The Avant-Garde and the Text:

A special issue of *Visible Language*

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Guest Editor

Stephen Foster

Advisory Board

Visible Language *The quarterly journal concerned with all that is involved with our being literate*

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Note:
Journal articles run on consecutive right-hand pages only

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Design Notes

THIS ISSUE OF *VISIBLE LANGUAGE* HAS A DUAL FUNCTION, on one side, consecutive right-reading pages form a critical analyses of the Avant-Garde text – while on the other side, consecutive left-reading pages running in the opposite direction (back to front) form the catalogue for a traveling exhibition of selections from the Kleinschmidt collection of Dada paperworks. Rather than separate the journal from the catalogue, we present a more direct contrast of two different means of appreciating these objects.

The nature of a book as an object consists of related verso and recto pages; it presents a singular cohesive point of view. The structure of this simultaneous presentation depends on the inter-leafing of two points of view. The purpose of this is to challenge the viewer's 'reading' and to propose an alternative look at the book as an object.

The Dada objects themselves are the primary concern. It is our intent to show that first, there is no one way to perceive these objects; and also to enhance the attitude of each point of view, by presenting it in the context of an alternative view.

– The Designers

In compiling this catalogue, a conscious editorial decision was made to photograph the texts in a way that reflected the revolutionary intentions of their makers. Dissatisfied with passive texts that merely reflected on, or set out the artistic or intellectual contents of positions, the avant-garde sought to employ the text as an "instrument" of their intentions and as an operational "thing" among other things. The decision to float the images and to avoid their high contrast, graphic reproduction, is a reminder that one of the key changes entailed in the revolution of the text was its objectification.

– The Editor

Colophon

This volume was designed and produced at the
Rhode Island School of Design.

Concept: Thomas Ockerse

Design: Laura Chessin

Text was generated on a Macintosh SE with PageMaker 3.0.
All pages were assembled on the computer
with the assistance of "The Big Picture", a large format monitor.
The final camera-ready output was direct from a Linotype, Linotronic 300,
a 1,270 dots per inch high resolution printer.

All type for this catalogue is a variant of Univers, including:
45, 46, 55, 57, 58, 65, 67, 68, and 76.

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The designer wishes to extend special appreciation to Ernie Bellaire,
manager of the RISD Type Shop for his unerring patience, and David Colvin,
Computer Wizard, for his emergency first-aid.

Preface

In the modern era, the debate between the old and the new has been most crucially centered around, and given substance through, the use of the text. The importance of its role for both the status quo and reform movements can scarcely be overestimated. This collection of essays concerns itself especially with the use of the text by the avant-garde, the force in modernism that has been most responsible for both sharpening the focus of crucial social issues and for the advocation of their "movement" towards change.

The editors are grateful to Sharon Poggenpohl for the opportunity to publish this collection of essays as a special issue of *Visible Language* and for her careful attention to the management and details of its planning and production. The occasion for the compilation of this volume resulted from the mounting of an exhibition of the same title, a collaborative effort of The University of Iowa's Fine Arts Dada Archive and Research Center and the Visual Studies Workshop of Rochester, New York. Special thanks are due to Dr. and Mrs. Hans J. Kleinschmidt, from whose impressive collection the exhibition was composed and around which the contributing scholars composed their articles. Laurilla Sundt, Graduate Assistant to the Archive, is also deserving of aknowledgement for her careful and sustained contribution to the editing of this copy for publication.

Roy F. Allen
Stephen C. Foster
Estera Milman

Abstracts

The Tradition of the Avant-Garde

by Roy Allen

For some, the essence of the avant-garde is found less in its analysis than in a sympathetic reading. This paper seeks an attitudinal common denominator that informs and identifies all authentic avant-garde art and literature. That common denominator is the embrace of change. Breaking with outmoded means for coping with a new and changing environment leads to breaks with established traditions (for example, rationalism) and to an exploration of alternative approaches. Rejection of conventions leads the avant-gardist to a course of self-determination explained here through discussion of a number of twentieth century movements and individuals. Among alternatives could be counted the discovery of the subconscious and political engagement. Yet any single possible approach is less important to identifying the avant-garde than it is a symbol of its openness to and inclusiveness at all possible approaches. The fluidity and limitlessness of the avant-garde define its freedom. Although a tradition, the avant-garde maintains as its center the imperative of change.

Between Text and Audience
A Path to the Future

by Allen Greenberg

This author is most interested in identifying the problematics inherent in the communication by an artist, through a text, to the audience(s). In creating a bridge to the public, ideally one which avoids the intervention of the critic or other agents of culture, the artist or author is providing a vision of possibilities for the future and attempting to induce actions taken on behalf of their realization. Having said this, however, leaves open the question of how and whether this path to communication is based on problems inherent to the process, actually possible. These are aspects of communication that frustrate the ideal correspondence between the artist's intended purposes and the audience's reception; factors such as the conflict decisions required of a challenging text (the security at the old as opposed to the risk and uncertainty at the new) and the particular convergence or non-convergence of the respective social contexts of the artists, text, and audience. Each context requires a different organization of perception that may facilitate or limit the usefulness of the text as a catalyst.

The avant-garde seeks to transcend audience expectations (the context of their perception), to challenge old concepts, and open up the communication situation which would permit the new. Their texts seek to translate their vision into action and to engage the audience as active participants. .Their impact on subsequent actions, measurable only after the text, may disclose that ideal communication may require the audience's prior understanding of the context of the artist and his or her text. For this author, however, the avant-garde may ultimately be better clarified through the nature of tis quest than through its successes and failures.

The Prerequisite Text

Stephen C. Foster

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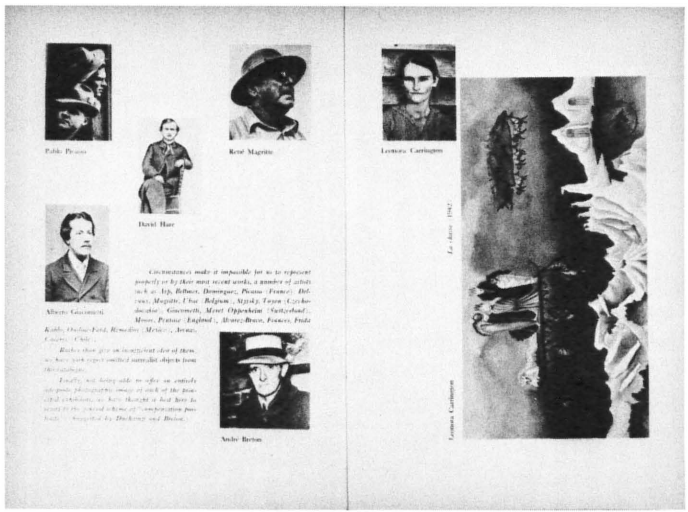
The avant-garde describes a particular position in modernism which, although constituting a common strand of all modernisms, gives to each of its manifestations the greatest relief and clearest articulation. That position is the shared conviction that art and literature are capable of reshaping, altering, or even revolutionizing individual human behavior, social consciousness or cultural institutions; in a word, "utopianism." Having stated such a general propostion, however, one immediately encounters a problem key to all work in this area; namely the absence of any imperative stated in the general proposition for how specific approaches to utopianism are to be achieved. The historical breakdown of twentieth century modernism into movements and "isms," while often mistakenly attributed to formal evolution, rests primarily on the different contexts out of which perspectives taken to utopian approaches are formulated. Put simply, there is nothing in the stating of utopian goals that requires, independently of the settings from which they emerge, that one approach be favored over another. Any approach, if it is aware, or even attempts to be aware of the internal possibilities of its "situation" in culture is, willy-nilly, avant-garde. This is important to note here because of scholars' temptation to confuse differences in approaches to a problem with differences internal to the problem itself; that is, with crude idealistic models in hand, to impute differences to goals where they should be attributed to sociological and psychological circumstances. Put-

*125. *First Papers of Surrealism*

New York, Coordinating Council of French Relief Societies, 1942

Exhibition catalogue, 27 x 18.5 cm., 52 pp.



ting it this way allows us to dismiss immediately whole categories of tiresome, unrewarding and basically unintelligible metaphysical analyses concerned with the wholeness of life and existence, the innate morality or immorality of man and, more specific to the questions surrounding the avant-garde and the text, the historically boring and patently absurd proposition that the avant-garde was somehow privileged in recognizing the need for a better world.

It can nevertheless be maintained that the thing that most distinguishes the artistic and literary avant-garde is the goals it sets itself. The forms employed in achieving these goals are secondary, which is not to say unimportant. Sometimes valued and sometimes devalued as achievements in their own right, sometimes intended and sometimes unintended to stand in dependence or independence of their service to further ends, their role is always situated around their effectiveness in *shaping* (which is not the same as *establishing*) the consequences of an intentionality. Their value is ultimately measured by the consequences of their "use," where the use may frequently supersede the questions surrounding the thing used.

The forms employed in achieving avant-garde intentions depend, in their turn, on the nature of available communication structures which are deemed capable of achieving public consequentiality. But this, in itself, is a difficult matter since there is no single, monolithic public for which the avant-garde can serve consequentially. The complexity of these questions can be appreciated when it is recalled that the very concept of "public consequentiality," as we understand it applied to politics, the mass media, etc., is the construct of an historical ideology adopted by aspects of the avant-garde, depending on their purposes, for either their use or abuse. However, having once identified a public, it is true that the avant-garde at any particular historical moment has more than one option normally available. Predictably enough, the avant-garde can be expected to explore the full range of options available to it.

Thus, the avant-garde has simultaneously pursued painting, sculpture, printmaking, poetry, performance and theater, the manifesto and a host of literary genre as well as a variety of media formats as vehicles for their programs' content, for the statements of their intentions, and as instru-

*124. *La Carte Surréaliste (premier sèrie, vingt et une cartes)* France, 1937

Twenty-one postcards, each 14 x 9 cm.

no. 1, Marcel Duchamp, *Ampule Containing 50cc air of Paris*

no. 2, André Breton, *Poem-Object*

no. 3, Max Ernst, *Triumph of Love*

no. 4, Paul Eluard, *They kill as easily as they breathe*

no. 5, Dora Maar, *29, rue d'Astorg*

no. 6, Joan Miró, *Time-Table*

no. 7, Salvador Dali, *Senile melancholy of dogs like a dizzy sky-glide*

no. 8, Hans Bellmer, *Step-sisters*

no. 9, Man Ray, *What we all lack*

no. 10, Yves Tanguy, *The Sandman*

no. 11, Oscar Dominiques, *Opening*

no. 12, Hans Arp, *Open this side*

no. 13, George Hugnet, *Word for word*

no. 14, Meret Oppenheim, *My Nurse*

no. 15, René Magritte, *The key to the riddle*

no. 16, Jacqueline Breton, *Bridge of drowsiness*

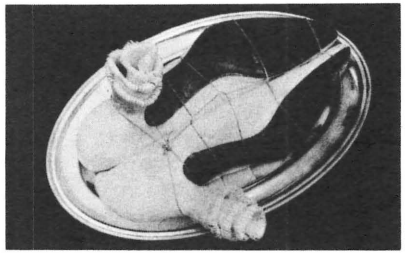
no. 17, Roland Penrose, *Bottled earth*

no. 18, Marcel Jean, *Bird's eye view of Paris*

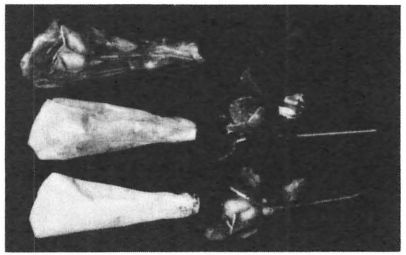
no. 19, Wolfgan Paalen, *The scale of desire*

no. 20, Nusch Eluard, *Precious woods*

no. 21, Pablo Picasso, *April fool*



no 14, Meret Oppenheim, *My Nurse*



no 16, Jacqueline Breton, *Bridge of drowsiness*

124. The collection of twenty-one cards reflects the Surrealists' interest in vernacular postcards, a genre of popular photomontage that a number of the members of the group collected. The execution of this series of surrealist cards was organized by George Hugnet and was intended for sale to the general public in news stands throughout Paris.

Figure 1

ments designed to facilitate their realization. Certain works may emphasize the program's content. Other works may largely constitute a statement of intent, while others may stress their instrumentality. This essay is primarily concerned with the latter.

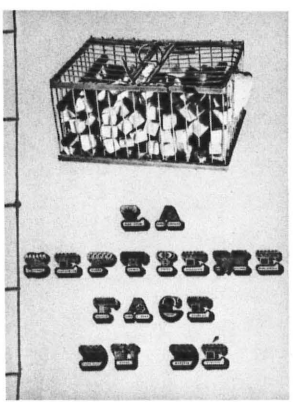
Historically, the text has functioned in all these ways. The fold-outs in F.T. Marinetti's *Words in Liberty* (*Les mots en liberté futuristes*) (1919) (figure 1, cat. # 8) provide the concrete substance, or content of a rehabilitated language. They serve as examples or products of the Futurists' language activities. The body of the book, however, is committed to an explanation of what these experiments seek to do. Here, conventional, albeit aggressive prose instructs (for the most part, those already initiated) in the value and instrumentality of the "pieces" which await their use, or deployment as instruments, in the kinds of contexts, normally event-based, that permit and facilitate change. Hence, the various uses of the text in the futurists' street demonstrations, political propaganda, and public relations rallies; for example, the group's descent on Berlin, in April, 1912, with the purpose of proselytizing for the movement. Although latently a political position, it is within the realms of art and literature that the avant-garde became, or attempted to become a social force, and not in politics, *per se*. Frequently criticized on these grounds as ineffective and incapable of real action (as understood by "political realists"), the avant-garde is dismissed as a well-meaning but naive endeavor organized mainly, for lack of a better purpose, to serve itself. Such a point of view, however, is limited to its *concept*, as opposed to the reality, of politics; a concept that sits squarely within the history of ideas awaiting use like any other idea. The *concept* of public consequentiality is of the utmost public consequence. And it was precisely in the use, rather than in the enjoinment or application, of political concepts that the avant-

+ 121. André Breton, editor
Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution (no. 6)
Paris, Editions des Cahiers Libres, May 1933
Little review, 28 x 19.5 cm., 52 pp.

122. *International Surrealist Bulletin* (Issue 4)
London, A. Zwemmer, September 1936
Little review, 27.5 x 21.5 cm., 18 pp.; Issued by the Surrealist group in England.

122. The bulletin was published under the impetus of the International Surrealist Exhibition in London, a show that was organized by a committee which included Henry Moore, Herbert Read, Paul Nash, and Roland Penrose.

*123. George Hugnet, *La septième face du Dé*



Paris, Éditions Jeanne Bucher,
1936
Book, 29 x 21 cm., 74 pp.
Cover by Marcel Duchamp.

123. Published in scrapbook-like format, La septième face du Dé *presents twenty poems published in conventional format and faced, on the opposite page, by decoupage.*

garde sought to enter the political *process*. The avant-garde was political to the degree that modernism employed politics as part of its creative "strategy" in the case of Futurism, as part of its "logistics."

The historical examples one could cite for this are as numerous as are the movements of the early twentieth century; they are commonplace among Futurism, Expressionism, Dada, De Stijl, Constructivism, et al. They are so common, in fact, that it is worth examining the proposition that the text is, in one or usually more respects, a prerequisite for the very concept of the avant-garde as we have come to know it in the early twentieth century.

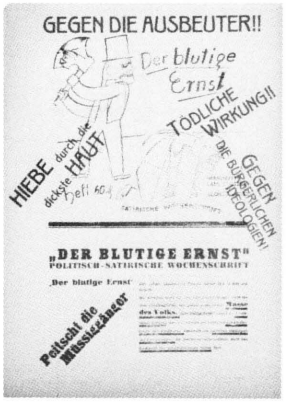


Figure 2

The text was definitionally present (at least implicitly) in the avant-garde because of its capabilities of addressing questions across concepts and operational dimensions of culture. For a point of view historically based in its contribution to a synthesis of philosophy, science, politics, the arts, etc., its operationalism required finding a common ground for formulating the avant-garde's content, stating its intentions, and instrumenting its changes. The text was preeminently suited to such a task.

Although picture making, for example, could intend, and state as its purpose, the accomplishment of all this (or even by virtue of the strength of images, to surpass the text in its capabilities), it is no accident that Dada, for example, was so heavily language based. It is not necessarily that texts constituted the period's, or even the movement's, most lasting or enduring works. There are, in fact, few texts, or even literary works, that possess the inherent value or stature of the best visual works by Ernst, Arp, Schwitters, Hausmann or a host of others. But, the closer Dada coincided with serious avant-garde intentions, the more critical the use of the text became; hence, Berlin was more textually based than Cologne, etc. Furthermore, the closer the mission could be characterized as avant-garde, the more that explicit partnerships, such as that between Grosz and Carl Einstein in *Der Blutige Ernst*, were sought between the artist and poet, or artist/poet, and the wider "culture of the text" (figure 2, Cat. # 49).

The problem, as conventionally approached, may be more usefully framed as follows: the avant-garde was not so concerned with the text of the culture (with whom

*117. André Breton, editor; *La Révolution Surréaliste*
(Vol. 1, no. 4)
Paris, Gallimard
July 15, 1925
Little review,
29 x 20 cm., 32 pp.

118. André Breton, editor
Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution (no. 3)
Paris, Librarie José Corti, December 1931
Little review, 28 x 19.5 cm., 36 pp.

118. Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution *was the successor to* La Révolution Surréaliste *and, as its title suggests, emphasized revolution in general, although the periodical's perspective coincided, to a certain extent, with the Russian's concept of revolution.*

+119. André Breton, editor
Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution (no. 4)
Paris, Librarie José Corti, December 1931
Little review, 28 x 19.5 cm., 36 pp.

+120. André Breton, editor
Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution (no. 5)
Paris, Editions des Cahiers Libres, May 1933.
Little review, 28 x 19.5 cm., 56 pp.

they are often and wrongly assumed to be in competition) as they were "the culture of the text." Their ambitions were aimed not at substituting one text with another, but at reexploring the "culture" in the "culture of the text." The avant-garde must be given credit for understanding that it was the text that carried with it the*concept of culture, indeed, its very prerequisite conditions*, and not the "things" and "events" that the text addressed as its subjects.

The priority of the text then can be traced, for lack of a better way of putting it, in its "life cycle," a life cycle impossible to impute to either the pictorial or literary arts. The logic of its historical evolution, from its initial inception in a given context to its final communication to an audience, proceeds through wider cultural levels of the very textual stuff of which it is made. That is, knowledge of the events to which it responds is normally carried and given significance by texts (the printed media). If witnessed, events are normally and most completely reported by the text (although it might be otherwise today with television and other communication technologies not available to the early twentieth century). Indeed, the very perception of the things reported, *as events*, is the conceptual apparatus of a popularized understanding of *written* history. Furthermore, the ability of things to fit into the schemes of other events relies on their configuration into workable, or workable-looking, processes such as causal chains of incidents. It is the configurative capabilities of the text and its social empowerment of events that provides significant reperception of culture. The avant-garde text, as the mechanism of relaying the event to the audience (photography becomes a partner with the text in these matters by the turn of the century) coincides, in its structure and emphasis with the "official" culture's means of transmitting and giving cultural status to events for its audiences.

If the textual instruments of the avant-garde were to be useful as means to ends, they had to effectively contend with the larger culture's textual *means*. Just as the larger culture had to work out the formal requirements of the text, so did the avant-garde. As the former had to construe its communication formats in a way that shaped and communicated ideology, so did the avant-garde. As the larger culture had to find a workable mechanism for both sending

Surrealism

114. Paul Eluard and Max Ernst,
Misfortunes of the Immortals
New York, The Black Sun Press, 1922/1943
Book, 27 x 19 cm., 44 pp.
and a supplement entitled "Vingt ans après," n.p. [6 p.]
Translated by Hugh Chisholm, second edition of a 1922 work.
Cover by Max Ernst.

*115. Pierre Naville and Benjamin Peret, editors
La Révolution Surréaliste (Vol. 1, no. 1)
Paris, Gallimard, December 1, 1924
Little review, 29 x 20 cm., 32 pp.

115. The first official organ of the Surrealist movement, La Révolution Surréaliste *was very severe in appearance and scientific in approach, borrowing its format from a popular scientific journal of the period. The periodical was intended to serve as a means by which to develop psychological data that could be analyzed by science.*

116. Pierre Naville and Benjamin Peret, editors;
La Révolution Surréaliste (Vol. 1, no. 2)
Paris, Gallimard, January 15, 1925
Little review, 29 x 20 cm., 32 pp.

Figure 3

and receiving texts, so too did the avant-garde. Yet, at the same time, the avant-garde text required the ability to critique and level what it perceived as the larger society's abuses of the cultural power of the text. This trajectory is the common property of all the World War I avant-gardes. The texts are initiated out of the occasions or events particular to the larger social setting. They are subsequently formulated into working, effective cultural instruments and aestheticized into compelling objects capable of configuring ideology. Finally, they are presented to an audience as nothing less than a "new culture."

In spite of apparent similarities, the avant-garde was not, nor did it aspire to be a replacement for "official" culture. Indeed, it took its purpose from its adversarial position. Although working parallel to culture at large, the overriding mission of the avant-garde was change, or movement into the future. Yet, its mandate seemed to involve not so much defeating culture by interrupting the *flow* of its events as already set in motion, as it did a change in patterns of social consciousness through the text, as projected by the artist and as received by the reader. It was natural that the artist sought superiority precisely in the visual understanding and manipulation of the text. What the artist tried to guarantee was the observer's perception of the visible and combinative basis of texts - the relationships taken between texts and between texts and other dimensions of culture - how they "added up" - how they created a world; in a word, how they composed culture. The aestheticization of the text no longer meant the picturing of the Eiffel Tower with letters (as it had been earlier for Apollinaire), but its composition into perspectives, overviews, etc. The aesthetics of the text became a design question operating within the boundaries of textual objects such as magazines, newspapers, or whatever, or between these objects and the balance of culture (a picture within a picture).

Any such superiority in the understanding or manipulation of the text frequently centered on questions of composition. Although by no means single-minded in this respect, Wieland Herzfelde and John Heartfield surely were aware of this when they produced the oversized issues (nos. 13 and 14, May and June, 1917, respectively) of *Neue*

113. Hans (Jean) Arp and El Lissitzky

Die KunstISMen

Erlenbach, Zurich, Munich, Leipzig;

Eugen Rentsch, 1925

Book, 26.5 x 20.5 cm., 48 pp

Cover by El Lissitzky.

113. Published three years after Hans (Jean) Arp signed the manifesto of International Constructivism and three years after the Erste Russische Kunstausstellung (see catalogue #109) was mounted in Berlin, KunstISMen *presents a geneology of various manifestations of modernism that preceeded the establishment of International Constructivism. Concentrating on the marriage of Western and Russian impulses, the book provides a history of the founding of the International Style, a universal Constructivist theory that transcends all particular styles.*

Jugend (figure 3, cat. # 20). Measuring 51.5 x 64 cm., and full of engaging, experimental typography, they made a considerable visual impact despite, or perhaps because of, their mere four pages. Their large format, although adjusted toward the New York dailies, basically distinguished itself by such features as the quality of the paper stock, the aesthetic distinction of layout and typography, the judicious use of color and the lean, but elegant use of visuals. But more importantly, for Herzfelde and Heartfield (in close collaboration with George Grosz), a text could only say what it was *designed* to say. Saying something new required a new design. For Herzfelde, Heartfield, and the Dadaists, in general, being truly modern required saying something new, something which the conventional media, because of the very impoverishment of its conventions, could not say. If the avant-garde could innovate, redesign and expand its configurative capabilities, the specific language of the text could communicate new ideas in a fresh manner. Along with innovation, the avant-garde sought, although more in principle than in fact, a flexibility capable of keeping pace with important and changing cultural imperatives; that is, the design had to respond to something, normally the very things designated as important in the conventional media. There was, nevertheless, an attempt to renew the communicative basis of the text, *as object*, since the communication of different ideas was deemed to require its altered object qualities.

A basic assumption in all of this was that the spectator would receive (and perceive) the text through a substantially aestheticized and, hence, more compelling mode. It is an assumption that lands the avant-garde curiously close to idealistic aesthetics. But this was not the only assumption. The avant-garde sought to reactivate the role of the receiver, to make his experience of the text participatory, critical and even creative. The audience was recruited into the revolution of the text as would be the followers or participants in any cultural revolution.

The avant-garde employed the text and, less so, other aspects of the media as instruments of their revisionism specifically because it was the text that was most effective in communication to large audiences. The audience responded fluently to the text. This in itself goes far in ac-

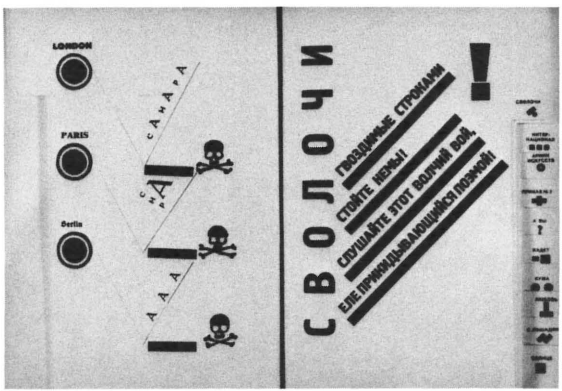
+*111. Maiakovskii and El Lissitzky, *Dlia Golosa (For the Voice)*

Berlin, Gosizdat

1923, Book,

18.9 x 13.2 cm.,

61 pp.



112. David Burliuk

Manifesto Radio-style

(Universal Camp of Radio Modernists, City of New York)

New York, 1926

Manifesto, 28.5 x 20.5 cm., 6 pp.

counting for the avant-garde's use of the text as a way of establishing how, and in what light the artist/poet was to be *perceived*; that is, as a revisionist communicating to a large audience whose capability for response was assumed . The avant-garde considered their use of language and the text to be of overriding importance because no other dimension of culture could be fully accounted for without them. There was, presumably, an historical gravity and moral responsibility on both sides of the transaction to achieve cultural liberty and cultural literacy; they were considered more or less the same thing.

However, intentions do not necessarily guarantee results. To what degree the text was operative on these terms is highly arguable. Many scholars' assessments offer us little reassurance that their impact was even measurable, to say nothing of crucial. The avant-gardists, themselves, perceived (perhaps they had from the beginning) that they were basically reflecting on themselves; that is, on other texts coming from *within* the orbit of the arts and literature. The audience, or what there was of an audience, remained basically undisturbed.

What was required was nothing short of a complete change of consciousness in the receiver, or a complete change of the context into which the avant-garde text was offered or presented. The text became second in an order of *events* (the means by which change is perceived to occur historically) for which it served as "text." The event, in its turn, served as a hand-made, specific vehicle for giving texts the historical *context* that they might otherwise lack.


SONDERAUSGABE »GRÜNE LEICHE« A.c.
Der erste Abend Huelsenbeck nach meinem Tode, Ac 15,
ist die Huldigung der Totem vor dem Tabu ( ) Dada Ad 30.
SUMSIADADREBO: SUMSIADAD –
AD REFERENDUM:
DER PRÄSIDENT DES ERDBALLS SITZT IM SATTEL DES WEISSEN PFERDES DADA
ÜBER DEN OBERDADAISMUS
DER OBERDADA SPRICHT

Figure 4

The Weimar Republic's February, 1919 National Assembly provided an unequaled opportunity for Berlin's "Oberdada," Johannes Baader, to perform in precisely such a capacity. Baader carefully managed perception of the event (he did not significantly change the event itself) in a way that adjusted the designs of this founding cele-bration to give added point, and significant context, to his own perspective as presented in a little broadside entitled *Grüne Leiche* (figure 4, cat. # 48). Initially quiet, Baader took advantage of a lull in the proceedings to present his own, rather eccentric, point of view. Before his almost immediate arrest, Baader threw the broadsides into the press boxes di-

*109. *Erste Russische Kunstausstellung*

Berlin, Galerie van diemen and co., 1922
Exhibition catalogue, 23 x 14.5 cm., 31 pp.,
18 unnumbered illustrations.

109. The Erste Russische Kunstausstellung *was the first major exhibition of Russian art mounted in the West and produced a considerable impact upon European artists. The show also served as the occasion for El Lissitzky's travels to Germany. Here he began to proselytize Constructivism to the Western art world.*

+110. Matthew Josephson, Harold A. Loeb and Lola Ridge, editors
Broom (Volume IV, no. 3); Berlin, Shicklerstrasse 5, February 1923
Little review, 33.5 x 23 cm., 71 pp.
Cover by El Lissitzky.

rectly below him. He was exonerated on grounds of his legal certification as insane, and because of evidence of his previous correspondence with the Republican constituents involved. The incident provided Dada with one of its great successes of the season.

The significance of this event relates primarily to Baader's *manipulation of the public press, by the agency of his text as given relevance through the event,* to assure wide coverage of his program. Baader had long been a favorite of the newspapers based on his extreme and outrageous actions. For example, Baader's nomination of himself for the Nobel Prize, published in an open letter to poet Paul Ernst (*Weltbühne,* July, 1918), which advocated his theories of Monism, was also event based; the event being, in this case, the slightly earlier parliamentary debates (!) on the dangers and destructive effects of Monism (and the *monistenbund*) on respectable German intellectual life. In the case of the Weimar National Assembly, we are looking at one of the most newsworthy, media-centered events of the decade. Giving the press a sensational incident to report, strengthened by a short and interesting text to quote, the assembly served beautifully as the context out of which Baader's adversarial position could find a meaningful reception.

Over and above all this, other aspects of Baader's strategies threw the whole affair into a rather odd light. The government was certainly no less aware than Baader of the historical importance of the event and promoted its proceedings in a way that would be perceived, by the public, *as an historical event of the kind through which changes in history are made.* Conducted in Weimar's Hoftheater, an appropriate setting for such a theatrical event, serenely nested into a venerable seat of old German culture (city of Goethe and Schiller), and comfortably distanced from the political turmoil of Berlin, the proceedings gave the appearance of sanity and stability. Baader, not unexpectedly, pronounced the event a piece of theater, with little or no consequence for the real dilemmas of modern post-War Germany. Thus, he asserted his own superior, non-theatrical reality, proclaimed his mock jurisdiction over the Weimar authorities and justly, from his point of view, reiterated his claim to being "President of the World."

International Constructivism

106. E. Donce-Brisy and Del Marle, editors
Vouloir: Organ constructif des littérature et d'art moderne (no. 18)
Lille, February 1920
Little review, 32.5 x 25 cm., 8 pp.

107. E. Donce-Brisy and Del Marle, editors
Vouloir: Organ constructif des littérature et d'art moderne (no. 19)
Lille, March 1926
Little review, 32.5 x 25 cm., 8 pp.

*108. H. Th. Wijdeveld ed., *Wendingen (Vol. 4, no. 11)*
Amsterdam,
1921 - 1922
Book, 33 x 33 cm.,
20 pp.

108. A special edition of a publication famous for its beautiful production, printing and the high quality of its paper, the periodical is Japanese block-book bound.

Special Frank Lloyd Wright volume,
cover by El Lissitzky with an introductory text in Dutch,
by architect H.P. Berlage.

For Baader, his page or text was not sufficient, notwithstanding its authentically radical content (a program of Ernst Haeckel's Monism) and exciting typographical devices. The formal innovation and the content were scarcely meaningful at all independent of the event in which it found its context.

Baader's activities, almost all of them employing the text, are marked by his *interception* of "real world" *events* in ways that deflected their development in behalf of the *reception* of his *texts*, not least of all by the newspapers!

Although more typical of Baader's particular work than that of most avant-gardists, such uses of the text are, nevertheless, symptomatic of the avant-garde's strategies in general; strategies also traceable in the development of their little magazines. The problematics implied here are illustrated by the divergence of Raoul Hausmann's *Der Dada* (cat. #s 59-61) (especially nos. 1 and 2) from pub-lications such as *Die Pleite* (cat. #s 54-58) or *Der Blutige Ernst* (cat. #s 50-53).In contrast to the latter two, *Der Dada*, no. 2, based most of its texts in *events* ("Reclame für mich, by Baader, is an excellent case in point), real or imagined, which themselves became part of the instruments of change, for which the texts served as "texts" and from which they in turn derived their contexts (figure 5, cat. # 60). Critical of Herzfelde's, Grosz's and the Malik-Verlag's concessions to establishment "radical" conventions, Hausmann, in almost equal collaboration with Baader, sought nothing less than a changed world consciousness. The magazine and its pictorial and photo graphic contents reflect, however idiosyncratically, this new order of consciousness.

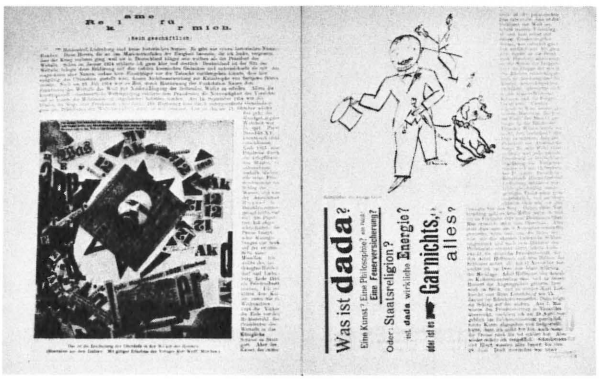


Figure 5

All the preceding perspectives must ultimately be examined in the context of the avant-garde's own history. That history describes a trajectory between the avant-garde's earlier dissolving of lines between the visual and liter

104. Wassily Kandinsky

Punkt und zu linie Fläche

Munich, Albert Langen Verlag, 1928 (second printing)

Book, 23.5 x 18.5 cm., 198 pp.

Bauhausbücher (no. 9), Walter Gropius and Laslo Moholy-Nagy, editors

104. Wassily Kandinsky's Punkt und zu linie Fläche *is a visual exposition of the theories and principles that he had set out in his 1912 work,* Über das Geistige in der Kunst *(see catalogue #9).*

*105. Die gegenstandslose Welt *is an attempt to derive a complete plastic theory of modern art. The book traces the development of this theory from the works of early modernists like Cezanne through the developments of the Cubists and culminates in Kasimir Malevitsch's own Suprematist works.*

*105. Kasimir Malewitsch

Die gegenstandslose Welt,

Munich,

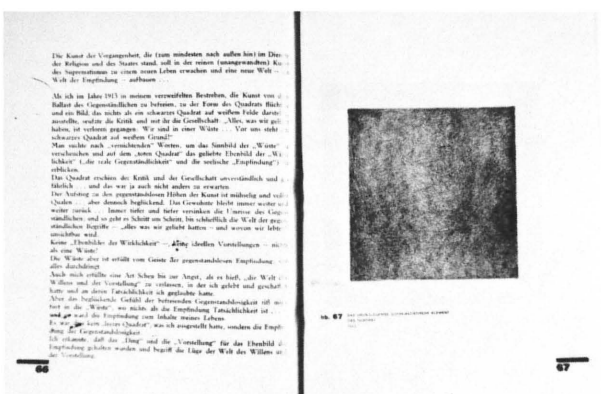
Albert Langen Verlag, 1927

Book, 23.5 x 18.5 cm., 104 pp.

Bauhausbücher (no. 11),

Walter Gropius and

Laslo Moholy-Nagy, editors.



ary arts and other dimensions of culture, and their subsequent attempts to reestablish them. In either case it is doubtful that the avant-garde, despite all appearances, ever went "outside" itself. Rather, their corridor of vision was limited and their intentions were actually confined to restoring the avant-garde to its former place in history. In this light, the etymological sources of "revolution" in "restoration" make perfect sense. We may, in fact, be looking at a case of historicistic narcissism that predicated the death of their pragmatics and new myth as much as had their idealism and formalism. Their texts, no matter how radical their intended social ramifications, were fundamentally conservative in their historical *modus operandi*. This essay indicates the nature of the questions raised by the avant-garde's creative use of the text and the kind of historical interrogation to which it might profitably submit. The following essays raise similar, further, and equally important issues which, taken altogether, will give the reader a valid, secure, and soundly critical footing for examining one of the twentieth century's most heroic gestures...the championship of a humane* text.

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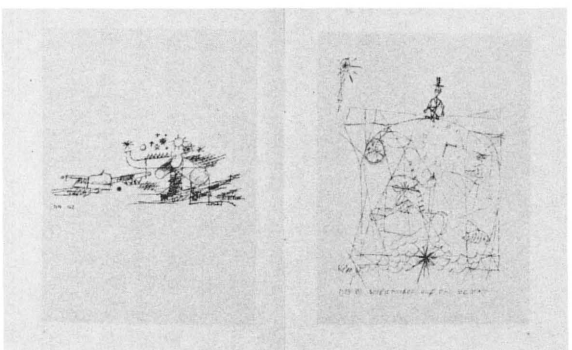
*hu - mane (hu mān), *adj.* [L. humanus.]
1. Having feelings and inclinations creditable to man.

102. Walter Gropius' Internationale Architektur *is a critique of major exponents of modern architecture from the turn of the century until the time of its publication. That it was presented as* Bauhausbücherr *no.1 is a good reflection of the predominant role that architecture maintained in the establishment of Bauhaus principles, a covering theory, as it were, under which the other arts took their place.*

102. Walter Gropius, *Internationale Architektur*
Munich, Albert Langen Verlag, 1925 (second printing)
Book, 23.5 x 18.5 cm., 52 pp.
Bauhausbücher (no. 1), Walter Gropius and Laslo Moholy-Nagy, editors.

