to follow that intellectual thread. In the thread we are following, however, Huneker looms large.

His name is mentioned in nearly seventy issues of *Scribner's* during the period 1908–22, usually in ads for his many books, and his work appeared on four occasions, twice in connection with music, once with a column called “The Melancholy of Masterpieces” (July 1914) in the magazine's regular “Field of Art” section, and finally, when some of his letters were published posthumously in September 1922, by which time every issue of *Scribner's* included a “Field of Art” column. The series had begun during the 1890s, and become regular around 1900. In the period 1910–22, over eighty different people wrote such columns, some appearing only once but others as many as eleven (Frank Weitenkampf) or even seventeen (William Walton) times. These articles were clearly meant to be educational, and they covered a wide range of topics. In general they discussed visual art either as representation or as decoration, treating such topics as “Subjects for the Painter in American Landscape” or “Decorations in the Hudson County
Court-House by Frank D. Millet.” But they also pointed to particular collections of art or particular forms of visual art like the etching.

The ostensible art editor of the magazine, Joseph Chapin, never contributed a “Field of Art” column. This is one of a number of clues that tell us that the magazine had no settled view of art, no single person whose views dominated. The writers who appeared most frequently took a generally conservative view of the field, but the magazine, as a whole, did not have a position on what it called the field of art. Nor did these columns attend with any regularity to current art shows, in America or abroad. This means that the extraordinary exhibition of modern art held in the 69th Infantry Regiment Armory on Lexington Avenue in 1913—known as the Armory Show—came and went unmentioned in the pages of the magazine. Walter Pach, however, played a major role in organizing that show, along with Arthur B. Davies and Walt Kuhn. Pach was fluent in French, German, and Spanish, and thoroughly familiar with the artists and dealers of art in Paris, in particular. When Kuhn and Davies came to Paris seeking works for the Armory Show, Pach was their guide. He admired the Post-Impressionists, especially van Gogh, but he never got to write about them in Scribner’s. He did publish an article on Renoir in May of 1912 that included his own interview with the artist, in which Renoir declined to speak about the younger artists but praised Cézanne’s intensity.

The Armory Show, of course, received the same sorts of mockery in New York (and in Chicago and Boston when it traveled to those cities) as the Post-Impressionists had received in London a few years earlier. But Scribner’s did not even mock. It simply ignored this major event in the world of modern art, until, a year after the show had closed, when William Walton mentioned it in passing. In a “Field of Art” article on sculptures by women, he took up a work of Abastenia St. Leger Eberle that had been included in the Armory Show. In his praise of Eberle, Walton’s contempt for modernism comes through plainly: “This cheerful and decorative group, very skillfully spaced and planned, was first seen in the plaster at the celebrated ‘Armory exhibition,’ of ‘Futurists’ and such, last year, but was one of several works of art shown there that did not seem to belong in that galère.”4 (We can translate galère as “stuff,” “mess,” or “junk.”)

As Walton was the most regular art columnist in Scribner’s, we can assume that his view came as close as any to representing that of the magazine in May of 1914. Actually, there were no Italian Futurists exhibiting...
among the 1600 artworks in that show, but the newspaper headlines threw that word and Cubist around wildly, though the number of actual Cubist works was quite low (eight works by Picasso, four by Picabia, and two by Léger—see Brown’s “Catalogue Raisonné” in his book on the show). Duchamp’s Nude Descending a Staircase, which was certainly in the Futurist manner, caused the most outrage. It seems clear, in any case, that Scribner’s ignored the Armory Show in 1913 and knew very little about it in 1914, neglecting an educational opportunity that might have advanced the cause of modernist art in America if the moment had been seized and someone like Pach invited to discuss the show. But Scribner’s at this time was just getting around to recognition of the first wave of modernist artists, the Impressionists, and even to them there was visible resistance in the magazine, as in this cartoon, which appeared among advertisements for “Buildings and Furnishings” in the front section of the issue for May of 1912 (figure 2).

