"HOME IS WHERE THE (HE)ART IS": MARGARET ANDERSON AND ISADORA DUNCAN, TWO UNDOMESTICATED ART LOVERS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this essay is to bring together the autobiographies of two remarkable women who developed their artistic talents in the first decades of the 20th century: Margaret C. Anderson, the editor of *The Little Review*, and Isadora Duncan, the innovative dancer. The analysis of their life narratives shows how, beyond temporal coincidence, and an independent attitude towards social conventions, both women shared a rejection of established canons of family life which led them to portray a model of domesticity quite different to that expected by Victorian standards. This is especially reflected in their particular attitude towards the places and houses they inhabited, in their manifold travels —both of them embarked on a life-changing journey to Europe, and in their economic mismanagement. Theirs was a constant longing for art and beauty, which may explain why they present a different model of womanhood from that of the women of their time.

KEY WORDS: Margaret C. Anderson, Isadora Duncan, autobiography, domesticity, spaces, family life, art.

RESUMEN

El objeto de este artículo es aunar las autobiografías de dos mujeres excepcionales que desarrollaron su talento artístico en las primeras décadas del siglo XX: Margaret C. Anderson, la editora de *The Little Review*, e Isadora Duncan, la innovadora bailarina. El análisis de sus textos autobiográficos demuestra que además de ser coetáneas y de mostrar una actitud independiente ante las convenciones sociales, ambas compartían el rechazo a los cánones de vida familiar que predominaban en su sociedad, lo cual les llevó a reflejar un modelo de domesticidad diferente al que cabía esperar en la época victoriana. Esto se aprecia de manera especial en una actitud peculiar hacia los lugares y casas que habitaron, en sus múltiples viajes —ambas se embarcaron en un viaje a Europa que les cambió la vida, y en su mala administración económica. Su anhelo constante por alcanzar el arte y la belleza pudiera explicar el porqué ambas presentaron un modelo de mujer diferente al de sus contemporáneas.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Margaret C. Anderson, Isadora Duncan, autobiografía, vida doméstica, espacios, familia, arte.

I have no place in the world —no fixed position.
Margaret C. Anderson

I certainly was not suited to domestic life.
Isadora Duncan

Writing itself is space. It is a populated house.
Nancy Mairs

Do Margaret Anderson and Isadora Duncan have anything in common beyond temporal coincidence? Their artistic endeavours and their personal stance in life suggest more similarities than differences. Certainly, a close reading of their life narratives shows that these early 20th-entury art lovers have more in common than at first appears.

At the turn of the 19th century, when America was being reshaped and transformed into a more cosmopolitan society and the "old Victorian certainties (of class, marriage, of the role of woman) were being dissolved by a rapidly changing order" (Reynolds 39), these two women embarked on a journey in the opposite direction going from the New World to the Old Continent. Those changing times were the socio-cultural scenario in which both women were to carry out diverse forms of artistic expression: editing,[1] writing, music, and dancing. Anderson, who founded the literary magazine *The Little Review* in Chicago, was one of the first women editors, and Duncan was an innovator in the art of dancing from her early times in San Francisco and later in Chicago. They not only devoted themselves to their artistic endeavours but also made an incursion into the field of autobiography, using differing approaches to write their lives. In the present essay we will analyse the first of the three autobiographical books written by Anderson, *My Thirty Years' War*[2] (1930), and Duncan's posthumously published autobiography, *My Life* (1927). Although their life stories, as well as their life narratives were very different, both women share, among other things, an independent attitude towards social conventions, evidenced in the way their lives unfolded; a compulsion to travel in order to

[1] In *The Little Review*, Anderson defended the idea that editing and criticism should be regarded as art: "...the tides of art would cease to ebb and flow were it not for the sun and moon of appreciation. This function of the sun and moon is known as criticism. But criticism as an art has not flourished in this country" (qtd. Marek 67). In her book, *Women Editing Modernism: "Little" Magazines & Literary History*, Jayne E. Marek infers that "critical writing [for Anderson] could be as original and useful as art" (67).