*103. *Paul Klee's* Pedagogical Sketchbook *is a visual abstract of his teaching methods.*

*103. Paul Klee, *Pädogogisches Skizzenbuch*
Munich, Albert Langen Verlag, 1925
Book, 23.5 x 18.5 cm., 52 pp.
Bauhausbücher (no. 2),
Walter Gropius and Laslo Moholy-Nagy, editors.



The Text and the Myth of the Avant-Garde

Estera Milman

Visible Language XXI 3/4 335 - 363

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By the turn of our century, the modernist, utopian concept of a cultural avant-garde was already seventy-five years old. The term itself, coined in 1825 by Saint-Simon during a period of extreme optimism, originally positioned the artist within a consortium of socially conscious individuals whose charge entailed a collective attempt to move culture ahead to a better future. Taking his or her place alongside the scientist and philosopher, the artist was perceived to be capable of making substantial contributions to the structuring of this new world. Having long since become specific to literary and artistic actions, the concept "avant-garde" had attained mythical status for artistic communities of the World War I era.

In his essay "The Logic of Interpretation" (originally published under the title "The Problem of Relevance in Esthetic Criticism"), Joseph Margolis persuasively argues that a myth is a schema of the imagination, a system of ideas that has "effectively captured a substantial part of society's habits of thinking and seeing" and that such myths, whether they be Catholic, Freudian, or Marxist, "pervade our experience in everyday life."[1] Margolis goes on to explain that it is not a question of the intrinsic validity of the specific set of ideas that have been given mythical status.

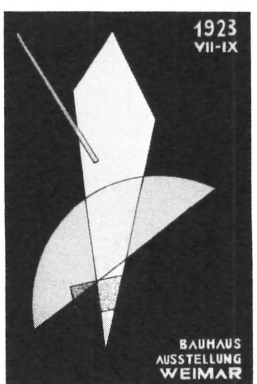
> The clue to the puzzle is that, though Freudian psychology claims respectable scientific status, the imagery of psychoanalysis [for example] is not at all restricted to the boundaries of its accompanying science; on the

Bauhaus

100. Walter Gropius
Bauhaus Manifesto
Weimar, 1919
Manifesto, 32 x 19 cm., recto and verso.

100. Published during the year of its founding, the manifesto established the early philosophy of the Bauhaus and, although it seeks to reintegrate art and industrial production, illustrates a mystical dimension that is later abandoned in favor of an orientation geared almost exclusively to production.

*101. *Bauhaus ausstellung*
Weimar, 1923; Postcard announcements, 15 x 11 cm.
Karte 1, Lionel Feininger, July-October
Karte 2, Lionel Feininger, July-October
Karte 3, Wassily Kandinsky, July-September
Karte 4, Paul Klee, July-September
Karte 5, Paul Klee, July-September
Karte 7, Ladislas Moholy-Nagy, July-September
Karte 8, Oskar Schlemmer, July-September
Karte 15, Ludwig Hirschfeld Mack, July-September



Catalogue # 101, Karte 7

> contrary, it is so much a part of our general culture that the imagination both of artists and of semi-educated persons is saturated with it. We think, see, and imagine in terms of Freudian symbols, not merely because our subconscious selves employ them for ulterior ends—a debatable thesis in the science of psychology—but because our conscious selves have assimilated the fascinating perspective and fictions that Freud invented.[2]

The numerous artistic avant-gardes of our century were aware, to one extent or another, that concepts of culture and cultural myths are most commonly communicated through texts. Some were further conscious that culture itself is a textual construct. In keeping with their mythical responsibility for social revisionism, the avant-garde logically turned to the text as a means through which to develop and to transmit their utopian vocabularies. Thus, an investigation of avant-garde texts provides access to the imagery of the specific fictions that saturated the consciousness of avant-garde communities, paradigms as diverse as natural order, the radical politicization of the arts, automatic procedure, and the viability of science and technology as mythical models for artistic action. It is interesting to note that an avant-garde's response to external crises of monumental proportion or to the crisis specific to the art community itself did not determine the level of formal innovation evident in their textual works. In the final analysis, the avant-garde's recurrent interaction with the text served as a means by which the myth of the artistic avant-garde itself was strengthened; it was through such interaction that they maintained their most pervasive fiction, the myth of functionality.

• • •

In June and July, 1914, just prior to the outbreak of World War I, Guillaume Apollinaire published a number of his "Calligrammes," a form of Cubist based, experimental typographical poetry in *Les Soirées de Paris*. These visual texts were concerned with the fusion of the visual image and the written word as well as with multiple perception and simultaneity. In May of 1916, the poet Tristan Tzara, one of the founding members of Zurich Dada, published a

98. Designed by Jan Tschichold and printed in sonata form, Merz (no. 24) reproduces the full score for Kurt Schwitters' "Ursonate", the performance of which would exceed the duration of thirty minutes. Schwitters was fond of presenting the piece in middleclass environments and it is widely reported that these performances were highly successful. The audience would experience incredible tension, at first, and would then achieve authentic release, liberation, and catharsis. According to such accounts, the pattern of audience response to the Ursonate performances would begin with civilized, controlled seriousness, move through uncontrollable laughter and tears, and finally culminate in a kind of communal exaltation.

*98. Kurt Schwitters, editor

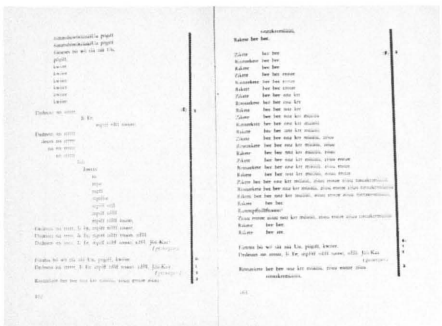
Merz (no. 24 "Ursonate")

Hannover, Merzverlag, 1932

Little review/score,

21 x 14.5 cm., 34 pp.

Inscribed "for GABO."



99. Kurt Schwitters, *"Postcards"*

a. *Konstruktion für edle Frauen*

Hannover, Hannover Papierwarnfabrik Richard Blumenthal, n.d.

Postcard, 15 x 9 cm.

b. *Das Lustgalen*

Hannover, Verlag Paul Steegemann, n.d.

Postcard, 15 x 9 cm.

c. *Das Merzbild*

Hannover, Hannover Papierwarnfabrik Richard Blumenthal, n.d.

Postcard, 15 x 9 cm.

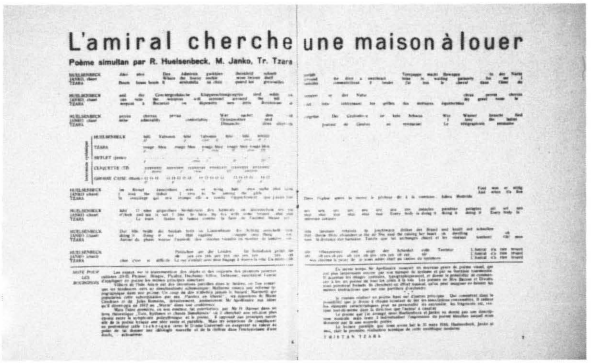


Figure 6

simultaneous sound poem and performance score entitled, "L'amiral cherche une maison à louer" (figure 6, cat. # 31), in Hugo Ball's *Cabaret Voltaire*, Zurich Dada's first little review (figure 7, cat. # 31). In his "Note pour les Bourgeois," which appeared below the piece itself and which attempted to explain simultaneity and visual poetry to a supposed "general audience," Tzara referred to Apollinaire's Calligrammes alongside his discussion of the experiments with simultaneity of other of his contemporaries; for example, Futurist poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, whose language work "DUNE: 7.8. Parole in Libertà" (figure 8, cat. #31) also appeared in*Cabaret Voltaire.*

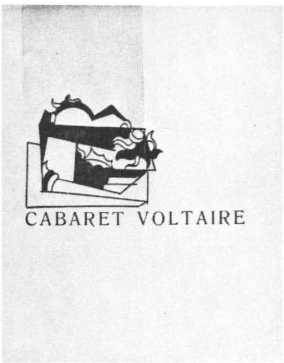


Figure 7

> En même temps Mr Apollinaire essayait un nouveau genre de poèmes visuel, qui est plus intéressant encore par son manique de système et par sa fantasie tourmentée. Il accentue les images centrales, typographiquement, et donne la possibilité de commancer à lire un poème de tous les côtes à la fois.[3]

It is not too far fetched to assume that, within the context of the conservative World War I Zurich art world, the

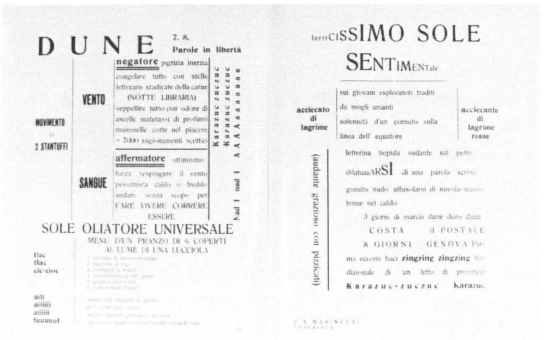
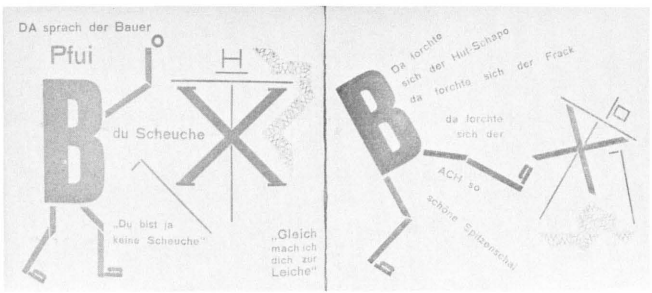


Figure 8

*94. Kurt Schwitters, Theo van Doesburg, and Kate Steinitz, editors; *Merz (no. 14/15 "Die Scheuche")*
Hannover, Apossverlag, 1925
Printed booklet, 24.5 x 20.5 cm., 12 pp.



94. The design of Merz *(no. 14/15 "The Scarecrow"), a typographical fairytale, was informed by international concerns about the need to develop a new children's literature and attempted to make a universal visual vocabulary accessible to children. Convinced that teachers and parents would not purchase such a publication if it appeared under the Merz imprint, Kurt Schwitters, Kate Steinitz, and Theo van Doesburg first released the issue under Apossverlag and it was not until later that The Scarecrow was incorporated into the* Merz *series.*

95. Kurt Schwitters and Kate Steinitz
Die Märchen vom Paradies
(Merz 16/17)
Hannover, Apossverlag, 1924
Book, 27.5 x 21 cm., 32 pp.

96. Kurt Schwitters, editor; *Merz (no. 18/19)*
Hannover, Merzverlag, January-April 1926
Little review, 24 x 16 cm., 28 pp.

97. Kurt Schwitters, editor; *Merz (no. 21)*
Hannover, Merzverlag, 1931
Little review, 32 x 21.5 cm., 14 pp.

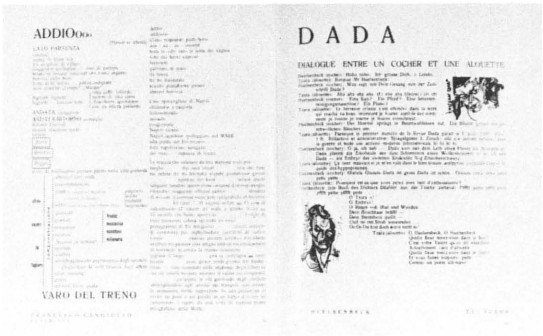


Figure 9

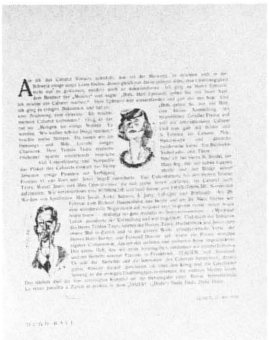


Figure 10

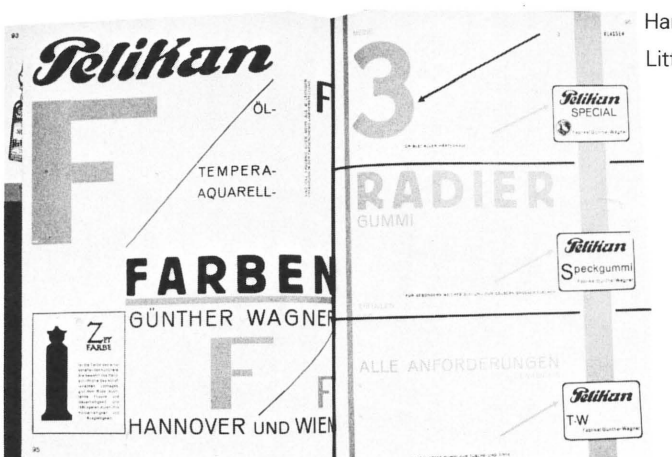
bourgeoisie to whom Tzara directed his note were artists assumed to be less sophisticated than the Zurich Dada group, itself a community of disenfranchised individuals who professed to have access to the cutting edge of international modernist innovation. The didactic tone of Tzara's note is clearly not directed toward a public beyond artistic and literary communities, since a more genereral audience would, in all probability, have had little interest in the fineness of the points that Tzara so eloquently synopsizes. With the exception of two Italian Futurist contributions,the first by Marinetti and the second, entitled *"DIOOO"* (Parole in Libertà), by Frencesco Cangiullo (figure 9, cat. # 31), *Cabaret Voltaire* was bilingual. Its literary contributions appeared in either French or German and sometimes in both, the two languages interwoven into one piece as, for example, in Richard Huelsenbeck's and Tzara's "DADA: Dialogue Entre un Cocher et une Alouette" (figure 9), a playful conversational attempt to provide a nonsensical definition of Dada.

Cabaret Voltaire was designed to serve as a textual elucidation of the activities and purpose of the artistic and literary cabaret which had served as the initial meeting place of the Zurich Dada group. Informed by utopian concepts of total theatre and the total work of art, the Cabaret Voltaire presented its public with a kaleidoscopic view of pan-European modernisms. The publication of the Zurich Dada circle's first journal was further intended to provide the group with an identity more specific to its members' own collective actions and intentions. In his straightforward editorial preface (figure 10, cat. # 31), Ball recounts the story of the birth of the cabaret, describes some of its performances and speaks of the relationship between its performers and the War. Ball closes his introduction by stating that the artists involved in the group intended to publish an international review that would be called "DADA (Dada) Dada Dada Dada Dada,"[4] thus implying that the choice of title for Zurich Dada's first little review was designed to pay

92. Kurt Schwitters and El Lissitzky, editors
Merz (no. 8/9 "Nasci")
Hannover, Paul Steegemann Verlag, April-July, 1924
Little review, 30.5 x 29.2 cm., 18 pp.

93. Merz (no.11), a projection of projects for the Pelikan Ink Company, served as a prospectus for Kurt Schwitters' advertising and design firm.

*93. Kurt Schwitters, editor, *Merz (no. 11 "Pelikan")*



Hannover, Paul Steegemann Verlag, 1925
Little review, 29 x 22.2 cm., 8 pp.

Figure 11 (detail)

retroactive homage to the location that had birthed the movement. In keeping with such implied reverential intentions, the layout of *Cabaret Voltaire* is formal, elegant and respectful of the works that it illustrates. The little review is subtitled, *Eine Sammlung Künstlerischer und Literarischer Beiträge* and, through its formal presentation of self, falls neatly within the tradition of the art press. It is the works that the review illustrates that are given responsibility for activating the journal's pages; for example, the visual texts already discussed and the reproductions of Emmy Hennings' puppets (figure 11, cat. # 31), Marcel Janco's woodcut poster for *Chant Nègre* , and the collages of Hans (Jean) Arp (figure 12, cat. # 31) and Otto van Rees. Although the cutlines for the latter two images are printed vertically rather than horizontally and thus test the standard, they provide the only exceptions that even superceptions that even superficially attempt to do so. On June 24, 1917, Apollinaire's play, *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*, subtitled "a surrealist drama in two acts and a prologue," was performed in Paris. Zurich Dada's second little review appear-ed in July of that year, under Tzara's supervision. As Ball had predicted in his preface to *Cabaret Voltaire*, the journal was entitled *Dada 1* (*Recueil Littéraire et Artistique*) (figure 13, cat. # 40). In December, 1917, *Dada 2* (cat. # 41) appeared in print. Tzara once again makes reference to Apollinaire's work in this issue and, under the heading "Notes", a section of the journal that fills five pages wherein mention is made of new developments in avant-garde art and literature, he writes, "A la manifestation de la revue *Sic* du 24 Juin, Apollinaire fit jouer son drame surréalist *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*."[5] It is interesting to note that, despite the change in title, *Dada 1* and *Dada 2* are as conventional in their design as was their precursor, *Cabaret Voltaire*. In all three cases, the formal model for these reviews appears to be other contemporaneous journals of art and literature. What is also apparent from these publications is the fact that, even during the height of World War I, it was through such a publishing network that artists maintained some contact with one another and with the progress of one another's art making activities.

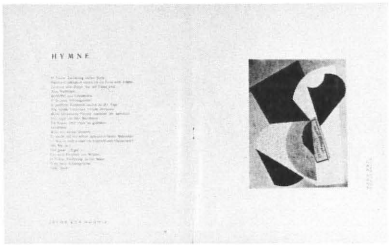


Figure 12

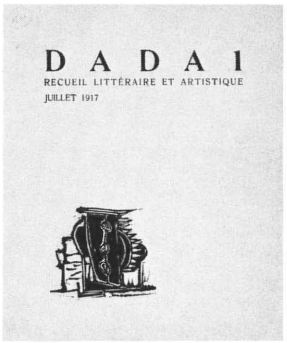


Figure 13

*89. El Lissitzky, *Merz-Matinéen*

Hannover,

1923-1925

Printed announcement,

22. 9 x 27.9 cm.

89. Designed by El Lissitzky, the announcement/poster advertises the Merz and Dada performance of Kurt Schwitters' "Anna Blume" and Raoul Hausmann's "Wang-Wang Blues," and announces the mounting of a revolution in Revon.

90. Kurt Schwitters

Werbe-Gestaltung

Hannover, 1923

Booklet in envelope, 14.5 x 11 cm.

91. Kurt Schwitters, editor, *Merz (no. 4)*

Hannover, Paul Steegemann Verlag, July 1923

Little review, 22.5 x 14.5 cm., 15 pp.

91. During the years 1923-1932, Kurt Schwitters published numerous issues of the periodical Merz. *Alongside Schwitters' own works, the journal reproduced works and statements by an international roster of progressive artists from throughout Europe and Russia.* Merz *(no. 4) includes contributions by Tristan Tzara, George Ribemont-Dessaignes, Philippe Soupault, Theo van Doesburg, Laslo Moholy-Nagy, Hans (Jean) Arp, El Lissitzky, and Schwitters.*

Figure 14

In 1924, almost two years after the initial rift between Tzara and André Breton signalled the demise of Paris Dada and the establishment of Surrealism in its stead, Breton's *La Manifeste Surréaliste* was published.That same year, the first issue of *La Révolution Surréaliste* (figure 14, cat. # 115), Pierre Naville and Benjamin Peret, editors, appeared in print. It has been suggested that the periodical's static and severe format was derived from *La Nature*, a popular scientific journal of the period and that the formality of the Surrealist journal's format paralleled Breton's preference for scientific, rather than literary, models for his early experiments with automatism.[6] Breton's choice of a scientific paradigm over a literary or artistic equivalent can perhaps be explained by again making reference to Margolis' thesis which states that independent myths are applicable to experience beyond their original areas of influence precisely because their strength "undoubtedly is fed by the conviction that they subtend true accounts of human conduct, that is, that they are capable of being formulated as science."[7] Despite the intentional severity of *La Révolution Surréaliste's* format, the journal did include photographs in its first three numbers, issues which were dedicated to a "new declaration of the rights of man" and which contained neither poetry nor prose.[8] Subsequent numbers of the periodical were edited by Breton and continued to include numerous photographic images alongside other visual works. However, the acceptance of photographic imagery even in the periodical's initial numbers is understandable in view of the longstanding agreement among artists, poets, and public alike, of the direct relationship between camera images, reality, verisimilitude, historical evidence and "scientific" proof, and particularly so in view of the fact that Surrealism itself has been described as a kind of photography of the mind.

In March of 1915, the first issue of the American review, *291* appeared in print, Alfred Steiglitz, Maurius de Zayas, Paul Haviland and Agnes Ernst Meyer, editors.The periodical, purportedly modeled after Apollinaire's *Les Soirées de Paris*, preceded the publication of *Cabaret Voltaire* by more than a year, and *La Révolution Surréaliste* by little less than a decade. Published in triptych format

*88. Theo van Doesburg, *Kleine Dada Soirée*
The Netherlands, 1922
Poster, colored lithograph,
30.1 x 30 cm.

88. Although signed by Theo van Doesburg, the poster was designed in collaboration with Hannover Merz artist, Kurt Schwitters and announces the highlight event of the Holland Dada tour. An outstanding example of innovative typography, the piece reflects Dada and De Stijl's shared constructivist tendencies.

(figure 15, cat. # 69), the journal's first number coincided with some of the later issues of Stieglitz's internationally circulated periodical, *Camera Work*, the first number of which had appeared in January, 1903. As would later be the case for *Cabaret Voltaire*, the title of the New York journal was a tribute to a place, in this case, Steiglitz's famous 291 Gallery, around which the American, as well as the visiting European avant-garde, had long gathered. Similarly, as would be the case for the editors of *La Révolution Surréaliste*, the editors of *291* (no. 1), in particular de Zayas, Haviland, and Meyer, were representative of a community of artists and poets eager to embrace "scientific method," as such was understood, on a vernacular level, by an educated lay public.

The preface to *291* (no. 1) was authored by Meyer and entitled, "How Versus Why" (figure 16, cat. # 69).Throughout the article, the author emphasizes those points that she feels are essential to her argument by upper casing them. These typographical shifts are the only even mildly unconventional aspects of the text, which is the only obviously conservative page of the otherwise visually experimental journal. In the article, Meyer insists that American art critics reject their obsolete romantic methods, based as they are in normative aesthetics, and replace these "old standards" with what the author identifies as the new "SCIENTIFIC CRITICISM," a criticism more applicable to those contemporary works that have responded to the "SCIENTIFIC INFLUENCE IN ART."[9] She begins by describing the art criticism that appeared in the American journals of the period as "unintelligent twaddle" that unfortunately "is

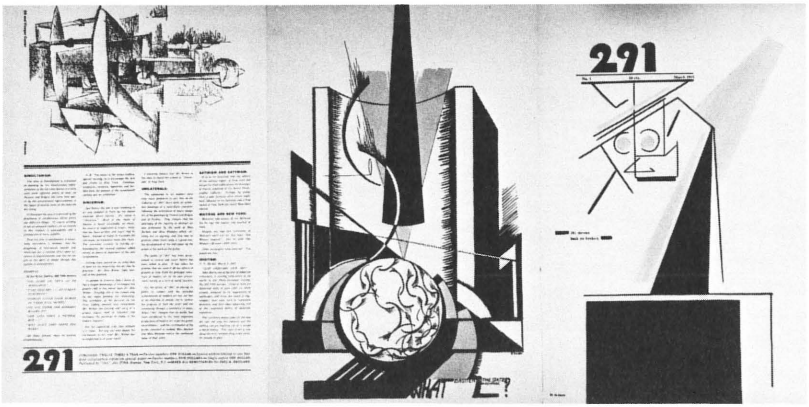


Figure 15

Hannover Dada

*85. Kurt Schwitters; *Anna Blume, Dichtungen*

Hannover, Paul Steegemann Verlag, 1919

Book, 19 x 13 cm., 82 pp.

No. 39/40 of Die Silbergaüle,

Hand illuminated special cover.

86. Kurt Schwitters, *Die Kathedrale*
Hannover,
Paul Steegemann Verlag, 1920
Book, 22.5 x 14.5 cm., 16 pp.
Volume 41/42 of Die Silbergaüle.

87. Kurt Merz Schwitters
Elementar, Die Blume Anna
Berlin, Der Sturm Verlag, 1922
Book, 23 x 15.2 cm., 32 pp.

not as harmless as it is silly for the written word influences even the wary, particulary if it is printed in a publication of standing and most people are perfectly willing to think about art in terms of their favorite newspaper." Meyer explains that, although criticism has failed to do so, "ART HAS ALWAYS PROGRESSED AS THOUGHT HAS PROGRESSED," and that although the "scientific influence has at last invaded the field of art... its critics still wander blissfully in the land of romance." She then presents Ruskin's proposition that because the religious function of art has passed away the "painter has no profession, no purpose," has become "an idler on earth chasing the shadows of his fancies," and would best serve culture through devoting himself to the "recording of objects of historical interest or beauty existing in his own period." Meyer responds by explaining that art has not only passed through its religious period, but through its "photographic era," as well, and has finally begun to be influenced by "the reasoning and scientific era," an evolution that has led to "A PERFECTLY CONNECTED CHAIN FROM APPLIED TO PURE REASON." For Meyer, the effect of this shift upon the "aesthetically emotional world" of her period was equivalent to what had "happened to thought in the middle ages when reason, rediscovered, took the religiously emotional world by storm." Her plea to contempory art critics, if it can be believed to be such, was based on her belief that, if the critic could "assume a constructive attitude," artist and critic could join forces and collectively "WORK CONSCIOUSLY TO HELP BUILD A BETTER FUTURE." Although "How Versus Why" makes repeated reference to, and provides direct evidence of, the extent to which the myth of scientific method had pervaded the consciousness of an art community involved in utopian experimentation, Meyer seems at least somewhat aware of the limitations inherent in accepting an external paradigm as an absolute model and closes her essay with the projection that it is possible that, in this better future, a new art could evolve "that would be NOT THE PRODUCT OF FOREIGN LAWS BUT A LAW UNTO ITSELF."

For the most part, neither the Surrealists nor the 291 group had primary access to the internal mechanics of scientific experiment or thought. They were, after all, poets

83. Marcel Duchamp, *Rrose Sélavy*
Paris, Éditions G.L.M., 1939
Book, 16 x 12 cm., 20 pp.

*84. Marcel Duchamp
Dada 1916-1923
New York, April 15 - May 9, 1953
Catalog and poster, 95 x 62 cm.
Dada exhibition at the Sidney Janis Gallery organized by Marcel Duchamp.

84. The historically based show produced a major impact upon the members of the post World War II American avant-garde and signalled the resurgence of interest in the Dada movement. The exhibition included over 212 works by individuals who had participated in the Berlin, Hannover, Paris, Cologne, and Zurich manifestations of the movement. Its catalogue, which also served as the show's poster and announcement, was available to visitors to the gallery in the form of a crumpled ball.

and artists by profession and, as such, were affected by the mythical status of science in much the same way that other educated members of the lay public were influenced by the myth's pervasiveness. It is interesting to note, however, that both the American modernists of 1915, and the French avant-garde of 1924 were able to accept aspects of this same myth as models for their artistic and literary actions based, in part, on certain similarities between the context within which they worked as artists. At the time that *291* (no. 1) appeared in print, America had not yet entered the War and, as a result, American artists were living through what can perhaps be described as the last stages of pre-World War optimism, a period of time often referred to as the "heroic years" of the Modern period. The crisis to which these artists responded was internal to their positions as members of a specific modern art community. By 1924, the Paris based Surrealists were participating in the reconstructive stage of the post-World War I European art world. The external crisis to which art communities had responded during the War had dissipated. For the Surrealists, crisis had once again become art based, that is to say, specific to the internal problematics of the art community itself. Reference is made, in the preface to *291* (no. 1), to another pervasive schema of ideas: the usefulness of the text for the propagation and dissemination of avant-garde ideology. This myth of the text pervaded the experience of the 291 group, the Surrealists, Dadaists, Expressionists, Constructivists, and Futurists to an equal extent.

Figure 16

Although in her editorial preface to *291* (no. 1), Agnes Ernst Meyer speaks of the power of the written word to influence even the wary, particularly when presented within the context of a publication of standing or a favorite newspaper, it is unlikely that she, or any of the other editors of the New York based little review, were attempting to combat the popular press on its own terms. It is ludicrous to assume that the periodical was perceived to be anything but an art journal, albeit an innovative one, and that the audience to which it was directed was anything but an audience of artists, writers, and other individuals interested in "new" developments within the arts and literature. It was in its self-proclaimed commitment to the "reportage" of the new and the experimental to its specific audience that *291*

*81. Marcel Duchamp, *Obligations pour la Roulette de Monte Carlo (Monte Carlo Bond)*

Paris, 1924

Photomontage on colored lithograph, 19.7 x 31.1 cm., recto and verso

Photograph of Duchamp by Man Ray.

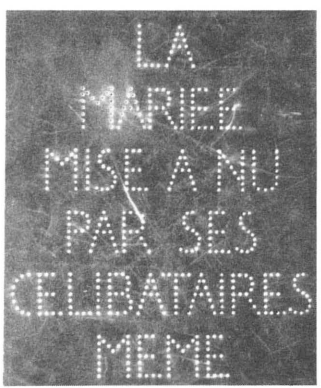
81. Marcel Duchamp issued the edition of this lithograph for sale as bonds. Critics and collectors of the period responded by stating that, because the bonds were Duchamp works. they were, in fact, tremendously sound investments. Through their sale, Duchamp raised sufficient funds to travel to Monte Carlo where he attempted to apply a theory that he had developed to the roulette tables. After a prolonged stay, Duchamp claimed to have broken even.

*82 Marcel Duchamp,

La Mariée Mise à Nu Par Ses Célibaitaires Même (The Green Box)

Paris, Éditions Rrose Sélavy, 1934

Boxed collection of documents, 33 x 28 x 2.5 cm.



82. The Green Box *consists of a collection of facsimiles compiled by Marcel Duchamp from his notes for* The Large Glass, *notes and sketches spanning a period from approximately 1912 through the early twenties. Duchamp made templates from his originals and carefully matched their paper, state of decomposition, etc. However, because the resulting facsimiles were boxed in random order, Duchamp deliberately avoided fixing any particular interpretive scheme that could be applied from the box back to the glass.*

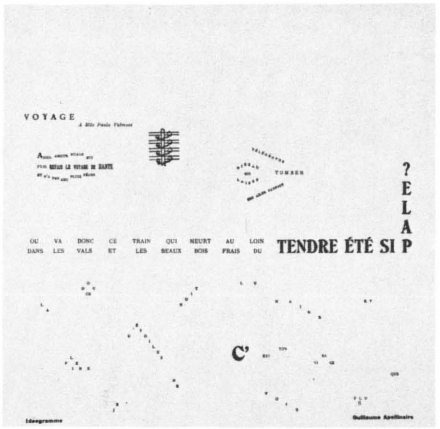


Figure 17

(no. 1), or *Cabaret Voltaire, Dada 1,* and *Dada 2* for that matter, paralleled in function the mechanics of the more broadly based popular press. The New York based review shared this aspect of its intention and some of its contents with the later Zurich journals, although its format and formal presentation of self were very different. Unlike the Dada reviews, the American periodical succeeded in integrating its content within a format that was more in keeping with the works and the position statements that it presented. As such, *291* (no. 1), despite the fact that it was precursory to the Swiss journals, fits more squarely, than do the Dada issues, within what we have been trained to believe are the criteria by which one can identify an interaction between the avant-garde and the text.

As has been mentioned, *291* (no. 1), (figure 15), was published in triptych format. The front cover is composed of Maurius de Zayas' "abstract caricature" of Alfred Stieglitz entitled, *291 throws back its forelock.* Edward Steichen's, *What is Rotten in the State of Denmark?* appears on the back cover. The inside fold carries Picasso's *Oil and Vinegar Castor* (printed horizontally across the page) beneath which a series of serious, semi-serious, and nonsensical discussions of such concepts as "Simutanism," "Sincerism," "Unilaterals," "Satirism and Satyrism," "Matisse and New York," and "Idiotism" appear. The initial inside page is committed to Meyers' "How Versus Why" (figure 16), a contribution that has already been discussed at great length and which is presented in a completely straightforward fashion, in keeping with the kind of contribution that it professes to be; the center inside page (figure 17, cat. # 69) contains an Idéogramme by Guillaume Apollinaire and a prose piece by Stieglitz entitled, "One Hour's Sleep—Three Dreams"; and the final page (figure 18, cat. # 69), a dialogue between the "Spirit" of 291 and the "Professor," signed by Paul B. Haviland, and similar in both presentation and intention to Tristan Tzara's and Richard Huelsenbeck's "DADA: Dialogue Entre un Cocher et une Alouette" (figure 9), that would appear one year later in *Cabaret Voltaire.*

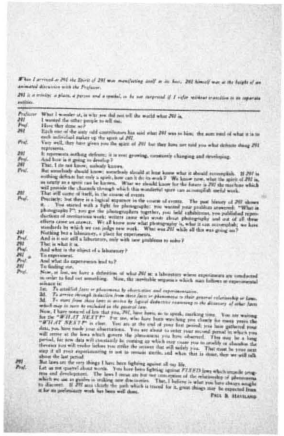


Figure 18

The last issue of *291* was published in February 1916, a

*79. Tristan Tzara, editor (with Paul Eluard and Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes)
Le Coeur à Barbe
(no. 1, Journal Transparent)
Paris, Au sans Pareil, April 1922
Little review, 22.5 x 14 cm., 8 pp.

79. Published in response to both the collapse of André Breton's Congress of Paris and to Francis Picabia's publication of the little review La Pomme de Pins *(March 1922),* Le Coeur à Barbe *attacked most of the Dadaists who stood in Breton's camp. The journal signifies the final demise of Paris Dada. Alongside Tristan Tzara's contributions, the review includes works and statements by Marcel Duchamp, Matthew Josephson, Paul Eluard, Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, Erik Satie, Phillipe Soupault, and others. Erik Satie's contribution consisted of a sketch for his "Office de la domesticité", a score composed of variations on the theme "M. André Breton is not the domestic for M. Ozenfant".*

80. Tristan Tzara, *Le Coeur à gaz*
Paris, Arts-litho, 1923/1977
Book object, 21 x 44.5 cm., 51 pp.
Seven lithographs by Sonia Delaunay.

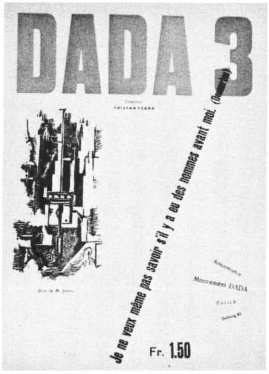


Figure 19

Figure 20

date that ironically coincides with the establishment of the Dada group in Zurich. It has been suggested that Tzara may well have received a copy of the review in November of that year.[10] It has also been suggested that the drastic form-al change in format evident in issues of *Dada* subsequent to *Dada 2* was somehow related to the influnce of Francis Picabia, although the artist was not to visit Zurich until early 1919, at which time issue number 8 of his periodical *391,* (named in memory of Picabia's involvement with *291* while in residence in New York) was published. Picabia had contributed to the December 1918 issue *Dada 3* (figure 19, cat. # 42), a publication that appeared in an enlarged and typographically visually activated format. The periodical opens with Tzara's "Manifeste Dada 1918" (figure 20, cat.# 42) announcing clearly that Dada has found its voice as a movement. Picabia's relatively minor contributions to the periodical consisted of an obituary for Guillaume Apollinaire (which followed another by Tzara), a poem entitled, "Salive Americaine," an announcement for Picabia's new book *Poèmes et Dessins de la Fille née Sans Mère,* and a mechanomorphic drawing entitled *ABRI.*

Gabrielle Buffet Picabia has stated that her husband received a letter from Tzara in 1918, soon after *Poèmes et Dessins de la Fille née Sans Mère* appeared in print, inviting him to join the Dada circle. Amused by Tzara's invitation, the two traveled from Lausanne to Zurich in early 1919.[11] However, Hans Richter recalled that Picabia's influence on the Zurich Dadaists preceded his physical arrival.

> The exhibition at the Galerie Wolfsberg in September 1918 marked the end of this period of "balance" within Dada ...In a dark room on the other side of the gallery from our brightly-lit exhibition hung a series of pictorially almost disembodied "machine pictures" mainly, as I recall, in gold and black. They were by a Spaniard then unknown to me, Francis Picabia. ...Shortly afterwards, Picabia himself arrived in Zurich with his talented wife Gabrielle Buffet. Viewed in retrospect, Picabia's arrival marks the end of an era in the history of Zurich Dada.[12]

This pivotal encounter between Picabia's "machine pictures" and Richter, Marcel Janco, Fritz Baumann, McCouch, Emmy Hennings, and Otto Morach was not Dada's first introduction to a mechanistic schema of ideas. The Zurich circle

77. Tristan Tzara
Excursions et Visites Dada
Paris, Église Saint Julien-le-Pauvre,
Thursday, April 14, 1921
Announcement,
28 x 22 cm.

77. The announcement refers to the first of a series of visits to undistinguished and unnoteworthy places throughout Paris that the Dadaists planned to organize. The complaints initiated by the tedium inherent to the event itself were further intensified by the fact that the excursion took place in the rain and its participants were forced to track through mud-puddles.

