The Dada Text and the Landscape of War

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What a privilege and good fortune it was to find myself forty years ago in a Dada graduate seminar conducted by Stephen Foster and Ruedi Kuenzli, and to have been able to spend many hours in the University of Iowa Museum in Art's pioneering 1978 *Dada Artifacts* exhibition. This unusual show presented a vast array of Dada ephemera from prominent collections including those of Timothy Baum, Hans Kleinschmidt, MoMA, the Walter Arensberg Collection in Philadelphia, and many more. Taken with Dawn Ades's contemporaneous *Dada and Surrealism Reviewed* at the Hayward Gallery in London — which I was also privileged to see — these groundbreaking exhibitions foregrounded the periodicals, broadsides, manifestoes, and even letterheads and visiting cards, that formed the lifeblood of the Dada movement and thereby provided a key to understanding the uniqueness of Dada. And there were few antecedents. *Dada 1916-1923* held in 1953 at the Sydney Janis Gallery in New York was the first US show to have Dada as its sole focus. Dadaist Hans Richter's *Dada 1916-1966: Documents of the International Dada Movement*, a traveling show beginning at the Goethe Institute in Munich in 1966, presented an innovative installation consisting of Dada documents reproduced on large transparent wall size panels, thrust towards the visitor like conventional artworks (Benson and Michaud 170). As Cécile Bargues has shown, Richter's careful organization of the layout galleys (which survive in his archive at MoMA) document the intensity of his activities as a guardian of the Dada heritage in the last decades of his life (161-84). It is also largely to Richter that we are indebted for the historiographic model of Dada centers presented in his *Dada: Kunst und Antikunst* (*Dada: Art and Anti-Art*), just two years before this exhibition in 1964. This convergence of text and geography offers more clues to the uniqueness of Dada.

Among the artifacts Richter chose to present was Theo van Doesburg's manifesto-like declaration taken from his eponymous brochure "Wat is Dada?" — a query that challenges us to ponder what is truly unique about Dada (fig. 1). Despite warnings from the dadaists, scholars have delved into all manner of definitions — ideological, stylistic, formal—allowing for political and social contexts, as well as literary and philosophical considerations. Yet how Dada functioned as an art form, a modernist movement, or political manifestation,

generally defines Dada in terms that seem to exist beyond Dada, rather than in terms of what is *unique* to it.

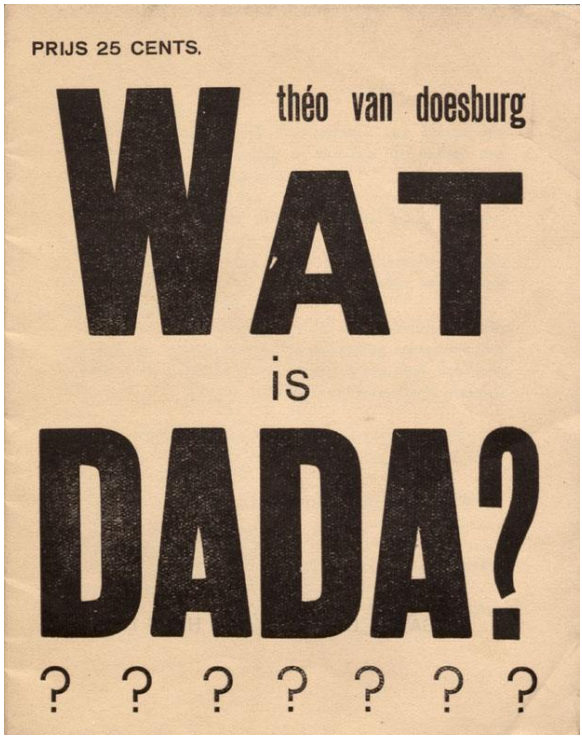

Figure 1: Theo van Doesburg, *Wat is Dada?* (cover) (The Hague: De Stijl, 1923). International Dada Archive, Special Collections, University of Iowa Libraries.

Pondering the question with which Doesburg's brochure ends, "Weet U nu wat 'Dada' is?" 'Now do you know what Dada is?' (14; *What Is Dada* 36), remains humbling, as does Tristan Tzara's warning that "littérature est dossier de l'imbécilité humaine pour l'orientation des professeurs à venir" 'literature is a dossier of human imbecility for the guidance of future professors.' ("Note 14"; "Note on Poetry" 77). Our myriad of explanations leads us into the conundrum of Paul Dermée's 1920 declaration in *Z* that "everything is Dada" and Tzara's admonition from his 1918 manifesto: "Dada ne signifie rien" 'Dada does not mean anything' ("Manifeste Dada 1918"; "Dada Manifesto 1918" 4). But we can take solace in Tzara's next contention that we not "perd son temps pour un mot qui ne signifie rien" 'waste our time over a word that doesn't mean anything.' Instead we might consider what the word "Dada" *does*. In this paper I will consider how the word Dada performs, how it nominates, attacks (as we might expect from its birth by fire in World War I), maps and diagrams (in some ways akin to a military strategy), advertises (in a mediascape greatly advanced by the war), speculates,

and even participates in the creation of cultural space — concepts that derive to some degree from the battlefield and war mediascape that Dada critiques.