In the cartoon the Impressionists are charged with being insufficiently representational, so that the only way to tell the top from the bottom of the painting is to look for the artist’s signature. This is absurd, of course, and many of the people who wrote about art in Scribner’s knew it. But some of them remained unsympathetic to Impressionism and all that followed it. One of these was Kenyon Cox (1856–1919), an artist and illustrator who wrote with some eloquence and published frequently in the

![Figure 2](image_url)
Robert Scholes

quality magazines. He had studied in Europe and wrote regularly about the old masters, but he felt that painting had gone astray in the nineteenth century as artists struggled to find a public after the French Revolution. In a major article in *Scribner’s* called “Artist and Public” (May 1914), he applied this view to the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists:

The nineteenth century is strewn with the wrecks of such misunderstood and misunderstanding artists, but it was about the sixties when their searching for a way began to lead them in certain clearly marked directions. There are three paths, in especial, which have been followed since then by adventurous spirits: the paths of aestheticism, of scientific naturalism, and of pure self-expression; the paths of Whistler, of Monet, and of Cézanne.

Cox then went on to explain how each of these was a wrong path, a dead end of one sort or another. He positioned Whistler as a dilettante, saw the Impressionists as scientists rather than artists, and reserved his worst thoughts for the Expressionists:

After Impressionism, what? We have no name for it but Post-Impressionism. Such men as Cézanne, Gauguin, Van Gogh, recognized the sterility of Impressionism and of a narrow aestheticism, while they shared the hatred of the aesthetes and the Impressionists for the current art of the salons. No more than the aesthetes or the Impressionists were they conscious of any social or universal ideals that demanded expression. The aesthetes had a doctrine; the Impressionists had a method and a technic. The Post-Impressionists had nothing, and were driven to the attempt at pure self-expression—to the exaltation of the great god Whim. They had no training, they recognized no traditions, they spoke to no public. Each was to express, as he thought best, whatever he happened to feel or to think, and to invent, as he went along, the language in which he should express it. I think some of these men had the elements of genius in them, and might have done good work; but their task was a heartbreaking and a hopeless one. An art cannot be improvised, and an artist must have some other guide than unregulated emotion. The path they entered upon had been immemorially marked “no passing”: for many of them the end of it was suicide or the madhouse.
This was the illustrator’s view of modernist art, and it was, therefore, the view of the magazine to the extent that such a thing existed, since *Scribner’s* had such a large stake in illustration. But Cox was not simply anti-modernist. He was also pro-American. He wrote eloquently about Winslow Homer, for example, and in a December 1911 piece titled “The American School of Painting” in a “Field of Art” column, he was at pains to distinguish the work of American Impressionists like Childe Hassam and J. Alden Weir from their French predecessors. Though he had studied in Paris, himself, he came to dislike what that city represented. Blaming the French revolution for modernism, as he did, was a political gesture as much as an aesthetic one. He was rejecting modernity as well as the modernist modes of representing it. It is ironic, of course, that the three modes of art he felt were most distant from any public have become as popular as any kinds of visual art, and more popular than most.

*Scribner’s* may be said to have accepted what Cox called the aesthetic and the scientific naturalist (Impressionist) modes of modernism within a few years of the publication of his attack on them. This acceptance is demonstrated in two distinct manners. Perhaps the most important is a series of educational frontispieces that appeared in the magazine in 1917 and 1918, in place of the usual illustrations (figures 3–10).

These images were clearly intended to help educate the public about modernism. Each one came with a brief description, such as this one, from October 1917, for a Goya painting:

The vital and fecund Goya may be rightly termed the last of the old masters and the first of moderns, for he outlived eighteenth century traditions and was the immediate precursor of Delacroix and the French romantic school. This picture, which represents the interior of a Spanish smithy, was painted about 1818, and at one time belonged in the Galerie Espagnole of Louis-Philippe.

The others follow a similar pattern, connecting each artist to the tradition and making him into an accepted part of the history of art. The note on a Monet painting is followed by this short message: “A calendar of current art exhibitions will be found on page 24.” The “calendar of current art exhibitions” is actually in the advertising section of the magazine, on a page devoted to “The Arts,” featuring galleries, shops, and museums. The modernist blend of commerce, art, and instruction is clearly at work here,
FIG. 3  Goya, Forge, October 1917.

FIG. 4  Manet, Balcony, November 1917.
fig. 5  Whistler, *Music Room*, December 1917.

fig. 6  Degas, *Ballet Scene*, January 1918.
FIG. 7  Renoir, *Mother and Child*, March 1918.