78. Arranged for the most part by André Breton, the trial of Maurice Barrès was designed to serve as the first of a series of such events that would bring a variety of influential, conservative French literary and artistic figures to trial on the charge of abusing the human spirit. Barrès was represented by a dummy during the proceedings. Tristan Tzara, who took the role of witness during the trial, attempted to undermine and trivialize the seriousness of Breton's purpose by making jokes. The event also marked Francis Picabia's withdrawal from the Dada movement.

*78. *Mise en accusation et jugement de M. Maurice Barrès par Dada*
Paris, Salle des Sociétés Savantes,
May 15, 1921
Announcement,
32.5 x 24 cm.

had published Italian Futurist works in *Cabaret Voltaire, Dada 1,* and *Dada 2,* and were throroughly familiar with the Futurist's technomania and their belief in the aesthetic dynamism of the machine. Picabia's pictures, on view at the Galerie Wolfsberg, provided a new visual reification of the already influential paradigm of a machine aesthetic, a concretization, as it were, of a myth that had survived the catastrophic realities of the first World War. Richter's statement implies that the innovative formal translation of this paradigm, as it was made evident in Picabia's work, marked the end of the tentative, "balanced," preliminary stage of Zurich Dada.

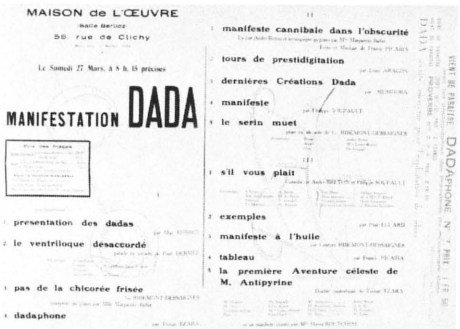
Figure 21

Dada 4/5 (Anthologie Dada) (cat. # 43), which appeared in May 1919, was a direct collaboration between Picabia and Tzara and fulfills an even greater number of our formal expectations for the early twentieth century avant-garde text. The little review has both an inside and an outside cover: the first bearing a biomorphic woodcut by Arp (figure 21, cat. # 43), a number of earlier examples of which had first been reproduced in *Dada 3;* the second, a mechanistic drawing by Picabia (figure 22, cat. # 43), purportedly made by dipping the cog wheels of a clock in ink. Works such as Picabia's suggestive drawing entitled, *Mouvement Dada/391* (figure 23, cat. # 43), and Arp's untitled woodcut (figure 24, cat. # 43), are reproduced throughout the anthology and make clear and direct reference to the fact that Dada was simultaneously effected by both the paradigm of natural order and by a mechanistic alternative, two schemata of ideas that appear to stand in direct opposition to one another. It is in this very juxtaposition of two contradictory myths that we are made aware of Dada's deep utopian intentions, its ongoing search for alternatives to those cutural constructs held culpable for the War.

Figure 22

However, it is wrong headed to assume that the last two Zurich numbers of *Dada,* despite their innovative formats or their mechanomorphic images, were directed toward, or ser-iously affected, a public outside the arts and the humanities. As had been the case for *291* and as would be the case for the official Berlin Dada publications, the little reviews *Club Dada, Der Dada* (no.1), *Der Dada* (no. 2) and *Der Dada* (no. 3) (cat. #s 46, 59, 60, and 61), the audience to which the reviews speak remains the same, despite the fact that the external imperatives that inform their production change

*74. Francis Picabia, *Manifestation Dada;* Paris, Maison de l'Oeuvre, Salle Berlioz
Saturday, March 17, 1920
Program, 37 x 27 cm., (1 leaf).



75. Paul Dermée, *Z* (special issue)
Paris, Au sans Pareil, 1920
Little review, 22 x 17 cm.
and 21 x 33 cm., 6 pp.,
Hectographed.

76. Francis Picabia and Philippe Soupault, *Dada Soulève Tout*
Paris, Au sans Pareil, January 12, 1921
Broadside manifesto, 28 x 21.5 cm., recto and verso.

drastically.

In his article, "Art and Disorder," initially presented during the September 1966 meeting of the American Psychological Association, Morse Peckham defines a work of art as "an occasion for a human being to perform the art-perceiving role in the artistic situation, that is, on the artistic stage," and that objects, or perceptual fields, may be categorized as occasions for artistic perception "if a chronologically arranged sequence of such objects shows both functional identity and nonfunctional stylistic dynamism."[13] For Peckham, the function of the work of art is to provide occasions, through the violation of expectations, for situations wherein the perceiver can safely practice the endurance of cognitive tension and thus strengthen his or her response to external crisis. According to this thesis, the artist, having learned the perceiver's role, assumes the position of initiator of such situations.

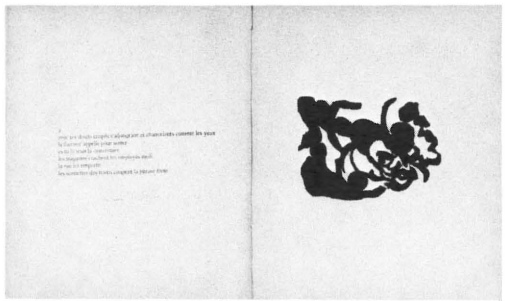
It is through the nonfunctional stylistic dynamism evident in *291* (no. 1), *Dada 3 and 4/5*, and the Berlin issues of *Der Dada*, that we can define these publications as occasions for artistic perception, as spaces or "artistic stages" intentionally designed for the transaction of art situations. However, it is important to point out that these texts successfully blurred the distinction between art maker and art audience and, as such, presented an unprecedented occasion for the artist to function as both initiator and receiver. During the early twentieth century, the text, or more specifically the art periodical, had not yet been conventionalized into yet another artistic space. The community of artists and poets responsible for its production, as well as those participating in its reception, collectively shared the transaction of the art experience, a situation designed to strengthen their response to external crisis.

Figure 23

In his "Zurich Chronicle 1915-1919," Tzara claimed that by October 15, 1919, 8,590 articles on Dada had appeared in numerous "newspapers and magazines" worldwide.[14] The Dadaists of Berlin as well as the community in Zurich were aware of the distinctions between the popular press and

71. Tristan Tzara, editor
Dada 7 (Dadaphone)
Paris, March 1920
Little review, 27 x 19 cm., 8 pp.

+ *72. Tristan Tzara, *Cinéma calendrier du coeur abstrait maisons*
Paris, Collection Dada, 1920
Book, 25 x 21 cm., 80 pp.
19 woodcuts by Hans (Jean) Arp.



72. A collaboration between one of our century's most influential poets and one of its most respected visual artists, the book is considered to be one of the most successful examples of early twentieth century book art. Printed in Paris, on varied papers, Cinéma calendrier du coeur abstrait maisons, *served as the renewal of the Zurich based collaborations between Hans (Jean) Art and Tristan Tzara and appeared under the Collection Dada imprint.*

73. Tristan Tzara and Marcel Janco, *Circuit total par la lune et par la couleur*
Paris, n.d., ca. 1920
Poem and woodcut, 29 x 23 cm., 4 pp. (1 folded sheet).
Cover by Marcel Janco.

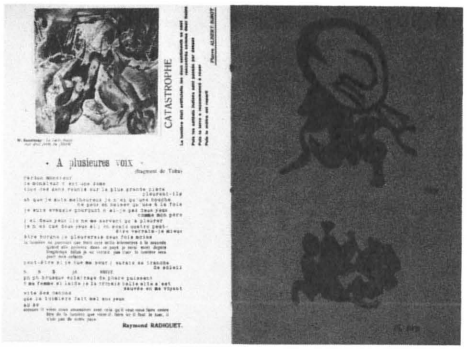
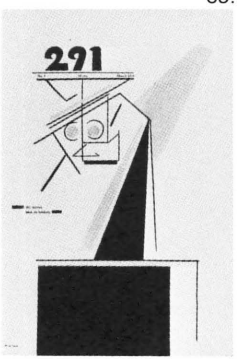


Figure 24

their own, and worked both. In the final analysis, however, it is through their little reviews, directed as they were to the mechanics of the internal culture of the art community, that they best strengthened the myth of the avant-garde while at the same time consolidating the strength of the community's sense of self. Thus, in her 1915 essay "How Versus Why," Agnes Ernst Meyer makes reference to the most influential myth that was to pervade the experience of numerous early twentieth century avant-garde communities when she insists that critic and artists join together and "WORK CONSCIOUSLY TO HELP BUILD A BETTER FUTURE." It was within the context of their own little reviews that avant-garde artists could best build a visual vocabulary that mirrored their ideological and culturally critical intentions; it was there that they could develop the iconology so central to the function and survival of the twentieth century avant-garde itself.

Dada and Surrealism have themselves risen to mythical status and, as a result, pervade our experience in the present. That such is the case was not based upon their interaction with, or initial effect upon, mass culture at large, but rather was the direct result of their intense ongoing dialogue with the arts and the humanities, an interaction that, in the long run, affects our very concept of culture itself. As George Kubler has stated in *The Shape of Time*, "Useful inventions alter mankind only indirectly by altering his environment; aesthetic inventions enlarge human awareness directly with new ways of experiencing the universe, rather than with new objective interpretations."[15] As Thomas S. Kuhn illustrates in his influential book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*,[16] science, which according to Margolis is the very discipline evoked as the means by which the persuasiveness of a particular myth is itself determined, is also affected by the rise and fall of its own paradigms. I am reminded of a statement by Feuerabend, the brilliant philosopher of science, who, in the 1970s, purportedly addressed what he perceived to be a naive, realist perception of his own field by insisting that he would prefer to be remembered as a Dadaist.



*69. Alfred Stieglitz, Marius de Zayas,
Paul Haviland and Agnes Ernst Meyer, editors
291 (no. 1)
New York, March 1915
Little review, 44 x 29 cm., 6 pp.
folded in triptych format
Covers by Marius de Zayas and Edward Steichen.

69. The periodical 291 *was named after Alfred Stieglitz's famous 291 Gallery in New York, a long time gathering place for the American and the visiting European avant-garde. Loosely influenced by such publications as Guillaume Apollinaire's* Les Soirees de Paris, 291 *was visually experimental in design and international in scope. The little review ran to twelve numbers before it ceased publication in 1916 and provides an invaluable record of the intentions and activities of the American moderns of the period. Despite the fact that it ceased publication at approximately the same time that Dada was first established in Zurich,* 291 *has come to be regularly included in the cannon of Dada publications.*

70. Tristan Tzara, editor
Dada 6 (Bulletin Dada)
Paris, February 1920
Little review, 38 x 28 cm., 4 pp.
Served as the program for the Salon des Indépendants
Grand des Champs-Élysées

70. Bulletin Dada *was published within weeks of Tristan Tzara's arrival in Paris, early in 1920. Although it appeared in large format, the little review consisted of only one folded sheet. The evening of performances and manifestations for which it served as program indicates the performance basis of Tzara's participation in Paris Dada.*

NOTES

1. Joseph Margolis, "The Logic of Interpretation," in *Philosphy Looks at the Arts,* Joseph Margolis, ed. (New York, 1962), pp. 112-113.

2. *Ibid.* p. 113.

3. Tristan Tzara, "Note pour les Bourgeois," in *Cabaret Voltaire,* Hugo Ball, ed., (Zurich, 1916), pp. 6-7.

4. Hugo Ball, *Cabaret Voltaire,* p. 5.

5. Tristan Tzara, *Dada 2* (Zurich, 1917), p. 17.

6. Jane Beckett, "Dada and Surrealism," in *The Art Press* ,Trevor Fawcett & Clive Phillpot, eds., (London, 1976), p. 38.

7. Margolis, p. 114.

8. See Beckett, p. 38.

9. Agnes Ernst Meyer, "How Versus Why," in *291* (no. 1), Alfred Stieglitz, Maurius de Zayas, Paul Haviland, and Agnes Ernst Meyer, eds., (New York, 1915), p. 1. All quotes in this paragraph come directly from Meyer's editorial preface to the New York based little review.

10. Ileana B. Leavens, *From "291" to Zurich the Birth of Dada* (Ann Arbor, 1983), p. 126.

11. Gabriele Buffet-Picabia, cited in Elmer Peterson, *Tristan Tzara* (New Brunswick, 1971), p. 56.

12. Hans Richter, *Dada Art and Anti Art* (New York and Toronto, 1965), p. 75. It is important to note that Picabia's machines were dysfunctional constructions. Inherent dysfunctionalism is essential to an understanding of Picabia's World War I era machine pictures.

13. Morse Peckham, "Art and Disorder," in *Esthetics Contemporary,* Richard Kostelanetz, ed., (Buffalo, 1978), pp. 97-98.

14. Tristan Tzara, "Zurich Chronicle 1915-1919," trans. Ralph Manheim, in Hans Richter, p. 28.

15. George Kubler, *The Shape of Time, Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven and London, 1962), p. 65.

16. See Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolution* (Chicago, 1970).

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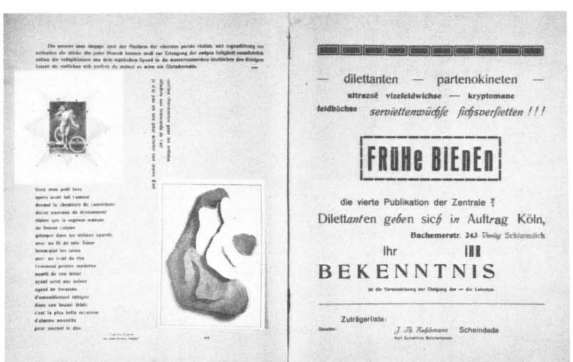
Her past publications include: "Dada New York: An Historiographic Analysis" (1985), "Photomontage, the Event, and Historism" (1988), Fluxus and Friends *(1988), and "Through the Looking Glass: Dada and the Contemporary Arts" (1988).*

Cologne Dada

67. *"Die Schammade (dilettanten erhebt euch)"*
Cologne, n.d.
Flyer announcing the publication of *Die Schammade*, 29 x 21 cm., 1 leaf.

*68. Johannes Baargeld and Max Ernst, editors
Die Schammade
Cologne, Schloemilch Verlag, 1920
Little review, 32.5 x 25 cm.,
32 pp.
Cover by Hans (Jean) Arp.



68. Die Schammade *was published in conjunction with the infamous 1920 Cologne Spring Bauhaus Exhibition, often considered to be the most scandalous Cologne Dada event. The periodical stands as evidence for the collaborative activities of Johannes Baargeld (pseudonym of Alfred Gruenwald), Max Ernst, and Hans (Jean) Arp. Although it includes contributions by Berlin Dadaist Richard Huelsenbeck and by members of the Cologne based Group Stupid, the periodical is predominately French in orientation in response to Arp and Ernst's shared interest in relocating in Paris.*

The Text and the Coming of Age of the Avant-Garde in Germany

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The radical change in the appearance of the text which occurred in German artists' publications during the teens demonstrates a coming of age of the avant-garde, a transformation in the way the avant-garde viewed itself and its role within the broader culture. Traditionally, the instrumental purpose of the text had been to interpret an "aesthetic" activity and convey the historical intentions and meaning associated with that activity. The prerogative of artists as well as critics, apologists and historians, the text attempted to reach an observer believed to be "situated" in a shared web of events, thus enacting the historicist myth based on the rationalist notion of causality which underlies the avant-garde.

By the onset of the twentieth century, however, both the rationalist basis and the utopian telos generally assumed in the historicist myth were being increasingly challenged in the metaphors of a declining civilization, a dissolving self, and a disintegrating cosmos so much a part of the cultural pessimism of the symbolist era of "decadence."[1] By the mid-teens, many of the Expressionists had gone beyond the theme of an apocalypse to posit a catastrophe so deep as to void the whole notion of progressive social change.[2] The aesthetic realm, as an arena of pure form and structure rather than material and temporal causality, became more than a natural haven for those artists and writers who persisted in yearning for such ideals as *Totalität*; that sense of wholeness for the individual and human-

*65. Richard Huelsenbeck

En avant Dada: Die Geschichte des Dadaismus

Hannover, Paul Steegemann, 1920

Book, 23.5 x 15 cm., 44 pp.

65. One of the first historical studies of Dada by a founding member of the movement, the publication reflects Dada's strong historical selfconsciousness and its awareness of the visible profile that it had already attained by 1920.

66. George Grosz and Wieland Herzfelde

Die Kunst ist in Gefahr

Berlin, Der Malik-Verlag, 1925

Book, 18 x 12 cm., 45 pp.; Cover by George Grosz.

ity, with roots running back to German Idealism, so often extolled in Expressionism. While serving the Expressionists' need for something identifiable as "absolute," the aesthetic realm also offered strategies for restructuring the text and other cultural artifacts whose historical purposefulness was increasingly in doubt. This prospect was especially important to the German Dadaists who, while overtly disgusted with the absolutist claims for art made by the Expressionist "swindlers," always maintained a covert respect for art.

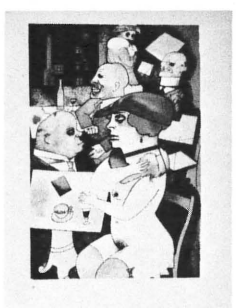
When social conditions forced artists and intellectuals from all over Europe into exile in Zurich, an unprecedented situation came into existence. The participants in what came to be known as Zurich Dada virtually constructed a generic art movement in isolation from both the national bourgeois cultures which had begrudgingly supported avant-garde circles and from the political turmoil which was now threatening their existence. Under the unusually hermetic conditions prevailing in the Cabaret Voltaire circle, the text was largely appropriated by artists and poets. Decisions regarding structure and assumptions pertaining to context — and with them the interpretation and expected reception of the text — were now more than ever merged into the structuring and forming enterprises of aesthetic activity.

In Berlin the German Dadaists responded to the immediacy of the political and cultural crisis by holding all of culture accountable, including the avant-garde. Their parodies of Expressionism, Futurism, and Cubism produced a sign-system for situating a "movement" — in the generic sense of the term being increasingly recognized in critical discourse[3] — within the broader setting of the surrounding culture. Their self-referential approach allowed the German Dadaists to attempt a broad restructuring of the elitist "institution of art," or social "subsystem" attendant on the aesthetic ritual of avant-garde movements including exhibitions, publications, the art market, criticism, etc.[4] The result can be called an "anti-ism" intended as social criticism. This rejection of the bourgeois setting for art also had its idealist aspect, as the participants considered their alternative a potential embodiment of such convictions as *Totalität* presented in an array of vehicles suited to the widest

62. Richard Huelsenbeck, *Phantastische Gebete*
Berlin, Der Malik-Verlag/Abteilung Dada, 1920
Book, 26 x 18 cm., 31 pp.
Covers, front, and back by George Grosz.

*63. Wieland Herzfelde, *Tragigrotesken der Nacht: Träume*
Berlin, Der Malik-Verlag, 1920
Book, 23.5 x 16 cm., 89 pp.
Cover, twenty drawings and
one photomontage by George Grosz.

*64. George Grosz, *Ecce Homo*
Berlin, Der Malik-Verlag, 1923



Folio of lithographs, deluxe edition,
in cloth-covered slipcase, 35.5 x 27 cm.
Vol. I, 176 pp.
with 84 black and white lithographs;
Vol II, 16 color lithographs.

64. Wieland Herzfelde, editor of Malik-Verlag publishing house, would regularly assist George Grosz in the organization and preparation of his prints for folio editions, often providing timely political captions for the satirical works. Composed of a series of lithographs completed by Grosz over a period of five to six years prior to its release, Ecce Homo *was produced in both regular and deluxe editions, the latter prepared for publication in order to accrue funds for other Malik-Verlag publication ventures.*

possible audience. While the Berlin Dadaists were as deeply ambivalent of a future utopia as they were skeptical of the means of its attainment recommended in either political or aesthetic radicalism, they were able to envision what the "Dadasoph" Raoul Hausmann called an *Übergangsform* [form of transition] in the immediate present.[5] While ultimately no less "fictional" than the historicist myth it sought to replace, this concept accepted the material conditions in which meaning occurs and thus conferred an unprecedented degree of objecthood on the text. This attitude briefly opened aesthetic activity, and in particular treatment of the text, to a host of hitherto excluded influences from the broader culture. The Dada text assumed guises ranging from the vernacular to the fashionable, from the found object to the commercial product, illustrated journal, and American film. This paper is concerned primarily with the formal transformation of the text as artists took advantage of this opportunity.

. . .

In the early modernist era prior to the twentieth century, it had generally been the content rather than the appearance of a given text which conveyed the revolutionary objectives of radical artists and writers. There existed, however, a long tradition of declarative devices alluding to the text. The red masthead of Hans Leybold's journal *Revolution* (figure 25, cat # 18) continues this legacy while sharing with Richard Seewald's cover woodcut the straightforward purpose of referring to the image of revolution as "active, singular, sudden," and "chaotic," as Erich Muhsam defined it when setting forth the journal's ideological framework in its opening essay.[6] Developing a circulation of 5,000 during just two months of publication, *Revolution* was quickly banned by the censors.[7] Within the context of other such journals, the visual format for *Revolution* assumes additional impor-

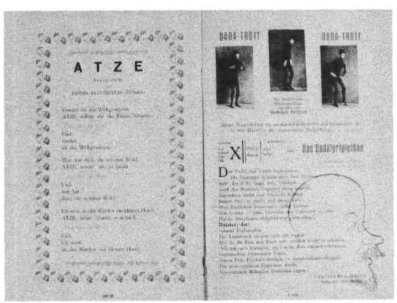
Figure 25

60. Der Dada *(no. 1) and* Der Dada *(no. 2) were offered as antidotes to the Malik-Verlag's point of view, with which both John Heartfield and George Grosz were associated. Issue number two offers an outstanding alternative to the Malik-Verlag perspective and was basically a direct collaboration between Hausmann and Baader. The periodical provides access to a point of view specific to Berlin Dada and is considered to be one of the most visually exciting of the publications generated by the Berlin group.*

*60. Raoul Hausmann, editor;
Der Dada (no. 2)
Berlin, December 1919
Little review, 29 x 23 cm.,
8 pp.
Cover by Raoul Hausmann.

61. Der Dada *(no. 3) was published under the Malik-Verlag imprint and represents the absorption of the periodical into a more broadly based perspective. Johannes Baader has been dropped from the role of substantial contributor and the issue is signed by "Groszfield" (George Grosz), "Hearthaus" (John Heartfield) and "Georgemann" (George Grosz). Based in part on its distance from the aftermath of the First World War and on the preparation of the never published* Dadaco, Der Dada *(no. 3) was far more international in scope than were its precursors,* Der Dada *(no. 1) and* Der Dada *(no. 2).*

*61. George Grosz, Raoul Hausmann and John Heartfield, editors



Der Dada (no. 3)
Berlin, Der Malik-Verlag,
April 1920
Little review,
23 x 15.5 cm., 16 pp.
Cover by John Heartfield.

tance as a further step among several attempts to establish an antibourgeois setting for the text. Its format was directly indebted to the modernized appearance of Franz Pfemfert's activist journal, *Die Aktion*,[8] which in turn was a reaction to Herwarth Walden's popular and more apolitical *Der Sturm* (cat.#s 11-13).[9] For its part, *Der Sturm* had appeared in an expansive American format with tradition-breaking antiqua type and large, forceful graphics at a time when nearly all artistic and literary reviews were in small formats set in German fraktur.[10]

Der Sturm also gave voice to a development which would challenge its own antimaterialist ideological foundations. Filippo Marinetti's *Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature*, published in *Der Sturm* in 1912,[11] advocated the liberation of the text from syntax and made it available for formal approaches ranging from calligraphic arabesques to the new "typographic revolution" employing multiple colors of ink and numerous typefaces on the same page, an approach described in his slightly later*L'immaginazione senza fili e le parole in libertà* [Imagination without Strings and the Words in Freedom] (Milan, 1913, cat.#7).[12] The Expressionists' failure to respond to the Futurists' visual liberation of the page and use of vernacular sources was undoubtedly related to their abhorrence of the material world.[13] While the Expressionist *Wortkunst* poets of the Sturm circle shared with the Futurists a desire to be released from the literary conventions of syntax and narrative development, they felt less affinity with the expansionist aesthetic implied in the Futurists' celebration of the "bruitism" (noise aesthetic) and the material qualities of art. Wassily Kandinsky's antimaterialist paradigm for historical change (based on the abstraction of a moving triangle) as described in his influential *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* (cat.# 9), opposed the demands made by the "practical-purposeful" world of matter.[14] His influence helped ensure that the visual appearance of the Expressionist text remain generally exempted from decisions which would make it suited to vernacular modes of communication.

Partly as a consequence of this pervasive antimaterialist approach, a rift was growing ever wider between political activism and the more esoteric aesthetic radicalism

*56. Wieland Herzfelde, editor

Die Pleite (no. 4)

Berlin, Leipzig; Der Malik-Verlag, May 1, 1919

Little review, 40.2 x 26 cm., 4 pp.

Cover by George Grosz.

+ 57. Wieland Herzfelde, editor

Die Pleite (no. 7)

Berlin, July 1923

Little review, 46 x 29.5 cm., 24 pp.

Cover by George Grosz.

+ 58. Wieland Herzfelde

Die Pleite (no. 9)

Berlin, 1923

Little review, 41.3 x 29.5 cm., 9 pp.

59. The first official Berlin Dada little magazine, Der Dada *(no. 1) was self-published by Raoul Hausmann. The review clarified the distinction between the two Berlin Dada camps; the first dominated by Hausmann and Johannes Baader, the second by George Grosz and John Heartfield.*

*59. Raoul Hausmann, editor

Der Dada (no. 1)

Berlin, June 1919

Little review, 29 x 22 cm., 8 pp.

Cover by hausmann-baader.

within the avant-garde. In Berlin, the Novembergruppe and Arbeitsrat für Kunst (Workers Council for Art), modeled after the soldiers' and workers' soviets, were among the groups most affirmative of socialist ideology in their rhetoric. Their exhibitions, however, were too diverse, disunited, and confusing to find a socially effective reception. Attacks came from both the socialist and bourgeois press as well as from the Dadaists who, in their "Open Letter to the Novembergruppe," accused the Novembergruppe of snobbery and betrayal of the cause through a "purely aesthetic revolution."[15] Naturally, there were exceptions. Max Pechstein, for example, produced a rousing apocalyptic cover image for the Novembergruppe's banner publication, *An alle Künstler!* His woodcut cover for the 1919 Arbeitsrat für Kunst pamphlet was equally effective,[16] and his posters for the new socialist government in 1919 were successful in reaching a proletarian audience.[17] In Dresden, too, artists and intellectuals generally failed to fuse the political and aesthetic revolutions. As early as 1918, *Menschen* publisher Walter Rheiner altered the magazine's declaration of purpose under the masthead, advancing Expressionism as a preserve of a "prinzipielle Idealismus" [fundamental idealism], a metaphysical "absolute" threatened by the material world.[18] A few of the younger generation in Dresden were able to successfully continue the exuberance of the hopes for change while also furthering the formal revolution begun by Expressionism. Among them was Conrad Felixmüller who had honed his skills as a prodigious illustrator for Franz Pfemfert's "Aktion" publications (e.g., his cover for *Das Aktionsbuch*). Exploiting the arbitrary qualities letters share with the visual ambiguity of the Expressionist woodcut aesthetic, he incorporated text and image to achieve a direct yet lingering impact in his cover for *Sezession Gruppe* (figure 26, cat. # 23). For many artists of this era, however, the aesthetic revolution was assumed as a *fait accompli*, its results needing only to be offered in the service of the chosen ideologies.[19] Consequently, as the Expressionist movement became irreversibly divided and embroiled in political and philosophical disputes during the mid to late teens, the text retained its vigor as the most reflexive and discursive component of the avant-garde.

Figure 26

54. Die Pleite (Bankruptcy) *was also heavily political and its visual contents dominated by Propagandada George Grosz's politically satirical drawings. The third of such collaborations between Wieland Herzfelde, John Heartfield, and Grosz, the periodical was eventually incorporated into* Der Gegner *(see catalogue #27).*

+ 54. Wieland Herzfelde, editor
Die Pleite (no. 1)
Berlin, Leipzig; Der Malik-Verlag, 1919
Little review, 43 x 30 cm., 4 pp.
Cover by George Grosz.

+ *55. Wieland Herzfelde, editor
Die Pleite (no. 3)
Berlin, Leipzig
Der Malik-Verlag, April 1919
Little review, 40 x 29 cm., 4 pp.
Cover by George Grosz.

In Zurich, the text departed from the absolutist purposes it had served in Expressionism to assume the object qualities and promotional role which would ultimately make it capable of attempting the restructuring of the "institution of art." The very diversity of the international personnel in Zurich Dada made such a restructuring necessary. Their movement evolved from simultaneous influences which included Expressionism, Cubism, and Futurism. Jakob van Hoddis, August Stramm, Oskar Kokoschka, and many other Sturm artists were represented in the journals, evenings, and exhibitions, some imported directly from the Berlin Sturm Gallery (cat. #s 32-35). Picasso and Delaunay were reproduced in *Cabaret Voltaire* (figure 7, cat. # 31) and *Dada*, (figures 13, 19, and 22, cat. #s 40-43) and Marinetti's typographic revolution was continued in *Cabaret Voltaire*, *Dada*, and *Der Zeltweg* (cat. # 45). These trends were accommodated among the components which were needed to "make" an international cabaret. As Hugo Ball recounted in his opening proclamation in the periodical *Cabaret Voltaire* (figure 10, cat.# 31), he assembled what he needed by type: some young people, a cabaret room, art works to exhibit, notices to the press, songs, poems, dances of various nationalities to be performed, and so on.[20] Unlike his Futurist and Expressionist predecessors, Ball's desired setting for these components was one isolated from the specificity of war and fatherland. While the Dada celebration of simultaneity, nonsense, and chaos was partly an ideological response to the war, the promotion of the mature products identified with several modernist movements under the generic term "Dada" also shows how the Zurich circle articulated itself as a paradigm of the modernist movement.

While the text reflected these diverse tendencies, it also unified them. Chaotic Futurist texts and emotionally-charged Expressionist poems were presented on the page with an elegance and restraint conceivable only beyond the political turmoil in Germany. The text layout was discretely varied on the spacious pages of *Cabaret Voltaire* and often coaxed into horizontal and vertical structures in *Dada*. In *Dada 3* (December 1918, figure 20, cat. # 42), the diverse typefaces suddenly attained a baroque decorative quality not unlike the accompanying woodcuts by Marcel Janco.

*51. Carl Einstein and George Grosz, editors
Der Blutige Ernst (no. 4)
Berlin, Trianon-Verlag,
November / December 1919
Little review, 40.6 x 28.7 cm., 8 pp.
Cover by George Grosz.

52. Carl Einstein and George Grosz, editors
Der Blutige Ernst (no. 5)
Berlin, Trianon-Verlag, 1920
Little review, 38.2 x 26.7 cm., 8 pp.
Cover by George Grosz.

*53. Carl Einstein and George Grosz, editors
Der Blutige Ernst (no. 6)
Berlin, Trianon-Verlag, February 1920
Little review 30.5 x 22.5 cm., 12 pp.
Cover by George Grosz and John Heartfield.

Texts presented unexpectedly askew, or in horizontal streams between columns, invariably promoted other reviews and editions: *Sic* and *Nord Sud* as well as editions by Reverdy, Picabia, and Tzara. While the later Zurich and Paris publications *Dada 4-5* (May 1919, figures 21 and 22, cat. # 43) *Bulletin Dada* (February 1920, cat. # 70) and *Dadaphone* (March 1920, cat. # 71) borrowed more directly from modes of promotional communication in the mass print media (e.g., the cover for the deluxe edition of *Dada IV-V*), the neatly organized layouts of text usually took on qualities of balance and symmetry. A poem by Pierre Albert-Birot, for example, is carefully balanced against a Hausmann woodcut (figure 27, cat. # 43). Scattered among the poems and reproductions of art works are Dada manifestos and promotions of Dada publications. Absent are the discursive analyses and ruminations on metaphysical absolutes common in Expressionist periodicals and publications. No where to be found are the contemporary references to political activism having currency in the material world beyond, so abundant in such periodicals as Franz Pfemfert's *Der rote Hahn*. Instead, meaning was now largely restricted to a contextual existence "inside" the social structure of the avant-garde.

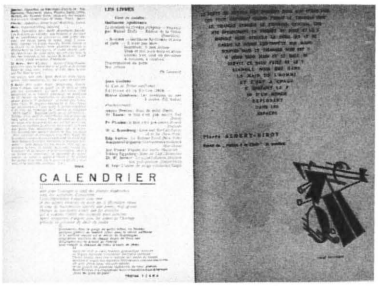


Figure 27

The nonsense term "Dada" served as a label within the generic movement, a device drawing attention to each performance and publication as a component of the institutional setting. Yet despite its international sophistication, the entire Zurich enterprise was largely unavailable to the observer situated beyond the conventional social boundaries of the avant-garde. The Berlin Dadaists redressed this concern by accepting the text as a primary mediator between their institutional setting and the broader culture. Their borrowing of text fragments and idioms of text manipulation from vernacular sources contested the atmosphere of aesthetic privilege sustained in most of the early Expressionist publications and in the Zurich Dada periodicals alike.

Even prior to the official founding of Berlin Dada in 1918, a decisive advance was made in 1917 by John Heartfield and George Grosz in the publications of the

*48. Johannes Baader

Grüne Leiche

Berlin, January 27, 1919

Broadside manifesto, 23.5 x 21 cm., recto and verso;

Distributed on February 2, 1919.

Verso *Dadaisten gegen Weimar.*

48. During the Weimar National Assembly, in July 1919, Berlin Oberdada, Johannes Baader, showered the press boxes with a broadside entitled, the Grüne Leiche (Green Cadavor). *The tract proclaimed Baader as the "Präsident des Weitballs" (President of the Globe) and was printed on the backside of Dadaisten gegen Weimar (Dadaists against Weimar), a broadside attacking the Weimar government signed by "The Central Dada Council of World Revolution". Widely reported the press, the incident provides an outstanding example of the use of text as an instrument of avant-garde intentions, that is to say, as ameans by which to intercept cultural and political events.*

*49. Carl Einstein and George Grosz

"Prospectus for Der Blutige Ernst"

Berlin, October-November, 1919

Prospectus, 40 x 28 cm., recto and verso.

*50. Carl Einstein and George Grosz, editors

Der Blutige Ernst (no. 3)

Berlin, Trianon -Verlag, November 1919

Little review, 40.6 x 28.7 cm., 8 pp.

Cover by George Grosz.

50. As its title implies Der Blutige Ernst (In Bloody Ernest) *was political in content. The periodical was directed toward a wide, varied audience and emphasized political satire. Several of George Grosz's most biting satirical drawings are reproduced in this issue.*

Figure 28

Malik-Verlag that had been founded a year earlier. As a tactic to gain a publication license, they had used the title of Else Lasker-Schüler's novella,*Der Malik*.[21] When their periodical *Neue Jugend* was officially banned, they replaced the monthly format with that of the weekly broadside (Wochenausgabe, June 1917). The second number shows their innovative use of different typefaces, surprints, and color diversity to create an engaging layout which anticipated both the Dada photomontage and Constructivist typography (figure 3, cat. # 20). Trademarks of commerce including "Regie-Zigaretten" and "AEG" are directly incorporated into the Futurist inspired poems, "Kannst du radfahren?" ["Can ya' bicycle/ brown-nose?"]. Grosz's portfolio of lithographs, *Kleine Grosz Mappe*, is advertised in a collage-like array of generic steel engravings that overlay the titles of the portfolio images printed askew to appear like slogans: "Mord," "Hinrichtung," "Goldgräber-Bar," etc. (figure 28, cat. # 20). This appropriation of vernacular ingredients from the mass media shunned the celebration of individuality conveyed in the graphical codes of gesture and spontaneity in the *Revolution* masthead (figure 25, cat. # 18). The satirical content of *Neue Jugend* is conveyed in mechanized typography and photographs borrowed from the industrialized culture of the capitalist economy, leaving far behind the aura of uniqueness in Seewald's "original woodcut" in *Revolution*. As an announcement for Grosz's portfolio, *Neue Jugend* acknowledged the inevitable consumer status of the audience and advanced the mode of self-promotion based on advertising which would become a central Dada tactic. The standardized steel engraving illustrations and banner slogans used here are continued in the *Vorblatt* of the portfolio itself,[22] thus eroding the boundary between promotion and art object.

Photographs also provided an effective "mechanical" means of incorporating vernacular references while refer-

Berlin Dada

*46. Raoul Hausmann, Richard Huelsenbeck, and Franz Jung, editors
Club Dada (special number, Die freie Strasse)
Berlin, Verlag Freie Strasse, 1918
Little review, 26.5 x 18 cm., 16 pp.
Cover by Raoul Hausmann.