Seeped in the cosmopolitan ambience of the avant-guerre, the dadaists recognized in the text what Tzara called a "langue essentielle de chiffres" 'fundamental language of cryptograms' ("Note 14"; "Note on Poetry" 77) as well as an arena of syntax and logic that had been playfully undone aurally and visually in literary works ranging from Mallarmé and Morgenstern to Roussel's *Impressions d'Afrique* (1910-12) and Apollinaire's *Calligrammes* (1913-16). But beginning with F. T. Marinetti's *Zang Tumb Tuuum* (Milan, 1914) the avant-garde felt compelled to respond to the atmosphere of the wide-spread social and political disruption caused by the war and to make the social use of text a fundamental concern of their art.Two projects from the Iowa Dada program focused on the dadaists' exploration of the instrumentality of the text to challenge beliefs in immanent signification by implicating the social and institutional settings in which the text occurred: the 1988 exhibition drawn from the Hans Kleinschmidt collection of avant-garde documents titled *The Avant-Garde and the Text* for which a special issue of *Visible Language* served as a catalog, and the first volume in Stephen Foster's series Crisis and the Arts: The History of Dada, published in 1996. Both placed an emphasis on what Foster called "the Dadas' actions and works as records of cultural transaction [rather] than as aesthetic objects . . . [their] intimate participation in the processes . . . of culture" (2). These volumes also articulated how aesthetic manipulation of the text became an effective means for *situating* the text vis-a-vis a widening range of social institutions, including some unaccustomed to transacting the text as an aesthetic artifact.

Separate from the often diagrammatic or otherwise evocative appearance of the text in religious and occult usage, the appearance of the secular text had previously been largely incidental to its purposes, allowing it to remain visually "inert." The text was assumed to be part of a predictable and repeatable *pattern* of communication, an integral component of a broader social formation. Even for radical artists and writers it had been more the *content* than the *appearance* or immediate situation of the enactment of a given text to which the revolutionary objectives were entrusted. This all began to change, even before the war, with periodicals like Hugo Ball and Hans Leybold's journal *Revolution* (fig. 2). The bright red calligraphic and seemingly spontaneous masthead along with Richard Seewald's cover woodcut evoke Erich Mühsam's notion of revolution as "active, singular, sudden, " and "chaotic, " as he proclaimed in the journal's opening essay.

Revolution was indebted to the avowedly anti-bourgeois visual format and modernized appearance of Franz Pfemfert's activist journal *Die Aktion*, Herwarth Walden's popular and more apolitical *Der Sturm*, and the typically expansive format of American newspapers with tradition-breaking antiqua type and large, forceful graphics — anathema to the conservative layout and *Fraktur* type of most contemporary German artistic and literary reviews. This shifting of the text from a content-laden cultural carrier to an *event* or incident in a transitory configuration

allowed the text to perform situationally amidst givens to establish connections to produce new meanings in a way not dissimilar from Kurt Schwitters' principle of "Merz: " "Merz means creating relationships, preferably between all things in the world" ("Merz").

Figure 2: *Revolution,* no. 1, ed. Hans Leybold and Hugo Ball (Munich, 15 Oct. 1913) (Cover). International Dada Archive, Special Collections, University of Iowa Libraries.

When Hausmann asked rhetorically in *Der Dada* no. 2 "What is Dada?" he speculated ironically on whether Dada might not be an art, a philosophy, a politics, a fire insurance, or state religion, or "Garnichts, d. h. alles" 'nothing, i.e., everything.'[1] Such a performative act of nomination, of labeling, applied to things and places, produced contradictory episodes of meaning and is perhaps the singular strategy most typical of Dada as a collective enterprise. Rather than turning inward, the text was now tied implicitly to a reflecting subject and the surrounding world. So persistent was Dada's procedure or "move" of *naming* so

[1] Where no published translations are cited, all translations are mine.

many things besides itself, as itself, that a myriad of meanings for the word "Dada" resulted. This pervasive strategy seemed to undo the entire mechanism of meaning, as was the contention of the linguistic theoretician Roman Jakobson as he arrived in Prague in 1920 at age twenty-three, fresh from Moscow via Berlin where he may have taken in the *Dada-Messe*. In an essay titled "Dada" written soon thereafter he contended that the dadaists were "running interference as it were" (37). Rather than concealing, Dada went beyond a "laying bare of the device" to exist as "the already laid-bare device" (38). Such confiscation and articulation of meaning by mapping extant conditions provided socially-critical artists with a diagnostics of the operational modes of culture akin to Marcel Duchamp's notion of "Dada" as an indivisible "prime word" capable of "undefining" any situation that might be thought of as bracketing artistic works, styles, ideologies, objectives, or theories in any definitive fashion (31).

Such a semiotic strategy is borne out in Raoul Hausmann's remarkable photocollage of 1920, emblazoned with a subtitle *Dada siegt* (*Dada Conquers*, Photocollage, 1920, Private Collection) as it appeared on Dada stationary, a phrase that would become the title of Richard Huelsenbeck's triumphant book of that year. Hausmann's world is not just conquered by Dada but permeated by Dada, interconnected by Dada's pseudo-technological systems overseen (in hat and gloves) by Dada's "Dadasoph, Dadaraoul, Director of the Circus Dada," the "President of the Sun, Moon and Little Earth," announced on Hausmann's Dada visiting card. Nearby are Hausmann's favorite alter-egos, the modern fashion plate and engineer. Prague's Wenceslas Square in a photograph on the easel, a "sportif" ball on the floor below, and a world map high above on the wall are all labeled with the word "Dada." Indeed, Dada nomination extended far beyond Europe: as Francis Picabia declared in *Cannibale*, "en Amérique tout est DADA" 'in America everything is DADA' ("Je suis des javanais"; "I am Javanese").

