

DANCING AT THE EDGE OF THE ABYSS

*George Grosz, Otto Dix, Christian Schad and the Influence
Of Cabaret Culture*

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Dedication and Thanks

This research is dedicated to the elderly German refugee librarian named “Lola”, whom when I was fifteen years old and a non-conforming misfit in the New Jersey suburb of Willingboro, USA, took me under her wing and introduced me to German avant-garde in Expressionist film, Berlin Dada, and the art of Weimar Germany. Now some thirty-eight years later, that influence has blossomed into this paper.

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“At this hour, when, as we see, Paris is going to bed, Berlin is just waking up.”

-- Percival Pollard, *Masks and Minstrels of New Germany*, 1911

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I. Introduction

The use of the cabaret motif in artworks created during the Weimar Republic in Germany has provided us with visual images that has helped define our modern perception of that era. These works often reveal a characteristic palette of lurid colors, reflective of the intensity of cabaret performance, with each stroke of the pen or brush conveying an undertone of decadence, desperation or hedonistic abandonment. Yet contemporary judgments of such works can often be misleading. The café, dancehalls and cabaret scenarios displayed in these works may ostensibly convey images of popular culture, but underneath often lies a deeper critique. Influenced by German Expressionist painters and their Parisian artist forerunners, the Weimar era artists also included existential and sociopolitical concerns into their distanced observations. Images of social and moral decay, prostitution and debauchery play out across many of these works, so inspired by the cabaret to divulge social issues of their day. And this meeting of cultural interspaces created by the cabaret art form, visual artists and their social conditions have resulted in highly characteristic works that exude an undeniable articulation of their own.

The focus and objective of this paper seeks to examine how the structure of cabaret was translated into painting by the artists of the Weimar era. My inquiry is directed on how the performative aspects of the cabaret stage and the social environment of the audience transformed into the visual images found in these artist's paintings, and also filtered from stage performance into performance art. What were the conditions and influences that led to these artists to incorporate the cabaret motif as subject matter for their artworks?

The politically and socially chaotic times of Weimar Germany has defined a turning point in history: the economic collapse, a populace cloaked in desperation, the advent of the mechanical age and avant-garde art movements, and the rise of Hitler and the National Socialists. Nowhere else was the zeitgeist of the times so brazenly captured as it was by both cabaret's song and in the works of visual artists. Both shared a mutual understanding and interpretation of their society's upheavals and changes in a setting that reflected their reciprocal concerns. By using selected, representative examples of artworks I wish to demonstrate how three German artists conducted their separate strategies in incorporating the cabaret motif into their works. Otto Dix (1891-1969), George Grosz (1893-1959), and Christian Schad (1894-1982) were three German artists who interacted with the cabaret environment in a variety of ways, infusing their works with cabaret's subjects, metaphors and types as a response to their era. Preference will be given to the cabaret culture found in

Berlin from ca. 1901 to 1933, the city that gave birth to its distinguishing format, as all the artists we are concerned with lived and worked there during varying periods in those years. The fundamental importance of the works by the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) is considerable for all concerned, and I will examine how these influential elements are all interconnected, resulting in *intermedial* works of art that would not have been possible without Nietzsche, the cabaret environment, and the artist's social-historical conditions. Nietzsche's influence on the era cannot be underestimated, as his philosophy permeates these artists' creativity, and indeed is found in the very foundational structure of Berlin cabaret itself. It is in the juxtaposition of these seemingly opposing components of Nietzsche, cabaret performance and text, with the perceptions of these artists that has resulted in the totality of dynamic, symptomatic works of art.

II. Methodological and Theoretical Approach

The methodological approach used in this paper has been conducted by research drawn chiefly from the literature of historical, art historical, and musicological studies. Source materials of original, period recordings, musical scores and song texts, period documents, cabaret programs, and contemporary arts journals were found in archives at the Akademie der Künste and the Statsbibliothek (Berlin), The International Dada Archive (The University of Iowa), and at the University of Oslo. I have made visual analysis of relevant paintings and works in the collections of Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna (Rome), the Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris), Nationalgalerie Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, and the Kunstmuseum Stuttgart. Invaluable advisement was given to me by Dr. Alan Lareau, Professor of German, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, USA, in his suggestions to me concerning books and materials to pursue in my research. Additionally, I have chosen to give weight to readings on Germanic culture and thought, instead of simply relying on sweeping theories of Modernism. In this way I hope to delve into the nuances of these artists' formative culture.

Where available I have used autobiographical writings by the artists (Grosz) or as quoted in other sources (Dix, Schad). Additionally, I have used autobiographical writings by authors such as Christopher Isherwood, Robert McAlmon, and Count Harry Kessler who were in Berlin during the time period of my focus, as an important source for understanding the era through the perspective of those who experienced it. I have also utilized the era's films, most notably *Abwege* (1928) by G. W. Pabst, and Richard Oswald's *Anders als die Anderen* (1919), as they directly display in cinematic form aspects of the

paintings under discussion. Walthier Ruttmann's unique documentary film *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* provided me with a visual documentary understanding of daily life in Berlin in 1927. While seemingly at the peripheral of my focus, they nonetheless provide a deeper understanding of the cultural complexities. Such secondary media reveal the era's underlying themes and concerns and not to include them would be to ignore the inspirations, motivations, and social environment addressed by Weimar artists.

The field of Weimar Studies has been emerging since the late 1970s as an area of specialization both for historians and art historians alike. However, no research has been conducted in specifically analyzing artworks using the cabaret motif. Books and articles written by German historians Professor Peter Jelavich, Dr. Alan Lareau and Lisa Appignanesi have provided ground-breaking research on Berlin cabaret, and they are justly recognized as experts within their fields, but they do not address visual artists in any detail. Other art historians may allude to artists' use of the cabaret motif appearing in paintings in books and journals, but I can find no work that specifically notes their significance, nor any in-depth study in art historical literature. Similarly, musicologists have written on the era's use of American jazz influences or the music used in Berlin cabaret, but they do not take into consideration art works containing cabaret dance or jazz musicians. Therefore, I have taken an interdisciplinary approach in uncharted territory, keeping a cross-cultural investigation that is in par with Modernism's character. Using selective readings and research from Germany history, using my own training in musicology and art history, I have sought to give emphasis to the art historical context while also implementing memoirs, literature, film and recordings to add depth to any iconographic and iconological analysis and interpretation provided for the works concerned.

My own personal interest in Berlin cabaret stems from an avid interest in Weimar culture stemming from my teenage years, and in my further researching and producing a recording of authentic Berlin cabaret songs, *Sound and Smoke: The Music of the Berlin Cabaret Era*, in 2004. The critically lauded reception of this recording has only increased my interest in pursuing art historical studies, leading to the writing and research of this thesis.¹ I have chosen to include a copy of this CD as a backdrop so that the reader may understand the aural dimension of this paper.

The theoretical basis of my research lies in understanding how the convergence of the cabaret environment as spectacle, and the artist as participant-observer within a particular set of historical and social circumstances, resulted in a specific and highly

¹ Critical praise of the recording was published in reviews appearing in *Aftenposten*, *Dagbladet*, *Dagsavisen*, *VG* and other Norwegian press media, including numerous publications in the USA and Germany, in November and December of 2004.

characteristic expression in their artworks that extends beyond the limitations of a commonly designated style. It is in how the artist conducts *address* that is of interest, not in relation between the painting and the beholder, but instead in the relation between the cabaret environment (performances, songs and the audience) and the artist. The cabaret becomes the field of the artist's gaze, and as spectator the artist interacts with the cabaret environment, becoming interdependent through shared meanings and mutual understandings.² This is a form of *symbolic interactionism*. For our purposes, we can understand this as the artist responding towards the cabaret milieu, deriving meaning from the social interaction with individuals and the collective group, with this experience further interpreted and filtered into the creation of artworks. Because the artists are both the participant and the observer in the cabaret environment, their understanding is dependent on what they expect will occur, their interaction based on anticipated behaviors such as dancing, call/response from the stage, social mingling, intoxication, and other types of behavior. The artist engages in a form of role-play, rehearsing “the prospective action of the other person,” not limited to an external event but “assumes an interiorized relation.”³ In the cabaret, the artists recognized a mutually shared interest in leftist political views and in avant-garde strategies in their respective artistic disciplines. A sense of community existed between the artist and the cabaret performers, writers, and composers, and each addressed a wider audience with their poignant observations of their culture and society. The artist's interaction becomes a self-directed, intentionally chosen behavior resulting in self-reflection and self-recognition, allowing him to “suspend, regroup, or transform meanings” found within the cabaret and reinterpret this as artistic expression.⁴ The subjective experience of the artist is vital to the creation of the work of art, in which meaning is constructed and construed from the varying elements before him, coming into being from the objective elements of cabaret performance.⁵

This conjoining of art forms (cabaret plus painting) and its resultant works of art – paintings and prints using cabaret motifs – can be seen as a form of *intermediality*. It is a fusion of one artistic expression -- cabaret entertainment -- with the skills and creative imagination of the artist that results in an *intermedium*, that is, the final visual expression on the canvas or paper in a new aesthetic.⁶ Conventionally separated forms of art become

² Pascale, Celine-Marie. *Cartographies of Knowledge: Exploring Qualitative Epistemologies* (Thousand Oakes: Sage Publications, Inc., 2011), 78.

³ Pascale, *Cartographies of Knowledge*, 82.

⁴ Pascale, *Cartographies of Knowledge*, 88.

⁵ Klemm, David E., “Intermedial Being” in *Intermedia: Enacting the Liminal*, ed. Hans Breder and Klaus-Peter Busse (Dortmund: Dortmunder Schriften zur Kunst), 70-72.

⁶ Herzogenrath, Bernd. *Travels in Intermedia-lity: Reblurring the Boundaries* (Hanover: Dartmouth College Press, 2012), 118-19.

enjoined to create new artistic expressions. Bernd Herzogenrath has categorized four levels of *intermediality*, and it is his second category that suits our pursuit. *Formal* or *transmedial intermediality* encompasses formal structures that are not specific to one medium but can be found in another.⁷ This is not limited to tangible, material forms, but may be also expressed in the combinatory juxtaposition of genres, social interactions, narratives, etc., not bound by media specificity. It is in the meeting of the two artistic forms – cabaret (which I use to encompass both the performance and the audience) and the artist, resulting in the *intermedial* work of art.⁸ The resulting concept is relatively autonomous and is the result of a relation between these two or more media.⁹ These artists function as intermediary figures, using sensory information gathered from their society and within the cabaret, juxtaposed against their cultural and historical setting resulting in a style of art occupying the liminal threshold of the New Objectivity style.

Since the structure of cabaret performance mixes text, dance, music, song, acting, staging, costuming, film, photography and more, cabaret in itself can be understood to be a kind of multimodal activity, a form of *intermedial* art making in its own right.¹⁰ Cabaret performance consists of a diverse mixture of visual and audible modes, which incorporates a miscellany of different media, meanings, and *intertextual* signification. The dimension of this becomes even larger when the visual artist interpellates these images and experiences, simultaneously recognizing himself as both part of the social group and also as a detached, participant-observer. Filtered through the creativity of the artist the cabaret experience becomes projected into their art making and adapts a variety of meanings. The influence of Nietzsche's aesthetic theories underlies both cabaret and the artist's motivations, functioning as a pivotal stimulation for both and in creating an interchanging relationship, attracting both to each another. It is Dix, Grosz, and Schad's Nietzschean discourse with cabaret as a relational activity that produced a specific outcome influenced directly by the era they lived in, of modernity and a society in chaos and collapse.¹¹

⁷ Bernd Herzogenrath proposes four models of intermediality. These briefly are 1) *Synthetic Intermediality*, in which a fusion of different media leads to a super-media, based on the Wagnerian concept of Gesamtkunstwerk; 2) *Formal (or Transmedial) Intermediality*, in which a concept based on formal structures which are not specific to one medium but are also found in different media; 3) *Transformational Intermediality*: in which the representation of one medium occurs through another medium, in a process of representation; and 4) *Ontological Intermediality*, when a proposed media is already thought to exist in relation to other media. Essentially, 3 and 4 are considered two sides of the same concept.

⁸ For a simplified understanding, see the graphic outline in Appendix A.

⁹ Schröter, Jens. "Discourses and Models of Intermediality" in *Comparative Literature and Culture* 13 (2011): 3.

¹⁰ Sturken, Marita and Lisa Cartwright. *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 49.

¹¹ Sturken and Cartwright, *Practices of Looking*, 102.

III. Otto Dix, Nietzsche, and the Cabaret

After the November Revolution of 1918, artists of the Weimar Republic saw their social conditions worsen due to the aftermath of the First World War and incompetent politicians. This led to a raised political consciousness among artists and for many a commitment towards pursuing utopian changes in their society through their art. For some, art would become a tool for creating revolutionary change. Kandinsky's abstraction may have continued within the Bauhaus school, but for many artists in Germany only the more Realist pathways of representation could aptly suffice to express their social criticism. Those artists who combined Realism with sociopolitical criticism, were described by German art critics as working under the Verist style, while those with less political content were deemed as Neo-Classicists. Of the three artists under examination in this paper, all whom were under Nietzsche's philosophic sway, it is perhaps Otto Dix that most intrinsically adapted the cabaret motif and applied it to multiple levels of interpretation.

Otto Dix: *Großstadt*, 1927-28

Otto Dix's *Großstadt* (*Metropolis*), 1927-28, is widely considered as one of his masterpieces [fig. 1]. Created as a triptych in oil and tempera on wood, its two outer panels each measure 181 x 101 cm, and 181 x 201cm for its central panel. Conceived during his professorial appointment at the Dresden Academy, a surface reading of the work suggests the theme of class conflict in two symbolic, opposing spaces. In the central panel, we see the inside of an upscale cabaret, and in the outer two panels, scenes of begging soldiers and parading prostitutes on the street. The central panel's hues are festive, in brightly invigorating tones of yellow, red, pink and shimmering greens emulating the garish theatrical lighting found in cabarets, while the side panels present the same colors though here subdued, in dark, looming shadows that surround its subjects. The central cabaret scene shows a couple of a man and woman dancing as the woman's gown floats through the air, in what might be a quick-moving Charleston dance [fig. 2]. Standing on the dance floor next to them is the figure of a chic, 1920s-styled cabaret showgirl, in a short yellow, red-orange and black gown with flowing drapery attached, and a bejeweled butterfly pendant on her stomach that matches her pearl and ruby earrings. She holds a large, pink ostrich-feathered fan up behind her head with her right arm, while her left hand gracefully displays heavily jeweled fingers. She is the essence of the chic, new woman of the Weimar era in her haute couture and her short, fashionably bobbed-hair. Her gaze is drawn towards the phallic-like, erect trombone mute, her body answering in the folds of her gown that

open like vaginal lips. To our right, directly behind her, sits an obese couple in the finest evening clothes displaying their social status and wealth. A group of a man and two women can be seen in the distance between the woman with the fan and the couple, and they seem to be engaging in conversation as the woman smokes.

Another group can just barely be seen just off-center in the upper right area, distanced far back in the perspective, of men and women, one of who seems to be topless. The cabaret walls are deep red, and speckled in shimmering gold. To the far left a group of jazz musicians are performing, with a saxophonist bending forward into the composition. The saxophone was for Dix, and for Weimar Germany in general, the very symbol of “the jazz age.”¹² As if this was not made clear, Dix has placed another saxophone to the left of the canvas, directly in front of the stage. Over the sax player we see the arms of a trombonist, and behind him we see a blonde violinist, the horn of a tuba, and above these two a piano with a pianist in black glasses. A black American jazz drummer is shown behind four steel bars that strangely appear to pierce his body, while one hand holds a drumstick and the other is held high, his head thrown back in a wild grimace. It seems that even for a left-wing artist such as Dix, as fascinated with African American jazz as he was, he could resort to depicting racist stereotypes.¹³

The Cabaret environment attracted many artists such as Dix to its form of popular entertainment mixed with heightened literary texts and humorous, critical commentary on German culture. It functioned as a meeting place for like-minded artists and writers to socialize and discuss intellectual ideas, and for artists to sketch its patrons and performers. Both Dix and George Grosz both regularly visited the Café des Westens on the Kurfürstendamm, a gathering point for artists, writers, and the demimonde, which would transform itself into Rosa Valetti’s Kabarett Größenwahn in 1920 [fig. 3 & 4]. It was popularly termed the Café Größenwahn (Café Megalomania) by the public due to the inflated egos of those who patronized it. Music too played a large part in attracting artists to Berlin’s cabarets, with Grosz and Dix especially drawn to the new dance crazes that transitioned from America. Both had been brought up on romantic boyhood notions of the American West with its cowboys and Indians found in the novels of Karl May.¹⁴ By the mid-1920s *Amerikanismus* was all the rage in Germany. As young men in Berlin both adapted American mannerisms, clothing themselves in American-styled suits and avidly danced to ragtime and then later, jazz music in the cabarets.

¹² Hailey, Christopher. “Rethinking Sound: Music and Radio in Weimar Germany” in *Music and Performance During the Weimar Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 25.

¹³ Weitz, Eric D., *Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 51.

¹⁴ Grosz, George. *A Little Yes and a Big No: The Autobiography of George Grosz* (New York: The Dial Press, 1946), 87.

The cabaret composers who provided the music for its dances and songs included such luminary figures as Mischa Spoliansky, Friedrich Hollander, and Rudolph Nelson, all who were either employed in cabaret productions or who ran their own establishments. Most composers had classical compositional training, and cabaret's earliest music borrowed heavily from Austrian and German operettas so popular in the early years preceding the First World War. Mazurkas, folk songs, marches and waltzes accompanying satirical text were the norm, with an odd tango, the cakewalk, ragtime, or the two-step making a rare appearance.¹⁵ Not until the 1920s did American influence in the form of jazz begin to take hold of popular culture in Berlin, after the "Chocolate Kiddies" review toured Germany performing Duke Ellington songs, causing a sensation in May of 1925 at Berlin's Admiralpalast, followed thereafter by Josephine Baker's riotous banana skirt dance at Rudolph Nelson's cabaret theater in January of 1926.¹⁶ *Amerikanismus* exploded, infecting a population hungry for novelty and new sensations. Primitivism, in all its misunderstood assessment of black American and African culture, became the rage in its "jungle rhythms", in which a mythic black sexuality and its expression was seen as a refutation of established bourgeois values.¹⁷ Although Primitivism had roots in the art movements of previous decades in the paintings of Gauguin, Bernard, and the Expressionists among others, Modernist Primitivism in Berlin of the 1920s was expressed most vibrantly in the music of the cabarets, and by mid-decade that meant jazz. The *noble savage* was toasted with champagne, as the Charleston and the Shimmy dance crazes took over cabaret dance floors, and suddenly every cabaret song was expected to incorporate syncopated rhythms and the instruments of the jazz band. At first orchestra leaders were hesitant to adapt the new sounds or rhythms and instrumentation of the banjo, the blaring saxophone, or the jazz trap drum kit.¹⁸ Yet as public demand grew, American jazz musicians found willing employment in German bands and orchestras, and were hired to make recordings. Often they would begin their day playing mid-day tea dances in the hotels or dance halls, then travel to one or two cabarets in the evening, joining fellow musicians completely unfamiliar with the demands of this new music. German jazz music itself became an *intermedial* hybrid created by having German, Austrian and imported American musicians performing jazz in a peculiar European style. In reality, the music that was performed in Berlin's cabarets was a mixture of European operetta and folk melodic influences set to "hot",

¹⁵ Bradford, J. Robinson. "Jazz Reception in Weimar Germany: In Search of a Shimmy Figure" in *Music and Performance During the Weimar Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 121-27.

¹⁶ Bradford, "Jazz Reception in Weimar Germany: In Search of a Shimmy Figure", 113.

¹⁷ Perry, Gill. "Primitivism and the Modern" in *Primitivism, Cubism, Abstraction: The Early Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 77.

¹⁸ Danzi, Michael. *American Musician in Germany 1924-1939* (Schmitten: Norbert Reucker Verlag, 1986), 43.

syncopated rhythms.¹⁹ *Intermediality* lay in the very essence of Berlin jazz's cross-cultural pollination. And Berlin's artists in the mid-1920s, who embraced the new dance styles and music in the cabarets, were saturated with it, as *Großstadt*'s center panel displays.

In stark contrast to the frivolity of the center panel, the left side panel places us in what seems to be a back alley looking out into a street in which six prostitutes stand displaying haggard, sagging faces, moving away from us with their backs turned [fig. 5]. One stands with her hand on her hip and another reaches out to stroke the head of a horse. Our gaze is commanded towards the centrally placed figure of a WWI soldier, standing on crutches facing the women, and his legs have been amputated. A small German Sheppard dog aggressively barks at him, while another soldier lies either dead or unconscious on the street between him and the prostitutes. To the far left in this panel we see a half-figure of a woman peering out from behind an enclave, lifting her skirt to urinate.

Similarly, in the right hand panel, Dix has constructed a mirror scene in an open street [fig. 6]. A group of ten women are seen strolling on the left, some towards us, some walking away. The figure of a woman in a red coat with a fur-lined collar is the same figure petting the horse in the left panel. To our right in this panel, segments of grand baroque architecture fill the space, though these do not seem to be part of any comprehensive structure. Centrally placed towards the bottom we can make out the figure of a begging man, in civilian clothing but undoubtedly to be understood as a wounded war veteran. His legs are also amputated, with a begging hat placed between his stumps that are openly on display. One of his hands is raised as if saluting the group of women who ignore him, and his head is bent down forwards, his facial features showing horrific wounds with a black patch concealing his lack of a nose (such as could be often seen on the streets of German cities after the war in the facial features of wounded veterans) [fig. 7].

Großstadt can be interpreted on a variety of different levels. Its immediate meaning seems convey an anti-capitalist critique of the social conditions of economic collapse during the Weimar republic, and of its treatment of wounded soldiers after World War I. The wounded war veterans here are placed on a lower social scale than the common prostitute, Dix seems to suggest. Similar displays of parading prostitutes were commonly seen on the pavements of Berlin's Unter der Linden avenue during the economic hyperinflation years of 1921-24. Exorbitantly high food prices resulted in lurid displays of prostitution, and in some cases, entire families could be seen soliciting -- sometimes only

¹⁹ Nathaus, Klaus. "Popular Music in Germany, 1900-1930: A Case of Americanization? Uncovering a European Trajectory of Music Production into the Twentieth Century" in *European Review of History* 20 (2013): 761-62; 768.

for the price of a loaf of bread.²⁰ Every taste and perversion was catered to, from the normal to the most extreme. Weimar society was in collapse, and for many, prostitution was the only answer to rampant unemployment and outrageously high food prices. At the height of the crises, an estimated 120,000 prostitutes were working in Berlin, with an additional 35,000 male prostitutes, and even this is considered to be a conservative assessment [fig. 8].²¹ While the working classes could resort to either crime or prostitution to put food on the table, the middle and upper classes had recourse to currency speculation, fraud, bribes, graft, and flagrant corruption [fig. 9].²² Only a very few could display the vulgar wealth and luxury that was visible in the upscale cabarets, where champagne flowed freely and jazz bands entertained, as Dix shows in the central panel. And wounded war veterans could only rely on begging. The painting pretends a social critique, but there is more going on here than what initially meets the eye.

After reading James Joyce's novel *Ulysses*, Dix was taken by the compositional structure in the book and sought to induce his work with numerous levels of reality, consciousness and experience.²³ He addresses temporality within the composition by juxtaposing the events on the inside against those of the outside in a variety of levels. There are three spaces, each represented by a panel in the triptych. The left and right panels are presented in two diametrically opposed views that are concerned with the same subject, but in different space types and times.²⁴ They show the parade of prostitutes departing on the left, and arriving on the right, in the hopes of a future income. The left panel views a working-class district, and in the right panel a bourgeois boulevard displaying constructed architectural elements from the more affluent Wilhelmine Empire years before the Weimar Republic.²⁵ The upper classes are represented in the central panel's affluent cabaret customers, who dance to jazz, with no care save for the pleasure of the moment.

In the side panels, the impoverished soldiers cannot dance, as they have amputated legs as a result of a past war. The prostitutes display their legs in an enticing manner, yet clearly they are out of bounds for the soldiers whom they seem to disdain. All combine in a circular movement starting with the aggressive German Sheppard (the betrayal of the Republic?) in the left panel, moving through the soldier on crutches and into the brick archway above him, through the raised trombone in the central panel and to the pink ostrich

²⁰ Gordon, Mel. *Voluptuous Panic: The Erotic World of Weimar Berlin* (Los Angeles, Feral House, 2000), 27-49.

²¹ Gordon, *Voluptuous Panic*, 27-28.

²² Fergusson, Adam. *When Money Dies: The Nightmare of the Weimar Hyper-Inflation* (London: Old Street Publishing Ltd., 2010), 236

²³ Karcher, Eva. *Otto Dix: 1891-1969 His Life and Works* (Köln, Taschen GmbH, 1988), 166-69.

²⁴ Van Dyke, James A., "Otto Dix's Philosophical Metropolis" in *Otto Dix* (London: Prestel Publishing Ltd., 2010), 180.

²⁵ Van Dyke, "Otto Dix's Philosophical Metropolis", 179.

feathers, then to the architectural figure of the roaring lion that echoes the dog, down into the pillars and to the seated man without legs bearing pinkish, fleshy stumps with folds of skin. This is paraphrased in the two columns of fleshy, pink granite, veined in red and phallic in structure, mimicking the crutches in the opposite panel. Finally, our eye is drawn to the prostitute in the right panel, who is shown here fingering the collar of brown fur and the material of her red coat that is realistically painted to be vaginal lips. Her fingers point inwards to her opening, as if enticing us.

Dix, ever at heart the classicist in his stylistic and technical influences, has made a reference to Albrecht Dürer's *Selbstbildnis im Pelzrock (Self-Portrait in Fur Cloak)*, 1500 [fig. 10], in the manner in which Dürer fondles his fur-lined collar in that painting. Dix's prostitute, accordingly, fondles her collar with almost the exact same shape of her hand as Dürer's. In 1928, the quadricentennial of his death, Dürer had been hailed across Germany as the ultimate German artist, and Dix pays both tribute and mocks him.²⁶ He also displays the techniques of classical masters by painting fur, clothing, velvet, stone, and metal, and in using the triptych format connotes works of the Renaissance. Dix also makes an allusion to Lucas Cranach the Elder's *The Judgment of Paris*, 1528, [fig. 11] in his composition for the left panel. He repeats the shape of the leaning tree in Cranach's painting in the structure of his brick arches, placing the main male figures at the base as in the original. The bubbling fountain is paraphrased in the urinating woman. Cranach's painting – one of several using this theme – displays Paris, who is seated dressed as a medieval knight in armor, enticed by Aphrodite, Hera and Athena. Hermes stands in the background, prepared to offer the golden apple to the fairest one that Paris must chose on behalf of Zeus.²⁷ Of course, Paris's choice creates disaster because of his choosing Aphrodite as the fairest who in return promised him Helen of Troy, whom he abducted. This set into events a horrific war and the complete destruction of Troy – that legendary metropolis of antiquity. The analogy to WWI is obvious. Dix's use of the underlying mythology becomes even more significant in the context of the prostitute. Hera was the goddess and protector of marriage. Athena was the first to tame the horse – reflected in the prostitute who is petting the horse in the left panel. Aphrodite is of course the goddess of love, beauty and sexual rapture, who wore a magic girdle whom no man could resist. Dix refers to this in the figure of the prostitute who wears the large sexual organ on her front in the opposing panel. And further into the myth, Paris shoots Achilles in his one weak spot, his heel, killing him. The soldiers, sans feet or unable to stand all reflect this. They have been emasculated, their power and their ability to stand

²⁶ Van Dyke, "Otto Dix's Philosophical Metropolis", 184.

²⁷ Littleton, C. Scott. *Mythology: The Illustrated Anthology of World Myth and Storytelling* (London: Duncan Baird Publishers, 2002), 206.

taken away from them, due to the senseless horrors of a war that Dix witnessed firsthand. It underscores the centrality of feet in the work itself. At the lowest strata of society are the wounded war veterans, unable to use their feet, the most fundamental and primal method of transportation. The prostitutes walk the street, in search of trade. And in the central panel, the carefree industrialists and wealthy patrons of the cabaret dance. The soldiers who were once the very foundation of Germany have now been swept aside in the Weimar Republic, becoming its tragic heroes, while the maddening dance of legs continues in the face of the oncoming collapse. Like *Ulysses*, Dix has constructed his mythic metaphors out of the past, bringing them securely into the reality of the present. And for *Großstad'*s underlying motives, Dix would draw on Nietzsche's aesthetic and philosophic theories to provide him with the impetus for his response to cabaret's environment to take hold.

Nietzsche, Cabaret and the Artist

For Dix especially, but also for Grosz and Schad, Nietzsche's writings played an important part in shaping these artists' worldview. Nietzsche addressed the artist in many of his works, also so integral in the creation of Berlin cabaret that arose in Berlin in the early 1900s. Nietzsche had written on art and artists extensively, and devoted an entire section on artists in Book Three of *The Will to Power*, stating that the artist creates "between dream and intoxication: both release artistic powers in us, but different ones: the dream those of vision, association, poetry; intoxication those of gesture, passion, song, dance."²⁸ This also was adapted by cabaret's artistic structure, functioning as society's critical mirror, induced by Nietzsche's aesthetic philosophies in creating an environment for artists to collaborate with, draw inspiration from and interpret. For Nietzsche, the artist was the potential *Übermensch*, a Zarathustra, the nihilistic destroyer of an ancient morality, and the creator of new values. "Of three metamorphoses of the spirit I tell you: how the spirit becomes a camel; and the camel, a lion; and the lion, finally, a child."²⁹ The artist would have recognized himself in these words, in how the transition into the laboring of the artist to learn his craft is a process, resulting in his breaking free from tradition into his own individual style and expression. This metaphor also reflected the artist's existential struggle. And within cabaret's structure, artists such as Dix found a platform from which they could transform the language of images into their works, deciphered through their common bond of Nietzsche's philosophy. Within this environment, artists were provided with a reflection of their society both in cabaret's performances as well as in its audience,

²⁸ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann et al (New York: Random House, Inc., 1968), 420.

²⁹ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Penguin Books Ltd., 1966), 25.

giving them subject material that also reflected the precarious duality of their own position as participant-observers.

And a precarious position it was. Weimar society exhibited extreme contrasts in all areas. As artist-observers of a culture teetering on the edge of the abyss, the figures projected on the cabaret stage and in the audience became the subjects and metaphors for its struggle. Cabaret served as an allegory of the times, giving thematic structure to many of these artist's works, but also as a response to Nietzsche in cabaret's endeavor to realize his aesthetic theories. And the paintings that used the cabaret motif could also be seen as an attempt to answer Nietzsche's call for a return to the spirit of Greek tragedy, which he held as the very apex of culture itself, and which had become degraded and decadent over time. Nietzsche felt that he had found the answer in the *intermedial* duality of two cultural forces, in the balance created by a fusion of the Apollonian and Dionysian drives (discussed below), which in the hands of the artist could best be conducted in the form of the tragic hero expressed in myth and art:

“To say that in life things really do turn out so tragically would be the least satisfactory explanation of the emergence of an art form, if art is not merely an imitation of the reality of nature, but rather a metaphysical supplement to the reality of nature, set alongside it for the purpose of overcoming it. The tragic myth, in so far as it belongs to art at all, also participates fully in art's metaphysical intention to transfigure: but what does it transfigure, when it presents the world of phenomena in the image of the suffering hero? Least of all the ‘reality’ of this world of phenomena, for it says to us: ‘Look here! Take a close look! This is your life! This is the hour hand on the clock of your existence!’”³⁰

These artists created works that evoked the “suffering hero” type, and that aspired towards the tragic myth, finding their expression in the cumulative embrace of both drives. All was captured in the hour of their existence, using the intensity of the cabaret performance to convey the tragic reality of their society, in the hope of overcoming it.