46. The establishment of the Club Dada in 1918 marked the formal birth of Berlin Dada and the Club Dada *prospectus was the group's first official publication. The prospectus appeared as a special issue of* Die freie Strasse, *an expressionist periodical which reflected a strong pro-Dada voice despite the fact that it was not a publishing organ specific to Dada. Dadasoph, Raoul Hausmann, was the featured contributor for* Die freie Strasse *(no. 9) and Oberdada, Johannes Baader, for issue number 10 of the journal (see catalogue #21 and 22).*

*47. Raoul Hausmann
Material der Malerei, Plastik, Architektur 1918
Zurich, Club Dada, October 1918
Book, 32 x 17.5 cm., 12 pp.

ring to the public understanding of historical events,[22] as Heartfield demonstrated in his cover for the Malik "illustrated" *Jedermann sein eigner Fussball* (February 1919), which reached a distribution of 7,600 copies.[24] Exploiting the techniques of propaganda and advertising, he used photographs to present six members of the Ebert-Scheidemann government across a fan and Noske, Ludendorff, and Erzberger, on the fan's handle, to accompany the slogan: "Preisausschreiben! Wer ist der Schönste?" [Open Competition! Who is the Prettiest?].[25]

If Grosz and Heartfield's borrowing of vernacular sources contributed generally to the foundation of the Berlin Dadaists' materialist strategy for their assault on Expressionism,[26] their interpretation of photographs as factual documents contributed directly to the best known of the Berlin Dada means for manipulating the text, the photocollage. Wieland Herzfelde's well-known description of his brother's approach, in the 1920 Dada-Messe catalog, lays emphasis on the qualities photographs share with objects:

> The Dadaists say...we need only take scissors and cut out the paintings, photographic reproductions of all of these things we need, and as far as something smaller in size is concerned, we don't need representation at all but take the things themselves...merely things.[27]

Figure 29

This remarkably pure approach (which avoided even a hint of drawing or the woodcut) was seen in yet another protest paper, *Der blutige Ernst* (cat. #s 50-53). In both the cover of issue number six of the periodical and in George Grosz's collage, "Schulzens Seele" (figure 29, cat. # 53), actual text fragments and reproductions are accepted as raw material for the structuring of what Grosz called "materializations."[28] Grosz's "Schulzens Seele" presents contemporary reality as mediated by the press while criticizing the entire German society in its full breadth as vernacular and high culture. References include the German Minister of the Interior (Gustav Noske), Tolstoy, mass murder, popular slogans, public monuments, Gothic architecture, advertisements, and the outspoken proclamation of rejection in Richard Huelsenbeck's 1918 Dada manifesto: "Nein! Nein! Nein!" The diversity of these references suggests a populist alternative to the ideological hierarchies of historical

*44. Marcel Janco

Mouvement Dada, Zur Meise

Zurich, Thursday, July 23, 1918

Poster, colored lithograph,

46.8 x 32.2 cm.

45. Otto Flake, Walter Serner, and Tristan Tzara, editors

Der Zeltweg

Zurich, Verlag Mouvement Dada, November 1919

Little review, 31 x 22 cm., 32 pp.

Cover by Hans (Jean) Arp.

45. The review is the last magazine published by the Zurich Dadaists and, in contrast to Dada 4-5 *(see catalogue #43), entirely German in content. Named after Zeltweg 83, the street address of Mouvement Dada,* Der Zeltweg *is closer in format to its precursor,* Cabaret Voltaire, *than to the last Zurich-based issue of the periodical* Dada.

meaning usually assumed as the framework for the text. As an objectification of the expectation horizon of the "situated" observer, they provided a more immediate and concrete setting.[29] The subversive potential of this kind of approach was recognized by Hausmann in his tract on Dada strategies. "Dadaism," he insisted, "applies itself tactically against the Christian-bourgeois world and uncovers pitilessly the absurdity and senselessness of its spiritual and social mechanism."[30] In "Schulzens Seele," fragments of an official history such as the "Alte Helden" [Old Heroes] are unmasked as merely sensationalist headlines on an equal status with "Germania ohne Hemd" [Germania shirtless] or "Ein Triumph der Wissenschaft!" [A Triumph of Science]. The entire setting of the historical epoch, as it would be perceived in the popular public imagery of great men, monuments, and heroes, is reconstructed in a vast array of contradictions. Yet precisely because their resolution tends to occur in a timeless aesthetic realm rather than according to an external ideological system, this approach risked inaccessibility. In contrast with the politically-directed journal, *Die Pleite* (cat. #s 54-58), with its artistically more conventional but scathing satirical drawings by George Grosz, *Der blutige Ernst* was less intelligible to the mass audience.

On the other hand, while releasing the text from its traditional roles of explanation and interpretation, Grosz and Heartfield allowed it to reflect the structure, appearance, and information value of the surrounding context in which it was transacted. The content of the photocollages *Sonniges Land* (used as a cover for Huelsenbeck's *Dada Siegt!*)[31] and *Leben und Treiben in Universal City um 12 Uhr 5 Mittags* (used for the cover for the 1920 "Dada Fair" catalog) served the artists' consensus on how their movement ought to be positioned historically and socially. As an "empty" term, "Dada" gradually accrued meaning by virtue of being situated in such collages. The text thus became part of the articulation of the institutional setting desired for Dadaism. Assuming the pose of "monteurs" (mechanics or fitters who assemble a product), Grosz and Heartfield used clippings from Dada periodicals and film advertisements along with photographs from the arenas of popular culture, politics, and industry to suggest an omni-

*42. Tristan Tzara, editor; *Dada 3*

Zurich, Julius Heuberger, December 1918

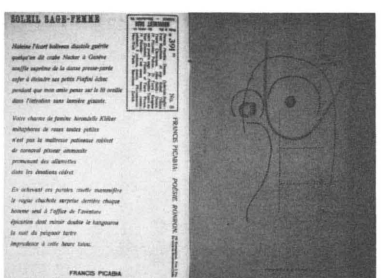
Little review, 33.5 x 24.5 cm., 16 pp.; Cover by Marcel Janco.

*43. Tristan Tzara, editor; *Dada 4-5 (Anthologie Dada)*

Zurich, Julius Heuberger, May 1919

Little review, 28 x 19 cm., 32 pp.

Covers by Hans (Jean) Arp and Francis Picabia.



43. The periodical carries double covers. The first is a biomorphic image by Arp, the second a mechanomorphic drawing by Picabia. The visually innovative journal was a direct collaboration between Picabia and Tristan Tzara which served as a bridge between Zurich and Paris Dada and included contributions by the Paris moderns. Picabia would later be partially responsible for the French avant-garde's sympathetic reception of Tzara upon his arrival in Paris in early 1920.

presence of Dada in precisely those realms excluded in the elite institutional setting of art being perpetuated at the time; for example, in such late Expressionist periodicals as *Genius* which proposed in its subtitle to align "nascent" with "old" art.

Despite their pose as "outsiders" to the institution of art, the significance of the Berlin Dadaists rests on the artistic decisions they made. Heartfield and especially Grosz had developed a proto-Dada collage style using a compo-sitional armature derived from Cubist and Futurist canons. Indeed, both artists shared a special admiration for Carlo Carrà whose *Funerali dell' anarchio Galli* (1911) was "treasured" by Heartfield and was a likely inspiration for Grosz' painting, *Widmung an Oskar Panizza* (1917-1918).[32] Even when Grosz fought against "Futuristic romantic dynamism" by "suppressing color" and using line "in an impersonal and photographic way" in such works as his *Der Mensch ist gut* (illustrated in *Ecce Homo*, cat. # 64), his model was the clarity and simplicity he perceived in Carrà.[33]

If the restructuring of the "institution of art" conducted "from the inside" by artists required a blending of aesthetic and instrumentalist strategies, then the historical situation in which the Dadaists found themselves could result only in a profound ambivalence. In opposition to the expressionists' anti-materialist imperative of using pure aesthetic forms to convey meaning, the Dadaists desired a disruption of the aesthetic ritual in order to convey meaning situationally through concrete objects and texts borrowing object qualities perceived in the surrounding culture as useful tools of communication. Yet, while incorporating found forms, the Berlin Dadaists also made formal decisions which would render these chosen implements suitable for the aesthetic ritual without totally sacrificing the communicative function needed to disrupt and redefine the institutional realm in which the aesthetic ritual had traditionally taken place. The condition of aesthetic contemplation permitted the suspension of conventional signification and allowed the recontextualization of meaning by using the associational logic of play celebrated in Dada ideology. By accepting the object quality the text shares with other cultural artifacts, they approached culture as a mate-

*39. Richard Huelsenbeck, *Phantastische Gebete*
Zurich: Collection Dada, September 1916
Book, 23 x 14.5 cm., 15 pp.
Seven woodcuts by Hans (Jean) Arp.

39. Arp's style integrates severe hierarchic totemic forms with the random configurations evident within the grain of the woodblock itself and constitutes an example of one of his early experiments with chance procedure.

*40. Tristan Tzara, editor; *Dada 1*
Zurich, Julius Heuberger, July 1917
Little review, 23 x 20 cm., 16 pp.

40. The relatively conservative magazine followed Cabaret Voltaire *and was the first number of a series of Zurich/Paris periodicals that appeared under the title* Dada.

*41. Tristan Tzara, editor; *Dada 2*
Zurich, Julius Heuberger, December 1917
Little review, 23 x 20 cm., 22 pp.

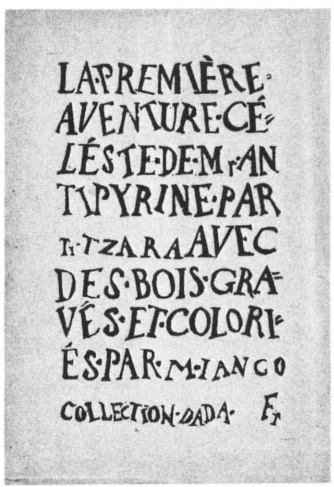
rial field which could be articulated aesthetically yet also hold the potential for contexturalizing new meanings.

Considered from the perspective of intentionality, it was monism — and especially Ernst Haeckel's version thereof championed by Hausmann and Johannes Baader — which made the Dadaist strategy of adopting a materialist position possible.[34] The Dada attack on Expressionist dualist metaphysics was launched during the first official Dada soirée in April 1918 with the reading of manifestos by Huelsenbeck and Hausmann extolling new materials in art.[35] Over the course of the following two years, the restructuring and recontexturalization of text and image advanced to the presentation of a text incorporating images as an object in the general field of culture. Appearing in a variety of situations approximating given cultural artifacts, the text developed a mobile and flexible array of fragments which were constantly interchanged and reused on the pages of little reviews, in mass-distributed broadsides, and in poster-collages. In so broad a setting, the text developed a standardized vocabulary capable of functioning in its various roles as "document," "relic," "product," "sculpture," "corrected masterpiece," and "propaganda."

For Hausmann, who was deeply influenced by the definition of culture in Salomo Friedländer's theory of creative indifference,[36] the linguistic component of all culture consisted in arbitrary visual and auditory forms which attained their meaning situationally. The transient and arbitrary aspects of meaning were reflected in Hausmann's earliest writings which expounded on the "'world' as a fiction."[37] His use of automatist procedures and coincidence in his Dada textual manipulations, rendered provisional structures—working myths having currency in the immediacy of the present. Baader also viewed Dada as revelatory of man's provisional systems imposed on an unfathomable reality, insisting in his "Erklärung des Club Dada" that "Dada is the chaos from which thousands of systems arise and are tangled again in Dada chaos."[38] With the Dada "movement" as their focus, Hausmann and Baader manipulated the text to unmask what they regarded as a flawed revolution and the failure of modernist movements (specifically Expressionism), while mounting provisional alternative structures in periodicals, posters, broadsides, collages,

37. *Mouvement Dada, Abonnemont-Liste No.*
Zurich, 1916
Printed sheet, 27.8 x 21.4 cm., (1 leaf).

*38. Tristan Tzara, *La Première aventure céléste de Mr. Antipyrine*
Zurich: Collection Dada, July 28, 1916
Book, 23.5 x 16.5 cm., 16 pp.
Seven woodcuts
by Marcel Janco.



38. The first of a long series of collaborations between the Dada painters and poets published under the Collection Dada imprint. The text for the book consists of Tzara's poetic rendering of what can perhaps best be described as a score for a manifesto that was originally composed for public recitation.

and assemblages.

The periodical issues produced by Hausmann and Baader were initially more conservative visually than Grosz and Heartfield's revolutionary *Neue Jugend*. However, Hausmann's visual contributions to *Club Dada (Die freie Strasse 7/8*, cat. # 46), his book *Material der Malerei Plastik Architektur* (cat. # 47), and *Der Dada 1* (cat. # 59) all responded to *Neue Jugend* with a qualitative departure in the development of a standardized visual vocabulary which was flexible enough to be applied in diverse Dada artifacts. In *Club Dada*, the influence of the unconventional setting of *Neue Jugend* is reflected in large red announcements displayed over conventionally printed texts by Huelsenbeck. Hausmann made a new departure in typography by turning letters ninety degrees off axis and placing them slightly out of alignment to heighten the abstract and arbitrary quality standardized type shares with abstract forms. This technique was undoubtedly developed in collaboration with Baader, as is evident in Baader's handbill, *Dadaisten gegen Weimar* (cat. # 48, verso), and in the Club Dada stationery and postcards both artists made at this time. But Hausmann's title page of *Material der Malerei Plastik Architektur* (figure 30, cat. #47) also shows his own construction of a composition for which the letters and abstract forms are equally essential.While the words remain legible, the recognition process is drawn out, causing the composition to become an embodiment of the central theme expressed in Hausmann's brief semi-automatic text for the book: art as pure perception, "a formation organic in analogy of the observed moments neither intuitive nor descriptive."[39] The text also shares in the structural sophistication seen in the woodcuts in the book, one of which reappears as the "Porträt des Oberdada" on the back cover of *Der Dada 1*.

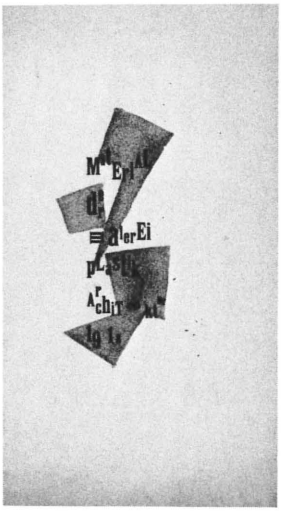


Figure 30

Hausmann's strategy for combining text and image, as recounted in 1932, was a "doubling of a text through optical illustration...not...simple juxtaposition, but rather...an optical construction referring back to linguistic-conceptual foundations."[40] His works range from conceptual to visual signification, and often incorporate prelogical and aural associations as well. The cover for *Club Dada* (figure 31, cat.# 46) presents an explosion of fragmented shapes de-

33. *Sturm-Ausstellung, Galerie Dada, I Serie*
Zurich, Galerie Dada, March 17 - April 7, 1917
Announcement/Program, 27 X 21 cm., (1 leaf).

34. *Sturm-Ausstellung, Galerie Dada, II Serie*
Zurich, Galerie Dada, April 7, 1917
Announcement/Program, 28 x 21.3 cm., (1 leaf).

35. *Sturm-Ausstellung: I Serie, 17. Marz - 7. April: II Terie (sic) 9. April - 30. April*
Zurich, Galerie Dada, 1917
Exhibition catalogue, 15.5 x 12 cm., 16 pp.
Cover by Oskar Kokoschka.

36. *Mouvement Dada*
Zurich, n.d.
Stationery, 13.9 x 21.7 cm.

Figure 31

rived directly from the striated forms and architectonic vocabulary of his earlier woodcuts now combined with the letters of the words "Club Dada". Multiple phonetic codes begin to appear in this jumble of shapes appearing like eggs in a Dada nest: "uab", "Dab", "Du ". The arbitrary forms of the letters also find visual echoes in the abstract shapes which surround them.

The cover for *Der Dada 1* (figure 32, cat. #59) is probably a "hausmann-baader" collaberation and presents a visually abstract structure of standardized mechanical typography, mathematical abstractions, Hebrew letters, generic steel engraving vignettes, and the letters "Ad1" (referring to the mock resurrection of the Oberdada) – all lending an air of mystery to the signifiers "Dadadegie", "Dada", and "IOADGDATTTSAE". Paging through the periodical, one finds Hausmann's phonetic poem, "kp'erium", several of his abstract woodcuts, and various vertical and horizontal slogans and mock headlines which allude to the belief systems of government, religion, and economics: "The Virgin Mary called to the Defense of Germany — the raising of the immaculate conception to state religion imminent," "invest your money in Dada," and "make Dada advertisements!" The text is also used to situate Dada artifacts fictionally in social institutions of authority. "Whoever wants to be informed about Dada" an article entitled "Erklärung Dada" explains, "must be shown the documents" available in the State Chancery and Office of the President of the Republic. The subversive logic of the *Der Dada* enterprise is thus established: the Dada text, and with it the institutional setting of the "Zentralamt des Dadaismus" [Dada Central Office], attains signification not in isolation but increasingly in terms dictated by the belief systems, communication modes, and social institutions of the surrounding cuture.

Figure 32

The separate numbers of *Die freie Strasse* which Hausmann and Baader produced in late 1918, show their differing approaches to virtually identical working materials. Hausmann's careful asymmetrical balance of bold geometrically articulated text blocks for the title page of

31. Hugo Ball, editor

Cabaret Voltaire

Zurich, Meierei Spiegelgasse 1, May 15, 1916

Little review, 27 x 22 cm., 32 pp.

Cover by Hans (Jean) Arp.

31. The periodical shared its name with the cabaret around which Dada was birthed as a movement. Although conservative in format, the heavily illustrated journal included contributions by the Futurists and Cubists as well as by the Dadaists and reflects early Zurich Dada's catholic embrace of European modernism.

*32. Sturm-Ausstellung, II Serie

Zurich, Galerie Dada,

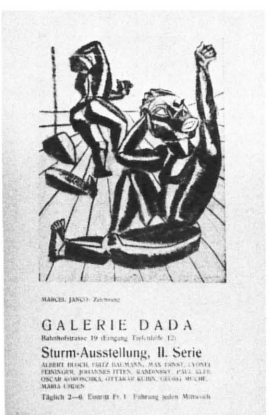
April 1917

Exhibition catalogue,

11 x 7 cm., 4 pp.

(1 folded sheet).

Cover by Marcel Janco.

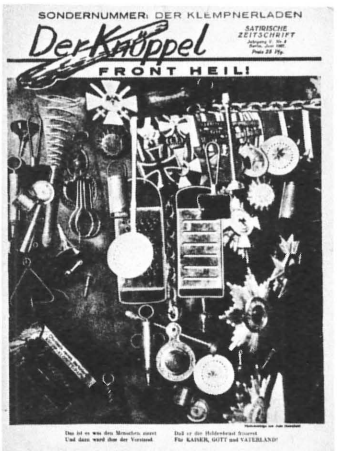


Die freie Strasse no. 9 (cat. # 21) conveys the proto- constructivist attitude already seen in his *Material der Malerei Plastik Architektur*. Baader, on the other hand, was trained as an architect specializing in cemetery monuments and was generally unaware of vanguard artistic styles. His idiosyncratic, yet monumental exclamation point dominates the title page of *Die freie Strasse* no. 10 (cat. # 22), which otherwise remains within the vernacular conventions of typography he had used in his 1914 tract, *Vierzehn Briefe Christi*. Unlike Grosz and Heartfield who brought vernacular convention into the vanguard artistic styles of Cubism and Futurism to affirm a political ideology (the Communist line taken in *Die Pleite*), Baader simply moved the accrued components (documents, events, publications) of his conceptual project, based around the monumental figure of the messianic Oberdada, through various settings. Hausmann had moved the journal toward aesthetic purity; Baader had then drawn it back towards the vernacular.

Figure 33

The half-tone technology added in *Der Dada 2* (cat. # 60) facilitated further inroads into the mass media, as is seen in Hausmann and Baader's "Klebebilder" ("glued pictures," known later as photocollages). While still influenced by the abstraction of Otto van Rees and Hans Arp he had absorbed from reproductions in *Dada*, Hausmann incorporated clippings from earlier Dada documents in his cover collage (figure 33, cat. # 60) to accompany the proclamations "Dada conquers!" and "Join up with Dada." His "Gurk" (appearing on the back cover) presents a portrait of the poet Paul Gurk made up of clippings from Hausmann's own woodcuts (e.g., that used in *Club Dada*, p. 11) as well as appropriations clipped from woodcuts by Arthur Segal and Hans Richter which he had admired when they appeared in *Dada 3* (pp. 9 and 10, cat. # 42).

*29. Ernst Schneller, content editor; *Der Knüppel* (Jahrgang V, no. 4)
Berlin, Verlag Vereinigung Internationaler Verlagsanstalten G.m.b.h.,
September 1927; Little review, 32.5 x 24 cm., 12 pp.
Cover by John Heartfield.



*30. Julian Gumperz, editor; *Platz! dem Arbeiter*
Berlin, Der Malik-Verlag, n.d. [1923-24]
Book, 23 x 15 cm., 238 pp.

30. One of the many journals published by the politically radical Malik -Verlag publishing house. The magazine successfully integrates photomontage and journalism. Its political concerns deliberately eclipse its aesthetic intentions.

Phonetic fragments of Pierre Albert-Birot's poem *Crayon Bleu (Dada 3*, p. 8) are mixed with advertising passages and headline clippings from the conventional press. Thus transported, these text fragments convey multiple meanings in forms suitable to be transacted across the international Dada movement and into the surrounding culture. In Baader's photocollage, *Das ist die Erscheinung des Oberdada in den Wolken des Himmels*, a quasi-occultist array of letters and numbers transcends the earthly sphere and conveys his cosmological program based around the fictional persona of the Oberdada. His accompanying text, "Reklame für mich" [Advertisement for Me], anchors that identity in the vast array of contemporary political events. Baader had actually participated in at least one of the events he mentions when, after gaining access to the founding celebration of the new German Republic in Weimar, he showered the press box with a mock political pamphlet entitled *Grüne Leiche [Green Corpse]* (figure 4, cat. # 48) declaring himself President of the World, thus manipulating the coverage of an event in the conventional press and thereby appropriating it as a Dada event. As a political tract which at the same time carries aesthetic value, Baader's flier was exemplary of the Dada text which attained currency while simultaneously challenging and altering the structures in which it was situated. The process of mapping and labelling the surrounding context is apparent also in Hausmann's mock advertisement "Was ist Dada?", a series of questions each set in a different typeface and printed at a ninety -degree angle to the rest of the page layout: "What is Dada? An Art? A Philosophy? A Politics? A fire insurance? or: State religion? Is Dada really energy? or is it nothing, i.e. everything?" By simultaneously announcing and questioning the meaning of the term "Dada," the Dadaists disrupted the orienting framework, im-plicating and rendering visible the process by which meaning is received.

Similarly, *Der Dada 2* (cat. # 60) simultaneously advances and subverts the institutional claims of Dada. In the text parody, "Tretet dada bei," the Club Dada is presented as a mock bureaucracy with a Dada Graphological Institute, Dada Health Department, Dada Advertising Department, and Central Office for Private Male and Female Welfare. A

25. Rudolf A. Dietrich, editor
Der Komet (no. 4)
Dresden, 1919
Little review, 22 x 17 cm., 4 pp. (1 folded sheet).
Johannes Baader issue.

26. Paul Steegemann, editor
Der Marstall (no. 1-2)
Hannover, Leipzig, Vienna, Zurich; Paul Steegemann Verlag, 1920
Little review, 22 x 14.5 cm., 58 pp.

27. Wieland Herzfelde, Julian Gumperz, and Karl Otten, editors
Der Gegner (no. 3, Blätter zur Kritik der Zeit)
Halle, Leipzig, Berlin; 1920/21
Little review, 23 x 15.5 cm., 88 pp.

27. Illustrates the ties between radical politics, Expressionism, and Dada during Germany's post World War I period.

28. H. Remmele, content editor
Der Knüppel (Jahrgang III, no. 10)
Berlin, Verlag Vereinigung Internationaler Verlagsanstalten G.m.b.h.,
September 15, 1925
Little review, 38.5 x 28 cm., 8 pp.; Cover drawing by Rudolf Schlichter.

massive Dadaco hand atlas to be produced by the "Central Office of the Dada Movement in Germany" is advertised in a bold full-page spread of varied typography (*Der Dada 2*, p. 3). But Hausmann's text,"Der deutsche Spiesser ärgert sich" [The German Bourgeois takes Offense] proclaims "We...laugh the irony: Dada! Because we are Antidadaists! . . .And we are Antidadaists, because for us Dada still has too much feeling and aesthetics."

In *Der Dada 3*, (figure 34, cat. # 61) and in the various artifacts on display at the International Dada Fair, the "Dada Advertising Campaign" attained its widest diversity in a general promotion of the mass imagery of politics, sports sports, fashion, film, and the machine. Taken over by Herzfelde's Malik Verlag, *Der Dada 3* was produced through the combined efforts of its "directeurs: groszfield, hearthaus, and georgemann." Using overlapping typography in red and black, cartoons, photocollages, and photographs, *Dada 3* incorporated references to Dada in Zurich, Paris, and Cologne. Yet it was the very dominance of the Dada allusions and the consolidation of Dada as an international avant-garde movement which brought to an end the potential restructuring of the "institution of art" in terms of the surrounding vernacular institutions. Despite the unprecedented complexity of the Dada texts and objects it illustrates, the periodical takes on the characters of an anthology, reverting back to the booklet format to become a visual pendant to Huelsenbeck's *Dada Almanach*. As was also the case with the technically sophisticated and facile, but ill-fated *Dadaco* project, the innovative text existed again in a conventional vehicle of the modernist movement and was thereby beginning to lose its instrumental capacity in the transactional arena beyond.

Figure 34

Precisely the same fate was suffered by the text in the International Dada Fair where, via the text as object, Berlin Dada exhibited itself as a movement. Appearing in political posters by Heartfield, advertising poster-collages by Hausmann, Dada "relics" by Baader, and "corrected masterpieces" by Grosz and Heartfield, the text was presented in an encyclopedic display of new idioms of its manipulation. The limits of its materialization were tested in

*23. *Sezession Gruppe 1919*

Dresden, Verlag Emil Richter, 1919

Book 28.5 x 22 cm., 36 pp.

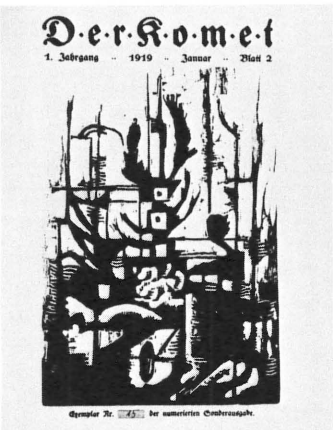
Cover by Conrad Felixmüller.

*24. Rudolf A. Dietrich, editor

Der Komet (no. 2); Dresden, January 1919

Little review, 22 x 17 cm., 4 pp. (1 folded sheet).

Marcel Janco issue.



Hausmann's use of wooden display letters in a relief he later called his first "Konkretisation-Skulptur-Assemblage."[41] The text was the raw material for Baader's five-story architectural model of German culture reconstructed around Dadaism and the Oberdada, an assemblage of newspapers, Dada propaganda, and other objects ironically entitled *The Great Plasto-Dio-Dada-Drama: Germany's Rise and Fall.* Such modes of communication were inherently idiomatic in nature; that is, their meaning was highly situational and intentionally related to the transitory context of an avant-garde institution and its relationship to the broader culture. Presenting itself as an alternative, Berlin Dada attacked the military, the government, the ruling class, and, above all, Expressionism. The Dadaists implicitly challenged the modernist historical myth of the "movement" and posed an ahistorical alternative based on other "fictions": ironical personas (Dadasoph, Monteurdada, and Marschall announced on the *Dada-Messe* cover) performing as Dada "managers" and "directors" of a bureaucratic "Dada Central Office" and "Advertising Bureau." As boldly proclaimed across the cover of the broadside catalog, the "Dada Movement" would lead "to the suspension of art dealing," offering instead "Dadaist products" for sale. But as the Weimar era of relative social stability dawned, the instrumental potential of the Dada text as subversive, and with it the promise of Dada as an alternative institution for art, was losing its potency beyond the context of Otto Burchard's art gallery.

The transient balance attained in Berlin Dada between the aesthetic and instrumental potentials of the text was rarely regained in subsequent developments of the text in Germany during the 1920s. Greatly simplified, the innovative text served either a commitment to political ideology or the formal revolutions of Constructivism. By 1922, the art of both Grosz and Heartfield had taken to the streets in Agitprop and in 1926, Grosz and Herzfelde were practicing the conventions of political persuasion (which Berlin Dada had parodied) in their Malik Verlag booklet, *Die Kunst ist in Gefahr* (cat. # 66). Heartfield, in collaboration with colleague-satirist, Kurt Tucholsky, achieved a relationship of irony between text and image in the 1929 book, *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles.* His contributions to *Der*

21. Franz Jung, editor

Die freie Strasse (no. 9)

Berlin, November 1918

Little review, 41.5 x 27 cm., 4 pp.

Raoul Hausmann, featured contributor.

*22. Franz Jung, editor

Die freie Strasse (no. 10); Berlin, December 1918

Little review, 42 x 29 cm., 4 pp.

Johannes Baader, featured contributor.


Die freie Strasse

Präsident Baader

D.B.D.R.

Knüppel (cat. # 29), *Die rote Fahne* (which editorially distanced him from the bourgeois "Romanticism" of the Dada "engineers"),[42] and the *Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung* reached an incomparably greater audience than had the Dadaists, even in the heyday of the Dada Tournée and its mass appeal. While Heartfield's photomontage technique insured a continual appropriation of topical and vernacular sources, the pursuit of a restructured society was again being perceived in an historicist framework for which a largely politicized institutional setting for art was the most logical objective.

The consolidation of modernist "-isms" continued during the 1920s in the new associations of artists variously aligned with Constructivism. Something of the self-reflective attitude of Dadaism persisted in Kurt Schwitters' "Merz" activities. These included Anti-Dada-Merz evenings in collaboration with Hausmann beginning in 1921 (e.g., *Merz-Matinéen in Revon*, cat. # 89). While Schwitters had been excluded from the Berlin circle by Huelsenbeck's decree, he had situated his Merz activities in relation to Dadaism almost from the beginning. In 1920, he displayed the phrase "Vorsicht: Anti-Dada" [Caution: Anti-Dada] on the cover of his book of lithographs, *Die Kathedrale* (cat. # 86).[43] By 1923, he was proclaiming in *Merz 1* that "Wir leben im Dadazeitalter" [We live in the Dada Era][44] and using Dada as a mainstay among framing references for Merz which included also El Lissitzky's "Proun" and Theo van Doesburg's "Stijl" activities. An admirer of the "Stillosigkeit" [absence of style] of Dada, his essential activity was one of a continual restructuring (using sources ranging from *Der Sturm* to *G*) of a movement that aimed for universal validity. *Merz 4* (cat. # 91) even carries a price in 16 currencies on the back cover adjacent to a listing of ten vanguard periodicals from various countries. In its reconstructive effort, *Merz* draws upon many of the conventions of modernist movements including Dada. While more serious in tone, the "Manifest Proletkunst" in *Merz 2* uses arguments against the idea of proletarian art very similar to those in Hausmann's tracts against a specifically proletarian art.[45] Not surprisingly, given Schwitters' Dadaist affinities, the appearance of the text in *Merz* moves from appropriations from the vernacular in the *Merz-Reklame [Merz Advertise-*

18. Hugo Ball and Hans Leybold's Munich based little review was particularly noteworthy for the radicalism of its political and critical intentions. The review, which integrated expressionist poetry with extreme criticism of contemporary culture, was overtly opposed to political neutrality. Revolution *provided Ball with the background out of which his concept of Dada emerged and was later also to influence the Berlin Dadaists of the late teens and early twenties.*

*18 Hugo Ball and Hans Leybold, editors *Revolution* (no.1)
Munich, Verlag Heinrich F.S. Bachmair, October 1913
Little review, 30.5 x 22.5 cm., 8 pp.
Revolution (no. 1), cover woodcut by Richard Seewald,
nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4 are rebound under one cover,
October 15 - December 1, 1913.

19. Neue Jugend *provided a breeding ground for Berlin Dada. For example, Richard Huelsenbeck, who imported the movement from Zurich to the German capital, published "Der neue Mensch," his proto-Dadaist manifestos, in* Neue Jugend *(no. 13), the first of the two large format issues of the journal. These issues were patterned after the New York dailies and appeared under the newly established Malik Verlag imprint which, during its long life, would become one of the most radical of the Berlin based publishing houses.*

19. John Heartfield, editor
Neue Jugend (no. 13)
Berlin, Der Malik-Verlag, May 1917
Little review, 64 x 51.5 cm., 4 pp.

20. The second and last of the large format issues of the journal, Neue Jugend *(no. 14), which was expensively produced, made use of multicolored printing and unconventional layout, and is considered to be one of the most handsome and formally innovative avant-garde experiments with the text.*

*20. John Heartfield, editor
Neue Jugend (no. 14)
Berlin, Der Malik-Verlag, June 1917
Little review, 64 x 51.5 cm., 4 pp.

ments] to the collage-like lithographs in *Merz 3*, while the use of diverse typefaces and steel engraving vignettes in *Merz 4* and *Merz 6* yields to the stunning formal clarity of the Lissitzky collaboration *Merz 8/9* (cat. # 92) and the in-ventive and imaginative *Die Scheuche* (cat. # 94) produced in collaboration with Kate Steinitz and van Doesburg Doesburg. Schwitters' bold *Typo-Reklame* in *Merz 11* (cat. # 93), printed in a run of 5,000, perhaps comes closest to the image of an alternative to the institution of art that the Dadaists had hoped for. Its innovative full-page layouts succeed as aggressive advertising. The slogans in *Merz 20* convey a strong echo of the Dada Advertising Company while its visual sophistication provides the periodical with a greater chance of succeeding as a means of transacting aesthetic objects across mass culture: "Entwürfe jeder Art für Propagandazwecke" [designs of every kind for propaganda purposes]. Lacking, however, is the critical dimension, the sharp sting of the Dadaists' subversive message and of Heartfield's contemporary photomontages employing vernacular imagery.

If the text had largely lost its potential for effecting social criticism as mediation between the modernist movement and the surrounding culture, it remained an integral part of the new structures of modernism. The developments in the periodical *Merz* illustrate that articulating the text could still imply a restructuring of a movement. Hans Arp and Lissitzky's 1925 book *Kunstismen* (cat. # 113) illustrates the unprecedented degree of sophistication the avant-garde had attained in articulating its identity via the text. Yet, without a reciprocal exchange with the surrounding social forces and vernacular patterns of culture, artists found it increasingly difficult to extricate the modernist "movement" from its historical dilemma. The text had only briefly enabled artists to articulate meaning independent of the institutional constraints of the avant-garde.

14. Herwarth Walden, *Die neue Malerei*
Berlin, Verlag Der Sturm, 1919; Book, 24.5 x 16.4 cm., 30 pp.

15. A spin-off of the Sturm circle which illustrates the points of congruence between Expressionism and Dada.

15. Rudolf Blümner, editor
Die Quirlsanze: Für Ball, Sidiographie und Politik; Berlin, 1921
Little review, 28.5 x 22 cm., 12 pp.

16. Oskar Kokoschka, *Zwanzig Zeichnungen*
Berlin, Verlag Der Sturm, n.d.; Portfolio of 20 drawings, 42.5 x 31.5 cm.

*17. Herwarth Walden, *Die Judentochter*
Berlin, Verlag Der Sturm, n.d.
Musical score,
41 x 29.5 cm., 8 pp.
Cover by Oskar Kokoschka.

NOTES

1. On this background, see Donald E. Gordon, *Expressionism: Art and Idea* (New Haven, 1987), pp. 1-25.

2. See, for example, the discussion of Georg Heym and Jakob van Hoddis in Rainer Rumold, "Crisis as Event: The Avant-Garde, Revolution, and Catastrophe as Metaphors" in: *"Event" Arts and Art Events*, Stephen C. Foster, ed. (Ann Arbor, 1988), pp. 11-28.

3. This recognition was evident, for example, in the reception of the first Berlin Dada *soirée* at the Berliner Sezession in April 1918. Willi Wolfradt could not accept the Dadaists seriously in part because he believed they had taken over the "pose" of a movement without any motivating beliefs: "Aber alle Definitionsversuche geben eine viel zu ernsthafte Vorstellung von dieser peinlichsten Flegelei, die je startete, nicht ohne zuerst einmal jede Beziehung zu den veralteten Erscheinungen des Futurismus, Kubismus, Aktivismus, etc. lärmend abzuschwören. Und mit Recht": denn jene jüngsten Bewegungen entstiegen in alle ihren Krassheiten und Verzerrungen einem heiligen, fanatischen Glauben, während hier tatsächlich, wie ja auch die Manager des Dadaismus mit Stolz sagen, eine 'Erfindung' (ohne Treu und Glauben) vorliegt." Willi Wolfradt, "Der Dadaismus," *Der Friede* 1, 18 (May 24, 1918): 434-435, rpt. in Karl Riha, *Da Dada da war ist Dada da: Aufsätze und Dokumente* (Munich, 1980), pp. 283-284, n. 3.

4. Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. Michael Shaw, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 33.

5. Raoul Hausmann, "Objektive Betrachtung der Rolle des Dadaismus," *Der Kunsttopf 4* (October 1920): 62-68, rpt. in Raoul Hausmann, *Texte bis 1933*, Michael Erlhoff, ed. 2 vols. (Munich, 1982), 1:112.

6. Erich Muhsam, "Revolution" in *Revolution* 1, no. 1 (October 15, 1913), p. 2.

7. Fritz Schlawe, *Literarische Zeitschriften: 1910-1933*, Second Edition (Stuttgart, 1973), p. 15. The first number was confiscated due to Hugo Ball's poem "Der Gehenkte" according to Paul Raabe, *Die Zeitschriften und Sammlungen des Literarischen Expressionismus* (Stuttgart, 1964), p. 50.