Nomination is endemic to the functioning of language in general — a generic act subject to Dada's language play and use of chance. This brings consequences beyond the mere chance generation of nonsense. When Tzara — ever distrustful of systems — supplanted reason by assembling by chance torn scraps of paper containing words to compose poetry, he removed intentionality from both himself and from the creative process, allowing the material manipulated by chance to produce what only the subject can recognize as ideas, as Bernard Wagner has noted (25). The dadaists entrusted order and meaning to what they perceived as the flux of reality, a tactic of nomination embodying Michel Foucault's "primitive moment" where language is "pure designation" with all the "arbitrariness" between language and "that which it names" — the "sovereign act of nomination" where "things and words are conjoined in their common essence" (104, 117). Hausmann's early chance-derived *Plakatgedichte* (poster poems) such as *fmsbwtözäu* (1918) enact a critical "pre-language" juncture where the relationship of sound and referent is yet in formation. Hausmann's evocative vocalizations in his performance of these poems (sometimes while dancing in expressive gestures)

were intended to take them to a primordial level that might also obviate predetermined codes of signification. The promise of Dada nomination was an epistemological and ontological investigation practiced collectively to obviate or disrupt the social discourses and logic that the dadaists held accountable for a social order which had produced the disastrous Great War. Thus extant language and ideologies, as well as their means of production and distribution, were for many of the dadaists *a priori* systems that needed to be "staked out" as a territory in the cultural field where their meaning could be disrupted or suspended.

Hausmann's photocollage *Dada siegt* in turn conveys these systems within a de Chiricoesque space, a configuration that displaces place and emphasizes space created by virtue of cultural artifacts linked by social relations, thus a representation of "social space," in Henri Lefebvre's sense (73), or, as Deleuze and Guattari might describe it, as something "constructed, a map that is always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable" (21). As cartographers of a cultural geography the dadaists were concerned with "how cultures, involving traits, complexes, and systems, are spread over space" (Kaufmann 2-3). The dadaists critiqued expressionist exoticism by asserting that modern artifacts were no longer stable and eternal symbols, but rather decentered and constantly shifting constellations, each an "equation" *(Gleichung)* or "equivalent" *(Äquivalent)* in Carl Einstein's words (xx) — for Hausmann, "eine Gestaltung organisch in Analogie der gesehenen Momente weder nachahmend noch beschreibend" 'a formation organic in analogy of the perceived instances neither imitative nor descriptive' (*Material*). Meaning would now be located only in what anthropologist James Clifford has called "local authenticities" (4) — that is, the found artifacts of the industrialized mass culture whose meaning was socially-based. Like the anthropologist's aesthetically-neutral practice of dissection and reassembly of surrounding rituals and artifacts, the artist creates new contextualizations in a contradictory and paradoxical enterprise (12).

The recapturing of the primitive without recourse to the exotic had been proclaimed in Huelsenbeck's 1918 "Dadaist Manifesto": "the word Dada symbolizes the most primitive relation to the reality of the environment" (38), an idea reiterated by Hausmann in *Der Dada* 3: "DADA war zunächst ein Bekenntnis zur unbedingten Primitivität" 'Dada was above all a creed espousing absolute primitivity' ("Dada in Europa"). The dadaists' cultivation of a spatially-conceived emancipatory consciousness may have constituted one of the "little eddies of a lively geographic imagination [that] survived outside the mainstreams of Marxism-Leninism and positivist social science" (Soja 4). This promised a critical and dialectical consciousness as Huelsenbeck proclaimed in his "Dadaistisches Manifest," "Affirmation — negation: the gigantic hocus-pocus of existence fires the nerves of the true Dadaist" ("Collective Dada Manifesto" 246). Such a "physical cleavage" of nothingness could construct a social ontology and a commensurate awareness of the spatiality of being (Soja 132).

How did this spatial and geographical dimension of the Dada text participate in the landscape of war? The largest and most communal event of the dadaist attack on the political, economic, and social infrastructure they held responsible for the Great War was the 1920 Berlin *Dada-Messe*, a clear result of what Arndt Niebisch has called Dada as linguistic shrapnel, a word that was "completely meaningless that nonetheless had the power to invade every aspect of a society" (11). In the wake of the war, anti-militarism could finally be broached, even if it risked being censored, as were John Heartfield and Rudolf Schlichter's *Preußischer Erzengel* (Prussian Archangel) — a uniformed mannequin with the face of a pig hanging from the ceiling — and George Grosz's portfolio of lithographs, *Gott mit Uns* (God with Us), offenses for which both Grosz and Heartfield were fined in subsequent trials.

Many students of Dada are familiar with Johannes Baader's observation in the *Dada Almanach*, "The World War is a newspaper war. In reality, it never existed" (101). He was interpreting his assemblage made of newspapers and other ephemera, the *Dio-Dada-Drama* exhibited at the *Dada Messe*. Baader included many war-time newspapers in a construction that itself may reference the frequent exhibitions of sometimes similarly piled up weapons, trophies, and war paraphernalia sometimes accompanied by manikins held throughout Germany, as Katharina Hoins points out. Baader's statement follows a well-established discourse in the World War I mediascape about visual propaganda and the weaponizing of journalism, as exemplified in a 1918 review in the *Neueste Illustrierte Rundschau* of a poster exhibition in Berlin that included examples from America, France, and Britain that were praised as often superior to German examples ("Der Papierne Krieg").

Baader's statement might also be seen as questioning the social and political construct "war" used to justify its mass slaughter, and to bracket its beginning and end. Without the newspapers and the expanded media space of broadsides, posters, film, and postcards, neither the beginning nor end of the First World War would be so easily discerned. Did it begin with the Balkan Wars in 1912 or with even earlier European and colonial struggles? What of the violent conflicts persisting after the 1918 Armistice with revolution in Germany, civil war in Russia and Ireland, frontier struggles between Greece and Turkey, as well as Russia and Poland, and the hundreds of incidences of violent social upheaval in America in 1919 alone?

