

**cut
with
the
kitchen
knife**

the weimar photomontages of hannah höch

**maud
lavin**

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To Blanch Bloom Perlman

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- 133 Hannah Höch, *Negerplastik* (Negro Sculpture), from the series *Aus einem ethnographischen Museum* (From an Ethnographic Museum), 1929, 26 × 17.5 cm., private collection. Photograph: John Webb, Surrey, England
- 134 Hannah Höch, *Indische Tänzerin: Aus einem ethnographischen Museum* (Indian Female Dancer: From an Ethnographic Museum), 1930, 10 1/8 × 8 7/8 in., photomontage, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Frances Keech Fund
- 135 Hannah Höch, *Fremde Schönheit* (Strange Beauty), 1929, 32 × 23 cm., photomontage, private collection, Paris. Photograph courtesy of Timothy Baum
- 136 Hannah Höch, *Entführung: Aus einem ethnographischen Museum* (Abduction: From an Ethnographic Museum), 1925, 19.5 × 20 cm., photomontage, Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin ©1993 ARS, N.Y./Bild-Kunst, Bonn
- 137 "Raub der Jungfrauen," (Abduction of the virgins) *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* 33, no. 38 (Sept. 21, 1924): 1095. Photograph: Werner Othmer KG, Dortmund
- 138 Hannah Höch, *Denkmal II: Eitelkeit* (Monument II: Vanity), from the series *Aus einem ethnographischen Museum* (From an Ethnographic Museum), 1926, 25.8 × 16.7 cm., Collection: Rössner-Höch, Backnang, Germany ©1993 ARS, N.Y./Bild-Kunst, Bonn
- 139 "The medicine man," *Uhu* (June 1930): 56. Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin. Photograph: Knud Petersen
- 140 Hannah Höch, *Denkmal I: Aus einem ethnographischen Museum* (Monument I: From an Ethnographic Museum), 1924, 19.6 × 15.5 cm., photomontage, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin, © Erbgemeinschaft Hannah Höch. Photograph: Hermann Kiessling ©1993 ARS, N.Y./Bild-Kunst, Bonn
- 141 Hannah Höch, *Trauer: Aus einem ethnographischen Museum* (Sadness: From an Ethnographic Museum), 1925, 17.6 × 11.5 cm., photomontage, Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin ©1993 ARS, N.Y./Bild-Kunst, Bonn
- 142 Hannah Höch, *Untitled*, from the series "Aus einem ethnographischen Museum" (From an Ethnographic Museum), 1929, photomontage, 49 × 32.5 cm., Kunstsammlung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn. Photograph: Walter Scholz-Ruhs, Museum Wiesbaden ©1993 ARS, N.Y./Bild-Kunst, Bonn
- 143 Hannah Höch, *Die Süsse* (The Sweet), c. 1926, 30 × 15.5 cm., photomontage, Collection: Rössner-Höch, Backnang, Germany, ©1993 ARS, N.Y./Bild-Kunst, Bonn
- 144 Hannah Höch, *Masken: Aus einem ethnographischen Museum* (Masks: From an Ethnographic Museum), 1929, 25 × 16 cm., photomontage, Collection: Rössner-Höch, Backnang, Germany ©1993 ARS, N.Y./Bild-Kunst, Bonn
- 145 Hannah Höch, *Hörner: Aus einem ethnographischen Museum X* (Horns: From an Ethnographic Museum), c. 1926, photomontage, 19.5 × 12.5 cm., Berlinische Galerie, Berlin,

- © Erbegemeinschaft Hannah Höch. Photograph: Hermann Kiessling ©1993 ARS, N.Y./Bild-Kunst, Bonn
- 146 Hannah Höch, *Mit Mütze: Aus einem ethnographischen Museum IX* (With Cap: From an Ethnographic Museum IX), 1924, 27.5 × 15.5 cm., photomontage, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin, © Erbegemeinschaft Hannah Höch. Photograph: Hermann Kiessling ©1993 ARS, N.Y./Bild-Kunst, Bonn
- 147 Hannah Höch, *Der heilige Berg: Aus einem ethnographischen Museum XII* (The Holy Mountain: From an Ethnographic Museum XII), 1927, 33.7 × 22.5 cm., photomontage, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin, © Erbegemeinschaft Hannah Höch. Photograph: Hermann Kiessling ©1993 ARS, N.Y./Bild-Kunst, Bonn
- 148 Hannah Höch, *Marlene*, 1930, 36.7 × 24.2 cm., photomontage, Dakis Joannou, Athens
- 149 Hannah Höch and Til Brugman around 1930. Photograph courtesy of Berlinische Galerie
- 150 Hannah Höch, *Roma*, 1925, 90 × 106 cm., oil on canvas, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin, © Erbegemeinschaft Hannah Höch. Photograph: Hermann Kiessling ©1993 ARS, N.Y./Bild-Kunst, Bonn
- 151 "Asta Nielsen als Hamlet" (Asta Nielsen as Hamlet), *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* 29, no. 37 (Sept. 12, 1920): 423. Photograph: Werner Othmer KG, Dortmund
- 152 Hannah Höch, *Liebe im Busch* (Love in the Bush), 1925, 23 × 24 cm., photomontage, Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Museum purchase, The Benjamin J. Tillar Memorial Trust
- 153 Hannah Höch, *Siebenmeilenstiefel* (Seven-League Boots), c. 1934, 22.9 × 32.2 cm., photomontage, Hamburger Kunsthalle. Photograph: Elke Walford ©1993 ARS, N.Y./Bild-Kunst, Bonn
- 154 Hannah Höch, *Dompteuse* (Tamer), c. 1930, 35.5 × 26 cm., photomontage, Kunsthaus Zürich, ©1993 ARS, N.Y./Bild-Kunst, Bonn
- 155 Hannah Höch, *Die starken Männer* (The Strong Men), 1931, 24.5 × 13.5 cm., photomontage, Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Stuttgart ©1993 ARS, N.Y./Bild-Kunst, Bonn
- 156 "Bub oder Mädels?" (Boy or girl?) *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* 37, no. 21 (May 20, 1928): 912. Photograph: Werner Othmer KG, Dortmund
- 157 Leontine Sagan, director, *Mädchen in Uniform* (Girls in Uniform), 1931. Photograph courtesy British Film Institute
- 158 Leontine Sagan, director, *Mädchen in Uniform* (Girls in Uniform), 1931. Photograph courtesy British Film Institute

acknowledgments

Questions about the representation of women and the social construction of feminine identities have redirected our understanding of twentieth-century culture. One thing we have learned is that any investigation of these issues requires both a personal stake and a communal dialogue. For me, questions about the relation between images of femininity and the societal status of women have been a primary motivation in writing this book. How is the evolution of cultural constructs of femininity connected to issues of subjectivity, power, and economics? Is it possible to intervene in this evolution? Although these questions are asked here in the context of twenties Germany, the germane issues are individual as well as scholarly, contemporary as well as historical, and American as well as European. Accordingly, the experiences and people contributing to this book are wide in range. I feel very warmly toward all those who have helped in the development of this study and am glad to be able to thank at least some of them in print.

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This book developed over a number of years and was made richer through dialogue with a number of other writers. In terms of connecting cultural history to

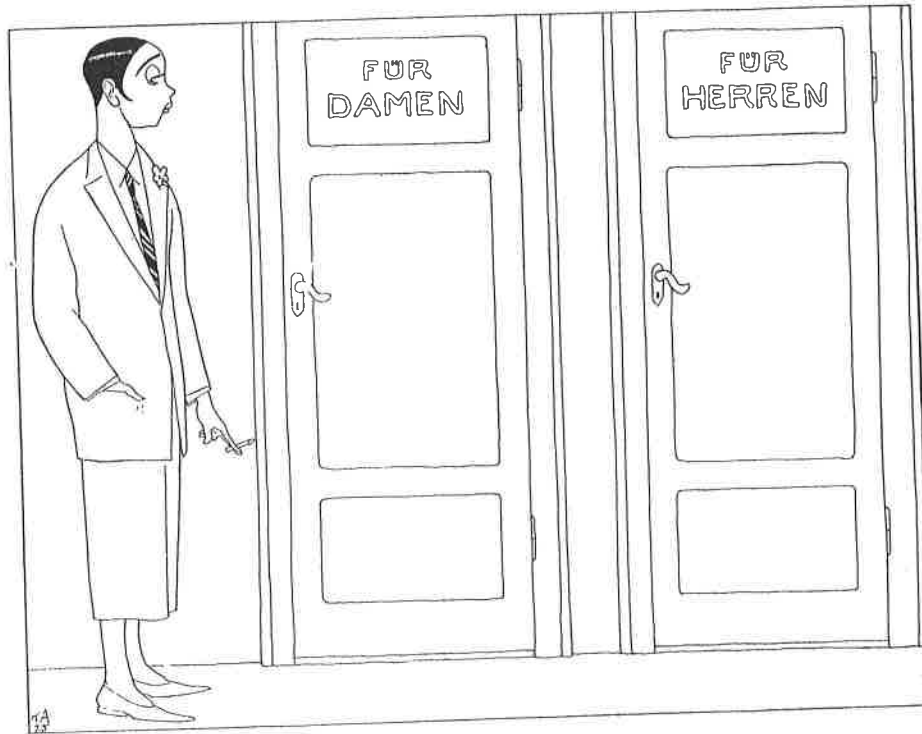
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Finally, this book is dedicated to the memory of my grandmother, Blanch Bloom Perlman (1895–1990), a woman of the twenties whom I loved very much, with gratitude for her love, intelligence, and *Lebensfreude*.

Lotte am Scheidewege

(Karl Arnold)



1 Karl Arnold, *Lotte am Scheidewege* (Lotte at the Crossroads), *Simplicissimus* 5, 1925. New York Public Library

introduction

representing the new woman

In a 1925 issue of the German journal *Simplicissimus*, caricaturist Karl Arnold drew his image of the New Woman and her dilemma (fig. 1). A stylish young woman stands in front of two doors. Her hair is short and sleek, her face a girlish mask of urban aplomb. She holds a cigarette and wears a man's shirt, tie, and jacket, — adorned with a flower — over her skirt. The joke is that she cannot decide which door to enter, "Für Damen" or "Für Herren." Titled *Lotte am Scheidewege* (Lotte at the Crossroads), the cartoon suggests that the modern woman does not know whether she is female, male, or perhaps a newly acknowledged third gender — and neither does the viewer.

In Germany in the 1920s, the transition of young women to modern roles was an uneven process. Although German mass culture constantly referred to the newly modern woman, her representation was by no means fixed. In fact, it is the multiple uses of the term New Woman that are significant today, suggesting how important this ambiguous paradigm was for the cultural conflicts of a newly modernized Weimar Germany. During the Weimar Republic (1918–33), two key developments in the larger history of industry, rationalization, and consumerism occurred almost simultaneously: first, a rapid growth in the mass print media and, second, a dramatic redefinition of the social roles of women.¹ These social phenomena have generally been regarded separately, but they are connected by the ubiquity of New Woman images produced for the new mass media consumers. In newspapers, films, magazines, and fine art, a radically new societal role for women was projected — and no sooner created than distorted. Wholly new images of women were presented:

working on the assembly line, typing at secretarial jobs, using modern household appliances, or posing like mannequins in advertisements. At the same time, there was an explosive growth in media formats and styles aimed specifically at women, like films with female protagonists or advertisements for household goods and beauty products. As a result, mass culture became a site for the expression of anxieties, desires, fears, and hopes about women's rapidly transforming identities.

Stereotypes of the New Woman generated by the media could be complex and contradictory: messages of female empowerment and liberation were mixed with others of dependence, and the new consumer culture positioned women as both commodities and customers. In the postwar years, for example, there was a noticeable rise in the number of media representations of female politicians and artistic performers. As German women had gained the right to vote in late 1918 and first run for office in January 1919, there was a fascination with female politicians, and the numerous portraits published in *Berliner Illustrirte* [sic] *Zeitung* (*BIZ*) and other *Illustrierte* (illustrated newspapers or photoweeklies) were, in effect, documents of a triumphant if problematic accession to power within a male political structure. A typical example is the March 9, 1919, cover of *BIZ* (fig. 2), portraying two female members of the National Assembly. Both women wear severe businesswomen's coats and hats and carry briefcases. Seeming insecure in this masculine attire, they stand hunched, looking out nervously. This is a photograph of contradictory messages: the newly empowered women demonstrate authority and timidity, confidence and its absence.

By contrast, the May 4, 1919, cover of *BIZ* (fig. 3) shows an actress confidently portraying the New Woman. Outfitted for aviation, buoyant and energetic, she seems like a living advertisement for the ideal of the modern bourgeois female. Her smile announces the ease with which the New Woman bears both goggles and flowers, helmet and curls, flight wear and femininity. In this type of idealized photographic image, the contradictions of daily life are glossed over, the female spectator is shielded from perceiving her own complex identity and material needs. And yet these two photographs of the aviatrix and the politicians cannot be simplistically and judgmentally divided into such opposing categories as healthy versus unhealthy, empowering versus ornamental. For each image is full of ambiguity, particularly for viewers at the time; many roles were expected of Germany's New Woman and representations of her served many functions.

Recently the New Woman has been the subject of great debate among scholars of German women's history. While emphasizing the fluidity of the term and its wide-ranging applications in German culture of the 1920s, these scholars have focused primarily on the sharp disparity between the material lives of Weimar women and the contemporaneous myths of the New Woman.² But in considering the representation of the New Woman, it may not be so easy to differentiate between the experience of material life and its cultural myths. Weimar Germany produced a composite of varying interpretations rooted in material reality and determined by the historically specific context of the image's production and reception.



2 *Zwei Schwestern, Abgeordnete der Nationalversammlung* (Two sisters, representatives to the National Assembly), *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* 28, no. 10 (March 9, 1919): cover. New York Public Library



3 *Margarete Christians (vom Deutschen Theater in Berlin) vor Antritt einer Reise im Flugzeug* (Margarete Christians from the German Theater in Berlin Before Beginning an Airplane Trip), *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* 28, no. 18 (May 4, 1919): cover. New York Public Library

The New Woman was, as historian Atina Grossmann explains, "a much abused and conflated image of the flapper, young stenotypist, and working mother," a symbol of actual social and demographic changes in Germany during and after World War I.³ Intense discussion of this phenomena in the media and the legislatures of the period centered on two significant trends: a gradual increase in the number of women working (35 percent of the female population was employed by 1925) and a declining birth rate (despite the illegality of publicizing contraception and performing abortions).⁴ Although these statistical shifts were not limited to a particular class, most of the popular print media, such as *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, a newspaper that included magazine-style features, and *Die Dame*, a German equivalent of *Vogue*, were restricted to candid or idealized photographs of specifically bourgeois women. (Later the *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* and other communist print media offered a different subject and type of idealization, making heroic the female worker in a photoreportage style.) Any attempt to derive a uniform definition of the New Woman, therefore, results in a disjointed composition of ill-fitting representational fragments. And, in fact, to consider the New Woman as a montage, a juxtaposition of allegorical fragments, is to capture perfectly the uneasy alliance of women with modernity in twenties Germany.