11. Herwarth Walden, editor
Der Sturm (vol. 3, no. 130) Berlin, Verlag Der Sturm, October 1912
Periodical, 41.5 x 31 cm., 8 pp. Cover by Wassily Kandinsky.

*12. Herwarth Walden, editor.
Der Sturm (vol. 3, no. 132)
Berlin, Verlag Der Sturm,
October 1912
Periodical, 41.5 x 31 cm.,
8 pp.
Cover by Arthur Segal.

12. Der Sturm *was the first of the Expressionist journals and set the tone for many of its successors in both content and format. The periodical was active for an extended period of time, its first issue appearing in 1910, and its last in 1932. The widely circulated journal was the publication organ of the group of artists who exhibited at Herwarth Walden's influential gallery of the same name and its editorial offices provided one of the major centers of ferment and artistic thinking of the period. Walden's Der Sturm gallery exhibited works by artists from throughout Europe and served as a training ground for members of a variety of subsequent movements, groups as diverse as Dada, International Constructivism and the Budapest/Vienna based MA circle.*

13. Herwarth Walden, editor
Der Sturm (vol. 7, no. 12)
Berlin, Verlag Der Sturm, March 1917
Periodical, 41.5 x 31 cm., 8 pp.
Cover by Paul Klee.

8. The appearance of *Die Aktion* began to be refined within a year of its first issue when it gradually became more streamlined, dropping its gothic script and employing bold graphic art on its first page. For a detailed account, see Paul Raabe, "*Die Aktion*: Geschichte einer Zeitschrift" in *Die Aktion*, reprint edition, Paul Raabe, ed. (Munich, 1961) 1: 11ff.

9. The circulation of *Der Sturm* in 1912 was 10,000 while that of *Die Aktion* in 1913 was 5,000-8,0000. Schlawe, *Literarische Zeitschriften*, pp. 39 and 86.

10. Raabe, *Zeitschriften*, p. 7.

11. F.T. Marinetti, "Die futuristische Literatur. Technisches Manifest," *Der Sturm* 3, 133 (1912), pp. 194-195.

12. Trans. in Umbro Apollonio, *Futurist Manifestos* (New York, 1973), pp. 95-106.

13. For an overview of the complexities of the mixed reception of Futurism in Germany, see Johanna Eltz, *Der Italienische Futurismus in Deutschland 1912-1922: Ein Beitrag zur Analyse seiner Rezeptionsgeschichte* (Bamberg, 1986).

14. cf. Kandinsky's discussion of "praktisch-zweckmässigg" in "Über die Fromage" in *Der Blaue Reiter* (Munich, 1912), pp. 84 ff.

15. "Offener Brief an die Novembergruppe," *Der Gegner* 2, 8-9 (1920-1921): 297-301, rpt. in Helga Kliemann, *Die Novembergruppe* (Berlin, 1969), pp. 61-64.

16. The entire pamphlet is illustrated in Eberhard Steneberg, *Arbeitstrat für Kunst Berlin 1918-1921* (Düsseldorf, 1987), pp. 2-9.

17. For further discussion of the posters and other public art of the Novembergruppe and Arbeitsrat für Kunst, see Ida Katherine Rigby, *An alle Künstler! War-Revolution-Weimar* (Exh. cat., San Diego: University Gallery, 1983), pp. 33-39 and 69-91.

18. [Walter Rheiner], "Die Zeitschrift 'MENSCHEN'" in *Menschen 2. 1* (1919).

19. This conclusion is largely borne out in Joan Weinstein's recent study, *Art and the November Revolution in Germany 1918-1919*, PhD. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1986.

20. Hugo Ball, "Als ich das Cabaret Voltaire gründete..." in *Cabaret Voltaire* (1916): 5.

9. An influential statement of Expressionist artistic theory, centered on Kandinsky's concept of "internal necessity." For Kandinsky the individual's experience of the environment produced an inner necessity, subsequently formulated into values which found their objectification in works of art. The principles of this theory operated independently of specific artistic genre and informed totalistic concepts of art in France, Switzerland, and Russia, as well as Germany. Kandinsky's theories deeply influenced Hugo Ball, the founder of Dada in Zurich.

*9. Wassily Kandinsky, *Über das Geistige in der Kunst*
Munich, R. Piper, 1912
Book, 21 x 18 cm.,
106 pp .
Cover by Wassily Kandinsky.

*10. *The* Blue Rider Almanach *represents a stage of Expressionism subsequent to the Dresden Bridge Group, founded in 1905. The publication brought together a group of artists and writers who were never, strictly speaking, composed into a movement. The Almanach was a heavily illustrated collection of writings about art and literature which focused on the origin and process of art as such could be identified in the production of folk artists (the Bavarian glass painters) and the "modern primitives" (Rousseau). The collection also reproduces a number of Kandinsky's "Improvisations," paintings typically interpreted as the first sustained manifestations of abstraction.*

*10. Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc, editors
Der Blaue Reiter
Munich,
R. Piper, 1912
Book, 29 x 21 cm.,
140 pp.
Rebound in cloth.

21. Wieland Herzfelde, ed., *Der Malik-Verlag: 1916-1947* (Exh. cat., Berlin: Deutsche Akademie der Künste zu Berlin, 1967), p. 21. At the time, Lasker-Schüler's *Der Malik* was being published in installments in *Der Brenner, Die Aktion*, and *Neue Jugend.*

22. Illustration in Wieland Herzfelde, *John Heartfield: Leben und Werk* (Dresden, 1971), plates 2-5.

23. For a discussion of the relationship of photographs and the popular conception of history, see Estera Milman, "Photomontage, the Event, and Historism" in: *"Event" Arts,* Stephen Foster, ed., pp. 203-238.

24. Although typically unsigned, Heartfield is given credit for the cover in Herzfelde, *Heartfield*, p. 21.

25. Wieland Herzfelde, "George Grosz, John Heartfield, Erwin Piscator, Dada und die Folgen — oder Die Macht der Freundschaft", *Sinn und Form*, 23, 6 (1971): 1224-51, rpt. in John Heartfield, *Der Schnitt entlang der Zeit: Selbstzeugnisse, Erinnerungen, Interpretationen* (Dresden, 1981), p. 88.

26. Timothy O. Benson, *Raoul Hausmann and Berlin Dada* (Ann Arbor, 1987), pp. 79ff.

27. Wieland Herzfelde, "Zur Einführung," *Katalog der Erste Internationale Dada-Messe* (Exh. cat., Berlin: Kunsthandlung Dr. Otto Burchard, 1920), rpt. in Heartfield, *Schnitt entlang der Zeit*, p. 41.

28. George Grosz, *Mit Pensel und Schere: Sieben Materialisationen*, book of monochrome reproductions after watercolor collages employing photographic fragments (Berlin, 1922).

29. For a discussion of the concept of "horizon of expectations," see Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* (Minneapolis, 1982), pp. 23-24.

30. Hausmann, "Objektive Betrachtung," rpt. in Hausmann, *Texte* 1: 112.

31. Richard Huelsenbeck, *Dada Siegt! Eine Bilanz des Dadaismus* (Berlin, 1920).

32. "Aus einem Interview mit Heartfield" in Heartfield, *Schnitt entlang der Zeit*, p. 464.

33. George Grosz, "Zu meinen neuen Bildern." *Das Kunstblatt* 5, 1 (1921): 10-16, trans. in Victor Miesel, ed.,*Voices of German Expressionism* (Englewood Cliffs, 1970), p. 187.

34. See Timothy O. Benson, "Mysticism, Materialism, and the Machine in Berlin Dada," *Art Journal* 46, 1 (Spring 1987): 46-55.

*8. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, *Les mots en liberté futuristes*
Venice, Milan,
Edizioni Futuriste di "Poesia," 1919 Book, 19 x 12.5 cm.,
112 pp., (4 fold outs).

8. The book, composed primarily of Marinetti's theoretical writings, includes four fold outs which illustrate the typographical and pictorial potential of language freed from the constraint of conventions. It was an attempt to allow language to speak in an idiom unencumbered by its cultural usage. A vivid illustration of the Futurists' image of themselves as the "primitives of a new age."

35. Richard Huelsenbeck, "Der Dadaismus im Leben und in der Kunst" published as "Dadaistisches Manifest" in *Dada Almanach*, Richard Huelsenbeck, ed., (Berlin, 1920), pp. 36-41; Raoul Hausmann, "Das Neue Material in der Malerei," published as "Synthetisches Cino der Malerei" in Hausmann, *Texte* 1: 14-16.

36. Hausmann and Baader both were closely associated with Friedländer in 1915, by which time his theory was codified. See Salomo Friedländer, *Schöpferische Indifferenz* (Munich, 1918), pp. xxi-xxiii.

37. Raoul Hausmann, "Notiz," *Die Aktion* 7, 31/32 (August 11, 1917), cols. 421-422, rpt. in Hausmann, *Texte* 1: 12.

38. Johannes Baader, "Erklärung des Club Dada" in Huelsenbeck, ed., *Dada Almanach*, p. 132.

39. "eine Gestaltung organische in Analogie der gesehenen Momente weder nachamend noch beschreibend." Hausmann, *Material der Malerei Plastik Architektur* (Berlin, 1918), rpt. in Hausmann, *Texte* 1: 19.

40. Hausmann, "Typografie," *Qualität* 10 (1932): 16-17, rpt. in Hausmann, *Texte 2*: 183.

41. Raoul Hausmann, *Am Anfang war Dada*, Karl Riha and Günter Kämpf, eds. (Giessen, second edition, 1980), p. 122; illus. in Benson, *Hausmann*, p. 155.

42. Duras [Alfred Kemeny] "Photomontage und Buchgraphik. Zur 3. Ausstellung des Bundes revolutionärer Künstler," *Die rote Fahne* 15, 17 (1932), rpt. in Heartfield, *Schnitt entlang der Zeit*, pp. 178- 179

43. Kurt Schwitters, *Die Kathedrale* (Hanover, 1920).

44. *Merz 1 (Holland Dada)* (January 1923), p. 5.

45. The "Manifest Proletkunst" was signed by Theo van Doesburg, Kurt Schwitters, Hans Arp, Tristan Tzara, and Christof Spengemann in *Merz 2 ("i")* (April 1923): 24-25. Cf. e.g., Raoul Hausmann, "Der Proletarier und die Kunst," *Das Kunstblatt* 2, 12 (December 1918): 388-89, rpt. in Hausmann, *Texte* 1: 24-26.

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His past publications include: "The Functional and Conventional in the Dada Philosophy of Raoul Hausmann" (1985) and Raoul Hausmann and Berlin Dada *(1987).*

4. Umberto Boccioni and Arnoldo Bonzagni
   La pittura futurista: Manifesto tecnico
   Milan, April 11, 1910
   Manifesto, 29 x 23 cm., 4 pp. (1 folded sheet).

5. Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Carrà, Carlo Dalmazzo
   Manifesto dei pittori futuristi: Agli artisti giovani d'Italia!
   Milan, 1910
   Manifesto, 29 x 23 cm., 4 pp. (1 folded sheet).

6. Umberto Boccioni
   Manifesto tecnico della scultura futurista
   Milan, April 11, 1912
   Manifesto, 29 x 23 cm., 4 pp. (1 folded sheet).

7. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti
   L'immaginazione senza fili e le parole in libertá: Manifesto Futurista
   Milan, May 11, 1913
   Manifesto, 29 x 23 cm., 4 pp. (1 folded sheet).

Berlin DADA: a few remarks.

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Visible Language XXI 3/4 413 - 451

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That Hugo Ball was the "founder" of Dada is probably one of the very few facts which all Dadaists would have accepted. That Berlin Dada was 'political' in contrast to parallel developments in Zurich, Cologne or Paris is considered an established fact. It is also thought that the stormy and negative reaction of the publics before which the Berlin Dadaists performed was based on the truly radical nature of their poetry and prose. The following is an attempt to investigate whether or not Berlin Dada was indeed a political phenomenon/force and whether the unfriendly reaction of the public was the result of the texts.

In his autobiography *Die Flucht aus der Zeit,* Hugo Ball makes an important statement: "Nowhere else but in the public recitation are the weaknesses of a poetry recognizable...For me, the loud recitation has become the touchstone of the value of a poem... (*Nirgends so sehr als beim öffentlichen Vortrag ergeben sich die Schwächen einer Dichtung... Das laute Rezitieren ist mir zum Prüfstein fuer die Güte eines Gedichtes geworden...*) When Raoul Hausmann prefaces the reprint of his manifesto with "In order to make this manifesto 'audible' to the reader..." (*Um dem Leser dieses Manifest 'hoerbar' zu machen...)* he makes an equivalent point. Since Dada statements should be taken seriously if they are made by more than one participant,

*2. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, *Movimento Futurista*

n.d. Letterhead, 29 x 23 cm.,
1 leaf.
Drawing by Giacomo Balla.

3. Umberto Boccioni and Carlo Carrà, *Manifesto dei pittori futuristi*
Milan, February 11, 1910
Manifesto, 29 x 23 cm., 4 pp. (1 folded sheet).

these seem to provide some hints concerning the development (and perhaps even the demise) of Berlin Dada.

Most publications concerning German Dada begin with the accentuation of the revolt against the arts and everything else of the period – past as well as present which Dada obviously constituted. However, while Dada was certainly the most rigorous and radical expression of such a revolt, it was not alone in its rejection of German life and the German lifestyle in general. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, an uneasiness and discomfiture with "the present" found its manifestation in literally hundreds of reform groups and movements all of which agitated for a change from the most varied points of view. For example, those groups rooted in the dislike for the city and its inherent anonymity and mechanization, took on forms which ranged from the ground-reformers (Adolf Damaschke), to the colonists of the *Obstbaukolonie* Eden near Oranienburg, to the garden-city movement (originally an English concept); Hellerau near Dresden was the first German equivalent. Other factions believed that the return to natural food would make the individual healthier and thus 'better.' There were groups which advocated a wide range of solutions: vegetarianism (the preacher Eduard Beltzer, for instance, made it a religious, Bible-based issue and the Mazdaznan followers added meditations; Richard Wagner participated in the opening of a vegetarian restaurant in Bayreuth in 1871), to the proliferation of 'natural food groceries' which according to local conditions stressed either the Muessli (Max Oscar Bircher-Benner) or the 'Vollkornbrot' - whole wheat bread (Stephan Steinmetz). That homeopathic practices would grow in such a time is obvious and from Vincenz Priessnitz's cold-water cures, and movement therapy, Johannes Schroth's warm-moist compresses and fasts to Pastor Sebastian Kneipp's maltcoffee, yogurt and herbs, the number of 'discoveries' grew every year. It is hardly surprising that the idea of natural movement of the body would gain equal importance and a number of gymnastic schools sprang up in the last part of the century. All of these movements were asking for a "return to" whatever they considered to be the roots of a healthy individual in a "good" society. The list could go on and emphasize

The Avant- Garde and The Text: Exhibition Checklist

compiled and annotated by Roy F. Allen, Stephen C. Foster and Estera Milman

Futurism

*1. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti *Fondazione e manifesto del futurismo*
Milan, n.d. Manifesto,
29 x 23 cm, 4 pp.
(1 folded sheet).
Published in *Figaro*, Paris,
February 20, 1909.

FONDAZIONE E MANIFESTO

DEL

FUTURISMO

(Pubblicato dal «FIGARO» di Parigi il 20 Febbraio 1909).

1. Although fundamentally nationalistic, the deeply political manifesto provided a paradigm, or model, for subsequent twentieth-century avant-garde movements. Its specific program was a rejection of Italian passeism, on the one hand, and of European traditions incapable of reflecting the modern industrial world, on the other. The manifesto provided an effective means for Marinetti of staging his propaganda events throughout Europe and Russia, and introduced artists to simultaneity and bruitism.

The symbol "*" indicates that the piece is illustrated, either in the exhibition catalogue, within the essays, or in both.

The symbol "+" indicates that the work could not travel beyond the exhibition's opening at the host institution.

the more future-oriented groups like the *Werkbund* which attempted to heal the break between the crafts and industry and thus create new and better forms for daily living, as well as many others.

It is even more important to recognize the developments in the arts documented in the Secession-movement and more radically, in the formation of groups like *Die Bruecke, der Blaue Reiter, Der Neue Club* and *Das Neopathetische Cabaret*, etc. All of these movements mentioned were rooted in the belief that a change of society — which appeared to all of them to be a necessity — required a change in man, in the individual. Enhancing his health was considered one way — and enhancing his sensitivity and receptivity was another. In short, the time was ripe for changes. The strength of this attitude is also apparent in the chauvinism which engulfed all of Europe at the outbreak of the war. Originally based on the belief that once the war ended victoriously, everything would change for the better, the shallowness of this hope gradually became obvious as the number of the dead and the maimed grew. Even true humanists, like Hugo Ball, had at first volunteered for the service. It required a direct confrontation with the horrors of war to change such views.

By 1915, events memorializing those who had died in the war had become relatively commonplace. An annoucement in newspapers and on bulletin boards of a commemorative celebration for poets who died in the war was therefore quite acceptable. On February 12, 1915, in the *Architektenhaus*, during an event organized by Hugo Ball and Richard Huelsenbeck, the poets to be commemorated were: Walter Heymann, Hans Leybold, Ernst Wilhelm Lotz, Charles Peguy, and Ernst Stadler. That Peguy, the French poet (and thus an 'enemy' in the eyes of many), was also to be remembered, prevented some newspapers from publishing the announcement. Alongside Ball and Huelsenbeck, the writer and publisher Alfred Richard Meyer, the polemicist who was later to be identified as the leader of the Activist movement, Dr. Kurt Hiller, and the actress Resi Langer were to speak and to recite works of the dead poets. After Ball's introduction, Meyer spoke for Ernst Stadler, Hiller for Ernst Wilhelm Lotz, Huelsenbeck

notes

1. Stanley Burnshaw, *The Seamless Web: Language-Thinking, Creature-Knowledge, Art-Experience* (New York, 1970), p. 252.

2. Franz Marc, "Geistige Güter," in *Der Blaue Reiter* (Munich, 1965; docu mentary new edition), p. 23.

3. Robert N. Wilson, "The Poet in American Society," in R.N. Wilson, ed., *Arts in Society* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1964), p. 13.

4 Arnold Hauser, *The Sociology of Art*, trans. K.J. Northcott (Chicago and London, 1979), pp. 432-433.

5. Charles M. Solley and Gardner Murphy, *Development of the Perceptual World* (New York, 1960), p. 26.

6. Ibid., p. 327.

7. Lewis Carroll, "The Hunting of the Snark," in *The Annotated Snark*, ed. M. Gardner (New York, 1957), Fit the Eight, Verses 8-9.

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for Charles Peguy, and Hugo Ball for Hans Leybold. It was the latter's speech which caused problems. Gerhard Schaub has given a comprehensive summary of Ball's presentation and has documented the reaction by the press,[1] as has Karin Füllner whose research has further clarified our understanding of the event.[2] Both accentuate the "unconventional" form of Ball's commemorative speech for his dead friend, which according to the *Taegliche Rundschau* was half a *Verulkung* (making fun) of the dead and half a *Verhöhnung* (mockery) of the public. The reporter for the *Berliner Börsen-Kurier* (René Schickele?) summarized that "there were words, sentences, parts of discussions, pieces of poems, anecdotes, mockery, hate, doubt, and stress. It was the only way to speak of Leybold." Since Ball's speech was not published in full, [the version in *Die Weissen Blätter* 2 (1915), pp. 525-527 is obviously shortened], a few phrases from the end of the speech shall stand as an example; "Purchase his posthumous glosses and poems which I shall publish. He is gone. (*Er ist hin.*) It must have been very difficult for him as I remember him. But nothing can be done about that. Remember him! Have compassion! Be friendly! All of you are accomplices to his death. All of you who sit down there. May you recall his name when you feed your children! I do not have to add anything."

There is no question that this speech was given to irritate, to enrage, and to offend the public by giving expression to the outrage Ball himself felt at the death of his friend. In short, Ball gave a Dada-speech long before Dada was born. This fact finds support in "A Literary Manifesto" printed on the back of the program which was distributed after the celebration "in consideration for the speakers." The document, published by Gerhard Schaub and reprinted in the catalogue of the exhibition *Hugo Ball, Leben und Werk* in the Wasgauhalle Pirmasens in 1986 is important enough to be repeated in English.

> By our appearance, it shall be demonstrated to the press and to the public that there are [still] personalities who continue to assist the 'youngest' literature even during the war. This youngest literature has a very definite tendency. This tendency: Expressionism,

real and potential--in society. In a dynamic, changing world, one necessary component is the avant-garde, along with the means it seeks to use in order to communicate with those who might follow, or who might seek to discover anew for themselves possibilities for the future.

They hunted till darkness came on,
but they found

Not a button, or feather, or mark,

By which they could tell
that they stood on the ground

Where the Baker had met with the Snark.

In the midst of the word he was trying to say,

In the midst of his laughter and glee,

He had softly and suddenly vanished away--

For the Snark was a Boojum, you see.

He had softly and suddenly vanished away--

For the snark was a Boojum, you see.[7]

> Colorfulness, Adventurousness, Futurism, Activism, Stupidity (against intellectuality, against the Bebuquins, against the truly arrogant ones). We want to stir up, upset, bluff, tease, tickle to death, incoherent without connections, to be daredevils and negationists. Our concern is the matter of intensity, of the nostrils, of asceticism, of the methodical fanaticism, of the flags and the conspiracies. We will always be 'against'.We will take over the spiritual leadership. We will wage war against the cerebrals, the spiritualists [*Geistlinge*], and systematizers [*Systemlinge*]. Against the actioneers and lyrical tenors. Against the programatics and the sectarians. We join the party of the iconoclasts and of all radicals. We will propagandize the metabolism, the somersault, the vampyrism and all sorts of mimicry. We are not naive enough to believe in progress. We are only concerned with the present. We want to be mystics of the detail, excavators and clairvoyants, anti-conceptionalists and literary troublemakers. We want to spoil the appetite for all beauty, culture, poetry, for all spirit, taste, socialism, altruism and synonism. We move against all 'isms-parties' and conceptions. Negationists we want to be.

While the 'content' points to future Dada statements, its form is based on the diction and the rhythm of Expressionist prose which at this time was still considered a positive force by the Dadas although they later declared it to be an anathema. The authors professed to stand against the spirit, but they also promised to take over the spiritual leadership!

It is by far the most radical statement of the time, because it ends with the declaration that its authors will be "negationists", and thus not counted among the 'reform' groups. Even more remarkable is the fact that Ball and Huelsenbeck presented their speeches before a public which would not have expected to hear such divergent forms of address at a memorial. Instead of following the accepted pattern of publishing the speeches as well as the Manifesto in a journal, they chose to read them publicly and to publish their Manifesto on the back of the program. As mentioned earlier, Ball had obviously become skeptical of the reading public and its reactions. A recitation before an audience, however, would permit an immediate recogni-

effecting a change in the way in which an audience sees or understands aspects of the world around it, somehow the interference of an intermediary would have to be controlled. This might be done either by educating the audience to differentiate between the work and another's perception of the work, or to help strengthen the audience's willingness to confront the work or text directly. But typically this would seem to be less an issue with texts than with other forms, since everyone feels relatively comfortable with WORDS (we all use them everyday). Another concern for the avant-garde was to loosen the grip of convention on people's perceptions, conventions which mold how one translates the object (text) perceived into the mental image of what has been perceived. Thus, one of the key concerns in the Bauhaus was to open students up to practicing art with their own eyes and approaches, and eliminating (or, at least, minimizing) the values and approaches of the academies: thus arose the "vorkurs," which emphasized peeling away the layers of "learning" to which they had already been subjected. Once done, the developing artists could proceed to create, or to establish the foundation for their own creativity. And in a parallel way, the Futurists were concerned with living as opposed to "dead" art, and as a result opposed the general nature of libraries and museums as mausoleums. Neither, of course, would of necessity fit that conception, as the works therein remain the vehicles for change that the avant-garde hoped their creations or commentaries would be.

Vision and perception, action on behalf of the creation of something new: these are all connected with the avant-garde, the text, and their roles--

tion of the power and impact of the statement. Although the newspapers seem not to have paid attention to the Manifesto, and as Füllner and Schaub have illustrated, published only a few short reviews, Ball and Huelsenbeck decided to continue their confrontations with a live public.

On March 26 at the Café-Austria, during the first truly political pre-Dada manifestation in Berlin, Ball spoke on Russia's revolutionary ideas and Huelsenbeck on Spain's politics. Because the texts for the two political speeches have not been found, and there are no press responses to that evening, it is impossible to speculate on the public's reaction to the event.

On May 12, 1915, another 'event' took place through the cooperation of Ball and Huelsenbeck. It was called an "Expressionist Evening" during which Johannes R. Becher, Paul Beyer, Huelsenbeck, Ball and Emmy Hennings were to recite their own works, Resi Langer was to read poems by Alfred Lichtenstein, and Meta Zlotnicka and Walter Heymann were to present musical compositions based on poems by Heymann, Klabund, Rilke and Nietzsche. It was probably this evening which permitted Huelsenbeck, in one of his attempts to interpret Dada long after its time, to claim: "Ball and I had been extremely active in helping to spread expressionism in Germany..."[3] The program, which appears to parallel the various poetry recitals of the times, also included some nonsense poems. Huelsenbeck also claimed to have recited "selbstverfertigte Negergedichte"[4] (selfmade negropoems) which appeared in later Dada programs. There was also a short 'performance' during which some of the actors had a verbal confrontation on the stage, and Alfred Wolfenstein shouted that Huelsenbeck had absconded with the evening's receipts. The reaction of the public and the press must have been negative. It is not possible, however, to clarify the reasons for this negative reaction since it could have been caused by some of the poems or by the form in which they were recited. It is also not known if a manifesto was distributed at this time. This was the last event which Ball and Huelsenbeck organized in Berlin.

The Berlin Dada scene opened in January 1917 when Huelsenbeck arrived in Berlin after having left the 'original'

nificant task: the collection covers a tremendous time period and contains items from France, Germany, Italy and the United States. Understanding the context of the text, or the world of presenter/sender and receiver, is vital, and the variations among countries did and do play a role. At the same time, there are basic similarities, certainly at the level of Western values and attitudes, which make it possible, with some license, to view the collection as a whole. Here we are dealing with a model which we use in order to attempt to understand the connections between sending and receiving through the text. Somehow, in order that sending and receiving in fact takes place, there must be some direct or indirect link that has been established between author and audience.

One of the concerns expressed by artists of all types, as well as by a number of other people during the late nineteenth and well into the twentieth century, was to create a bridge to (or a link with) the public, to their audience (potential or otherwise). Such a bridge could be established only if there were some way in which the creator of a work could be reassured that the work was being read and seen by the audience, and not the work as commented on by critic "X" or "Y." One of the individuals who took on a number of critics, and by extension the critic in general, was the artist Kurt Schwitters. A number of Schwitters' essays in the periodical *Der Sturm* are concerned precisely with the role of the "critic." Schwitters argued that critics created obstacles, or at least laid the groundwork for obstacles to be interposed between creator and audience. Given the avant-garde's goal of

Zurich Dada. Although there are still unanswered questions concerning the reasons for his return, he did bring the word Dada with him. Having quickly made contacts with the circle around the journal *Neue Jugend,* Huelsenbeck also spread the story of Zurich developments.[5] His first publication in this anti-war publication was entitled "Der Neue Mensch" (The New Man), a strange conglomerate of expressionistic phrases, cynicism, attacks on the bourgeoisie and humanistic references, a diatribe which, but for a few sentences, could easily be counted as 'ecstatic' expressionistic prose with an undertone of nearly rhapsodic prayer. The closing phrases of the article, however, foreshadow the *Publikumsbeschimpfungen* (verbal assault of the public) of future Berlin events:

> The New Man believes to know only one battle, the fight against the idleness, the combat against the fat... The New Man who bears the weight of his own personality, hates the hullabaloo, the bawling for bawling's sake, all the silly pranks of erogenously excited youthfulness; because he knows what the time demands from him: it wants the manly and competent, the simple, the solid... He thinks: everything shall live — but one shall cease to exist — the bourgeois, the fatbelly, the greedy pig, the fattened pig of spirituality (*Mastschwein der Geistigkeit*), the animalguard of all wretchedness.[6]

Sprinkled with reference to Benvenuto Cellini and Ronsard, with Latin and Italian quotes and the imitation prayerform, there is little Dada to be found in this document. Furthermore, the article could not be considered political even though the antibourgeois stance was obvious.

Huelsenbeck's hour came on January 22, 1918 at the J.B. Neumann Gallery where Theodor Däubler, Max Hermann-Neisse and H.H. Twardowsky were to read their own works. During his introduction, Huelsenbeck surprised his colleagues and the public with a recitation of the history of the Zurich Dada[7]. Because Neumann and the others reacted angrily, it is possible to surmise that the formation of the Club Dada which followed shortly thereafter, may have been a reaction to this unfriendly reception.

Raoul Hausmann and Huelsenbeck appeared together

tative aspects of the text make it richer and, at the same time, more difficult to understand fully.

In no instance in an audience's consideration of a text are there absolutes that must prevail. There is neither one framework nor one set of values that determines how one *must* read a text, although at the same time there are expectations that may be derived from historically-understood symbols and signs employed as part of the text. Clearly, if this concern were the creator's intent, then there would be ONE appropriate way to meet a text, and failing to discover this way, the audience will have failed–*this time*. This would also be the case if one were charged with tracing precise connections between any given text and some successor creation or deed, or if one were seeking to assess responsibility, identifying it with the text and its author as opposed to an interpreter or interpretation of the text rooted in some other normative or value context. And so, again, how different individuals or audiences understand texts will depend, at least in part, on their reference base: a limited base may result in a narrow interpretation or understanding of a text; as that base evolves, so might the way in which one understands or interprets a text. At the same time, we do well to consider the text from a number of different perspectives in relation to its audiences (rather than one audience). Understanding the avant-garde works of the Kleinschmidt collection is a sig-

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in public for the first time on April 12, 1918 at the Berliner Sezession.[8] The program consisted of four parts. First, Huelsenbeck read his manifesto "Der Dadaismus im Leben und in der Kunst" (Dadaism in Life and Art). In the program was the notice: "This first theoretical reflection on the dadaistic principle shall appear shortly in a limited edition. Copies with the signature of the author can be purchased for 3 Marks." Regardless of their antibourgeois stand, they knew quite well the value of a "limited, signed copy" and did not hesitate to use their familiarity with the business practices of the art market. (George Grosz also published some of his portfolios in three different versions, on better and less good paper, with and without his signature and at staggered prices.) The second part of the program was composed of recitations of "Futuristic and Dadaistic" poetry by Else Hadwiger; the third part consisted of George Grosz reciting his verses entitled "Sincopations", followed by Raoul Hausmann who presented his famous manifesto "The new material in painting" (later published as *Synthetisches Cino der Malerei*). That this evening also ended with loud protests, is well known. But there is the nagging question as to why the public reacted so negatively when the program for the evening was well publicized and presented no "surprise." Hausmann made direct reference to the only possible reason that exists: "In order to make this manifesto audible...." In other words: it was not so much the text as the way in which these texts were presented which upset the public. On the other hand, none of the Dadaists were in any way trained or schooled as actors or performers (with the exception of Hugo Ball), and the amateurish results may have been one of the reasons for the public's negative reaction. In any event, it becomes obvious that the texts were written to be read aloud and that most of the Dada activities in Berlin were performances in the true sense of the word.[9] Only when read aloud in a performance framework, can these texts, with their staccato patterns, their word avalanches, their defiance of logic, have the desired effect on the public. The performances in Zurich, further clarify this attitude for although the texts were prepared, the masks were made, etc., the performances were frequently pure improvisa-

Given an existing ideology or value set, along with consideration of the text object/subject in question, it remains to determine the role of perception in all this. And if perception in fact involves the "structuring of stimulation,"[5] and there is an "arbitrariness of traditional boundaries between perception, judgment, memory, thought, imagination," with perceptual responses involving memories and judgments, leading into thought and imagination, and then influencing subsequent perception,[6] the TEXT, whether avant-garde or traditional, is both subject to perceptual expectations and is a potential effector of change in perceptual expectations. It is in the latter sense that the avant-garde text is significant: in its style and/or in its content, a challenge is raised to old concepts. Whether or not the new, as presented in a particular text, is accepted is not the issue as much as is the questioning of old or traditional ways of presentation.

And it is well to be aware that texts may vary in their impact or meaning for the same individual at different times and in, for example, different sociopolitical or ideological contexts. Thus, for example, the George Grosz collection entitled "Ecce Homo" (cat. # 64) is significant in and for itself, at least in the context of Weimar Germany in the early 1920s; related to the general concept of "Ecce Homo," the collection takes on broader significance, and one may place this work in some relationship to other works of the same name stemming from a wide variety of time periods. At the same time, it is important to recognize that Grosz has taken a very traditional religious theme and employed it as a means for examining man in contemporary secular society. The conno-

tions. It is well known that some of the Zurich Dada's poems were shouted and screamed, a form of presentation which Huelsenbeck had brought with him to Berlin and which Hausmann adopted. After demanding complete silence, he began "thundering with the highest volume of my voice."[10] Huelsenbeck, in reference to his own Zurich performances states "I would roar my lungs out, more like a sideshow barker than a reciter of verse... and throwing all restraint to the wind, [during the simultaneous poems] each of us shouted his text at the bewildered spectators."[11] (The twice repeated, triple NO to Expressionism within the manifesto makes this soundpattern quite obvious).The Berlin texts were performance-driven, 'oral' texts. Thus, the reaction of the public becomes quite understandable and was obviously calculated.

Huelsenbeck left Berlin shortly after the two manifestoes had been read. Only Hausmann and Baader remained as performing Dadas. Hausmann read his sound poems in the Café Austria on June 6 but no press reaction can be found. There are no precise descriptions of how these *Lautgedichte* were recited in the various performances. However, it is obvious that they had to be read aloud to obtain the impact for which they were designed.[12]

Then the war came to an end. In Berlin there were strikes and bloody suppressions of anti-war demonstrations. The Kaiser finally fled and the revolution occurred. The government tried to establish 'order' by repressing the left wing's demands for truly revolutionary changes with the assistance of right-wing volunteer forces while the left wing groups battled each other. The cruelties committed on both sides were horrifying. Hunger stalked the streets of Berlin while the number of black market profiteers grew. The Expressionists still believed that "man" could be changed by and through the arts. They tried to concentrate their efforts by forming the *Arbeitsrat fuer Kunst* (Workers' Council for the Arts), the *Rat geistiger Arbeiter* (Council of Intellectual Workers), the *Novembergruppe* and many similar organizations. All these groups issued manifestoes, held meetings, organized exhibitions — but the Dadas, regardless of their 'revolutionary stance,' remained quiet and stayed apart.

The February 6 meeting in the Rheingold center which

Change is thus the focus, and the type of change that might be effected in readers is affected by the nature of the text, be it "traditional" or "avant-garde." In the case of the former, the audience may be affected, but probably only in a limited and personal way: there is no conscious effort on the part of the author to influence some aspect of society and the audience in order to bring about a structural or value change. In the case of the avant-garde, the audience is likely to be (or have been) much more broadly affected, given a predilection for the new and, therefore, for–or at least the possibility for–change indicated at least in part by its receptivity to the kinds of texts with which we are here concerned.

Thus, there is an additional issue that must be taken into consideration when we are attempting to understand particular kinds of texts and particular environments. Concerned with the text of the avant-garde, we are in fact concerned with texts that somehow are related to change. These text forms are dependent for their impact or effect on the willingness of the audience to consider such texts (whether as potential affirmation of one's own ideas and values or a readiness to examine one's own ideas critically), on the openmindedness of the audience, or on the previous adherence of the audience to the values and ideology of the avant-garde. There is at least one other possibility which depends upon the effective impact of a text as a result of its public relations value: notoriety might readily accrue to an avant-garde text, which then affects its audience via other forms, such as critical statements in the press or references to it through other media.

saw the establishment of Baader as president of the globe, remains without any detailed description from its participants. The same is true for the various spoof announcements which kept some of the Dadas busy. In the meantime it had become obvious that the new Republic was more interested in rebuilding than in changing society by revolutionary means. The Dadas began to add an icy cynicism to their vocabulary. On March 29, 1919, Hausmann published in the individual-anarchic journal *Der Einzige* , a "Pamphlet gegen die Weimarische Lebensauffassung"[13] (pamphlet against the Weimar concept of life), the most all-encompassing condemnation of German life and society. "I proclaim the dadaistic world! I laugh at science and culture, those poor securities of a society condemned to die."[14] Hausmann condemns everything: expressionism, positivism, the Prussian spirit, the classicism of Goethe and Schiller; he called communism a beautiful insanity, he satirizes by name some of the government leaders as well as specific writers such as Fritz von Unruh; he attacked the poets who could not see the real world and had "pressed the desire for education as fiction of the surplus value of rhymed words into the heads of the proletarians..." He answered his own rhetorical question as to what democracy meant with "Life - gained through fear for our daily Our-Father-Bread" (...erarbeitet durch die Angst um unser taegliches Vaterunserbrot) and proclaimed: "We want to create everything ourselves. Our new world!....The Dadaist is against humanism, against the historical education. He is for the individual's own experience!"