FIG. 8  Zorn, *Peasant Girl*, April 1918.
modernist art in a “quality” magazine, 1908–1922

fig. 9 Sargent, *Nonchaloir*, May, 1918.

fig. 10 Monet, *Lady in the Garden*, September 1918.
and Monet is being used, quite properly, to lead readers toward a better appreciation of the artists who followed him, whose work is to be found in those galleries, some of whom are advertising in the magazine. (This picture, painted in 1881, was identified in the magazine as in the collection of Mrs. Hugo Reisinger in New York. Its usual title is *Alice Hoschedé in the Garden*.) We should notice several things about this sequence of images and instructional notes. One is that all the images have an illustrative quality, with titles that point to content (though Whistler also points toward technique, as he often did). Another is that this sequence never quite gets to the Post-Impressionists. It begins with Goya and Manet as opening the way to modernism, but it does not go further than Monet. It emphasizes the “classic quality” of Degas, though it mentions his attention to movement. But we are following the Impressionist thread here, and this sequence of images was reinforced by other mentions of Impressionism in the magazine during these years.

Just a few months after Kenyon Cox had dismissed modernist art, a counter-position was presented in the “Field of Art” column in July 1914 by James Huneker called “The Melancholy of Masterpieces,” in which the Armory Show got its second mention in the magazine:

> It is a pity that New York as yet has not had an opportunity of viewing the best Cézannes, Gauguins, and Van Goghs. I did not see the exhibition a year ago at the Armory, which was none the less an eye-opener. But I have been told by those whose opinion and knowledge are incontrovertible that this trinity of the modern movement was inadequately represented; furthermore, Henri Matisse, a painter of indubitable skill and originality, did not get a fair showing. It would be a superfluous and thankless task to argue with critics or artists who refuse to acknowledge Manet, Monet, Degas. These men are already classics. Go to the Louvre and judge for yourself.⁶

In a magazine like *Scribner's*, many voices contend, and no single writer may be said to speak for the whole entity. What we are investigating here is the pattern in which those voices contend. But the visual art that was featured in the frontispieces of the journal in 1917 and 1918 does seem to represent the view of the magazine itself, which had come down, several years later,
to be sure, on the side of Huneker. But, in this important article, Huneker went further than the magazine itself was ready to go. He gave measured praise to Cézanne:

His fundamental qualities are sincerity, a dogged sincerity, and also splendid coloring—the value of the pigment in and for itself, the strength and harmony of color. His training was in the classics. He knew Manet and Monet, but his personal temperament did not incline him to their forms of impressionism. A sober, calculating workman, not in my humble opinion a heaven-storming genius, yet a painter whose procedure has served as a point of departure for the younger tribe. (134)

He went on to accord Gauguin and van Gogh high praise, setting Gauguin “aloft with the Olympians” and directly countering Kenyon Cox (without mentioning him, to be sure) by asserting that “none of these revolutionary artists jumped overboard in the beginning without swimming bladders. They were all, and are all, men who have served their technical apprenticeship before rebellion and complete self expression.” And he praised van Gogh as “the truest genius of the trio under discussion” (134).

When it came to the Cubists, however, Huneker drew a line. There his modernism ended. But it included Matisse, whom he called “a magician... a master of line, of decoration, of alluring rhythms.” The Futurists, however, he described this way: “They are men of ability, well-trained, perverse if you will, victims of a false theory—and all desperately ‘literary’ despite their denial of the imputation.” As we shall see, the resistance to Cubism and Futurism was entrenched and varied. Huneker was more appreciative than most of those who expressed their views in Scribner’s during this period. And though he had not attended the Armory Show, he clearly recognized its importance as an eye-opener.

Scribner’s was not like The New Age, where a real debate was held, in 1914, between Walter Sickert, advocating a representational art, and T. E. Hulme, arguing for abstraction, with both presenting images of what they thought modern art should be doing. But when Scribner’s got around to presenting Impressionism, the magazine could offer impressive colored frontispieces of an art in which color was so important.