Großstadt Redux

The only known sculpture by Otto Dix was a bust of Nietzsche, created c. 1914, after he passionately studied the philosopher's works in 1911 at the age of twenty, with *Fröhliche Wissenschaft* (*The Gay Science*) and *Also sprach Zarathustra* (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*) being his particular favorites.³¹ He often carried a copy of the latter work with him.³² Dix saw himself as a Dionysian artist, influencing him to register as a soldier, seeking to intensify his will to survive and experience “the expressive power of the human

³⁰ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Douglas Smith. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 127-28.

³¹ Peters, Olaf. “Intransigent Realism: Otto Dix between the World Wars” in *Otto Dix* (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2010), 16-17.

³² Gutbrod, Philipp. *Otto Dix: The Art of Life* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2010), 26.

and real, between birth, Eros and death.”³³ Nietzsche confirmed his belief that Eros was the driving force from which life progressed, creating, destroying, and re-creating again, represented by female sexuality and exemplified both in his drawings and paintings of prostitutes and, in its destructive mode, in his paintings of lust murderers.³⁴ Dix’s wife Martha had also purchased a complete edition of Nietzsche’s works in the late 1920s as a gift for him, and Dix discussed these at length with fellow artist George Grosz.³⁵

Großstadt can be interpreted as a kind of Nietzschean allegory under the guise of the cabaret motif. In the *Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche’s description of the chorus being a witness to the actions in the tragedy and offering a different perspective can be seen in the function of the jazz band acting as a satiric chorus.³⁶ They serve both as witness and interlocutor of the action. And the dancing of the central panel connects with Dix’s own avid interest as a dancer in cabarets himself. At one point in Berlin after the war, he actively danced in cabarets and dancehalls with his wife Martha, and seriously considered becoming a dance teacher, with the Charleston and the Shimmy being his particular favorites.³⁷ In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche writes: “And we should consider every day lost on which we have not danced at least once. And we should call every truth false which was not accompanied by at least one laugh.”³⁸ This passage and others regarding dance as an act of self-affirmation were underlined by Dix in his copy of the book, acknowledging Nietzsche’s call to reject the life-denying heaviness of German culture and instead give precedence to the life-infusing, “tonic” of Dionysian dance.³⁹ In §807 of *The Will to Power*, Dix had also underlined “...we must reckon with the fact that dancing in itself, like every other swift movement, brings with it a kind of intoxication of the whole vascular, nervous, and muscular system. So one has to reckon with the combined effects of a two-fold intoxication. —And how wise it is at times to be a little tipsy!” and further in §809 emphasizes the physicality of the artist and art’s ability to create “subtle recollections of intoxication.”⁴⁰ This text also coincidentally inspired impresarios Ernst von Wolzogen (1855-1934) and Max Reinhardt (1873-1943) to create the very format of Berlin cabaret itself, as we shall shortly examine [*fig. 12 & 13*]. In many of Nietzsche’s writings he brings

³³ Dietrich Schubert. “Death in the Trench: The Death of the Portrait?” in *Otto Dix*, (Munich: Presetl Verlag, 2010), 33.

³⁴ Eberle, Matthias. “Neue Sachlichkeit in Germany: A Brief History” in *Glitter and Doom: German Portraits from the 1920s* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2007), 32-33.

³⁵ Van Dyke, “Otto Dix’s Philosophical Metropolis”, 183.

³⁶ Van Dyke, “Otto Dix’s Philosophical Metropolis”, 187.

³⁷ Funkenstein, Susan Laikin. “A Man’s Place in a Woman’s World: Otto Dix, Social Dancing, and Constructions of Masculinity in Weimar German,” in *Women in German Yearbook* 21 (2005): 2-3.

³⁸ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 210.

³⁹ Van Dyke, “Otto Dix’s Philosophical Metropolis”, 184.

⁴⁰ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 425 & 427.

attention to dance as a metaphor of freeing one's self against the staid morality of Christianity and German culture. In *Großstadt*, Dix has even included the Nietzschean figure of the lion, used often as a symbol of self-affirmation by Nietzsche, overlooking the events in the right panel.⁴¹ So then, are we then to interpret the work as Nietzschean praise, and not as a critique of the actions in the central panel?

Dix creates multiple positions of interpretation in this work between the central and the opposing panels on either side. And like Joyce's *Ulysses* and its use of mythology and varying levels of interpretation and meaning, Dix has applied this same strategy to *Großstadt*. Its dialectical structures are promoted throughout the work, creating meaning and contrasting it, almost in a satirical manner – similar to cabaret itself. By including people he actually knew into the painting (the figure of the violinist is thought to be Gert Wolheim, a painter and friend of Dix's; the saxophone player shows Saxon state official Alfred Schluze, a leading politician supporting cultural activities in Dresden; the architect Wilhelm Kreis's features adorn the seated man at the table behind the showgirl dancer; and above him, just barely visible and partly concealed by the ostrich feathers stands the art collector – and supporter of Dix – lawyer Fritz Glaser), Dix is applying his own social circle and a sense of subjectivity to the painting in using the cabaret, contrasting it with an objective approach in its social commentary.⁴² The types of the prostitute and the war veteran, are juxtaposed with subjective figures from Dix's own life. Ever the unapologetic outsider observing his society, by including his own social circle into the work, Dix thereby acknowledges his own position within the world, and uses the cabaret to encompass this. Germany may be headed towards disaster, but what can he do but dance? He is both a participant and a disgusted observer, of his society and of his own entrance into the Dresden bourgeoisie. Nietzsche rejected a moral system based on the values of Christianity and conventions such as pity, and Dix here maintains this in an acceptance of poverty and exploitation, of life and death, and sickness and health as a *Nietzschean universal truth*.⁴³ The triptych shows us the co-existence of all of these factors. Dix is both criticizing and acknowledging the duality of his own position within his social ascension from the struggling artist to the bourgeois citizen, against the backdrop of the social conditions of his society. He may dance to the ecstatic jazz rhythms in the cabaret, but outside there was always going to be abject poverty and death. "Artists," he said, "should not improve or

⁴¹ The lion is often used by Nietzsche as a symbol of becoming and overcoming the sublimated self through the will.

⁴² Van Dyke, "Otto Dix's Philosophical Metropolis", 189-90.

⁴³ Gutbrod, *Otto Dix: The Art of Life*, 71.

convert others. They are far too insignificant. But they must bear witness.”⁴⁴ This was his reality, and not an attempt to moralize it. It is, as the compositional structure has shown us, an endless cycle of growth and decay, the circular rhythms of life, from the left-hand panel of putrefaction and death, to the central panel’s whirlpool of cabaret dance, to the right, where a new parade – a new beginning – is shown in the arrival of the prostitutes as Eros, in a Nietzschean dance, a “carousel of life.”⁴⁵ Dix has created a work of art befitting the *Übermensch* while also taking a position of empathy, that most un-Nietzschean stance in itself.

IV. The Wagnerian and Nietzschean Dynamic

Before exploring the Nietzschean origins of cabaret we should examine the underlying foundations of aesthetic thought that were so fundamental to both cabaret and for art movements that arose in the advent of Modernism. This is in the influence of the aesthetic theories of composer Richard Wagner (1813-83) and, as stated, in Nietzsche’s philosophy. Both developed elaborate theories on music, theater, and art that reverberate throughout the very culture of German artists and cabaret. Rooted in the Romantic era, these writings helped usher in cultural changes of German Modernism, and as some have argued, even as far as in postmodernist thought. Certainly Nietzsche’s ideas transcend the boundaries of artistic disciplines and categories.⁴⁶

Both Wagner and Nietzsche’s writings were a response to the aesthetic theories of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), and in Nietzsche’s case, a “correcting” of that philosopher’s theories of the will, of negation and in the sympathizing of other’s pain, all of which he strongly differed on.⁴⁷ For Wagner, Schopenhauer’s attempt at classification and a structuring of the arts lead him and other composers to experiment with crossing the boundaries of different genres in their own work.⁴⁸ With Schopenhauer as their springboard, each developed their own aesthetic theories that would not only have a significant influence on cabaret’s creation, and also on how German artists viewed themselves.

Wagner’s *Gesamtkunstwerk*

⁴⁴ Elger, Dietmar. *Expressionism* (Köln: Taschen GmbH, 2007), 215.

⁴⁵ Gutbrod, Otto. *Otto Dix: The Art of Life*, 72.

⁴⁶ Gooding-Williams, Robert, “Nietzsche’s Pursuit of Modernism,” *New German Critique* 41 (1987): 95.

⁴⁷ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 87-90.

⁴⁸ Beardsley, Monroe C., *Aesthetics from Classical Greece to the Present* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1966), 270-72.

The Exposition Universelle in Paris of 1889 and 1900 prompted a surge in tourism from Germany to the capital, where many Germans also sought out the nightlife entertainments of cabarets in Montmartre.⁴⁹ They may have been surprised to find that two of their own countrymen were sources of inspiration there. Both Nietzsche and Wagner were highly praised in the in-house magazines offered for sale by the Mirliton, the Le Chat Noir and the Quatre Gats cabarets. These journals featured Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* theories of art and his friend Nietzsche's aesthetic philosophies, which would come to have such a profound effect on German artists after the turn of the century.⁵⁰

It is in Wagner that we find a direct precursor to the structure of cabaret's format and also as instigation for artists to engage it in their own creative strategies. Published in his book *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, 1850 (*The Art-Work of the Future*), Wagner proposed that the ideal form of art should consist of a merging of all the arts into one ultimately powerful, emotional expression.⁵¹ This "Total Work of Art" or, *Gesamtkunstwerk*, as he named it, would find form in his tragic opera dramas, such as in *Tristan und Isolde*, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, and *Parsifal*. Each element of text, music, staging, choreography, lighting, and scenic design were given equal importance. Each area of creative input should be raised to the highest standard, combined into the totality of the work of art in what Wagner proposed would become "the artwork of the future."⁵² This new musicodramatic unity would for many German artists become the apex of the arts, as exemplified in Wagner's *Ring Cycle*.

Theoretically, *Gesamtkunstwerk* falls into the first category of Herzogenrath's theories of *intermediality*, known as *synthetic intermediality*, in which different media are combined into a fusion to become a "super-media", or, a total work of art.⁵³ Wagner's theories elaborate upon this by stressing the value of action by the artist, in combining these varied elements into one cohesive artwork, the *expression*.⁵⁴ It is the artist's reception of these parts that is the goal, transformed in the address of the final work itself. Wagner writes:

"...none but the individual unit can take into himself the spirit of community, and cherish and develop it according to his powers . . . Only the lonely one, in the thick of his endeavor, can transmute the bitterness of such a self-avowal into an intoxicating joy which drives him on, with all

⁴⁹ Kropmanns, Peter. "Dance Clubs and Cabarets in Montmartre During the Belle Époque" in *Esprit Montmartre: Bohemian Life in Paris around 1900*, edited by Ingrid Pfeiffer and Max Hollein (Munich: Hirmer Verlag GmbH, 2014), 191.

⁵⁰ Appignanesi, Lisa. *The Cabaret* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 36.

⁵¹ Beardsley, *Aesthetics from Classical Greece to the Present*, 272.

⁵² Goldman, Albert and Evert Sprinchorn. *Wagner on Music and Drama*, trans. H. Ashton Ellis (New York: Da Capo Press, 1964), 227-34.

⁵³ Herzogenrath, *Travels in Intermedia-lity: Reblurring the Boundaries*, 118.

⁵⁴ Goldman and Sprinchorn, *Wagner on Music and Drama*, 230.

the courage of a drunkard, to undertake the making possible the impossible; for he *alone* is thrust forward by *two* artistic forces which he cannot withstand—by forces which he willingly lets drive him to self-offering.”⁵⁵

These two forces that Wagner mentions is a reference to Schopenhauer’s two aspects of the will – an aimless, unconscious striving in bursts of creative energy, and the *thing in itself*, objectified as representation, which through our cognitive powers and society’s conditioning becomes actualized in creation.⁵⁶ The will is the striving for life, to create, leading to suffering due to conflict. Schopenhauer saw the negation of the will as an answer to man’s suffering, on which Wagner agreed, but would become vehemently opposed by Nietzsche. It was this premise of the duality of the will that Nietzsche would come to further develop and refute in his first work, *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik*, 1872 (*The Birth of Tragedy*) and later in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, 1882 (*The Gay Science*).

Decades later Wagner’s theories of *Gesamtkunstwerk* would become broadly established in German culture, curiously not so much in opera itself, but in the Modernist realization of cabaret. Cabaret typically combined literary text, music, staging, dance, lighting, set designs, and other elements, all which strived for artistic excellence, assembled for the total meaning of the concept performed. Visual artists were also quick to explore these theories, inspired by *Gesamtkunstwerk*, but perhaps even more so in Nietzsche’s aesthetic response to Schopenhauer.

Nietzschean Apollonian and Dionysian Drives

Many Weimar era artists held a strong allegiance to Nietzsche’s writings. In order to understand the attraction that cabaret had for artists such as Dix, Grosz and Schad, we must first understand the underlying current of Nietzsche’s thought, and how this was one of the fundamental principles drawing them together. This can be found initially in Nietzsche’s *The Birth of Tragedy*, an examination of the origins of Greek tragedy in the context of German culture. The book repudiates Schopenhauer’s theories, though upholds Wagner’s, to whom the work is dedicated. Nietzsche presupposes that human suffering was overcome by the ancient Greeks in the merging of two disparate cultural elements and expressions, resulting in the form of Greek tragedy. These “drives” found in culture were the Apollonian and the Dionysian worldviews. The Apollonian worldview came from the god Apollo, and symbolized tonal music and the lyre, proportion and balance, order,

⁵⁵ Goldman and Sprinchorn, *Wagner on Music and Drama*, 234.

⁵⁶ Schopenhauer, Arthur. *The World as Will and Idea Vol. III*, trans. Haldane, R. B. et al (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd., 1909), 32-33.

superficial appearance, the naïve in art, and illusion. In contrast, the Dionysian drive represented wildness, suffering and its acceptance, chaos, primal sexuality, the immediacy of experience in the present *now*, reality, drunkenness, and dissonance in music, all naturally represented by the god Dionysus. When art or music consisted of too much of one element it suffered, creating an imbalance in culture, in society, and most importantly, in a culture's creative manifestations.

Nietzsche's theories created sets of binary oppositions and called for the merging of these two powerful impulses. This interaction creates powerful art, with different forms of art containing measured parts of each drive.⁵⁷ It is an *intermedial* effect, in which these two seemingly opposing forms or "drives" come together to create a new expression. "Dionysus speaks the language of Apollo, and Apollo finally speaks the language of Dionysus, and so the highest goal of tragedy and of art itself is achieved."⁵⁸ Any advancement in the arts can be explained by this Apollonian and Dionysian duality, though Nietzsche seems to have a preference for the Dionysian, stating that this is essential for the creation of great art.⁵⁹ He claims to have found such impulses in the latter operas of Wagner. The composer's works represented a return to tragedy not unlike, Nietzsche claimed, the tragic plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles, whose plays reflected the tragic hero who accepts the inflicted suffering and cruelty bestowed by fate as a condition for human existence.

The ancient poet, writing in the form of Greek lyric, did not write subjectively but spoke for the wider consciousness in that it was always expressed in connection with music, a primarily Dionysian element. Subjective art was Apollonian, superficial, only concerned with shallow beauty and appearance, and Nietzsche called on artists to abandon the Subjective in art, replacing it with Objectivity:

"...modern aesthetics could only add by way of interpretation that this was the moment when the 'objective' artist first confronts his 'subjective' counterpart. ...the subjective artist [is] a bad artist and demand above all in the art the defeat of the subjective, redemption from the 'I' and the silencing of each individual will and craving, indeed we cannot conceive of the slightest possibility of truly artistic creation without objectivity, without pure disinterested contemplation."⁶⁰

Art is best objectified in an expression of universal suffering. The audience (or for our purposes, the beholder of art and the cabaret audience) recognizes in the chorus (the cabaret performer's sarcastic commentary and in key elements of the artist's paintings) a process of mimesis; the chorus does not voice the feelings or understandings of the play (song, painting) but serves to create an alternate point of view of the tragedy (the song's topic, and

⁵⁷ Hammermeister, Kai. *The German Aesthetic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 141.

⁵⁸ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 117.

⁵⁹ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 23.

⁶⁰ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 34.

the central focus of the painting). The Greek satyr chorus is expressed in allegorical form, acting as the ‘ideal spectator’ in that it functions to promote and elaborate on the inner vision-world of the stage.⁶¹ The Apollonian, conscious perception is needed to transmit the tragedy’s meaning in a more intelligible manner, and in its union with the Dionysian, unconscious reaction results finally in a new, more profound understanding. These theories would come to have a significant effect in the creation of cabaret and in its attraction for artists, and also in their works, as is reflected in the next painting we shall discuss.

Otto Dix, *Bildnis der Tänzerin Anita Berber*, 1925

As can be found in *Großstadt*, Dix also uses a dual Nietzschean disposition to enhance meaning in his startling portrait of a cabaret dancer, his *Bildnis der Tänzerin Anita Berber* (*Portrait of the Dancer Anita Berber*), 1925 [**fig. 14**]. One of Modernism’s emerging phenomena was the growing obsession with celebrity and fame by the public and mass media. Movie stars, singers and dancers were the topic of both tabloid newspapers and magazines as newsstands exploded with periodicals aimed towards target groups and the general public alike. Popular actors and performers were presented as glamorous, exciting personas to be emulated by an adoring public. The cabaret, theater dancer and film actress Anita Berber (1899-1928) was unique in that not only was she the subject of heated tabloid columns but also was praised by conservative dance critics, who singled her out as an ascending star after her critically successful debut in 1916 [**fig. 15**].⁶² One reviewer noted that she transcended the limits of cabaret and the traditional stage by incorporating the audience’s reactions into her choreography, hailing her as the future of dance.⁶³ Her style was a mixture of freeform movement popularized by Isadora Duncan, with a foundation in classical dance techniques. Berber would appear in numerous films and was widely photographed, and by the 1920s achieved celebrity status. Comfortable performing at the Berlin Conservatory and on traditional stages, she also became a regular feature in cabarets such as the Berlin Apollo, Rudolf Nelson’s cabaret, and Schall und Rauch, where its program for April 1920 shows her performing three works set to classical music.⁶⁴ It is ironic then that Dix chose to portray this celebrated beauty as grotesque figure, moving from the Nietzschean dance as an affirmation of life, to it becoming the very personification of death.

⁶¹ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 48.

⁶² Elswit, Kate. *Watching Weimar Dance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 69-70.

⁶³ Elswit, *Watching Weimar Dance*, 23.

⁶⁴ Berber, Anita. “Tänze” in *Schall und Rauch Heft 5*, ed. Heinz Herald (Berlin: Gebr. Feyl, 1920), 4.

Perhaps no other painting created during the Weimar Republic captures the era's decadent type more than Dix's portrait of Berber. Berber is revealed in a fully frontal position, her right hand on her hip as her left hand rests just under her pelvic bone. Her face is turned in three-quarter profile, her clown-white make up evoking the pallor of death, with crimson lips outlined in the shape of a small heart (her trademark), here more vampiric than sensual. Her heavily black contoured eyes are topped with pencil-shaped eyebrows. She is encased in a red-crimson background with an underpainting of orange and yellow hues, suggestive of flames. Her dress, draped loosely, clings to her body as if it were skin ravaged by time and old age. This too is a shade of red, mixed slightly with purple accents in the highlights. We see that her hair is dyed stark red and her claw-like hands display fingernails lacquered in blood red. It is a study in red, and a study of self-immolation.

By 1923, Berber's status as a glamorous young German cabaret dancer, actress, and writer who projected grace, beauty and visionary choreography, had been replaced by scandal and outraged media gossip. Her sordid personal life received more attention by the press than her dancing. That same year, Berber published *Die Tänze des Lasters, des Grauens, und der Ekstase (Dances of Vice, Horror, & Ecstasy)*, a book of poems, writings and drawings created together with her co-dancer, choreographer and poet Sebastian Droste, a homosexual whom she also briefly married [fig. 16 & 17]. The book is filled with melodramatic photographs of the two in Expressionistic poses, showing them either naked, or draped in cloth or in costumes with heavily made-up faces. The poems have such titles as *Cocaine, Byzantine Whip Dance, Insane Asylum, Suicide* and *Morphium*, all named after the duo's collaborative dances performed while on tour (with the latter work set to music by Mischa Spoliansky).⁶⁵ Written in free verse often using only one-word lines, the book is a self-fulfilling prophecy of destruction that would reflect Berber's own.

Dix had known Berber personally. Proceeded by her notoriety, he and his wife Martha had first met her at the Jungmühle cabaret in Dusseldorf in 1925, and followed her to Wiesbaden to make further studies of her there.⁶⁶ Dix's style of creating a portrait always began with doing quick studies of his subjects, drawing them while observing them, and then painting them while alone in his studio. Berber's portrait was no different and was painted in Dusseldorf before he relocated to Berlin.⁶⁷ As an avid dancer himself, Dix was captivated by Berber's eccentricity and her extraordinary audacity. Martha Dix recalled how Berber would ask them for money, and once when walking down the street with her,

⁶⁵ Berber, Anita and Droste, Sebastian. *Dances of Vice, Horror, & Ecstasy*, trans. Merrill Cole (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Side Real Press, 2002), 16-27.

⁶⁶ Peters, Olaf. "Portrait of the Dancer Anita Berber 1925" in *Otto Dix*, ed. Olaf Peters (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2010), 210.

⁶⁷ Karcher, Eva. *Dix* (Köln: Benedikt Taschen Verlag GmbH, 2002), 104.

Berber called out suggestively to approaching men, “200 marks!”⁶⁸ Salacious rumors abounded as to her behavior, such as her seducing one infatuated Baroness and then insisting that the Baroness’s fifteen-year old daughter join them in bed, sexually enslaving them both. Once having achieved her goal she promptly rejected them.⁶⁹ Another told of when dining at five-star restaurants after her performances, she calculated the room’s attention by entering in a body-length mink coat that she would promptly let drop to the floor mid-way to her table, joining her party entirely nude except for diamonds and jewels. The gossip columns filled with reports of her eccentric behavior. Finally, it was her appearance at the Weisse Maus cabaret in Berlin on November 20, 1923 that would usher in her downfall. The cabaret’s wealthy clientele wore black masks ostensibly to shield them from being recognized by other patrons present for Berber’s shocking troupe of dancers, who were lightly clad and made up to look like figures of death [*fig. 18*]. Appearing onstage dressed only with a red ribbon placed between her labia, Berber heard laughter coming from one of the front-row tables. She quickly jumped up on the table where the laughing Baron sat, urinated on it and grabbed a champagne bottle from the ice bucket, and smashed it over his head.⁷⁰ When she was fired from the cabaret the next day her life began a downward spiral. She completely disregarded what others thought of her, destroying people in her path and indulged in every sort of vice imaginable. Ultimately, her flame burned out at the age of twenty-nine, dying of a mixture of tuberculosis and an addiction to cocaine, alcohol, morphine and opium.

In his portrait of Berber, Dix did not paint the glamorous cabaret dancer at the height of her fame. Only twenty-six at the time of the painting, the deep lines on her face betray her youth. This was, after all, a woman who drank a bottle of cognac every day.⁷¹ For Dix, Berber becomes an allegory of destruction, of Death and the Maiden in one and the same form. She is the archetypical Weimar debauchee. He understands the distance between what is real, and what is projected – the glamour of the illusion of fame – in a visual polarity between attraction and repulsion. As viewers of the painting, we are swept up in a kind of perceptual dance by being strongly attracted in his use of red, and making us step back again when we comprehend its subject. We are the moth drawn to the flame. It is an *intermedial* experience resulting in a chaos of emotions, a push-and-pull of seduction

⁶⁸ Karcher, *Dix*, 104.

⁶⁹ Gordon, Mel. *The Seven Addictions and Five Professions of Anita Berber: Weimar Berlin's Priestess of Depravity*. (Los Angeles: Feral House, 2006), 57-58.

⁷⁰ Gordon, *The Seven Addictions and Five Professions of Anita Berber*, 139-44.

⁷¹ Karcher, *Otto Dix: 1891-1969 His Life and Works*, 104.

and disgust. The Apollonian concern with superficiality, of fame and the celebrity of a cabaret dancer is juxtaposed with the extreme Dionysian, destructive forces.

As well versed as he was with Nietzsche's writings, Dix must have seen in Berber as the personification of Dionysian forces in all of its destructive glory. She too was a tragic hero caught in the vortex of her fate, an antisocial creature dancing in the metropolis, disdaining convention and society, in an expression of the Dionysian drive "symbolizing everything that is chaotic, dangerous and unexpected, everything that escapes human reason."⁷² But Berber was not the Zarathustrian dancer striving towards a transvaluation of morals, in the liberating act of dance to free the mind, body and primal instincts from the shackles of an old morality. Her nihilism did not serve to transition as Nietzsche proscribed. Instead, Berber was the high priestess of a Bacchanalian cult, a destroying harpy caught in a dance of flames, a faulted Nietzschean character becoming a figure of death itself. She reflects her own society's decay, in the depersonalized type of the era's vamp, so immensely popular in Weimar film and sung about in the cabarets, a woman-serpent ready to bite behind her seductive, heart-shaped lips.⁷³ Berber's glamour has been turned upside down, now exuding her deathly pallor from an overly made-up face and dressed in the very same costume from her *Morphine* cabaret dance, caught in a stationary *totentanz*.⁷⁴ She is the tragic hero, mythic, and entirely grotesque.

Dix uses the cabaret both as a sociopolitical and cultural critique in a variety of levels, and creates parallel interpretations by recognizing his own position within it. He is equally attracted to the spectacle of Berber's self-destruction as he is her beauty. He offers no direct, easy understanding, but instead attracts and repulses us, just as in *Großstad*'s use of the cabaret and its figures in a complex and poetic construction of meanings. He admitted no specific political ideological stance but recognized in Nietzsche, and in cabaret, an accordant procedure in which to include the underlying machinations of society in his works.

V. Cabaret's Roots and Definition

Before further analyzing paintings that have sought their inspiration from Berlin's cabarets, it is necessary to understand Berlin cabaret's origins and history. This will provide us with an understanding of how cabaret's content resonated with the artists who

⁷² Daniélou, Alain. *Gods of Love and Ecstasy: The Traditions of Shiva and Dionysus* (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 1992), 15.

⁷³ Dix has even signed his name at the bottom right in the shape of a serpent for the "O" and an archer's bow for the "D" as if Cupid's arrows are not the delights of Eros, but the poisonous bite of the serpent.

⁷⁴ Gordon, *The Seven Addictions and Five Professions of Anita Berber*, 165.

were active in the earlier part of 20th century Berlin, and give us an analogy between cabaret and the rise of art movements that occurred in the same period to further our understanding of their kinship.

Cabaret's inspirational roots derive from the popular entertainments of Paris during the latter 1800s. Traditionally seen to be the leader in fashion, art, technology and literature, German artists often looked to that city for inspiration. French Impressionism, Fauvism, and other artistic styles found its way into German artist's paintings, and it was little wonder that the cabarets, dance halls and variety theaters of Montmartre would invariably influence popular entertainment in German cities as well. Cabaret's origins in Paris can be traced back to as early as 1560, when the proprietors (known as a *cabaretier*) were assisted by *cabaretières* (dancers).⁷⁵ *Bals*, or dance halls, and cabarets with names such as Moulin de la Galette, Chat Noir, the Cabaret Mirliton, and the Au Lapin Agile were popular stops along the tourist route for German visitors abroad in the late 1800s, centered on the Boulevard de Clichy and its side streets. Artistically inclined German tourists would take their cue from Parisian cabarets, reinterpret it, and recreate it after the turn of the century in such cities as Berlin, Dresden and Munich, providing it with a style and character of its own.

German cabaret evolved from the variety (also called vaudeville or music hall) theater tradition of the latter 1800s. Variety theater's format was a theatrical show comprised of thematically unrelated acts such as dancers, singers, magicians, animal acts, aerobic performers, and more, all performing before an audience placed in traditional theatrical seating. Only after the turn of the century in Berlin did the first German cabarets appear, ambitiously changing its format from the populist, light entertainment of the variety shows to a more artistically ambitious and "literary" content. The first recognized cabarets were Ernst von Wolzogen's Buntes Theater (Motely Theater), and Max Reinhardt's Schall und Rauch (Sound and Smoke) theater, both which opened almost simultaneously (though independently) in Berlin in 1901 [*fig. 19*]. Each sought to raise the artistic content of variety to a higher level of quality by calling on poets, visual artists, writers, performers and composers to create a new kind of literary entertainment set to music. This literary format included overtones of political and social commentary on current events that were entirely lacking in variety. And like variety, cabaret was initially presented to an audience seated in a traditional theatrical format, not yet adapting the table-and-chair seating of the Parisian cabarets that we have come to associate with it today. Contemporary critics had

⁷⁵ Castor, Markus. "Into the Mines of the Extraordinary – Montmartre: Historical Background and Topography" in *Esprit Montmartre: Bohemian Life in Paris Around 1900*, ed. Ingrid Pfeiffer, et al. (Munich: Hirmer Verlag GmbH, 2014), 63.

observed that this form of cabaret lacked what the Parisian cabarets excelled in: intimacy, improvisation, direct communication with the audience, and a sense of political and sexual openness in its programming. This was partly due to the strict preliminary censorship laws that prevailed in pre-Weimar Germany, in which all theatrical and cabaret programming had to be approved beforehand by police censors.⁷⁶ In spite of this, artists' cabaret-pubs began appearing alongside the larger, established theater venues, where clientele could view performers singing to satirical, witty songs that often dealt with subject matter that the larger, more established theatrical cabarets could only dare dream of presenting.

Pub-cabarets in Berlin evaded censorship by claiming to be private, invitation-only clubs not charging a cover fee.⁷⁷ The police for the most part ignored these smaller venues – but there were exceptions. In 1903 the police turned their attention to The Silver Punchbowl, established by a formerly incarcerated thief named Hans Hyan. His cabaret not only presented salacious songs performed in the local argot but also featured notorious acts presenting taboo subject matter such as the artist Dolorosa, singing her paean to masochism, *The Song of Songs of Pains and Tortures*.⁷⁸ In presenting subject matter such as sex, crime, and other indecorous topics, The Silver Punchbowl set a tradition from which future avant-garde cabaret writers and performers would further explore. When the established theater-cabarets and vaudeville directors complained to the police that their audiences were being stolen by the *Kneipenbrettl* (pub-music hall), and that The Silver Punchbowl had begun charging entrance fees, a crackdown occurred on the smaller cabarets in 1904 and 1905. It is estimated that there were at least seventy-two establishments by this time advertising themselves as cabarets.⁷⁹ Their ability to connect with their audiences, perform a repertoire that went further in content than the theater cabarets, charge a cheaper admission and hold longer opening hours all added to their success.

