

Dreiser, Nathan, Boyd Describe New Magazine, Also 'Own Saloon'

BY H. ALLEN SMITH.

NEW YORK, Oct. 29.—(UP)—George Jean Nathan, critic of the drama; Theodore Dreiser, towering novelist, and Ernest Boyd, the bearded man of letters, sat in a smoke-filled Forty-first street office today and beamed benignly on one another.

"When's the next saloon meeting?" Boyd demanded, stroking the great black bush which adorns his chin.

Nathan and Dreiser froze him in his seat with icy glares. Didn't he know a reporter was present? Didn't he know he was speaking for publication?

The reporter had called to find out about the new publication these men, with James Branch Cabell and Eugene O'Neill, are editing. It is called "The American Spectator," and its editors have a hunch that if American literature ever had a white hope, here it is.

"The idea struck me," said the well-tailored Nathan, "back when I was with Mencken on the Mercury. I came to the conclusion that the intellectual magazines are both too big and too expensive.

"I mentioned it once to O'Neill and I have never seen him so stirred up. We got together with Dreiser, here, and Boyd, and Cabell, and now we're fairly walking on air. Our first . . ."

"Why not," interrupted Boyd, "why not let's take him up to the saloon and show him our other office?" Dreiser sat twisting his handkerchief—a nervous gesture that ranks with William S. Hart's habit of scratching his chin.

"Our first issue," continued Nathan, ignoring Boyd (who is known in Brooklyn as Quinest Bird). "already has had four printings, 40,000 copies. We thought if we got to 10,000 on the first issue we'd whoop

for joy. We have articles by all the editors, Clarence Darrow, Frank Swinnerton, Joseph Wood Krutch, Van Wyck Brooks, Havelock Ellis, Lincoln Steffens, Liam O'Flaherty, Ring Lardner, Louis Untermeyer and Calvin B. Bridges in the first issue. Wait'll you see the next!"

"Ten cents a copy," put in Dreiser, the father of American realism, "available at all reputable newsstands and bookstores, and in England, France, Germany, Austria and Italy."

"The radio people," Nathan went on, "asked us to broadcast on a national chain next month, explaining our magazine. We said we all would if they'd give us a European hookup."

"And, by God, they did!" said Dreiser.

"We felt that British authors have been blabbing across the ocean long enough by radio, telling America what's wrong with things over here. Now we'll get back at them. We'll tell them a thing or two."

"Tell him about the saloon meetings!" insisted Boyd.

"Dreiser, Boyd and I come to this office every day," Nathan explained. "We talk over things, fill the room up with smoke, give each other hell and have fun. Then we have the monthly directors' meeting in a speak-easy up on Sixty-first street. We've got a room on the top floor and we sweep into it at 5 in the evening. We stay till 2 in the morning, with the others—O'Neill and Cabell—present."

"Do you drink?" asked the reporter, timid before all this volubility.

The three men stared in perplexity. "Young man," Dreiser finally drawled, "in my day the newspaper profession was honorable. You'd better see your doctor right away."