[2] Anderson would publish *The Fiery Fountains* in 1951, giving an account of her life in Europe and her relationship with Georgette Leblanc, and *The Strange Necessity* in 1962, for the most part a text containing personal reflections on art, love, and life.

see new horizons and to expand their ideas —as Anderson affirms, "movement implies change" (233); a special attitude towards the spaces and the houses they inhabited; a rejection of the established canons of family life, moving beyond domesticity; and economic mismanagement. Above all, they shared an ever present longing for art and beauty which became a "lighthouse" in their lives.[3]

In talking about the woman autobiographer, Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson explain how she negotiates the cultures of subjectivity available to her, the discourses of identity circulating around her, as well as the narrative frames commonly used to tell stories: "she reads her life through her readings of other life stories" (5). Duncan's text, for instance, presents numerous allusions to the usual reflections made by the autobiographers of her time about aiming at truth, plus a specific acknowledgment of her incapacity —as a woman— to write the truth of her soul, as she believes Rousseau did, for which she affirms: "no woman has ever told the whole truth of her life" (8). Yet, Anderson goes further than that, reading her life not only through, but also *against* her readings of other life stories. That is to say, because she was aware of the discourses of identity circulating around her she wrote a type of discourse where she would not allow herself to be defined in the same terms in which her contemporaries were writing themselves.

Anderson's narrative could stand as an example of how a modernist autobiography should read. She presents herself as an impersonal narrator, one who is not concerned about her past memories, or telling the truth, but who is merely creating a literary artefact in which she happens to be the protagonist. Acknowledging in the first paragraph that the book is a record of her refusals to be cornered or suppressed by those who cannot accept exceptional or inspired people (3), she goes on to tell of her various fights and struggles—it is no wonder that the title of her narrative makes reference to her belligerent attitude. At the beginning of her text, as an epigraph to the first chapter, she reveals one of her most important battles, which she seems to be winning: "My greatest enemy is reality. I have fought it successfully for thirty years" (3). This statement appears as a warning to her readers about the kind of autobiographer they are about to meet: one who lives in a different dimension. Yet, Michelle E. Green points out in an article about Anderson and *The Little Review* that Patricia Meyer Spacks uses precisely this quote from Anderson to argue about some women's tendency "to glorify themselves in their own minds at the expense of tangible accomplishments," linking both Anderson and Duncan in their narcissism: "Anderson is a prime example of a woman caught up in her own myth, like Isadora Duncan" (12-13). In the first chapter, Anderson also states that she has no place in the world, "no fixed position" (4), which stands out as an early awareness of a female identity which will not consent to being easily grasped. What

[3] In the final paragraph of the last chapter of *My Thirty Years' War* Anderson makes an interesting comment when she says: "I no longer look out upon a lighthouse. I live in one" (274), which is an allusion to the period of time when she lived with Georgette Leblanc in an actual lighthouse in France, whilst it can also be read as a projection of her continuous quest for art.

follows is a description of herself in terms of what she is not, which seems to be a means of preventing her readers from expecting to find the usual kind of story a woman of her time would tell:

> I don't know just what kind of thing I am. Nobody else seems to know either. I appear to be a fairly attractive woman in her thirties. But such a human being falls inevitably into one or more human categories —is someone's daughter, sister, niece, aunt, wife, mistress or mother. I am not a daughter: my father is dead and my mother rejected me long ago. I am not a sister: my two sisters find me more than a little mad, and that is no basis for a sisterly relationship. I am certainly not a niece; (...). I could almost be called an aunt (no one would dare), but my two nephews don't find me convincing; so I'm not an aunt. I am no man's wife, no man's delightful mistress, and I will never, never, never be a mother. (4)

All those human categories she rejects have to do with family relations, making clear from the start that she is not going to define herself in those terms. Furthermore, in choosing to define herself through negation, which actually means going against the pre-established patterns of thought of a conventional society which assigned pre-defined roles to women, she is presenting the roles she was not willing to embody.