After 1910, the influence of Parisian cabaret seating using tables and chairs, and waiters serving customers, quickly became the norm [*fig. 20*]. Cabaret staging in larger theaters were prohibitively expensive and most failed accordingly. In contrast, the pub-cabarets using table-and-chair seating flourished. Attempts by the police to curtail their activities resulted in laws prohibiting them from using costumes or lavish stage sets so as not to compete with the larger variety shows. In 1918 with the advent of the Weimar Republic and the fall of the Wilhelmine rule in Germany, preliminary censorship was abandoned. This meant that cabaret and theater producers no longer had to submit their

⁷⁶ Lees, Andrew. *Cities, Sin, and Social Reform in Imperial Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 130.

⁷⁷ Jelavich, Peter. *Berlin Cabaret* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 88.

⁷⁸ Jelavich, *Berlin Cabaret*, 90.

⁷⁹ Jelavich, *Berlin Cabaret*, 91.

programs and lyrics for official inspection to state censors before any show could be performed, and costume prohibitions became relaxed. Still, censorship did exist. As a result, an increased amount of political commentary, satire and sensuality began being performed on its stages, allowing for a variety of different types of cabarets in Berlin to emerge. At the lower end were the *Tingeltangle* dive bars where there might only be a piano or other instrument to accompany a singer or two, or the *Kneipenbrettl* cabarets where a small house orchestra would perform with acts. The bourgeois cafés and dance halls with small orchestras featured cabaret programming, as did the upper echelon black-tie cabarets that attracted wealthier patrons. Artist cabarets with an emphasis on literature and the arts also became the haunt of the intelligentsia. All shared a common bond in presenting earthy, aspirational entertainment soaked in typical Berlin wit and sarcasm.

Some historians make the distinction of *cabaret* versus *kabarett*, the latter defined as presenting a more intellectually critical and political program, as opposed to cabaret's appeal as mere popular entertainment. Yet at various times in its history cabaret's content has shifted from either side. A definition based on a general consensus would be that cabaret is an art form consisting of short musical numbers of different genres, including skits, or other acts such as puppet shows, films, dancers, comic monologues, or short segments, presented in small clubs, ballrooms, dancehalls or bars, in which the audience has a direct viewpoint of the performers on the stage [fig. 21 & 22].⁸⁰ The subject matter is often of a satirical nature, its texts commenting on current events, politics, sexuality, fashion, fads and culture. The performers were for the most part professional actors and singers, together with writers, poets, dancers and visual artists, who often performed their own material. All of the segments were interceded and presented by a master of ceremonies, who introduced the artists and the acts with a certain pizzazz and style, often being the sole linking element tying the parts to a thematic whole. Sometimes cabaret programs were built around a central theme, similar to a musical play. Its public consisted of the entire stratum of social classes, from the proletarian dives to expensive, grand venues. Often its patrons were an amalgam of social classes gathering under one roof. All of this created not only a combusive situation on the stage and in the material being performed, but also in the audience to which cabaret's songs were directed.

The Cabaret Environment in Weimar Berlin

The metropolis of Berlin emerged as a provincial town built on a swamp-filled plain of past centuries to become one of Europe's leading modern cities by the 1920s. In 1850

⁸⁰ Jelavich, *Berlin Cabaret*, 2.

the town boasted a population of 400,000 and after becoming the capital of Prussia in 1871 its populace grew to 865,000, and within a decade surpassed 1 million.⁸¹ By 1905 it had reached to more than 2 million; in 1914, over 3.5 million; and in 1919 when encompassing its neighboring suburbs, the populace reached 3.9 million by official census.⁸² It quickly became one of the most modern cities in Europe, competing – and usually leading -- with London, Paris and New York in terms of sanitation, electricity, public transportation, and a highly competent public administration. People flocked to Berlin not only from across Germany, but also throughout Europe and beyond its borders. By 1918 any number of expatriots from a great variety of nations could be seen in its cabarets, both as patrons and as performers. Russians, French, Americans, Belgians, and even Norwegians may have sought the city for its academies of art, but the vibrant attraction of its nightlife was undeniable.

We can understand the emergence of cabaret in Berlin as a kind of metaphor of the times, reflecting the creation of new types of identity in its citizens as a response to the modern demands of the metropolis.⁸³ Contemporary sociologist Georg Simmel astutely observed at the turn of the century that the individual in the metropolitan social-technological mechanism actively resisted losing their identity by amplifying their own individual features, and sought an intensification of emotional responses to both their internal and external stimuli.⁸⁴ An objective sense of indifference predominated, different from previous epochs due to people's responses for survival in the big city. Mankind could not help but develop these tactics, caused by the dizzying onslaught of technological advances such as motor vehicles, machinery, electricity, increased speeds in travel, and the cacophony of metropolitan life. The price of modernity was in its devaluation of values, especially in terms of the individual life.⁸⁵ Commerce was partly to blame, creating false economic social groups and classes that limited relationships. Eccentric behavior flourished, Simmel observed, in which drawing attention to oneself by exhibiting capricious and extreme behavior in dress, appearance or mannerisms becomes a kind of survival mechanism in response to a dehumanizing society. These distanced, objectified survival tactics typified in the people of Berlin had replaced the individual subjective culture of rural environments. New sensations were sought out in order to give direction and meaning in life, through the ever-increasing variety of items for sale in department

⁸¹ Beachy, Robert. *Gay Berlin: Birthplace of a Modern Identity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 48.

⁸² Beachy, *Gay Berlin*, 48

⁸³ Jelavich, Peter. "Modernity, Civic Identity, and Metropolitan Entertainment: Vaudeville, Cabaret, and Revue in Berlin, 1900-1933" in *Berlin Culture and Metropolis* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 96.

⁸⁴ Simmel, Georg. "The Metropolis and Mental Life" in *The Blackwell City Reader*, ed. Gary Bridge et al (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2010), 11.

⁸⁵ Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life", 15.

stores, novelties presented to the populace, or stimuli offered in heightened and intensified forms of entertainment.⁸⁶ Cabaret provided such a response, and mirrored Simmel's observations in its very performance strategies and content. The originator of cabaret in Germany, Ernst von Wolzogen, understood this need as "a sign of our nervous, precipitate age, which finds no response for long and prolix entertainments. We are all, each and every one of us, attuned to aphoristic, terse and catchy tunes."⁸⁷ Cabaret's songs were presented with biting wit and satirical commentary on its society, set to infectious rhythms, reflecting the fractured characteristics of its age like the many rays of the mirror balls that hung over its audience. And as its social circumstances changed from the pre-war years into the Weimar Republic, so too did cabaret's thematic and formal concerns.

Inside the cabarets the program varied. Weimar Berlin's cabarets appealed to a wide variety of tastes and budgets, and social climates. In the artist's cafés, the intelligentsia gathered to argue, debate and listen to songs or read poetry aloud, and often it included a small stage and at least a piano to provide music. The bourgeois cabaret establishments featured tasteful décor, a small stage and an audience seated at tables around a dance floor in front of the stage, which also served for floorshow acts. Most cabarets featured dancing during the show's intermission, or after the performances had ended. At the higher end of the scale were the chic, luxury cabarets and revues, affordable only for those whose incomes reflected a higher social status, where the orchestras were considerably larger, the entertainment more lavish, and the champagne significantly more expensive. But if we are to really gain a sense of what artists such as Dix, Grosz and Schad may have encountered inside of the cabaret's walls, we should seek out the descriptions of those who actually experienced these first hand.

American writer Robert McAlmon lived in Berlin in the early 1920s, writing short stories that were in reality his autobiographical reminiscences. He described his nightly roaming from the Hotel Adlon to various cabarets until the late hours of the morning, all highly fused with alcohol, sex and cocaine, topped with a number of desperate Poles, Russians and Germans willing to comply to almost anything for cash.⁸⁸ Filmmaker G. W. Pabst visually captured the drunken clientele of a 1920s up-scale cabaret in his film *Abwege*, 1928 (*The Devious Path*), where one lengthy scene shows a crowded cabaret room with fashionably dressed dancers socializing, drinking champagne, flirting drunkenly with one another, cavorting and buying cocaine. Around the dance floor is a gated area of seated

⁸⁶ Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life", 11-12.

⁸⁷ Jelavich, *Berlin Cabaret*, 98.

⁸⁸ McAlmon, Robert. *Miss Knight and Others* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), 23-55.

customers that perfectly matches the setting shown in Christian Schad's painting *Lotte*, 1927-8, and also shows party favors of the kind that appear in George Grosz's *Drinnen und Draussen*, 1926 (both discussed below).⁸⁹ But perhaps the most riveting of these descriptions is in the memoirs of writer Klaus Mann, who recalled his experiences of the cabarets in Berlin during the early 1920s:

“Maybe the era was a little shaky as far as moral equilibrium is concerned. ... The collective organism which is society was avid for lust and oblivion, depleted after the orgy of hatred and destruction, still bleeding from many wounds. ... Millions of helpless, impoverished, bewildered people capered and swung in a delirium of hunger and hysteria. Dance was a mania, a religion, a racket. The stock market danced. The members of the Reichstag hopped about as if mad. The poets were convulsed with rhythmic spasms. The cripples, the prostitutes, the beggars, the reformers, the retired monarchs and astute industrialists – all of them swayed and skipped. They danced the shimmy, tango, foxtrot, and St. Vitus' dance. They danced despair and schizophrenia and cosmic divinations... they danced with Negro masks, Gothic helmets, and no clothes on. They danced ecstasies, hangovers, orgasms, intoxications, and nervous tics. They imitated Isadora Duncan, Nijinsky, Charlie Chaplin, the motions of pugilists, and the tormented pantomime of imprisoned animals in the Zoo. Jazz was the great balm and narcotic of a disconcerted, frustrated nation. The fever was indomitably expansive – a mass frenzy akin to certain contagious excesses in the Dark Ages. Small wonder that the pulsating heart of the country, the capital, was affected most perturbingly.”⁹⁰

Such descriptions serve to provide us with a general idea of what the social setting was like for the artists who frequented cabarets and joined in its dance. It also provides us with a reference point from which to understand their artworks.

Cabaret's Debt to Nietzsche

In 1901, Vaudeville in Germany was transformed by Nietzsche's aesthetic philosophies into Berlin cabaret's more ambitious format. While Parisian cabarets had discovered the theories of Wagner and Nietzsche, it was up to Berlin's first cabarets to realize them. Critics at the turn of the century had already noted vaudeville's display of a pagan, hedonistic character in its text and song, in response to the Wilhelmine era's Christian asceticism.⁹¹ A physical sensuality infiltrated the stage and those who had read Nietzsche's works recognized its expressed Dionysian elements. Promoters and directors of vaudeville would answer Nietzsche's call for a rebirth of culture in the creation of their own “improved” version of the variety theater, in the form of the Berlin cabaret.

Promoter Ernst von Wolzogen's Buntes Theater opened on January 18 of 1901, billed as a new type of variety theater in which the literary quality would be raised above vaudeville's lowly populist appeal. Wolzogen dubbed his new entertainment the *Überbrettel*, coined from a passage in a novel by Otto Julius Bierbaum (1865-1910) titled

⁸⁹ Pabst, G. W. *Abwege*, accessed via YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4uScBah-jb8>, with Brigitte Helm, Gustav Diessel, and Hertha von Walther (Berlin: Deutsche Universal-Film, 1928).

⁹⁰ Mann, Klaus. *The Turning Point: Thirty-Five Years in this Century*. (London: Victor Gollanz, Ltd., 1944), 75-76.

⁹¹ Jelavich, *Berlin Cabaret*, 28.

Stilpe, 1897.⁹² *Stilpe* described the life of a writer who became a cabaret promoter and ultimately hangs himself on its stage. The book's main character derided vaudeville's lack of substance and called for the lowly *Tingeltangel* to replace it with a renewed aesthetic vitality. *Stilpe* resonated with a generation of German artists and writers hungry for new art forms (Bierbaum, coincidentally, also co-published the influential arts journal *Pan* in 1894). Poems, Bierbaum wrote, should not be only recited in the drawing room, but also performed on the stage set to music.⁹³ Literature could more easily be presented to a needing public by using the lyric poem set to music, in what he termed a "Deutsche Chansons", modeled after the cabarets of Paris. Vaudeville would be lifted from its place in the gutter and transformed into an art form approaching Nietzsche's demand for a revitalized culture in *The Birth of Tragedy* and in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. "We will give birth to the Over-man [*den Übermenschen*] on the stage boards [*auf dem Brettl*]," Bierbaum's character proclaimed.⁹⁴

Wolzogen applied the term *Überbrettl* to his Motley Theater, in the hopes of creating a revitalized and elevated form of theater in the cabaret. Wolzogen wrote, "I began to immerse myself in Nietzsche. And just as Nietzsche's dream of an *Übermensch* colored my catchphrase about the '*Überbrettl*,' so too did Nietzsche's idea of the Dionysian man, the dancer, the gay science."⁹⁵ In case anyone doubted his intent, he placed a cast bust of Nietzsche by the artist Max Kruse in the foyer of his second cabaret, opening in November that same year.⁹⁶ Humor, laughter and dancing were the attributes of the *Übermensch*, as described in Nietzsche's works, and were to become cabaret's hallmark. Wolzogen sought to answer the philosopher's solicitation by making cabaret a process of self-affirmation. This was to be presented in the form of *Kleinkunst*, or "small forms": short segments of sketches, pantomimes, song numbers, dances and poetry recitations.⁹⁷ Wolzogen had specifically called for genuine artists who did not cater to proletarian tastes, composers, poets, writers, actors, and singers to be a part of his cabaret, combining their talents to create a form of entertainment drawing on Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* and Nietzschean disregard for bourgeois standards of art.⁹⁸ On opening night a riot broke out in the audience

⁹² Appignanesi, *The Cabaret*, 37-38.

⁹³ Bierbaum, Otto Julius. *Deutsche Chansons*. (Berlin, Schuster & Loeffler, 1900), ix-x.

⁹⁴ Bierbaum, Otto Julius. *Stilpe: ein Roman aus der Froschperspektive*. (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1909), 359.

⁹⁵ Wolzogen, Ernst von. *Wie ich mich ums Leben brachte: Erinnerungen und Erfahrungen*, trans. Tom Garretson (Hamburg: Verlag von Georg Westermann, 1922), 197.

⁹⁶ Segel, Harold B. *Turn-of-the-Century Cabaret* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 123.

⁹⁷ Segel, *Turn-of-the-Century Cabaret*, 134.

⁹⁸ Wolzogen, *Wie ich mich ums Leben brachte: Erinnerungen und Erfahrungen*, 196-97.

due to lack of available seating, but on the whole Wolzogen's cabaret was deemed a resounding success.

Max Reinhardt, the Viennese producer and director, opened his own cabaret at the Deutsches Theater named Schall und Rauch (Sound and Smoke) only five days after Wolzogen's cabaret, after writing of the need to create a new kind of theater. "We do not want to be unhealthy by denying our egoism. In every respect the project is infused with the will to power."⁹⁹ Under the influence of Nietzsche, the premiere displayed a variety of acts parodying German cultural icons such as Wagner's *Walküre*, avant-garde Symbolist drama, and topics such as suicide, incest, alcoholism and mental retardation. Reinhardt also noted the current tendency to segregate different forms of theater, and sought to combine these on one stage, mostly in a satirical manner. Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* was applied to all aspects of the performance, from the lighting to the performances itself.¹⁰⁰ The figure of Serenissimus was created, whose sole purpose was to sarcastically comment on the actions on stage as well as on current events. Seated in the Kaiser's balcony over the stage, Serenissimus was a caricature of the aristocracy, and together with his sidekick Kindermann derided the Kaiser and politicians. The skit was so well received that it became a staple of the cabaret, though its outright disrespect caught the attention of the police censors who imposed fines on the actors.¹⁰¹ And just as in Nietzsche's Greek chorus, the figures of Serenissimus and Kindermann created an alternate, objectified understanding of the audience and their society through commenting on the cabaret performance. The pair functioned as a Nietzschean comic "ideal spectator", creating a more intelligible perception through the its union of Apollonian observations with the Dionysian caustic wit.¹⁰²

What exactly did cabaret's originators find so appealing in Nietzsche's works? Nietzsche stressed the importance of the lyrical poem and its dependence on music. He used the folk-song as an example of the perfect union of the Apollonian and Dionysian drives, and together with Wagner, agreed that music was the "first and the universal principle."¹⁰³ The folksong form is a kind of epic tragedy, something the cabaret song would emulate in its focus on contemporary topics. Language imitates music, and the conjunction of words and music are of the utmost importance, and cannot exist without the other. A true understanding of any existential reality could only occur by combining the two, and to not do so would create a very superficial understanding at best. The cabaret

⁹⁹ Jelavich, *Berlin Cabaret*, 65-67.

¹⁰⁰ Kennerley, Mitchell. *The Theater of Max Reinhardt* (New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1914), 11-13.

¹⁰¹ Jelavich, *Berlin Cabaret*, 76-77.

¹⁰² Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 48.

¹⁰³ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 39.

song exists to give us a deeper understanding of the text in relation to music, in creating an allegory or mythic state, from which the listener derives a deeper understanding of reality when performed by the singer. An overly rationalistic, “Socratic” approach would ruin music’s effect. This is why Nietzsche attacked opera other than Wagner’s because the music for other composers is always secondary to the text, and is never considered as equally important.¹⁰⁴ Cabaret placed equal emphasis on both music and the text, each expressively reliant on the other for an increased effect.

Cabaret’s originators laid the foundation on which other cabarets in the Weimar period would follow. It was an attempt to create a new, higher form of Germanic art in the acknowledgment of Nietzsche’s insistence that music was a vehicle for the rebirth of tragedy. Music embodied the will, using the subconscious to create a sense of the tragic:

“Dionysian art usually exercises two types of influence on the Apollonian capacity for art [text/poem]: music stimulates the *allegorical contemplation* of Dionysian universality, and music allows the emergence of the allegorical image in its *most significant form* . . . music gives birth to *myth*: the myth which speaks of Dionysian knowledge in allegories. . . if we now imagine that music in its most heightened form must also seek to reach its greatest transformation into images, then we must consider it capable of finding symbolic expression for its real Dionysian wisdom; and where else should we look for this expression if not in tragedy and above all in the concept of the *tragic*? . . . The metaphysical joy in the tragic is a translation of the instinctively unconscious Dionysian wisdom into the language of images”¹⁰⁵

Nietzsche insisted that music is an expression of a symbolic intuition, originating in the Dionysian universality. It emerges through music in its highest form, creating tragic myth. And cabaret’s poets, lyric writers and composers understood this importance of this connection between music and tragedy/text, as did the artists who read Nietzsche’s texts. Cabaret song fused music with the text to create a heightened understanding of its underlying message, creating images of a metaphysical, objective reality in the mind of the spectator, and sought to utilize its texts as mythic allegory. It was their concurrence with Nietzsche in counterbalancing the subconscious power of music upon us, mediating its audiences away from the destructiveness of Dionysian forces by creating an objectiveness and detachment, which they felt was necessary for citizens of the new culture to receive in order to understand their reality on a sane level.

Had they lived long enough to see it, Wagner and Nietzsche’s concerns for the degeneration of culture and their wishes to see an artwork for the future may have well have been realized in the *Gesamtkunstwerk* and *intermedial* qualities of cabaret, though it is doubtful Nietzsche would have fully approved. His definition of the Apollonian and Dionysian drives changed throughout his life, often describing them in meanings that s

¹⁰⁴ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 118-121.

¹⁰⁵ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 89-90.

contradicted each another, and catering to mass taste would have been objectionable to him.¹⁰⁶ By the end of his career he had rejected theater or even art's ability to transform man's values. However, misinterpreted as his writings may have been by cabaret's originators and for the artists who assimilated his works, Nietzsche would serve as an important bridge between the two.

VI. George Grosz and the Pessimistic Cabaret

George Grosz also intensely read Nietzsche as a youth after being introduced to his works (and Wagner's) by Erwin Liebe, a fellow student at the Kunstakademie in Dresden in 1909 to 1911.¹⁰⁷ He returned to the writer again and again, and mentions him throughout his autobiography. During Grosz's Dada years, he would spend evenings listening to a certain "Dr. St." read passages from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and discuss the signification of the *Übermensch* and the power of the will.¹⁰⁸ Grosz often referred to his own pessimism as coming from reading Nietzsche, seeing the world as a spectacle and being highly suspicious of morality in humankind, wishing not to reform man but to reflect their own ugliness in his drawings and paintings of café and cabaret nightlife. Citing Nietzsche in his autobiography, he stated that he preferred to think of himself as:

"a student of natural science, not a painter or satirist... [drawing] the rich, champagne-drinking gluttons favored by fate as well as the beggars standing with extended hands in the rain ... The elements rain, wind, volcanic eruptions, snow and the frost that nips people's feet cannot be viewed as good or evil. Why then man? Because of this attitude, I could not be a reformer. ... Something in me objected. I was not sufficiently gifted in the mild and genteel virtues of faith."¹⁰⁹

He greatly identified with Nietzsche's cultural pessimism, arguing about it often with Weiland Herzfelde, the publisher and poet, and with Dix. His adaptation of Nietzsche's thought in his own works, though, reveals something more than an unequivocal inclusion of the philosopher's views, in a contrast of a discord in his intent, and we can find evidence of this in his works incorporating the cabaret image.

Drinnen und Draussen (Inside and Outside), 1926, [fig. 23] is an oil painting using a compositional structure of two opposing, unequal sections, divided by a brick and plaster wall placed just off center in the work itself. This separates the two scenes. On the right side we see Grosz's typical caricatured "types" of barons, bankers or rich industrialists that appear throughout his works, with fat cheeks and jowls, dressed in tuxedos with black

¹⁰⁶ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Gay Science*, trans. Josefine Nauckhoff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 86-87

¹⁰⁷ Grosz, *A Little Yes and a Big No*, 98.

¹⁰⁸ Grosz, *A Little Yes and a Big No*, 191.

¹⁰⁹ Grosz, *A Little Yes and a Big No*, 172.

tie, with signs of over-indulgence in their blotched faces. In the background are two couples of men and women. They are seated around a table draped with a white tablecloth, with champagne glasses set before them. The central figure at the end distance of the table reveals a large red, bulbous head expressing what could only be a kind of grimace, caught in a moment of laughter. His teeth are visible, mouth open to display his voracious appetite, and bifocals circle his small, closed eyes. The coquettish women sit on either side of him, together with a dark-haired gentleman with a monocle holding a cigarette, his left hand extended towards a champagne bucket. All seem to be in the moment of some great revelry, as if a joke has just been told.

An additional, larger figure sits closer to us at a different table, on which we see a champagne bucket placed with a bottle, a cigar box, party favors (often used in upscale cabarets to create a festive atmosphere), and a table lamp.¹¹⁰ His arms are resting on the table, his hands folded before him. His facial expression can only be described as a leer, as he bites down upon a lit cigar extruding from his mouth. His eyes are intensely wide open. It is the face of greed. Colorful paper streamers drape him, as he directs his gaze towards the opposite side, as if to mock the action in the left part of the canvas.

The left area of the painting reveals the figure of a beggar, with a wooden leg and a crutch. His face is scarred, identifying him as a wounded war veteran, and he holds his cap in one hand with the other outstretched begging for alms. There is a box on his lap, with a neck strap securing it in place. In side profile, we see his eyes closed and his mouth open, as if calling out to the pedestrians before him. There is a dark figure approaching us with a raised coat collar to shield his face, ignoring the beggar. He clenches his fist and seems spectre-like, with loose shading and minimal detail. The street could be Unter den Linden in the heart of Berlin, as we see the almost bare linden trees in the background (in contrast to the potted palms in the scene at the right) where a couple, arm in arm with their backs towards us, retreat. The woman's coat is made of some kind of transparent material, displaying her buttocks, suggesting she is a prostitute. Has she just succeeded in acquiring a client? A red sun low on the horizon is in the distance, as the night is just beginning, bringing darkness, when the cabaret will emerge to life.

Like Dix's *Großstadt*, Grosz underscores the societal imbalance by using an emphasis of red, blue and green in the right side of the canvas, creating a festive, vibrant cabaret atmosphere, while in the left hand he has blended these into shades of brown and yellow, in oppressive tones. This is in part by the lack of use of white, which is in ample display on the right side of the painting. The figures are not carefully modeled, nor do they

¹¹⁰ The very same type of paper streamers and horns can be seen in G. W. Pabst's 1928 film *Abwege*, in its cabaret scenes.

show an attempt at increased plasticity. Grosz has disbanded the hatching and detailed shading of his youth. Even in his attempt to rid himself of an individualistic style in the hope of creating a politicized art form, he nonetheless presents an idiosyncratic style that is immediately recognizable as his own.¹¹¹ He retains Cubist elements of skewed perspectives in the right side as if to enhance the warped reality of its subjects, which is lacking in the left panel.

Compositionally, Grosz places the two scenes in binary opposition to one another, the “inside” world of the very rich cabaret environment, and those excluded, kept on the “outside”, in poverty and destitution. In dividing the painting into equal, vertical thirds he places the key figures of the fat, cigar smoking baron/industrialist centrally on the right line, and the head of the beggar on the left line, based loosely on the compositional “rule of thirds”, drawing our attention to these primary figures. The couple in the distance on the left – the woman in her fur-trimmed collar coat and the man in his respectable hat – are counterbalanced by the grey shaded worker, both leading our eye upwards towards the red sun, then to the cabaret figures in the background, before finally settling on the cigar-smoking baron. This is similar to Dix’s circular, compositional movement in *Großstadt*. All the figures in the painting ignore the veteran’s suffering, in a continuing cycle of wealth and poverty. Grosz displays the great disparity of wealth in the Weimar Republic, recalling in his memoirs:

“The Berlin to which I returned was cold and gray. Its dark, gloomy, unheated residential sections contrasted sharply with the gayety of its nightlife. The same soldiers who were seen in the cafés and wine cellars singing, dancing, and clinging drunkenly to the arms of prostitutes, were to be seen later, dirty and unkempt, dragging their weary way from station to station ... It was interesting that the higher the scale of prices, the greater the lust for living. The new type of dancing became wilder and wilder; both native and French champagne flowed in streams. Dozens of my countrymen stood in front of every restaurant gaping, even as their forefathers had done in front of palace doors in the Middle Ages. Their outstretched hands contained nothing but a few intertwined fate lines.”¹¹²

And further:

“To view the world as a natural spectacle, as rationally explicable, seemed right and good to me. Not in a religious sense, I admit. Since reading Nietzsche I was rather suspicious of the moral in man.”¹¹³

In a 1925 issue of the German satirical, humoristic literary journal *Simplicissimus*, there is a cartoon drawing by Theodor Heine showing a likeness the artist George Grosz, holding a large axe in his right hand and what appears to be a large hunting knife in his other [fig. 24]. Grosz wields these over the body of a naked, portly middle-aged man, who is bound to the table by straps, as a group of seven well-dressed bourgeois men and women

¹¹¹ Elger, *Expressionism*, 220.

¹¹² Grosz, *A Little Yes and a Big No*, 146; 171.

¹¹³ Grosz, *A Little Yes and a Big No*, 172.

look on. We recognize Grosz by his distinctive features and his Fedora hat. Underneath it reads: “The draftsman George Grosz asks his audience whether it is right to butcher or ritually slaughter the bourgeoisie.”¹¹⁴ Heine has taken note of Grosz’s ardent assault on the middle-classes in his artwork, so often seen in his cool, calculating observations of them. It is interesting that up until that cartoon, Grosz had never been mentioned in the journal, but from the following year his work would become a regular feature in *Simplicissimus*’s pages with his caricature drawings appearing in seventy-two issues until the end of 1932. Apparently, Grosz’s caustic slant on his society appealed to the journal’s satirical policy.

Grosz wanted “to convince the world of its ugliness, sickness and hypocrisy.”¹¹⁵ The roughly shaded figures on the left of *Drinnen und Draussen* display Grosz’s use of types to represent society, just as its cabaret patrons do, all of whom ignore the veteran’s poverty and plight. Grosz isn’t supplying us with hope; it is as things are. He stressed this emphatically under the court proceedings of the *Ecce Homo* (drawing on Nietzsche’s title) censorship trial of his portfolio lithographs conducted in February of 1924, stating, “My whole conception of the world...it is considerably more negative and skeptical. I see things as I have depicted them. When I look at the majority of my fellow men I see no beauty.”¹¹⁶ For Grosz, the cabaret serves to amplify the tragic in his society, but with a more direct, bitter call of attention to the injustices that surround him than we find in Dix’s *Großstad.* Just as he places two opposing polarities of class in conflict with one another, he also takes on the position of himself opposing the totality of his society. Though he had performed and worked in cabarets, Grosz lacked its humor or even Nietzsche’s call for laughter, and his stance remains acerbic and overtly critical. He could not decide if he wanted to be an artist or a moralist, and saw the cabaret as a visual platform to combine the two.¹¹⁷ We can find this also in his non-cabaret works, but in his use of the cabaret as a setting for merriment and moral abandonment by the ruling class, he intensifies their disregard for social justice by enhancing their frivolous setting in the context of entertainment and drunkenness. This is what gives his cabaret works such a shocking effect on the viewer.

Grosz’s oppositional personality derives back to his boyhood defiance against the strictness of his schoolteachers, calling them “an arsenal of human perversity and inadequacy.”¹¹⁸ It continues in his drawings and paintings, further intensified by his political beliefs, which would come to play a determining factor in his choice of style,

¹¹⁴ Heine, Theodore Th. “Grosse Männer in kleiner Zeit” in *Simplicissimus* 30, no. 37 (1925): 547

¹¹⁵ Elger, *Expressionism*, 220.

¹¹⁶ Schneede, Uwe M., *George Grosz: Life and Work*, trans. Susanne Flatauer (New York: Universe Books, 1979), 86.

¹¹⁷ Schmeid, Weiland. “Neue Sachlichkeit and German Realism of the Twenties” in *German Realism of the Twenties: The Artist as Social Critic*, ed. Louise Lincoln, 54.