Impressionism even invaded the illustrations in the magazine, as in an eye-catching image by Francis Hopkinson Smith (figure 11). Smith was
a very interesting person. A descendant of Francis Hopkinson, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, he made his living as a contractor in New York and wrote and painted in his spare time. He wrote for *Scribner's* and provided illustrations for the work of others. As it happens, his work had been noticed in *The New Age* by Ezra Pound, who (writing as B. H. Dias) was reviewing a show of the work of “the late Sir Alfred East,” a British academician, at the Fine Art Society in London in 1918 when he made the following observation: “An old man named Hopkinson Smith who used to be seen painting in Venice could have given Sir Alfred valuable hints upon water colour.” Pound must have seen the old man painting while Smith was on a vacation in Venice, where their paths crossed briefly in 1908, when Pound paused in that city for a few months on his way from Gibraltar to London.

Smith would have been seventy years old at that time. And Pound, who was twenty-two when he saw Smith in Venice, remembered Smith’s work, ten years later, looking at the work of Sir Alfred East. He must have seen Smith painting something very like this illustration, which appeared in the issue of July 1910 (48, no. 1), where it and other paintings by Smith were used to illustrate an article by Mary King Waddington called “Venice—A Sketch.” The words under this image, quoted from the article,

![Image](image_url)

**FIG. 11** “A beautiful little palace, with façade quite intact, in the midst of the most sordid surroundings” (July 1910).
say, “A beautiful little palace, with façade quite intact, in the midst of the most sordid surroundings” (56). Monet, of course, painted scenes like this in Venice, one of which is part of the Havemeyer Collection in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Hopkinson Smith is not Monet, to be sure, but he was good enough for Pound to notice him and hold his work up as an example of how watercolor painting should be done. My points are that the illustrators in this magazine were very skillful and should not be neglected when we consider the reception of modernism in the magazines, and that American Impressionism was visible in *Scribner’s* as early as 1910.

The art collectors and dealers also played important roles in the acceptance of modernism in America, along with the artists and critics. Louisine Havemeyer, for instance, wrote for *Scribner’s* during this period. She was a friend of Mary Cassatt and Edgar Degas, and a formidable collector of modern art. (The Havemeyer collection is now one of the great strengths of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.) Havemeyer was active in the cause of woman’s suffrage and lectured on modern art to raise money for that cause. The connections among New York’s social and economic elite, the museums, and the magazines are an important feature of the world of modern art during this period, and a magazine like *Scribner’s* enables us to trace those connections and begin to understand that world. Havemeyer wrote two articles for *Scribner’s* about her adventures as a suffragist agitator, which included making the case for suffrage to audiences of working men and going to jail in Washington, D.C., after being arrested while demonstrating there.

The line between illustration and art was often crossed by Americans, in both directions. Edward Hopper earned money in his youth by illustrating for *Scribner’s*. Some of his illustrations turn up in February 1919, in a story called “The Emperor’s Ghost,” by Temple Bailey. This is a war story about French troops who are dispirited and then inspired by a hero who dresses up to resemble Napoleon, walks out toward the German trenches, and is shot. The French soldiers, believing that Napoleon’s ghost has come back to lead them, are inspired and regain their courage. Here are Hopper’s images of the ghostly figure seen by the troops and of the troops saluting that figure (figures 12 and 13). This is not exactly the Hopper we know, to be sure, but they are interesting images. Hopper made some money doing this work before he became famous as a painter of scenes so realistic that they verge on the surreal.
FIG. 12  Hopper, *The Apparition of Napoleon*, February 1919.

We shall return to illustration, but first we need to explore a bit further the resistance and acceptance of the more abstract modes of modernism. A prime example of the resistance to such work appeared in *Scribner’s* in an article for the April 1918 issue by Allan McLane Hamilton, called “Insane Art,” in which we find the author saying things like this: “It is not my purpose hastily to condemn the good faith of all cubists and futurists, but only to say that I believe most of them may be divided into three classes, viz., the ignorant, the dishonest or disingenuous, and the insane.” Dr. Hamilton, a well-known “alienist,” presented images of artwork by insane people that he connected specifically to Futurism and Cubism (figures 14 and 15). The captions connect the image below to Futurism and the one on the next page to Cubism. Hamilton is clearly at one extreme of the spectrum of views of modernist art in *Scribner’s*—but his resistance extended well into the past as well. In his article, Hamilton described Goya, Blake, and Whistler as mentally unsound, and called El Greco “a psychopath” (490). These views themselves are so extreme as to merit the word *unsound* for this alienated alienist. And they appeared, we must remember, shortly after the magazine had printed frontispieces by the “unsound” Goya and Whistler. Clearly the magazine did not speak with one voice. Few large magazines did, though some of the little reviews came very close to doing so.