Hausmann's pamphlet is thus a complete "NO" to society as well as to the specific times. The list itself is not new. The points of attack are not new either, but Hausmann's summary is the most sweeping, radical statement of all Dadaist publications. Only one question remains: is an all encompassing NO in itself a political statement? It must have become obvious that with their attack on all and everything, the Dadas would soon lose their appeal. Could this have been the reason for the publication of the equally famous "Was ist der Dadaismus und was will er in Deutschland?" (What is Dadaism and what does it want for Germany?) It was signed by Jefim Golyscheff, the Russian

veyed (if at all), and the nature of the next step that the receiver of the text may take.

Activities resulting from the existence of the text and the interaction between text and audience range from personal change or reflection of some sort, even if it is only to reject the text, to action on a group or societal scale. In each of these instances the text, as with any created work, does (and must) serve as an intermediary between creator/presenter and audience. But the text is a special sort of "intermediary," in that it is independent of its creator once released to the world. The text's creator lives and affects an audience through the text and, perhaps, through other effects he or she may have had on members of the audience in determining assumptions and expectations. At the same time, it is essential to recognize that:

> Artistic production and reception are interdependent, not only because the "I" who is talking addresses itself to a "you" but also because the forms of organization and the sense contents of the language have their reception in view from the beginning and move in the conceptual forms of both the receptive and the productive subject. The interaction between these two means not only that the creative act is in a state of constant change under the influence of the recipient's attitude but also that the audience's reaction is constantly modified under the influence of the presentation; the spectators at the end of a play or the listeners at the end of a concert [or the readers at the end of a text] are not the same as they were at the beginning.[4]

painter and musician who composed the 'Antisymphony' for the performance in the *Harmoniumsaal* on April 30, 1919, and who also made collages, and by Raoul Hausmann and Richard Huelsenbeck, as representatives of "the Dadaistic Revolutionary Central Council." It repeats Hausmann's attacks in satirical and cynical form .The pamphlet is black humor at its best and again lists the enemies, this time by name (Kurt Hiller and Alfred Adler, Expressionism, the journal *Der Sturm* etc.), and also calls for, among other things, a "Dadaistic sexual center to regulate all sexual relations on an international dadaistic base". This sudden turn to outrageous humor raises the question of whether or not these various activities and publications bestow on Berlin Dada the eminent political role for which it has become known. Of all the Berlin Dadas, only Wieland Herzfelde maintained his affiliation with Communism. All the others put considerable distance between themselves and the political movements at one time or another, and generally became apolitical.[15] Once it had established its communist direction, the *Malik Verlag* discontinued all Dada publications. In summary: the Dadaists in Berlin attacked and condemned the war, did not participate in the struggle for a revolution, attacked and condemned the Weimar government, condemned Expressionism as well as Futurism and all bourgeois manifestations in society. They simply said NO to all and everything. Since a NO is only political if followed by a YES, it is possible to doubt Dada's Berlin label as the 'political' Dada.

Since all of the German Dada performances are credited with the creation of tumult and uproar, it may be useful to once again investigate the reasons for the violent, negative reaction by the public to these events. Although none of the Dadas ever mentions the fact that these performances provided an income for the participants, the financial reward must have been attractive enough to continue these performances and to engage the bourgeois *Konzertdirektion* of Schönfelder for the organization of the famous tournée of 1920. The performance in Dresden on January 19, for example, can provide an answer for the 'success' of Dada performances, on one hand, and the angry reaction of the public on the other.

yond the critics or reviewers who have chosen to write about a particular text, may not be readily discernible. But if we look at other reactions, such as censorship or confiscation of texts by authorities, we begin to gain some understanding of the nature of the reception of a particular text by some concerned element in society. Thus, in 1919 the police arrested and detained Wieland Herzfelde for publishing *Jedermann sein eigner Fussball*; most of the copies were apparently confiscated, since they posed a threat to the state during a period of turmoil when efforts were being made to create a new stability. If nothing else, the authorities invested this text with sociopolitical significance, and attributed to it the ability to affect an audience in a manner critical of, and threatening to, their conception of society. In this way, such a magazine became, were it not beforehand, an avant-garde text as we have defined it.

As we broaden our understanding of the text and the avant-garde, which has created a place for itself separate from and/or in opposition to contemporary society as it is perceived, we are faced with the considerably more difficult task of identifying the audience. In many instances, the avant-garde has characterized its society as essentially lacking an audience for the new and the daring. For the audience, depending upon the societal context in which its members find themselves and the degree of critical self-awareness with which they assess their situation individually, the impact of the text may vary significantly. The societal, psychological, ideological, and informational context in which each member of the audience develops an understanding of a text affects the clarity with which the creator's intent is con-

According to the agent's program the following numbers were planned for the Dresden performance: *1)* Hausmann: Introduction. *2)* Hausmann-Baader: Simultaneous discussion concerning the knife. *3)* Baader: Concerning intertellurian insanity. *4)* Hausmann: Dada-Trott (Sixty-one step). *5)* Baader: My last funeral. *6)* Baader-Hausmann: Simultaneous poem. *7)* Hausmann: Classical relations with middle-class cooking. *8)* Hausmann: Phantastic Prayers (poems) by Huelsenbeck. *9)* Baader-Hausmann: The pig's bladder as advertising agency. Bruitistic Finale. The program carried the warning that "during the lectures [sic!] the doors remain closed,"[16] indicating that the unruly reaction of the public was expected and calculated. Huelsenbeck quoted a critique by Friedrich Kummer which could not be compared with the original. However, other critiques do exist but have never been published in English. For example, R.B. wrote in *Dresdner Volkszeitung*, vol. 31, no. 15, January 29, 1920:

> "*Dada Evening.* Approximately 10 years ago, in the Berlin Hasenheide in the Hall of the New World which has a capacity for 10,000 people, a certain architect, Herr Baader, lectured an audience of 100 on his plan for a tower of Babel with a base of two square kilometers. He called it "A Monument to Humanity" with drawers in which every man should have his life's work entombed. Since this was no more acceptable to the audience than his tomb-design, the architect worked in nightclubs, and as they also brought him little money, he had himself committed in the mental hospital in Jena for free bed and board.
>
> Meanwhile, however, he has discovered the goldmine Dada, and yesterday in the hall of the *Kaufmannschaft*, the racketeer business was brisk. That the local public, in spite of preliminary press-information with excerpts like "Bruruhihi-Hosenbandschoso" and the advertised introduction of the Oberdada as global president and leader of the world court,[17] etc. - that they came with reasonably high expectations and that they then screaming, thrashing, whistling, cursing, fell on the four stand-up manikins on the podium - that was also a disgrace for the public of many hundreds. I would have wished Dada the only devastating humili-

texts, if we have chosen to read them? That is, is there any degree of predictability about our perceptions and, perhaps more importantly, the impact of our perceptions–their translation into cognitive change or action? This question in conjunction with the avant-garde may be meaningless: how can there be specific expectations when the concern emphasizes the new and change? When one is concerned with text *and* audience, one has gone beyond an internal consideration of any given text and moved to the societal context of the text, and its impact upon some element(s) outside itself.

Lacking a contemporary audience, a not uncommon occurrence for the avant-garde, the text would be of significance only in and for itself and its creator. To be sure, it might well mirror the place of its creator in society, or the nature of the society, but it would do this as an *object* and not as a *catalyst* for some kind of effect. If we consider the text as a catalyst in the relationship between text and audience, what then happens depends upon the existence and nature of the link between text and audience, on the one hand, and audience and society-at-large on the other. The text may *merely* be a vehicle for self-reflection and observation, but in any case the audience as *receiver* is the immediate end-point; the audience as *actor*, in some way, is the significant end point. (There can be at least one additional step, whereby the text's immediate audience serves as the disseminator for the text's "message.") A major problem one faces in looking at the text and its impact is that the internal effect (the impact of a "new" text on successor texts) is *relatively* easily determined; in contrast, the impact of a text on its audience, be-

ation: a yawning, cold, and shoulder-shrugging audience which would assure after this one fiasco - empty halls in the future.

Everything which the gentlemen offered was boring and silly – lacking humor, spirit and temperament - some was even foolish–insolent, like the sentence: "The poets from Goethe to Hasenclever belong in the outhouse..." Nevertheless, does one beat up a silly, cheeky songstress at the nightclub?

Julius Ferdinand Wolff wrote in the *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten*, vol. 28, no. 19, January 21, 1920:

Dada. The Oberdada had announced his entry into Dresden. A lecture on Dada. Hausmann, the World-DADA, and Huelsenbeck, and Dadasoph (sic!), accompanied him as courtiers. And everybody looked forward to the feast. By the hundreds they stormed the hall of the *Kaufmannschaft*. First the cloakrooms. Hundreds attempted to force their entry–tickets were no longer available. The huge hall was jampacked. All emergency exits were soon clogged. Between the narrow rows of chairs, the aisles were congested with people; because there would be talk about Dada by the Oberdada. Many hoped for the redemptive word. The nonsense of existence–they thought–would be solemnly sanctioned here or condemned by the nonsense of Dadaism. This–so believed the believers–should somehow secretly, meaningfully come to pass. Then there was the army of the harmless and the curious.In between were the adepts and the initiates. The opportunistic profiteers of the newest fad, always ready to jump tomorrow on the very newest and to bombard the news of yesterday with their written and babbled filth. The malicious braggarts of art. The brainfop with his enraptured entourage. Everyone who has made a profit of his inabilities while under all circumstances insulting the capable. A charming circle, with sympathetic women. One only needs to say that one finds Goethe a boring, offensive bourgeois in order to gain their trust, or that Kulicke[18] is a poet. Or one could combine both in a decisive manner. For instance: 'What is that asshole Schiller compared to our brilliant Kulicke?' Whereupon one becomes an honorary member... Then there

volved in maintaining a society open to change. In fact, the avant-garde is rarely well-received. One may borrow a view of the "artistic [in this case, literary] innovator" (avant-gardiste) and apply it to the text:

> [The artistic innovator–the avant-gardiste–is in a precarious position.] In nearly every time and place the truly creative individual [or text, as product of that individual] has represented a threat to the norms men live by, since he [it] promises to shatter or transcend or at least drastically amend those norms. The creative individual [avant-garde text] in art is the more dangerous because he [it] challenges our ways of perceiving and our habits of expressing what we see. Unlike the political revolutionary or social reformer, who would change the forms of social intercourse, the artist [avant-gardiste] would change our total response to the universe of man and nature.[3]

It is in this context that the early twentieth century avant-garde had to operate: this was the setting which allowed its participants room for development, and which would make it possible for them to have an impact on their audience.

If we assume an openness in the society of which we are a part, and that significant change is really possible, we may then proceed to ask certain questions that pertain more directly to the audience. (At the same time, a focus on openness would seem to contradict our posing any questions concerning the specific impact of a text. But, in fact, if we maintain an awareness that the text is serving as an intermediary, and that specific ends will not be the work exclusively of the avant-garde, these questions are certainly valid.) How are we affected by what we read? What is the likelihood that we will be affected in a particular way by avant-garde

were also the completely naive. The people who had looked forward to fun at the Cabaret and had spent good money for it. They were on the right track without suspecting it. Only that one warmed up for them the most pitiful, watery confrencier-soup (master of ceremonies-soup) of Berlin nightjoints. Whereupon they thanked for the rubbish and raised hell. A veritable 'genuine fun' for those who had come only to make a racket.

It all began with trampling because the Dada did not appear. Finally, after a grammophone prelude, the Berlin lads stepped forward with the big Swabian Oberdada, smoked cigarettes, and talked, and talked and talked... about the worldwide triumph of Dada and about everything they negated. With obvious seriousness they constantly repeated their assurance that they also negated the spirit (intellect). (Of which one was thoroughly convinced after the first ten minutes.) What had one expected? Joyful defeat of popeous authority by your people. Desire for destruction which rages against the Kitsch-pyramids and ostentatious cultural edifices. *Nil admirari* [nothing to be admired] and liberating laughter. As surely as to destroy false delights is bliss–one would have roused enthusiasm for Dada, had it only at least attempted the victory of nonsense over no sense. Instead, they smoked cigarettes and talked, talked, talked... Without spirit (intelligence), without humor, without inspiration. To this objection they said that they negate the mind, humour and imagination as everything else. They make declarations that, for example, they also negate communism and expressionism, education as well as culture. They stand the world on its head. Supposedly. But since it is *their* head, nothing comes of it.

One of them reads aloud an article from a newspaper clipping. At least some gall flows in it. Even some fragments of the denied spirit come fluttering forth from it. But intermittently, they encourage audience participation. One has some tricks. When seemingly the Worlddada gets stuck, the Oberdada exclaims: "you can't already make a pause for effect!"Or theWorlddada has forgotten his manuscript and fetches it quickly. You get it? Everything is 'improvised'. A coquettish coincidence. The gentlemen confrenciers are practicing

garde vision, specifically as delineated in the text, *in some way* been translated into deeds, or action? The result about which we ask need not have been implemented by the creator of the text, but somehow has to have been influenced by the text itself; only then may we in fact speak of impact, or of the instrumental nature of the text. Success is only measurable after the fact, and would be determined by the nature of the people and the society that remains.

In order to be aware of some of the issues that face both the avant-garde and their audience, we must acknowledge some fundamental parameters. Accepting the avant-garde as an advocate of change and openness, we know that at some point its adherents had to resolve a conflict between competing values of, for example, authority and hierarchy, as contrasted with independent decision-making and equality. Responding to the avant-garde, audiences had to make a similar conflict resolution decision. The early twentieth century was confronted by more rapid change than any previous period in history, ranging from pre-WW I working class unrest, verging on revolution, to the burgeoning information age. Conflict ranged from government efforts to wean workers away from socialist and Marxist parties to international organizations. These and similar situations and changes raised questions about existing structures and values, creating openings for advocates of change and the possibility of developing a more open structure in general, or at least alternatives to what had been. On the other hand, given the situation (just as in the vying for power between political groups of varying persuasion), members of avant-garde audiences too were being buffeted by the security of old ways and customs on the one hand and the uncertainty and risks in-

the roles of the deceased Guertler and the Rough Gottlieb from the Taubenstreet [rough nightspots]. 'Atmosphere, hey!' Only they do it tediously. And at the Rough Gottlieb one at least got potatoe pancakes. Boredom, obviously, is the only thing they don't negate. This is supposed to be triumphant nonsense? The suspicion of a well-planned speculation spreads. Because Dada is not all Dada. They encourage whistling, the throwing of rotten apples, any kind of 'participation'; they bellow a simultaneous poem. And finally [they read] the article on Dada. One learns several things: the German poets from Schiller to Werfel, from Goethe to Hasenclever belong in the outhouse, at the most they are useful as an endless roll of toilet paper. Spirited nonsense, eh? But the spirit they deny too, after all.

Then all of a sudden, amid a hellish racket of screaming voices, horn-honking, shrill whistles, a frightfully serious man mounts the podium. With a serene gesture he takes the paper out of the Worlddada's (or was it the Dadasoph's?) hands, throws it crumpled to the floor, turns to the roaring wave of humanity: 'We are supposed to be the nation of Goethe? Phooey!'[19] A hellish uproar erupts. A group storms the podium. One becomes physically violent. A proper free-for-all is underway. The Opera Singer Burg, who attempts to ask for quiet, is pushed from the podium. Rows of chairs are toppling. Women scream. Again, somebody plunges off the podium.

The pandemonium lasts for about three-quarters of an hour. Jokers replace serious people who rightly say that one is not supposed to behave like that. But the disappointed shout: 'Thieves, swindlers, police!' The police arrive. Two policemen look at each other astonished and perplexed. Obviously they arrive at the correct conclusion that they are not here to educate the rabble nor to voluntarily take care of the insane. One elects a senior president. He can't make himself heard. Finally, after the Oberdada has shouted himself hoarse, and has declared that the Dadaists in theory would be prepared to refund the entrance fees if one were willing in exchange to offer them room and board for several weeks; finally, after two hours of presumptuous bore-

bemoaned the fact that there was "a general disinterest in cultural creations" and so why should there be new ones? — "we [the public] have too many old ones [ideas and paintings that we don't like]."[2] In creating an environment conducive to change, values or beliefs demand at least as much attention as forms and structures, for the two sets must be complementary. Whether it be Kandinsky and Marc in *Der Blaue Reiter* (cat. # 10), or Schwitters in *Merz* (cat. #s 91-98), styles and forms need to be accompanied by values and norms which transcend any specific medium, as well as a particular structure. In particular, if they hinder or skew the the structure. In particular, if they hinder or skew the process of transformation, values and norms would have to be changed. For the avant-garde, openness to change is the crucial priority. Whether the avant-garde achieves this end via the text or via some other medium does not seem to be the most important issue: it is the goal that is important. In the context of the written work, there may be a better chance of the goal being attained because there is more time to consider how one might achieve it. The individuals involved need to reflect on what has passed, and focus on what has been proposed for the future. Minimizing the intermediated steps between the creator and the receiver of the message (whether through the medium of a text or any other created work) seems to be most supportive of the goals of the avant-garde.

The avant-garde does not see members of its audience
as passive receptacles,
into whose laps visions are dumped,
there to be contemplated in a state of reasoned inactivity.

Within this framework, we are concerned with the avant-garde text as a means. As such, we are left with at least one key question: Has the avant-

dom and bad behavior, the masses slowly leave the hall.

What remains is disgust; with the pompous inability toward liberating nonsense, with the 'participation' by the audience. One could have embarrassed these pitiful proponents of dadaistic superiority most terribly by listening in silence. And then one could have finished them off with laughter. But one should not have thrashed them; in this way one almost made martyrs of these smart entrepreneurs.

What remains is disgust. Disgust with the vain rascals of the 'spiritual' revolution and with their patrons and patronesses filled with the superior understanding of tomorrow's newest, at present still unknown, unnamed 'direction'. They had expected a bit of the 'Green Kakadu', in their own way. As they also 'understand' and cuddle Spartacism while, of course, disdainfully negating the paying of taxes as a bourgeois depravity. Redeeming nonsense would have been, after all, also liberation from this artistic and educational rabble. It never came to that. Dada proved itself totally impotent, even toward Dada. Bad conferenciers, boredom, thrashing, rabble rousing. What is left is disgust. Or, a proposal: what would happen if for once one would *not* negate the spirit but instead would give the thousands of Marks which were wasted on reprehensible sensationalism to the poor who are not modern enough to make a connection between Goethe, Schiller, Werfel and Hasenclever and the outhouse - but who have nothing to eat. [Professor Julius Ferdinand Wolff was the chief Editor of the Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten.]

Two other critiques of the Dresden performance were published in the *Dresdner Konzert- und Theater-Zeitung*, No. 20, Saturday, January 24, 1920. The first, probably by the editor, is signed 'Hiawatha'. The author believes that it was due to an organized group that the evening ended in tumult. He criticizes the police who were not willing to protect the Dadaists (who seemed to have been roughed up) and thus not willing to permit freedom of opinions to reign, even in a Dada performance. However, this is the only place where the conspiracy-theory appears. But he, too, condemns the rowdiness of a part of the public and he

which in the best of circumstances would be defined only as they approach it — and even then, as a particular avant-garde maintains its unique perspective and energy, it would continue to transform that focus for the future.

Concerned with the new and unrealized, desirous of maintaining an openness that fosters the translation of new visions into realities, the avant-garde must, at the same time, hesitate when faced with a reality which suggests closure, equilibrium, or stasis rather than dynamism. This is a dynamism originating from within the individual avant-gardist, in contrast to the movement imposed upon individuals from without (individual self-mobilization as opposed to mobilization of individuals in society from above). Much of the work of the Futurists, for example, conveys a sense of dynamism, verbally and quintessentially depicted in the Futurist manifestos (cat. #s 1 and 3-7).

The avant-garde does not see members of its audience as passive receptacles, into whose laps visions are dumped, there to be contemplated in a state of reasoned inactivity. The members of this audience are seen as potential actors or recruits to accompany the avant-garde on the path it set out. They are people able to continue their support for appropriate old forms, styles, techniques, and attitudes and able to embrace the process and end state which involves exchanging elements of the old for something quite new. As this audience makes conscious decisions in selecting out elements of the old and opting for something that is new, values and beliefs, bound to social, religious, political and economic structures, begin to play a significant role. However, Franz Marc, in a manner not unique among the artists and intellectuals of the day,

lays the blame on the shoulders of the policemen who, since they obviously did not like the performance, saw no reason to protect the performers.

By far more interesting is the critique by Walter Rheiner, the expressionist poet, who for a while was editor of the Dresden journal *Menschen.*

> Let it be stated from the start: I consider Dadaism a superfluous word because from what I understand of it, is the fire of life against the ashes of the dead - is the youthful storm which blows, to the last and all-holy, against the false gods - is a radiating explosion, dithyrambic detonation of the rigid and lazy - is the everlasting revolution and thereby the necessary, eternal victory. And it is NOT what was offered here to a public of a thousand, which - that must be pointed out immediately - was in its aggressive, anti-Dadaistic representatives, by far more evil, boring and empty than the Dadaists themselves.....

Rheiner rhapsodizes over the concept underlying Dadaism as he understands it and is as radical in his attack on the present and on society as the Dadaists were.

> We want to show you what is the matter with your culture. (Does this need Dadaism - after 1914/18 - to still be recognized?) We uncover unmercifully that horrible swindle which is done to man under the slogans 'Geist' [spirit], and 'God', and 'soul' and 'erotic', and 'religion' and 'art' (from Goethe to Werfel and from Schiller to Hanseclever), may it be called Classicism or Romanticism, Naturalism or Expressionism....

He declares himself to be a humble reporter but as a poet, an Expressionist, who knows that Dadaism has also declared war on him.

> But I do not mind stating that after this Monday evening at the *Kaufmannschaftssaal,* that I prefer Dadaism and true Dadaists with all their apparent nihilism a thousand times over that bourgeois mob with its dead sand in its so-called heart and brain. Never will I hesitate to stand side by side with Dadaism in order to fight with it (even in the tactics of its printed manifestoes!) against that arch-enemy of all life which here stripped off the restraining jacket of convention with evil howls.

distinctive and crucial component of the avant-garde text, a text that is cultural rather than programmatically political. In some way that text presents a vision which provides the basis for some deed, or action. The deed might be of an internal nature, affecting the historical development of the text, or of an external nature, whereby the text has an effect somehow related to its being linked with an audience. In the case of the avant-garde text, an implicit attempt is being made to transcend the assumptions an audience may bring with it — and the success of the avant-garde text resides in the transformation of perception and attitude of its audience(s). Accordingly, the world of text and audience must be an open one, allowing for a meaningful connection between the two. In addition, the relationship between that world and the outside world must not be circumscribed by boundaries and expectations which prevent any real and vital connection. A closed universe of text and audience is antithetical to the nature of the avant-garde — whence the future if there are no open pathways?

Members of the avant-garde have sought, through the text, among other vehicles, to transcend the limits of the accepted visions of their day. Although at times the needs of their societies are such that the creation of a component supportive of a new equilibrium would be gratefully received, such an action would contradict the goals of the avant-garde. If there is a general responsibility that falls to members of the avant-garde, it is to open and keep open a window to fresh air — by maintaining and insisting upon the acceptance of a critical and challenging perspective. They seek to avoid becoming part of a comfortable and enervating status quo. They set their sights on a beacon dimly seen,

After having thus declared his defense of Dadaism, he then writes about the Dadaist performers as "three gentlemen from Berlin's dadaistic fields, badly prepared, without an atmosphere, without control of the Dadaistic impact-possibilities..."

> Finally, after a phonograph-overture, the three matadors appeared. Baader, the Oberdada, Huelsenbeck, the World-Dada with monocle and chrysanthemum, and Raoul Hausmann, the Dadasoph, a pocket-lense in his eye and the grin of an executioner around his mouth. After surprisingly helpless, spasmodic appearing attempts of an introduction of metaphysics, and the birth and development of Dada, Huelsenbeck, the World-dada read the beginnings of a dadaistic manifesto.

Rheiner is convinced that if one would have let him speak, the program might have been quite alright. But "some were already ruled by that corrupt atmosphere of political rallies in which those who think differently will be prevented from speaking." Condemning the disturbing parts of the public in no uncertain terms, he ends with

> The Oberdada played one trump at the end. Exhausted and hoarse he called into the room: 'That was No. 3 of the Program: the Oberdada as animal trainer!'–And the Dadaist told me that they had reached their goal; because this evening presented an image which was capable of driving one not necessarily into the arms of the Dadaists but into solitude where one could find at least one human being: himself. And nothing else.

While only small tesserae to the mosaic of Dadaism could be offered in this short article, it remains necessary to point out that it was not merely its advocacy of a total NO which made Dada in Berlin different from Zurich, Cologne or Paris but, the different form in which it advocated the complete change of the value-system of society. Furthermore, it is difficult to uphold the perception of a "political Berlin Dada" due to the fact that there were few 'political' issues brought forth by the movement. Reevaluating the poetry of the Berlin Dadas on the basis of texts designed for oral presentation, however, may provide a new insight into the movement's intentions.[20]

the understanding of the new text. The nature of the interaction between senders and receivers of texts must significantly affect perception. Many types of interaction may take place between individuals and texts. There is "interaction" between audience and work, between audience and intermediary (e.g. critic, exhibitor), and between audience and creator. The last of the three is in most settings the least likely interaction (exceptions would be the reception for a literary artist, or performances which invite interaction — such as the cabaret). The second situation in which the audience takes its clues from critics, exhibitors, or commentators is the most common form of "interaction," although this situation is hardly interactive in any true sense.The text-audience relationship determined by the intermediary tends to be unidirectional (critic, exhibitor 'to' audience), with perspectives and understanding being passed on to an audience which can take it or leave it, at will. The first situation is the most desirable, and involves individual and work. This, too, is hardly "interaction," but rather involves the individual "reacting" to the work. In this situation, the text, becomes a stimulus for an audience, and here the audience is seen in a strictly singular and isolated way. One of the major concerns of the avant-garde was to develop an environment in which individuals would become increasingly willing to "risk" approaching the text directly, allowing the creator to speak to them without human (and often doctrinaire) intermediaries.

In the case of the avant-garde text, an implicit attempt is being made to transcend the assumptions an audience may bring to it. . .

As we consider the avant-garde text, we are looking at compilations of words, visual elements, and visions. It is the last of these which seems to be the

NOTES

1. Gerard Schaub. " Dada Avant La Lettre, Ein unbekanntes 'Literarisches Manifest' von Hugo Ball und Richard Huelsenbeck:" in *Hugo Ball Almanach* (Pirmanens, 1985/86, Bearbeiter: Ernst Teubner), pp. 63-180

2. Karin Füllner, Richard Huelsenbeck. Texte und Aktionen eines Dadaisten (Heidelberg, 1983), esp. pp. 58-67. See also her "The Meiuster-Dada: The image of Dada through the eyes of Richard Huelsenbeck," in Richard Sheppard, ed., *New Studies in Dada. Essays and Documents.* (Dirffield, 1981), pp. 16-34.

3. Richard Huelsenbeck, *Ein Avant Dada: Eine Geschichte des Dadaismus.* (Hannover, 1920), p. 58.

4. Kasimir Edschmid, ed., *Briefe der Expressionisten*, (Frankfurt/ Berlin, 1964), p. 70.

5. He stated that the first place where he went was the *Cafe des Westens* where he met his old friends Gottfried Benn and Else Lasker-Schüler. Richard Huelsenbeck. *Memoirs of a Dada Drummer*, trans. and ed., H.J. Kleinschmidt, (New York, 1974), pp. xxx-xxxii

6. *Neue Jugend.* No. 1, May 1917, weekly edtion, p. 3. A more extensive translation of this article is published in Richard Huelsenbeck. *Memoirs of a Dada Drummer* (New York, 1974), pp. xxx-xxxii.

7. There are two versons of this speech with no indication which of the texts was read. *DadaAlmanach*, Richard Huelsenbeck ed., (Berlin, 1920), pp. 104-108 and a shorter version in Richard Huelsenbeck ed., *Dada, eine literarische Dokumentation* (Reinbeck, 1964), p. 30.

8. Raoul Hausmann. *Am Anfang war Dada*, Karl Riha and Günter Kaemfp, eds. , 2nd ed. (Giessen, 1980), pp. 22 ff. See also Richard Huelsenbeck. *Dada siegt. Eine Bilanz des Dadaismus* (Berlin, 1920), where the critique of the *Berliner Börsenkurier* of April 4, 1918 is cited.

9. Werner Haftmann. *Painting in the Twentieth Century. An Analysis of the artists and their work.* trans., Ralph Mannheim. 8th printing, (New York, 1973), p. 186 states " The old Futurist techniques were employed..."

10. Ibid. p. 79.

the author desires to convey. However, once "released" to the public, the text takes on a life of its own. It is vital to understand that, although the text is the creation of a person who does control its denotative components, and who may make reasonable assumptions about how the text will be received and perceived, the author alone clearly does not determine what impact the text may have, nor what purpose(s) the text eventually serves. While the *intended* purposes may very well vary according to the perspective of their different and individual creators, the audience(s) will ultimately play the more significant role in determining the effect of any text. What the members of the audience in fact perceive may be significantly different from what was intended, that is to say, what the author wished to convey may or may not be what the audience perceives. Congruence of values, ideology, and all that is subsumed therein is essential to the possibility of approaching a 1:1 correspondence between the ideas of the text's creator and the audience's understanding of the text. The perception(s) may in fact be identified only from subsequent activities (or actions) OR from a clearly and overtly expressed change of mind. It is the audience that has the final WORD and DEED. That final word and deed, we may reasonably assume, involves the audience's translation of its perception(s) into some kind of response, cognitive or behavioral. This is all the more the case when we consider the avant-garde work or text, one component of which seems bound to involve something new, whether in form or in content.

It is well to beware that it is not only the text that effects a change in perception and/or perspective. The reader brings personal history to bear upon

11. Huelsenbeck, *Memoirs of a Dada Drummer*, p. 21 and 22

12. Ibid. p. 166. Riha remarks that a tape recording made by Hausmann in 1956/57 exists. I had no access to it.

13. in Nr. 14, (April 20, 1919), p. 163 f.

14. *Dada Berlin. Texte, Manifeste, Aktionen.* In Zusammenarbeit mit Hanne Bergius herausgegeben von Karl Riha. (Stuttgart,1979), pp. 49-52.

15. Huelsenbeck in *The Dada Drummer* on p. 51 states: "I personally never had any inclination toward political activity" and on p. 54 repeats, "We weren't political..."

16. The other performances followed very similar programs as well as results: on February 18 in Hamburg, on the 24th in Leipzig, the 26th in Teplitz-Schoenau, on March 1st in Prague (during this performance Baader is supposed to have left with the receipts, leaving Hausmann and Huelsenbeck to carry on), on March 2nd another performance in Prague and finally on March 5 an appearance in Karlsbad. It is obvious that the performances had become the reason for Dada's existence, it had certainly become a money-making proposition. [To complete the list: Hausmann together with Klockmann gave a Dada evening on December 15, 1920 in the Berlin Sezession: Baader gave two performances in Hamburg, in 1924 and together with Hans Harbeck on January 18, 1925 (!!), calling it the "Matinee at the conclusion of the Dadaistic Movement.] Karl Riha, *Da Dada Da war ist Dada da, Aufsätze und Dokumente* (Munich/Vienna, 1980). p. 57.

17. H.J. Kleinschmidt's assertion is therefore arguable when he states that the Dadas in these performances were "always provoking the unsuspecting citizenry, whipping them into a state of uncontrollable frenzy but always escaping personal harm at the last moment." That was not an 'unsuspecting citizenry' when the press had announced the program. As to 'escaping personal harm', the Dresden performance does not permit such a categorical statement.

18. Kulicke is a street-jargon name of a person with low intelligence.

19. Raoul Hausmann in *Am Anfang war Dada* on p 116, states that the Baron von Lücken, a well-known "original" poet climbed the podium and announced to the public "I find Dada wonderful and it was a lovely evening. I dedicate to the Dadaists all the money I carry with me, 5 Marks!"

20. Special thanks are to the Robert Gore Rifkind foundation, and especially to Peter Ludewig and Hans-Jürgen Sarfert, for their friendship and help.

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and on other intermediaries who come between text and other members of the public, we might find the going a bit easier. We would have something definite to analyze, for example, specific people or groups, such as critics, often the bane of creative individuals' lives, many of whom would undoubtedly agree with Stanley Burnshaw's assertion that "it is plain that all critics are more or less dangerous as whatever their judgments imply affects and conditions the response of the readers."[1] For the creator who seeks to send or transmit some kind of message, be it informational, emotional or whatever, the most direct and immediate route to the receiver would seem to be the most desirable. With their texts, the authors may seek to communicate clearly and distinctly by traditional means; they may on the other hand raise a challenge to traditional means of communication and thus attempt to construct a context for "real" communication. And if what the audience receives is as will-o'-the-wispy in nature as the Cheshire smile, and the audience thus is forced to recreate or create anew for itself that image or message, so be it, for it is under these circumstances that the interaction between audience and work, between audience and text becomes real.

The object which we are considering is composed of text, words/letters/symbols ("literary" forms in the broadest sense) on a page. In fact, the text is clearly both object and subject. As an object it is read, reflected upon, catalogued, and then often forgotten. As a subject, it "speaks" to us, inspires us, initiates an exchange which we may have with ourselves. Arguably, the text becomes an intermediary between author and audience: in it resides that which

The Dadaist Text: Politics, Aesthetics and Alternative Cultures?

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Looking back at Dada

Compared with German Expressionism, Italian or Russian Futurism, and French Surrealism, Dada was the least literary, the least theoretical, the most spontaneous, and the most insistent of the historical avant-garde movements so richly documented by the Kleinschmidt collection. Looking back at Dada, we are reminded that the very radicality of its embrace of the spontaneity and complex richness of "life" was the reaction to the death-urge of European civilization, which, with the First World War, had erupted through the surface of reason. Today the documents of two world wars and the documents of Dada appear to rest in peace in their respective museums and archives; in the indestructible vaults of rationality and security. Viewing a collection such as this one, the phantoms may unfreeze for the sensitive and imaginative viewer, and various questions may come to life again. Are we not still somewhat uncomfortable rereading the various Dada-manifestoes, confronted with proclamations such as: "Dada is not a new trend in art. Dada is a direction of life itself turning against everything that we imagine to be the meaning of life?" Would most of us not recoil as did the late sixties philosopher of modernist art Theodor Adorno, when faced with the international student revolution in the wake of the Vietnam war, which demanded his leadership that signaled the advent of the sublation of avant - garde art's utopia into political life? As had the political philosopher Herbert Marcuse, in the aftermath of a failed revolt which he had accompanied and,

between text and audience:

a path to the future

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Although it is hardly an impossible task, coming to grips with the audience for a text, a painting, or any other created work is in some ways akin to capturing the snark, or the smile of the Cheshire Cat. There is no doubt about the importance of the audience, whether for the author or artist, on the one hand, or as an intermediary between text and "outside world," on the other. At the same time, focusing on the audience itself, we must look for firm ground to stand on. Were we to focus on the creator, his/her text,

to a degree, master-minded, would most not have reduced their expectations of revolutionary potential in artistic utopianism: toned them down and conceded that art can render only a momentary anticipation of freedom? Dada, however, insisted, in greatly varying degrees of concretely political engagement, on total liberation. Whatever date literary history reserves for the end of historical Dada, its spirit was dead when the Nazis pulled the revolver on all of Western culture.

Seen from the vantage point of historical experience, the spirit of Zurich Dada appears to have by no means signaled a revolution. But like all significant artistic production of our culture, it may have had a power of analytic imagination and a seismographic sensibility that was capable of anticipating at least certain aspects of the future. In his "Dada Manifesto" (figure 20, cat. # 42), published in the third number of *Dada,* Zurich 1918 (figure 19, cat. # 42), Tristan Tzara projects the ideal of "Je m'enfoutisme" (as Motherwell suggests, roughly translatable as "I don't give a damnism." Dada's tireless promoter advocated a type of "ah shucks" - mentality; "...the kind of life in which everyone retains his own conditions, though respecting other individualisms, except when the need arises to defend oneself, in which the two-step becomes national anthem, curiosity shop, a radio transmitting Bach fugues, electric signs and posters for whorehouses, an organ broadcasting carnations for god, all this together replacing photography and the universal catechism."[1] Has not Tzara's vision, whether one likes it or not, become a fair image for today's daily life in the industrialized world? The cosmopolitan Dadaists had not been vacationing in Switzerland. They had come there, in 1915/16, at the height of the war, as political refugees, as exiles avoiding censorship and military draft: Ball and Huelsenbeck from the Kaiserreich, Tzara and Janco from Rumania, the Alsatian Hans Arp, legally a German citizen, from Paris because he was unwilling to fight for either side. Thus, the vision of a state of global "Je m' enfoutisme" was an expression of their concrete fear and hatred of the hybrid European ideology of rationalism and nationalism which had resulted in the institutionally sanctioned mass murders of the First World War. The main-stream intellectuals and artists of Germany, France, and England had been not only sup-

22. André Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism," *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, by André Breton, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane (Ann Arbor, 1972), p. 26.

23. See the documentation of the background to the composition of *Howl* in Allen Ginsberg, *Howl*, ed. Barry Miles (New York, 1986), pp. xi-xii, 149-188.