¹¹⁸ Grosz, George. “Mit Abbildungen aus den Notizbüchern,” *Das Kunstblatt* 13 (1929): 238.

materials and subject matter. Grosz had joined the Communist party in 1918 and Marxist undertones extend throughout his artworks and writings.¹¹⁹ In an article co-authored with John Heartfield titled *Der Kunstlump (The Art Scab)*, published in *Der Gegner* in 1920, they attacked Oskar Kokoschka's plea for striking workers to move their protests out of the range of works of art. Worker's protests in Berlin on March 15, 1920 had caused a Rubens painting at the Gemäldegalerie to be damaged by a bullet hole, and Grosz and Heartfield were outraged by Kokoschka's valuing works of art of the past higher than contemporary workers' needs for food, housing and a fair income.¹²⁰ This was a typical response for Grosz, who felt that all art making should be determined by class relations in a Marxist concept of *Tendenzkunst*, in that art should have a clear political message in the service of a revolutionary cause. Also, this functioned as an answer to Dada's nihilism.¹²¹ Including political meaning gave his work purpose and intent, and a sense of progression towards the future. In all of the styles he assimilated at various points in his career – Expressionism, Cubo-Constructivism, Futurism and Dada – Grosz merged political and socially critical content with his artworks. Though a visit to Russia in 1922 would leave him disillusioned and lead him to finally abandon Marxist ideals, he continued to think of himself as a political activist and many of his works reflect this.¹²²

Throughout the 1920s there is a growing sense of pessimism in Grosz's works, with his revolutionist fervor becoming replaced with a bitter resignation, evident in his many drawings, lithographs and paintings of cabaret scenes. This coincided with the political and historical events in the aftermath of the war. By 1921 the destabilization of the national budget in Germany continued due to rising inflation, increased debt, and the expenses of wounded veterans. War reparations, the occupation of the Rheinland-Westfalen and Ruhr mining region by France in lieu of Germany's failure to meet its payments, and the disastrous handling of currency by Germany's politicians resulted in 1921 to 1924 becoming some of the harshest years its citizens had endured. Only the currency reform of 1923 and the Dawes Plan to restructure reparations and loan payments helped change the situation.¹²³ Fortunes were lost, and those who had little to begin with found themselves utterly destitute. By 1931, writing in *Das Kunstblatt*, Grosz criticized both the Communists

¹¹⁹ Elger, *Expressionism*, 219.

¹²⁰ Heartfield, John and George Grosz. "The Art Scab" in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, ed. Anton Kaes, et al. (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1994), 483-86.

¹²¹ Sheppard, Richard. *Modernism – Dada – Postmodernism* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2000), 348.

¹²² Lewis, Beth Irwin. *George Grosz: Art and Politics in the Weimar Republic* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1971),

^{103.}

¹²³ Fergusson, *When Money Dies*, 226-29.

and National Socialists as having the same goal in subduing and controlling the masses.¹²⁴ This tone of moral and political pessimism was not unique to Grosz – indeed, it permeated the era’s entire culture. Currency speculators and corrupt industrialists filled the upscale cabarets, while the poor majority, as Grosz noted, could only look in from the outside. And outside of all of this stood Grosz, observing and capturing it with his sketchbook, even if on occasion that view was from a seat inside of the cabaret itself.

As cabaret’s politics were predominantly leftist, shared also by many artists of the period, the cabaret environment provided a sense of community. The cabaret and artists held common artistic strategies in their use of images, symbols, metaphors and types, both observing and critiquing an audience that often contained “a merry-go-round of interesting freaks.”¹²⁵ Already by the age of twenty in 1913, Grosz was strongly drawn to nightlife, writing “it’s the moth instinct that attracts us to bright lights of the streets and cafés. I could not afford the more expensive places, so we would content ourselves with the cheaper ones, where we would sit around and make many sketches as we drank our beer or coffee.”¹²⁶ He spent many nights observing prostitutes and the patrons who frequented the cabarets and the Café National on Friedrichstrasse, capturing the sordid nightlife with his drawing pen before moving on to document other cabaret denizens that haunted the night, such as in his *White Russian Cabaret*, 1920 [fig. 25].¹²⁷ Grosz too shared Dix’s enthusiasm for *Amerikanismus* and the syncopated jazz music performed in the cabarets. He wrote of hearing jazz for the first time at the Café Oranienburger in Berlin just after the First World War, albeit played badly by Viennese musicians. In what could almost be a precursor for Berlin Dada performance, he described how the musicians were served a constant supply of beer and schnapps, until the drunken bandleader smashed the musicians’ instruments on their heads, creating a pandemonium that the audience participated in.¹²⁸ And Grosz had even changed his name from Georg Ehrenfried Gross to an Americanized George Grosz in 1916 as a protest to the German militant nationalism experienced during the war.¹²⁹ A visit to his studio in 1917 by *Das Kunstblatt* art critic Paul Westheim revealed tomahawks, Indian pipes, and buffalo skins decorating the walls, and other assorted Americana, as well as having Grosz insist his visitors sing Negro songs and dance to

¹²⁴ Grosz, George. “Unter anderem ein Wort für deutsche Tradition” in *Das Kunstblatt* 3 (1931): 79.

¹²⁵ Grosz, *A Little Yes and a Big No*, 149

¹²⁶ Grosz, *A Little Yes and a Big No*, 139.

¹²⁷ Grosz, *A Little Yes and a Big No*, 167.

¹²⁸ Grosz, *A Little Yes and a Big No*, 140.

¹²⁹ Lewis, *George Grosz*, 28.

ragtime music with him.¹³⁰ America was the “land of my desire” stated Grosz, “remaining to trouble my Marxist friends.”¹³¹ Such antagonistic posturing by Grosz made the attraction of live jazz music performed in the cabarets even more enticing for him to seek them out.

Grosz’s visits to Berlin’s cabarets to sketch its patrons resulted in an abundance of the motif appearing in his oeuvre. His work *Ruf der Wildnis (Call of the Wild)*, 1929, is a cabaret scene from the 1920s in his characteristic, caricatured style, a monochrome line drawing, lithographic print in black and white [fig. 26].¹³² A semi-nude woman is shown on a cabaret stage, her back facing us with her head turned towards the audience. She smiles, her eyes are closed in mid-dance, the backs of her high heels towards us, showing her left side breast. The only articles of clothing are a necklace and some bracelets, and what appears to be a banana skirt of the kind made famous by Josephine Baker. Here Grosz is not emphasizing German Primitivism’s idealization of sexuality, but instead calls attention to the scene’s obvious sexual voyeurism. An audience of five men seated around a table show an excited interest in the dancer. Their faces reveal the features of pigs. One of the men claps while another holds a champagne glass on the table. The cabaret setting leaves little doubt as to the gluttony of sexual appetites on display.

By the time this work was created, cabaret had begun to slip away from its initial aspirations of combining art and literature to regressing into a more populist entertainment form resembling variety theater. These cabaret revues gained in popularity, again staged in large theaters with traditional seating. Light entertainment filled the majority of these and nudity on its stages led to increased ticket sales for the promoters. The James Klein revue was one such cabaret advertising shows such as *Everyone’s Naked, Goddam -- 1000 Naked Women* and *Berlin Without a Shirt*, featuring elaborately staged erotic shows with the sole purpose of displaying nude women [fig. 27].¹³³ The Celly de Rheidt Ballet Company performed pastiche dance tableaux that verged on the pornographic, and the Tiller Girls drill troupe dancers marched mechanically to the delight of their male onlookers. By the mid-1920s the phrase on everyone’s lips was *Girlikultur*. *Ruf der Wildnis* shows Grosz’s response to such a cabaret in using the audience to critique the sexual greed of his society. In contemporary reviews Grosz was often labeled the “German Hogarth” and compared to Honoré Daumier.¹³⁴ Though unlike Daumier, his linear drawings and paintings do not

¹³⁰ Lewis, *George Grosz*, 25.

¹³¹ Grosz, George. “Jugenderinnerungen” in *Das Kunstblatt* 6 (1929): 174.

¹³² This work originally appeared in a book of collected drawings that had appeared in portfolios and magazines spanning fifteen years titled *Die Gezeichneten: 60 Blätter aus 15 Jahren*, formally published by the Malik-Verlag, Berlin in 1930, although the book had been available in late 1929.

¹³³ Gordon, *Voluptuous Panic*, 65.

¹³⁴ Perry, Gill. *Modern Art and Modernism: George Grosz and Weimar Germany*. (Milton Keynes: The Open University, 1983), 10.

always make a clear distinction between the exploiters and the exploited, where even the working class ignores the plight of the tragic war veteran and women allow themselves to be commoditized.

Nietzsche's philosophy may have been a convenient excuse for Grosz to distance himself from his society, but his political beliefs betray an otherwise close engagement with his world. He reveals a strong subjective empathy while he positions himself as an objective observer, crying out for reform, yet claims not to be a reformer. And therein lies the crux of the matter, in that there is a conflict of positions in his work. But this paradox is not necessarily a bad thing because it gives his works a sense of dynamism. Grosz is attracted to the cabarets, enough to even have worked in them, and takes the same position as the cabaret stage performer in targeting the audience. For Grosz, the cabaret clientele *is* society. But unlike Dix, he does not recognize his place within it. As in his work's title, he is both inside and outside, simultaneously observing from the cognitive stance of cabaret's satire and his own caricaturist approach. Yet he never acknowledges that he is also a part of that very same audience. And even if so many of his cabaret works express a revulsion for inequalities and exploitation, we cannot see him for what Dix attempts to be, the true Nietzschean artist unapologetic in his participation in society.

Drinne und Draussen serves no deeper allegory other than to express disgust at the unjust social conditions of Weimar society, using the cabaret's wealthy patrons to contrast the suffering of the streets. The war veteran is the tragic hero, and all of the figures in society ignore his suffering too. *Ruf der Wildnis* shows society's lechery reflected in the cabaret, exemplified in the pig features of the men who lust after the nude dancer. One finds no true subtext of Nietzsche's disregard for pity. Grosz didn't need Nietzsche to ignore the reality of poverty and suffering – all around him his society was doing exactly that.

Grosz's paradoxical positioning adds to the creation of its *intermedium*. It is his use of this exchange of dialogue and contrast in his works that gives his works substance: the spectacle of the cabaret versus the reality of the street; Nietzschean disregard for suffering versus moral outrage; cool distance versus engagement; pessimistic satire versus empathy; and cabaret as a consolidating referent for the external society versus the artist as participant-observer. All of these contradictions converge in Grosz's works with no easy, tidy conclusion but results in works that engage the viewer. As Raoul Hausmann noted, cabaret is the mirror of society, and Grosz recognized its parallel, mutual objective in pursuing their shared targets of critique. Cabaret provided a forum for expressing his concerns, and in the meeting of the two we have Grosz's impelling outcome.

In his forward to *Über alles die Liebe*, Grosz wrote, “I use my pen and brush primarily for taking down what I see and observe, and that is generally unromantic, sober and not very dreamy. . . . people and objects become somewhat shabby, ugly and often meaningless or ambiguous.”¹³⁵ Realism gives way to exaggerated caricature as Grosz’s pen and paintbrush become his weapons. And because of Grosz’s pessimistic, caricatured style, it has also given us a view on cabaret of the era that overemphasizes the decadent, mythological image that we have of Weimar culture today.¹³⁶ Grosz’s works are intentionally exaggerated and we should remember that his primary focus is on the audience and not the cabaret art form. For Grosz, the modernist consumer indulging in popular cultural entertainment leads to a consumptive result. The cabaret dance is simply an enticement for the masses to follow into the abyss.

By the mid-1920s there were still cabarets where sharp irony and sarcasm could be found, and at its most extreme, were the Agitprop cabarets that featured left-wing political entertainment. Grosz would have most certainly found a kindred environment in such cabarets in their harsher criticisms of Weimar life and in their mordant observations of capitalism. However, cabaret’s use of wit and irony contrasts Grosz’s dark, pessimistic view of the world. But perhaps we are too harsh on Grosz. Grosz’s friend Richard Huelsenbeck aptly noted that, “No matter how much Grosz’s art has been designated as social criticism, it was, after all, essentially a critique of man. Grosz saw the ugliness, not because he liked ugliness, but because it was a part of beauty that no one could see or understand. . . . This was the only way he could approach beauty: from the ugly side with timid proposals of love.”¹³⁷

VII. Art Movements and Cabaret

Like their Parisian counterparts, German artists living in Berlin during the late 1890s realized the value of fusing artistic talent with commercialized technologies, merging with popular culture to create new styles and expressions, and widen their economic base.¹³⁸ Artists such as Dix, Grosz and Schad were quick to seize upon the new opportunities that arose with emerging art movements in the new century, and cabaret

¹³⁵ Grosz, Georg. “Forward” in *Love Above All and Other Drawings*, trans. Stanley Appelbaum (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1971), iv.

¹³⁶ Simon, Sidney. “The Artist as Social Critic in the Weimar Republic” in *Germany in the Twenties: The Artist as Social Critic* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), 29.

¹³⁷ Huelsenbeck, Richard. *Memoirs of a Dada Drummer*. Hans J. Kleinschmidt, ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 122.

¹³⁸ Seigel, Jerrold. *Bohemian Paris: Culture, Politics, and the Boundaries of Bourgeois Life, 1850-1930*. (New York: Penguin Books, 1987), 215-41.

provided opportunities for collaborations between artists and writers, composers and directors. This allowed for their creativity to blossom in areas that transcended the materials of their discipline, allowing them to explore new artistic avenues created by fusing seemingly disparate art forms. We shall now examine how this characteristic of Modernism would be further developed by German artists over the following decades, who would come to incorporate non-traditional forms such as cabaret into their own artistic strategies.

Literature has always been linked with artists, and this would continue in art movements after the turn of the century. Two plays written for the Paris stage would have a primary influence on Futurism and Dada, setting the tone that succeeding art movements such as Surrealism would exploit. The first of these was *Ubu Roi*, a scandalous work performed in December of 1896, written by playwright Alfred Jarry (1873-1907). Absurdist and confrontational, the play shocked its audience with its opening line “Merdre” [Shit-r] uttered by the character Papa Ubu, at which the audience promptly rioted. In one segment Papa Ubu cries out that he’s to be decapitated and Mama Ubu responds by offering him sausages.¹³⁹ *Ubu Roi* intentionally parodied Shakespearean drama, attacked authoritarian power structures, and used nonsensical text with juxtaposed meanings, all delivered in an aggressive, elocutionary style. The stage designs were executed by Jarry with the assistance of Édouard Vuillard, Pierre Bonnard, and Paul Sérusier, integrating those artists’ creativity with the stage.¹⁴⁰

The second of these originated as a book by Raymond Roussel (1877-1933) titled *Impressions of Africa*, published in 1910 and then adapted as a play in 1911. The book is written in a disjointed novel form, full of word riddles and absurd situations that have nothing to do with any actual African country or culture. Its text presents an excessive use of homonyms, bizarre punctuation and grammatical structures, and juxtaposes characters in costumes that have no logical connection. The characters are all shipwrecked cabaret performers, and this is even further elaborated upon in the staged version, presented as a cabaret with short “attractions” to maintain the interest of both the audience and the performers alike.¹⁴¹ The opening has them land in an African cabaret named The Incomparables Club with Germanic features such as a painting labeled *The Electors of Brandenburg* and a bust of Immanuel Kant.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Jarry, Alfred. *King Ubu (Ubu Roi)*. Trans. Patrick Whittaker. (Los Gatos: Smashwords, Inc., 2007), 11-14.

¹⁴⁰ Goldberg, RoseLee. *Performance: Live Art 1909 to the Present* (London: Thames & Hudson, Ltd., 1979), 10.

¹⁴¹ Gordon, Mel. *Dada Performance* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1987). 11.

¹⁴² Roussel, Raymond. *Impressions of Africa*. Trans. Rayner Heppenstad and Lindy Foord (Surrey: One World Classics, 2011), 3-6.

While neither of these works were cabaret productions per se, the similarities to cabaret are obvious. Their implementation of fragmented performance tactics, absurd use of language and illogical meanings, their satirizing of power structures, and use of short scenes of heightened delivery would be implemented into Futurist and Dada performance, mimicking cabaret's format.¹⁴³ Both of these plays were instrumental for setting a platform from which Futurists and Dadaist tactics would emerge.

Futurist Influence, 1909-44

On the morning of February 20, 1909 Parisian citizens opening their newspaper were confronted with a targeted provocation to its self-proclaimed status as the leader of culture on the front page of *Le Figaro*. The Italian poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876-1944) had published his *Le Futurisme / Manifeste du Futurisme (The Futurist Manifesto)*. Marinetti called for artists to “break out of the horrible shell of wisdom...only to replenish the deep walls of the Absurd!”¹⁴⁴ He appealed for poetry's components to include courage, audacity and revolt, and hailed the beauty of speed as a rallying cry to change form in art by mimicking objects in motion with implied geometric shapes. Futurism must embrace a machine-aesthetic, he wrote, finding beauty in the shimmer of steel and the moving parts of the factory or automobile, in the streamlined design of transportation and in its physical movement. Works of art, he stated, cannot be described as true masterpieces if they do not display an aggressive character, and poetry itself must be conceived and performed as a “violent attack on unknown sources.”¹⁴⁵ The *Manifesto* sought to destroy the legacy of the past, by negating Western society's cultural inheritance, and gave priority to the immediacy of the *now* and the future. Marinetti and other Futurist artists would write numerous manifestos on a number of artistic fields, seeking to experiment and combine their artworks in a variety of disciplines. Futurism was a self-designated movement that embraced all the arts, and at times utilized these in synthesis of the totality of their performances.

Marinetti had resided in Paris from 1893 to 1896, a period in which the cabarets of Montmartre were booming and French artists were actively painting them. He had been introduced to the cabarets and literary salons patronized by artists, writers and poets such as Alfred Jarry, Léon Dechamps, Remy de Gourmont and others who wrote for the literary magazine *La Plume*, acquainting Marinetti with free-verse poetry writing.¹⁴⁶ Jarry's *Ubu*

¹⁴³ Gordon, *Dada Performance*, 9.

¹⁴⁴ Marinetti, Filippo Tommaso. “The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism” in *Art in Theory 1900-2000*, ed. Charles Harrison et al. (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 146-49.

¹⁴⁵ Marinetti, “The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism”, 148.

¹⁴⁶ Goldberg, *Performance: Live Art 1909 to the Present*, 9.

Roi had left its mark on him, and two months after the *Manifesto* had been published, Marinetti staged his own play *Le Roi Bombance* in April 1909 at the same theater as where the original was performed. The resultant uproar in the audience on its premiere matched Jarry's, establishing a tradition for outrage and provocation in the public for succeeding Futurist performances.

As other artists began to take up the Futurist cause, especially Italians, they concurred in Marinetti's vision for a synthesis of the creative fields, handed down through the legacy of Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk*, and sought to eliminate its borders. Architecture, design, ceramics, art, textiles, clothing, opera, theater, drama, dance, and cinema, in short, all the creative disciplines could be drawn on in synthesis for a contemporary expression in Futurist works for the stage, even if there was a clear preference given to painting by the movement's members.¹⁴⁷ Where Wagner's goal was the enhancement of each creative element joined in union towards artistic excellence, Futurist synthesis instead sought to throw disparate creative elements together, heavily relying on a resulting chaos, in order to transition into something entirely new. Such was Futurism's *intermedial* effect. Nietzsche too played his part in the Futurist dogma, especially in its enthusiasm of war, which was seen as an expression of the destruction of the old order, of becoming, and in the transition of the new against the old.¹⁴⁸ Marinetti had confessed that *Le Roi Bombance* was heavily inspired by Nietzsche, in particular his writings on the will and *becoming*, providing Futurism with a theoretical foundation from which further Futurist aesthetic theories would be developed.¹⁴⁹

In Marinetti's *Manifesto on The Variety Theater*, originally written September 29, 1913 and printed in Italian and English newspapers that same year, he insisted that the variety form of theater is the perfect vehicle for Futurist performance. The program format of the Folies-Bergère, with short, set acts, was cited as a direct influence, being the only kind of theater that could amply educate the public in regards to politics, with Marinetti stating that a nude, symbolic dance there "was equivalent to at least three years' study of foreign affairs."¹⁵⁰ Marinetti extolled the variety format over traditional theater, that he relegated to the past and which should be obliterated.¹⁵¹ Variety, he claims, has no

¹⁴⁷ Greene, Vivian. "The Opera d'Arte Totale" in *Italian Futurism 1909-1944: Reconstructing the Universe*, ed. Vivian Greene (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2014), 211.

¹⁴⁸ Salaris, Claudia. "The Invention of the Programmatic Avant-Garde" in *Italian Futurism 1909-1944: Reconstructing the Universe*, ed. Vivian Greene (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2014), 23.

¹⁴⁹ Lista, Giovanni. "The Italian Sources of Futurism" in *Futurism*, ed. Didier Ottinger (Paris: Editions du Centre Pompidou, 2009), 50.

¹⁵⁰ Marinetti, Filippo Tommaso. "Futurism and the Theater: The Variety Theatre", trans. D. Nevile Lees, in *The Mask* 6 (1914): 190.

¹⁵¹ Marinetti's use of the term "variety theatre" is problematic. In his original Italian-language manifesto, he clearly confuses the terminology of the variety theater with cabaret, not realizing that there is a clear distinction between the two. A reading of the text reflects the structure of the cabaret more than its predecessor, variety or the music hall. Even though cabaret's birth in Paris can be dated to 1881, the term "cabaret" was not in common use in France until 1897 when the Cabaret des Quat'z Arts opened, one year after Marinetti left

tradition, “neither masters nor dogmas, and nourishes itself upon actuality.”¹⁵² It is the ultimate form of Futurist theatre. He especially praises its use of caricatures, a sense of the ridiculous, irony, and a heavy use of symbols. Cynicism, use of sarcasm and wit, and the intentional use of stupidity and the absurd come together using lighting, sounds, noise, language, and “the synthesis of all that which humanity has up till now refined in its own nerves so as to divert itself in laughing at material and moral suffering.”¹⁵³ Interaction with the audience in variety is preferred to a passive, voyeuristic one, and bickering by the performers with both the musicians and the public is admired. Variety “destroys the Solemn, the Sacred, the Serious, the Sublime of Art with a capital A. It collaborates in the Futurist destruction of the immortal masterpieces, plagiarizing them, parodying them.”¹⁵⁴ Marinetti praises the synthesis of thought as well as the inherent segments of variety: writers, performers, musicians, foreigners on the stage, music, lights, stage props, rhythms; the synthesis of speed and transformations that occur on the stage; electrical lighting as opposed to moonlight, and all the gaudy, shiny colors that are attendant to variety and cabaret performance. Further, variety refutes traditional use of time, space, perspective and proportion. All logic should be disregarded. This can only be done by the spectacle of variety theatre, and Marinetti makes the suggestion that performers might even insult and curse their audiences, apply glue on the theater seats to enrage them, or sell the same ticket seats to multiple parties to create a sense of chaos in the hall.

What Marinetti sought to create was the complete obliteration of logic and intellectual reflection in the audience. The traditional, illusionistic “fourth wall” of the theater was torn down, as was any sense of make-believe in the minds of the viewers.¹⁵⁵ Cabaret also destroys this fantasy by directly addressing the audience in the moment of the performance to elicit a response. It is in the immediate, heightened experience of the performance that both share, between the audience and the artists on the stage. Futurist performance takes this further, and seeks to create an “alogical” instantaneous incident.

that city. Prof. Alan Lareau, one of the recognized experts in the field of the history of cabaret, states that the word wasn't even in use until the 1920s in Italy. Marinetti's confusion is therefore understandable. The two forms of entertainment share many similarities, though the variety theater form is noted for a lack of political commentary, a preference for “light”, superficial entertainment, and the performance of popular songs, which is really the opposite of what Marinetti is praising, and indeed attacks in his *Manifesto*. By contrast, French cabaret often consisted political satire and ironic, often poignant, short songs of commentary on the day's social issues, which Marinetti refers to this in his text. He also cites the Folies-Bergère as being a specific influence, and praises the structure of its entertainment program, and that establishment was indeed a cabaret, and not a variety theater. I have also examined the original Italian text and two English translations. The earliest translation is in the London Daily Mail on November 21, 1913, and uses the term “Music Hall” instead of Variety Theater, though essentially they are the same. The translator for the January 1914 issue of the English arts journal *The Mask* includes “Music Halls, Café-chantants or equestrian circuses” which latter translations do not include, and in his notes he is also unsure about Marinetti's use of the term. Therefore, I ask the reader to understand Marinetti's use of “variety theatre” to in reality mean cabaret.

¹⁵² Marinetti, “Futurism and the Theater: The Variety Theatre”, 180.

¹⁵³ Marinetti, “Futurism and the Theater: The Variety Theatre”, 189.

¹⁵⁴ Marinetti, “Futurism and the Theater: The Variety Theatre”, 191.

¹⁵⁵ Kirby, Michael and Victoria Nes Kirby. *Futurist Performance* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1986), 20-21.

Intellectual elaboration is disdained, as spontaneous reaction is evoked, and traditional structures of language creating cognitive, logical meaning are abandoned – hence the term alogical.¹⁵⁶ The events and actions on the Futurist stage are self-sufficient; they need no experiential background in the viewer, since its target is the interaction, the *intermedial* result between the two. As such, the audience becomes part of the performance, and each is interdependent upon one another. The creation of chaos and the disbandment of logical understanding were enhanced by the simultaneity of events, that is, of further confusion by staging different occurrences at the same time. In all aspects of Futurist performance *Simultaneity* was sought as an aesthetic condition, in which improvisation and intuition took precedence over logical structures in order to capture the “confused fragments of interconnected events” of everyday life.¹⁵⁷ This was typified by Marinetti’s play *Simultaneity*, 1915, in which the performers on the stage appeared at the same time in three separate, though simultaneous acts, which only once converged. Such underlying tactics of bravado mixed with confusion would become a distinctive feature of Futurist performance, whether it was in dance, theater performances, poetry readings, or within the gallery space where Futurist paintings were hung. But paintings also occasionally joined in Futurist performances, carried onstage for no apparent reason, often becoming used as a shield against the barrage of rotten fruit and vegetables being hurled at the artists.¹⁵⁸

By 1915, Marinetti would revise his views on the variety theater in his manifesto *The Futurist Synthetic Theatre*, claiming that traditional theater created passivity, and the new Futurist theater would rally to war. Farce and vaudeville should be abolished, with:

“...the sketch, the comedy, the serious drama, and tragedy, and create in their place the many forms of Futurist Theatre, such as: lines written in free words, simultaneity, compenetration, the short, acted-out poem, the dramatized sensation, comic dialogue, the negative act, the reechoing line, the ‘extra-logical’ discussion, synthetic deformation, the scientific outburst that clears the air.”¹⁵⁹

Even though at times it seems as if Marinetti contradicts himself, this could be read as part of his alogical postulation. The variety theater, or cabaret, was a prime influence on the structure of Futurist performance, absorbing its constituents in a fervent, assertive synthesis of ideas, resulting in the mutual interfusion of Marinetti’s “compenetration” that emphasized the *intermedial* culmination that Futurist agency strove for.

¹⁵⁶ Kirby and Kirby, *Futurist Performance*, 21.

¹⁵⁷ Goldberg, *Performance: Live Art 1909 to the Present*, 20.

¹⁵⁸ Kirby and Kirby, *Futurist Performance*, 16.

¹⁵⁹ Marinetti, Filippo Tommaso, et al, “The Futurist Synthetic Theatre (1915)” in *Futurist Performance* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1986), 202.

The cabaret motif would appear in many Futurist painters' works, depicting settings of dancers, performers and musicians in characteristic Cubist-inspired fragmentation of planes and oblique angles, also in its use of Divisionist color schemes and shading techniques that evoked movement. For the Weimar artists, Otto Dix had his first encounter with Futurism in the summer of 1913 during a trip to Italy, becoming influenced by its use of Cubist fragmentation of form, which he utilized with Constructivist techniques applied to his works made during his brief Dada period.¹⁶⁰ Christian Schad had also explored the Futurist style, which can be seen in his prints that use lateral lines and shading in woodcut illustrations, which he had published in 1915 in the journal *Sirius*, and also as a portfolio of woodcut prints issued by the Sirius-Verlag that same year. These show dancers with a man in a top hat, another shows a cabaret or café orchestra with a customer seated at a table, and a portrait, all created by combining Futurist style in representation together with Expressionist compositional forms [figs. 28].¹⁶¹ During his residence in Zurich in 1916, he created five paintings predominately in black, white and grey tones in the Cubo-Futurist style. One of these was of the cabaret performer *Marietta* (1916) in which he added blue and red hues [fig. 29]. Marietta was a well-known cabaret performer also in exile in Switzerland. She had been praised by numerous poets of the day and was known for her monologues and singing in the *Simplicissimus* cabaret bar in Munich, meeting Schad and his friend Walter Serner at the Cabaret Bonboniere in Zurich.¹⁶² But perhaps of all three of the artists we are concerned with here, it is George Grosz who most took the techniques of Futurist painting and applied it to his own works, becoming first aware of their style while on a trip to Paris in 1915.¹⁶³ He had also visited Futurist exhibitions in Berlin as a young man. Futurist elements can be found throughout his paintings, lithographs and drawings from this time up to the late 1920s. Although he incorporated right angles, skewed planes of distortion and perspective, and the abstraction of movement in his works, he strongly opposed the underlying fascist idealism of many Futurist artists. For Dix, Grosz and Schad, Futurist art had indelibly made its mark, whether it was in the adaption of its techniques of style during transitional periods of their development, or in the appropriation of alogical simultaneity inspired by cabaret, and so favored by the Dadaists who followed.

Expressionism, ca. 1905-1925

¹⁶⁰ Elger. *Expressionism*, 216.

¹⁶¹ Ratzka, Thomas. *Christian Schad 1894-1982: Catalogue Raisonné, Vol. I: Paintings* (Cologne: Wienand Verlag, 2008), 351-52.

¹⁶² Ratzka, *Christian Schad 1894-1982: Catalogue Raisonné*, 16.

¹⁶³ Grosz, *A Little Yes and a Big No*, 118.

In 1909 a group of intellectuals and artist students gathered in Berlin, with poet Jakob van Hoddis and writer Kurt Hiller at the helm, and created the Der Neue Club as a meeting place for Expressionist writers interested in the arts. Having no fixed venue, they met at the Café Austria, in bookstores, rented halls and cafés. By 1910 they had realized that something had to be done about their dwindling audience. Though keeping the Der Neue Club's regular meetings for its core members, they also created a literary cabaret that would include *Kleinkunst* segments of recitations, readings of poems, talks by artists, and musical performances. It differed from the cabaret's focus on social topics by placing a greater emphasis on art.¹⁶⁴ Its members were not the bohemian types as were found in Paris. Klaus Mann noted that in Berlin, all the artists were too commercial to be considered bohemian but instead were "bourgeoisie, too smart to be outright Philistines."¹⁶⁵ These artistically inclined intellectuals coined the term *Neopathetisches* [Neopathos] and tagged the word "cabaret" onto it solely in the hopes of drawing a larger crowd to their evenings.¹⁶⁶ Thus was born the *Neopathetisches Cabaret*, inspired by Nietzsche's work *Ecce Homo*, in which he described an embracement of life's thorns:

"... affirmative pathos par excellence, which I call the tragic pathos.... Pain does *not* count as an objection to life: Have you no more happiness to give me, well then! *Still do you have your pain...Perhaps my music is also great at this point.*"¹⁶⁷

First published in 1908, Nietzsche's book had been the focus of an article by author Stefan Zweig (1881-1942) titled *Das Neue Pathos*, published the following year. He wrote of Nietzsche's "yes-saying pathos with his conception of tragic art and philosophy."¹⁶⁸ Zweig asserted Nietzsche's rejection of the nineteenth-century's false optimism and rationalism, together with its decadent pessimism based in a meaningless existence. This, Zweig stated, should instead be replaced by a new embracing of mankind's own tragic situation with joy and a self-affirming pathos.¹⁶⁹ Both Zweig's article and Nietzsche's book resonated deeply with Hiller, who cited them at the first evening of the Neopathetisches Cabaret and announced that this too, would be an instrument of the regeneration of mankind. And *Ecce Homo* was a prime motivator in its creation.¹⁷⁰

Beginning in June of 1910 and lasting only for nine performances, the Neopathetisches Cabaret drew a considerable audience of Expressionist artists and would

¹⁶⁴ Lareau, Alan. *The Wild Stage: Literary Cabarets of the Weimar Republic* (Columbia: Camden House, Inc., 1995), 11.