Ultimately, *Scribner’s* came around to taking a calmer and more appreciative view of the Expressionist phase of modernism. We can trace this process by tracking the names Picasso and Matisse through these years.

**FIG. 14** Insane Futurism, April 1918. Caption reads: “The insane artists revert to geometrical forms, some of their attempts being the embodiment of the most approved kind of futurist work.”
The first mention of Picasso that I have found is in 1914, in James Huneker’s article “The Melancholy of Masterpieces,” which we have already considered. These are the concluding words of that essay:

To miss modern art is to miss one of the few thrills that life holds. Your true decadent copies the past and closes his eyes to the insistent vibrations of his day. I know that it is not every one who can enjoy Botticelli and Monet, Durer and Manet, Rembrandt and Matisse. Ready-made admiration, as George Saintsbury pointed out in his essay on Baudelaire, is fatal to youthful minds; nevertheless, we should, all of us, old as well as young—particularly the academic elderly—cultivate a broader comprehension of the later schools and personalities. Art is protean. But will, I ask myself, posterity sit before the masterpieces of Matisse, Picasso, and Van Dongen, and experience that nostalgia of the ideal which I have described at the beginning of these desultory notes? Why not? There may be other ideals in those remote times, ideals that may be found incarnate in some newfangled tremendous Gehenna. But nature will always remain modern.⁹

In 1914 Huneker was already assuming that Picasso and Matisse had created masterpieces and imagining a time when their allure might begin to
dim just as was the case with their illustrious predecessors. Clearly, with Dr. Hamilton waiting in the wings, *Scribner’s* was not yet ready to go along with Huneker. But other voices were coming into play in these years. The next mention of Picasso in *Scribner’s* appears in the same issue that features a frontispiece by Manet, that of November 1917. Picasso is mentioned in a “Field of Art” article by William Aspenwall Bradley called “American Etching Today.” Bradley was an expert in the etching of earlier periods, which lent considerable weight to his words:

> It is natural—inevitable, even—that this revival should reflect certain of the new ideas concerning the representation of the human figure, as of all other objects, now prevalent in painting, especially as some of the best-known members of the Post-Impressionist and Cubist groups abroad have made the copper-plate the medium of their radical ideas. Thus Cézanne executed at least one *eau-forte*, in addition to three colored lithographs, and he has been followed by men like Bracque, Derain, Matisse, and Picasso. The last-mentioned, particularly, has done some of his most beautiful and significant work on copper.10

Bradley (1878–1939) is a figure of interest to all of us who study modernism. A graduate of Columbia—poet, fiction writer, translator, and expert on etching—he became a literary agent in Paris in the 1920s. Gertrude Stein in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* referred to him as “the friend and comforter of Paris authors.” While still in New York, however, he was the friend of modernist artists, returning to *Scribner’s* for a second article in September 1918, with a “Field of Art” piece titled “Some French Etchers of the Modern School.” In this article Picasso received the most extensive and sympathetic attention to be found in the *Scribner’s* of those years. When Bradley begins to discuss Picasso, he translates from André Salmon’s *La jeune peinture française* (Youthful French Painting):

> “In choosing for guides the savage artists, he (Picasso) was not unaware of their barbarism,” writes M. Salmon. “Only he conceived logically that they had attempted the real figuration of the being, and not the realization of the idea—sentimental, for the most part—that we fashion of it for ourselves. . . . Thus he wishes to give a total representation of man and things. Such was the attempt of the barbarous
image makers.” And such, in another medium, with the special problems involved in representing this totality on a plane surface, has been that of Picasso. It has led him directly to so-called “Cubism,” of which Picasso is the father, precisely as Matisse is the father of “Les Fauves.”