For my purposes, the New Woman is best considered as a cumulative perception of female stereotypes, collected over time by women newly self-conscious of their modern status – and by their observers. Changes in women's status during the Weimar Republic were dramatic, especially compared with the years of Kaiser Wilhelm II's rule (1888–1918). In the years following World War I, the numbers of women working for wages slowly increased, and rationalization in factories and offices opened up new employment possibilities. It was acceptable for young women to live and work on their own in the city, and urban attitudes toward sexual behavior became more permissive than before. More marriages occurred and more married women worked for wages. But at the same time, illegal abortion was a widespread phenomenon, and there was a continual decline in the birth rate.⁵

Despite this social upheaval, the economic situation of most women did not improve. As historian Claudia Koonz has written, "About a third of all wage earners [in Weimar Germany] were women, as compared to about 15 percent in the U.S., [yet] by far the majority of women's jobs remained in heavy agricultural work, textiles, food-processing, and assembly-line production, all exhausting, low-paid occupations."⁶ Similarly, despite women's active participation in politics, their legal status as individuals continued to be subordinate to that of men. According to Grossmann, "The constitutional guarantees of sexual equality were mocked by the persistence of the Reich's criminal code of 1871 which criminalized abortion and the publicizing of contraception; and the civil code of 1900 which directly contradicted the promise of equality in marriage by stating that the husband had the right to make all decisions in married life including [those regarding] a wife's work."⁷

Thus the much-vaunted "modern" status of Weimar women was not monolithic. There was much about women's lives that remained rooted in traditional hierarchies

and ways of life. This mix of old and new suggests another form of montage, a perception of time that the cultural critic Ernst Bloch referred to as “nonsynchronous” (*ungleichzeitig*). By this he meant the presence in contemporary German culture of fragmentary forms and contents of the past, particularly pre-capitalist components, which coexisted with modern elements. Writing in 1932, he gave as examples the resurgence of interest in folkways and the irrational.⁸

The particular relevance of Bloch’s term for Weimar women is striking: it was a time when women were working on farms as well as in offices, when women had sexual freedom but no access to legalized abortion, when women did unpaid housecleaning as well as wage work.⁹ Yet, these contrasts should not be viewed merely with cynicism. Many aspects of the modern woman’s life were experienced, or fantasized about, with considerable excitement – mobility in the city, flexibility in modern dress, sexual freedom. The predominance of liberating or utopian images of the New Woman in films and the *Illustrierte* of the times suggests that these representations served not only the purposes of the producers of mass culture, but their women viewers as well.

Within this framework of the mass cultural representation of the New Woman, the avant-garde artist Hannah Höch, generally known for her ties to the Berlin Dada group, created a remarkable group of photomontages during 1918–1933, the Weimar years. These photomontages offer a clear indication of the responses of a reader and consumer of mass media images to the shifting representation of the New Woman. Selecting photographs of women from the *Illustrierte*, Höch juxtaposed them with photographic fragments of scenes from Weimar and German colonial society. The resulting images are violent and enthusiastic, shocking and ironic, whimsical and witty; and they raise challenging questions about the representation of women. Producing over eighty photomontages during the Weimar years (in addition to drawings, watercolors, paintings, and collages), Höch exhibited these in art exhibitions, but the close ties of her montages to the mass media posed questions for viewers about both avant-garde and mass culture stereotypes of women.¹⁰

During the Weimar period, Höch shifted from use of mass media photographs of the New Woman as celebratory allegories – as in her well-known Dada photomontage of 1919–20, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife* – to a more ambiguous treatment of such images as in the painting *Roma*, 1925, or even the more critical photomontages directly challenging gender stereotypes such as *Deutsches Mädchen*, 1930, and the *Ethnographic Museum* series of the mid-twenties to early thirties. Yet, at the same time, Höch never relinquished the pleasure of representing mass media photographs of women, as is evident throughout her Weimar work from the 1919 *Cut with the Kitchen Knife* to the *Dancer* series begun in 1926. On multiple levels, Höch both criticized and reproduced the media’s representation of women in her day.

As a member of Berlin Dada, Höch had by the 1920s evolved an aesthetic that incorporated the pleasure of viewing the new mass media. The unprecedented proliferation of photography in newspapers and magazines at that time offered new pleasures to film or theatergoers, who could suddenly see innumerable images of

their favorite actresses and dancers. For female readers in particular, the mass media offered liberating fantasies to women in transition, in part by suggestively linking women with modernity. And yet the expanded availability of such "star" photographs may have contributed to an idealization of media icons and increased the negative potential for the viewer to develop narcissistic or masochistic identifications. In Höch's work, these responses were disrupted both literally and metaphorically; the highly controlled or posed photographic portraits were cut up, reassembled, and recombined with other photo fragments to form unsettling new representations, pleasurable but in a different way than the original.

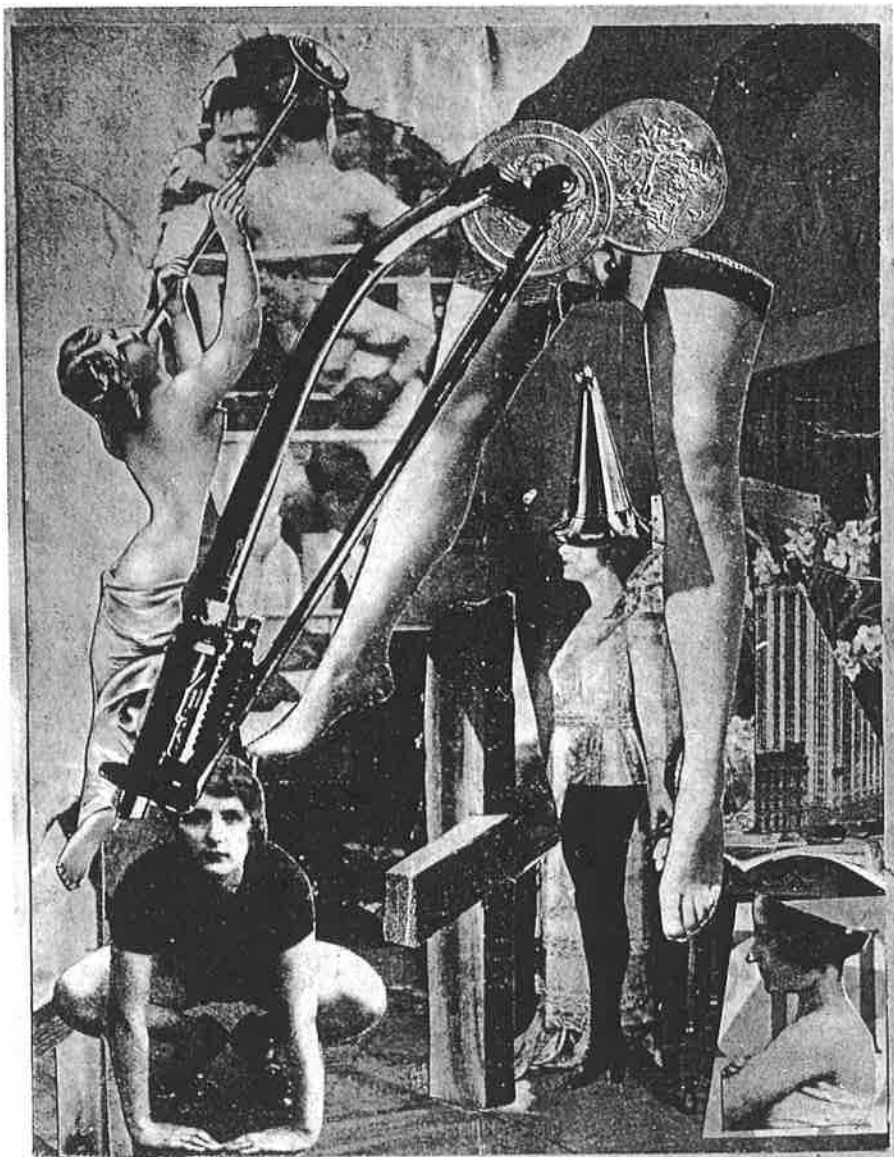
Among the photomontages Höch produced during the Berlin Dada years, the 1920–21 work entitled *Dada-Ernst* shows most clearly the sort of conflicts Weimar women faced in relation to modernity. This work is worth considering at length here as it suggests the complexity of Höch's allegorical use of montage to represent the New Woman. At first glance, *Dada-Ernst* (fig. 4) seems like a celebration of the New Woman in an array of popular guises. But on closer examination, this work raises questions about the representation of the female body and allegories of pleasure and anger.

Dominating the composition are two gigantic truncated female legs, which straddle the right half of the image. A man's eye, pasted at an angle, is superimposed over the area where the legs are joined – where the pubic region would have been. Overlapping the eye are two gold coins, the brightest and most colorful emblems in the montage. Here the formal violence of cutting and superimposing images implicit in all photomontage is made explicit. Objects ripped out of context and roughly conjoined connote a violence that is underlined, none too subtly, by the resemblance of a large bowl-like machine part to a saw and the severing of the female legs from the body.

The violent juxtaposition of metal with flesh, combined with the commodity status of the disembodied signs of femininity provide an additive and allusive reading producing anger in the viewer. With this interpretation, the kaleidoscopic, centrifugal, and seemingly celebrational nature of the montage composition is seen anew; more disruptive and violent aspects are apparent, not only in content but in form – in the disorienting variety in perspective, the disjunctive variations in scale, the interruptions of contours, and the visibility of seams. (Höch's working method was to clip images from the print media and to insert them directly into her montages. She did not re-photograph the montages; thus the edges are visible to the viewer).¹¹

The other images of women in *Dada-Ernst* must be read in conjunction with the male eye and the money positioned at the woman's torsoless crotch. These interpretations are encouraged by the proximity of the fragmented images: the oversized, severed legs are positioned as if straddling the woman in the ball gown, and the machine part links the money at the crotch with the gymnast's head.

Female pleasure is represented in *Dada-Ernst* through the image of the female gymnast, crouching as if ready to spring forward. She is a point of identification, the only figure to look directly out at the viewer. Her hair short, her chin up, her



Hannah Höch

4 Hannah Höch, *Dada-Ernst*, 1920–21, 18.6 × 16.6 cm., photomontage. Vera and Arturo Schwarz Collection, Milan

gaze steady, her posture symmetrical, and her figure lithe, she is a model of health, fashion, and energy. Directly above her is a more conventional allegorical figure – a cut-out of a half-draped nude, arching upward, blowing a trumpet. Cut from a gaudy Victorian chromolithograph, the woman is draped in bright pink, her golden hair tied decorously with a blue ribbon. Given the art world context suggested by the title *Dada-Ernst* (it can be read literally as “Serious Dada” or as a punning reference to the Cologne-based Dadaist Max Ernst), the woman could connote a female muse.¹² Two other female figures appear in profile, one New Woman bare-shouldered with bobbed hair, the other in a fashionable ball gown wearing a tall, metallic party hat shaped like a dunce cap. These women are linked to a constellation of signs of modernity: a boxing match (connoting a modern masculine type much admired by the Dadaists),¹³ a skyscraper, and a large, bowl-like machine part. The boxing match is shown in sequential photographs, a sign of the new visual possibilities offered by *Illustrierte* photography. For a viewer of the twenties, these signs – the new city, a female gymnast, bobbed hair, boxing, sequential photography – would have been optimistic, even thrilling images evocative of the utopian potential of modern life.

In the most general sense, all of Hannah Höch’s Berlin Dada photomontages can be read as cuts through the contemporary scene, a filmic cataloguing and recombining of signs of modernism. When juxtaposed, these fragments offer allegorical interpretations. Thus symbolically, the money at the crotch alludes to prostitution, but allegorically, it functions within the montage to link positive images of the modern woman with the more threatening one of female sexuality commodified for men and the male gaze.

Viewing *Dada-Ernst* in its historical context emphasizes the critical functions of the montage. In Germany after the war, there was runaway inflation and great fear of poverty. For women of many classes, selling oneself sexually in various guises was a real possibility, and a fearful one. Consider as an illustration the later film *Die freudlose Gasse* (Joyless Street), 1925, where Greta Garbo and Asta Nielsen played women from the petit bourgeois and working classes respectively. The two female characters were faced with a series of options to sell themselves – none of them outright street prostitution – in order to help support their impoverished families: performing almost naked for a male audience, becoming the mistress of a wealthy man, having sex with the butcher to obtain meat, and even marrying an American.¹⁴ *Dada-Ernst* is no moral narrative warning of dangers for the New Woman but a montage addressing fears and hopes, new possibilities and dislocations for the modern woman. The juxtaposition of images connoting violence with others suggesting pleasure is precisely what makes this image such a strong and dialectically utopian one. A representation that simply celebrated the New Woman would present a reified utopia, papering over the contradictions of the present and promising an idealized and unattainable future.

Looking closer at *Dada-Ernst*, we see clusters of allegorical fragments suggesting violence, alienation, and anger. These prompt more general questions concerning the representation of the female body. Does this image align the modern woman with

signs of pleasure or of violence? Is this a utopian or dystopian representation? What are the dynamics in this montage between pleasure and anger, celebration and critique, desire and fear? Depending on the viewer, representations of violence toward women can elicit feelings of anger or fear. By linking this anger and fear to alternative images of hope, the artist might offer the female viewer a deeply felt motivation for change, a desire to reconfigure the relationship between pleasure and reality. In *Dada-Ernst*, the female body is the site of this dialectical process and, as a result, several women are represented with startling ambiguity. Superimposed on the skirt of the woman wearing the party dress is a silhouette of a leg severed at the upper thigh. Of course, this could be a witty reference to the new vision enabled by technology and the current fascination with x-ray photography. On another level, though, this image suggests a prosthesis and echoes the violently truncated legs above and their association with the male gaze and female prostitution. As with so many of her works, in *Dada-Ernst* Höch sustains a multiplicity of ambiguous readings through her sophisticated use of montage.

The concept of montage is central to this book, particularly in considering feminine representation and its ambiguities. As a formal term “montage” has specific meanings. Thus two definitions of montage will be operative throughout this study: first, the single-image montage, that is, an individual work composed of a juxtaposition of fragments (for example, a John Heartfield photomontage cover for the *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung*); and second, montage as an organizational system, which refers to those media or forms whose signification is *dependent on* the juxtaposition of parts (these would include virtually all films, newspapers, and magazines, as well as some forms of modern experience such as working in a factory or riding public, urban transportation). Within this dual concept of montage, my object is to explore the connection between the production of avant-garde photomontage and the fractured experience of everyday life in Weimar Germany.

In Weimar film, theater, and photography, the connection between avant-garde and mass culture was a two-way street. There was a condition of mutual influence and fascination marked by the pervasive use of montage (in Bertolt Brecht’s epic theater and in *BIZ* photo layouts, to take just two examples) and by explorations of modernity. Höch’s simultaneous involvement with avant-garde and mass cultural spheres was typical of the mixed allegiances of many German artists in the 1920s. In the mid and late twenties, many of Höch’s close friends like Kurt Schwitters and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy worked in commercial advertising, and, from 1916 to 1926, Höch herself worked for Ullstein Verlag, the publishing house that produced *BIZ*. For many in the avant-garde, the interest in mass media was not pejorative or hierarchical. In Höch’s case, for example, the mass media served not only as an archive and resource fueling her avant-garde production, but the *Illustrierte* also offered her a panoply of images that were tremendously exciting. In a larger sense, it seems probable that the Weimar avant-garde’s experimentation with photomontage and film montage directly influenced newspaper and magazine layout in the most popular publications.