¹⁶⁵ Mann, *The Turning Point*, 80.

¹⁶⁶ Lareau. *The Wild Stage: Literary Cabarets of the Weimar Republic*, 10-11.

¹⁶⁷ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One Is*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1992), 70.

¹⁶⁸ Taylor, Seth. *Left-Wing Nietzscheans: The Politics of German Expressionism 1910-1920* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1990), 41.

¹⁶⁹ Zweig, Stefan. "Das neue Pathos" in *Das literarische Echo*, 15 September, 1901, 1703.

¹⁷⁰ Taylor, *Left-Wing Nietzscheans*, 41.

continue to be influential until its disbandment in 1912. The first two theme nights were titled *Von Rausch und Kunst* [From Noise and Art], in which passages of works by Nietzsche concerned with art and artists, sexuality and the Revaluation of Values were read aloud.¹⁷¹ Perhaps more importantly though, was that its cabaret evenings brought like-minded critics of Wilhelmenain culture into contact with one another, resulting in the creation of radical periodicals of literature, art and politics such as *Die Aktion* and *Der Sturm*.

Both journals had their origins in the combustive intellectual atmosphere of the Neopathetisches Cabaret evenings. Each featured artworks on its cover or as inside illustrations by such artists as Franz Marc, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Max Oppenheimer, Oskar Kokoschka, Georg Grosz and many others. *Die Aktion*, founded by Franz Pfemfert in 1911, focused on literature and leftist politics, though included writings on the arts as well as on Expressionism. Christian Schad contributed three woodcut prints for the June 1916 issue.¹⁷² He had briefly adapted the Expressionist style on the way to finding his own technique and was then greatly under the influence of Kokoschka.¹⁷³ This is reflected in the *Die Aktion* prints, one of which shows a café scene of a group of men, one in black tie and tuxedo, together with a woman leaning on a table, dressed in a gown [*fig.30*].

Der Sturm's first issue appeared on March 3, 1910 and lasted with varying regularity until 1932, overseen by its editor and publisher Herwarth Walden. Its content centered on Expressionist art and literature, theater, poetry, dance, architecture, as well as cabaret, revues of theatrical productions, operas and operettas, short dramatic works (including one by Kokoshka), and even entire printed music scores. Music plays a central role throughout the publication's existence, with numerous articles on art music and reviews on performances in variety and cabaret venues such as the Wintergarten and the Passagetheater. In the August 1910 issue, Kokoschka wrote a scathing review of the Wintergarten cabaret revue, gracing it with a drawing of an acrobatic act, sarcastically noting that:

“The 12 Sunshine Girls stood evoking praises for virginity... a contortion of sweet, soft arms and legs. Twelve chaste *Mädchenhosen* fluttering in the wind... the lisping, English euphony is a twelve-part song of praise for the conservation of virgins. I was the only one who bothered to hear them out.”¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ Taylor, *Left-Wing Nietzscheans*, 41-42.

¹⁷² Schad, Christian. “Three untitled woodcut print illustrations” in *Die Aktion* 6: 20/21 (1916): cover, 473 & 533.

¹⁷³ Ratzka, *Christian Schad 1894-1982: Catalogue Raisonné*, 12-13.

¹⁷⁴ Kokoschka, Oskar. “Wintergarten” in *Der Sturm* 26, trans. Tom Garretson (1910): 207.

Kokoschka's ties to cabaret continued in numerous issues with both his drawings and reviews. His cover artwork for *Der Sturm* in December of 1916 featured a drawing of the iconic cabaret singer Claire Waldoff (1884-1957), also praised by other reviewers in succeeding issues [**fig. 31**].¹⁷⁵ Throughout its publication, one can find numerous woodcut prints or drawings by Kokoschka, Kirchner, Nolde and others representing cabaret scenes of dance, drinkers at tables, or even depictions of *Tingeltangle* cabarets [**fig. 32 & 33**].¹⁷⁶ The October 1911 issue featured a lengthy cover review of the Café Größenwahn. Articles on Nietzsche also are given place of prominence, and the April 5, 1921 issue there even is a color midsection woodcut print by Lothar Schreyer, titled *Spielgang Kreuzigung, Blatt XLVI* [Game Crucifixion, Sheet XLVI] featuring the words "Gott ist tot," a reference to Nietzsche's paragraph in *The Gay Science* [**fig.34**]. Numerous announcements appear for both Der Neue Club and the Neopathisches Cabaret evenings that included music or jazz bands as well as cabarets can be found in the advertisement sections. After the disbandment of the cabaret due to a falling out in the Neue Club circle, Hiller responded by creating his own GNU Cabaret, with its first performance on November 2, 1911, advertised in *Der Sturm*. Advertises for variety schools training cabaret acts, for the Café Continental ("Grosses Künstler-Konzert"), for the Wintergarten, the Passagetheater, and others appear throughout the publication's run. Indeed, so many articles appear on jazz dancing, dance, music and cabaret performers written by artists often accompanying their own artworks in *Der Sturm* that one could arguably claim that what was attempted on the stage of the Neopathisches Cabaret in combining art, artists, literature, poetry, Nietzschean philosophy, dance and more, became realized in its editorial format. Even as the journal proceeded into the next decade past the concerns of Expressionism, it still maintained a kindred affection for the cabaret art form from which it sprung.

Expressionist artists after the turn of the nineteenth-century responded to an ever-expanding metropolitan landscape by capturing the essence of urban alienation and dehumanization, as forewarned by Nietzsche and elaborated on by Georg Simmel.¹⁷⁷ This was often represented in depictions of the cabarets, theaters, and cafés of Berlin and other German cities, and is found throughout Die Brücke and Blaue Reiter artist's works. Max Beckmann, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, and Max Pechstein were just some of the artists who captured the spectacle of cabaret and urban entertainment, using it to convey the isolation

¹⁷⁵ Kokoschka, Oskar. Cover illustration "Claire Waldoff" in *Der Sturm* 12 (1916): 97.

¹⁷⁶ Nolde, Emil. "Tingeltangel" in *Der Sturm* 56 (1911): Cover. In my research of reviewing 336 issues of *Der Sturm* from 1910 to 1932, I have found 78 separate issues that have cabaret related artwork, reviews, articles or advertisements throughout *Der Sturm*'s entire publication timespan. In contrast my research of *Das Kunstblatt* from 1917 to 1933 revealed not one article on cabaret. Clearly *Der Sturm* felt that cabaret was an essential element in their critical assessment of culture and used Expressionist artists to not only visually depict the cabaret environment, but to write on it as well.

¹⁷⁷ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 159, 160-61 & 164-65.

of the human condition. One artist in particular sought to address this dissociation affecting the arts itself, using Wagner and Nietzsche as inspiration, calling for the cross-pollination of forms and colors that was in essence an *intermedial* process. Though not directly linked with cabaret itself, nonetheless these aesthetic theories would come to have an important influence on other artists who combined cabaret with art making, and accordingly deserves our attention here.

The aesthetic theories of Russian-born artist Wassily Kandinsky's (1866-1944) influential treatise *Über das Geistige in der Kunst*, 1912 (*Concerning the Spiritual in Art*), would become one of Zurich Dada's underlying stimuli. Kandinsky's book outlines his call for a subjectively based expression in painting. In using all the creative arts such as music, literature and dance as a metaphor to describe color, he also sought a crossing of their artistic boundaries. A synthesis and unification of the arts, he claimed, would result in a new, unique artistic expression, not bound by the limitations of narrative art but instead become more emphatic in an emotional subjectivity displayed through abstraction. A synthetic or "monumental" art would be created by understanding the particular use of color's vibratory effects, heavily influenced by music, in which Kandinsky seems to describe the effects of chromesthesia. Such vibrations of musical performance could be applied to painting, in terms of an analogous use of color, each of which has a particular vibratory output that would influence the color next to it. It emphasized a correlation of art and music, inspired by music's abstract form, and called for the other arts to also influence the use of color.

Drawing on the *Gestamtkunstwerk* theories of Wagner, Kandinsky used Wagner's development of the *leitmotive* in music as a model for color theory.¹⁷⁸ As in Wagner's epic operas the use of the representative *leitmotive* changes the meaning and gives psychological depth and character through the context of its use, rhythmic pattern, intonation and length of its melodic structure, Kandinsky felt the same technique could be applied to give color added depth and emotional effect in its placement next to other colors, primacy of shape and form, composition, etc. The juxtaposition of colors on the canvas created either a discord or complimentary context, just as in music's use of dissonance and consonance for heightened expression. He devalued the use of language and narrative in art though did not discard its value outright. Use of the word, of text, "... fails to express [but] will not be unimportant but rather the very kernel of its existence.... words are, and will always remain, only hints, mere suggestions of colours."¹⁷⁹ A metaphor of the pyramid was used to

¹⁷⁸ Kandinsky, Wassily. *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*. Kindle edition. (New York: Dover Publications, 1977), 42.

¹⁷⁹ Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, 51.

describe the lone artist's struggle to lead the spiritual life of humanity forwards to a more monumental form of art, in which all the arts "encroach one upon another", resulting in a harmony of vibrations leading to a higher spiritual state.¹⁸⁰ This is comparative to Nietzsche's call to the philosopher of the future's process in overcoming both himself and his society by practicing a sublimated will to power in *Beyond Good and Evil*. In fact, Kandinsky refers to Nietzsche directly by citing the need to refocus an external emphasis to a more emotional, internal sphere in order to create a "spiritual revolution", similar to Nietzsche's ideal.¹⁸¹ The book's underlying theoretical platform is a mixture of Wagner and Nietzsche, and in reality calls for an *intermedial* structure of the arts to create a higher form of painting. It is the unification of all the arts in the service of painting. While Kandinsky does not refer to cabaret specifically, it echoes Bierbaum's own call for a conglomeration of the arts in the form of a higher, literary cabaret, and the work is essential for our understanding of the mentality of the era's artistic thought. Certainly, it was a impelling force on Hugo Ball's (1886-1927) creation of the Cabaret Voltaire and Dada in its mixing of the performative elements of cabaret with the visual arts, in the aim of creating a cabaret that emphasized artistic quality and visionary creativity.¹⁸²

Also in 1912, Kandinsky together with artist Franz Marc (1880-1916) published *Der Blaue Reiter Almanach*. The almanac is remarkable in its departure from a Euro-centric focus on art to encompass African, Asian, primitive, folk, Inuit, and other art from a variety of cultures, mixing different historical epochs for comparative depth, such as in juxtaposing a woodcarving by Paul Gauguin against an ancient Greek stone carving relief [**fig. 35**].¹⁸³ Music received special attention, in written articles on the anarchic elements of music, one on the music of Alexander Scriabin, and an article by composer and artist Arnold Schönberg. Kandinsky makes comparisons of art to music, paraphrasing *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* and again citing Wagner's influence in the use of "individual parts organically combining and creating a monumental work."¹⁸⁴ Musical scores by Alban Berg and Anton Webern are printed in entirety alongside articles on art, masks, text in music, and on page six of the almanac we even find an etching by Kirschner, of a cabaret scene of four dancing girls on a stage, illustrating an article by Marc [**fig. 36**].

Both *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* and *Der Blaue Reiter Almanach* conveyed a progression towards synthesizing diverse cultural influences and forms into a convergence

¹⁸⁰ Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, 32.

¹⁸¹ Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, 25.

¹⁸² Dickerman, Leah. "Zurich" in *Dada* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 2006), 23-24.

¹⁸³ Gauguin, Paul, "Holzrelief" and Anonymous, "Antikes Relief" in *Der Blaue Reiter*, ed. Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc (München: R. Piper & Co. Verlag, 1914), 62-63.

¹⁸⁴ Kandinsky, Wassily and Franz Marc, *Der Blaue Reiter*, (München: R. Piper & Co. Verlag, 1914), 108.

of a new style. In particular, Kandinsky stressed the need not to “ape ineptitude in technique” of Primitivism in exchange for a simplicity of vision, seeing it only as a transitional style towards abstraction.¹⁸⁵ This preference of Expressionist Primitivism also came under fire by other artists. Max Beckmann wrote in 1912 in the journal *Pan* in an exchange of articles with Marc, that there was too much dependence on a form that intrinsically was not part of their own historical culture.¹⁸⁶ Other artists such as Ludwig Meidner supported this view, citing the need to turn away from the pseudo-naivety of primitivism and the influence of art of the Middle Ages. This coincided with the Futurists, who called for a focus on contemporaneity, especially in the form of metropolitan dynamism and the variety theater. In answer to this, Kirchner painted numerous urban street scenes, mask-faced prostitutes, and cabaret dancers, after moving to Berlin in 1911. His cabaret motifs display the latent sexual tension of the *Tingeltangel* where dancers often performed in sexually suggestive moves, in images that he returned to again and again, even up into the 1930s.¹⁸⁷ August Macke also sought to interpret a concept of the primitive expressed in the more modern setting of the cabaret, which in one work he compared the “butterfly-colored dancer’s” charms as equal to the music being played on the organ in a gothic cathedral.¹⁸⁸ Emil Nolde too explored Berlin’s nightlife in a vast variety of artworks, painting 17 works in the winter of 1910/11 that reflected the theme of the cabaret, in addition to over 300 watercolors, brush-drawings, lithographs, drawings and etchings on the same.¹⁸⁹ He and his wife Ada would explore the glitzy cabarets of Berlin dressed in their best evening clothes, drawing its patrons and noting that:

“... wan as powder, and the odor of corpses, impotent asphalt lions and hectic ladies of the demi-monde in their elegant rakish robes, worn as if by queens... into the tobacco haze of the early-morning... where newcomers from the provinces, sitting harmlessly with street-girls, were half falling asleep, woozy with bubbly as they were. I drew and drew... All around there was much to stimulate the eyes.”¹⁹⁰

Like Kirchner and Macke, Nolde too moved from portraying scenes of savage exoticism to include scenes of exoticism found in more contemporary subject matter. Even if it only hinted at Kandinsky’s subjective abstraction, Expressionism’s brilliant colors and jagged lines were the perfect formal response to convey the vibrancy and kinetic energy of the cabarets. Expressionism’s inner subjectivity was beginning its transition towards the New Objectivity of the following decade, as scenes of Negro dancers, trapeze acts, chorus girls

¹⁸⁵ Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, 6.

¹⁸⁶ Lloyd, Jill. *German Expressionism: Primitivism and Modernity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 85.

¹⁸⁷ Krämer, Felix. *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner Retrospective* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2010), 250.

¹⁸⁸ Macke, August. “Die Masken” in *Der Blaue Reiter*, edited by Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc (München: R. Piper & Co. Verlag, 1914): 24.

¹⁸⁹ Reuther, Manfred, et al. *Nolde in Berlin: Tanz Theater Cabaret* (Köln: Dumont Buchverlag, 2007), 25.

¹⁹⁰ Reuther, *Nolde in Berlin: Tanz Theater Cabaret*, 33.

and dancing couples, came to replace the fascination with the primitive in exchange for the urban exoticism of the cabaret.¹⁹¹ And it was in the context of cabaret itself, that Kandinsky's aesthetic theories would come to be further explored.

Zurich Dada, 1916-1919

Before his inception of Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich, Hugo Ball had written for *Die Aktion* and *Der Sturm* and worked as a literary adviser for radical theater groups while living in Munich. His unfinished dissertation was on the topic of the renewal of German thought in the writings of Nietzsche, whom Ball became so enamored with that he passionately applied the philosopher's tenets to his own life.¹⁹² After a short period in Berlin studying at Max Reinhardt's drama school, he returned to Munich in September of 1912, meeting Richard Huelsenbeck (1892-1974), who would come to have such an integral part in Zurich and Berlin Dada.¹⁹³ The following year Ball met his future wife Emmy Hennings (1885-1948), a seasoned cabaret performer with a notorious reputation. But it was perhaps most importantly it was his befriending of Kandinsky in 1912, whom he held in the highest esteem, after reading his works on the regeneration of the spirit through art and *Gesamtkunswerk*.¹⁹⁴

In 1913, Ball had visited a Futurist exhibition in Dresden, becoming impressed enough to later create a few proto-Dada evenings with Huelsenbeck in Berlin during November of 1914. In May of 1915, Ball and Hennings relocated to Zurich, in order to avoid Ball's conscription into the military after misguided attempts to enlist had left him disillusioned by the harsh reality of war. There the two attempted to make a meager living touring Swiss cabarets and variety venues with Hennings singing and Ball performing on the piano.¹⁹⁵ After a number of menial jobs, Ball acquired work as a pianist and playwright for the Maxim Ensemble, a vaudeville group that toured Switzerland and which educated Ball on the nuances of variety entertainment.¹⁹⁶ In January 1916, Ball discovered the Meierei Inn located in the center of Zurich, and convinced the owner to allow him to use the establishment as an avant-garde cabaret nightclub under the name of Cabaret Voltaire. Like Wolzogen before him, Ball sent out the call for artists, poets, writers, performers and anyone who was actively creative to join in contributing acts on its stage. Initially four

¹⁹¹ Lloyd, *German Expressionism: Primitivism and Modernity*, 95.

¹⁹² Elderfield, John. "Introduction" in *Flight Out of Time: A Dada Diary by Hugo Ball*. Edited by John Elderfield. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), xvi.

¹⁹³ Dickerman, *Dada*, 20.

¹⁹⁴ Elderfield, *Flight Out of Time*, xviii.

¹⁹⁵ Gordon, *Dada Performance*, 12.

¹⁹⁶ Dickerman, *Dada*, 21.

artists answered, Tristan Tzara, Marcel Janco and his brother George, and Hans Arp, all war émigrés and who would eventually band together to form the inner core of the first Dada movement. Marcel Slodki designed the poster advertising the “Künstlerkneipe Voltaire, every evening except Fridays. Music, lectures and recitations.”¹⁹⁷ Ball wrote in his diary of his press release on February 2, 1916:

“Cabaret Voltaire. Under this name a group of young artists and writers has been formed whose aim is to create a center for artistic entertainment. The idea of the cabaret will be that guest artists will come and give musical performances and readings at the daily meetings. The young artists of Zurich, whatever their orientation, are invited to [make] suggestions and contributions of all kinds.”¹⁹⁸

On the night of February 5, 1916, the first cabaret performance of artists opened and was a resounding success, with notices in the *Züricher Post* the next day applauding Emmy Henning’s unique presence as a cabaret singer.¹⁹⁹ Ball’s recollections written three months later tell of there also being a “Madame Leconte” who sang French and Danish chansons with Hennings; Tristan Tzara recited Rumanian verses; a balalaika orchestra performed Russian folk songs and dances; and a “Russian and French Soirée” with classic works were read by Apollinaire, Max Jacob, André Salmon, Rimbaud and others.²⁰⁰ Poems written by Kandinsky and Frank Wedekind were recited and Jean Arp read passages from *Ubu roi*. The songs performed were either established cabaret numbers full of satire and political overtones or songs written by Hennings and Ball. The entire program of the evening would not have been out of place in a *Tingeltangel* or a literary cabaret in Berlin.

What made this cabaret’s opening night usual was in its use of art works hung on its walls. Paintings by Pablo Picasso, Marcel Slodki, August Macke, Amedeo Modigliani, Jean Arp, Marcel Janco and others were as visually important as the acts upon the small stage. The majority of its art emphasized abstraction in collage, drawings and in painting. “The image of the human form is gradually disappearing from the painting of these times and all objects appear only as fragments. . . . The next step is for poetry to decide to do away with language for similar reasons. These are things that have probably never happened before,” Ball wrote in his diary.²⁰¹ The influence of Kandinsky is evident. And like the artworks that hanged on Cabaret Voltaire’s walls, the poetry of narrative text became increasingly abstract, transforming language into new use of the word and alphabet, uttered in declamatory eruptions, all performed by poets and artists. Inspired by the Futurists’ use of

¹⁹⁷ Slodki, Marcel. “Künstlerkneipe Voltaire” poster in *Dada*, ed. Leah Dickerman (Washington, National Gallery of Art, 2006), 22.

¹⁹⁸ Ball, Hugo. *Flight Out of Time: A Dada Diary by Hugo Ball*. Edited by John Elderfield. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 50.

¹⁹⁹ Ball, *Flight Out of Time*, 63.

²⁰⁰ Ball, Hugo. “Introduction” in *Cabaret Voltaire* (Zurich: Hans Hack, 1916), 5.

²⁰¹ Ball, *Flight Out of Time*, 55.

Simultaneity, the “simultaneous poem” *L’amiral cherche une maison à louer* (*The Admiral Seeks a House to Rent*) was read aloud by Huelsenbeck, Marcel Janco and Tzara, in an alogical work interjected with linguistic sounds.²⁰²

“Our attempt to entertain the audience with artistic things forces us in an exciting and instructive way to be incessantly lively, new, and naïve. It is a race with the expectations of the audience, and this race calls on all our forces of invention and debate,” Ball wrote in his diary the following month.²⁰³ It read almost like a statement by a Marinetti, but with much less antagonism. Ball also was concerned of losing control of the audience and the actions onstage, noting the high level of intoxication amongst all concerned. The interaction between the performers and audience began to create an almost maddening, hysterical atmosphere, in which the artists were challenged to create spontaneously and to outdo themselves, gladly tearing down the established boundaries of their art forms. As audience participation was encouraged, they also found themselves in danger of being trampled as well. The audience’s aggressive response created new challenges for the artists onstage that answered them, and as Ball writes noting their response, “... threatens and soothes at the same time ... the threat produces a defense.”²⁰⁴

Ball’s diaries refer throughout to the theories of Kandinsky, Wagner and Nietzsche, showing the three as motivating forces besides the influence of Futurism. Ball’s lecture at the Gallerie Dada in Zurich on April 7, 1917 titled *Kandinsky*, specifically paraphrases several of that artist’s earlier theoretical passages from *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* at length, as well as in citing Nietzsche’s infamous “God is Dead.”²⁰⁵ Ball proclaimed that the transvaluation of values had occurred, praised Kandinsky’s rejection of the figurative and the return to pure form, compared Wagner’s theories to Kandinsky’s in the context of theater, and faulted *Gesamtkunswerk* in its “externalization of each of the arts” that serves only to “intensify, emphasize, and reinforce expression, while contradicting the intrinsic laws of the arts involved.”²⁰⁶ Kandinsky, he noted, envisioned a more basic approach, allowing for each individual art form to remain pure and separate (in contrast to Wagner’s blending each artistic element into one complete whole), yet still influencing each other. Ball also stressed the use of Kandinsky’s “vibratory color” and the juxtaposition of colors to achieve new harmonies in painting. Ball’s lecture showed just how strongly Kandinsky’s influence on him took hold, and of how these theories filtered into Cabaret Voltaire’s use of

²⁰² Huelsenbeck, Richard, Marcel Janco and Tristan Tzara. “L’amiral cherche une maison à louer” in *Cabaret Voltaire* (Zurich: Hans Hack, 1916), 6-7.

²⁰³ Ball, *Flight Out of Time*, 54.

²⁰⁴ Ball, *Flight Out of Time*, 54.

²⁰⁵ Ball, Hugo. “Kandinsky” in *Flight Out of Time: A Dada Diary by Hugo Ball* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 223.

²⁰⁶ Ball, *Flight Out of Time*, 233.

abstraction both in performance, its text and in its artworks. Added with Nietzsche and Wagner's aesthetic theories, and Futurism's simultaneity and bombastic performance, combined with the programmatic structure of cabaret, all of these influential factors would converge into an *intermedial* expression giving birth to Dada as a movement itself.

After the Cabaret Voltaire closed its doors in early July 1916, Dada continued to utilize cabaret performance structure in its own soirees presented in art galleries such as in the First Dada Exhibition at the Galerie Corray. Throughout successive nights, the Dada artists performed readings, poetry, sang songs, displayed puppet shows and dances, together with exhibiting collages, paintings and sculptures. As other artists joined the Dada circle, the movement began to spread abroad, extending to Berlin, Hannover, Cologne, New York, and Amsterdam, and to other cities, retaining their cabaret elements in varying degrees. For the artists we are concerned with, it is Christian Schad who was most directly affected by the presence of Zurich Dada, however briefly this would last.

In the winter of 1918 Schad had moved to Geneva, and shared an apartment with his friend writer Walter Serner, who had recently embraced Dada. Serner influenced Schad's explorations of Dada, suggesting that he create collages and compositions from scraps of paper and textiles. Schad also incorporated textual elements derived from Dada in his Schadograph works. He had also attended the First Dadaist World Congress in Geneva in 1919, voting to exchange the word "painter" for the exclamation "Oho!", and the word "pictures" to be replaced by the snapping of fingers.²⁰⁷ Schad's paintings retained the influence of Futurist-Cubist and Expressionist styles, though his woodcuts showed a new venture into abstraction.²⁰⁸ In 1920, he also created numerous works of constructive collages, using wood, decorative tacks, found objects and oil, and also designed the poster for the *Grand Bal Dada* [Great Dada Ball] in Geneva [**fig. 37**]. Schad's brief foray into the Dada style offered him a way to cast off the more subjective approach of Expressionism, and to cleanse his stylistic palette in order to explore other forms of creativity. However, upon returning home to Munich before his trip to Naples, Schad destroyed most of his Dada works, in response to the apathy of a nation in crises, causing him to realize that "the Dadaist typewriter pictures I made in my parents' flat struck me as so absurd and truly irrational that I tore them up shortly thereafter."²⁰⁹ After moving to Naples in 1920, he would reject Dada altogether. Italy provided him with a rediscovery of Italian Renaissance classicism in painting and the style of Magic Realism in the Italian Realist painters. For

²⁰⁷ Peters, Olaf. "A Voluntary International Madman: Christian Schad and the Avant-Garde 1915-20" in *Christian Schad and the Neue Sachlichkeit*, edited by Jill Lloyd and Michael Peppiatt (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2003), 32.

²⁰⁸ Ratzka, *Christian Schad 1894-1982: Catalogue Raisonné*, 128.

²⁰⁹ Ratzka, *Christian Schad 1894-1982: Catalogue Raisonné*, 22.

Schad, Dada was a process of transition in finding his own fundamental style, something he would display with aplomb in the 1920s.

Berlin Dada, 1918-1923

Twenty-four-year-old Richard Huelsenbeck returned to Berlin from Zurich in the beginning of 1917, bringing with him the influence of the Cabaret Voltaire and Dada and exposing its ideas to artists John Heartfield, Weiland Herzfelde, George Grosz, Raoul Hausmann, Hannah Höch, Johannes Baader, Otto Schmalhausen and others. These artists quickly responded to Zurich Dada's sense of confrontational art making but also infused it with a characteristic ideology of their own. If Zurich Dada had been a reaction to the madness of the First World War created by a collective of exiled artists centered on the framework of cabaret, then Berlin Dada instead functioned more as group of individuals brought together by mutual artistic interests and political ideals. Its style displayed an aggressive exhibitionism that did not start within the environment of the cabaret, but instead progressed actively towards it.

In Berlin Dada's twelve public performances and readings between the 12th of April 1918 and March 1920, the group proclaimed an antagonistic stance against politicians, the war, bourgeois mentality and values, the legacy of Expressionism, art and the concept of genius in artists.²¹⁰ Society, and in particular Weimar Berlin and the republic's incompetent politicians, were attacked with a disregard of logic, meaning, and narrative in Dada art works. The group professed to not being political, although in reality their individual members sided heavily with Marxist theory (especially Grosz and Herzfelde), and there is an undercurrent of political commentary found in many of their collage and photomontage works – as well as a sense of ridiculousness and humor. Where Zurich Dada had not called for revolution but instead drew attention to the world's insanity by engaging its public into a confrontational reaction, Berlin Dada threw the perceived madness of Germany back into its citizen's faces, provoking and creating outrage, which at times led to the arrest of its members or even violence from their audience. Berlin Dada wanted revolution that went further than the Weimar Republic and its daily battles in the streets, into the very structures of society itself.²¹¹

Taking up the reigns from Zurich Dada also meant that the Berlin Dadaists needed to excel in their creative efforts and add something unique to the Dada canon. "Like all newborn movements we were convinced that the world began anew in us; but in fact we

²¹⁰ Richter, Hans. *Dada Art and Anti-Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, Ltd., 2014), 129.

²¹¹ Richter, *Dada Art and Anti-Art*, 101.

had swallowed Futurism – bones, feathers and all. It is true that in the process of digestion all sorts of bones and feathers had been regurgitated.”²¹² Hans Richter’s statement in regards to the underlying motivations of Berlin Dada reflect the significance of Futurism’s importance to the movement, but does not take into account the reality of the individual, creative brilliance added by each of its members. Photomontage, of ambiguous origins hotly debated even today, was first created by the Berlin Dadaists and developed by its members, especially in works by Höch, Heartfield, Grosz and Hausmann.²¹³ By cutting out photographs and text from newspaper clippings, photographs, or magazines, the artists assembled different parts to create works that also are in essence *intermedial*. Disparate visual elements were combined to create something entirely new, different than their original meanings. Many of these are infused with a subtle political message and others are more direct. And in all of this, the photomontages, collages, sculptures, drawings and paintings of the Berlin Dada group show a preference of the figurative in their works even when combined with abstract motifs, leaving the more progressive abstraction of Zurich Dada at the wayside.

Huelsenbeck gave his inaugural *Erste Dada-Rede in Deutschland* [First Dada Speech in Germany] on the 22nd of January 1918, lecturing and reading from his book of poetry, *Phantastische Gebete* [Fantastic Prayers], at a literary evening held at the I. B. Neumann gallery. Joined by the poet and critics Max Herrmann-Neisse and Theodor Däubler, it would have been a polite literary gathering with attendant audience had it not been for George Grosz reciting a poem with abusive text hurled at the audience: “You sons-of-bitches, materialists/bread-eaters, flesh = eaters = vegetarians!! /professors, butchers’ apprentices, pimps! / you bums!”²¹⁴ At the same time, Huelsenbeck waved his cane dangerously towards the audience, not caring whom or what he struck, loudly declaring that the war had not been bloody enough. An offended war veteran with a wooden leg angrily objected and departed, the horrified audience loudly protested, and the evening ended when the gallery owner threatened to close and call the police. The next day the newspapers reported the scandal, and like the Futurists before them, it set the tone for successive Berlin Dada performances. What seemingly had started as a rather conventional literary gathering became instead an impromptu artist’s cabaret.

²¹² Richter, *Dada Art and Anti-Art*, 33.

²¹³ There is little agreement by both the artists themselves or by art historians writing today as to whom exactly first originated the photomontage cut-up technique, though the argument primarily centers on Raoul Hausmann against George Grosz and John Heartfield. Hans Richter is unsure and states that there had always been a conflict between photomontage’s true creators, and each of the parties insist that they are the originators. I have chosen not to add to this argument here in my thesis as this has no direct connection with cabaret’s influence.

²¹⁴ Goldberg, *Performance: Live Art 1909 to the Present*, 43.