From its very declaration, the war was a media event, as portrayed by the comparatively conservative Max Liebermann on the cover of the premiere issue of *Kriegszeit*, the leading Berlin artists' war periodical. Here the German Kaiser announces to a huge crowd gathered before his palace in Berlin that Germany was at war. In a plea made in the Reichstag a few days later the Kaiser drew upon deep nationalist roots in the statement which Liebermann scrawled below his portrayal: "I no longer see any political parties, now I see only Germans."

Crucially most observers would have seen Liebermann's lithograph as a mediated image, given its wide coverage in stories and photographs distributed through the burgeoning mass media. Not only the *Berlin Illustrierte Zeitung* (no. 32, 2 August 1914, p. 638), but even the sedate provincial weekly, *Kieler Hausfrau* (fig. 3) — a source for fold-out clothes patterns and lace-making designs — was now suddenly a vehicle of war imagery. Its 16 August cover featured a photo of the Kaiser's speech from the same viewpoint as Liebermann's image, replete with an observation platform with a still photographer and film cameraman, possibly from the Kaiser's own media crew. Echoes of Baader's sentiments may be found in French cultural historian Paul Virilio's suggestion that "there is no war . . . without representation, no sophisticated weaponry without psychological mystification" (6).

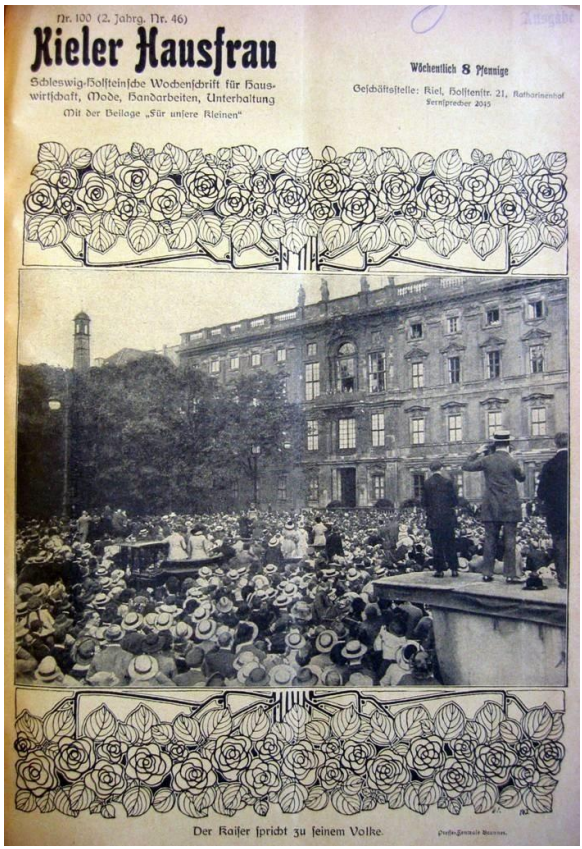

Figure 3: "Vor dem Schloß während der Ansprache des Kaisers" (In Front of the Palace during the Emperor's Address). *Kieler Hausfrau: Schleswig-Holsteinsche Wochenschrift für Hauswirtschaft, Mode Handarbeiten, Unterhaltung*, vol. 2, no. 100, 16 August 1914 (Cover).

The dadaists were responding to a media world where images were uprooted, recontextualized, reconfigured, and re-weaponized. This occurred, among many examples, when official Canadian war photographer Ivor Castle's photographs celebrating the new British secret weapon, the tank, were used to portray the "Mysterious Monsters on the Muddy Somme" in *The War Illustrated* (9 December 1916, pp. 2256-57), images soon repurposed in the *Neueste illustrierte Rundschau* (fig. 4) to convey impotent, plodding targets easily dispensed with by artillery if the vehicles didn't break down first.

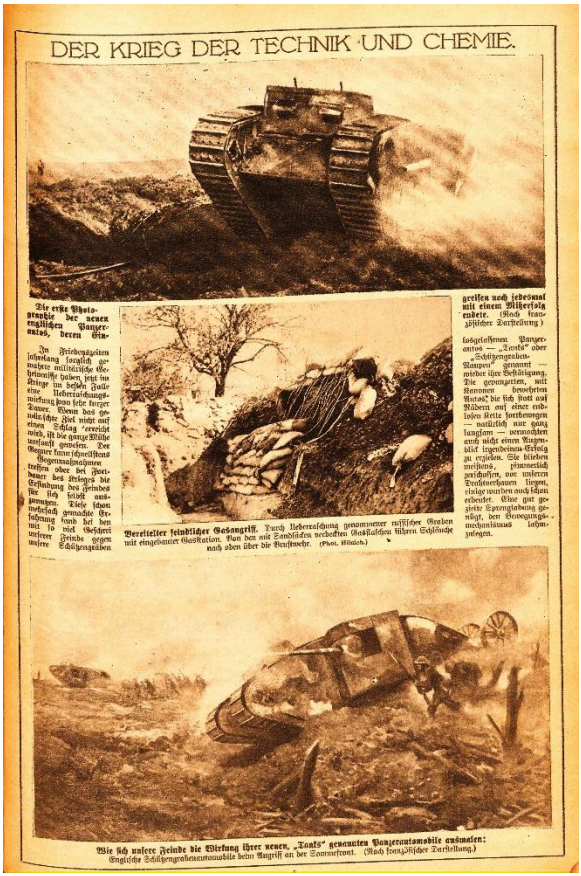

Figure 4: "Krieg der Technik und Chemie."*Neueste illustrierte Rundschau*, no. 49, 30 Dec. 1916, p. 9.