Höch recalled in 1966 that for the Dadaists, alienation (*Verfremdung*) or distancing – making the familiar unfamiliar – had been a key strategy in transforming photographs into new creations, photomontages.¹⁵ Therefore it is the interaction between defamiliarization and pleasure that bears scrutiny in Höch's aesthetic. But perhaps defamiliarization is too general a term, suggesting an emotional remove from subject matter that is not evident in Höch's photomontages. Höch's use of irony, caricature, the grotesque, and other critical strategies point to an underlying anger that, coupled with the pleasure of repeating some mass media images, opens up for the viewer emotional tensions between anger and pleasure in exploring questions of identity and femininity.

Höch's own life to a large degree formed around the new issues of sexuality, morality, friendship, and politics confronting the typical New Woman in Weimar Berlin. But her photomontages do not simply reflect Höch's autobiographical experiences. Rather, they show her as an avid reader of *Illustrierte* stereotypes and an astute observer of women's roles in mass culture. Höch collected and recomposed images from the media self-consciously, constructing an active critique of the forms of representation and the meaning of new definitions of femininity. At the same time, Höch was affiliated with Berlin Dada in the early Weimar years and shared an interest with colleagues Raoul Hausmann, Johannes Baader, Richard Huelsenbeck, John Heartfield, and George Grosz in using montage for societal critique. The Berlin Dadaists emphasized the dialectical tendency of photomontage as well as its anarchic potential both to affirm and negate.¹⁶

Höch (1889–1978) was raised in a small-town bourgeois milieu (fig. 5); her father was a supervisor at an insurance company. When she was fifteen, she was taken out of the *Höhere Töchterschule* (high school for girls) to care for her youngest sister, Marianne, and it was not until she was twenty-two that she was able to leave home, with her family's support, to pursue an artist's education. Arriving in Berlin in 1912, Höch studied applied arts, first at the Kunstgewerbeschule in Berlin-Charlottenburg for two years, until 1914. Then, after a brief interruption due to the outbreak of the war, Höch enrolled with Emil Orlik at the Staatliche Kunstgewerbemuseum in Berlin in 1915. While studying art, Höch supported herself by working part-time at Berlin's major newspaper and magazine publisher, Ullstein Verlag. From 1916–26 Höch was employed as an *Entwurfzeichnerin* (pattern designer) in the handicrafts department, which produced individual brochures on knitting, crocheting, and embroidering, and which also contributed to a bi-monthly two-page spread on women's handicrafts to the tony women's magazine *Die Dame*.

Although this book will not deal extensively with Hannah Höch's biography, it is important as one context among many that contributed meaning to her works. Hers is a unique story, as well as an exemplary narrative about a Weimar professional woman searching for and living out new feminine identities.

The book oscillates between asking large questions about the photographic representation of women in Weimar and the experience of spectatorship, and looking at the production of one particular woman, Hannah Höch. And my characterization



5 Hannah Höch with her siblings, c. 1908

of Höch shifts between her definition as an avant-garde artist and her more ordinary position as a fan of Weimar mass media. Both of these roles in turn are colored by the fact that Höch worked part-time at Ullstein for ten years. My intention is not to simplify any of these questions or characterizations, but rather the opposite, to outline them and keep them circulating and intersecting for the reader of this study, to look at Höch and her work as both unique and not unique, and to use this complexity to return continually to general questions about the relationship of Weimar women to modernity and the representation of the New Woman.

One of the strengths of art history, as the field is presently evolving, is that it offers the analytical tools to delve into an individual's cultural experience and artistic production in order to examine sociological issues related to representation, rather than simply propagating myths of artistic genius or hyperindividualism.

Any writing of history is informed by the writer's own time and concerns. I am motivated to study Weimar culture and Höch's representations of women because they pertain to contemporary issues of gender identity, particularly whether or not one individual or group can make a difference in the mass cultural representation of women. Clearly, the two historical contexts are quite different and lessons from one cannot simply be mapped onto the other. But the writing of history is also an act of displacement, a process whereby a different point of view or context can help clarify issues close to home. For me, one fundamental question is how women's reading of conventional media representations and other visual images contributes to our experience of feminine identity. Another is whether or not, by producing new

or reconfigured images of women, it is possible to intervene and transform existing cultural conventions.

Höch's photomontages offer provocative answers to both of these questions. Yet her work is not presented here as an ideal, the totalized production of a creative "genius" like that of the mythologized Picasso. Rather, it serves as an example, critical for the questions it raises and for the political strategies it employs. Of particular interest to me is Höch's exploration of the radical potential of feminine pleasure. This study investigates how, in Hannah Höch's photomontages, strategies of pleasure are coupled with the representation of anger to generate ideas of liberating, transformative utopias. The intriguing tension between anger and pleasure in her works, often manifested through an ironic humor, also raises questions about the interaction of critiques of present-day and utopian desires for the future in representation. Particularly in her Berlin Dada photomontages, Höch offered disruptive views of the present and involved viewers in utopian fantasies that have the potential to form an allegorical link between individual aspiration and societal transformation.¹⁷

the berlin dada photomontages

1

To visit the First International Dada-Messe (Dada-Fair) of 1920 was to step into the confrontational yet bitterly ironic world of the Berlin Dadaists. The walls of Dr. Otto Burchard's art gallery, a converted three-room apartment at Lützowufer 13, were covered floor to ceiling with a disorienting display of photomontages, posters, Dada periodicals, paintings, drawings, and assemblages by young, largely unknown artists. Here and there on the walls were pasted large posters with slogans like "Dada ist politisch" (Dada is political) and "Die Kunst ist tot/ Es lebe die neue Maschinenkunst TATLINS" (Art is dead/ Long live the new machine art of Tatlin). From the ceiling of the main room, where one might have expected a chandelier, hung a uniformed dummy with a pig's head, the so-called *Preussischer Erzengel* (Prussian archangel) by Rudolf Schlichter and John Heartfield.

In another room, Johannes Baader had erected an assemblage he titled *Das grosse Plasto-Dio-Dada-Drama*: It looked like the aftermath of an accident between a trolley car and a newspaper kiosk. On top of a table covered with papers, posters, and junk, and attended by a male mannequin, were Dada periodicals, mainstream newspapers, and poster-size examples of nonsensical sound poetry.

There were oddly titled works of art like George Grosz's "*Daum*" *marries her pedantic automaton* "George" in May 1920, John Heartfield is very glad of it, a combination of montage and watercolor, which parodied Grosz's own marriage as well as the stereotypes of the mechanized male and the prostituted female. The Berlin Dadaists also exhibited collaborative periodicals published by Wieland Herzfelde's

Malik Verlag like *Jedermann sein eigener Fussball* (Each Man His Own Football), 1919, a satire of politics and art. Raoul Hausmann showed a variety of tongue-in-cheek advertisements for Dada, like his well-known photomontage *Dada siegt* (Dada Triumphs). Many of the Dadaists created assemblages (most since destroyed) such as George Grosz and John Heartfield's construction that featured a light bulb – wired and turned on – as the head of a male mannequin with an amputated leg. From outside Berlin, such artists as Hans Arp, Francis Picabia, and the Cologne Dadaists Max Ernst and Johannes Baargeld were included.

Dominating one wall in the main room were the works of Berlin Dada's least-known member, Hannah Höch (fig. 6). Höch's wall space, adjoining Hausmann's, was filled primarily with photomontages, but also at least one relief, now missing, *Diktatur der Dadaisten* (Dictator of the Dadaists), and one poster, *Plakat Ali-Baba-Diele* (Poster Ali-Baba-Hall), also missing (fig. 5).¹ Höch's huge and elaborate photomontage critiquing Weimar culture, *Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser Dada durch die letzte weimarer Bierbauchkulturepoche Deutschlands* (Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada through the last Weimar Beer Belly Cultural Epoch of Germany) was displayed prominently. In addition, Höch exhibited *Dada Rundschau* (Dada Panorama), which also satirized the Weimar Republic and celebrated Dada and the New Woman, *Da-Dandy* and other photomontages, as well as sculptures and two hand-sewn Dada dolls (fig. 7), each 60 cm. tall with ragamuffin hair and abstractly rendered body parts.

The Dada-Messe was the highpoint of the short-lived Berlin Dada movement, a loosely federated group of artists who had come together during the World War I out of a shared interest in pacifism and anarchic Expressionism. In early 1917, the artist Richard Huelsenbeck had returned from Zurich where he had seen the art of Hans Arp, Emmy Hennings, Hugo Ball, Tristan Tzara, and other Dadaists. He had been particularly impressed by their embrace of chaos and randomness. Huelsenbeck had shared his enthusiasm with a group of artists that included John Heartfield, George Grosz, Wieland Herzfelde, Raoul Hausmann, Johannes Baader, and Hannah Höch. Berlin Dada's first public appearance on April 12, 1918 was a riotous evening at the otherwise decorous Secession where Huelsenbeck's Dadaist Manifesto was presented along with readings of sound poetry by George Grosz and the Italian Futurist F. T. Marinetti. Cacaphony was created by drums, instruments, and noise from the audience.² From 1918–22, the Dadaists were involved variously in publishing periodicals and portfolios, painting, printmaking, photomontage, collage, assemblage, sound poetry, and performance. Although not a monolithic movement, this Berlin "Dada Club" had multiple styles that were united by an ironic cynicism and a desire to provoke.

From the beginning, the group was politically engaged, interested in representing the concrete and the chaotic instead of the transcendent. After the so-called socialist revolution of 1918, the Dadaists were highly vocal in their opposition to the new Republic, going so far as to organize street demonstrations and distribute copies



6 Hannah Höch and Raoul Hausmann in front of their works at the First International Dada-Fair, June 30, 1920



7 Hannah Höch, *Dada-Puppen* (Dada Dolls), 60 cm high, cloth dolls, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin

of a periodical criticizing the government.³ One of their principal complaints centered on the hypocrisy of the supposedly socialist government. Far from establishing socialism, the new Weimar government immediately entered into agreements with big business and with the vestiges of the imperial military. In the name of keeping order, the state even encouraged the use of radical right-wing vigilantes, the dreaded *Freikorps*. By collaborating with the *Freikorps*, the state in effect sanctioned the assassinations of such leftist leaders as Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. The more radical members of Berlin Dada – Grosz, Heartfield, and Herzfelde – were highly critical of the government's bloody suppression of the Spartacist revolt in 1919 and joined the newly formed Communist Party, the KPD. Höch, Hausmann, and Baader were affiliated with a more utopian type of anarcho-communism.⁴

Although the Dadaists embraced agitation, polemic, and disorder, they were not exclusively involved in strategies of negation. Typically, their program was neither consistent nor limited. As can be seen from the varied works displayed at the Dada-Messe, the Berlin Dadaists prided themselves on both affirming and negating their principal themes. While they were applauding the newly rationalized man – associated in their minds with the machine, the engineer, and the Soviet artist Vladimir Tatlin – they were also satirizing man-as-machine idealism, particularly as it had been played out in the carnage of World War I. While the Dadaists were using their art to propagandize for a radical Soviet-style revolution and to criticize the German military, they were also questioning the very production of meaning and the efficacy of art.

In addition, Berlin Dada's relationship to the mass media was purposefully ambiguous. The Dadaists co-opted media strategies – headlines, advertising campaigns, propaganda – but satirized the popular press as well. Through Herzfelde's publishing house, the Malik Verlag, Berlin Dada produced a series of periodicals on culture and politics and portfolios such as George Grosz's *Gott mit uns* (God with us) lithographs, which lampooned the military. Malik also published mass market books such as German translations of Upton Sinclair's muckraking novels, part of a clever two-track strategy to reach both avant-garde and general audiences.⁵

Amid the array of Berlin Dada production, Hannah Höch's work was distinguished by her interest in the allegorical uses of montage to represent the society, gender roles, and modernity of Weimar Germany. Höch had become involved with the Berlin Dada movement through Hausmann, whom she had met in 1915. Although Hausmann was married and had a daughter, he and Höch became lovers and a publicly acknowledged couple. For seven years, from 1915 to 1922, the two had a passionate, intense, and friction-filled relationship during which they struggled to define their individual identities along with new concepts of gender, politics, and psychology. Through Hausmann, Höch became acquainted first with the proto-Dada, loosely Expressionist circles of *Der Sturm* and *Die Aktion*, including such writers and painters as Franz Jung, Maria Uhden, Georg Schrimpf, Mynona (Salomo Friedlaender), and Arthur Segal, and later with the more iconoclastic and experimental artists affiliated with the Dada Club.⁶

Because Höch's links to the Dadaists were almost exclusively through Hausmann, and as she was the only woman in the group, she always held a marginal position in the "Club." Grosz and Heartfield initially opposed including her in the Dada-Messe (probably because she was a woman – she was one of few to exhibit in the show and the only one with adequate representation) – relenting only when Hausmann threatened to withdraw his own works.⁷ Yet Höch managed to participate in all the major Berlin Dada exhibitions,⁸ and early reviews of Höch's work identify her as a Berlin Dadaist.⁹ On the other hand, Höch did not present her work through mass distribution channels, as did Grosz, Heartfield, Hausmann, and others associated with the Malik Verlag. She only had one abstract woodcut included in *Der Dada 2* (which was edited by Hausmann and published by Malik)¹⁰ and two photographs of her Dada puppets published in the avant-garde periodical *Schall und Rauch*, one on the cover and one inside.¹¹

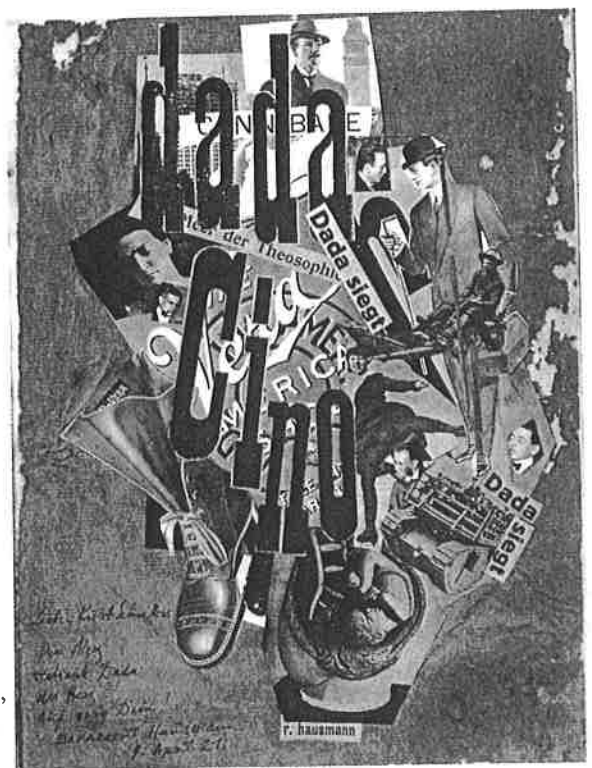
Höch was also featured in one of the Dada performances, an evening of satires read by Höch, Hausmann, and Mynona at the Secession in 1921. Her reading of "Italienreise" (Italian trip), which parodied the Italians and the Germans and described part of her journey to Rome, was praised by a reviewer and the text was later published in the Novembergruppe periodical *NG*.¹² Höch's greatest contribution to the Dada movement was her sophisticated development of the technique of photomontage. Höch, together with Hausmann, is often credited with inventing avant-garde photomontage (although other Dadaists also claimed this distinction).¹³ As cultural historian Sally Stein has pointed out, photomontage had been common in advertising since the nineteenth century.¹⁴ Höch herself located the source of photomontage in popular culture (see appendix, "A Few Words on Photomontage").¹⁵ When Höch and Hausmann began to make photomontages in 1918, they were first inspired, as she tells it, by montages of soldiers's heads and officers's uniforms that they saw on postcards when they were vacationing at Gribow on the Ostsee.¹⁶ Several years later, Höch collected French popular postcards montaged with photographs, feathers, and other materials and noted them for herself as "Vorgänger der Photomontage und der Collage" (precursors of photomontage and collage).¹⁷

Höch and Hausmann collaborated on at least one occasion, the *Dada-Cordial* of about 1922 (fig. 8). This photomontage combines images with *Der Dada* texts by Hausmann as an advertisement for Dada: "Legen Sie Ihr Geld in dada an!" (Invest in Dada!) Three interconnected photomontages are arranged throughout the text and are laid out as illustrations. They mix images of tribesmen, modern machinery, a European woman with a veil, embroidery, insects, and some lettering (most significantly the words "Malik Verlag" and "Welt Teppich" [World carpet]). Insects appear throughout Höch's work as emblems of Dada.