In the following weeks the Club Dada was created, a gathering for Dada artists to stage performances and spontaneous art works which would occur in galleries, theaters, exhibition spaces and the streets. Dada performance centered on provocation and shock, and its members often belligerently insulted their audiences to get a reaction, who responded with both amusement and hostility. More often than not, the artists were considerably inebriated before performing, which only added to their aggressive stance. Fights were constantly breaking out and the police often had to be present, as they pursued a nihilistic program that mocked both the audience and themselves.²¹⁵ Zurich Dada had welcomed the audience in its performances, but the Berlin Dadaists attacked theirs. Sometimes they wore masks and dressed in outlandish costumes, danced absurdly, and wore theatrical make-up, as if mimicking acts of a cabaret or referencing their Zurich originators.²¹⁶ At the Berlin Sezession on April 12, 1918, the Dadaists presented an evening of poetry readings, lectures and performances by Hausmann, Franz Jung, Gerhard Preiss and Grosz. There Huelsenbeck attacked Expressionism, performed noisily on a rattle and toy trumpet accompanying Else Hadwiger's reading of Marinetti's war poems, and then shouted a treatise on new materials in art to the audience. A drunken Grosz quickly read his poems and danced a self-made, jazz-influenced shimmy he called *Sincopations*, before urinating on one of Lovis Corinth's paintings that hung on the gallery walls.²¹⁷ The management reacted by turning off the lights and the next day Huelsenbeck went into temporary hiding. The Berlin newspapers reported the scandal the next day, especially noting also the tedium of Huelsenbeck's one and a half-hour reading.²¹⁸

The Berlin Dadaist came to understand and avoid the chief cardinal sin of public performance: don't bore your audience. Lengthy readings were soon exchanged for shorter, more brutally performed pieces, in spontaneous "happenings" of art making that allowed for chance and chaos to contribute to its style. Music was included in a "musical war guillotine" brutalist concert titled *Antisymphony*.²¹⁹ Short pieces in the style of *Kleinkunst* was presented, such as the *Contest Between the Sewing Machine and a Typewriter* performed by two women led by Grosz firing a start pistol, and readings of phonetic poems added to the atmosphere of a cabaret stage spectacle. And similar to advertisements for cabarets, posters for Dada events were plastered up around Berlin, with Dada slogans such

²¹⁵ Grosz, *A Little Yes and a Big No*, 182.

²¹⁶ Biro, Matthew. *The Dada Cyborg: Visions of the New Human in Weimar Berlin* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 50.

²¹⁷ Doherty, Brigid. "Berlin Dada" in *Dada*, edited by Leah Dickerman (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 2006), 88.

²¹⁸ Doherty, "Berlin Dada", 87.

²¹⁹ Biro, *The Dada Cyborg*, 50.

as “Dada kicks you in the behind and you like it!”²²⁰ Dada tours featuring Hausmann, Huelsenbeck, Grosz and Baader were conducted as a kind of traveling cabaret, visiting Dresden, Hamburg, Leipzig and Czechoslovakia, often provoking audiences horrified by their antics (Hausmann threw lit firecrackers into the audience), until at times they were chased out of the theaters.²²¹ The street also became their stage. When the group sold copies of their publication *Jedermann sein eigener Fussball*, they had a rented band performing on an open-topped bus, traversing the city with antics mimicking Karl Liebknecht’s (a socialist who had been murdered by the Freikorps, together with Rosa Luxemburg and others) funeral procession before finally being apprehended by the police.²²² Grosz could also be seen dressed in a large skull mask, black trench coat and gloves, and white cane, parading as Dada Death up and down the Kurfürstendamm and scaring shoppers in front of the Kaufhaus des Westens department store [**fig. 38**]. Clearly, theatricality and performance was a huge part of Dada’s maneuvers to attract the public to their artmaking.

Huelsenbeck’s description of a typical Dada cabaret performance is part religious ritual, part absurdist play, and reads almost like a passage from *Ubu Roi* or *Impressions of Africa*: A woman audience member is indignant, a man is laughing so hard he cries; Johannes Baader is both madman and “Dionysian dullard”; Hausmann shouts, “From the Eternal One we come to the pigs! Hopsassa!” Propaganda Marshal Grosz bangs on a drum followed by Dada Minister of Commerce Heartfield, all in an endless procession with rattles and trumpets, with slogans shouted out such as “Dada is the Cabaret of the world, just as the world is Cabaret Dada!”²²³

As the Dada events received more publicity in the press, it was little wonder that cabaret directors would also take interest in their peculiar performance style and seek to incorporate its elements into their own productions. In December of 1919, producer and director Max Reinhardt reassembled his Schall und Rauch cabaret now relocated in the basement of the Das Grosse Schauspielhaus, and approached Dadaist Walter Mehring to write songs for his shows.²²⁴ Mehring wrote the pastiche titled *Simply Classical—an Oresteia with a Happy Ending (Einfach Klassisch!)*, staged with puppets designed by Grosz and made by Heartfield and Waldemar Hecker that parodied Aeschylus’s tragedy by comparing it to the events which led up the creation of the Weimar Republic [**fig. 39**]. Off-

²²⁰ Goldberg, *Performance: Live Art 1909 to the Present*, 43.

²²¹ Richter, *Dada Art and Anti-Art*, 128.

²²² White, Michael. *Generation Dada: The Berlin Avant-Garde and the First World War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 100.

²²³ Huelsenbeck, Richard. “Ein Besuch im Cabaret Dada”, *Der Dada* 3 (1920): 9.

²²⁴ Biro, *The Dada Cyborg*, 51.

handedly it also referred to Nietzsche's praise of Aeschylus's use of the tragic hero, in recreating the form of Greek tragedy. Mehring's play also places two separate time periods against each other in an *intermedial* device to create a new understanding of the audience's own. This was presented in the second half of the cabaret's line-up. The cabaret's printed program features cover artwork and a drawings by Grosz and Heartfield, a photomontage of one of the puppets, a monologue passage from the *Oresteia* by Mehring, and a short, absurdist text by Huelsenbeck titled *Gespräch über den Hut (Talking about the Hat)*, introduced as "written apparently five minutes before the outbreak of DADISIMUS."²²⁵

The three very short acts of the *Oresteia* contain headings of "Agamemnon in the Bath", "The Dawn of Democracy", and "The Classic Flight from Taxation", and the text of the play keeps the disjointed, fragmented tradition of Dada linguistic structures inherited from *Ubu Roi*, satirizing the audience, the artists, and even Rheinhardt himself.²²⁶ The text juxtaposes meanings in quick changes of logic and thought, such as modernity versus classicism, creating a sense of hysterical chaos and hilarity with ironic references to cultural, social and contemporary conditions.²²⁷ Both a film projector and a phonograph playing popular melodies were used onstage, and the ending featured a brass band playing *March of the Toreador* from Bizet's opera *Carmen*. It was an absurdist Dada spectacle set to music written by the iconic cabaret composer Friedrich Hollander, thus firmly joining Dada art making with one of cabaret's most prominent fixtures. Hollander's music is featured throughout the cabaret's program, also in other acts with cabaret stalwarts Paul Graetz, Blandine Ebinger and Klabund, the pseudonym for the German writer Alfred Henschke (who incidentally also participated in the Zurich Cabaret Voltaire).²²⁸ The program booklet displays the use of Dadaist letter layout design in one of the reproduced song texts by Theobald Tiger (alias Kurt Tucholsky), in which letter typefaces are exchanged and shown in varying sizes, very much like a printed Dada poem.

The collaboration between the Dada artists and the Schall und Rauch cabaret did not stop there. For all of 1920's cabaret performances at Schall und Rauch, Heartfield, Grosz and Mehring were heavily involved. This included responsibility the typographical design and editing, and even included a short article by Weiland Herzfelde. There are so many direct contributions to Schall und Rauch's cabaret and programs from the Berlin Dada

²²⁵ Huelsenbeck, Richard. "Gespräch über den Hut" in *Schall und Rauch Heft 1, December 1919*, edited by Heinz Herald (Berlin: Gebr. Feyl, 1919), 8.

²²⁶ Mehring, Walter. "Simply Classical! An Orestia with a Happy Ending" in *Dada Performance*, edited by Mel Gordon (New York: PAJ Publications, 1987), 66-79.

²²⁷ Lareau, *The Wild Stage*, 33.

²²⁸ Lareau, *The Wild Stage*, 24.

artists that a comprehensive overview would take up too much space.²²⁹ Most notable of these are Raoul Hausmann's *Kabarett zum Menschen* (*Cabaret for the People*), an introduction to the February 1920 issue, where he states that cabaret is a mirror of culture, the three-minutes on stage acting as a reflection of society in a cage:

“What is the human? ... I mean, the human being is no better than a puppet that is played in the milieu of the atmosphere of which man creates himself. ...and that's cabaret's function as a larger pocket mirror. Everything is reflected in it – it very well could mechanically represent the concept of man in a cabaret number.”²³⁰

In this same issue Grosz has drawn the cover artwork and inside, two Negro dancers and a pianist, titled *Niggertanz* [**fig. 40**]. Mehring provides instructions on how to behave during a cabaret visit (“don't spit on the floor!”), with textual design by Hausmann, who also contributed a Dada-styled article titled *Percival and Klytemnæstra* (again referencing Nietzsche's preference for Greek Tragedy, combining it with a medieval legend).²³¹ The pinnacle of the Berlin Dadaists' direct involvement with cabaret occurs in May 1920, when the Schall und Rauch cabaret devoted an entire program booklet to Berlin Dada, yet strangely the actual acts on stage are traditional chanson singers, violin pieces, dancers, an Expressionist lecture, and in the last act Paul Graetz performed a work by Theobald Tiger set to music by Friedrich Hollaender [**fig. 41**]. The *conferancier* for the evening held the pieces together, yet one can only imagine how Dada may have interacted with the events on the stage. Reprinted articles from *Der Dada* appear, and texts by Huelsenbeck, Hausmann, Mehring, Francis Picabia (*Manifeste Cannibale Dada*), and Herzfelde. Works by Grosz and Heartfield are reproduced, as is the figure of the *Jedermann sein eigener Fussball* with the text written under it, “Der Dadaist WEILAND HERZFELDE, Kurfürstendamm 76.”²³² The cover is a photomontage by Hausmann who also has an additional drawing inside, and its contents include a photo of a Grosz and Heartfield puppet, reproductions of Grosz's paintings, and a photo of Hausmann flexing his naked back to the camera. The entire layout is done in pure Dada style using type setting placed vertically, horizontally, and upside-down and sideways, with some elements framed in boxes, and an interchanging use of typefaces and sizes [**figs. 42**]. Advertisements appear in the mid-section for *Gott mit uns*, an

²²⁹ Indeed, I have not found in any other sources of research literature that mentions the incredible amount of involvement the Dada artists had with the Schall und Rauch cabaret. The *Oresteia* cabaret production of course is commonly referenced, but I can find no other art historian that has noticed the immense amount of involvement the two parties have had with each other. In my research at the Akademie der Kunst, I have found that the Schall und Rauch cabaret programs (“heft”) reveal from December 1919 and throughout all of 1920, the Dada artists were extensively engaged both in its cabaret and in the creation of the program booklets.

²³⁰ Hausmann, Raoul. “Kabarett zum Menschen” in *Schall und Rauch Heft 3, Februar 1920*, trans. Tom Garretson (Berlin: Gebr. Feyl, 1920): 1-2.

²³¹ Mehring, Walter. “Anleitung für Kabarettbesucher” in *Schall und Rauch Heft 4, März 1920*, trans. Tom Garretson (Berlin: Gebr. Feyl, 1920), 1-2.

²³² Hausmann, Raoul, et al, *Schall und Rauch DADA-Heft 6, Mai 1920*, ed. Heinz Herald (Berlin: Otto Hellwig, 1920), 24.

edition of prints by Grosz, and for Huelsenbeck's *Phantastische Gebete* and *Deutschland muß untergehen* (*Germany Must Perish*), printed by the Malik-Verlag and available in paperback form in the lobby of the cabaret. It appeared that art and cabaret no longer were strange bedfellows, but actually engaged in mutual business.

Walter Mehring's texts abound in Schall und Rauch's programs. "The Cabaret ... the historic hotbed of all reproductive arts! ... The artistic Cabaret, grown on an old, most reputable cultural foundation, there has always been, and will always continue as long as the audience wants Art!"²³³ Mehring surpassed even Grosz's earlier involvement in cabaret as a performer, providing cabaret text throughout the 1920s. While still an active Dadaist, he wrote extensively for other cabarets such as Rosa Valetti's Café Grössenwahn and Trude Hesterberg's Wilde Bühne. He had published numerous song texts in compilations, namely his *Das Politische Cabaret*, 1920, including the introductory poem *Dada-Prolog 1919*, written in true Dada style combining alogical words that seemingly have no meaning.²³⁴ His *Achtung Gleisdreieck!* (*Attention Gleisdreieck!*) song text, performed by Paul Graetz in the October 1920 *Schall und Rauch* cabaret as part of his *Berliner Tempo!* trilogy of songs, is in reality a simultaneous poem in the tradition of the Futurists. Graetz performed the text by quickly juxtaposing the words and phrases against each other, mixing a hodge-podge of terms that the audience would associate with the metropolis of Berlin, creating an *intermedial* meaning as its result [*fig. 43*].²³⁵ Mehring also wrote the libretto for a cabaret titled *Das Ketzerbrevier*, 1921 (*The Heretics Breviary*), in a satiric parody of Christianity, containing the final act of a "Black Mass, performed by puppets."²³⁶ The characters speak in German, French, English and Latin – in a mish-mash of styles while attempting to conjure Satan on the stage, and at one point the choir representing "the people" and stage members walk around "Quak-Quaking" like ducks "with the loudness of a pond of toads".²³⁷ Mehring brings the influence of *Ubu Roi*, *Impressions of Africa*, Futurism and Zurich Dada full circle into the traditional Berlin cabaret format, infusing its text with Berlin Dada inventions and a partiality for the absurd. Dada and cabaret performance were now firmly entwined, in Berlin Dada's progression towards a renewed and highly innovative, avant-garde articulation of its own.

²³³ Mehring, Walter. "Rummelplatz und Cabaret" in *Schall und Rauch Heft 3, November 1920*, trans. Tom Garretson. (Berlin: Gebr. Feyl, 1920), 3.

²³⁴ Mehring, Walter. *Das Politische Cabaret* (Dresden: Rudolf Kaemmerer Verlag, 1920), 9-11.

²³⁵ Jelavich, *Berlin Cabaret*, 147.

²³⁶ Mehring, Walter. *Das Ketzerbrevier: Ein Kabarettprogramm* (München: Kurt Wolff Verlag, 1921), 117-130.

²³⁷ Mehring, *Das Ketzerbrevier*, 124.

VIII. Christian Schad and the Use of Types

Speaking on the radio in 1929, Walter Benjamin discussed to his listeners the use of language that was particular to the region of Berlin. The colloquial vernacular by the working class that had been in use for at least a century was a well-known phenomenon. He called it “Berlin *Schnauze*”, or Berlin Snout, a manner of speaking and an attitude consisting of insolence and coarseness, and used a metaphor of the pig’s snout or muzzle to convey its earthier basis.²³⁸ Its origins stemmed from the earlier part of the 1800s in the working-class, where time was a luxury due to the incessant demands of work, causing linguistic communication to become scaled down to the slightest suggestion, a knowing glance, and the use of half-words. This developed into a manner of speaking created in response to the frenzied life of the big city. Its heavy use of satire was not only directed towards the subject but infers just as many barbs towards the speaker. Benjamin also notes the use of objectified “types” in daily use, in such phrases as The Innkeeper, the Market Woman, and Nante the Loafer, all used regularly to define certain traits of a passing target. The avant-garde of Berlin also consciously incorporated this conversational structure into its works, combining German popular culture with elitist theatrical traditions. This was reflected in cabaret’s use of working-class language in its texts and also in using, for example, popular song or American jazz into its strategy to reach a wider audience.²³⁹

Cabaret actively utilized popular culture subject matter in recurring themes of politics, sex, fashion, crime, shopping and just about any topic on the front page of the daily newspapers. For example, from its very beginning, cabaret’s singers performed satirical crime ballads of the *Moritaten*, evoking the antithesis to bourgeois values by hailing the grotesque and the ugly in the criminal murderer *type*. Such song texts were presented with ample doses of sarcasm and satire, and always accompanied by the ever-present *Berliner Witz*, or Berlin wit. A description in *Meyers Konversationslexikon* of 1876 described the typical Berlin citizen as “quick-witted, always ready to find a sharp, spicy, witty formulation for every encounter and event . . . the tendency to carp at everything great or profound that confronts him, or to drag it down to the level of illusion or fashion . . . the exquisite quality of treating themselves and their weaknesses ironically, and of making all aspects of Berlin the object of their wit.”²⁴⁰ This mental outlook of the Berlin citizen was already securely rooted in its culture even before the ascent of cabaret.

²³⁸ Benjamin, Walter. “Berlin Dialect” in *Radio Benjamin*, ed. Lecia Rosenthal (London: Verso, 2014), 3.

²³⁹ Appignanesi, *The Cabaret*, 167.

²⁴⁰ Jelavich, *Berlin Cabaret*, 32.

Cabaret's song style adapted this expression of wit and satire using a declaratory style of performance, as if the singer were announcing a proclamation, the need arising from when microphones were not available in theaters or cabarets. The audience knowingly understood this approach that evoked certain "types" of German society and culture, as noted by Benjamin. Parodies of soldiers or military generals, politicians, bankers, housewives, stock speculators, coy lovers, sultry vamps and broke gigolos, murderers and thieves, scientists and even artists, all and more were the topic of jocular and penetrating cabaret text. From cabaret's inception in 1901, writers and poets actively transgressed the accepted morality of the times using types to convey larger social issues. The topics of war, militarism, economic crises, and changing morality became central to the thematic concern in much of cabaret's song text as Romanticism's ideals of order and discipline were exchanged with a new century full of conflict and antagonism. Cabaret text was cloaked in subtle references in recognizable gestures, conveyed by costuming, body language and scenography, in the choice of motifs, colors and the performer's physical posturing. It provided ironic insight to any number of issues, becoming a platform for public debate in which social issues were presented on its stage. Contemporary phenomena were exposed and criticized to the public in a way that made people aware of their own times, seeing their lives from an objective position. At its most political, it called for social change, and at its most mundane, it sarcastically chided its subjects. Nietzsche's challenge to dispel with the old order was answered by Germany's artists, even if this was conducted in the face of a rigidly conservative public. Since cabaret's texts and performances targeted its criticism towards its audience and society in its use of types, it was only natural then that visual artists who were enamored with cabaret also chose a representational style to express their own critique of Weimar society. This included the use a direct, communicative language that could be easily understood by viewers of their works. And this most often took form in types, as Grosz noted, because the individual had lost its relevance and the symbol of the collective type had replaced him.²⁴¹

An example of cabaret's use of types, distance and objectivity that preceded its use in German painting can be found in the texts and performances of the afore mentioned Claire Waldoff, who excelled in portraying Berlin types to an audience that recognized such personality mannerisms in urban society [*fig. 44*]. Waldoff performed songs in the argot of the Berlin dialect, in a guttural, brash voice that even today the modern listener finds abrasive. One reviewer writing in *Der Sturm* in 1911 described her performance as:

²⁴¹ Grosz, Georg. "Zu meinen neuen Bildern" in *Das Kunstblatt* 5 (1921): 14.

“This little girl stands on stage with the modesty of a German virgin, without movement and with hands lowered, folded; her eyes occasionally roll to the corners in a parody of shock as she blares out her songs of sexual obscenities in the Berlin dialect ... everything conveyed in the Berliner’s eroticism, in perfect intonation that infers herself as experienced ... the presentation of art has nothing to do with literature and music, but rather that their laws must be derived from their distance....”²⁴²

This “distance” that the reviewer refers to is the sense of distance needed in the performance in order for the audience to laugh *with* her. The performer did not identify with the subject in the song, and the audience, who reveled in its ironic undertones and insinuations, understood this. Also, music of the Romantic era song had served to illustrate and give emotional emphasis to the text’s subjective meaning. In cabaret, the music instead is emotionally distanced from the text, in that it serves to underscore an ironic element of the singer’s interpretation, thus satirizing its subject and promoting the objective position. The cabaret singer creates a kind of caricature or type, distancing his or herself, understood by an audience in on the joke. Waldoff excelled in this kind of performance and was one of the most loved performers of her day. Her songs satirized the working classes, often interchanging sexual roles either as a man or woman. Her 1913 song *Hermann heesst er!* (*He’s Called Hermann*) expressed admiration for her man who could “reach his goal” quickly and remove her clothing with flair.²⁴³ As Waldoff was widely known to be a lesbian it provided the song with an additional dimension. Police censors who targeted her performances and demanded cuts from her songs were answered by Waldoff replacing the censored lines of text with nonsensical, guttural sounds, leaving the audience knowing fully what she referred to. After 1918, when preliminary censorship was abolished, she would be free to express such Berlin types as *Hannelore* (1926):

süßes reizendes Jeschöpfchen mit dem schönsten Bubiköpfchen, keiner unterscheiden kann, ob 'nu Weib iss oder Mann Hannelore Hannelore schönstes Kind vom halleschen Tor Hannelore trägt ein Smokingkleid mit einem Bindeschlips trägt ein Monokel jederzeit am Band aus Seidenrips ²⁴⁴	[Sweet Lovely [flower] with the finest Bubiköpfchen [a short hair style] Can’t see whether she is wife or husband Hannelore, Hannelore sweetest child from Halleschen Tor Hannelore wearing a tuxedo with a Bow Tie Wearing a monocle at any time and a band of ribbed silk]	Here,
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Waldoff was clearly expressing the type of masculine, Berlin lesbian that could be seen throughout the cabarets of Berlin, a type of whom both Christian Schad would feature in

²⁴² Trust., “Theater und Varieté: Passageteater” in *Der Sturm* 90, trans. Tom Garretson (1911): 730.

²⁴³ Claire Waldoff, vocal performance of “Hermann Heesst ‘Er...!’” by Mendelssohn, recorded 1913, on *Es gibt nur ein Berlin*, Duo Phon 01203, CD. Trans. Tom Garretson.

²⁴⁴ Claire Waldoff, vocal performance of “Hannelore” by Horst Platen and Willy Hagen, recorded 1928, on *Es gibt nur ein Berlin*, Duo Phon 01203, CD. Trans. Tom Garretson.

his portrait of *Sonja*, 1928 and who Otto Dix would paint in his *Bildnis der Journalisten Sylvia von Harden (Portrait of the Journalist Sylvia von Harden)*, 1926 [**fig. 50 & 45**].²⁴⁵

Just as in Simmel's assertion that life in the metropolis created an objective sense of indifference, this position is also shared in cabaret song texts by Marcellus Schiffer, Friedrich Hollaender, satirist Kurt Tucholsky, Willi Kollo and others. Cabaret text predominantly uses second or third person pronouns. If the first person tense was used, it was usually done so to represent and portray a metropolitan Berlin "type". Certainly there were subjective love songs to be found – Hollaender's *Jonny* sung by Marlene Dietrich is an example -- but in the over three hundred songs (both period recordings and sheet music) analyzed for this paper, there is a clear predominance of the objectified viewpoint.²⁴⁶ Objectivity and the use of types was in every breath of cabaret song well over a decade before *Neue Sachlichkeit* became a catchword in the mid-1920s. And the performer and audience alike shared this constant, underlying sense of distance and objectivity.²⁴⁷ Bertolt Brecht's theories of *Verfremdungseffekt* (distance-effect) and his use of incorporating the audience into the action of his plays owes much to the cabaret stage (Brecht started his career performing self-composed songs in the pubs and cabarets of Munich).²⁴⁸ Grosz, in the years before the First World War, toured music halls and cabarets with his own poems, singing and dancing, performing monologues, and during the war had his own cabaret act that preceded his Dada cabaret activities.²⁴⁹ And just as Dix had danced and frequented cabarets, Christian Schad also actively patronized the cabarets of Vienna and Berlin. By 1928 this objectivity, distance and use of types in German culture was acknowledged in the cabaret revue *Es liegt in der Luft (It's in the Air)*, created by Schiffer and Spoliansky. Its action was set in a department store recreated for the stage, in a parody of consumerism told by singing shoppers, shoplifters, and store employees. Especially of interest here is the title song's proclamation of "there's something in the air like electricity . . . There's something in the air called Objectivity", a direct reference to Gustav Friedrich Hartlaub's term.²⁵⁰ Cabaret had acknowledged what had been emerging in painting but what had existed already for twenty-seven years on its own stage. It is not then unreasonable to think

²⁴⁵ Upon first seeing Sylvia von Harden on the street, Dix had approached her and asked to paint her. He claimed she was the ultimate representational "type" and would represent her era.

²⁴⁶ Due to page limitations, I have not included the full overview of the songs I have examined for this paper which are from 1902 to 1933, and that were performed in cabarets. However, I have found that out of total of 378 song titles analyzed, 29 used the First Tense ("I"), 75 used the First Tense in an objective manner (I" representing a type), 17 used the Second Tense ("you"), and 248 songs used the Third Person. 9 of these were instrumentals.

²⁴⁷ Hill, Robert. "Overcoming Romanticism: On the Modernization of Twentieth-Century Performance Practice" in *Music and Performance During the Weimar Republic*, edited by Bryan Gilliam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 39.

²⁴⁸ Appignanesi, *The Cabaret*, 168.

²⁴⁹ Lewis, *George Grosz*, 22.

²⁵⁰ Willett, John. *The New Sobriety: Art and Politics in the Weimar Period 1917-33* (London: Thames & Hudson, Ltd., 1978), 111.

that this same influential atmosphere of objectivity and the use of types in cabaret cross-pollinated to the German artists of the 1920s who would come to “revolt against the romance of ecstasy and of the interpretation of the soul.”²⁵¹ Certainly, those artists who frequented the cabarets assimilated such ideas if only by osmosis, but perhaps more realistically in the shared cultural undercurrents of their society. And we should remember Nietzsche’s insistence to abandon subjective art in the interest of a disinterested contemplation in objective art, so important to all the artists discussed here.²⁵²

Hartlaub, director of the Kunsthalle Mannheim, coined the term *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) in 1923 after noting a certain characteristic use of distance then emerging in painting.²⁵³ For his seminal 1925 exhibition, Hartlaub included paintings by Dix and Grosz, and the term came into common use in the media. New Objectivity in painting was a rejection of the subjectivity found in the Romantic era and Expressionist art, characterized instead by a cold, unsympathetic criticism on contemporaneity, with an emphasis on the outer world rather than the inner emotional life.²⁵⁴ Artists who were classified under this term also made use of the same types that were satirized in cabaret songs, such as in Grosz’s caricatures, in Dix’s use of the wounded soldier and the prostitute, and in Schad’s astute observations on social roles by using actual persons to represent types, combined with a psychological use of color.²⁵⁵ As in cabaret and in Berlin’s colloquial use of language, the subjective personality portrayed by these artists were secondary to their function as types, creating what Helmut Lethen has called “the cool persona” that distinguished artistic output of the era.²⁵⁶

During Christian Schad’s travels through Italy, Vienna, and Switzerland, he made numerous paintings and prints with the cabaret as its theme before relocating to Berlin in the fall of 1927. By then he had been making works of art featuring this motif since 1915, for the publications *Sirius*, *Die Aktion* and *Die weissen Blätter*.²⁵⁷ After moving to Berlin he spent many evenings at the Romanisches Café, the Mikado and the Voo-Doo cabarets, seeking out its excesses with his friend the journalist and entomologist Felix Byrk,

²⁵¹ Schmidt, Paul F. “Die deutschen Veristen” in *Das Kunstblatt* 12 (1924): 367.

²⁵² See page 19, second paragraph.

²⁵³ Schmalenbach, Fritz. “The Term Neue Sachlichkeit” in *The Art Bulletin* 22 (1940): 161.

²⁵⁴ Peters, Olaf, “The New Objectivity Aesthetic” in *Otto Dix and the New Objectivity*, ed. Kunstmuseum Stuttgart (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2013), 34.

²⁵⁵ Michalski, Serguisz. *New Objectivity – Neue Sachlichkeit – Painting in Germany in the 1920s* (Köln: Taschen GmbH, 2003), 53.

²⁵⁶ Lethen, Helmut. *Cool Conduct: The Culture of Distance in Weimar Germany*, trans. Don Reneau (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 14-17.

²⁵⁷ Lloyd, Jill. “Christian Schad: Biography” in *Christian Schad and the Neue Sachlichkeit* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2003), 239.

exploring both the cheaper cabaret dives as well as the opulent, luxurious establishments.²⁵⁸ Just as with Dix and Grosz, it provided Schad with observations of all the social classes and types contained there. For Schad, cabarets and the night brought out the bizarre, the titillating and the unusual, providing him with ample material for his works. “Everything that was somehow outside the norm was of interest to us. And there was plenty of that in Berlin in the 1920s, that city of many possibilities and impossibilities,” he later wrote regarding his cabaret visits.²⁵⁹ And like so many other artists of his generation, Schad too had avidly read Nietzsche.²⁶⁰ But in contrast to Grosz and Dix’s more Nietzschean-inspired critique, Schad preferred a more subtle, psychological approach, centering on the social archetypes that filled his world. His style would be more in investigating the mechanics of the psyche and the superficial in opposition to hidden motivations of the social type. Confrontational social criticism or political satire was never his aim.²⁶¹ His *Graf St. Genois d’Anneaucourt (Count St. Genois D’Anneaucourt)*, 1927, could be understood bearing this in mind. [fig. 46].

Painted during a year in which he traveled back and forth to Berlin from his home in Vienna, *Graf St. Genois d’Anneaucourt* displays Apollonian artifice in the form of a constructed public persona type, against the underlying, contrasting inner Dionysian reality. We can also understand this work as a critique of the private as opposed to the public metropolitan façade. Painted with oil on wood panel, it reveals three figures set before the backdrop of an urban rooftop panorama. The figure of the Count stands central in the painting, his hands placed in the pockets of his black tuxedo jacket. He turns towards us in three-quarters profile, his dark eyes staring out, conveying sadness in his demeanor. There is a suggestive vulnerability in his physical appearance. To our left we can just see half the figure of a woman, dressed in a sheer, green transparent gown, and her left hand bears an emerald ring on her pointer finger. Her body faces us, with one of her breasts revealed underneath the sheer material. She holds a large, white feather in her hand, as she gazes in profile behind the Count to stare gravely to the figure on the right side of the canvas. There, standing above the other two figures in her dominating height, is the questionable appearance of a woman in a red, transparent gown with a floral design, revealing her buttocks underneath. She stands with her back towards us, in a deceptive pose, as her face is turned in profile to meet the harsh glance of her opposition. Her face is heavily made up,

²⁵⁸ Peppiatt, Michael. “Christian Schad: Portrait of the 1920s” in *Christian Schad and the Neue Sachlichkeit* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2003), 46-47.

²⁵⁹ Peppiatt, *Christian Schad and the Neue Sachlichkeit*, 48.

²⁶⁰ Schad, Christian. “Picture Captions” in *Christian Schad and the Neue Sachlichkeit*, ed. Lloyd, Jill and Michael Peppiatt (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2003), 238.