Anderson does describe some scattered episodes of her childhood and youth in what appears to be a suffocating family atmosphere, and talks about the many people she met in the early years of *The Little Review*, the artistic/life project around which the whole book revolves,[4] yet she does not reach the point of showing any emotions which would render her text something other than a modernist artefact. One of the most outstanding examples is that of her relationship with Jane Heap, which is presented as one of profound intellectual admiration, with no specific mention of the love they shared, even though the readers gradually become aware of their emotional involvement and subsequent partnership.[5] In fact, that refusal to be too personal makes Anderson present herself in various parts of her text through Heap's perception of her personality and attitudes, and through the ceaseless dialogues in which they were always engaged, as this illuminating assertion shows: "Being really solicitous about human development, Jane sometimes found this im-

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[4] To appreciate what this project meant to Anderson, it is worth mentioning one of her famous dictums, actually taken from an article by Jane Heap in *The Little Review*: "To express the emotions of life is to live; to express the life of emotions is to make art" (148).

[5] In the Introduction to her edition of Margaret C. Anderson's novel, *Forbidden Fires*, Mathilda M. Hills gives an interesting account of the relationship between Anderson and Heap. She explains how Jane's jealousy became a troubling aspect for both of them (4), and how Margaret's falling in love with the French actress-singer Georgette Leblanc was the beginning of the end of their relationship (6-8). Anderson does not mention her love for Leblanc in *My Thirty Years' War* either, although she does introduce and briefly describe her, talking of their activities together, and, most important, dedicating the book to her as "the only human being I have known who has none of the human *bêtises*."

personality of mine discouraging. But I am eternally interested in performance" (187). This fragment not only shows Jane's appreciation of her, but also seems to be another warning to her readers about the kind of text they should expect to find —a text as impersonal as this performer-writer aimed at creating. Furthermore, such a text would not be concerned with providing its readers with a strictly chronological account of events; Anderson's narrative is very well organized, structured through six chapters ("My Thirty Years' War," "The Little Review," "Jane Heap," "California," "New York," and "Paris") and yet, it is not particularly concerned about temporal references.

Such is also the case of Isadora Duncan's narrative, full of memories and anecdotes which take readers from one part of the globe to another in the endless journey that Isadora's life became, but hardly ever giving dates to contextualize any of those events. Ironically enough, she seemed to fail in trying to emulate Rousseau, the truthfully honest autobiographer she mentions several times in her text, not only because of the "omissions and inaccuracies" (Blair xiv) many biographers find in it, but also because of her emphasis on spatial rather than temporal references, which Nancy Mairs, when talking about her own work, perceives as a characteristic of women's life narratives: "...in emphasizing the spatial rather than the temporal elements in my experience, I attempt to avoid what Georges Gusdorf calls [...] the 'original sin of autobiography' (and, one might add, the outstanding feature of phallocentric discourse in general) —that is, 'logical coherence and rationalization' " (472). Subverting phallocentric discourse, Duncan hardly ever offers temporal references; yet, she puzzles her readers with an overwhelming account of the multiple spaces she occupied such as: cattle boats, yachts, benches, hotels, tents, studios, museums, manor houses, or palaces, to mention but a few. Accordingly, her friend and biographer Sewell Stokes, "contaminated" by Duncan's apparent carelessness in making reference to place and time, realizes that he fails to keep a temporal sequence in his own book when he affirms:

> As I write, I realize that even in the first few paragraphs I have failed to keep to any sequence in this story. Perhaps that is because a sequence of any kind was the last thing one considered in any experience that had to do with Isadora. Her mind was big enough (...) to be unconscious of space and time as they are reckoned with, in countries and in minutes. (18)

In contrast to Anderson, Duncan does show her emotions in *My Life*, telling her readers of her numerous love affairs —after a longer than usual virginal state— or sharing her grief at the dramatic loss of her children. She was also explicit when asked by Stokes why she was writing her memoirs, answering in a straightforward manner: "because I need the money so badly" (35). It is not our purpose to "police the truth" of our autobiographers, as Leigh Gilmore wisely warned feminist critics of autobiography some years ago, but we think that we must draw attention to two important omissions in Duncan's text, since they are relevant to our analysis. One is that despite the fact that she had once fallen into "the trap" of marriage, she never mentions it, and yet maintains a belligerent attitude towards that institution