Despite occasional collaboration, Höch's preoccupation with the New Woman and with gender roles set her apart from the other Dadaists (fig. 9). For example, her work stands in marked contrast to George Grosz's misogynist depictions of prostitutes. As might be expected, there is a greater similarity between Hausmann and Höch in their representation of women. Gender issues were more central and



8 Hannah Höch and Raoul Hausmann, *Dada Cordial*, c. 1919, 45 × 58 cm., photomontage, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin. (Right side by Hannah Höch, left side by Raoul Hausmann)



9 Raoul Hausmann, *Dada Cino*, 1920, 12½ × 9 in., photomontage, Collection Dr. Philippe-Guy Woog, Geneva

fully developed in Höch's work than in that of any other Dadaists, however, and she was more interested in the development of modern identities and new freedoms for women.¹⁸

Though seemingly as chaotic as the Dada-Messe itself, Höch's *Cut with the Kitchen Knife* is a remarkably concise and elegant work that functions as a Dadaist manifesto on the politics of Weimar society. In keeping with its large theme Höch gave this grandly-scaled photomontage an equally grand name: *Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser Dada durch die letzte weimarer Bierbauchkulturepoche Deutschlands*, (Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada through the last Weimar Beer Belly Cultural Epoch of Germany), 1919–20 (114 × 90 cm.) This montage (fig. 10) combines photographs of political leaders with sports stars, Dada artists, and urban images. In this allegory, Höch assigns women a catalytic role in the opposition between a revolutionary Dada world associated with Karl Marx and the anti-Dada world of the politically compromised President Friedrich Ebert.

In *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*, images of Höch's fellow Dadaists (fig. 11), are aligned with Marx, Lenin, and other revolutionary figures (lower right). But many other images that populate Höch's Dada world are photographs of women she admired, particularly dancers, actresses, and artists. In opposition, Höch's anti-Dada world (fig. 12) is represented by images of the paunchy President Ebert and other Weimar government leaders (upper right). In Höch's decentered inversion of Weimar society, the images of women are crucial. Famous and easily recognizable women signify various metaphors of liberation: movement, technology, female pleasure, innovation, Dada, and revolution.

Cut with the Kitchen Knife offers an entire social panorama of the Weimar Republic. The upper right "anti-dadaistische Bewegung" (anti-Dada movement), as it is labeled, is dominated by a densely clustered composite montage-portrait of the recently deposed Wilhelm II. Two upturned wrestlers form his moustache. On his right shoulder perches the body of the exotic modern dancer Sent M'ahesa whose head has been replaced by that of General Field Marshal Friedrich von Hindenburg. One of the dancer's arms seems to tickle Wilhelm under the chin; the other rests on the shoulder of General von Pflazer-Baltin. He in turn is standing on the heads of the infamous Reichswehrminister Noske (known for his support of the *Freikorps*) and another general. Over Wilhelm's left shoulder is a scene of people waiting in line at a Berlin employment office.

Another series of witty gestalts, though, makes inroads on this pompous portrait. Immediately below is the area labeled "Die grosse Welt dada/ Dadaisten" (the great Dada world/ Dadaists). At the time of the Dada-Messe – when the newly achieved Soviet revolution still loomed large as a model for the German left – Höch labeled this section "Weltrevolution/ Dadaisten" (world revolution/ Dadaists), but these words were later replaced with the more innocuous Dada slogan. At the center of the Dada world is Raoul Hausmann in a diver's suit, facing the viewer, mouth open in ironic confrontation. Out of his head grows a montage of technology. Karl Marx's



10 Hannah Höch, *Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser Dada durch die letzte weimarer Bierbauchkulturepoche Deutschlands* (Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada through the Last Weimar Beer Belly Cultural Epoch of Germany), 1919–20, 114 × 90 cm., photomontage, Nationalgalerie Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin



11 Hannah Höch, detail of the Dada world, *Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser Dada durch die letzte weimarer Bierbauchkulturepoche Deutschlands* (Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada through the Last Weimar Beer Belly Cultural Epoch of Germany), 1919–20, 114 × 90 cm., photomontage, Nationalgalerie Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin



12 Hannah Höch, detail of the anti-Dada movement, *Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser Dada durch die letzte weimarer Bierbauchkulturepoche Deutschlands* (Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada through the Last Weimar Beer Belly Cultural Epoch of Germany), 1919–20, 114 × 90 cm., photomontage, Nationalgalerie Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin



13 Hannah Höch, detail, Impekoven/Kollwitz, *Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser Dada durch die letzte weimarer Bierbauchkulturepoche Deutschlands* (Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada through the Last Weimar Beer Belly Cultural Epoch of Germany), 1919–20, 114 × 90 cm., photomontage, Nationalgalerie Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin

head is appended on one side of the machinery in what seems to be a nonambiguous reference to revolutionary hopes for the marriage of communism and new technological production. The pile of machinery is topped by a wheel at Wilhelm's breast; next to the wheel is the head of the much-admired poet Elsa Lasker-Schuler.

The centrifugal composition rotates around a cut-out photograph of the body of the popular dancer "Niddy" Impekoven. Headless, she pirouettes below the tilted head of Käthe Kollwitz which has been pierced by a spear (fig. 13). In the "Dada world" section of the montage, these other female faces appear: Niddy Impekoven again (bathing John Heartfield), the actress Asta Nielsen (as an American photojournalist), the dancer Pola Negri, and Hannah Höch herself. Höch's face appears in the lower right corner, in what is commonly a signature area, abutting a map of Europe showing the progress of women's enfranchisement. The bodies of female athletes and dancers punctuate this section; for example, the heads of George Grosz and Wilhelm Herzfelde are attached to a ballerina's body. By their professions, movements, and locations in the montage, the women represented are strongly and positively associated with Dada and the new. One of Impekoven's feet rests on the forehead of Walther Rathenau, the liberal Jewish foreign minister who was later assassinated. The other foot kicks back in the direction of a giant roller bearing. In the lower left the leader of the revolutionary sailors, Raimund Tost, appears as if addressing a montage of crowd scenes with the words "Tretet Dada bei" (Join Dada). Surrounding him are a photograph of a throng of children, a view of the new National Assembly in session, two street scenes of urban crowds, and an image of an outdoor

orchestra. In the upper left there are more advertisements for Dada, several seeming to spring from Albert Einstein's head. Next to Einstein and leading in a clockwise direction back toward the anti-Dada, militaristic world are two montage caricatures of President Ebert.

Within the montage, five gigantic wheels or roller bearings echo the centrifugal motion of the composition. This tribute to technology is itself paralleled by the incorporation of mass-produced newspaper images and the use and parody of advertising slogans. The art historian Julia Dech has painstakingly located the *Illustrierte* sources for the majority of the montage's photographic fragments.¹⁹ The mass media as form and subject of the montage is a comment on the status of the media in the postwar years; its newly visual, photographic face, marked by a significant increase in the number of photographs used, and the sheer proliferation of newspapers signified a new cultural order.

In *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*, the power of Dada is signified, on several levels, by movement; Dada is a destabilizing force. In addition to the formal echoing of the wheels and roller bearings, the dynamic action of the compositional design is paralleled iconographically by images indicating movement, either by machines or female dancers or revolutionary scenes.²⁰ Art historian Hanne Bergius has suggested that dance represents the anti-intellectual, action-dedicated beliefs of Dada.²¹ If this is so, then the dynamic Impekoven, a female dancer, is offered as the antithesis of male, militaristic culture, typified by Wilhelm II and his generals. (Significantly, Kollwitz's head is presented in an unresolvable and ambiguous position. The separation of a female head from the body, although here delicately, even wittily portrayed, has underlying connotations of great violence, brought to the fore by the spear running through Kollwitz's head.) The key role of Dada dancer, symbolizing power, movement, and the female, is one that Höch assumes for herself. Even the title of this work, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*, points to a female actor. It is the female gaze that cuts through the "Weimar beer belly" and offers this Dadaist cross-section.

Women occupy the principal revolutionary roles in *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*, often signified by dramatic or assertive physical movement, such as dancing or ice skating. Formally, the instability of disjunctive montage fragments creates a kaleidoscopic effect of movement which is embodied in the figures of the female dancers and athletes. Dada as disseminated by voice and word is associated with men. (For example, the word "dada" emanates from Einstein's brain in the upper left of the montage). But it is Impekoven's body that, small as it is, literally has the pivotal position in the work. Impekoven's pirouette and the movements of other dancers and ice skaters can be read explicitly as physical freedom and Dada anti-repression. But, more than this, the images of women are allegorical signifiers of female liberation and anarcho-communist revolution. In *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*, the montages and representations of women function as utopian elements within the centrifugal dissolution of Weimar hierarchies.

In other words, these photographic fragments of women should not be regarded separately, with each having a discreet, fixed meaning. Rather, the meaning of each

fragment is contingent and incomplete, open to a variety of supplementary readings in juxtaposition with other fragments. I should like to emphasize an allegorical reading of Höch's montage. Whereas a symbolic reading offers one definition of an image, an allegorical interpretation reads layers of meaning in or through a text. As the critic Craig Owens put it succinctly, "In allegorical structure, then, one text is *read through* another, however fragmentary, intermittent, or chaotic their relationship may be."²²

When constructed to emphasize its disjunctive properties, the approach favored by the Berlin Dadaists, photomontage is inherently allegorical.²³ Art historian Benjamin Buchloh has pointed out that when an image is taken from its familiar context – appropriated – and therefore depleted of one level of meaning, and then recontextualized and given new layers of meaning, this montage technique makes it possible "to speak with hidden meaning." He quotes George Grosz as saying that photomontage allowed the Berlin Dadaists to say allegorically "in pictures what would have been banned by the censors."²⁴ Allegorical fragments in suggestive juxtapositions assume a knowing audience – montage is a technique well suited to a veiled and open-ended propaganda. Further, an allegorical representation opens up a range of interpretations and a play of significations for the viewer. Meanings, political and otherwise, are intentionally not made explicit. Allegory is not prescriptive. The viewer is an active, creative proponent in constructing meaning rather than a passive recipient. Allegory often implies and builds on a shared knowledge or value system between author and audience.

In the allegorical suggestions of Höch's *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*, the representation of pleasure has an important function. In fact, there is a significant parallel between critical theories about the allegorical operations of montage and Sigmund Freud's foundation thesis of how pleasure functions with other psychoanalytic processes. In an early essay from 1911, "Formulation of the Two Principles of Mental Functioning," Freud describes the way that psychic processes, striving to gain pleasure, work through and with more repressive mechanisms. Although Freud does not use the word "allegory," the relationship he is describing is allegorical: the ego's goal of pleasure is represented through and mediated by the necessity of making adjustments to external reality. Freud defines pleasure as the minimizing of tension, and, for him, the search for pleasure is a primary and primitive mental function; indeed, he calls it one of the most basic psychic processes and motivations. But Freud complicates his definition when he describes how the primitive "pleasure principle" interacts with what he terms as the "reality principle," meaning the psychic mechanisms that make the ego come to terms with outside reality. Over time, Freud says, the reality principle adjusts the ego to the external world, teaching it to delay gratification in order to reach satisfaction eventually. But Freud cautions against treating the pleasure principle and the reality principle as opposites. Instead, he implies an additive, layered, and contingent relationship: "Actually the substitution of the reality principle for the pleasure principle implies no deposing of the pleasure principle, but only a safeguarding of it."²⁵ In everyday functioning, then, this relationship is

allegorical in the sense that the pleasure principle must be “read through” the reality principle.

It is the coexistence of the pleasure principle and the reality principle – the drive to minimize tension and at the same time the need to accommodate the ego to the external world – that has the potential to provide ambiguous, allegorical readings of any *representation* of pleasure. The two principles are interdependent, but there is also, of course, the possibility for tension between the search for pleasure and the experience of reality. To use montage to represent pleasure can emphasize the discordant nature of these broadly-based tensions. And to do so with specifically female pleasures (here of female athleticism, modernity, the body, dress) is to underline these tensions in a highly gendered context. In some instances, the tension between the two psychic principles Freud outlines can be seen as a distinction those between fantasizing about the future and coping with present-day reality. In terms of montage theory, this analogy is useful for examining the coexistence of utopian traces with fragments connoting more repressive elements of everyday life. Freudian theory suggests the strong linkage and interdependence between the two types of representation.

To apply this reading to Höch’s Dada montages and their allegorical representation of pleasure is not to say that Höch was interested in a direct transcription of Freudian theory. On the contrary, Höch and Hausmann were involved in circles influenced by Freud but often in disagreement with him. In a series of articles published in 1919, Hausmann elaborated his views on psychoanalytic theory and gender roles. Particularly influential for Hausmann’s “feminist” theories were the writings of the contemporary psychoanalyst Otto Gross, a staunch anti-Freudian. Gross saw gender difference as societally conditioned and considered such conditioning (particularly as it was practiced in his own culture) to be repressive and destructive. Gross’s writings are inconsistent and utopian, but they insistently advocate the full expression of male and female sexuality in communal living.

Following Gross’s theories, Hausmann attempted to formulate a “natural law” of communism by locating communal instincts in the unconscious. According to Hausmann, both communal instincts and fully formed gender roles were repressed by patriarchal capitalist society. To rectify this dysfunction, Hausmann called for an idealistic repatterning of sexuality and family structures to liberate communal instincts.²⁶ In his writings for the postwar culture journal *Die Erde*, Hausmann developed a model of communal living that centered around matriarchy, in which he combined prewar anarchist goals with postwar admiration for communism.²⁷ What is significant for understanding Höch’s intellectual context is that Hausmann’s concept of political revolution depended on a new, liberated role for women in society.