²⁶¹ Eberle, *Glitter and Doom: German Portraits from the 1920s*, 27.

with dark eye shadow and heavily rouged cheeks. There is a noticeable mole on her right shoulder, as well as a smaller one on her left cheek, turned towards us.

Schad has placed the three figures in the painting in a sort of inverted triangle, using the two women to balance the figure of the Count, center-weighted by the use of the neutral black and white of the Count's tuxedo. The placement of secondary figures in a binary organization within the painting to enhance meaning of a third, central figure is a compositional format Schad had used previously. The same very same format can be seen in his painting *Baronesse Vera Wassilko*, 1926, which had he originally intended to hang with *Count St. Genois D'Anneaucourt* as a female counterpart, both of which were exhibited in Vienna and Berlin in 1927 [fig. 47].²⁶² He also returned to the structure again the following year in the cabaret portrait *Sonja*, 1928, (discussed below). Here, its use creates a tension in the work, and serves to define the inherent polarization of the superficial against the more primal, sexual reality of the Dionysian.

The women are dressed in complementary colors of red and green that accentuate their competition to one another. Green, the color of envy, jealousy, and red the color of lust, sexuality, and desire, perform their respective roles behind the Count's back. Schad has given precedence to the red draped "female" in the painting, displaying more of her body than the woman to our left, and gives her hierarchal priority in the composition. We see signs of a five-o'clock shadow on her face, painted with a transparent glaze of black on both on her and the Count, and her masculine features reveal she is indeed a transvestite. Her reply to the woman in green expresses a haughty arrogance. The flowers on the transvestite's dress appear to be anemones, the flower symbol of Adonis, the Greek god of beauty.²⁶³ Its leaves and stems points towards her anus. Schad has painted these figures with clearly contoured outlines separating them, especially noticeable in features such as the eyes. His years in Italy spent studying classical techniques of painting have been put to good use here. A careful blending in the shading and in the layering of paint glazes to produce modeling in the flesh and skin tones discloses the techniques of Italian Renaissance portraits.

The background scene shows the rooftops of Montmartre in Paris, colored in grey, black and shades of brown, with widows lit in red, yellow and orange. A darkened sky looms above, with dark, orange-lit clouds on the horizon. It seems a mystery as to why Schad has placed these figures, so well-known in Berlin cabaret society, in the midst of Paris. Schad had visited Paris first in 1925 taking photographs of Montmartre rooftops, and

²⁶² Ratzka, *Christian Schad 1894-1982: Catalogue Raisonné*, 128.

²⁶³ Bauer, Esther K. "Penetrating Desire: Gender in the Field of Vision in Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* and Christian Schad's *Graf St. Genois D'Anneaucourt*" in *Monatshefte* 101 (2009): 488.

uses it here to alienate the figures in the painting from their original environment, further objectifying their role in this work.²⁶⁴ He had often referred to Paris as his ideal city and used it as a backdrop in other portraits. We can see the influence of Magical Realism here, such as found in de Chirico, which Schad incorporated into his own style after studying classical masters in Rome and Naples in 1923 to 1925.²⁶⁵ The rooftops of Montmartre do not serve simply as Schad's favored metropolitan landscape, but is used to project a strange, unreal atmosphere that creates a sense of unease, and promotes the characters as types. There is no street to be seen and the buildings seem to float in the air. The smokestacks are misshapen. The entire scene is dreamlike and surreal, as false as the Count's persona.

Schad was intimately familiar with the three figures in the painting from his forays into Berlin and Vienna cabarets and painted them from memory.²⁶⁶ Count St. Genois belonged to a fallen Austro-Hungarian aristocracy, his family's fortune lost during the 1914-18 war, now destined to a life spent wandering from cabaret to cabaret in the high society of Vienna and Berlin where titles gained entrance to places now ordinarily too expensive.²⁶⁷ Schad wrote: "Count St. Genois d'Anneaucourt was a well-known figure in Viennese society...which had become much more mixed...the old aristocracy, which had been able to rescue nothing but their titles from the brink of the abyss, now shared the same table with new money – something impossible in former times. This new society now welcomed all those who had either a title, money, influence, or fame."²⁶⁸ The Berlin cabaret environment offered refuge for many such displaced aristocratic figures as the Count, with its texts and performances creating a transgressive, avant-garde, experimental melting pot.²⁶⁹ And as a form of theater it also created an illusion of smoke and mirrors to hide behind. The Count is a tragic figure, here caught between the two women, resulting in the subjugation of his true nature. He is imprisoned in the conventions of his bogus, aristocratic role and the outmoded morality of the past, humiliated by his social descent, spending his life among the nouveau riche industrialists and the demimonde that filled the cabarets. There also was the threat of sexual disgrace should his true nature be revealed. The woman in green is the Baroness Glassen, the Count's "alibi" in his social and public

²⁶⁴ Peppiatt, Michael. *Christian Schad and the Neue Sachlichkeit*, 44.

²⁶⁵ Schad, Nikolaus. "Christian Schad's 'Magic Realism' The Formative Years and Maturity of the Artist: Rome/Naples 1923-25 – Vienna 1924-28" in *Christian Schad and the Neue Sachlichkeit* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2003), 39.

²⁶⁶ Peppiatt, *Christian Schad and the Neue Sachlichkeit*, 44.

²⁶⁷ Peppiatt, *Christian Schad and the Neue Sachlichkeit*, 45.

²⁶⁸ Eberle, Matthias, "Count St. Genois d'Anneaucourt, 1927" in *Glitter and Doom: German Portraits from the 1920s* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2007), 152.

²⁶⁹ Korzen, Christina. "Theater in Caricature as an Expression of Cultural Identity in Viennese and Berlin Modernism," in *Vienna - Berlin: The Art of Two Cities* (Munich: Prestel, 2013), 349.

life (and whom Schad himself referred to as “a manly woman”), seated on what seems to be a bench.²⁷⁰ The two would often be seen together in the upscale cabarets of Berlin.²⁷¹ Yet the true sexual and romantic interest of the Count lay deceptively to where his elbow points, towards the transvestite in red. She was a well-known figure of the notorious Berlin transvestite cabaret the Eldorado, which Cook’s Travel Tour Guide of the period implored tourists to visit to see the “cabinet of curiosities.”²⁷² It was one of the most popular destinations for both gay and heterosexual tourists, movie stars and celebrities, who flocked to the novelty of dancing with men dressed as women and to see their cabaret shows.

In the salacious guidebook to the cabarets, sex venues, restaurants and nude shows of Berlin published in 1931, titled *Führer durch das ‘lasterhafte’ Berlin (Guide to ‘Naughty’ Berlin)*, Schad contributed ten drawings featuring depictions of popular homosexual and lesbian cabarets [fig. 48]. The book describes the Eldorado’s magically, illusionary atmosphere of confused pronouns:

“a very elegant audience...Tuxedos and tailcoats and large evening gowns ... a male chanteuse sings with her shrill soprano ambiguous Parisian chanson songs. A very girlish revue star dances under the spotlight in graceful, feminine pirouettes. He is naked except for his feathered fans and a loincloth, ... in this nudity...the audience questions whether the performer is a man or a woman.”²⁷³

At any point in the 1920s there were no more than a dozen transvestite cabarets but these were heavily promoted by concierges in hotel lobbies as well as by people “in the know.”²⁷⁴ Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld (1868-1935), the Berlin medical doctor and sexual researcher who fought for transgendered, transsexual and gay rights, was frequently written about in the German media in the 1910s and ‘20s. Schad would often attend Hirschfeld’s lectures in Berlin.²⁷⁵ Hirschfeld’s research and treatment center was the focus of much public debate, and one cabaret song recorded in 1908 by Otto Reutter titled *Der Hirschfeld kommt!* expresses the Count’s predicament:

Der Hirschfeld kommt!	[The Hirschfeld is coming!
Zum Hirschfeld sagt er ich bewies:	For Hirschfeld he says I proved:
Ich bin noch ganz normal!	I am still quite normal!
Und Sie sagt Fritz, er zweifelt noch,	And she says Fritz, he still doubts,
beweis es schnell noch mal.	prove it quickly again.
Wer heut nicht jedes Mädchen küsst,	Who today does not kiss every girl,
der kommt gleich in Verdacht,	the same is suspected

²⁷⁰ Peppiatt, *Christian Schad and the Neue Sachlichkeit*, 46.

²⁷¹ Note that this is disputed in the footnotes to Schad’s *Catalogue Raisonné Volume I: Paintings*, in which Thomas Ratzka insists this is not the Countess Glassen and that Schad simply made the figure in the painting up. However, since all other literature (including quotes from Schad) that I’ve found supports that this indeed is the Countess, and that the two were seen throughout society in Berlin and Vienna together, I will maintain this identity.

²⁷² Beachy, *Gay Berlin*, 198.

²⁷³ Moreck, Curt. *Führer durch das “Lasterhafte” Berlin*, trans. Tom Garretson (Leipzig: Verlag moderner Stadtführer, 1931), 180-81.

²⁷⁴ Gordon, *Voluptuous Panic*, 127.

²⁷⁵ Ratzka, Thomas. *Christian Schad Retrospective*, ed. Thomas Ratzka et al (Köln: Wienand Verlag GmbH, 2008), 140.

bleibt heut 'ne Ehe kinderlos,
dann wird er ausgelacht . . .²⁷⁶

remains today un-married without children,
then he will be laughed at . . .]

Count St. Genois could not find the strength to live his life openly in public, and Schad portrays a man torn between his public persona and his personal desire. He is the tragic Nietzschean hero, trapped in the social expectations of his class yet struggling in his Dionysian passion. The woman in green directs a white feather, which during World War I signified cowardice, towards his genitals as her hand that holds it rests suggestively on her inner thigh.²⁷⁷ She is indignant in her gaze towards the transvestite, who returns her own malicious stare. Their jealousy is clear. The woman in green is literally squeezed out of the picture. It is interesting that the women are clothed in transparent material, their hostility towards one another apparent, while the Count hides behind the fraudulent respectability of his tuxedo. Schad is conveying the Count's inability to stand up for his own sexuality as a sign of weakness, but not of his sexuality itself.

Although Germany had proscribed laws against homosexuality as early as 1871 with Paragraph 175 of the criminal code, Berlin was seen as a mecca for lesbians and gays throughout Europe and America in the 1920s. Enforcement of the law proved difficult and it was used primarily against pederasts and male prostitution.²⁷⁸ In Berlin there were scores of bars, *Kneipenbrettl* and cabarets that catered to gay and lesbians. Some of these were the Adonis-Lounge, the upscale Alexander-Palast, the Cabaret of the Spider, and the Zauberflote that featured separate floors for lesbians and gay men.²⁷⁹ Weimar Berlin boasted establishments open to the vast variety of human sexual expression, and newsstands openly displayed periodicals geared towards all sexualities and even fetishists of all kinds.²⁸⁰ If gay men did not officially enjoy acceptance in Weimar culture, then at least there was a more general permissiveness and tolerance to their co-existence in a hetero-normative society. As early as 1919, there appeared a film directed by Richard Oswald, *Anders als die Anderen (Different from the Others)*, with a script by Oswald and Magnus Hirschfeld (with Anita Berber in a key role), challenging Paragraph 175 in a plea to free gay men from the threat of blackmail and legal persecution.²⁸¹ In the following year the cabaret song *Das Lila Lied (The Lavender Song)* was recorded in several versions, with

²⁷⁶ Reutter, Otto, vocal performance of *Der Hirschfeld kommt! (Das Hirschfeldlied)*. Otto Reutter mit Orchester, Dir. Bruo Seidler-Winkler. Issued on Die Schwule Plattenkiste, 05183, compact disc. Originally recorded January 1908, DGG 741 BH. Translation by Tom Garretson.

²⁷⁷ Peppiatt, *Christian Schad and the Neue Sachlichkeit*, 47.

²⁷⁸ Beachy, *Gay Berlin*, 82-83.

²⁷⁹ Gordon, *Voluptuous Panic*, 233-43

²⁸⁰ Beachy, *Gay Berlin*, 113.

²⁸¹ Oswald, Richard. *Different from the Others (Anders als die Anderen)*, DVD. Directed by Richard Oswald. New York, NY: Kino Video, 2004.

music written by Mischa Spoliansky (under the pseudonym of Arno Billing) and a text by Kurt Schwabach. It became a hit and was performed widely in cabarets, and its text attacked the persecution of gays, religious guilt, and their exclusion from society.²⁸² Clearly, the position of gay men and women in Weimar society had changed from the former century when it was barely even acknowledged.

Schad's *Count St. Genois D'Anneaucour's* is a kind of public outing of the Count's type in society and draws attention to the surface illusion set against the contrasting reality that could be found in his culture. Schad tells us that the old values have been discarded, and calls the Count out for his cowardice and his inability to manifest his true nature, to leave behind the shackles of his role, and go through his own process of a *transvaluation of values*. The Count's predicament is in being placed between his superficial appearance of his social role against the reality of his desire, or in the context of Nietzsche, between the Apollonian and the Dionysian extremes. Schad has removed these figures from the cabaret in which they are associated with, and placed them in a setting that is as unreal as their public personas, transcending their individual, subjective identity to become types. The use of the Magical Realist style only adds to the distanced, ethereal appearance of things as they are imagined, and with things as they indeed are.²⁸³ The Count and his cohorts are types found throughout Berlin's cabarets, captured in the representation of their roles: the dormant and lost Count, the conniving Baroness, and the decadent Transvestite. This referential use of cabaret's textual stance using types is replicated in New Objectivity painting. It is in these artists' use of types, predated in cabaret's performance, that solidifies their shared, kindred interest.

Schad is the most Neo-Classicalist in his technique of the artists examined here, adding a subtle social critique to his psychological approach of social types.²⁸⁴ This is evident in two of his portraits of the Weimar "New Woman." Both are similarly portrayed but with certain differences in the context of their cabaret setting. In *Lotte, 1927-28* [fig. 49], we see a woman seated at a table, viewed frontally from the waist up. She is separated by a small, gated fence, common to many of the nightclub cabarets of the era, used to divide the dance and seated areas.²⁸⁵ She is dressed in a black jacket and white blouse, tied

²⁸² Schwabach, Kurt and Mischa Spoliansky. *Das Lila-Lied* (Berlin: Noten Roehr Verlag, 1920), 1-4.

²⁸³ Danto, Arthur C. "Christian Schad and the Sachlichkeit of Sex" in *Unnatural Wonders: Essays from the Gap Between Art & Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 249.

²⁸⁴ Director of the Mannheim Art Gallery G. F. Hartlaub originally described two factions of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* tendency in painting as being either "Neo-Classicalist" (politically right-wing) or "Veristic" (politically left-wing). Schad's technique adhered to a more Neo-Classical approach in his contoured forms and stylistic approach inspired by his studies of Renaissance painters, but his politics were most certainly not "right-wing." Also, Dix shares in these stylistic techniques. Such categorization was for convenience, and we should remember that not every New Objectivity painter fits so comfortably into these terms. Accordingly, New Objectivity divisions are something of a misnomer.

²⁸⁵ See also *Figure 1* of such a cabaret seating placement.

at the neck with a black string tie. Her brown hair is cut short in the “bob” fashion style of the day, and her large blue-green eyes stare directly at us underneath pencil-thin plucked eyebrows. Behind her we can see an empty champagne glass on another table with a white tablecloth. From the mirror on the wall behind her head, the reflection of blue and red spotlights and electrical lighting of the cabaret stage flicker in zig-zag prisms, reminding us of Schad’s brief flirtation with Futurism. A spotlight bounces off the wall behind her and the show lighting seems to almost explode from her head.

In *Sonja*, 1928 [fig. 50], here too sits a single woman at a cabaret table, dressed in a black chiffon evening gown with transparent shoulders, with a pink-white corsage gracing her left shoulder. In her right hand she holds a cigarette in an extender, while on the white tablecloth before her that her right elbow rests upon, we can see the package of American Camel cigarettes, a compact and a tube of lipstick. Her left hand is placed on her right knee, which is crossed over her left leg, showing her dark stockings. Her black hair is short, cut in almost a mannish style, as her brown eyes also stare directly at us. She wears less make-up than *Lotte*, and her expression is sullen. Behind her is a table with a white tablecloth, an open champagne bottle in an ice bucket, yet no one sits in the empty chair. To the upper left is the just discernable figure of a bald man, which Schad has painted without features. This we can recognize as the poet and cultural critic Max Herrmann-Neisse.²⁸⁶ Clothed in a black tuxedo, only his left ear and upper chest show, with just a hint of his table. To the upper right is a figure of a man, with the lower right side of his ear and jaw visible, dressed in a red jacket, white shirt and black tie, sitting behind a black piano. Abstract blue-grey plant patterns adorn the walls behind them. Schad has again adapted the same compositional structure used in his *Count St. Genois*, by placing the central figure between the segmented figures at opposite sides to create tension in the painting.

In both of these works, Schad presents us with two positions of the Weimar New Woman type in German society, presented in the locality of the cabaret. The cabaret is used not as social criticism such as in Dix or Grosz’s works but is used by Schad to divulge social changes. The New Woman is now emancipated and focused on the future. She moves freely about her society and in a world of men. Already from the turn of the century, women’s suffrage movements had gathered strength in Germany. Helene Stöcker (1896-1943), the German pacifist, feminist and sexual reformer, advocated the right for sexual self-affirmation, citing Nietzsche’s philosophy as a prime influence and as a voice of

²⁸⁶ Peppiatt, *Christian Schad and the Neue Sachlichkeit*, 48.

reason, calling for new values arising directly from women's needs.²⁸⁷ She openly fought for a new morality, insisting on the right for married women to work, to education, and to pursue their physical pleasures. She also called for society to accept the status of single mothers and for the acceptance of lesbianism. Marriage should be reformed, its economic dynamic of power re-addressed in order to establish a new independence, and self-autonomy should be established. The Nietzschean "affirmation of life" was a birth right for both men and women alike.²⁸⁸ By 1910 Stöcker's views were widely debated in the press and in women's movement meetings, and her ideas were resoundingly anchored in pre-War German thought.

After being granted the right to vote for women in 1919, the inflation years of 1921 to 1924 instigated a completely different assessment of how womanhood would come to be defined. Old social structures of dowries presented by women after marriage to their husbands disintegrated in the light of desperate economic conditions. The sexual roles of women in the context of marriage changed out of necessity, evolving from secluded homemaker to employment. At its most extreme it resulted in prostitution. And as we have seen in Dix's *Großstadt*, during this period the metropolitan public space became filled with prostitutes, on the streets and in the cabaret nightclubs.²⁸⁹ Like their Parisian counterparts in the previous century, the bourgeois woman and prostitutes mixed in social settings, transgressing each other's boundaries and contributing to a blurring of appearances. The frail, feminine morality of the Wilhelmine era quickly faded into a newer generation of women seeking self-empowerment, be it social, sexual or otherwise.

Schad had known both the real life figures of Lotte and Sonja, meeting them through his friend Felix Bryk.²⁹⁰ Lotte was a milliner and dressmaker that had worked at a women's apparel shop on the ground floor of the Pension Schlesinger in Berlin, where Schad had an apartment. Albertine Herda, using the nickname "Sonja", worked as a secretary by day, and was openly lesbian. Schad recalled about them both that they were "the most striking, soigné and beautiful women."²⁹¹ Both actively explored the cabaret nightlife, and Schad had chosen to portray them both as solitary figures within the cabaret space. For *Sonja*, he has placed her at the Romanisches Café, the haunt of artists and intellectuals that also featured cabaret performances. Schad had never seen her there, but

²⁸⁷ Smith, Jill Suzanne. *Berlin Coquette: Prostitution and the New German Woman, 1890-1933* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 86.

²⁸⁸ Smith, *Berlin Coquette*, 87-88.

²⁸⁹ Smith, *Berlin Coquette*, 112.

²⁹⁰ Rewald, Sabine. "I Must Paint You!" in *Glitter and Doom: German Portraits from the 1920s* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2007), 7.

²⁹¹ Ratzka, Thomas. "Sonya, 1928" in *Christian Schad 1894-1982: Catalogue Raisonné, Vol. I: Paintings* (Cologne: Wienand Verlag, 2008), 154.

chose instead to present her in that setting, associating her type with the intelligentsia of Berlin. She is the essence of the New Woman, the female in modernity, less feminine perhaps than *Lotte*, even androgynous. Her back is turned to the men behind her, hinting of her lesbianism, inviting no contact but stares at us directly. The make-up placed on her table suggests that she may apply it at her table, something only modern women would have dared.²⁹² Both *Lotte* and *Sonja* show independent, feminist women, able to visit cabarets on their own without relying on men. But there was a price to pay, and that price is shown in a hint of solitary loneliness. The champagne bottle has been opened, but there is no one there for Sonja to share it with. Lotte's glass is empty behind her, placed in the background of her cabaret where the excitement of flashing lights – dynamic convictions of her future electrically shooting out from her brain -- contrasts her porcelain doll features, her inner loneliness and urban alienation.²⁹³ Schad again uses individuals to become objectified types, understanding that the price of leaving behind the older bourgeois female role models is in the solitary loneliness of *Zarathustra*, of the New Woman who recreates herself in the new morality of the Weimar republic. For both of these portraits, Schad has used the cabaret to express that social relationships have changed, and the *transvaluation* that has led to their independence now requires a new existential procedure.

IX. Summary and Conclusions

From its first inception in Berlin in 1901, until the demise of its original form in 1933 at the hands of the Nazis, German cabaret was a theatrical art form that actively welcomed visual artists into its domain. In turn, German artists responded to their shared strategies of art making, recognizing their common bond of Nietzsche's aesthetic and existential philosophy. Both shared progressive, leftist political concerns, solidifying their reciprocal interests and mutual concerns. Also, the cabaret environment provided artists with a setting in which to explore the social and psychological manifestations found in their culture, and to find inspiration from its dazzling array of types. Both cabaret's text and performances were directed towards an audience representing a microcosm of its society, and this was understood by visual artists who adapted cabaret's course of action and common targets. This in turn provided artists with a method to transform the language of images into a critique expressed within their own works. And this environment of cabaret's

²⁹² Rewald, Sabine. "Christian Schad: Sonja, 1928" in *Glitter and Doom, Glitter and Doom: German Portraits from the 1920s* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2007), 146.

²⁹³ Price, Dorothy. "The New Woman in 1920s Berlin" in *Berlin Metropolis 1918-1933*, ed. Olaf Peters (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2016), 287.

conceptual palette of human behavioral types and performance structures, mixed with the artists' social and historical conditions, together with their readings of the works of Nietzsche and Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk*, resulted in the creation of *intermedial* works of art. Such works differed from the era's New Objectivity style that was characterized by a lack of emotional content, in including cabaret's spectacle of amusement and heightened emotional levity to emphasize the extreme social disparities and injustices of their time.

When I first approached the subject of how visual art was influenced by cabaret, I could not find anything in my research sources that directly addressed this. While many researchers have written on Modernism's mixing popular "low" culture with the "high" culture of painting, none have centered on the cabaret tradition peculiar to Berlin – so prevalent in the works of German Modernist artists – or what the significance of this motif implies. There is certainly room for further investigation. Cabaret, though perhaps not directly responsible for the occurrence of New Objectivity in their works, nonetheless intensified and encouraged its development. And its most direct, it is in the creation of Modernist art movements such as Futurism, Zurich and Berlin Dada that we can find cabaret influencing artists' use of its inherent performance structures to promote their own creative visions. All of these movements utilized cabaret's *Kleinkunst* format, its direct immediacy of communication to audiences, and in the confrontational breaking down of the fourth wall of the stage, further incorporating and developing these into their own specific artistic agency. Expressionism too drew heavily on Wagner and Nietzsche's influential writings, progressing towards adapting cabaret's exoticism as a replacement for primitivism.

Individual artists further incorporated the cabaret image in their own individual styles, translating its environment and audience into their works. Cabaret's vibrant spectacle, its use of theatrical lighting and costumes, dancers and performers, were all integrated into the artists' creative manifestations, rendered under the influence of the objective stance taken in cabaret song text. This was expressed in cabaret's use of types, found also in the tradition of Berlin's colloquial language, transferring in artists using either known habitués from the cabaret landscape or in creating their own caricatured figures in order to represent broader, social types. Whether these reflected political, social or existential concerns, or created contrarian dispositions that revealed their society's turmoil, the artists' role as participant-observer of the cabarets resulted in their using this motif to promote a sense of the tragic, as so favored by Nietzsche. All of this was expressed with a subtle penetration into the illusion of the projected metropolitan facade, juxtaposed against its harsh reality. And finally, the cabaret functioned as an axis point for the artist's social

interactions, filtered by their personalities and by their own particular relationship to Nietzsche.

It is doubtful that artists of the era would have found cabaret as attractive if it had not been for Bierbaum, Wolzogen and Rheinhardt's infusion of Nietzsche's philosophy into their call for a new, revitalized form of variety. It injected a popular entertainment form with an existential and intellectual undertone that resonated with artists, and facilitated a common platform to interact with, each party reinforcing the other's goals. This conjoining of cabaret and the artist also resulted in Berlin cabaret becoming flavored with avant-garde developments, which it incorporated into its own structure, and in return, in artists infusing their own works with a vigorous social commentary using cabaret as its metaphor. Nietzsche's philosophy is the one binding element that runs throughout all of the artist's examined actions here as well as in cabaret's origins, and the importance of his writings cannot be underestimated. It is this that sets their cabaret motif works apart from their Parisian predecessors, and underlies my historicist approach. It bears repeating: The German artists that used images from the cabaret in their works are the result of specific historical and cultural events that occurred in their own country, motivated by socio-political conditions decoded through the writings of Wagner and most importantly, Nietzsche, resulting in *intermedial* works of art.

These *intermedial* motions could be seen as a chief characteristic of German Modernism. As we have seen, throughout these influential art movements and its artists there is an assertive synthesis of ideas and artistic forms conjoined into new artistic articulations, styles, and methods of execution. Artists' appropriation of cabaret to create a theoretical basis and manifesto in the arts resulted in disparate forms and cultural elements coming together into new expressive works of art. All of this converged in the cabaret paintings, lithographs and drawings of Weimar artists, resulting in the most haunting, mesmerizing visions that still, even now, transmits its assessment of a society in disruption and decay. It provides us with images we can still recognize in our own, so many decades after that original society had long since danced off the edge of its own abyss. ☆

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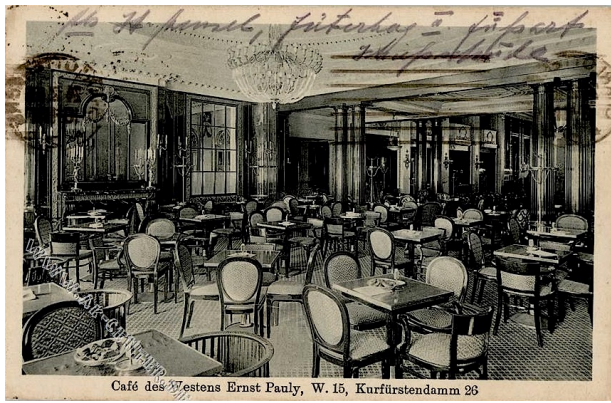
Artworks and Images



Figure 1: Otto Dix, *Großstadt (Metropolis)*, 1927-28, oil and tempera on wood, middle panel: 181 x 201 cm, left panel: 181 x 101, right panel: 181 x 101 cm. Kunstmuseum Stuttgart.



Figure 2: Otto Dix, *Großstadt (Metropolis)*, 1927-28. Center panel, detail. 181 x 201 cm.



Café des Westens Ernst Pauly, W. 15, Kurfürstendamm 26



„Café des Westens“, Ernst Pauly, W. 15, Kurfürstendamm 26. Tel. Steinplatz 4450, 4451, 4452
Nur für den Anruf 4453

Figures 3 & 4: Two views of the Café des Westens, haunt of the Berlin intelligentsia and also turned into a full cabaret, the Cabaret Größenwahn run by cabaret artist Rosa Valetti in 1920. Souvenir postcards collection of the author.



Figure 5 (left): Otto Dix, *Großstadt (Metropolis)*, 1927-28. Left side panel, detail. 181 x 101 cm.

Figure 11 (below): Lucas Cranach the Elder, *The Judgment of Paris*, c. 1528. Oil on wood panel, 35 x 24 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Figure 6 (right): Otto Dix, *Großstadt (Metropolis)*, 1927-28. Right side panel, detail. 181 x 101cm.



Figure 10 (above): Albrecht Dürer, *Selbstbildnis im Pelzrock (Self Portrait in Fur Collar)*, 1500. Oil on limewood panel, 67,1 x 48,9 cm. Alte Pinakothek, Munich, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, AP



Figure 7: Wounded German war veteran begging on the Unter den Linden avenue in Berlin, early 1920s. (Public Domain, photographer unknown.)

Figure 8: Prostitutes plying their trade by the Unter den Linden in Berlin, ca. 1924. Notice the fur collar, similar to Dix's prostitute. (Public Domain, photographer unknown.)



Figure 9: German children playing with worthless Deutsche Marks during the economic inflation years of 1921-24. (Public Domain, photographer unknown.)



Figure 12: Ernst von Wolzogen in 1902. Photo by E. Bieber, Berlin. (Public Domain)



Figure 13: Max Rheinhardt, 1911. Photo by Nicola Perscheid. (Public Domain)



Figure 14: Otto Dix, *Bildnis der Tänzerin Anita Berber (The Dancer Anita Berber)*, 1925. Oil and tempera on plywood, 120 x 65 cm. Loan of the Landesbank Baden-Württemberg in the Kunstmuseum Stuttgart.

Figure 15: Souvenir postcard of Anita Berber at the beginning of her career, in more innocent times, ca. 1916. (Brecker & Maass, Berlin. Public domain)



Figure 16: Portrait of Anita Berber and Sebastian Droste in 1923, from the photo session for the book *Dances of Vice, Horror, & Ecstasy* (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Side Real Press, 2002). Photograph by Madame d'Ora (Dora Kallmus), © Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna.

Figure 17: Portrait of Anita Berber in her *Cocaine* dance dress in 1923, from the photo session for the book *Dances of Vice, Horror, & Ecstasy* (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Side Real Press, 2002). Photograph by Madame d'Ora (Dora Kallmus), © Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna.





Figure 18: Masked patrons of the Weisse Maus cabaret in Berlin, waiting for Anita Berber to begin her performances. From the book *The Seven Addictions and Five Professions of Anita Berber* by Mel Gordon (Los Angeles: Feral House, 2006), 141.

Figure 19: View of Ernst von Wolzogen's Bunter Theater (Motley Theater) in 1901, designed by August Endell. Note traditional theater seating, before Parisian table-and-chair seating became adapted.

From *Berlin Cabaret*, by Peter Jelavich (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 55.