throughout her narrative[6]: “I would live to fight against marriage and for the emancipation of women” (19), or, “Any intelligent woman who reads the marriage contract and then goes into it deserves all the consequences” (138), are only two of the numerous assertions that reveal her oppressive notion of marriage. The other omission is the irony that while she was writing her autobiography she was secluded at the hotel Negresco in Nice, which came to be her last “home”, victim of her total incapacity to deal with economic matters. After a nomadic life of absolute freedom and unrestrained movements, she found herself a prisoner of her own chaotic disorganization.[7] To these important omissions, we must add the use of a pseudonym, Lohengrin, to refer to her lover, and father of her second child, the sewing-machine millionaire Paris Singer. In fact, Stokes makes reference to a conversation he held with Duncan on her relationship with Singer where he was told, “You don’t know my Millionaire. He was a great influence in my life. I lived with him for a long time. The stories I could tell you about our life together. Such a strange life. None of it is going into the memoirs” (121). In spite of her alleged intention to be a truthful autobiographer, these examples show that Duncan seems to be more in command of what she reveals or conceals from the readers than might be expected from her initial discourse.

Having introduced Anderson’s and Duncan’s life narratives, we will focus on their specific relationships to the spaces they inhabited conditioned, somehow, by their compulsion to move from place to place, and which reflect their personal ideas on home and domesticity. Both women seemed to have lived in “no man’s land”, free of the patriarchal impositions that usually paralyzed women in those times; women who were not acted upon but were themselves acting. As Anderson asserts, “I have found out that the quality of every life is determined exclusively by its position in relation to acting or being acted upon” (270). Travelling gave them freedom from domestic constraint, giving them the opportunity not only to drink from the sources of the Old Continent but also to shed in Europe the fresh sap of the New World. Anderson makes clear her reasons for crossing the ocean: “During these years I stayed in Europe —chiefly in France and Italy. I wanted to find out what the old civilizations, races, countries, climates, landscapes would do for me. In some ways these old things made me a new person” (265). For her part, Duncan’s journey started early in her life travelling across the States; it continued in Europe

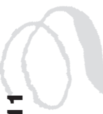
[6] It must be acknowledged that Duncan’s autobiographical enterprise was interrupted by her unexpected death. The final chapter leaves her as she arrives in Soviet Russia, where she would meet, marry —for bureaucratic reasons— and shortly after divorce the Russian poet Sergei A. Esenin (Wood 331-362). A reader trusting her autobiography as the only source of information about her life would never suspect that this “preacher” against marriage would ever have surrendered to the institution she so much despised.

[7] Sewell Stokes recalls in his biography of Duncan her confession that she felt in prison at the Negresco. Recklessly, she had made the decision to stay at the most expensive hotel on the Riviera, pretending that she would be able to pay the bill when she left —which was precisely the reason why she could not leave, for she had no money to meet her expenses (61).

where she was nourished by the classical tradition of Greece and Italy, while she impressed innumerable audiences with a new type of dance, the result of her research on movements that, according to her, did not exist before. She resumed her intentions on travelling to Europe as follows: "I had come to Europe to bring about the great renaissance of religion through the Dance, to bring the knowledge and the Beauty and Holiness of the human body through its expression of movements" (65).

Marilyn R. Chandler, in her book, *Dwelling in the Text: Houses in American Fiction* in which she analyzes space and settlement, points to a characteristic tension present in American culture "between the project of building a settlement and the romantic image of the homeless, rootless, nomadic hero whose roof is the sky (...), or the boundless sea," which she considers a "conflict over the tremendous psychic costs of 'civilization' and domestication" (4). This tension does seem to be present in the two texts under analysis: both Anderson and Duncan had gone beyond the boundaries marked by the Puritan codes of settlement, alternating the Thoreauvian lack of attachment to a particular place with a special interest in houses. Interestingly enough, in her narrative Anderson recalls how at one point in her life she had "an intuition [that she] no longer needed a house" (88), embarking herself, her lover, her sister and two nephews on a camping experience which lasted six months. On this adventure, described as "the most lyrical" months in her life (89) she would comment: "The only lack was the residence. But was this an essential obstacle? Wasn't camping a passion with all sensible people? What was to prevent our putting up tents and living the pristine life of nomads?" (86). Significantly, Duncan found herself immersed in a similar situation when her brother, in order to console her in her sorrow after the tragic death of her children, asked her to join him in Albania, where he was working among refugees. Duncan describes how they lived in a tent by the sea (201), although "the misery represented by the Albanian refugees" led her to long "for the feeling of Persian carpets beneath my feet" (202). These experiences show the capacity of these two women to enjoy or adapt to austere environments; notwithstanding, their love for houses, villas or palaces –as Anderson once exclaimed: "We now had an enchanting palace to live in and nothing to live on" (157), seems to have always been in the background of their personal landscapes.