In a 1919 essay titled “Weltrevolution” (world revolution) – the term Höch used in *Cut with the Kitchen Knife* – Hausmann proclaimed his support for a communist economic revolution, but argued that such a revolution would never be viable unless accompanied by a sexual revolution. “The communist movement,” wrote Hausmann, “will lead to a complete breakdown of the male spirit if it does not re-

orient itself from mere economic justice to sexual justice, to allow women to finally be women.”²⁸ Hausmann believed that capitalist ideas of ownership were deeply rooted in the patriarchal organization of the family, a system legalized by marriage, which allowed the father to possess the wife and children. In theory, Hausmann also opposed marriage, which he called “the amplification of a rape into a right.”²⁹ He argued that the oppression of women’s sexuality enforced female bondage and the false idea of the male’s right to possession. Hausmann, at least in his essays, insisted that each person should have control of his or her own body. Women, he argued, should have the right to experience a full range of female sexuality:

The creation of a feminine society leading to a new promiscuity and to matriarchy, in opposition to the masculine model of a patriarchal family, is intimately connected to the restructuring of bourgeois society into communism.³⁰

Although Hausmann was a theoretician and a prolific writer (his nickname was “Dadasoph”), Höch left few written statements and none of her published statements from the Weimar period touch on feminist issues. Höch and Hausmann were closely associated, but it cannot simply be assumed that she agreed with his views. There are, however, areas in Hausmann’s theory that must have been of interest to Höch and that pertain to Höch’s representation of women, despite the fact that Hausmann in his relationship with Höch actually contradicted certain tenets of his own “feminism.”

Höch recalled their relationship as “a difficult and sad apprenticeship.”³¹ Yet, it seems likely that Höch agreed with Hausmann’s call for liberation of women. Although brought up in a bourgeois family and the daughter of an authoritarian father, she was leading an unorthodox and independent life. It seems probable that, like Hausmann, Höch aligned sexual equality with communism.³² Many leftist intellectuals of the Weimar era supported the communist ideals of the Bolshevik revolution. Höch’s own support of communism is evidenced by her participation in the 1920 November Group letter which demanded artists’s involvement in politics and advocated communism in particular.³³ However, the most convincing proof of Höch’s associating women’s liberation with political revolution is in her artwork, where representations of women are central to her ironic, anti-Weimar images depicting and urging political change.

In letters that Hausmann wrote to Höch, he quoted at length from such sources as Gross and Freud. It is clear that his psychological theories of 1919–20 evolved through and with his relationship to Höch, what Hausmann called their “antagonistische Gleichwertigkeit” (antagonistic equivalence).³⁴ Both Höch and Hausmann used psychoanalytic theory to analyze themselves, each other, and their relationship. In one letter, from 1918, Hausmann wrote accusingly to Höch, “And isn’t it true that you’re always reading books – Mereschowsky, Adler – just to gather material to use against me?”³⁵ As any reader of these letters quickly becomes aware, Hausmann and Höch were attempting to live as a New Man and New Woman, that is, to live outside bourgeois conventions and to formulate social and sexual identities

in keeping with their anarcho-communist beliefs. The letters also reveal, however, Hausmann's attempt to justify his psychological brutality and at times even physical violence towards Höch with psychoanalytic theory.³⁶

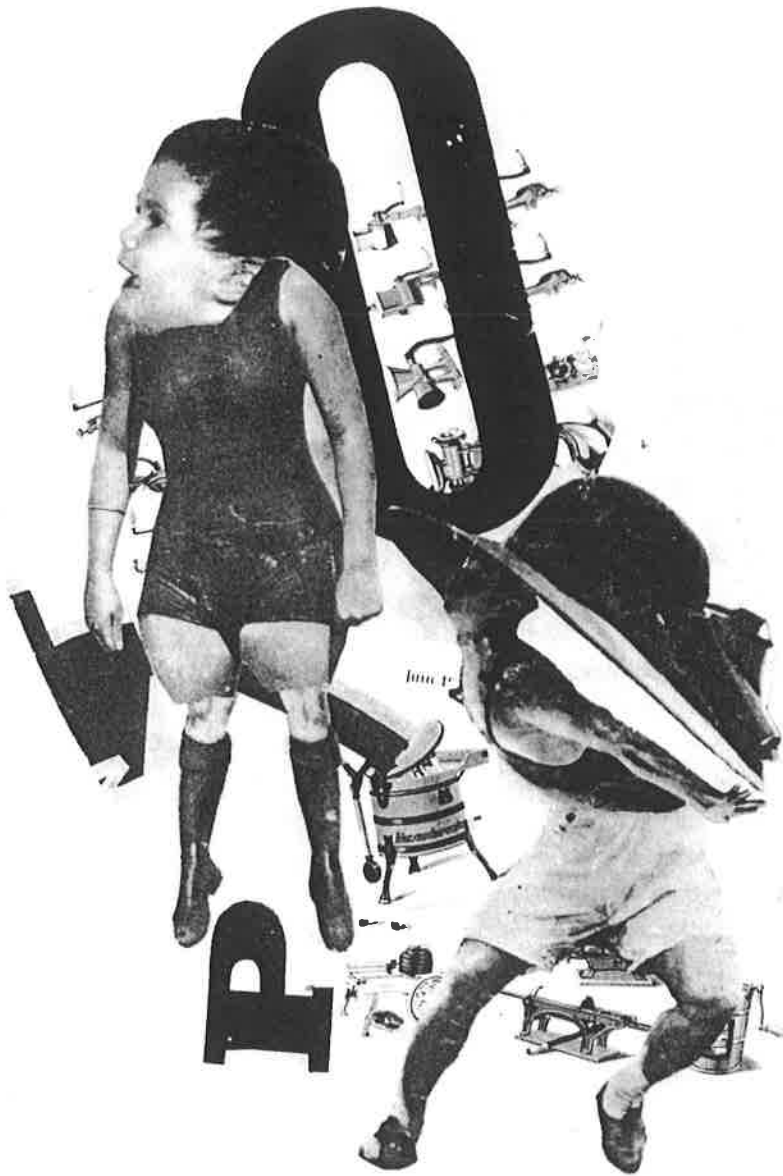
The entire time that Höch and Hausmann were involved, Hausmann remained married to and living with his wife Elfriede Hausmann-Schaeffer (they had a daughter, Vera Hausmann, who was born in 1907). Hausmann's position on his marriage was contradictory; on March 15, 1918, for example, he wrote to Höch: "I am not for bigamy, and am no bigamist, since I am opposed to any type of marriage."³⁷ Despite his inability to dissolve this union, he repeatedly wrote to Höch about his desire for her to bear his child and for them to live together. As early as 1915 he talked about having a son with Höch: "How can I say I love you and our son who I want to have with you?"³⁸ The Höch–Hausmann relationship was a public one; he knew her family well; they had friends in common and were regarded as a couple. Höch apparently wanted Hausmann to end his marriage and, although she wanted to have children with him, refused to do so under the circumstances. She had two abortions, one in May 1916 and the other in January 1918.³⁹

Not coincidentally, in the 1919 photomontage *Bürgerliches Brautpaar – Streit* (Bourgeois Bridal Pair – Quarrel) (fig. 14), Höch parodied conventional marriage. In the background are colored illustrations of household items for cleaning and cooking, and in the foreground are illustrated photographs of a male figure and a female figure in modern sports attire. Both athletes are infantilized – the woman bears the head of a child with a distressed expression, and the man awkwardly carries an enormous ribboned hat on his back and head. He is dwarfed and feminized by the oversized hat. Höch created other works during this time ridiculing marriage, such as her watercolor *Bürgerliches Brautpaar* (Bourgeois Bridal Couple) 1920, where a groom in formal clothes stands arm-in-arm with a headless mannequin wearing a bridal veil.

Although Höch's photomontages do not simply reflect the tumult of her efforts to sort out her own identity as a New Woman, details of her biography show how deeply and directly questions about the New Woman affected her. One suspects that in Höch's life at this time, issues concerning new roles for women – new possibilities, new pleasures, and new anxieties – were never distant.

For his part, Hausmann constructed two elaborate fantasies around Höch: one saw her as holy, as Eve or a virgin, with himself as Adam and their son-to-be completing the trinity; in the other, Hausmann imagined himself wresting Höch from the influence of her father and his bourgeois values.⁴⁰ When Höch would periodically leave Hausmann, he would use these "arguments" to justify his behavior and plead for her return. Hausmann was violent; he hit Höch on several occasions, and this, along with his refusal to end his marriage, was most frequently her reason for leaving him.

One of Höch's attempts to escape from Hausmann was in autumn 1920 when she, her sister Grete, and the poet Regina Ullmann hiked across the Alps from Munich to Venice. Höch then continued to Rome by herself. Höch maintained much inde-



BRÄUTHAUEN, FÜR FÜRBEREITUNG + TRAGEN

BRÄUTHAUEN, FÜRBEREITUNG + TRAGEN

14 Hannah Höch, *Bürgerliches Brautpaar – Streit* (Bourgeois Wedding Couple – Quarrel), 1919, 38 × 30.6 cm., photomontage, private collection

pendence in the relationship and should not be seen as a martyr or passive victim. Her anger and resistance are indirectly evident in Hausmann's letters. She also parodied Hausmann in her wonderfully funny and pointed short story "Der Maler" (The Painter) in which she satirizes a painter's male vanity and the glib appropriation of one of his works (an abstract rendering of a chive) first as an allegory of Woman and second as a representation of revolution (see appendix).⁴¹ In 1922, Höch broke completely with Hausmann, although they had some contact in later life. That same year (and the relationship between these events is not clear), Hausmann became involved with the artist Hedwig Mankiewitz. He obtained a divorce and subsequently married Mankiewitz in 1923.

As I suggested at the outset, there is a dialectic in Höch's work between anger and pleasure and, for the viewer, an oscillation between ironic distance and intimate identification. Using montage, Höch fragments photographs of female performers and allegorizes these images, recomposing them in open-ended narratives, eliciting empathy but confounding a sense of closure in the viewer. The sight of the fractured image of Impekoven and Kollwitz at the center of *Cut with the Kitchen Knife* elicits responses of alienation, exultation, and dislocation. Ambiguities result from viewing the head separated from the female body and yet recognizing the dancer's headless body as a signifier of female pleasure, power, and movement. As such images become allegories in the implied narrative of the larger composition – dismantling the Weimar Republic – this pleasure is linked specifically to revolutionary change.

Here theories of montage reception from the twenties and thirties, particularly those of Ernst Bloch, illuminate the nascent utopianism of Höch's montages. In much of Bloch's theoretical writing, he stresses the critical value of disjuncture and fragmentation and the relationship of these formal procedures to the development of what he terms "anticipatory consciousness," that is, the instances in everyday life of desire for a better future. Rather than privileging a single technique such as photomontage, Bloch celebrates any device or strategy that prompts the viewer to imagine and desire a new utopian future. Bloch scrutinized both fine art and mass culture, in search of what he called "utopian traces," those elements in a representation that elicit a desire for societal utopia. Bloch concentrated on the reception of various styles rather than on prescribing one correct style. Above all, Bloch was interested in the popular appeal of different representations and was an early observer of National Socialist propaganda, warning of its ominous effectiveness.

In an important essay published from exile in Zurich in 1935, Bloch explored the "nonsynchronism" (*Ungleichzeitigkeit*) in Nazi cultural appeal to different groups in German society.⁴² By *ungleichzeitig* (nonsynchronous) he meant literally "not of this time." Pointing out that such segments of German society as youth, white-collar workers, and farmers had become angry and dissatisfied, particularly during the economic depression, Bloch analyzed how these groups had turned to pleasures of nostalgia, and how susceptible they were to Nazi seduction, to promises of a future

that would resurrect the qualities of a mythic German past. He is perceptive about the situation of the middle-class, white-collar worker: "An immiserated middle class wants to return to prewar conditions when it was better off. . . . The desire of the white-collar worker not to be proletarian intensifies the orgiastic pleasure in subordination, in magic civil service under a duke. . . . Order and hierarchy, do they make up the fascist architectural style? – perhaps, but many are looking for quiet in the order, for a job in the hierarchy."⁴³

Although Bloch does not expand on the relationship between anger and pleasure, such a connection is the cornerstone of his investigation of various utopias. In the same essay, he writes "pent-up anger has its nonsynchronous contradiction not so much against the meager inheritance of the past as against a Now in which even the last inkling of fulfillment has disappeared." In other words, Bloch suggests that for certain groups in Depression-era Germany there was no dialectic between anger and pleasure in the present. Instead, the immediate dominant emotion was anger, which was then coupled with pleasure in the past (evoked by lingering traces in the modern present of the pre-modern past). In this essay and in the later, multi-volume *Principle of Hope*, Bloch, a Marxist, dissected the different motivations necessary for the desiring of quite different utopias.⁴⁴

In order to imagine a better future, Bloch argued, a person needs a sense of anger and discontent with some aspects of the present. But he or she must also know the experience of pleasure and have a feeling of entitlement to that pleasure in order to imagine an improved life. It makes a difference, then, what kinds of anger and what types of pleasure are felt. What are their sources? What sort of future is imagined? How are, in each case, an individual's emotions linked to dreams for a whole society? Are these dreams egalitarian or hierarchical? Is the utopian image open to the process of change or is it petrified – dialectical or reified? Thus Bloch's utopian theory provides a good starting point for considering utopian processes – the conjoining of anger and pleasure – in Höch's photomontages. Applying a Blochian critique is not simply a matter of identifying elements or their sources as utopian, but rather analyzing their function for producer and viewer within the dynamics of representation.

In *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*, Höch expresses her utopianism by celebrating the female pleasures of political liberation founded on the dissolution of the Weimar government and leading to a Dadaistic anarcho-communist alternative. A key element in this political allegory is the ambiguous Impekoven-Kollwitz pairing at the center of the work. In 1919, Käthe Kollwitz had just been named the first female professor at the Prussian Academy of Arts. This rather remarkable appointment acknowledged the fact that at the age of fifty-two, Kollwitz was widely respected as a veteran artist and political activist. Höch's image of her head was cut from the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* for March 30, 1919, the very issue that announced Kollwitz's appointment (fig. 15).⁴⁵ The oval of the head is left intact and icon-like, but an idealized wholeness is made impossible by its violent disassociation from the body and its diagonal



Käthe Kollwitz,
die Malerin und Radiererin, das erste weibliche
Mitglied der Akademie der Künste.
Phot. Hofferichter.



15 Käthe Kollwitz, die Malerin und Radierin, das erste weibliche Mitglied der Akademie der Künste (Käthe Kollwitz, the Painter and Etcher, First Female Member of the Art Academy), *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung* 28, no. 13 (March 30, 1919), page 101. General Research Division, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations

orientation. In *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*, the head is speared by an Indian man standing in front of an elephant. Yet, whatever connotations of martyrdom might be inferred are made merely ironic by the improbability of the implied narrative. The spear disturbs neither Kollwitz's head nor her contemplative expression.