Not only did the armored tank, fighter bomber airplane, and chemical weapons evolve over the course of the war, but the targeting of these weapons, as well as coordinated artillery barrages and the conducting of battles in general, depended on advances in aerial photography, telephoto lenses, film, and real-time

data communicated via telephone and wireless telegraphy. This experience was shared — and even dependent upon — the unprecedented and equally industrialized reconstruction of the war in illustrated periodicals, posters, photography, and film. Thus, during the Great War, the means of mass media were not only engaged as reportage and weaponized as propaganda, but technological advances shared by the mass media were harnessed to accomplish unprecedented industrialized destruction.

The notorious six-month Battle of the Somme began in July 1916 simultaneously with the first feature-length battle documentary film ever made, *The Battle of the Somme*. It was shot by the British cameramen Geoffrey Malins and John McDowell, who captured a broad range of war preparations, movement of supplies, and scenes of the actual battle in which some of the soldiers who appear were dead soon after being filmed. In contrast with the purview of the film, what the soldiers trapped in the actual conditions of the trenches could see was very little. They could often not see whom they were shelling nor who was attacking them, relying instead on what Virilio calls the "remote perception" of aerial reconnaissance from planes and balloons using wireless telegraphy (3), film and still cameras with telephoto lenses, or artillery spotters in observation posts miles from the canons or creeping along the ground reporting through phone lines, as recounted by Ernst Jünger in his *Storm of Steel* (94). The battlefield could only be seen by a composite perspective provided in part by the advanced technology used by the military and media alike; the media space and the battlefield were becoming integral with one another as never before. Perception had taken a radical turn toward a spatiality amplified by technology. Often the same images — including aerial photography of enemy troop positions or documentation of the destruction wrought by artillery — were spread through the spectacle of the public media space of films and illustrated newspapers. This provided a rich and multifaceted perspective on the war from multiple viewpoints unavailable anywhere else, even to its participants on the battlefield.

Yet the full intensity and horror of battle could scarcely be captured by any means. Soldiers faced nearly certain death when ordered "over the top" into what Ernst Jünger called "random sprays of machine-gun bullets" (89). By contrast the "over the top" sequence in *The Battle of the Somme* was re-enacted safely behind the lines. In actual battle soldiers found themselves in the midst of flying artillery shrapnel where life and death were determined by the chance of the moment, as captured in Wilfred Owen's poem "The Chances." Such impersonal mechanized killing led to a complete mutation of perception of time and space on the battlefield, as one soldier wrote in the trench journal *Le 120 Court*: "Accustomed to this day-to-day and hour-by-hour life, we leave to others the task of sending patrols into the future" (Audoin-Rouzeau 159). As authors from Robert Graves to psychical researcher Charles Carrington have noted, to actually experience the chaos of the deafening artillery barrage (even when not in the zone under attack)

was to endure terror as a kind of hypnotic condition that shattered any rational pattern of cause and effect or even any sense of temporal sequence.

How could this extreme state of time compressed into the present be portrayed in the arts? On the eve of the war the Italian futurists, French cubists, and "orphists" around Robert Delaunay celebrated the "simultaneity" of distant places brought together by modern communications such as the radio-telegraph atop the Eiffel Tower seen at the center of Robert Delaunay's painting, *Simultaneous Windows, 2nd motif, 1st part*, 1912 (Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum). In 1913 German essayist and philosopher Salomo Friedlaender had already extolled a "presentist" consciousness of simultaneous interactions that would find echoes in Hausmann's 1921 presentist manifesto ("Présentismus"). And throughout Europe many considered the world in terms of the vitalist philosophies of Bergson, Nietzsche, and others. Otto Dix and Gino Severini were among those who continued to pursue an Italian futurist mode of simultaneity and dynamism at the dawn of the war, but their artistic approaches soon changed precisely because, as Steven Kern argues, technological innovations in weaponry and military tactics culminated in a war that was a transformative event in modern consciousness so intense that it left little place for Bergson's more contemplative *durée*; instead the isolation of the present from the flow of time past and future now overwhelmed the modern psyche (294).

It took Robert Graves, Siegfried Sassoon, and Otto Dix years of struggle to find a new language adequate to embody their experiences of such unimaginable battle trauma, as the venerable literary historian Paul Fussell points out in his landmark study *The Great War and Modern Memory*. At the same time new technological media such as photography and film were evolving now in direct competition with traditional art. Which has more authenticity? The hallucinatory surreal nightmare illuminated by the flares of a nighttime battle as rendered on paper by Otto Dix in such images as "The Outposts in the Trenches Must Maintain the Bombardment at Night" from his 1924 *Krieg* series? Or the "Over the Top" image by official Canadian war photographer Ivor Castle (Library and Archives Canada, PA-001182)? This photograph was widely used to report the war in British and French illustrated newspapers. Yet, as Inge Henneman as shown, the photograph was staged using soldiers in training (42-43). It was used, for example in *The War Illustrated* (3 February 1917) and *Le Miroir* (18 November 1917) (Bibliothèque nationale de France) (Henneman, 42-43). Such doctored images were far from rare.

The *Dada-Messe* was permeated with the residue of such media representations and constructions of the war, now transformed by what Hanne Bergius has called "the dialectic between political extract and satirical portrayal" (33). The so-called political and aesthetic wings of Berlin Dada were exemplified in John Heartfield's propaganda slogans and Hausmann and Hannah Höch's more generic cross-section of the media environment deploying the visual codes of advertising, as proclaimed in Hausmann's now lost *DADA Reklame* collage on display.