Bestriding different types of settlement, Anderson ponders on her capacity to live in manifold places when she discovered, on her arrival in France, that her lover Georgette Leblanc's sister lived in "the most fabulous fairy castle" of her experience: "I thought of my excessive interest in diminutive ranch-houses, tents, gold rooms, Brookhaven, and felt that here at least it would appear less excessive" (242). Indeed, at many points in her autobiography Anderson insists on her attraction towards houses, on her impulse to settle immediately in abandoned houses which inspired her intellectual hunger. This is her description of the moment she found "the most sympathetic house anyone has ever seen", in Highland Park: "I came upon an empty house (...) of such a perfect romanticism that it occurred to me we should live in it (...). There is always a delicate way of breaking into abandoned houses, so I examined this one thoroughly and found it was the ideal home" (99-



100). This "hunting" for abandoned houses continued when, after having met Jane Heap, they decided to go to California. This time, they were also looking for a proper house where they could have "good conversation" (117): "You must never consider any environment that looks new. There must be an atmosphere of other lives upon it. If you can find an abandoned house with a straggling garden you've found perfection" (117). The ranch-house they finally encountered and reconstructed was "old, simple, homely, deserted, isolated, sympathetic" (117), the perfect place for the editorial tandem to thrive. If this was their experience on the West Coast, later on, in New York they came across, again, a small, abandoned house, "It wasn't a house; it was hardly a structure" (184-185). This shows her fascination for ruined places, which she loved to reconstruct: "it's the rebuilding that attracts us!", she would exclaim (185). Anderson and Heap tailored their rooms according to their intellectual needs: "It was to be a room where all *Little Review* conversation would take place. It was to be a special, haunting, poignant, dedicated room. It was. In this room the *Little Review* entered into its creative period" (152). Anderson's obsession with abandoned, ruined houses might be symbolic of the "ruins" of her own family life, that she so much resented, and her urge to rebuild houses and rooms could be read as a desire to craft a different way of life, away from bourgeois mediocrity.

Anderson's excessive interest in houses finds its parallel in Duncan's "*idée fixe*" (137) —the founding of the school of dance which had been engrained in her mind since her early childhood (16), a dream she took along with her wherever she went, be it Berlin, France, England, the United States, Russia, or Greece. This nomadic school needed a physical space to shelter the troupe of children she intended to instruct in her innovative ideas on dancing. In her search for the right places, she was confronted with innumerable obstacles, economic and otherwise, which she usually, miraculously, managed to overcome. Of all the locations where her school was settled, Bellevue, in France, was among the most outstanding. This incredible place was damaged during the war, and coming back to it she found with distress that it was "falling into ruins" (249). Duncan, like Anderson, thought of rebuilding the ruin, but the lack of funds made it an "impossible task" (249). The whole situation could be interpreted as a symbol of her destroyed life, of the impossibility to recover happier times. Nevertheless, Duncan never gave up in the face of adversity; once again, she tried to found her school of dance, this time in Greece, in Kopanos, a much cherished old place which she also found in ruins (250). That seemed to have been her fate.

Postmodernist and feminist criticism has commented widely upon the importance of space, and the close intertwining of space and power. Chandler states that space is "an ideologically weighted 'product'," and that the idea of space is "a highly charged issue for theorists and artists" (3). Space, be it physical, emotional, psychological, or metaphorical, has been such a rich source of interest for women writers, and feminist critics alike, because of its complex and contradictory meanings for women. Traditionally, there has been the notion or expectation that "home" is a sanctuary, a place of safety that can always be returned to, a place of love and warmth, an image evoked in manifold literary works. Looking more closely at the