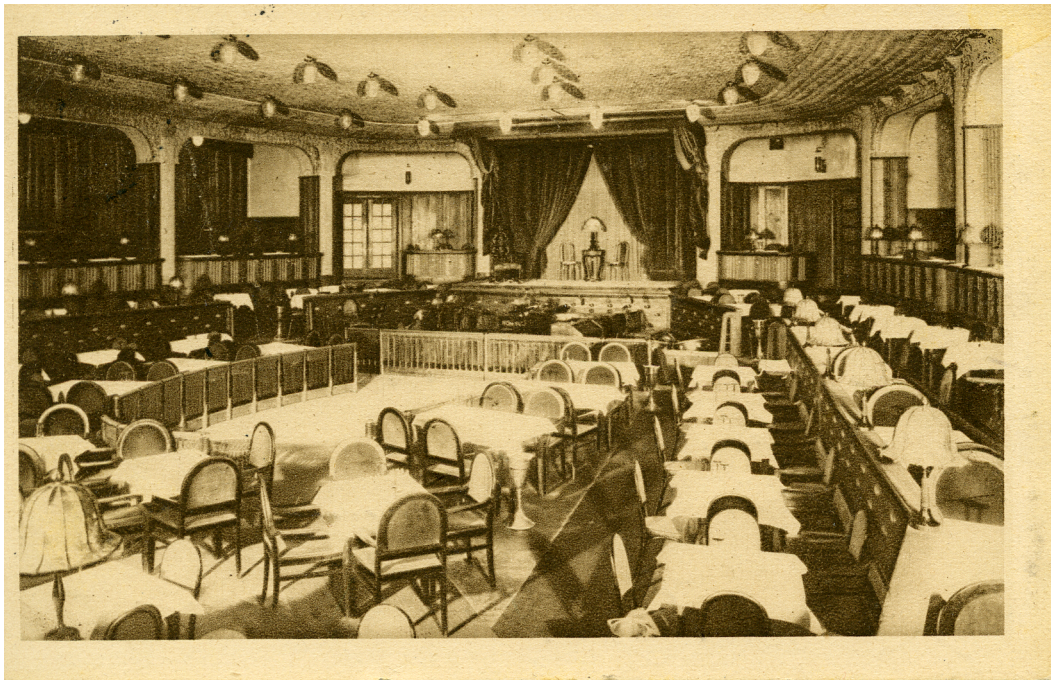


Figure 20: *Regina-Palast Tanz-Kabarett, Dresden, 1924*. This same format of tabled seating could also be found in many of Berlin's cabarets. Souvenir Picture Postcard, 9 x 14 cm. Collection of the author.

Figure 21: Tivoli-Cabaret im Prunksaal, Berlin, 1912. Cabarets featured direct views of the stage from its table seating. Souvenir Picture Postcard, 9 x 14 cm. Collection of the author.

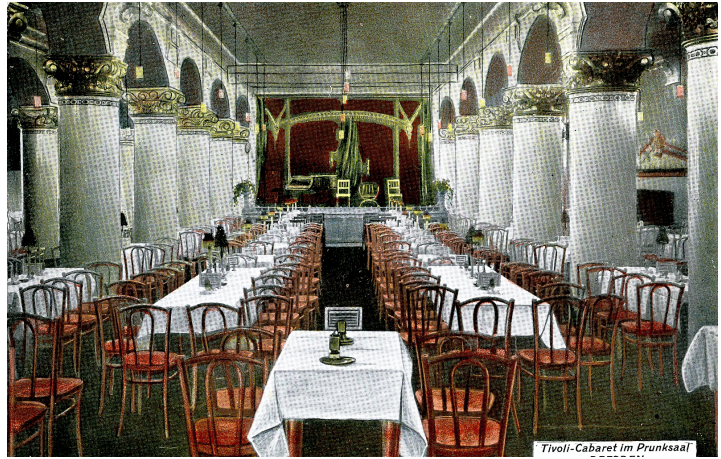


Figure 22: Alt Bayern cabaret located at Friedrichstr. 94 in Berlin, ca. 1925. The back of the postcard reads "Im Cabaret gegiegene Kleinkunst." Souvenir Picture Postcard, 9 x 14 cm. Collection of the author.



Figure 23: George Grosz, *Drinnen und Draussen (Inside and Outside)*, 1926. Oil on canvas, 80 x 118.7 cm. Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven. Lent by Dr. and Mrs. Herbert Schaefer.

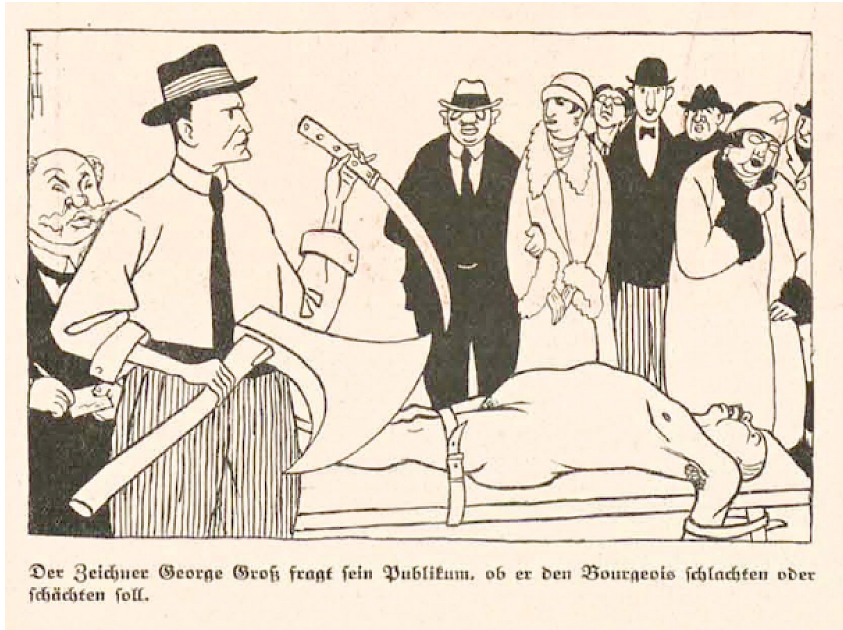


Figure 24: Theodore Th. Heine, "Grosse Männer in kleiner Zeit" cartoon of George Grosz in *Simplicissimus* 30, no. 37 (1925): 547.



Figure 25: George Grosz, *White Russian Cabaret*, 1920. Etching, 13 x 18 cm. From *A Little Yes and a Big No: The Autobiography of George Grosz* (New York: The Dial Press, 1946), 167.



Figure 26: George Grosz, *Ruf der Wildnis* (*Call of the Wild*), 1929. Lithograph, 27 x 20 cm. From the portfolio volume *Die Gezeichneten: 60 Blätter aus 15 Jahren* (Berlin: Malik-Verlag GmbH, 1930). Reproduced in *Love Above All and Other Drawings* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1971), 116.

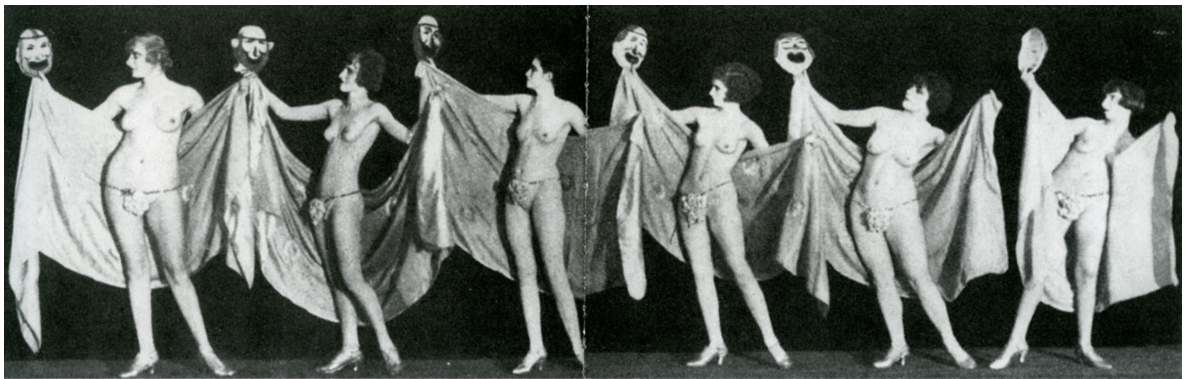
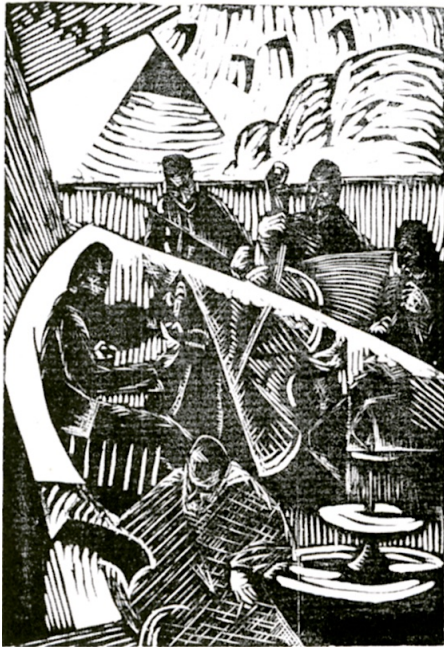


Figure 27: *Girlkultur* in all its glory. A staging from the Berlin Haller-Revue, ca. 1926, showing ample amounts of female nudity in order to draw in the patrons. From *Voluptuous Panic: The Erotic World of Weimar Berlin* by Mel Gordon (Los Angeles: Feral House, 2000), 59.



Figures 28: Three untitled woodcuts from Christian Schad's *Sirius* woodcut print contributions in 1915, showing the combination of Futurist with Expressionist styles. Reproduced in *Christian Schad and the Neue Sachlichkeit*, edited by Jill Loyd and Michael Peppiatt (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2003), 241.





Figure 29: Christian Schad, *Marietta*, 1916. Oil on canvas, 60 x 41 cm. Christian-Schad-Stiftung Aschaffenburg.

Figure 30: Christian Schad, *Apothecafé*, 1916. Woodcut print from *Die Aktion*, exemplifying the influence of Kokoshka, Expressionism and Futurism. (Berlin: Verlag der Wochenschrift Die Aktion, June 1916): 533/34.

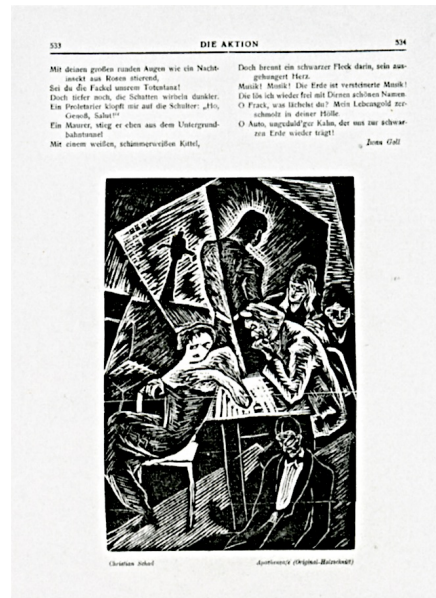


Figure 31: Oskar Kokoschka, *Claire Waldoff*, 1916. Cover illustration for *Der Sturm* 12 (1916): 1.

Figure 32: Nolde, Emil. Cover print *Tingeltangel* for *Der Sturm*, displaying group of cabaret performers on stage and the backs of the audience and pianist. From *Der Sturm* 56 (Berlin: Geschäftsstelle Der Sturm, 25 March 1911).



Figure 33: For comparison, this is a program advertisement for Friedrich Hollaender's *Tingeltangel* cabaret, from its opening night in Berlin in 1931. Hollaender had worked with many Dada artists in Berlin, writing music for their cabaret productions. The term "tingeltangel" was well understood as a small cabaret scaled back to its essential elements. From *Cabaret Berlin*, by Lori Münz (Hamburg: Edel Classics GmbH, 2005), 42.

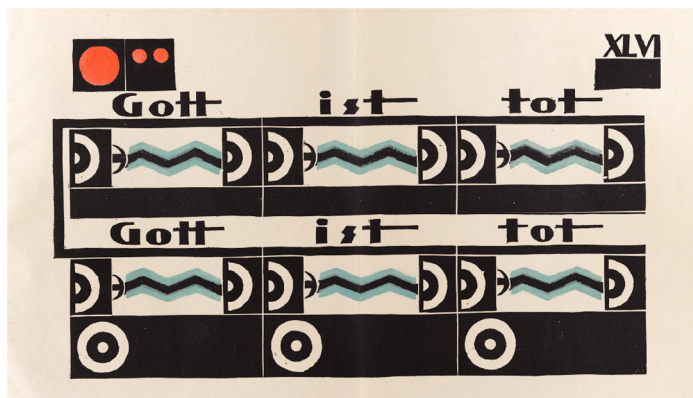


Figure 34: Lothar Schreyer, *Spielgang Kreuzigung, Blatt XLVI* [Game Crucifixion, Sheet XLVI], 1921. Hand-painted woodcut color mid-section in *Der Sturm* 4, (1921), 73-74. Verlag Der Sturm.

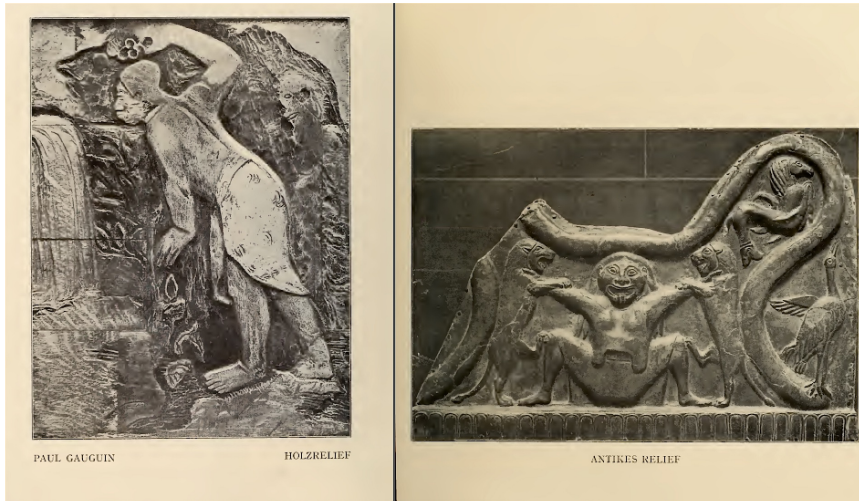


Figure 35: Paul Gauguin, *Holzrelief* and Anonymous, *Antikes Relief*. Photograph illustrations from *Der Blaue Reiter*, ed. Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc. München: R. Piper & Co. Verlag, 1914, 62-63.

Figure 36: Page 6 from Kandinsky and Marc's *Der Blaue Reiter Almanach* book from 1916, showing a print by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner of dancing cabaret girls.

From *Der Blaue Reiter Almanach* by Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc. München: R. Piper & Co. Verlag, 1914.

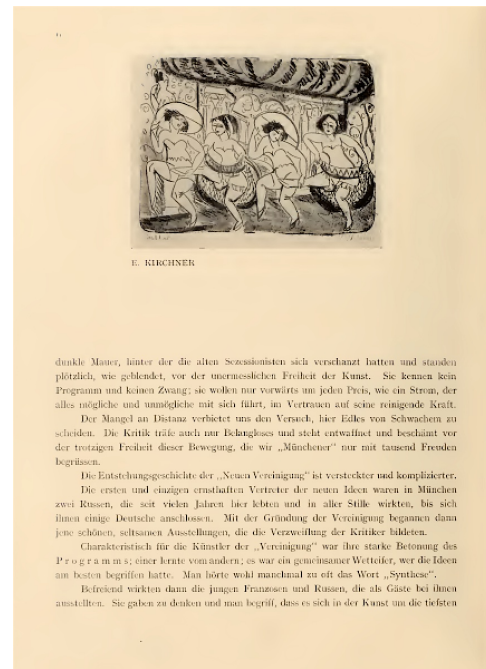


Figure 37: Christin Schäd's design for the poster of Grand Bal Dada (Great Dada Ball), 1920. Red and black print on yellow paper, 79 x 56 cm. Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva, Cabinet des Estampes

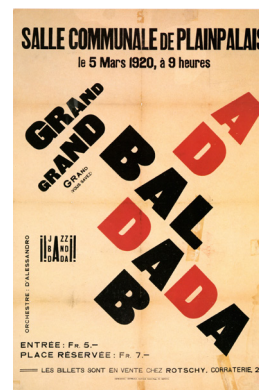




Figure 38: Photograph of George Grosz as Dada-Death. From *Dada Performance*, ed. Mel Gordon (New York: PAJ Publications, 1987), 64.

<p><i>Die kapriziöse Dame der Herr Welt</i></p> <p>liegt und die Scherzhaft</p> <p>deutsch: „Ach und die Großstadt“</p> <p>entfällt: Weicheude Effneys aus der Welt der Eleganz und Freude</p> <p>besetzt: einen mondänen Modenführer durch alle Reizier Neuanstellungen</p> <p>Geschäftsstelle: Sch. 19 Karpfinger Straße 73/74</p>	<p>Ankauf von Juwelen und Uhren zu den höchsten Preisen Riemer Friedrichstraße 153a (Laden) Schräg gegenüber „Cafe Victoria“.</p> <p>SCHALL UND RAUCH IM GROSSEN SCHAUSPIELHAUS Direktion: RUDOLF KURTZ — Künstlerischer Beirat: HEINZ HERALD und ERNST STERN</p> <p>DEZEMBER-PROGRAMM:</p> <p>Der Conferancier (mit zwei verschobenen) Eberhard Wrede Der Zirkusdirektor Paul Graetz Serenissimus Hans Junkermann Kindermann Hans Henryk Der Kammerdiener Edgar Kanisch</p> <p>Gustav von Wangenheim: Pierröt-Lieder Text: Gustav v. Wangenheim — Musik: Werner R. Heymann Lala Herdmenger: Tänze Musik: Robert Forster-Larriaga</p> <p>Klabund: Eigene groteske Dichtungen</p> <p>Ein Tag des Reichspräsidenten Karikaturenfilm, gezeichnet von Walter Trier Musik von Friedrich Hollaender</p> <p>PAUSE</p> <p>Gertrud Eysoldt Hans Heinrich von Twardowski: Parodier.</p> <p>Musikal. Leitung: FRIEDRICH HOLLENDER — Techn. Leitung: PAUL ERCKENS — Am Flügel: FRIEDRICH HOLLENDER Eröffnung 1/8 Uhr</p> <p>Text und Musik der Vorträge des Marionettenspiels sind am Büchertisch in „Schall und Rauch“ zu haben.</p> <p>PAUL EGGBRECHT Weingroßhandlung und Weinstuben Friedrichstraße 109 gegenüber der Karistraße (3 Minuten vom Theater)</p> <p>Schultheiß-Restaurant Inh.: H. GÖTZ Karlststraße 19, Am Zirkus 2 (im Großen Schauspielhaus) Täglich: Auf Nacht 210 Vor und nach dem Theater: Warme und kalte Küche Wiener Küche Gutzugedigte Weine — H. Lükör</p>	<p>Reserviert für: E. LIEBERMANN Brillanten-, Goldwarenverkauf Karlststraße 16</p> <p>Frei</p> <p>PERSONEN: Der Wichter (Gavaldi von anno 1870) Agamemnon (König) Hobart — Kommande General in den besten Jahren Klytemnestra (Seine Gattin, vollbüsig, gefährliches Alter) Agath (Seine Diener) Libret und Drehbucher, später Demokrat, Präsident Kass Andre (Kass) mit Spitzschloßchen Ereiter von der Heilarmee Orest (Offizier eines atlantischen Preikorps, Kneigt, Hobart) Henry Pythia (genannt die Duse des nordischen Kneigt) Woodrow Apollon (reist in solaren Spätkreis) Der Coor der Presse (aktuelle Steuerminister)</p> <p>Mitwirkende: Blandine Ebinger, Fränze Roloff, Lotte Stein, Edgar Kanisch, Gustav von Wangenheim, Eberhard Wrede Musik: von Friedrich Hollaender Licht: von Bildhauer Waldemar Hecker</p> <p>„EINFACH KLASSISCH!“ Eine Orestie mit glücklichem Ausgang (ein Puppenspiel) von Walter Mehring 1. Agamemnon im Bade — 2. Die Morgenröte der Demokratie 3. Die klassische Steuerflucht</p>	<p>Trauringe Dukaten-Gold 900 14 Karat, 188 Karat 1 Kar. Gold von 18,75 an Verkauf direkt an Privat Goldwaren-Fabrik G. m. b. H.</p> <p>Weinstock Zentrale: Mohrenstr. 16 Alexanderstraße 14a, Köthener Baum 14 Charlottenburg, Potsdamer Str. 6, 4. u. 5. u. 6. u. 7. u. 8. u. 9. u. 10. u. 11. u. 12. u. 13. u. 14. u. 15. u. 16. u. 17. u. 18. u. 19. u. 20. u. 21. u. 22. u. 23. u. 24. u. 25. u. 26. u. 27. u. 28. u. 29. u. 30. u. 31. u. 32. u. 33. u. 34. u. 35. u. 36. u. 37. u. 38. u. 39. u. 40. u. 41. u. 42. u. 43. u. 44. u. 45. u. 46. u. 47. u. 48. u. 49. u. 50. u. 51. u. 52. u. 53. u. 54. u. 55. u. 56. u. 57. u. 58. u. 59. u. 60. u. 61. u. 62. u. 63. u. 64. u. 65. u. 66. u. 67. u. 68. u. 69. u. 70. u. 71. u. 72. u. 73. u. 74. u. 75. u. 76. u. 77. u. 78. u. 79. u. 80. u. 81. u. 82. u. 83. u. 84. u. 85. u. 86. u. 87. u. 88. u. 89. u. 90. u. 91. u. 92. u. 93. u. 94. u. 95. u. 96. u. 97. u. 98. u. 99. u. 100. u. 101. u. 102. u. 103. u. 104. u. 105. u. 106. u. 107. u. 108. u. 109. u. 110. u. 111. u. 112. u. 113. u. 114. u. 115. u. 116. u. 117. u. 118. u. 119. u. 120. u. 121. u. 122. u. 123. u. 124. u. 125. u. 126. u. 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<p>Juwelen, Perlen Margraf & Co. Q. m. Kanonenstraße 9 b. H. Tauentzienstraße 18 a</p> <p>An- und Verkauf Zur gemütlichen Weinstube!</p> <p>Niedels Weinstuben Gute Weine! Glasweiser Ausschank! Ziegelstraße 1 (an der Friedrichstraße)</p> <p>Siegbert Levy BERLIN W. Potsdamer Straße 6 (am Potsdamer Platz) Elegante Blusen, Kleider u. Damenmodeneinheiten</p> <p>Akademische Bierhallen Oekonom: RICH. THALER Dorotheenstraße Ecke Charlottenstraße (am Bahnh. Friedrichstraße) Gute Küche Weine u. Liköre, kalte, echte Biere Vereins- und Klubzimmer, Ausgezeichnete Küche — Mäßige Preise</p> <p>Neu eröffnet! WEINKLAUSE Gemütlichste Weinstuben am Potsdamer Platz (Eingang durch das Schultheiß-Restaurant)</p>
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Figure 39: Schall und Rauch cabaret program showing the “Einfach Klassisch!” play by Walter Mehring, with puppets designed by Grosz and Heartfield. *Schall und Rauch Hefte 1*, December 1919, midsection. Collection of the author.

Figure 40: *Niggertanz*, George Grosz. Drawing in the February 1920 program booklet for Schall and Rauch. *Schall und Rauch Hefte 3*, December 1920, page 3. Collection of the author.



Figure 41: Cover for the Dada program booklet of Schall und Rauch for May of 1920, showing a photomontage by Raoul Hausmann. *Schall und Rauch Hefte 6*, Mai 1920, cover. Collection of the author.



Figure 44: Picture Postcard of Claire Waldoff, signed, ca. 1923. 14 x 9 cm. Collection of the author.

Figure 45: Otto Dix, *Bildnis der Journalisten Sylvia von Harden* (Portrait of the Journalist Sylvia Von Harden), 1926. Mixed media, oil and tempera on wood, 89 x 121 cm. Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée national d'art modern, Paris.

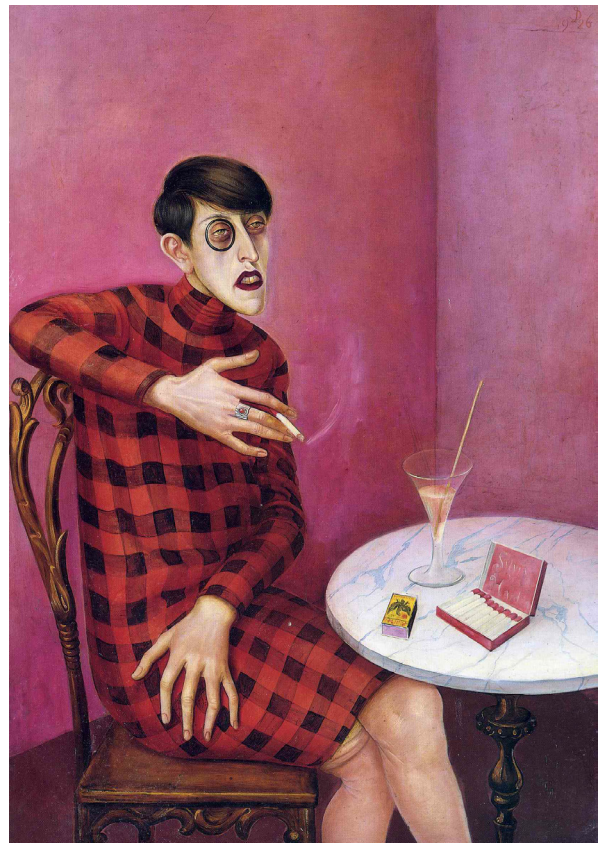




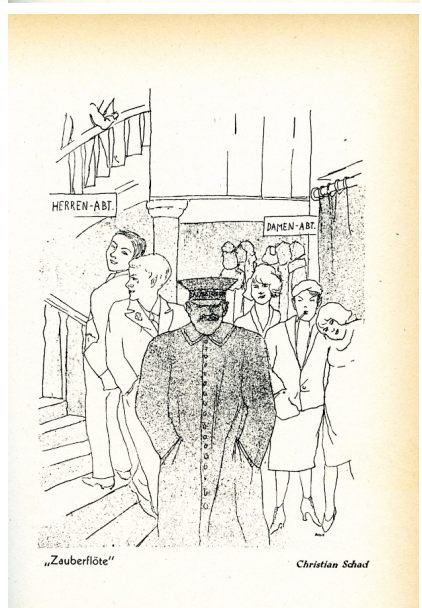
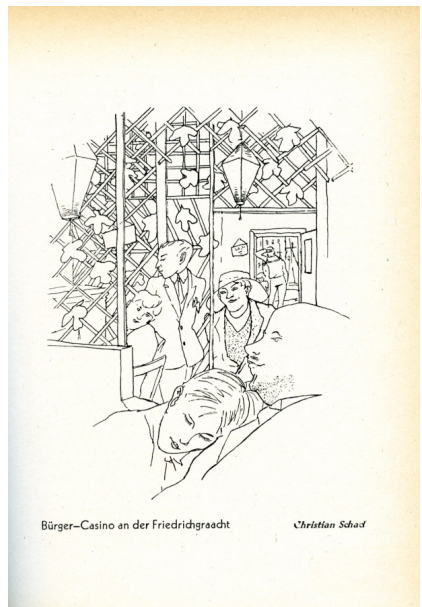
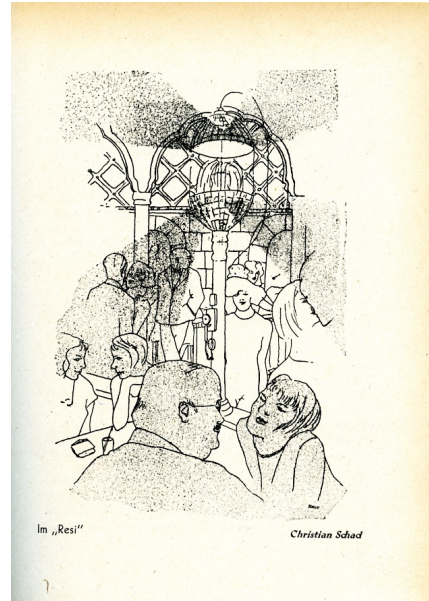
Figure 46: Christian Schad, *Graf St. Genois d'Anneaucourt (Count St. Genois d'Anneaucourt)*, 1927. Oil on wood, 86 x 63 cm. Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée national d'art modern, Paris.



Figure 47: Christian Schad, *Baronesse Vera Wassilko (Baroness Vera Wassilko)*, 1926. Oil on canvas, 74 x 49 cm. Private collection, Chicago.

Figure 48: Some of Christian Schad's illustrations from his observations of Berlin cabaret nightlife for the book *Führer durch das 'lasterhafte' Berlin* published in 1931.

Note also George Grosz's contribution on the bottom right.



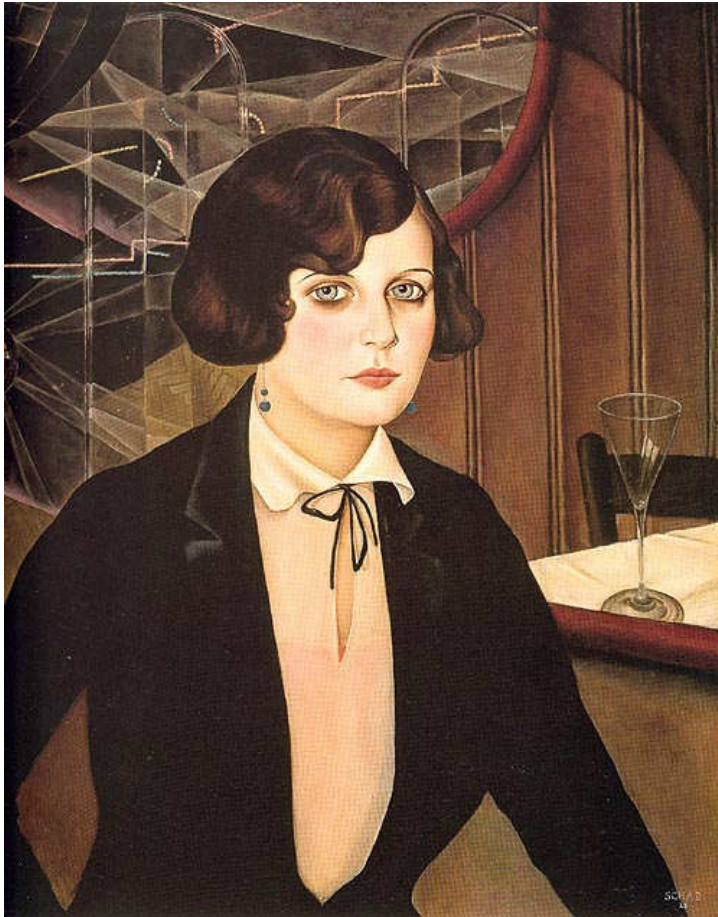


Figure 49: Christian Schad, *Lotte*, 1928. Oil on wood, 66.2 x 54.5 cm. Sprengel Museum Hannover

Figure 50: Christian Schad, *Sonja (Sonja, Max Hermann-Neisse in the Background)*, 1928. Oil on canvas, 90 x 60 cm. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Nationalgalerie.



Appendix A – The Process for the Intermedial Work of Art

Simplified diagram showing how the varying factors converge, with the main influences of Nietzsche, Berlin cabaret and the artist's sociopolitical and historical conditions, resulting in a *formal/transformatal intermedial* work of art.