Their generic and anonymous "cross-section" of the media evokes Walter Benjamin's observation that "the epic moment will always be blown apart" (406), leaving what Nicholas Mirzoeff has called a "horizontal visuality" creating a "photographic common that turns hierarchy inside out" and "reaches across space and seeks to find its others" (200). Among the most accomplished and sustained practitioners of capturing this media space was certainly Höch, as best exemplified in her *Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch of Germany* (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Nationalgalerie). With Höch the Dada photocollage, in its process of "aufkleben" — "gluing on" or "assembling" — released the collage from the *papier collées* tradition into what Bergius has called "the photograph as political quotation and the destruction of illusion through montage" (34). Höch uncovered how politics, technology, advertising, fashion, and mass culture were defined by communication systems and shared with Hausmann an awareness of how **s**ignification was now to be found in the ruptures, discontinuities, and breaks between the fragments of routine artistic and communicative practice.[2] Höch plumbed this media space, collecting actual fragments from periodicals published at the Ullstein Verlag, where she was employed as a pattern designer. Her panoramic view of postwar Germany is permeated not only by Dada letters and words but also figures from the world of culture and politics as they appeared in the media. These included references to the war as well as contemporary political events such as workers rebelling in Berlin during the social unrest and revolution of 1918-19.

While the *Dada-Messe* represents the most significant collective critique by the dadaists of the mediascape produced by the war, many artists derived individual strategies from their experience of the battlefield. Some shared with the dadaists an interest in mapping and diagraming, evoking in their multiple perspectives what Kern typifies as a cubist landscape, a term he borrows from Gertrude Stein's impression of her first flight which occurred under more peaceful circumstances (Kern 288). For military strategists and artists alike, this multiplicity was conveyed through various technologies and rendered "whole" only abstractly through maps and dispatches or more representationally only through a combination of photography, film, and artists' renderings in the mass media.

In his *The Night of January 20th, 1915 I Dreamt This Picture (Joffre's Angle of Penetration on the Marne Against two German Cubes)*[3], from *Guerrapittura*, 1915, Carlo Carrà drew a triangle to represent the angle of French general Joseph Joffre's attack against the Germans (represented by two cubes) during the First Battle of the Marne, as Maria-Elena Versari has shown. This attack was guided by French air reconnaissance and radio intercepts, the first time either had been used in a major

[2] Cf. Raoul Hausmann: "the photomonteur lets us perceive and recognize. He creates his photomontage out of the insignificant in-between-parts and uses the unperceived optics" ("Fotomontage" 54).

[3] Reproduced in Rainey et al. 366.

conflict (Porch). Between these geometric figures flows the vertical stream of the river Marne, at the side of which a star-shaped clipping from a contemporary newspaper signals the battle, hence a visualization of military maneuvers.

Even direct physical experience and perception were abstracted in a world where machine-like precision clashed with the disarray and fragmentation of the actual battle. German military strategist Helmuth von Moltke, having campaigned as early as 1890 for the introduction of World Standard Time, issued wristwatches to be synchronized for the precision timing crucial for the mobilization of hundreds of thousands of soldiers needing railroads, depots, supplies, and communications, and for the conduct of battles involving creeping artillery barrages and infantry advances across fronts extending miles in either direction. Such endeavors relied on frontline maps, aerial photos, and artillery barrage maps, such as those used in the Battle of Vimy Ridge that led Canadian forces to victory over the Germans, as celebrated by Castle in his photographs (Kern 288).

However, for soldiers directly engaged in such battles the perspective was very different; they were often forced to find their own way in the resulting geography. One soldier who sought to negotiate what he called the "phenomenology of landscape" was field artilleryman Kurt Lewin, who would later gain renown as an exponent of the Berlin school of Gestalt psychology. In his 1917 article, "The Landscape of War," Lewin made a distinction between physical and imagined landscapes and how they are mingled as a result of movement, behavior, and the boundaries imposed by perceived dangers. A hill is merely a "spatial form" in a landscape, round and indefinite until a danger zone imposes a "boundary" and "danger points" ("places") which then all shift as a result of mobile warfare, which imposes a "directedness" onto the landscape. During combat, "positions" of military value could impose themselves but might return to their original cultural values as villages or farmsteads once they were no longer of military value. The phases of such a relativized landscape were routinely visualized in strategic maps sometimes rendered by artists in service such as future film director Fritz Lang, who produced maps as a reconnaissance officer, winning a commendation for venturing behind enemy lines to identify previously unknown enemy artillery positions (Aurich et al. 25-26). We can imagine the influence on Lang's meticulously planned camera positions to convey the urban architectural fantasies of *Metropolis* in collaboration with set designer Erich Kettelhut, who himself rendered many drawings of destroyed buildings as a soldier.

Similarly, Hungarian artist Lazlo Moholy-Nagy served as an artillery reconnaissance officer forging ahead of the advancing troops to identify enemy targets, transcribing what he saw cartographically. In such maps he often employed signs and colors that were entirely arbitrary. As Joyce Tsai has shown, he trained his eyes to a vision augmented by the optical tools of a surveyor, forming the basis for his "New Vision" of the 1920s as articulated in his Bauhaus book, *Painting, Photography, Film* (Tsai 161-62). As Stephanie D'Alessandro has suggested, Moholy-Nagy also wanted to get beyond one-point linear perspective

arriving at what he would call "vision in motion" (64). A prime example of this immersion would be his *Kinetic Constructive System*, where the observer could become "an active partner in the forces unfolding themselves" (Moholy-Nagy and Kemény 186).