Höch's use of Kollwitz's head is somewhat enigmatic. Although formally there is a great contrast between Kollwitz's own Expressionistic work, which integrated stereotypes of working-class women, and Höch's fragmented photomontages of ecstatic dancers, politically Kollwitz was often aligned with the Dadaists. Somewhat later, several tributes were paid Kollwitz in the communist press as well. So Kollwitz did not simply personify the Expressionist enemy derided in Dada manifestos. Nor, as an activist artist, could she have represented a disengaged intellectual position. Perhaps Höch's mixture of irony and accent here can be interpreted as an inter-generational tribute, a sign of both admiration and difference. In all probability, like most of the other women in *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*, Kollwitz, as a leftist artist, was someone Höch admired.

Nidda Impehoven was also highly celebrated, but in a different context. Having made the transition from child star to adult celebrity, by 1919 "Niddy" Impehoven still conveyed a childlike persona in the popular press and in her dances. The particu-

lar image used by Höch was reproduced in both *BIZ* and in *Die Dame* and shows a pirouetting Impekoven dressed as a Pritzel puppet in a marionette costume (fig. 16).⁴⁶ Lotte Pritzel was a well-known contemporary puppet-maker; an exhibition of her work was advertised in a December 1919 issue of *Die Dame*.⁴⁷

Impekoven's status as a dancer, which could have connoted an active, empowered woman, was somewhat contradicted by her childlike identity in the media. A 1922 brassiere ad for which Impekoven posed is a good example. Captioned "Harmonie der Linien im Tanz mit Bustenhalter Forma" (Linear harmony in dance with the *Forma* bra), the ad (fig. 17) shows the slender Impekoven, virtually without female curves, stretching backward, further erasing any suggestion of breasts.⁴⁸ Yet she is presented as an ideal for bra-wearers. Impekoven here embodies a liberation of movement and a freedom from aging, which at the same time creates an uncomfortable (and ultimately destructive) equation of female power and childishness.

By depicting Impekoven as a headless dancing body and juxtaposing this photo fragment with Kollwitz's head, Höch further complicates these connotations. The montage cannot simply be read as additive – the wisdom of the older Kollwitz added to the youthful corporeal power of Impekoven. For all its whimsy – the head balances lightly just out of reach of the dancer's outstretched arms – this is at its most basic a violent representation of a female mind-body split. Particularly for the female viewer, the severing of Kollwitz's head and Impekoven's body provides a more urgent and personal level of critique than the overarching condemnation of the Weimar government and the military. Anger surfaces, as does a sense of frustration with the separation of a life of the mind from the power of the female body so clearly celebrated in *Cut with the Kitchen Knife* – adding a sharper edge to the liberating tone of the montage.

Kollwitz's head is pinned in place, but Impekoven's entire body suggests movement. Her kick sets in motion the circular sweep of the montage's composition. Here, the modern dancer represents the various pleasures associated with social freedoms available to Weimar women, particularly those relating to their bodies. These new concepts about the body often concerned explicitly ideological issues of sex, class, and the role of technology.

In many ways, the image of the modern dancer in Weimar is a pastiche, a sign operating in multiple contexts. This image combines the stereotype of the lower-class dancer from the nineteenth century, a woman who could live out fantasies forbidden to bourgeois women; a symbol of postwar modernism with its cult of the machine and contemporaneity (particularly through the rationalized choreography of dance troupes); and the myth of a bohemian artist, existing outside class boundaries. This combination adds up to a representation of unbounded, fully expressed female pleasure.⁴⁹ Using Freud's definition of pleasure, we are reminded of its roots in the body and its drives, and the complex relationship of the pleasure principle to the principle governing the interface with external reality. The reality principle can repress the pleasure principle, or it can guard it, protect it in terms of delayed gratification. Or



16 Niddy Impekoven as Pritzel-puppet. *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* 28, no. 45 (Nov. 9, 1919): 460



17 "Harmonie der Linien im Tanz mit Bustenhalter Forma," (Linear harmony in dance with the Forma bra) *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* 31, no. 5 (Jan. 29, 1922): 93

in a utopian vision such as *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*, the reality principle, aligned here with the Weimar government, can be disrupted, and change propelled by the pleasure principle, represented here by the female body. I do not suggest reading *Cut with the Kitchen Knife* as a schematic map of Freudian theory; instead, I am arguing that one can use the theory as an entry for interpretation of the multiple layers of meaning given the female body in Höch's montage.

Valeska Gert, Niddy Impekoven, Anna Pavlova, Mary Wigman, Gret Palucca – these dancers, as represented in avant-garde and mass culture – were leading emblems of female corporeal pleasure. Like many women of the 1920s, Höch was a devoted follower of dance. In her treatment of the Impekoven photograph in *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*, Höch has preserved the formal aspects of the publicity or fan photograph. Although the image has been beheaded, the graceful silhouette of the dancer's pose is retained and even highlighted by a surround of white space. (Compare this respect for the outline to the treatment of Hausmann's face – above the diver suit in the lower right – where the scissors have invaded his outline, trimming the face and leaving the open mouth ridiculously large). Impekoven's pirouette is echoed by the equally choreographed poses of an ice skater (lower left), and an exotic dancer (upper right, below Ebert's head). The exotic dancer's body has a dual impact: juxtaposed with Ebert's head, it mocks him, and as an independent element in the composition, it echoes Impekoven's movement and adds to the sense of female-propelled motion.

To reproduce the image of a recognizable mass media star, even if fragmented, was in and of itself to celebrate the star system, a method that presents anew the pleasures of viewing media images. These pleasures would range from a narcissistic identification with the star to the more general enjoyment of the production quality of the photographs and their sensuous presentation in magazines and *Illustrierte*. Hannah Höch was an avid moviegoer and reader of the popular press in the twenties, the era that sparked a proliferation of publicity photographs in a variety of guises. For example, Höch could have seen Asta Nielsen live on stage and on the screen, in newspaper photographs reporting on or publicizing her performances, in "candid" shots in *Die Dame* and other magazines, and in advertising. To repeat images of this admired star in an avant-garde context (as Höch did later in her painting *Roma*) was, for Höch, to participate in this thoroughly pleasurable cycle of media reproduction. However, to deconstruct a Weimar *Illustrierte* subject using examples of newspaper photography was also to counter the widespread reverence for the media and its technologies. To combine the two was to turn technological progressivism in on itself and, at the same time, to express the desire for a new order.

Höch's strategies raise questions about gender and identity, particularly the revolutionary potential of representing female pleasure. Traditionally women have been relegated to seemingly frivolous arenas of enjoyment like shopping, appreciation of beauty, and spectatorship of media. Recently, feminist film theorists have argued that because women have no position outside patriarchal culture from which to put forward a critique, the feminine positions within that culture – particularly those

concerning pleasure – must therefore be examined for their power, ambiguities, and contradictions. In Blochian terms, “utopian traces” prompting pleasure – especially those experienced dialectically with others prompting anger – could motivate women to imagine a more egalitarian future. Thus certain representations of pleasure can be valued for their potential to motivate change through desire.⁵⁰ In this sense, Höch’s *Cut with the Kitchen Knife* serves as a model, combining the representation of female pleasure with sharp societal critique to create a utopian allegory of revolutionary change.

Hannah Höch’s utopias and her rethinking of feminine identity are, above all, historically specific. Höch’s Dada works, in general, critique Weimar bourgeois culture and traditional gender roles and celebrate the pleasures of modernity and the New Woman. In *Dada Rundschau* (Dada Panorama), 1919, (fig. 18), for example, brown-tinted newspaper photographs appear with text and pasted papers, some solid black, some watercolored with blues or reds, to create a series of smaller montages within the larger one. Vertical strips of paper imply a grid format, but this is disrupted by multiple diagonals; the eye wanders within the composition. For the Weimar-era viewer, perhaps the most eye-catching image would be flabby President Ebert and Reichswehrminister Noske in their bathing suits. The photographs of the Weimar SPD (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, Social Democratic Party) leaders were taken from an infamous *BIZ* cover of 24 August 1919: “Ebert und Noske in der Sommerfrische: Aufgenommen während eines Besuchs des Seebads Haffkrug bei Travemünde” (Ebert and Noske in the summer air: taken during a visit to the seaside resort Haffkrug near Travemünde) in which the two stand in the water looking slumped and ridiculous.⁵¹ The photograph of the two top government officials wading at the beach was already a joke – this was hardly the image of Prussian grandeur most Germans had come to associate with national office. But on top of this derision inherent in the photograph, Höch’s treatment is mocking. She has added flowers to each bathing suit, ironically feminizing them. And she has placed Ebert’s feet in handsome riding boots, perhaps spoofing the traditional militaristic look of German officialdom. Juxtaposed with the boots is the pseudo-advertising slogan “Gegen feuchte Füße” (Against damp feet) – another mockery, as if Ebert’s image problem could be solved by the right consumer product.⁵²

Höch shared with most other members of the twenties avant-garde a tendency to represent technology and modernism in a positive, even exultant light. A cloud marked Dada seems about to swallow Noske and beneath the cloud a New Woman gymnast dives gracefully into a pipe. If this melding of the New Woman and technology is implicitly utopian, the montage in the upper left of toga-clad, forward-moving women is explicitly so. The toga figures are cut, significantly, from the same issue of *BIZ*. Originally captioned “Tanz-Gruppe von einem Schweizer Sommerfest” (Dance group from a Swiss summer festival), this utopian image links modern women, body culture, sun, dance, liberation, and Antiquity.⁵³ The headline, “German Women in the National Assembly,” montaged with them in *Dada Rundschau*

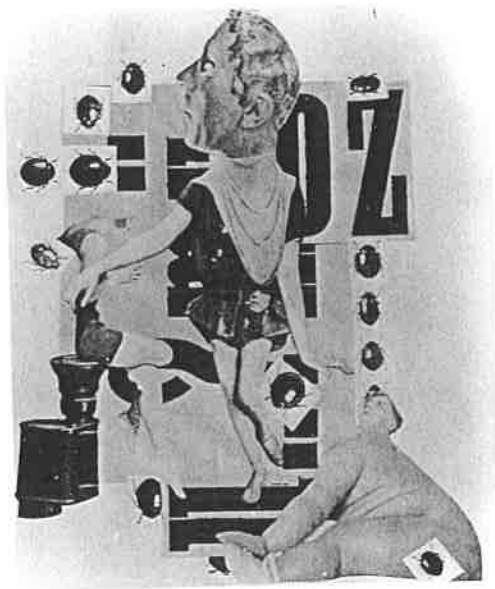


18 Hannah Höch, *Dada Rundschau* (Dada Panorama), 1919, 45 × 35 cm., photomontage, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin

refers to the fact that 1919 was the first year German women held elected office. The toga-draped bodies are modern dancers, but in the montage at least one of the heads attached to them is that of Anna Von Giercke, a woman recently elected to the Assembly.⁵⁴ Nearby, Woodrow Wilson's head appears on a young female athlete's body that seems to salute the toga-wearers. In this photomontage, dislocations of scale, identity, and context – the alienation effect of montage – create the distance and recognition necessary for allegory. Instead of simply portraying the women new to the National Assembly, Höch creates an utopian allegory of freedom of movement, internationalism, and modernity out of this specific political victory for women. In the lower right corner, as signature, Höch has pasted the caption "Schrankenlose Freiheit für HH" (Unbridled freedom for HH).

At times Höch used images of women to embody and represent Dada. This inscription of the female as the generative force, the center of Dada, was itself a fantasy, especially given the peripheral status accorded to women in the group.⁵⁵ One early photomontage from 1918 or 1919, titled *Oz, der Tragöde* (The Tragic Actor Oz), now missing (fig. 19), functions loosely as a portrait of George Grosz's Antwerp friend Otto Schmalhausen, who occasionally exhibited with the Dada group. Schmalhausen's nickname, "Oz," appears in the background along with the sort of insect illustrations that in Höch's work often serve as a Dada signature. The central figure of the piece is androgynous – a dancing woman's body wearing pearls with Schmalhausen's head. The dancing female legs also serve as an allegory for Dada as in *Dada-Tanz* (Dada Dance), 1922, (fig. 20). And in the untitled Neumann Collection photomontage (fig. 21), in which a female dancer is also the primary focus, the familiar Dada bug crawls across a man's head seen from above. (In Weimar photomontages often images of aerial photography or related points of view read as a tribute to technology and corresponding new ways of seeing).

Da-Dandy, 1919 (fig. 22), depicts a series of fragmented images of fashionable women, almost like an overlapping film montage. These are different women but dressed so much the same they look like one. This is the twenties version of a female dandy, upscale and flamboyant, dressed in an elaborate hat, pearl earrings, a pearl necklace, bracelets, and a velvet dress, with a beaded purse and heels. In each set of eyes, one eye has been made slightly larger, as if to resemble an eye with a monocle. (In later years, Höch affectionately remembered the monocle as the sign for the [male] Dada dandy; Hausmann, she quipped, probably came into the world wearing a monocle).⁵⁶ The montaged women are primarily in elegant shades of black and white while the background of collaged papers is accented in reds, yellows, and blues. Enigmatically, behind the dandy, a woman's head with a soft hair style and lowered eyes seems almost to kiss one of the necks of the composite dandy. Höch herself wore avant-garde clothes, plain and drop-waisted, possibly of her own design; she hardly appeared the dandy. Nor could she have afforded to costume herself like the dandy in the montage. So if *Da-Dandy* is to be considered a self-portrait at all it would be in the realm of fantasy.