evolution of the concept of space, it is evident that private space could not only be seen as a place of “safety, warmth, and love” but also as one of empowerment. Spaces such as the domestic sphere may signal frustration and confinement for women at particular historical moments, and in certain cultural locations. Indeed, private spaces can provide a backdrop to relationships of power and dependence or, on the contrary, they can be transformed into spaces of freedom —liberating spaces or constraining spaces which might convey a sense of imprisonment; “[t]hey are, after all, embodiments— incarnations that threaten to become incarcerations” (Chandler 6). Nonetheless, women would want to escape, in their lives and writings, breaking down the association between themselves and the home through the reconfiguration of their familial domestic spaces and the opening up of new environments. Anderson felt that sense of imprisonment in her early family life, but she soon released herself from this constraint; the spaces she created after that period in her life show how private spaces can be liberating and artistically productive. Duncan, who did not feel the oppression of family relations in the early stage of her life, never accepted the attempts of her lovers to incarcerate her in domestic spaces.

Undoubtedly, personal spaces and family life are deeply intertwined in the two narratives under analysis, revealing the perception both autobiographers had of the concept of home —one which diverges from conventional patterns. Anderson gives different accounts of her early, almost precocious eagerness to confront her family. One revealing example of this attitude can be seen in her letter to the advisor of young girls in the “obnoxious” magazine the *Ladies' Home Journal*, where she asked “how a perfectly nice but revolting girl could leave home”, adding a list of “everything I found immoral in the family situation” (12); this is evidence of her rebellious attitude, which reached its breaking point when her mother gave her an ultimatum which forced the decision about “which policy was to rule our house —hers of suppression or mine of freedom” (65). Mother and daughter were at war sorting out who had the power. Hence, family relationships were not easy for Anderson, who arrived at the disappointing conclusion that “the Blue Bird of discontent is not to be searched afar but to be found right in the home” (10), proving that home may not only be a space of empowerment but also a place of discomfort. In short, Anderson rejects the bourgeois family model she inherited from her parents, and this is clearly expressed in her autobiography when she confesses bluntly: “I liked houses and disliked my family” (7). For her part, Duncan does not seem to reject her family upbringing: she proudly speaks of the “Clan Duncan” —formed by her mother, sister, and two brothers— which she insistently defined as “self-sufficient” (93, 95). Small wonder Duncan's perception of family life is more positive than Anderson's: the Duncans were raised in a household with an absent father, and with a cultivated and supportive mother who loved and played music, and encouraged her children to lead a free, nomadic life the evidence of which can be seen in their numerous transcontinental journeys. This togetherness was projected in their preposterous dream to build a Greek temple —“that should be characteristic of us” (91)— in Kopanos, an enterprise which proved to be impossible and which highlighted the Clan Duncan's impractical view of life. This peculiar vision

of family life, which seemed to have been engrained in her personality, led Isadora Duncan to construct a *sui generis* type of family: she conceived three children by three different fathers, and refused to marry any of them; she never had a permanent home to bring up her children, as she was constantly travelling, either taking her offspring along or leaving them behind for long periods of time. This stance in life did not obviously comply with the traditional family model of her time.

Houses are usually "inhabited" by furniture and objects which become mirrors of their owners. As David Harvey affirms, "the appropriation of space examines the way in which space is occupied by objects" (222). Chandler, for her part, states that "the notion that 'things' bind and that emptiness liberates [has] deep roots not only in American romanticism but in ancient Eastern cultures"; she adds that "...the relative absence of material objects had made way for something intangible that nevertheless required space to become apparent" (137) Undoubtedly, that "something intangible" stands, in Anderson's and Duncan's case, for their awareness of the space required by art in order to be made manifest. Significantly, the ideas Anderson and Duncan had about furnishing were rather peculiar; at different points in their texts they actually say that they could do without furniture: in Anderson's own words, "furniture was undesirable. I decided" (68), or "[w]e weren't exactly bourgeois perhaps (...) being without furniture" (70). Similarly, Duncan refers to her family's decision to live in a studio with no furniture so "as to have space to dance in" (34). Neither one seemed to have felt special attachment to "things," in general, with two important exceptions. The first one was Anderson's insistence on the impossibility of living in a house without the presence of a Mason and Hamlin piano. This obsession was such that there were moments when the piano was among the few objects present in the houses she inhabited (66-67, 71-72). Duncan, on the other hand, tells the readers of her autobiography that the only thing she needed to give expression to her art was "a blue curtain", which she would hang wherever she was to dance. These objects become leitmotifs throughout their narratives: Anderson writes repeatedly about the "necessary grand piano" (120), and Duncan about the need for the "never-failing inspiration" of her blue curtain (228).