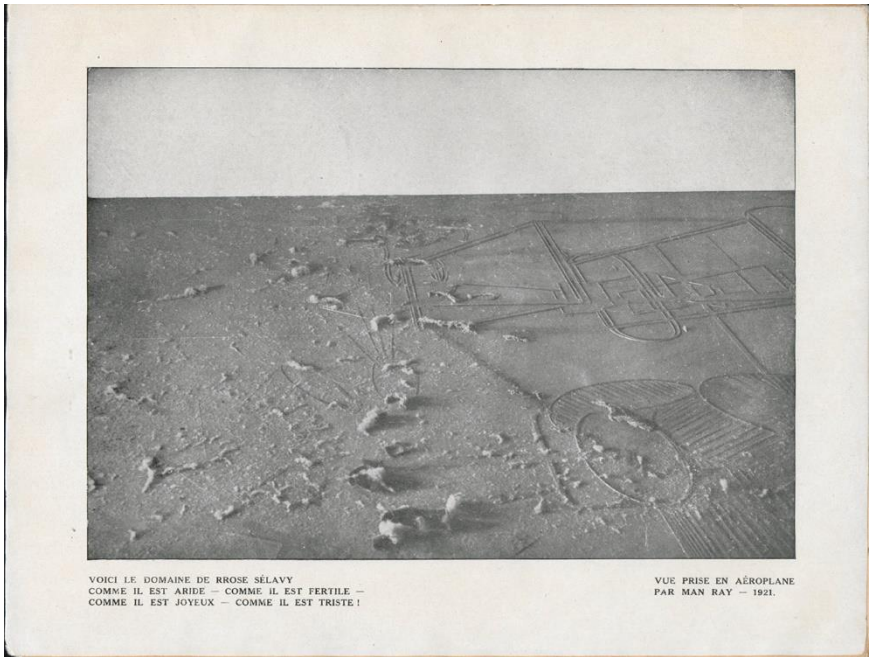

Figure 5: Man Ray, "Voici le domaine de Rrose Sélavy" ["Élevage de poussière"] (Dust Breeding). *Littérature,* n.s. no. 5, 1 Oct. 1922. International Dada Archive, Special Collections, University of Iowa Libraries.

In an analogous fashion the dadaists embraced — usually with irony — the mechanical dimensions of this perspective. For example, Marcel Duchamp's *Notes* may have been a kind of Dada "machine" *avant la lettre*, especially if interpreted with Deleuze and Guattari as an "abstract machine" which "plays a piloting roll" in generating his *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even* (142). The notes themselves may derive in part from his wartime experiences, not as a soldier (he was discharged for health reasons), but as a kind of geographer, parodying military mapmakers and aerial reconnaissance strategists. Given Duchamp's specification in his notes that "the geographical landscape [may be] looked at like a map," Béatrice Joyeux-Prune surmises that Duchamp used this strategy to distance himself from the artistic avant-garde, the tradition of landscape, and a technocratic military, with which however he shared a fascination with optics and mechanics (113).

Man Ray's 1920 photograph *Dust Breeding* captures the surface of Duchamp's unfinished *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, even* in a manner resembling an aerial surveillance photograph, a connotation he explored in its publication in the Paris surrealist journal *Littérature* (fig. 5) with the phrase "taken from an airplane by Man Ray" (Hopkins 118).

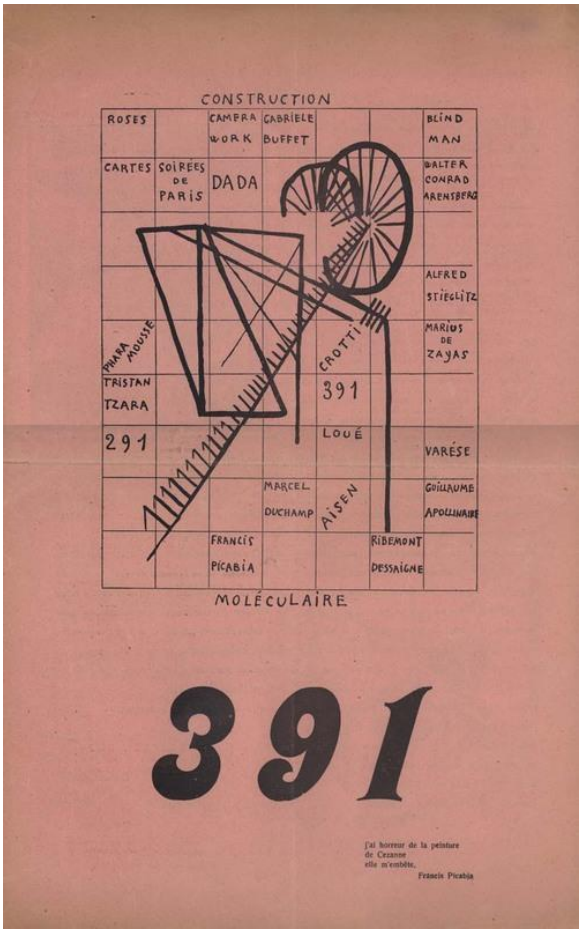

Figure 6: Francis Picabia, "Construction moléculaire" (Molecular Construction), *391*, no. 8, Feb. 1919, cover. International Dada Archive, Special Collections, University of Iowa Libraries.

After the war, Dada reinforced its collective identity by continuing the labeling and mapping of itself as a social enterprise, indexed in social space. What began in Zurich now extended to locations ranging from Berlin and Paris to Rome, Geneva, Weimar, Vienna, and Zagreb, where Branko ve Poljanski's *Dada-Jok* appeared as an insert in *Zenit* (vol. 2, no. 7, 1922). Other reflections on Dada by

Karel Teige and Bendřich Václavek were to be found in *Host*, published in Prague. Dada was no longer a single site or *place* but had become an array of multiple sites within a widening cultural and geographical *space*. The dadaists' strategic relocating of the subject to liberate it from discourses that would construct it was a *collective* enterprise, one that left discernible traces on the artifacts left behind. That they shared a collective identity is suggested in their self-indexing seen, for example in Picabia's 1919 ink drawing *Mouvement Dada* (Museum of Modern Art) which draws whimsical connections among artists and writers within and beyond Dada, just as his ink drawing *Construction moléculaire* (Molecular Construction, used on the cover of *391*, no. 8, Zurich, February 1919) distributes the names of various Dada participants in the spatial array around the word Dada (fig. 6).