24. Roy F. Allen, *Literary Life in German Expressionism and the Berlin Circles* (Ann Arbor, 1983), pp. 229-250; Timothy O. Benson, "The Functional and the Conventional in the Dada Philosophy of Raoul Hausmann," *Dada/Dimensions*, ed. Stephen C. Foster (Ann Arbor, 1985), pp. 131-163; Stephen C. Foster, " Johannes Baader: The Complete Dada," *Dada/Dimensions* 249-271; Hans J. Kleinschmidt, "Berlin Dada," *Dada Spectrum: The Dialectics of Revolt*, ed. Stephen C. Foster and Rudolf E. Kuenzli (Madison, 1979), pp. 145-174; Karl Riha, *Da Dada da war ist Dada da* (Munich, 1980), pp. 37-64.

25. Filippo Marinetti, "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature," *Selected Writings*, p. 84.

26. Frank O'Hara, "Personism: A Manifesto," *Claims for Poetry*, ed. Donald Hall (Ann Arbor, 1982), p. 306.

27. Jack Kerouac, "Essentials of Spontaneous Prose," *Evergreen Review 2* (1958), pp. 72-73; Jack Kerouac, "Belief and Technique for Modern Prose," *Evergreen Review 2* (1959), p. 57.

28. Roy F. Allen, *German Expressionist Poetry* (Boston, 1979), pp. 82-85.

29. This "inclusiveness" is the chief characteristic of Post-modernism according to George F. Butterick and Donald Allen. See their preface, *The Postmoderns: The New American Poetry Revised*, ed. Donald Allen and George F. Butterick (New York, 1982), p. 12.

30. Howard N. Fox, *Avant-Garde in the Eighties* (Los Angeles, 1987), pp. 9-25.

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portive of the war of the nation states but had actively produced ideological snake oil through their prowar essays, the signing of manifestoes and works of art. In Germany, for example, Thomas Mann's *Gedanken zum Krieg* (Thoughts concerning the War) represented such major- ity sentiments which had inspired the 93 signatories of the chauvinist manifesto "An die Kulturwelt" (To the Cultured World) among them Gerhardt Hauptmann. In June 1915 a petition signed by 1,347 intellectuals, addressed to Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg, demanded the annexation of conquered territories and extensive economic and military measures.[2] Mentioning names like Maurice Barrès, Charles Maurras, and Rudyard Kipling may suffice to recall an equally frenzied nationalist chauvinist climate in France and England at the time.[3]

At least equally disturbing was the fact that many members of the early European avant-garde, had put themselves into the service of chauvinist propaganda or at least did not shy away from prowar sentiments. In Italy, there was d'Annunzio and the Italian futurists who shouted the slogan "War the World's only Hygiene" and pressed for Italy's entry into the conflict on the side of France and against Austria; Guillaume Apollinaire wrote poetry in the service and for the glory of war and France; in Germany even the sensitive Franz Marc, in a series of letters from the Western front to a rather startled Paul Klee, envisioned a rejuvenation of European civilization through war. Dada reacted to the betrayal of art and the intellect by these artists and intellectuals.

And today? In the West, intellectuals seem to display a certain "I don't give a damnism" vis-à-vis ideological issues. However, this is not an "I don't give a damnism" as a fulfilled state of affairs, but rather a measure of jadedness *in spite* of a continuous threat of global ideological divisions. What the exiles in Switzerland could not have envisioned is that the intellectual of the future would have capitulated and conceded his powerlessness in regard to any funda- mental change, his inability to create new values or even to sustain traditional ones. Dada's provocative and explosively anarchist freedom of play, envisioned as a model for the whole of social life, has since degenerated into a tired postmodern "anything goes" attitude. Dada's attack

8. Guillaume Apollinaire, "Zone," trans. Louis Simpson, *The Poetry of Surrealism: An Anthology*, ed. Michael Benedikt (Boston, 1974), p. 15.

9. Noel Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound* (San Francisco, 1982), pp. 457-458.

10. William Carlos Williams, *Paterson* (New York, 1963), p. [i].

11. William Butler Yeats, *Autobiographies* (London, 1975), pp. 348-349.

12. Passage cited in Roger Shattuck, *The Banquet Years* (London, 1968), p. 254.

13. Hugo Ball, *Tenderenda der Phantast* (Zurich, 1967), p. 11.

14. Cited in Martin Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd* (Garden City, 1961), p. xix.

15. Tristan Tzara, *Seven Dada Manifestos and Lampisteries*, trans. Barbara Wright (London, 1977).

16. Marcel Janco, "Creative Dada," *Dadas on Art*, ed. Lucy R. Lippard (Englewood Cliffs, 1971), pp. 35-38.

17. Filippo Martinetti, "The New Religion-Morality of Speed," *Selected Writings*, by Marinetti, ed. R.W. Flint, trans. R.W. Flint and Arthur A. Coppotelli (New York, 1972), p. 94.

18. Filippo Marinetti, "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism," *Selected Writings*, p. 41.

19. Marinetti, p. 94.

20. Kurt Hiller, "Über Kultur," *Die Weisheit der Langenweile: Eine Zeit- und Streitschrift* (Leipzig, 1913), pp. 49-72.

21. See, e.g., his articles published in 1913 in *Die Aktion*: "Zur Überwindung der kulturellen Krise" (384-387), "Ludwig Rubiners *Psychoanalyse*" (506-507), "Die Psychoanalyse oder wir Kliniker" (632-634), "Die Einwirkung der Allgemeinheit auf das Individuum" (1091-1095), "Anmerkungen zu einer neuen Ethik" (1141-1143), "Notiz über Bezie-hungen" (1180-1182).

on the authority of all styles of the past has been flattened into an acceptance of the meaningless simultaneity of all styles as decor. Dada's original radical attack on the bourgeois quasireligion of art, on the status of art as an "autonomous" sanctuary of values, promoted by the culture and consciousness industry and the educational system, has apparently been deflected. Its spontaneous energies have been funnelled back into an ever growing market for "revolutionary" and "avant-garde" art. Thus the status of the art establishment has been recaptured and extended. What is shocking about avant-garde art today, is its market value, the ever increasing prices achieved at auctions and in the galleries for articles that had originally been directed against them as "anti-art" artifacts.

Dada ("We recognize no theory") and Theory

Musing over the significance of the hundreds of diverse materials of the avant-garde contained in the Kleinschmidt collection, the overall question arises, why such a fate for such an impressive and vital movement in the culture of our century? Will we find an answer in the texts themselves, which are, of course, marked by what seems to be a certain overdose of negativity and cynicism to begin with, or does it lie in their context? Most of the Dadaists were convinced that only the total eradication of the old tablets could somehow ensure a new start. The Russian Futurists, on the other hand, had implemented the destruction of the old art establishment by the constructive replacement of the illusions of art in galleries, journals, libraries, salons and palaces with a functional art on the walls of houses, fences, rooftops, streets, on the back of cars, streetcars, locomotives, or people's clothes. The mass media, newspapers, film and radio, theatre and concert, all were to be put into the service of a "recreation of life", so that Meyerhold could exclaim, "Soon there will be no more spectators, all will have become actors, only then will we have a genuine, truthful art of theater."[4] In other words, before its inevitable repression through Stalin's terror, the Russian avant-garde had embarked on a program which abolished the concept of the everyday and introduced the ideal of the complete man, an individual integrated into the world of work. By comparison with the opt-

clusion, exclusion, or personal combinations.[29] With the loss of traditional center, the avant-garde artist, re-flecting in heightened form the sensibilities of all individuals, has been moving in the last century outward from the traditionally defined self in search of alternative knowledge about himself, others, and the world. If his has not always been a more constructive approach than that of convention, it has, in its lack of fear of confronting — and thereby exposing — certain otherwise hidden realities and truths, been more honest. The avant-garde has thus been a tradition of bold experiment. And it remains one which is still very much alive and constantly changing.[30]

notes

1. Henry Miller, preface, *The Subterraneans*, by Jack Kerouac (New York, 1959), p. 5.
2. Charles Olson, "Projective Verse," *Human Universe and Other Essays* by Charles Olson (New York, 1967), pp. 51-61.
3. Olson, p. 51.
4. Ibid.
5. William Barrett, *A Study in Existential Philosophy* (Garden City, 1962), p. 177.
6. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, vol. 2 of Werke, by Friedrich Nietzsche (Darmstadt, 1973), p. 127.
7. Friedrich Nietzche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, vol. 3 of Werke, 7,pp. 21, 25.

imism of the Russian avant-garde (however ill-fated), the seeming nihilism of Dada–"you give us the honorable title 'nihilist'"[5] – raises a number of issues for an assessment of the significance of the movement, its achievements and shortcomings. In the terrifying light of the experience of World War I, brought about by the supposedly most refined, most humanistic, and rational cultures of the planet, did the everlooming threat of such catastrophic and total reversals in the social realm prompt the Dadaists to reject all aspects of the functionality of art and refuse any participation in the productive aspects of our culture? Such refusal to adopt a moral vision, as is well known, led to the split between Tzara's Dadaists and Breton's proto-surrealists, in 1921, at the occasion of the mock trial against the nationalist writer Maurice Barrès (figure 35, cat. # 78). Was there, as Arnold Hauser has maintained in his *Soziologie der Kunst* (1974), indeed nothing constructive in the Dadaist events? How can one justify the verdict that Dada was no more than "anarchic vandalism"? Were their texts really "cynically nihilistic", not only beyond the good and evil of bourgeois morality, but also against art?[6] Literary history, like much of Dada's contemporary audience, must have taken the provocation of the Dada texts ("the fraud of all art") *literally*, something, as we shall see, that the essence of the Dadaist text was opposed to. What then are the categories through which we could understand Dada ("I am against all systems")?[7]

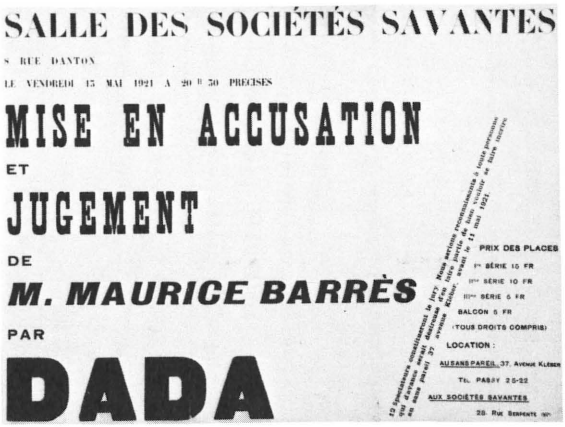

Figure 35

The classificatory impulse of the historian will note that the texts from the early Dada period in Zurich reveal a single common denominator with which Tzara's "Manifeste Dada 1918" (figure 20) ends emphatically: "Life," a concept so broad that it is (as with Nietzsche, the key philosopher of the European avant-garde) really not a concept at all, whether it refers to individual (Nietzsche) or collective life (the avant-garde). Such an unruly premise could not have been very effective. In Berlin of the twenties, the

> Sitting on the gas tank of an airplane, my stomach warmed by the pilot's head, I sensed the ridiculous inanity of the old syntax inherited from Homer. A pressing need to liberate words, to drag them out of their prison in the Latin period![25]

The American poet Frank O'Hara, on the other hand, describes what must have been the experience of many others. As he tells it in his "Personism Manifesto" (1959), his new poetics emerged automatically with the removal of the control held on language by the old faith:

> I don't believe in god, so I don't have to make elaborately sounded structures. I hate Vachel Lindsay, always have, I don't even like rhythm, assonance, all that stuff. You just go on your nerve.[26]

Whatever the initial impulse, experimentation with non-traditional means of expression, one of the most conspicuous features of the twentieth century avant-garde, has given rise to a whole new canon of techniques and styles.

The real essence of the avant-garde is not to be found in any one approach to reality or artistic expression, but rather in its openness to, or inclusiveness of, all possible approaches. The avant-garde has been consistent in its effort to avoid restrictions of any sort on living, thinking, feeling, writing, painting, composing: in other words, it has insisted on the total freedom to create without laws or rules. In the course of its development the avant-garde has, of course, developed a tradition, a repertoire, of its own as it has cast off older ones. The new avant-garde tradition, however, is not a fixed one; it has become in increasing measure a fluid complex of almost limitless possibilities available to the free choice of the individual artist for in-

indistinct but vigorously upheld vision of "life" becomes transformed into, and is substituted by, the common denominator of "social life" as *political* life. Nevertheless, the genuinely political objectives of a new proletarian culture did not fare any better. Such must be the historian's conclusion in view of the restorative developments of the Weimar republic and of the subsequent victory of Nazism.

Looking at the state of current academic theoretical discussion concerning the socio-political and cultural impact of Dada and the avant-garde, one would think that the avant-gardists were social planners on the grand scale of a Hegelian "Zeitgeist" rather than artists. We know, on the other hand, that they were, inspired by Bakunin and Russian anarchism. Clearly we cannot, nor would we want to, do without the profound insights of theoreticians such as Peter Bürger or (for the socalled postmodern era) Jean-Francois Lyotard. They render a philosophically coherent, intellectually exciting frame of reference. Nevertheless, we should be aware that theoretical brilliance and logical perfection do not altogether do justice to the reality of the historical conditions of actual artistic production or its contemporary reception. The avant-garde's artistic creativity was inextricably intertwined with the anarchic bohemian atmosphere of the café house, with the spontaneous soirées, the "sabbaths" of the Dadaists, and of Hugo Ball's Cabaret Voltaire in the Spiegelgasse in Zurich, from where it spread to New York, Berlin, Hannover, Cologne, Leipzig, and Prague. The Dadaist's tumultuous happenings were exercises in offending, provoking and ultimately engaging an audience in the abandonment of the inhibitions imposed by the cultural status quo. It becomes questionable whether Bürger in his seminal analysis *The Theory of the Avant-Garde* (1974) is correct in positing as an unconditional premise that the avant-garde programmatically meant doing away with the "institution of art." According to Bürger, the avant-garde directed its onslaught on the "institution" of art, because it was a sub-system of bourgeois society, a society that prevented the critical and liberating impulses of art from being implemented in concrete social life forms. Yet it seems that the avant-garde was much less programmatic, much less revolutionary in a specific political sense, much more spontaneous in its broad attempt to remove the

unique; more typical is identification with socialism or communism. German Expressionism included in its ranks some of the most dedicated followers of Marxist and socialist ideas, particularly in the circle around Franz Pfemfert and his journal *Die Aktion*. Also, large numbers of Expressionists played key roles in left-wing forces during the 1918/1919 revolution in Germany. Even Dada, whose dominant negativism and stress on alogical forms of artistic expression made it scarcely compatible with any organized political program, was induced to align itself with the communists when it moved to Berlin just as the November Revolution was being organized.[24] While avant-garde artists have not always shown clear sympathy with organized political movements (and perhaps more typically are inclined almost by nature to the kind of anarchism that underlies the exuberant hedonism of Kerouac's 1957 novel *On the Road*), they have with rare exceptions, managed to make clear their antipathy to capitalism and its role in industry and commerce throughout the world. Again, however, such criticism is generally expressed so playfully (as it is very often in the poetry of the Beats and always in the verse of E.E. Cummings, where it is scattered amongst his celebrations of love and joy) as to render its potential for reform innocuous.

Olson wrote in his projectivist manifesto that the stance described in these pages gave rise to a new poetics. For artists like Marinetti they purportedly came from a conscious effort to find a means of artistic expression more consonant with a new world. He reports in his "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature" (May 11, 1912):

traditional dividing wall between art and life understood independently of the social conventions. Therefore these impulses could easily be stored *affirmatively* as cultural ideals in a sanctuary elevated above social practice.[8] After all, Dada's most influential artists such as Hugo Ball and Hans Arp, or Tristan Tzara were ultimately contributing to the resurrection of art–in radically new forms, of course. They did not really destroy the "aura", the singularity of art, the ideological basis of the status and cult of a market-driven bourgeois culture.[9] What, in terms of production and the intentions of the individual creator, was designed to disrupt as "anti-art," was received as an enrichment of the art market. Averse to stagnation, the market was ready to take political "risks," and redefined Dadaist "anti-art" as an innovative "work of art."Huelsenbeck, in his somewhat precocious, but incisive *En Avant Dada: A History of Dadaism* (1920), censures Tzara as a mercurial manager in the field of the international art business for his insistence on the "very old hat" of "abstract art," which Berlin Dada had turned against "gun in hand."[10] One does witness, in the Kleinschmidt Collection, a multitude and variety of alternative journals, publishing houses, a flourishing counterculture –all within the friendly confines of the traditional.

It seems that the avant-garde–on the whole–was specializing, as the Russian formalists put it, in "laying bare the device" of the techniques of artistic production through the new provocative text or icon of art, in order to estrange, demystify, and to debunk the ideological claims of the old text of art. Most of all, Dada wanted to disrupt the by then outdated complacent classical equation of an aesthetic totality of beauty, organically self-contained, with ethical integrity and purpose. By virtue of the programmatic openness of the new text to the cultural *context*, the avant-garde text was intent on laying bare the ideological mechanisms of artistic productions *within*, rather than altogether against, what Bürger calls the "institution of art." The institution of art here refers to the "affirmative" function of bourgeois culture, in terms of its concrete social forms, the exhibition hall, the publishing house, methods of distribution, the relations between author, critic, and public, etc. At any rate, it is the process of evolution towards changes through reflection rather than through revolution, that prevails. Bürger

> ner — actual functioning of thought. Dictated by thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern.[22]

He follows this stylistic application of Freudian theory with an explanation of Surrealism as philosophy. Breton's contention is that by substituting the expression of the "superior reality" of the inner workings of the human psyche, for all other approaches to life (and the knowledge gained thereby), he would solve all of life's problems. This concept is, in simplest terms, the one which forms the basis of therapy in Freudian psychiatry. By expressing his innermost psychic states, in particular those revealed so ingeniously in dreams (such as represented in the canvases of Giorgio di Chirico and René Magritte or in the poetry of Breton and Paul Eluard) the individual will be better reconciled with the conflicting forces within himself and thereby with his external environment. Similar applications of Freudian theory, most of them directly influenced by Surrealism, permeate the avant-garde in subsequent years. Most conspicuous and recent of these successors is the literature of the Beat movement, in which the related theory of "spontaneity" in composition is developed and experimented with in a similar attempt to extract, from the mind, the most profound truths about life.[23]

The more practical approach, the reform of contemporary life through participation in political movements, has also been a long-standing tradition for the avant-garde, even though such participation has most often been less than fully committed. The endorsement of fascism by Futurism and Pound is

himself points out that the market-place of ideas, insatiable as it is, will assimilate also that which wants to do away with it. The circulus vitiosus of bourgeois culture ultimately causes the theoretician's reversal into sublimation of his original premise of the avant-garde as revolutionary. The very text of avant-garde art–marked by culture's double-bind of criticism and affirmation of its context (Marcuse) – is ultimately valorized to be the only vantage point from which the relative freedom of critical distance can be achieved.[11] Such a critical resurrection of the "autonomy" of art is, indeed, necessary for the survival of the distance of criticism, since advertising industry's pseudo-creative activities have commodified the original play-factor of the avant-garde text. A "relatively autonomous"[12] art is, indeed, necessary, it seems to me, because the consciousness-industry has commodified the archaic utopian images of the avant-garde in trivial literature and mass culture.[13] If Schulte-Sasse were right in his assumption that the "institution of art" today has collapsed after all,[14] ironically–and disastrously–any avant-garde potential would have self-destructed. In the end, there would be only the high art of the past, advertising and trivial mass culture. However, I maintain that because the economic sphere of our culture is omnivorous, it is also blessedly pluralistic. The critical impulses of both the historical and contemporary avant-garde and the influence of mass culture will coexist–in tension. Thus, it is increasingly important for the literary critic and general audience to understand the nature of the avant-garde text in its contexts.

The Avant-Garde Text

Although Dada was as an exile movement highly aware of and reactive to the political situation of the world at war,[15] the beginnings of the movement were essentially directed towards a revolution of art. Zurich Dada believed in the text itself as a means of changing consciousness through a deconstruction of the "ruling" texts fabricated in the interests of the bourgeoisie. Thus, the Dadaist text was to compete in the struggle for cultural influence[16] by subverting the ideological texts of the chauvinist press and the literary texts of traditional art claiming the eternal values of the bourgeois ideal of humanity. In the eyes of the

ance to deeper insight into the inner workings of human character. This was soon provided by a young Austrian free spirit and ex-student of Freud by the name of Otto Gross. Gross, who was developing a program for the reharmonization of life through total sexual liberation, joined the Expressionist camp just before the outbreak of the First World War.[21] He published these ideas in the movement's journals and explained them at length at its social gatherings. Although quickly attracting a large following, Gross' interpretation of Freudian theory was clearly very narrow. Furthermore, the appearance of his ideas in publications with very limited circulation and life, restricted his impact on the avant-garde.

No strain of the avant-garde has yet surpassed James Joyce's broad analysis of the psyche of one individual, encompassing not only its basic intrinsic facets, but also its decisive extrinsic conditioning. Executed in *Ulysses* (1914-1921), Joyce's work was a model in practice, but a forbidding one in length; it was also very slow in reaching an international audience as it was only gradually published in increasingly larger editions and in translation. Surrealism, on the other hand, made Freudian theory the basis for its central program, circulated it widely in easily digested form, and quickly gave it artistic expression. The movement's leader, André Breton, defined the concept of Surrealism — dictionary style — in his 1924 manifesto:

> surrealism, n. Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express — verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other man-

Dadaists, that ideal had sold out to the political powers. The Dadaists were specifically provoked by national art based on the traditional aesthetics of beauty and truth; an art which had supported the war-effort in a wave of enthusiastic poems and manifestoes.[17] In that specific sense they were "anti-art." In other words, the earlier Dadaist texts competed *within* the institution of art, while the Berlin Dadaists later attempted a political destruction of the institution of art for the establishment of a proletarian culture.

The early Dadaist texts were most consistent in deconstructing the normative social sign system which suppressed the uniquely individual and heterogeneous for the totalized and totalizing general. Their texts, generated on the basis of a decentering spontaneity and chance, attempted to deflate the illusionist spectacle of Western ideology which championed the omnipotence of the logocentric subject, rationally and ethically autonomous. However, the problems of a criticism that stayed, in spite of all appearances, within the established cultural context were manifold in the realm of reception. The Dadaist assault on the audience's "horizon of the expectations" (Jauss) through soirées and happenings ultimately created–as the mass media reported on the Dada events with predictable bias and hostility–a counterproductive *expectation* of a disappointment of expectations. Once the initial shock value of the Dada performances had rubbed off, the Dadaist deconstructive event, as an instructive performance, degenerated for the audience into a tumultuous secular carnival of aggression either towards no particular end, or against the Dadaist performer. Thus Tristan Tzara's *Coeur à gaz*, staged in the early twenties in Paris' Salle Gaveau, served as a mere cue for throwing eggs at author and actors.[18] The public's reaction did not favor the eradication of the division between author and audience. The public merely became bad actors with very conventional and predictable roles. The often brutal provocation ("Hoosenlatz"), for example, Huelsenbeck's *Phantastische Gebete* (Phantastic Prayers, 1918) (cat. # 39) was lost in negatively primitive havoc, not in mutually shared bruitist-primitive rhythms as a primordial expression of life. As Huelsenbeck became increasingly preoccupied with the

that he adopt fully the new "style" of life which they represent. According to Hiller, this feat is only possible if the individual (especially the thinking, educated individual — i.e., the intellectual or *literatus*) temper with emotion the dictates of reason, which urge him to attempt to understand everything rationally, and thus integrate himself into the new environment instinctually rather than consciously. Hiller's point is simply that because the new world is too complicated and diverse to be grasped by one mind we must give up hope of understanding it all and adjust to it unconsciously, as we would more easily have done had this world evolved more slowly.

Art in periods of heightened sensitivity to the human condition (e.g., Elizabethan England, German Storm and Stress, Romanticism) has always been able to delve deeply into the inner workings of the human psyche. Publications of studies, early in this century, relating to the discovery of the subconscious, seemed to offer hope of a source of a new, more essentially humane set of guiding principles for some strains of the avant-garde. The later Freudian tendency to look inside human character was already inherent to vitalism as was license to fuller appreciation of sensate, including sexual, experience. Thus, the influences of Nietzsche and Freud complement each other so fully that it is difficult to separate them.

In its earliest stage (1910-1914), German Expressionism concentrated on interior states, largely by suggesting them indirectly through the use of startling, alogical imagery and the depiction of irrational actions. But such techniques remained superficial. At this stage, the movement clearly lacked guid-

political mission of Dada, he became oblivious to its textual medium per se. He was intent on destructing the aura of art. On the other hand, there were Hans Arp's finely tuned texts weaving in dreamlike fashion patterns of romantic images, onomatopoeia, fragments of every-day language and slang into an intricate texture. The evocative play of these "Arpaden" would ultimately dwell on and expand the cognitive dimension of linguistic constituents and particles of meaning rather than provoke shock. Texts like Arp's *Wolkenpump-en* (Cloud Pump, 1917) give rise to subliminal aesthetic meditation rather than to a mood of revolt. Here, for example, is one of Arp's early poems "Dem Ausgang zu," rendered in English by Herbert Read:

> die nachtvögel tragen brennende laternen im gebälk
> ihrer augen.
> sie lenken zarte gespenster und fahren auf
> zartadrigen wagen.
> der schwarze wagen ist vor den berg gespannt.
> die schwarze glocke ist vor den berg gespannt.
> das schwarze schauckelpferd ist vor den berg
> gespannt.
> die toten tragen sägen und stämme zur mole herbei.
> aus den kröpfen der vögel stürzen die ernten auf die
> tennen aus eisen.
> die engel landen in körben aus luft.
> die fische ergreifen den wanderstab und rollen in
> sternen dem ausgang zu.
>
> the night birds carry lighted lanterns in the beams
> of their eyes
> they guide delicate ghosts and drive
> fine-veined carriages
> the black carriage is yoked to the mountain
> the black clock is yoked to the mountain
> .....
> the dead carry saws and timber to the nearby jetty
> from viscous goitres crops gush onto the iron
> threshing-floor
> angels land in baskets of air
> fish grip their pilgrims' staff and roll through stars
> to the exit.[19]

Arp's texts would quietly participate in the subtle, reconstruction of art in a form only Roland Barthes' "aristocratic reader" could savor. Contrary to proclamation, Arp's

The Futurists' break with classical canons of aesthetics had to be a simultaneous break with its stance on reality. Thus, in a subsequent manifesto (May 11, 1916), Marinetti wrote the necrology of Christian morality as he again elaborated on the new:

> Following dynamic art, the new religion-morality of speed is born this Futurist year from our great liberating war. Christian morality served to develop man's inner life. Today it has lost its reason for existing, because it has been emptied of all divinity.[19]

Several German Expressionist groups — such as the circles around the journal *Der Sturm* (cat. #s 11-13), Alfred Richard Meyer's publishing ventures, the journals *Pan and Die Dichtung* — supported an interpretation of vitalism developed by Kurt Hiller and other members of "Der Neue Club" in Berlin. In the same year in which Marinetti's first manifesto of Futurism appeared, Hiller wrote an essay "On Culture" (1909) in which he also proposes a solution to modern existential alienation. In Hiller's mind, the problem is experienced most acutely by the contemporary urbanite who has to come to terms with the new metropolises. Because this experience is so differentiated and refined, the urbanite finds that tradition can no longer help him to either cope with what this new life requires of him or to take advantage of its opportunities.[20] Much like Marinetti's embrace of the beauty of speed as the new essence of the modern world, what Hiller advocates is that the individual not attempt the impossible task of participating in the full range of experiences available, but rather

ideal reader could not be the innocent printer, the man of the masses, even if his typesetting errors were welcomed as chance additions, as creations of a collective enterprise, in which the ivory tower barrier between author and reader had supposedly been removed. Arp, who knowingly compared the imaginative capacities of the "normally organized bourgeois" with that of a "worm,"[20] was keenly aware of the problematic art character of his texts when he qualified his statement, clearly directed at the conventions of what he considered dead academic art as well as trendy avant-gardist posturing; "Dada is for nature and against art" by emphasizing his profound trust of nature: "I believe that nature is not in opposition to art. Art is of natural origin and is sublimated and spiritualized through the sublimation of man." I agree with Herbert Read who wrote that "Arp was always guided by his aesthetic feelings."[21]

In other words, it is insufficient to understand the Dadaist manifestos and happenings merely as provocative, anarchist aggressions against Bürger's "institution of art." It is time to decisively lay to its final rest the widespread cliché of Dada as "anti-art," still advanced by leading theoreticians of recent "experimental" or "concrete poetry" in an attempt to justify their "experiments" as aesthetically innovative and artistically superior to Dada.[22] Any reassessment of Dada cannot rely on such evidence of its reception, but has to scrutinize the Dadaist text by itself. By the same token, we cannot cite as evidence for an aesthetic valorization of Dada, the retrospective mellowness of, e.g., Huelsenbeck, who in 1920 attacked what he perceived to be Tzara's ambitious aestheticism and railed against the "fraud" and "humbug," the commercialism of art, and who in 1950, decades after Dada's prime– insisted on its original "faith in the evolution of art" and that the movement was "never anti-art."[23] Such expressive reversals rather are based on the experience of the disappointed hindsight of the renegade; the avant-garde did not succeed in breaking down the barrier between life and art. Consequently, Dada and its protagonists now have to be saved for the history of literature. What can be said is this: while Dada was boisterously anti-establishment, it nevertheless participated in a struggle for dominance of its texts over traditional texts, in the "cultural activity"[24] rendered by even the most sub-

tiques of most all human endeavors by Tristan Tzara's "Monsieur AA Antiphilosopher," is well-known.[15] Marcel Janco, who attempted to mitigate this reputation of Dada by trying to make a case for its "positive speed," was still forced to confess that Hans Arp's "serene art, his poetry without bitterness, aggressiveness, or nihilism is not characteristic of Dada."[16] For this reason, however, Dada is not really typical of the avant-garde; more faithful to avant-garde's predominant thrust are attempts to synthesize the thesis of the old and the antithesis of the new into more constructive alternative approaches to life; attempts that, more often than not, are refomulations of Nietzschean vitalism. Thus, the Futurists expressed a desire to embrace, and infuse their art with, what their leader, Marinetti, called "the beauty of speed." For much of the middle class of his time, the older conception of art was best manifested in the post-classical Greek sculpture, "Victory of Samothrace," standing — not coincidentally, of course — in the Louvre Museum in the very same city in which this first Futurist manifesto (cat. # 1) appeared on February 20, 1909:

. . .Dada is not really typical of the avant-garde; more faithful to avant-garde's predominant thrust are attempts to synthesize the thesis of the old and the antithesis of the new. . .

> We say that the world's magnificence has been enriched by a new beauty; the beauty of speed. A racing car whose hood is adorned with great pipes, like serpents of explosive breath — a roaring car that seems to ride on grapeshot — is more beautiful than the *Victory of Samothrace.*[18]

versive argument. The radical Dada text in that sense constitutes a choice of alternative communication and dialogue within the context of a potentially seminal and exemplary countercultural community of art. The evolving community of art relied on its own publishing houses and a growing number of sympathetic critics. In that sense it fostered an alternative elitist audience, while the avant-garde ultimately failed in creating a new collective public. Because potentially anybody could freely and without coercion participate in the proposed counterculture, Dada was very much a part of the bourgeois culture of its time.

In sum, the "cultural activity" of the Dadaist text consisted in 1) its provocative unmasking of the "big slogans" of Western culture, such as "Art" with a capital A, "patriotism" a la "Vive la France" (Tzara), "Individualism" etc. In as much as the World War triggered the Dadaists' cultural pessimism and criticism, their "demonstrations" echoed that very aggression through unique forms of violence. But we must not overlook 2) the reconstructive energies of the Dadaist text itself. They are based on the fundamentally deconstructive employment of language as it turns against its own enslavement in the service of slogans.Thus the "Dadaist Manifesto" (1918) (figure 20, cat. # 42), closes quite consciously with a retraction of its own assertions, "To be against this manifesto, means to be a Dadaist."[25] The paradoxical strategies of the Dadaist text allow language to liberate itself from the subject-centered perspective of the supposedly autonomous individual, permitting the text to play itself without a player, as it were, and thus to open up for its audience a wider experience of the heterogeneity of the world. Although there are no coherent Dadaist poetological treatises, we can nevertheless infer from a close reading of their texts that the Dadaists attempted to reintegrate into the text extra-literary language, formerly banned through the narrowing conventions of the exclusive styles of high culture. Through its montage of quotations from the public texts of newspaper, advertising, slang or simply *language*, the Dadaist text intended to rupture the traditional closure and isolation of the "organic" work of art from life. As such a "non-organic fragment" (Adorno), the Dadaist text intended to open itself to a reintegration with life transformed by its very own experience.

one vapid daily affair to another; in *The Waste Land* it is suggested by the desolation and sterility of the land it depicts and the impotency of the king who rules it.

The "theater of the absurd" reinterpreted "Jarry-style" nihilism for post-World War II Western audiences. Ionesco defined the concept of the absurd as used by his movement in an essay on Franz Kafka (1957):

> Absurd is that which is devoid of purpose... Cut off from his religious, metaphysical, and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless.[14]

Samuel Beckett gave the concept its classical expression in dramatic form in *Waiting for Godot* (1952), a work whose image of the world's spiritual abandonment approaches Eliot's in *The Waste Land* in its starkness. The absurdity of existence is the very substance of the action here: as the play's title suggests, the characters simply wait; they wait for salvation by some higher power or being; it becomes clear, however, that it will never arrive. Waiting postpones; here it indefinitely postpones life itself and the final definition of its purpose. Hope thus becomes a concept maintained by fools. Even sexuality, the last desperate alternative for many adherents of the avant-garde, has no attraction. Life is utter boredom. Having been confronted with the emptiness of the dialog, the senselessness of the action, the barrenness of the stage throughout, we think in the end of the gaunt stick figures, who stand in isolation on a desolate plane in some of the sculptures of the Swiss Surrealist Alberto Giacometti.

The negativism of Dada in Zurich and Paris, epitomized in the cynical cri-

However it is defined, as an organic unity or a fragment, the Dadaist text, after all, remains a "work." No matter how heavily it relies on the montage of components quoted from the linguistic environment, it will always constitute an aesthetic sign distinguished from the world of mere objects; hence, from this perseptive, its critical cognitive potential. Beyond the provocative aspects which the Dadaist work shares with much of modernist poetry, language itself will be given a chance to unfold itself in its functionally objective (metonymical) relation of letter to letter as sign to sign, image to image, sound to sound; ultimately, in its ambiguous relation to "meaning," or the absence thereof. At any rate it will demonstrate and unveil, through multiple defamiliarization effects, how meaning is generated or fabricated through signifying conventions. Because the Dadaist text gives us a glimpse into what Nietzsche called the "dark work-shop of human ideals," it throws a monkey wrench into the subjective metaphorical (fictional) mechanisms of poeticization, literalization and the fabrication of fictions of reality (Carl Einstein). While on the provocative level, it "disillusions" to the degree of the absurd, in its "deep structure" it will ideally generate energies of expression that can point to yet unrecognized experiences of the senses, experiences not labeled, not classified; experiences resisting our rational and intuitive compulsions. The Dadaist text demonstrates that the experience of reality is mediated through language which is part inner, part outer, and thus indeed a realm by itself. Our experience of the dynamics of language itself will be thrust open to the potential of new perceptions generated and aggregated in the innovative structures of what we call the Dadaist collage technique. 3) In social terms, we can state that the Dadaist text enriches our cultural realm of forms of communication: it represents the experience of a group of intellectuals who, on top of their proverbial status of the artist as social outsider, have been disenfranchised by censorship and political repression. The exile's reaction is one of anarchism projected negatively on the social realm, positively onto the complexly innovative order of the text. The Dadaist compensates for his own crisis of uprootedness by valorizing it as the existentially privileged status of a "free-floating intelligentsia."[26] From this vantage point, the avant-garde

mind such as Yeats', with very deep roots in the older world, it was a very disturbing realization:

> Feeling bound to support the most spirited party, we have shouted for the play, but that night at the Hotel Corneille I am very sad, for comedy, objectivity, has displayed its growing power once more. I say, after S. Mallarmé, after Verlaine, after G. Moreau, after Puvis de Chavannes, after our own verse, after the faint mixed tints of Conder, what more is possible? After us the Savage God.[11]

As the new century dawned, the future spokesman of the Cubists, Apollinaire, put a similar appraisal of contemporary mankind in the mouth of Dr. Cornelius Hans Peter in his novel *Que Faire?* (1900).[12] The Zurich Dadaist, Hugo Ball, implied the death of the old God of Christianity in heralding the impending arrival of a "new god" at the very beginning of his prose fantasy *Tenderenda der Phantast* (1914-1920).[13] The Russian Suprematist, Kazimir Malevich, makes the equivalent statement more subtly by simply hanging his scandalous "Black Square" abstract (1915) in the upper corner of one of the rooms at the "0-10" exhibition in Petrograd in 1915, i.e., in the very spot normally reserved in Russian homes of the time for the family icon. Both poems by Eliot referred to earlier in the context of fragmentation of perspective not only represent the phenomenon structurally and thematically, but also point to its source, namely, the loss of clear direction or meaning in life once provided by an abiding faith. In "Prufrock," this idea is implied in the titular figure's appeals to his readers for guidance which punctuate the poem as he drifts from

feels called upon to offer to civilization, as a saving device, its aesthetic experiences and experiments in radically innovative aspects of formerly suppressed forms of communication. However, Dada's self-defeating, tantalizing problem arose from its sweeping cultural aspirations. It could only reach the ear and the eye of the "aristocratic reader."