These two objects seem to be symbolic of the way in which the lives of these two women were inevitably linked to their passion for art: in the case of Anderson, for almost all artistic expression —especially music and literature; in the case of Duncan for dancing. Their life narratives are good examples of how these two women were throwing off the roles usually attached to them, showing aspirations other than the care of the home and family. Indeed, the lack of attachment they both had for the different spaces they inhabited, —Anderson would claim: "Why anyone wanted to own a property [sic]?" (54), and the way they both related to those spaces point to changing attitudes about how a woman's life would unfold at the dawn of the 20th century. Domesticity, therefore, would not be their lot. Anderson relied on others to perform those household chores that would distract her from her dedication to *The Little Review*; as she acknowledges in her narrative when she explains how in their "organized domesticity" her sister Jean "decided to be housekeeper [...], leaving my time free for editorial (anarchistic) writing. I played

the Mason and Hamlin until three in the morning and slept on an uncovered balcony, usually waking under a blanket of snow" (82), which made her arrive at the conclusion that somehow she "could never lead the kind of life that appeared normal" (155). Likewise, Duncan took advantage of a tightly knit family who supported her emotionally or, in prosperous times, of an army of servants who organized the chaotic, uncontrollable life of a creative woman. Their lifestyle was rather alien to what has been considered a "stable domestic life". As Duncan clearly affirms in her memoirs: "I certainly was not suited to domestic life" (180), and whatever "experiment in domesticity" (Wood 223) she undertook, mostly forced upon her by her various partners, was a complete failure. If, according to Chandler, for women "'housekeeping' has been recognized as a kind of autobiographical enterprise, a visible and concrete means of defining and articulating the self" (3), in Duncan and Anderson that "feminine task" seems to have been replaced by their dedication to Art. In other words, their devotion to art was a way of life: editing was for Anderson what the long-cherished school of dance was for Duncan: two life/art projects in continuous process. This dedication is clearly expressed by Anderson when she declares that: "Art to me was a state; it didn't need to be an accomplishment. By any of the standards of production, achievement, performance, I was not an artist. But I always thought of myself as one" (<http://www.littlereview.com/mca/mcaquote.htm>).

These "undomesticated" women, in the literal and metaphorical sense, had a great personal appeal which attracted numerous artists from many different fields[8] —avant-garde poets, sculptors, musicians, performers, interpreters, singers, choreographers, painters, composers, anarchists, politicians, aristocracy, royalty, and a whole troupe of sophisticated members of the upper classes who were interested not only in the new trends in literature, and in innovations in the art of dancing, but also in the lifestyle of these incredible characters who could certainly be the embodiment of the "New Woman." Duncan, conscious of the personal attraction and magnetism she exerted on her audience, claimed with an air of self-importance: "My dancing is for the élite, for the artists, sculptors, painters, musicians, but not for the general public" (74). When Singer was asked by Duncan, late in her life, why he kept returning to her, his reply was: "[because] you are the one woman in my life who never bored me. Ever" (qtd. in Wood 286). Such was the life Isadora Duncan led: unpredictable, unconventional, flamboyant, extravagant, daring, con-

[8] Among Anderson's acquaintances were: Sherwood Anderson, Gertrude Stein, William B. Yeats, Ezra Pound, Emma Goldman, Harriet Monroe, Amy Lowell, Hilda Doolittle, Carl Sandburg, Harold Bauer, Mary Garden, Hart Crane, Mabel Dodge, James Joyce, Tara Osrik ("The Baroness"), Djuna Barnes, Pablo Picasso, Allan Tanner, Constantin Brancusi, George Antheil, Francis Picabia, Man Ray, Jean Cocteau, Ernest Hemingway, Richard Aldington, André Guide, George Braque, among many others. Regarding Duncan's : the Princess of Polignac, Henry Bataille, Auguste Rodin, Eugène Carrière, the Grand Duke Ferdinand of Vienna, Siegfried Wagner, Ellen Terry, Cosima Wagner, King Ferdinand of Bulgaria, Eleonora Duse, Gabriel D'Annunzio, Cécile Sorel, Comte Robert de Montesquieu, the King of Greece, Percy McKaye, and a great many others.