The movement also attempted to fulfill its promise of internationalism in Tzara's ill-fated *Dadaglobe* project. As Adrian Sudhalter as shown in her reconstruction of *Dadaglobe*, it had begun in 1918 as a Dada atlas, but only became feasible upon Tzara's arrival in Paris in January 1920. Despite a Europe described by Jakobson in his 1921 Dada essay as "turned into a multiplicity of isolated points by visas, currencies, cordons of all sorts" (34), *Dadaglobe* functioned as a postal in-box containing the heterogeneous, international contributions of the Dada movement. What was important for the *Dadaglobe* and beyond was showing the geographical reach of the movement, best demonstrated in other periodicals such as *Dada* 6 (Paris, March 1920) with its seventy-six authors from *Dada* and *391*, many of whom had been enlisted for the *Dadaglobe* project.

Soon the burgeoning array of periodicals bridged the transition to constructivism, a bridge built at least in part on the network established by dadaists as exemplified in periodical announcements on the back covers of *Merz* 4 of 1923 (fig. 7) and the Vienna-based Hungarian constructivist Journal *MA*.

The International ambience of the burgeoning constructivist groups was advanced through the agency of El Lissitzky's periodical *Veshch, Gegenstand, Objet* and his Proun artworks. Another collaborative effort was "A Call for Elementalist Art," published by Hausmann, Hans Arp, Ivan Puni, and László Moholy-Nagy in *De Stijl* (1921). The Congress of Constructivists and Dadaists, held in Weimar on 25 September 1922, brought Hausmann, Tzara, Arp, Schwitters, Richter, Moholy-Nagy, Erich Buchholz, and others around Doesburg's demand that "the international *must* come into existence" (Finkeldey 65, n. 51). With this, the Dada movement had largely charted a new direction, moving towards surrealism in Paris and international constructivism and other directions in Germany. Yet artistic critical interventions in popular culture and propaganda continued in the work of John Heartfield, who employed a biting collage technique in *AIZ, Der Knüppel*, and other left-wing periodicals.

Perhaps the most enduring and radical continuation of the dadaists' interrogation of mass media was in Höch's anticolonial series *From An Ethnographic Museum,* dating from the mid-1920s onward. While the presence of Commonwealth and colonial troops from throughout the world including Asia,

the Middle East, and Africa was profusely illustrated and discussed in the media landscape of the war, most of the dadaists were more interested in the artifacts and rituals of native cultures, especially in Zurich. But as can been seen in these pages from her scrapbooks, Höch's probing of mass media representations of non-European cultures extended to dances and rituals, as well as similarities with athletics and entertainment, for example Josephine Baker. Her interest in non-Western cultures can be traced back to at least the mid-teens, and in 1919 she collaborated with Hausmann on *Dada Cordial* (Berlinische Galerie) — rare for its sourcing of a media portrayal of native peoples.

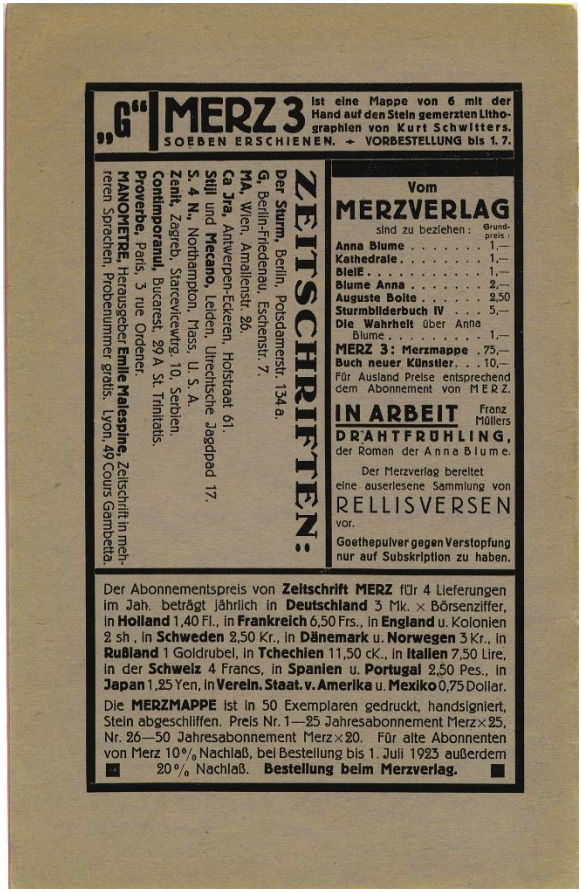

Figure 7: *Merz,* no. 4, ed. Kurt Schwitters (Hanover, July 1923) (back cover). International Dada Archive, Special Collections, University of Iowa Libraries.

In Höch's *From An Ethnographic Museum* series, references to Western and native cultures are given equal status, as if to negate the hierarchies of stereotypes. Sourced from the *Berliner illustrierte Zeitung* and Paul Westheim's periodical *Der*

Querschnitt, her *Indian Dancer: From an Ethnographic Museum* (1930, Museum of Modern Art) combines a mask from the Bekom tribe in Cameroon with a press image of actress Renée Falconetti, star of *Passion of Joan of Arc*, as Maria Makela has shown (107). As the artist commented on the occasion of her first exhibition of the works from the series following year, "I want to blur the fixed boundaries that we people have drawn around everything within our sphere with obstinate self-assurance." (365). Höch's work embodies in an enlightened yet ironical way the conditions of the media war's aftermath.

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