Berlin: The Politicization of the Dadaist Experience

The subtleties of the "cultural work" of the Dadaist text, made conscious only by a very recent generation of academic ("aristocratic") readers, were in reality, in the words of Werner Mahrholz' early contemporary assessment of the new art of modernist expressionism, "specialty products for specialists": "The circles of the literati and bohemia have generated from within themselves a 'culture' of painting and poetry of their own, which in general becomes known only in the circles of the art specialists and which according to its nature does not want to influence the people as a whole..."[27] This is exactly what I mean: though Dadaism was in one way or other a radical revolt against the institution of art, its claim to recapture "life" could not but lead to the establishment of a countercultural institution within the institution of art which favored specialization to begin with. In this sense Tzara and Arp were quite consistent. In a way, Dada's effects are not altogether unlike those which the Berlin Dadaists attacked as pseudo-avant-garde, the "workers of the spirit" (Hiller, Adler), Expressionism and of Herwarth Walden's Sturm group dedicated to the most exquisite phenomena of the new art. This condition, resembling the specialization of aestheticism which the avant-garde professed to have broken with, would early on provoke the criticism of more clearly politically committed writers around Franz Pfempfert's *Die Aktion*. Specifically, for example the painter George Grosz and the writer and art critic Carl Einstein, who had contributed to the activist journal before the war, would in the postwar Berlin of the twenties, alongside Huelsenbeck, Raoul Hausmann, Franz Mehring, Wieland Herzfelde, John Heartfield, and Johannes Baader, be instrumental in the politicization of the dadaist revolt against the literary and artistic tradition. It is quite instructive to trace Dada's relinquishment of the practice of revolutionizing the literary

gested his approach (its radical mutability) had already, in the course of only one decade, made his work anachronous:

> [since completing *Paterson, Four* I have come to understand not only that many changes have ocurred in me and the world, but I have been forced to recognize that there can be no end to such a story I have envisioned with the terms which I had laid down for myself. I had to take the world of Paterson into a new dimension if I wanted to give it imaginative validity. Yet I wanted to keep it whole, as it is to me. As I mulled the thing over in my mind the composition began to assume a form which you see in the present poem, keeping, I fondly hope, a unity directly continuous with the Paterson of *Pat. 1* to *4.* Let's hope I have succeeded in doing so.[10]

All avant-garde artists in our century have followed Nietzsche's lead in adopting a nihilistic assessment of the status quo, focusing, as he did, on the failures of hypernationalism and hypermaterialism to provide mankind with a meaningful existence. One of the earliest of such critics is the French dramatist and novelist Alfred Jarry, often considered to be a forerunner of the Surrealists. His play *Ubu roi* (1896) is a mercilessly derisive satire of the ruling class' cupidity, hypocrisy, pompous vanity, and flagrant misuses of authority under the license of reason. Both the severity of its criticism and the hopelessness of the human portrait it presents prompted the realization in William Butler Yeats, who was present at the premiere of the revival of the play at the Théâtre de L'Oeuvre in Paris in 1908, that the work had been created by a mind rooted in the godless world of Nietzsche. As he suggests in his report of the night, for a

and artistic medium, the *text*, *within* the "institution of art" in favor of a progressive commitment to attempts at revolutionizing the "institution of art" through political events. Such a shift presupposes a growing awareness, generated specifically by the economic and political crisis in Weimar Germany, that in order to make the text into more (or for that matter less) than what is bound to remain an *aesthetic* expression of "revolt," namely an effective instrument of social change, its social *context* has to be altered.

The pragmatic nature of the Dadaist politicization aesthetically meant a return to the incomparably simpler, conventional sign systems of the agit-prop pamphlet, a reorientation culminating in post-Dadaist politicized treatises in the vein of Grosz' and Herzfelde's *Die Kunst ist in Gefahr* (1925) (figure 36, cat. # 66), in which Kokoschka's appeal to protect the master works of art from the destruction of the street battles waged in the revolutionary turmoil of the day is ridiculed and the thesis of "art as a weapon" in the struggle for the rights of the proletariat is put forth. Captions on Dada posters unmistakably call for political action in the manner in which Heartfield's famous photomontages will later unmask Hitler's claim: "Behind me stand millions" (the montage demonstratively reveals that these are not people but the millions of the capital). In short, the formerly complex Dadaist text is reduced for the sake of political effectiveness. This trend, which only in exceptional cases like that of George Grosz' or Heartfield's splendidly innovavative work is not neccessarily one of artistic impoverishment but of genuine "revolutionary beauty" (Aragon), is already made evident by the outright political manifesto "What is Dadaism and what does it want in Germany" drawn up by Hausmann and Huelsenbeck in 1918. Its first demand anticipates the political radicalization of Breton's surrealist program by more than a decade: "The international revolutionary union of all creative and intellectual men and women on the basis of radical Communism..." Huelsenbeck explained himself: "While Tzara was still writing: 'Dada ne signifie rien'–in Germany, Dada lost its art-for-art's-sake character with its very first move. Instead of continuing to produce art, Dada

Figure 36

Cantos (1917-1972), set his readers completely adrift in their search for meanings beyond those enclosed separately within each canto. Pound himself knew in the end that he had failed. He admitted to friends in a conversation in Venice, Italy, during his last years, that his attempt to write the great epic poem of our times had been defeated by its own basic structural principle:

> ...Cory brought up the subject of the cantos and the conflicting opinions they had aroused. Pound intervened firmly, describing the work as 'a botch.' And when Cory persisted, 'You mean it didn't come off?' the poet replied: 'Of course it didn't.' He then went on to describe a shop window full of various objects: 'I picked out this and that thing that interested me, and then jumbled them into a bag. But that's not the way,' he said, 'to make' — and here he paused— 'a *work of art*.'[9]

Olson in the three volumes of his *Maximus Poems* (1960-1975) and William Carlos Williams in the five books of his *Paterson* (1946-1958) managed to attenuate the effect of incohesion by concentrating on one place — Olson on Gloucester, Massachusetts, and Williams on Paterson, New Jersey — and by introjecting their works with bits of autobiography at carefully spaced intervals. Their purported attempt was to render the totality of human experience through the record of one human settlement with a substantial past and a fully contemporaneous present. Still there were problems; the most insurmountable one was the essential endlessness or open-endedness of the story they had set out to tell. Williams described this problem in a letter to his publisher regarding the final book of his epic, confessing that the very nature of the world that had sug-

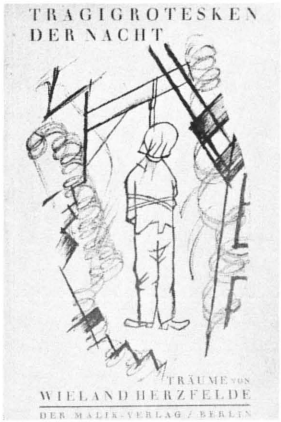

Figure 37

in direct contrast to abstract art... had to say exactly what our Dadaism was after."[30]

Exactly. It is true that some of the "Dadaist revolutionary central council's" demands retain something of the original "creative irrationalism" (Huelsenbeck) and anarchism: "the introduction of the simultaneist poem as a Communist state prayer;..." However, others are to say "exactly what our Dadaism was after;" "the immediate expropriation of property (socialization) and the communal feeding of all..."

By contrast, Grosz's and Herzfelde's contributions to Hausmann's *Der Dada,* 1919, (cat. #s 59-61) are still marked by the Dada notion of "play" as revolt; Herzfelde's *Tragigrotesken der Nacht. Träume* (Tragi-Grotesques of the Night. Dreams, 1920) (figure 37, cat. # 63), by an early surrealist dimension devastating the bourgeois rationale that had climaxed in the war. Journals such as *Der Blutige Ernst* (In Bloody Earnest, 1919) (figure 38, cat. # 50), edited by Einstein/Grosz, are indicative of a transition towards revolutionary pragmatics: "Ludendorff's Tagebuch" (in Nr. 3) fuses the original Dadaist play–factor with the relatively straight-forward political satire in the vein of Heinrich Mann. In Nr. 6 (cat. # 53), the treatise "Abhäng-igkeit" (dependency) renders a sort of "user's manual" for understanding the *concretely* political function of the subversion of the repressive conventional sign system. Journals such as *Die Pleite* (Bankruptcy) (cat. #s 54-58), edited by Grosz/Heartfield, give further evidence of this trend which is inseparable from the activities of the Spartakus League and the Communists. The issues of 1923, are devoted to such topical issues of interest such as the Stinnes-case or Ludendorff's endorsement of the memorial for Schlageter, the Nazi idol fallen in the battle with Communism. The more the model of the artistic revolt was transferred, away from the text into life as the social realm and the topical political arena, the more powerful was the revolutionary vitality. Such transfers of the subversive Dadaist "play" into events range from Grosz' WWI posturing as the "merchant from Holland," at parties of the ruling class offering

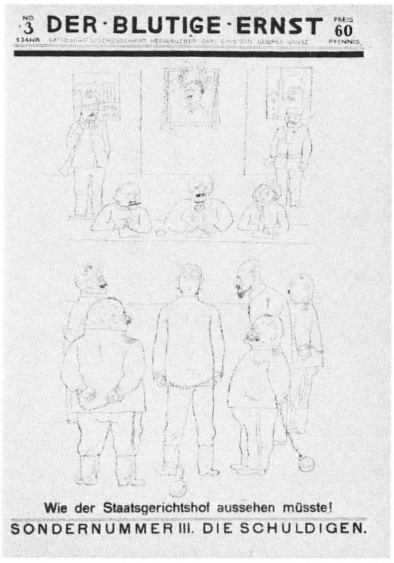

Figure 38

Georges Braque or the portraits of models by Pablo Picasso, Cubist canvases reveal a much more encompassing perception of reality than do those of the Realists or Impressionists. The same principle informs Guillaume Apollinaire's classically Cubist poem "Zone" (1912), in which the poet, surveying his contemporary Paris from the personified perspective of the Eiffel Tower, boldly counterposes the remnants of the old world in the city (e.g., Christianity, neoclassical architecture) with the noisy and gaudy ingredients of the new (e.g., poster advertisements, business managers and typists, automobiles and airplanes). In his final lines, instead of the strained reconciliation that more conventional verse might have offered, the poet leaves the reader with a brief glimpse of the great diversity of the world, as he superimposes our image of Christ on that of the "fetish-gods of Oceana Guinea."[8]

Some artists seemed so overwhelmed by the loss of traditional center that they could only register the fragmentation of experience that resulted. This was the case with the early T.S. Eliot, most notably in his poems "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1915) and *The Waste Land* (1922). In both works, the disjointedness of the images ("Prufrock") and the parts (*The Waste Land*) corresponds to the fragmentation of modern urban existence. Eliot tried to provide some artistic cohesion to the latter work by using certain unifying mythological symbols, poetic juxtapositions, simultaneity, and literary quotation or parody. These devices worked reasonably well in a short poem. However, Ezra Pound's refusal to introduce order into his groupings of discrete shards of human history, which he chronicled and with which he composed his voluminous

for sale engraved bullets from the front, to the concretely political Dadaist "happenings" at the trials against Einstein's drama *Die Schlimme Botschaft* in which Jesus Christ returned to the temples of the money-mongering Weimar Republic; or George Grosz's famous-infamous "Jesus with Gas-Mask. Shut Up and Keep Serving" ("Maul halten und weiterdienen"). They all mark the "art of revolution" as a practical political artform staging events in the *context* of the social lifeforms. The very negative "reception" of their event-related texts and sketches at the hands of the authorities implied that obvious political revolutionary advantage was gained: most crucially, the targeted recipients, the masses, were reached by such spectacular "happenings" as those highly publicized trials which Bertolt Brecht, with his killer instinct for publicity, plan-ned to exploit for his "Lehrstück" stage. Similarly, the Malik press' hit-and-run distribution method of Grosz-illustrated pamphlets on the street corners of Berlin constituted a form of convergence of political art and political life. In this dynamic process, constituted by the text and the political context, art indeed became a "weapon." In the longer event, however, the story was not changed: while literary history, constituted by the insatiable institution of art, proved extremely receptive to the dadaist "revolutionary" text, political history, of course, was less inclined to tolerate its political contextualization.

him responsible self-determination by reintegrating his emotional life, of which rationalized Christianity had robbed him, into his intellectual life. An emotional life is no longer condemned, as it had been by the old morality, as purely destructive; the intellect is no longer glorified, as it had been by the old philosophy, as exclusively constructive; both the structuring force of reason and the gratifying force of emotion assume roles of equal validity and importance now.[7]

For the avant-garde movements that began appearing shortly after Nietzsche's death in 1900, his alternative approach to modern reality was, if not always the final answer, at least a model of courageous defiance. One of the problems addressed earliest by these movements was that of the sheer, overwhelming complexity of the new environment which had been created by advanced industry and technology and which the old rationalism could no longer satisfactorily structure for the individual. The Cubists in France sought to gain control over the new reality by making its complexity the compositional principle of their art. They rejected the harmonious portraits of their predecessors and conventional contemporaries as the products of a vision which, by specious excerpting, cheats the audience of a sense of the unintegrated totality. They chose instead to represent reality more faithfully by juxtaposing or superimposing all of its disparate facets on one single plane or in one single text. Whether in the reproduction of cityscapes by Robert Delaunay, in the still lifes by

They chose instead to represent reality more faithfully by juxtaposing or superimposing all of its disparate facets on one single plane or in one single text.

NOTES

1. Robert Motherwell, ed. *The Dada Painters and Poets* (Boston, 1981), p. 80.

2. Michael Stark, *Für und wider den Expressionismus* (Stuttgart, 1982), pp. 182f.

3. Julien Benda, *La Trahison des Clercs* (Paris, 1927), p. 66.

4. Burckhardt Lindner, "Aufhebung der Kunst in Lebenspraxis? Über die Aktualität der Auseinandersetzung mit den historischen Avantgardebewegungen" in *Theorie der Avantgarde. Antworten auf Peter Bürgers Bestimmung von Kunst und bügerlicher Gesellschaft*, Martin Lüdke, ed., (Frankfurt 1976), p. 78.

5. Motherwell, p. 107.

6. Arnold Hauser, *Soziologie der Kunst* (München 1974), p. 729.

7. Motherwell, p. 29, 79.

8. Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde,* trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis, 1984), pp. 11f.

9. cf. Eckhard Philipp, *Dadaismus* (München, 1980), p. 88.

10. Motherwell, p. 32, 33.

11. Bürger, p. 54.

12. Lindner, pp. 99f, points to Brecht as the paradigm of an avant-garde that seizes its chances for change by a systematic subversion ("Umfunktionierung") of the cultural institutions and that maintains, against a possible false sublation into mass-communication, an effective "relative autonomy" by a mutual critical exchange with other social spheres of action.

13. Frederick Jameson, "Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture" in: *Social Text*, 1, 1979/80, 130-148.

14. cf. Schulte-Sasse, foreword to Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. xli.

15. cf. Theda Shapiro, *Painter and Politics: The European Avant-Garde and Society 1900-1925* (New York 1976). Rudolf E. Kuenzili, "The Semiotics of Dada Poetry" in: *Dada Spectrum: The Dialetics of Revolt,* Stephen C. Foster, Rudolf E. Kuenzli, eds. (Madison, 1979), pp. 52-72; and "Dada gegen den Ersten Weltkrieg" Die Dadaisten in Zürich" in: *Sinn aus Unsinn. Dada International*, Wolfgang Paulsen and H.G. Hermann, eds., (Bern/

the environment, it soon became clear that the old approaches no longer worked, i.e., they no longer helped the individual either to understand or to cope efficiently with what had become an almost totally transformed world. The result was an acute sense of alienation. William Barrett writes in his study of existentialism, which itself became one of the proposed alternative approaches to this new world:

> By the middle of the nineteenth century, as we have seen, the problem of man had begun to dawn on certain minds in a new and more radical form: Man, it was seen, is a stranger to himself and must discover, or rediscover, who he is and what his meaning is.[5]

Sören Kierkegaard advocated at the onset of these developments a revitalization of the religious center of the self. But Kierkegaard's approach required a return to a form of Christianity that antedated even the Middle Ages; its lack of contemporaneity with an inexorable present meant it could be no lasting solution. The crisis intensified as the century progressed, until Friedrich Nietzsche, repelled by the moral vacuity and narrow interests fostered by the hypermaterialism and hypernationalism of his epoch, issued his devastating, yet inevitable, declaration of the death of God.[6] His was a stance that seemed to most who read him much more congruent with the new reality than simple revisions of the old order. Moreover, while his view was nihilistic in opposition to the old, it was not a dead-end: he offered a way out through a vitalistic approach to existence. Nietzsche's vitalism frees the individual from all external authorities and grants

Münich 1982), pp. 87-100. While Kuenzli correctly assesses Zürich Dada as a phenomenon deeply politically motivated, Reinhart Meyer et al. view it as a primarily aesthetic event: *Dada in Zürich und Berlin 1916-1920,* Kronberg ts. 1973.

16. cf. Schulte-Sasse, p. ix.

17. cf. Stark, pp. 178-199.

18. Richard Huelsenbeck, ed., *Dada Eine literarische Dokumentation,* (Reinbeck, 1964), p. 23.

19. Herbert Read, *The Art of Jean Arp* (New York, 1968), p. 156.

20. "Dadaland" in: *Dada,* Peter Schifferli, ed. (Zurich, 1957), p. 108.

21. Read, p. 40, 41.

22. cf. Rainer Rumold, *Sprachliches Experiement und literarische Tradition, Zu den Texten Helmut Heissenbüttels* (Bern, 1975), pp. 77f.

23. Motherwell, pp. 29, 33f., 88, 14.

24. cf. The discussion of the creative aspects of alternative groups such as the Expressionists in time of cultural crisis, which consist in the establishment of a cultural dialogue towards expanded communication by offering alternatives : Bernd Hüppauf, "Zwischen revolutionärer Epoche und sozialem Prozess. Bemerkungen über den Ort des Expressionismus in der Literaturgeschichte" in: *Expressionismus und Kukturkrise,* Hüppauf, ed., (Heidelberg, 1983), pp. 55-88.

25. Huelsenbeck, p. 29.

26. cf. Stark, pp. 73-88.

27. Stark, p. 82

28. Motherwell, p. 41.

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objects of nature. All of these objects, when compared with one another by the Objectist, are judged to be of equal value; human beings, furthermore, are found to be endowed with no lesser, but also no greater, qualities (e.g., a soul) than are any other of the objects which cohabit the Earth.

As Olson himself is very much aware[4], his Objectism program rides in the wake of many equivalent statements which were issued under other rubrics at the beginning of our era and have since initiated a whole series of artistic movements; we are used to designating them all as "avant-garde"; Cubism, Futurism, Expressionism, Dada, Suprematism, Constructivism, Surrealism, et al. Most broadly put, such statements represent a break with the rationalized version of Judeo-Christian theology which had developed in the early part of the 18th century and had provided the middle class with the basis for its positivist-materialist view of reality that was eventually to make it the dominant class in Western society. As this new posture in the dialectical process of history was imposed on reality, it naturally altered the human environment that had been created by its ideological predecessor. It thereby paved the way for its own crises and a break with its own tradition as it produced the need for yet another new approach to reality. The changes which led to the crises have been well-documented by historians. They developed in the course of the 19th century, reaching their height around the turn into the next: the industrial revolution, the movements for greater political freedoms and labor benefits which it engendered, the appearance of the metropolises, imperialism, increasingly sophisticated technological advances, etc. In the face of these dramatic alterations of

Abstracts

The Prerequisite Text

Stephen Foster

This essay maintains that the importance of the avant-garde text, as a prerequisite of the avant-garde, rests in the fact that it is the text itself that most bears and transmits patterns of culture. Both a visible record of its emergence from culture and the basis upon which culture could be visibly recomposed, the text was a recognition and reflection of culture. As a "configuration" of institutions, ideas, and events, the avant-garde text drew attention to the nature of culture, *per se*. This act was more important than advocating any specific historical expression of culture. Thus freed, for the most part, from party-specific politics, reigning ideologies, and the limitations of their expressions in conventional texts, the avant-garde text could intercept and critique normative culture, propose alternatives to it, and project future visions of it on an operational rather than historical basis. Although questionable as an instrument of practical politics, the impact of the avant-garde text on humanistic social perspectives and concepts of culture has been considerable.

The Text and the Myth of the Avant-Garde

Estera Milman

This essay defends the assumption that the avant-garde text most importantly served to perpetuate the avant-garde's own mythic basis in culture. This author, in analyzing a sample of little magazines, identifies the paradigms consulted by the artists and through which they felt they could, based on these paradigm's cultural pervasiveness, most effectively secure a viable social standing and reception as art. Rarely involved in contributing to substantial aspects of the cultural perspectives they appropriated (politics, science, etc.), they were nevertheless of heuristic value to the avant-garde which translated them into expanded and challenging artistic spaces. Arguing that they were intentionally offered primarily to arts and humanities audiences, the paper maintains that traditional interpretations of them as efficacious crossovers between the arts and other dimensions of culture confuses the myth they mean to perpetuate in text. Their purposes should, consequently, be reexamined.

state of things in their respective eras. But because their times were less turbulent, and the changes the times wrought in art, therefore, less dramatic, their interpreters have felt less need to acknowledge in their work what is really, as Miller suggests, the accomplishment of all artists.

As social beings, our approach to our endeavors is necessarily determined by our orientation to reality. We acquire this orientation from our surroundings; it is the most decisive conditioning of our times. In our century, the radical changes in art begin with corresponding changes in attitudes toward the world. The American post modernist Charles Olson explains these changes in typical avant-garde fashion in his 1950 manifesto "Projective Verse."[2] He proposes here a series of theoretical dicta for a new poetics of open verse; he stresses, however, that they did not develop in a cultural vacuum, but derived from a "new stance toward reality":

> I want to do two things: first, to try to show what projective or OPEN verse is, what it involves, in its act of composition, how, in distinction from the non-projective, it is accomplished; and second, suggest a few ideas about what stance toward reality brings such verse into being, what that stance does, both to the poet and to his reader.[3]

This new stance involves reconsidering the individual's position relative to other elements which constitute his surroundings. Olson calls the reevaluation "Objectism" because it removes the individual from the center of focus in our world, from the position of priority and preference which he has enjoyed for centuries, and repositions him as merely one among many other

The Text and the Coming of Age of the Avant-Garde in Germany

Timothy O. Benson

This essay traces the revolution in the avant-garde text from the initial absolutist intentions of the Expressionists to the strategic use of the text by the Dadaists. Centering on the shortlived balance between the text as aesthetic activity and its employment in broader cultural criticism, the discussion most concerns itself with Berlin Dada. The author argues that the altered appearance of the text reflects changes in the avant-garde's perception of itself and, in particular, its role within the context of culture in general. With the disillusion of rationalism and teleology, artists rejected the concept of contexts shared with its audience, ideas of a causal historical motion, and with them, the whole notion of progressive social change. Opposed to art's conventional social setting, the Expressionists sought their absolutes—the totality of experience—in art, an idealism that was perpetuated, at least in part, in Zurich Dada's appropriation and aestheticization of the text in their attempts to define an avant-garde, as opposed to establishment, art setting. In contrast, Berlin Dada turned to promotional and strategic uses of the text in their attempts to infiltrate the wider culture. Admitting a variety of influences from other, non-aesthetic, areas of culture (the press, entertainment, advertising, etc.), their approach became more materialist and their texts more objectified. Their texts reflected their historical context and social positioning and, as a result, the texts operated on a level as concrete as did their counterparts in other dimensions of culture. Their reconstructions betrayed their sources in both fragmentation and contradiction. Although wearing a public face, they continued to be evaluated in terms of their successes or failures, as the subjects of aesthetic criteria. Losing power with the stabilization of the Weimar Republic to even symbolize social subversion or significant alternatives the avant-garde text finally took its place as part of the new structure of modernism that it was instrumental in creating.

Berlin DADA

Peter Guenther

Through a careful examination of existing Berlin Dada performance documents, the present essay attempts to refocus attention from the text itself to how the text was presented. Frequently meant to be read aloud, the performatory nature of these texts provided a power and impact impossible to achieve by the text designed for reading. Direct verbal assaults intended to confront live audiences, the public's reaction was understandably hostile and negative. A radical revolt against the entire period, committed to change in society through a change in man, the mode of these text performances do, nevertheless, throw doubt on the common assertion that Berlin dada was heavily political. Although insisting in their aggression and audibility on being heard, their unqualified "no" to German culture is rarely followed by a plan for constructive

the tradition of the avant-garde

by **Roy F. Allen**

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We apply the term "avant-garde" to art that is not in fact ahead of its time but simply more fully expressive of it. Henry Miller writes in his 1959 preface to Jack Kerouac's "spontaneous prose" novel *The Subterraneans*: "We say that the poet, or genius, is always ahead of his time. True, but only because he's so thoroughly *of* his time."[1] What the avant-garde artist accomplishes very often becomes in time a model for others; we therefore focus on classifying him in his role as forerunner. But what distinguishes him more precisely from his more conventional contemporaries is really the greater concordance with his times which his work seems to express based on a willingness to make fuller use of new themes and the formal possibilities that they offer. In an era of more dramatic change, the difference between the art which embraces such change and that which resists it will be all the more striking. The Storm and Stress writers in Germany, the Romantics of Europe, and the Naturalists throughout the Western world noticeably changed the appearance of art by incorporating in it the new

Guenther (cont.)

action. The text, centered in events, seeks neither political reform nor advocacy of a coherent Dada platform, but". . . an image which was capable of driving one not necessarily into the arms of the Dadaists, but into solitude where one could find at least one human being: himself. And nothing else."

The Dadaist Text: Politics, Aesthetics, and Alternative Cultures?

Rainer Rumold

The question addressed in the following essay both affirms the mission of the avant-garde text and acknowledges its historical fate; the consignment of this vital movement to the archives and museums, staunch symbols of the very social structure that it sought to criticise and replace. The answer is to be sought in the nature of art and its inevitable structured integration into society. Contrary to this anti-art myth, Dada did not destroy art's aura but rather sought art's resurrection. Although it flourished as a counterculture, it did so within the confines of art's traditional social place. Operating within, rather than against, the institution of art, Dada sought to expose art's ideological mechanisms and open the text to social context. In maintaining art's autonomy, Dada preserved the distance required of significant criticism but limited itself to change through reflection rather than through revolution. Zurich Dada sought, by destroying ruling texts, to compete for social influence, the movement's radical alternatives and its successes as a counterculture were felt most keenly in the community of art. Ultimately creating an alternative elitist audience, Zurich Dada remained squarely situated within the structure of establishment culture. Aware of the text's role in the mediation of reality, Dada was committed to unmasking culture's "big slogans," to rupturing the closure and isolation of the text in favor of its integration with life, and to defamiliarizing the audience from culture in ways that would generate primary meanings. Although enriching existing modes of cultural communication, the text remained aesthetic and reached only the aristocratic reader. Aware of this, the Dadaists turned to the liberation of themselves from their own enslavement. Forced to adopt new strategies a self-critical Berlin Dada attempted to change the cultural context into which the text was placed; to revolutionize the institution of art through political events. Reducing art in the interest of effectiveness, the text was employed as a weapon. Engaged in what this author identifies as "revolutionary pragmatics," Berlin Dada achieved, at least momentarily, the convergence of political art and political life. Brought sharply into tension with establishment culture, it nevertheless remained with the institution of art.

is a profoundly important aspect of literacy and, as such, is essential for a responsible and informed use of the text by virtually the entire literate world.

The primary purpose of THE AVANT-GARDE AND THE TEXT is to present a retrospective of pivotal avant-garde paper works to the American art public. While examples of avant-garde texts are often included in exhibitions of twentieth century art, there have been few systematic attempts to mount retrospectives of this scope within the United States. One factor contributing to this surprising situation has been the lack of attention paid to the innovative formal characteristics of the works themselves. While it is true that the materials cannot be viewed without an understanding of the critical perspective toward which they were directed, it is wrong to perceive of them as mere gestures and thus deflect attention away from the works as objects of art. Scrutiny of many of these texts discloses a sense of aesthetic purpose rarely surpassed in the twentieth century. Faced with historical imperatives, the avant-garde artist confronted questions concerning the capability of the text to address contemporary issues. How the avant-garde confronted these questions accounts for the nature and extent of the formal innovations evident in these works. While providing a rich context for the objects is essential to their proper understanding, it is not sufficient. The importance of the avant-garde text rests, in part, in its transposition of the problematics of culture into visual statements. Lack of concern for the visuality of the works can only lead to misunderstandings. It is the concern of the curators fo this exhibition that the materials be rediscovered as some of the most innovative artistic statements of the last one hundred years.

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the communicative aspects of the text as object (the communication of different ideas required different object qualities; because the conventions of the text were so strong, it was felt that it was necessary to make the new object qualities of the text part of the communicative process). The avant-garde's reformulation of the text required an active role, or involvement, from the spectator in the communication process (conventional texts had been sender oriented; the avant-garde text required a participatory or active role from the audience or receiver).

In general, the avant-garde text was attentive to its relationships to the individual and to culture at large. The avant-garde was always an active concept and as such , was highly aware of its positioning in relationship to the general public. The avant-garde chose the text and its mass media formats as the objects of their re-visionism specifically because of their effectiveness in communicating to large audiences (the general public was far more fluent when confronted by the text than when faced with more traditional art formats such as painting, sculpture, drawing, etc.). The avant-garde considered its use of language and the text to be of overriding importance because no other dimension of culture could be adequately accounted for without them.

The current exhibition makes the assumption that the purpose of history is to teach the present. Through a critical examination of the historical revolution of the text, attention is called to the responsibility of the present to do the same. The general audience in the present has something to learn about its own perception of the relationship between culture and the text through an awareness of how earlier audiences perceived and were influenced by the historical avant-garde's manipulation of the text and the mass media. Understanding how the text functions in culture, both in terms of its limitations and its possibilities,

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consistently tested the process by which new visual vocabularies are developed and communicated. As the current exhibition travels across the country, it is hoped that its publics will become more familiar with the relationship between avant-garde movements and their texts, experiments that produced artistic works counted among the most sophisticated and complex of our century.

. . .

The avant-garde proceeded alternatives to society's conventional use of the text at the same time that it formulated correctives to what it perceived as culture's abuses of the social power of the text. The avant-garde criticized culture's manipulative use of the text and the strictness and limitations of the text's conventions. It examined the nature of the text's emergence from specific social contexts and the kinds of social events to which texts specifically responded. Implied in this activity was one of the avant-garde's primary purposes - effecting social reform.

The avant-garde believed that much of what happened in culture was understood by the public through the printed media. It was not simply a matter of the media communicating something but, more importantly, a belief that the media provided the very means by which people understood things. The text, as given, could only say what it was designated to say. If the avant-garde could redesign the text, innovate the text, expand it, as it were, the new language of the text could communicate new things. The avant-garde attempted to open up language in order to communicate more than the text was conventionally designed to communicate. This involved a reexamination of the specific historical relationships between the text and ideology. The avant-garde wanted to make the text capable of responding to "modern" social imperatives (the avant-gardist viewed the conventional text as anachronistic and incapable of Modernism). The avant-garde provided the text with a new flexibility in order to help it keep pace with important changes in other aspects of culture (the avant-gardist was convinced that the text was not aligned with other progressive aspects of culture). There was also an attempt to renew

Note

Readers interested in securing copies of any of the articles listed above should send for the appropriate issue of Visible Language. Pages 1 through 160 are in the Winter issue (volume XXI number 1). Pages 161 through 300 are in the Spring issue (volume XXI number 2). Pages 301 through 508 are in the Summer/Autumn issue (volume XXI number 3/4). A limited number of all back issues of Visible Language are available at $6.00. Copies should be ordered directly from Visible Language, Rhode Island School of Design, Graphic Design Department, Providence, RI 02903. Payment should accompany your roder. A folder listing the contents of all volumes of past issues of Visible Language is available on request.

Design Notes

This volume has a dual function.
On one side, consecutive right-reading pages present critical analyses of the Avant-Garde text,
forming the Summer/Autumn issue of the journal Visible Language –
while on the other side, consecutive left-reading pages running in the opposite direction
form the catalogue for a traveling exhibition of selections from the Kleinschmidt collection
of Dada paperworks. Rather than separate the journal from the catalogue,
we present a more direct contrast of two very different means of appreciating these objects.

The nature of a book as an object consists of related verso and recto pages; it presents a singular, cohesive point of view. The structure of this simultaneous presentation depends on the inter-leafing of two points of view. The purpose of this inter-leafing is to challenge the viewer's 'reading' and to propose an alternative look at the book as an object.

Utimately, the subject of both the exhibition and the journal is the Avant-Garde objects.
Our intent is first, to express that there is no one way to perceive these objects; and moreover,
to enhance the attitude of each point of view by presenting it in the context of an alternative.

the designers

Preface

Of all the characteristics shared by the numerous early twentieth century avant-gardes, perhaps the most common was a commitment to moving culture ahead to a changed future. This intention informed most avant-garde productions: paintings, sculpture, architecture, performance works, and assemblages. It was through their ongoing experimentation with the text, however, that members of various avant-garde movements most

This issue of *Visible Language* was designed and produced at the Rhode Island School of Design.

Concept:
Thomas Ockerse

Design:
Laura Chessin

. . .

All text was generated on a Macintosh SE, with "The Big Picture", a large format monitor.

The final output was on a Linotype, Linotronic 300, a 1,270 dots per inch high-resolution printer.

Both display and text type are set in Century Old Style.

The designer wishes to extend special appreciation to Ernie Bellaire, manager of the RISD type shop, for his unerring patience and to David Colvin for his emergency computer first-aid wizardry

. . .

If you are interested in serving as guest editor for your specific research interest, write to the editor outlining the general ideas you have in mind and listing a half dozen or so topics and possible authors. If you would rather discuss the idea first, call the editor: Sharon Helmer Poggenpohl, at 215 - 565 - 9747.

to the volume's designers, Thomas Ockerse and Laura Chessin of The Rhode Island School of Design; David Trend, Editor, Afterimage, who served as the initial liason between the Archive and the Workshop; Karen Chase, Traveling Exhibitions Coordinator (VSW); James B. Wyman, Coordinator, Exhibitions Program (VSW); Laurilla Sundt, Graduate Assistant (FADA&RC); and to photographers Ray Robbennolt (VSW) and Forrest Rogness (FADA&RC). The curators of THE AVANT-GARDE THE THE TEXT are grateful to all of the above and welcome the opportunity to present the following catalogue to the exhibition's public.

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innovative page design, witty typography, and gestures of the hand. Each of these formal properties underscores the revolutionary social content of the pieces, whose goal was to revitalize the process of communication.

In making this exhibition available to a wider audience through its Traveling-Exhibition Service, Visual Studies Workshop hopes that more viewers will savor the intelligent contradictions of the avant-garde movements: the swings from crudity to elegance, the shifts from the sensical to the whacky, and most important, the avant-gardists' dual intention to hector and rehabilitate humanity.

We would like to acknowledge the State University of New York College at Brockport for its support of the exhibition, and the New York Council for the Humanities, a state program of the National Endowment for the Humanities, for its funding of "The Avant-Garde and the Text" Symposium. Our deep thanks go to Roy F. Allen, Stephen C. Foster and Estera Milman for their able curatorship of the exhibition. Dr. and Mrs. Hans J. Kleinschmidt have our gratitude for their willingness to part with these works for the duration of the traveling exhibition. These works are not only fragile and rare, but for Dr. Kleinschmidt, a significant repository of the often searing contradictions of his youth in Weimar Germany.

Susan E. Cohen,
Curator of Collections

Nathan Lyons, *Director*
Visual Studies Workshop

Acknowledgements

The exhibition, THE AVANT-GARDE AND THE TEXT, has been realized through direct collaboration between The University of Iowa's Fine Arts Dada Archive and the Visual Studies Workshop in Rochester, New York. Particular acknowledgements are due to Nathan Lyons, Director, Visual Studies Workshop, and to Wallace J. Tomasini, Director, the University of Iowa School of Art and Art History. Exhibitions of this scope are rarely realizable through access to works from a single collection. That such has been possible for this undertaking is due to the sustained, intelligent collections activities of Dr. and Mrs. Hans J. Kleinschmidt, long time friends of the Dada Archive. Special thanks are also due Sharon Poggenpohl, Editor, Visible Language, for her meticulous facilitation of this publication; Susan E. Cohen, Curator of Collections (VSW), for her tireless administrative contributions to the project;

Foreword

Many of the 150 paperworks which make up "The Avant-Garde and the Text" exhibition are diminutive in size. As such, they are a shock and a delight to the modern viewer, for whom gigantism and its corollary simplicity, are the devices used now to get our attention. The manifestos, brochures, broadsides, and periodicals in this show are scaled to the human body. They are meant to be held, scrutinized and read. Some of the pieces are in unfamiliar languages, yet their common and most powerful quality – that of purposeful engagement with the beholder – is clearly transmitted through

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January 27 - March 5, 1989	**Bowdoin College Museum of Art** **Brunswick, ME**
August 25 - October 1, 1989	**University of Illinois, Krannert Art Museum,** **Urbana/Champaign, IL**
November 3 - December 17, 1989	**University of Houston, Blaffer Gallery,** **Houston, TX**
January 7 - March 11, 1990	**The Pennsylvania State University,** **Palmer Museum of Art, University Park, PA**

The Avant-Garde and the Text

Exhibition Catalogue