Using Salmon’s anecdotal history of Cubism, Bradley actually explains the function of primitivism in the work of Picasso and Matisse, and he connects them properly to the modes of visual modernism that they dominated. He also understands, and uses, the evolution of Picasso’s work through its various phases:

But it is not with Picasso the Cubist that we are here concerned. It is with Picasso in that first fine period of his maturity, the “Blue Period,” when, fresh from a visit to his home in Spain, he reveals anew the influence of the great Spanish masters Greco and Goya, either direct and unadulterated, or modified by that of such modern French artists as Daumier and Toulouse-Lautrec, as in his skeleton-like figures of absinthe drinkers. (384)

Sympathetic as he is, Bradley prefers the early Picasso to the work of his Cubist phase, but he praises him, along with Matisse and Derain, in particular, in terms that left no doubt that he was a master of his medium—and he provides the first images of work by Picasso and Matisse to appear in *Scribner’s*, including a Picasso scene of circus people (figure 16). Bradley: “But Picasso’s mastery of pure line is, to my mind, even more evident in those prints where what he seeks is little more than balanced rhythm and harmony, but where he succeeds, at the same time, in realizing a vital vigor of conception.” About a second Picasso (figure 17) Bradley wrote: “Monumental, too, are the figures in the smaller groups” (384). On the Matisse (figure 18) he observed: “It is subtle and refined rather than strong and expressive. It gives us the shapes and the patterns of things seen on a flat surface rather than their weight, volume, and density. But it also gives us delicacies of modeling and of texture, as about the temples and in the beard of the man’s head which we reproduce” (383).

At last, the Expressionists of modern art get their due in the pages of this “quality magazine.” But Bradley did not have the last word on modernism in this run of *Scribner’s*. The last word clearly belonged to a
Harvard-trained professor of art history at Vassar, Oliver S. Tonks, who contributed two important articles to the “Field of Art” column in 1921 and 1922, “Realism and Idealism in Art” and “The Modernist Movement in Painting.” In these essays Tonks is very much the teacher of art history, connecting past and present, ranging easily from ancient to modern times. He shows how realism and idealism are often mixed in works from Michelangelo to Manet, and he has a clear grasp of the motives of all the modern movements. He does not really like modernism, though he sometimes grudgingly admits that it has been useful. In his article on realism and idealism, he argues that the Cubists and Futurists are too interested in ideas, that they do not understand the limitations of their medium, which leads him to this observation:
Every sane person knows that art deals first and last with emotions and moods, and, by the same token, every sane artist recognizes that to convey these emotions or moods to another person he must avoid such bizarre distortions of artistic speech that either disturb by their unusualness or confuse by their contradiction of the laws of good usage. It is as if someone with an idea to express insisted in using the language of Chaucer, some such artificial gibberish as Volapuk, or, perhaps more pertinently, the incomprehensible futuristic phraseology of Gertrude Stein.12

Stein, of course, had no love for Marinetti and the Futurists, and joked about the leader’s name in “Marry Nettie.” But Professor Tonks did not get that joke, and one may doubt if he knew Stein’s work very well. His resistance to modernism, however, comes through clearly in his 1922 article on that subject. After discussing and sympathizing with the resistance to academic art in the nineteenth century, and praising Manet, in particular, Tonks rejects Post-Impressionist art:

After Manet showed that the impression of reality could be better produced by simplification of plane and color—in which matter he was only following a law which the Greeks had discovered five hundred years before Christ—after he had demonstrated the potentials
of simplification, it was easy for Gauguin to extend his planes and reduce not only the tones of his colors, but the actual gamut of color itself. With this disregard of nature's particularities it was natural that a mind like Gauguin's, verging on the abnormal, should feel no impropriety in disdaining the verity of natural color. A green horse or a magenta dog was no offense to him. If such colors fitted into the scheme of his picture he saw no reason why they should not be borne by a dog or a horse as well as any other object. He had never seen a purple cow, but, unlike the poet, he had no objection to seeing such a creature.\footnote{13}

In suggesting that Gauguin had a mind “verging on the abnormal,” Tonks almost joins the alienist Dr. Hamilton. That this well-trained scholar should fall into this pattern of resistance to the modern tells us clearly just how strong this resistance was. But he was too well trained to make the mistake of thinking that artists like Picasso and Matisse could not draw:

Could it be proved that this revolt against academic canon is entirely the work of improperly equipped artists, we might dismiss the question of the modernist movement as a bit of stupid charlatanism. But in the face of the fact that many of these rebels could, when they so chose, draw well even according to academic standards, we must look closer at the matter. (256)

And he does look closer, concluding with words that leave the way open to a future appreciation even of the modernists whose work he does not like:

At the same time it would be incorrect to say that the modernist movement has produced no good results. Rebellion always accomplishes some good. It was, for example, the impressionist’s eagerness to record the fugitive aspects of nature that taught the artistic world that color in nature is not bounded by the conventional rules of the studio. The modernist also made it clear that form has a solidity which is due to the play of light on color. This fact had never once glimmered in the consciousness of the tradition-reverencing academician. Through the modernist’s efforts man’s appreciation of the beauty and mystery of nature has been quickened. Therefore if in their speculative audacity they err in attempting the unattainable, they should be credited at
least with jolting the academician out of the rut of contentment and complacent self-appreciation into which he had fallen. (256)

If the appreciation of artists like Picasso was still muted in the critical side of *Scribner’s* at the end of the run we are considering, he was getting some attention on the commercial side. For four issues in 1921 (February to May), an ad appeared for a book on modern painting published by Scribner’s. Actually, the book was produced by Chapman and Hall in England, but released in the United States by Scribner’s. What is interesting (and amusing) about this ad, is that, in it, Picasso’s name is misspelled in two different ways (figure 19). They never got it quite right on the advertising side of the magazine.

As “Pecasso” and “Picasse,” Picasso was there, and one can only speculate whether these versions of his name were accidental or deliberate. Could there have been resistance to Cubism in the advertising department of the magazine? If I may misquote Oscar Wilde’s Lady Bracknell, to get it wrong once seems like carelessness, but to do it twice and differently, is suspicious. Somebody continued to resist the more experimental forms of modernism in the pages of the magazine. But now that the magazine’s publisher, Charles Scribner’s Sons, had a commercial interest in publishing books on modernism, the battle for acceptance was largely over.

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**FIG. 19**  Four art book advertisements, February–May 1921.
But something else was going on in the advertising section of *Scribner’s* that we should notice before closing. We have seen how an artist like Edward Hopper could move from illustration to fine art, and Hopper and other artists of the time worked for advertisers, too. In modernist visual art the border between elite aestheticism and popular commercialism was a permeable one, with artists moving back and forth across it, and critics following them. The elitist critic Anthony Ludovici once lamented in *The New Age* that a show of poster art contained more good work than many displays of “pure” art. Here are three passages from his review of 28 August 1913:

At the Dore Gallery there is an interesting show the proper title of which is the “Post-Impressionist Poster Exhibition.” It is interesting and sad at the same time, because it shows how utterly the last possible opponent of this age and all its vulgarity has become enslaved to the very power which it ought to have done its utmost to undermine and to overthrow. . . .

If it was possible for Huysmans, the well-known art critic and author, to say with some truth of Cheret’s work: “There is more talent in one of his posters than in most of the pictures which cover the walls of the Salon,” the far-reaching results of this modern “patronage” of the arts, even in the nineteenth century, becomes unmistakably plain. . . .

By far the best, from the purely artistic standpoint, are Steinlen's wonderful child and cats in the famous poster for Nestle’s Milk (No. 64)—a lesson to that maligner of cats, Louis Wain, if nothing else—and B.C.'s “The Russian Ballet” (No. 38). How mechanical, vulgar, and stupid do such posters as those of Hassall, for instance, appear, beside these two chef-d’œuvres in the art! Think too, of the good taste and discrimination which some French engineers or businessmen must have shown in order to have selected the delightful series for the “Chemin-der-Fer de l’Etat” (Nos. 58, 59, 62, 63, 66, 67, 68, 70, 72, 77)!14

For Ludovici, the unholy alliance of art and commerce was producing far too interesting work. If we look at a magazine like *Scribner’s* with less elitist eyes, we can find illustrations by artists of considerable skill, some of whom also worked on the “pure” side of the divide between art and commerce.
But the impure side has much to offer us. In the same issue as the Manet frontispiece, an astonishing ad for Murad cigarettes (figure 20) appeared. I like to think that Manet would have approved and Ludovici would have shaken his head. Images like this, I believe, point the way to further investigations of the commercial side of modernist visual art. Murad alone provides a range of fascinating pictures in *Scribner’s*, and there are other visually interesting ads as well. I hope younger scholars of modernism will take advantage of the opportunity afforded by digital editions that include the advertising. To them I say, in the spirit of this ad, “Good hunting!”
NOTES

2. Ibid., 235–47.