stantly moving, on the verge of insanity, prey to grief and alcohol, but always rejecting domesticity and always complying to the demands of art. Likewise, Anderson was the brilliant woman who was easily the centre of attention for intellectuals and artists who appreciated the unique personality and talent for conversation of the exceptional editor of *The Little Review.*[9] This is emphasized by Edna M. Levey, who also links our art lovers when she refers to Anderson's appeal: "she reminds you of Mary Garden, Isadora Duncan, Lysistrata, Sappho, all packed into one dynamic personality" (qtd. in Green 3). Making allusion to how conversation became the axis in her life with Jane Heap and other intellectuals, Anderson says: "Our talk began with luncheon, reached climax at tea, by dinner we were staggering with it. By five o'clock in the morning we were unconscious but still talking. Chiefly we talked ART —not 'aesthetically', but humanely. We talked of the human being behind the art manifestation" (122) or "The younger poets came for talk. We had long discussions on the making of poetry" (153).

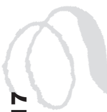
All these projects, journeys and enterprises carried out by Margaret Anderson and Isadora Duncan were plagued by a constant scarcity of money. It seemed that they both had a congenital difficulty in dealing with money matters; as Anderson points out in her narrative, "We used to develop headaches trying to understand why we found it so hard to relate our talents to money-making. It is not strange that talented people without practical abilities or common sense live and die without money" (187). In a similar way Duncan, not being able to control her extravagances —which knew no boundaries— continuously experienced the uncertainty of being short of funds; she always seemed to have put the cart before the horse, going from opulence to poverty, and often returning to Singer for economic help. Being a victim of her own incapacity to manage her personal fortune, in a moment of lucidity she makes the following reflection in her memoirs: "All money brings a curse with it, and the people who possess it cannot be happy for twenty-four hours" (167), which might be read as a premonition of her end: she died penniless, confirming Anderson's intuition about talented people being unable to deal with money in a sensible way.

If Duncan re-invented the art of dancing, engaging herself in an almost wild, non-stop journey across the Old and New Continents, Anderson turned the task of editing into an art-form in a more subdued manner. They both had itinerant lives, confirming the American tendency to be somewhat uprooted, always ready to make the next move. The different spaces these two women inhabited came to be a sort of metonymy for their personal conceptions and beliefs about art,

[9] Jayne E. Marek makes reference to Anderson's fascination with conversation, and how this was reflected in her motivations to found *The Little Review*: "This insistence on response and interaction demonstrates Anderson's expressed reason for developing the magazine in the first place: her boredom with the life that did not include 'inspired conversation' every minute, and her belief that publishing a review would place her in contact with persons with whom she could always have an interesting exchange of ideas. The 'conversation' embodied in *The Little Review* became one of the forces that moved modernism" (60-61).

and therefore they reflect and become a visible manifestation of the ideas of those who dwell in these spaces. Likewise, Anderson and Duncan show how they did not conform to the established concept of "home," where daily life unfolds and personal relationships thrive. Undoubtedly, their idea of family did not meet traditional standards, inasmuch as domesticity was not a concept with which either woman could identify, and so they became two undomesticated women who happened to be art lovers. Both women had to struggle with economic difficulties to carry out their projects, so disturbing their Arcadian lives.

In conclusion, we see in the analysis of Anderson's and Duncan's autobiographies two women who were not willing to have their lives ruled by Victorian principles. If, according to the adage, "home is where the (he)art is," Anderson and Duncan placed art at the centre of their lives, devoting themselves to the construction of an always provisional home the heart of which was Art. In so doing, they made one the extension of the other: Europe, the source of Western art, became their home, and their reverse journey turned them both into significant women. Indeed, Europe, where they could deliver the untamed energy of the New World, was the target for their intense creativity. They not only left us the innovations in their art fields, but also the legacy of their autobiographies. To confirm the transnational character of Anderson and Duncan, since neither one was attached to a particular place, we might paraphrase Virginia Woolf in her novel *Three Guineas* by saying that Margaret and Isadora had no country as women. They did not want any country. Their country was the whole world.



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