19 Hannah Höch, *Oz der Tragöde* (The Tragic Actor Oz), 1919, photomontage, now missing



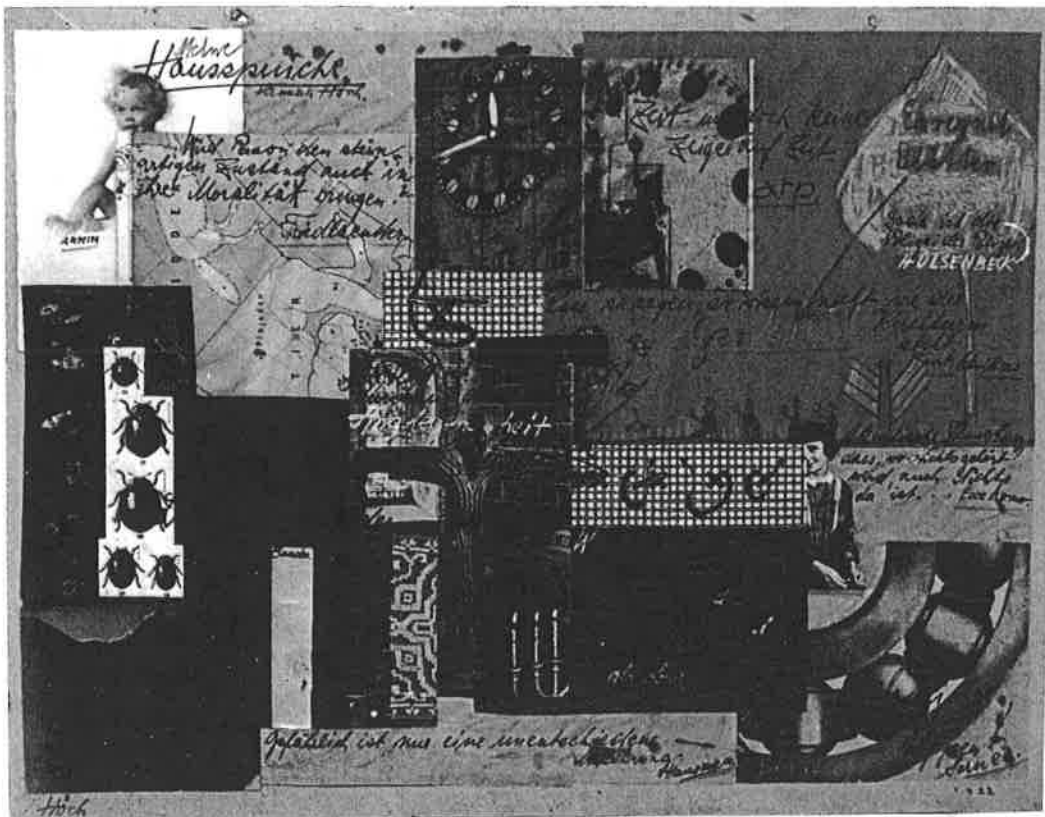
20 Hannah Höch, *Dada-Tanz* (Dada Dance), 1922, 32 × 23 cm., photomontage, Vera and Arturo Schwarz Collection, Milan



21 Hannah Höch, *Untitled*, 1920, 13 3/4 x 11 1/4 in., photomontage, Morton G. Neumann Family Collection

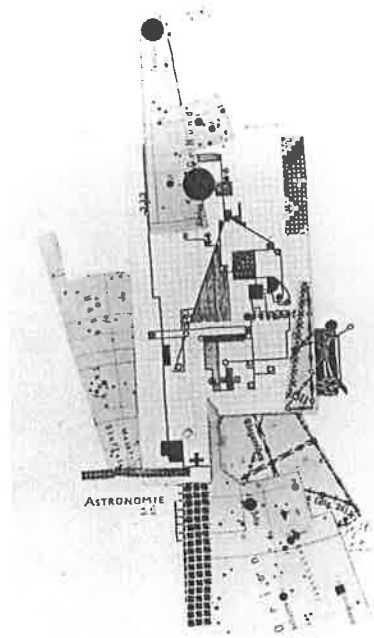
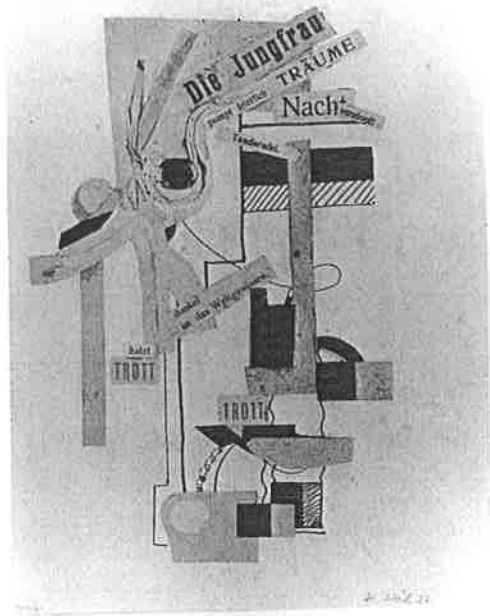


22 Hannah Höch, *Da-Dandy*, 1919, 30 × 23 cm., photomontage, private collection



23 Hannah Höch, *Meine Haussprüche* (My House Sayings), 1922, 32 × 41.3 cm., collage, Galerie Nierendorf, Berlin

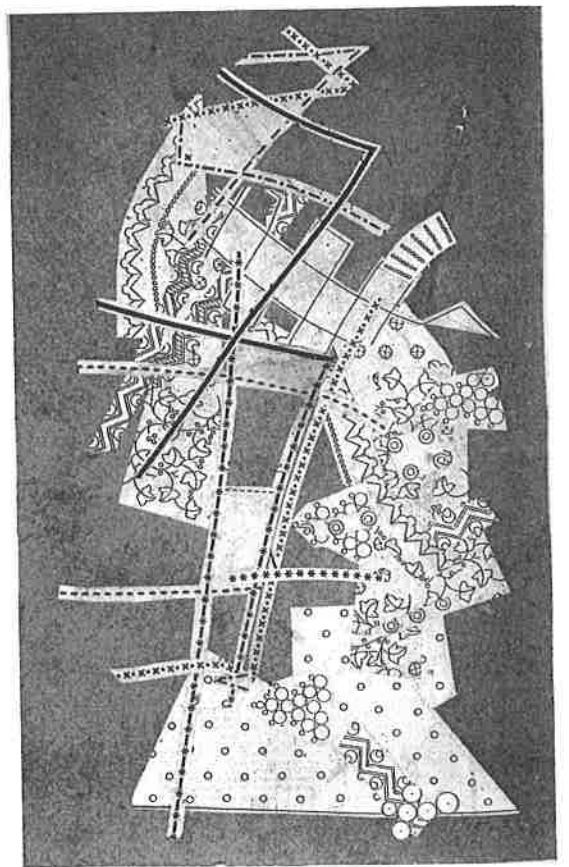
Meine Haussprüche, 1922 (fig. 23), is generally considered Höch's last Dada work, a sign-off collection of sayings.⁵⁷ It combines a Constructivist grid composition with emblems of Dada and sayings from Dadaists and like-minded writers. With this work, Dada, instead of being represented as the trigger of dynamic change, has become the stuff of memory. The title, *Meine Haussprüche* (My house sayings), refers to the German tradition of having a guest book where visitors leave aphorisms and good wishes upon departing. For Höch, the year 1922 marked her break with Hausmann, and, in the art world, a shift of interest from the anarcho-communism of much of Dada to the more concrete political ideals of Soviet Constructivism (figs. 24, 25, 26).⁵⁸ Already there is something nostalgic in some of the Dadaist statements quoted in *Meine Haussprüche*: "Der Tod ist eine durchaus dadaistische Angelegenheit. R. Hülsenbeck" (Death is a thoroughly Dadaist affair. R. Hülsenbeck); "Ohne dieses Lesepult kann überhaupt keine Literatur verstanden werden! Baader" (Without this podium no literature can be understood! Baader); "Dada ist die Polizei der Polizei! Hülsenbeck" (Dada is the police of the police! Hülsenbeck); "Und immer mehr Zeit und doch keine Zeiger auf Zeit" (And always more time and yet no indication of time. Arp.)



24 Hannah Höch, *Poesie* (Poetry), 1922, 25.5 × 19.5 cm., collage, private collection (top left)

25 Hannah Höch, *Entwurf für das Denkmal eines bedeutenden Spitzenbemes* (Sketch for Memorial to an Important Lace Shirt), c. 1922, 27.6 × 17 cm., collage, Hamburger Kunsthalle (bottom)

26 Hannah Höch, *Astronomie* (Astronomy), 1922, photomontage, 25.7 × 20.5 cm., Collection Grete König-Höch (top right)



But the utopianism Höch associates time and again with the representation of the New Woman remains alive in her work after the Dada years. And so in closing my consideration of those years, I want to explore further the construction of these utopias through two examples. *Die Mädchen* (The Girls), 1921 (fig. 27), now missing, consists of joyous figures of female swimmers, dancers, and a pilot, an energetic mix of heads and bodies with the addition of one car signifying technology.⁵⁹ The whole composition, with its familiar centrifugal movement and jazzy diagonals, reads like an advertisement for corporeal pleasures of New Women-in-motion. At the center is a swimmer about to dive; the smiling female pilot's head is atop a gymnast's body; the three women in the lower right are clasping hands and dancing together. Everyone is smiling; the car apparently flying in at the lower left is clean and shiny. This utopianism reflects the representation of female dancers in the contemporary mass media; the circle of dancers in the lower right of *Die Mädchen* derives from *BIZ*, July 10, 1921 (fig. 28): "An der See: Ballett im Wasser: Eine Aufnahme aus Westerland" (By the sea: ballet in the water: a photograph from Westerland). If Höch's image celebrates the then-popular *Girllkultur* (which idolized the lithe, the athletic, the young), it does so with an appropriately American accent in its resemblance to a Hollywood movie poster (then taking up ever more wall space in German cities).⁶⁰

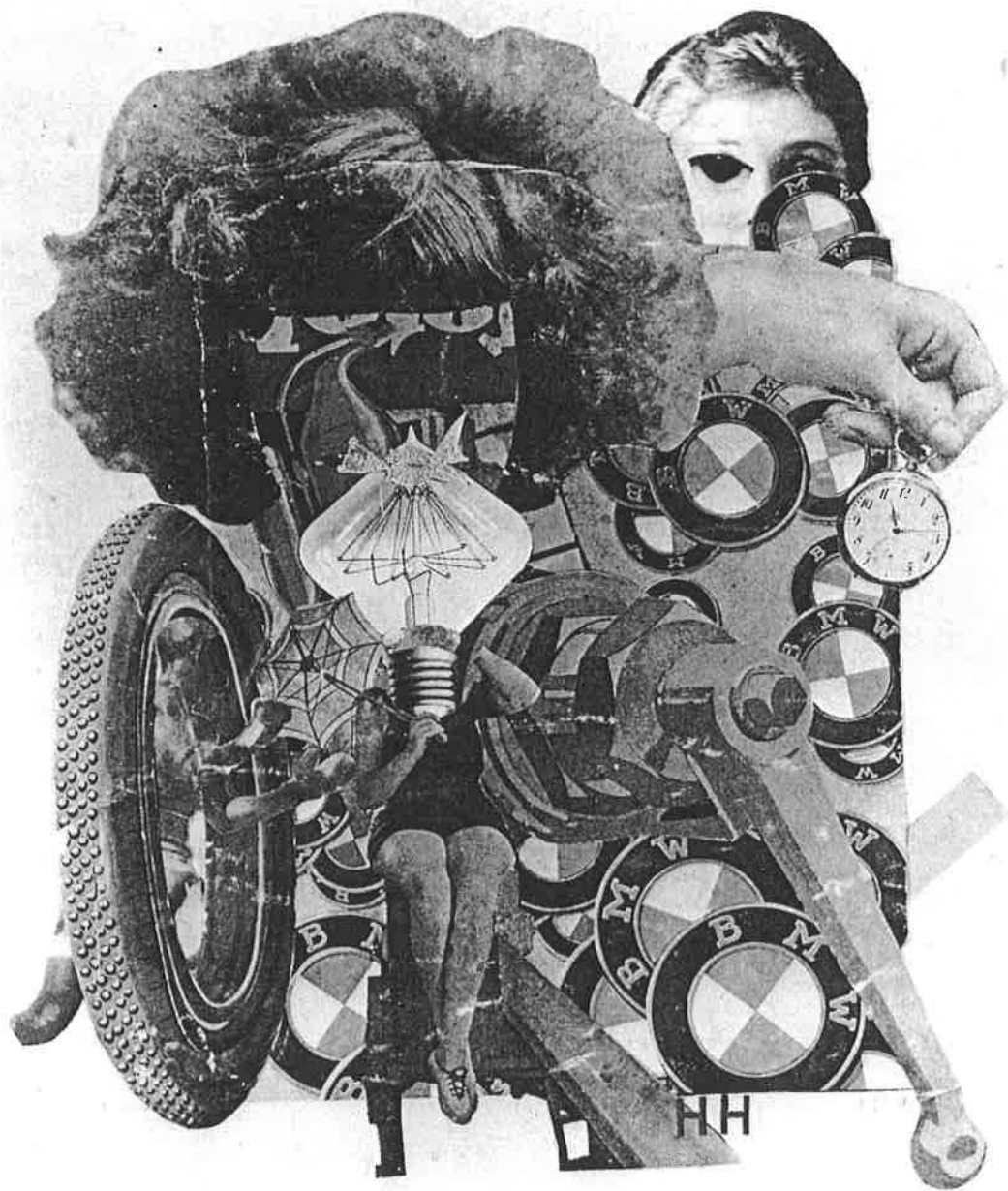
In contrast, *Das schöne Mädchen* (The Beautiful Girl), 1919–20, (fig. 29), presents what appears to today's viewer as a bizarre and even sinister equation of technology and the female: circular BMW insignias repeat throughout the image; perched atop a girder, a female body in a modern bathing suit with a parasol has a light bulb for a head.⁶¹ In the most simple interpretation, *Das schöne Mädchen* is a portrait of a modern woman defined by signs of femininity, technology, media, and advertising. Behind her, looming like a large shadow, is a red-tinted advertisement topped by a woman's bobbed and puffed hairdo; she is part human, part machine, and part commodity. The background is apparently from a BMW advertisement which repeats the circular red, white, green, and black insignia in erratic clusters across the surface. The New Man makes his entrance in the lower left; a black boxer appears through a tire. His face is cut out and his arms are held stiffly in front of him, suggesting an automaton. There are also gears and a clock in the image. The whole montage is given the feel of an advertisement in contrast with the woman's head visible in the upper right. One of her eyes is replaced by a cat's eye, but the other peeks over a BMW logo to look directly at the viewer. (The cat's eye is larger than the woman's own eye, giving her the appearance of wearing a monocle; this was Höch's sign for a Dadaist, in this case possibly a reference to herself). The black-and-white tones of the observer's face are those of a newspaper photograph whereas the rest of the image consists of the brown tints and painted colors of an advertising poster — making the woman "behind the scenes" appear more realistic. The absurdity of the scene provides an ironic distance that is doubled by the presence of a spectator within the montage. But the viewer outside the montage is in part implicated by the gaze of the female spectator within the frame of representation. It is as if we, the viewers, are aligned with the montage spectator in looking at this surreal advertising scene; she views from the back, we from the front, and our gazes meet.



27 Hannah Höch, *Die Mädchen* (The Girls), 1921, photomontage, now missing



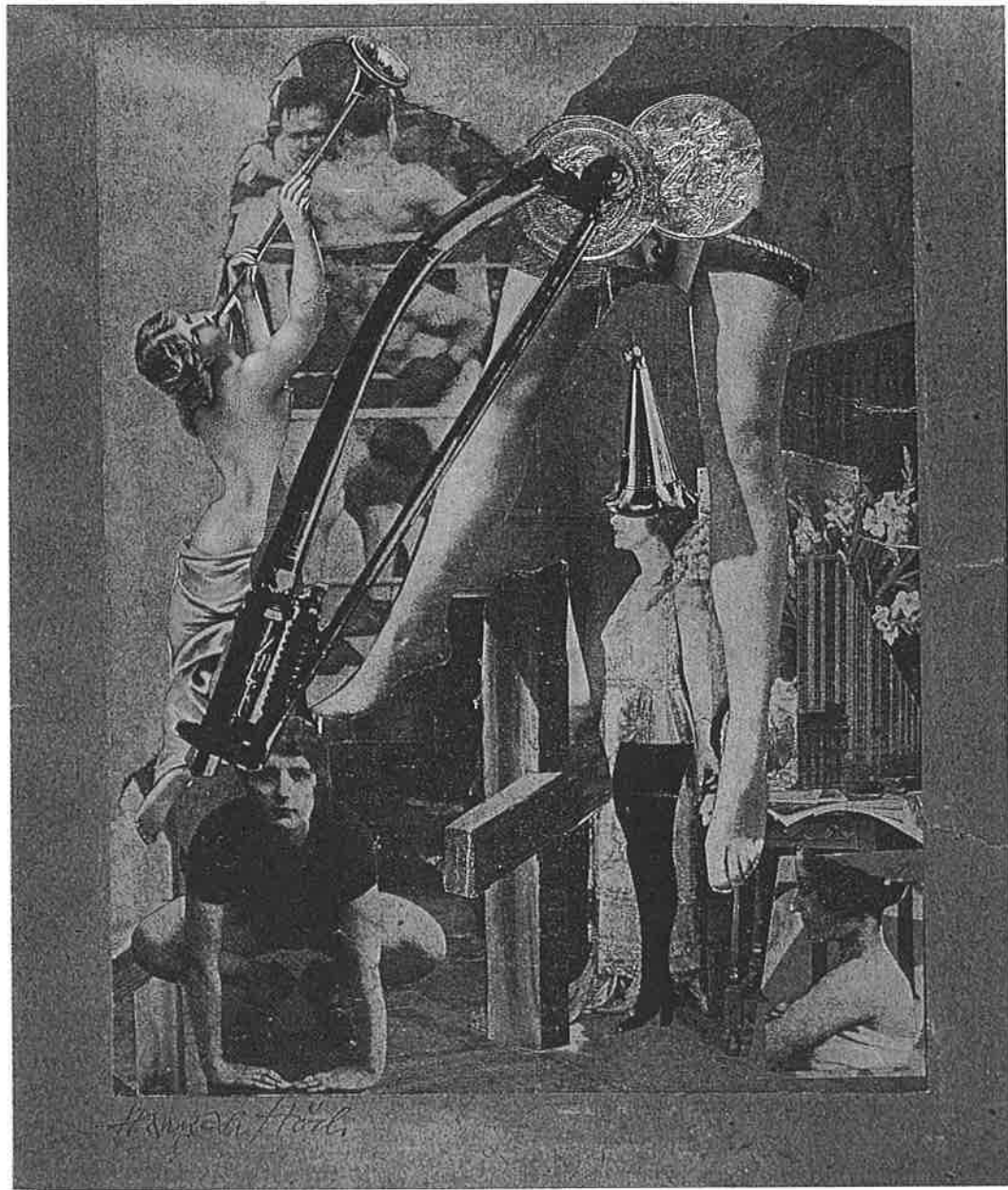
28 "Ballet im Wasser" (Ballet in the Water), *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* 30, no. 28 (July 10, 1921): 424



29 Hannah Höch, *Das schöne Mädchen* (The Beautiful Girl), 1919–20, 35 × 29 cm., photomontage, private collection

But what she as a representative twenties spectator and we, seventy years later, are likely to see are two extremely different matters. In our overly industrialized, noisy, and polluted world, it is hard to believe or accept the unbridled twenties optimism for technology expressed by people across the political spectrum. Advertising and rationalization were seen as aligned with technology in promoting an egalitarian, progressive modernism. As historian Victoria de Grazia reminds us about the interwar period: in advertising could be seen “a new language, the idiom of youth embattled against the rhetorical conventions of the old, the sacrosanct, and the academic. Advertising promised to become the Esperanto of a dynamic capitalism [here the Dadaists would substitute the word ‘socialism’], ‘the key to world welfare’ to use the slogan of the 1929 Berlin World Advertising Conference.”⁶²

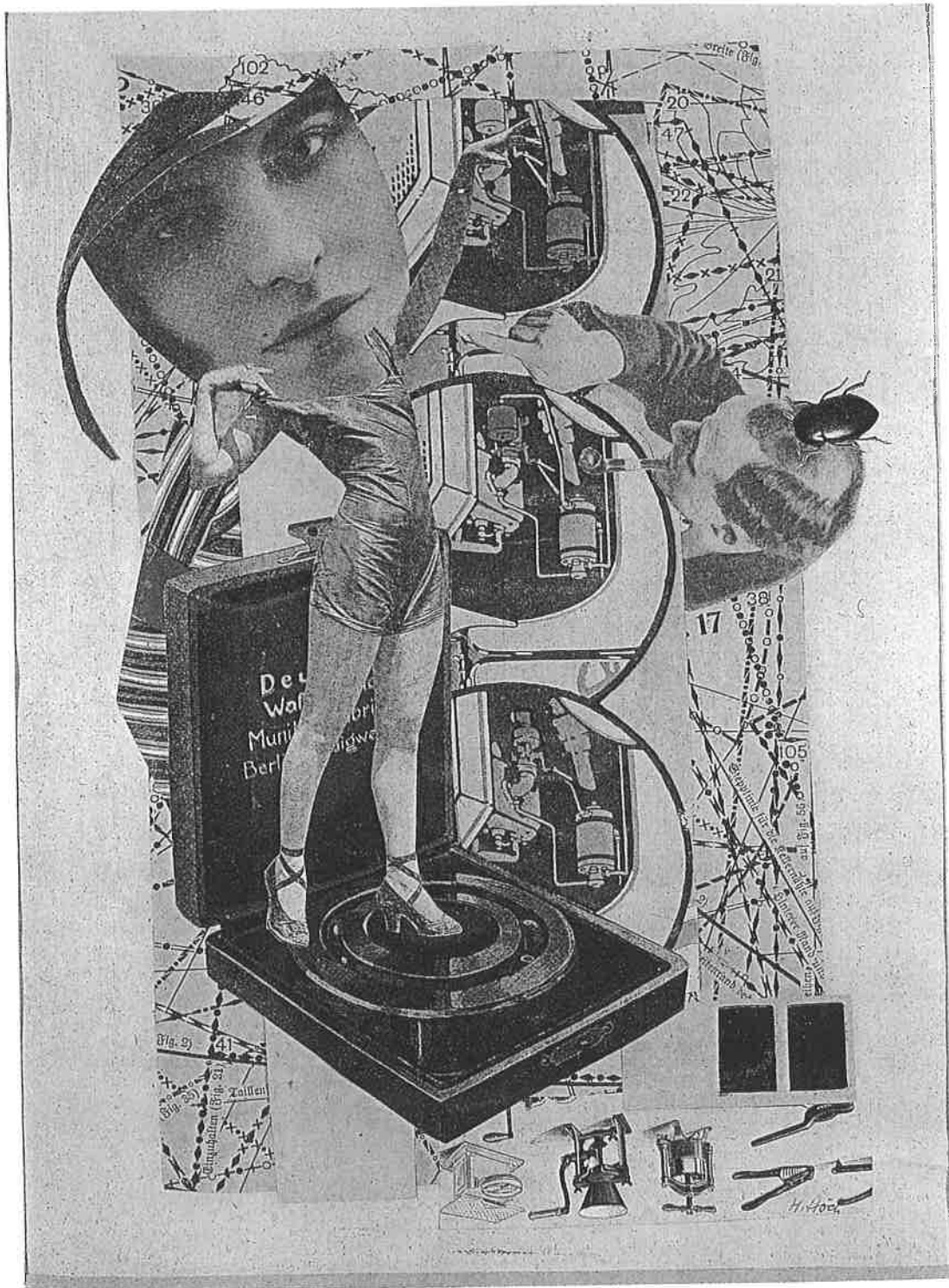
It is possible that only our contemporary cynicism about advertising and the de-personalizing effects of technology makes the facelessness of the New Woman and the New Man in a Weimar representation seem ominous. Whereas we might interpret the dislocation between the female spectator and the scene in the montage as a representation of alienation, in contrast a twenties viewer might identify with her interest in utopian imagery. Or perhaps even a Weimar-era spectator would have read ambiguity into this image, both desiring and fearing the depicted melding of women, technology, and commodity. She might in fact have felt both alienated by the facelessness of the modern woman and the boxer, and, at the same time, excited by these blank slates, by their implication of identity transformations occurring and possible. *Das schöne Mädchen* raises questions about how Höch’s irony was received at the time, whether, for different viewers, it veered toward critique or celebration of new identities in modern life. But the historical context is all-important. Höch’s work requires our sensitivity to a historically specific spectator, the meanings and ambiguities she would perceive, and to utopias, desires, and fears time-bound to Weimar Germany.



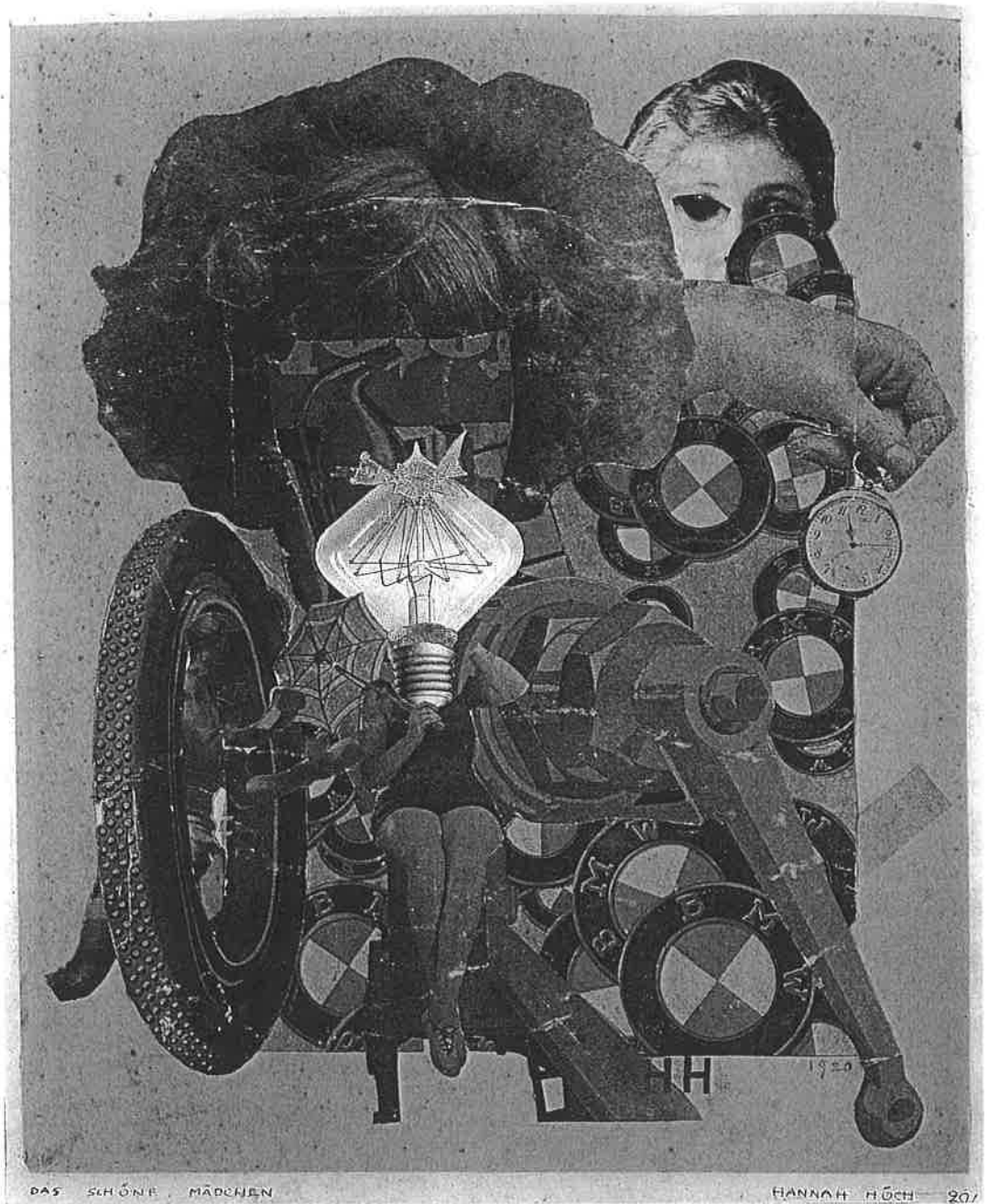
1 Hannah Höch, *Dada-Ernst*, 1920–21, 18.6 × 16.6 cm., photomontage. Vera and Arturo Schwarz Collection, Milan. Photograph: S.A.D.E. (Surrealism and Dada, Even) Archives, Milan



2 Hannah Höch, *Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser Dada durch die letzte weimarer Bierbauchkulturepoche Deutschlands* (Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada through the Last Weimar Beer Belly Cultural Epoch of Germany), 1919–20, 114 × 90 cm., photomontage, Nationalgalerie Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin ©1993 ARS, N.Y./Bild-Kunst, Bonn



3 Hannah Höch, *Untitled*, 1920, 13 ¼ × 11 ¼ in., photomontage, Morton G. Neumann Family Collection



4 Hannah Höch, *Das schöne Mädchen* (The Beautiful Girl), 1919–20, 35 × 29 cm.,
photomontage, private collection



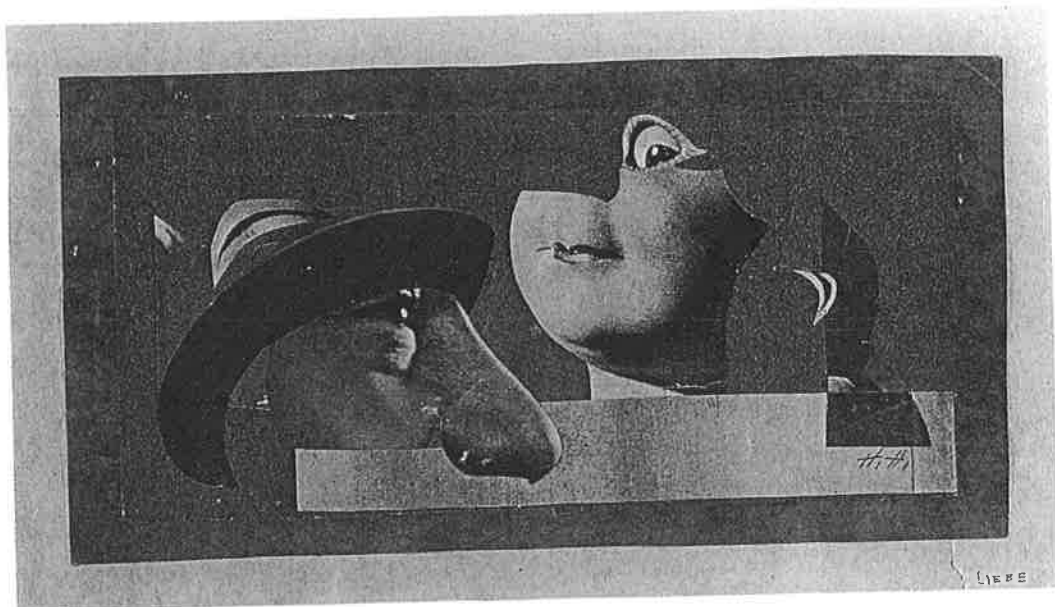
5 Hannah Höch, *Deutsches Mädchen* (German Girl), 1930, 20.5 × 10.5 cm., photomontage, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin, © Erbgemeinschaft Hannah Höch. Photograph: Hermann Kiessling
© 1993 ARS, N.Y./Bild-Kunst, Bonn



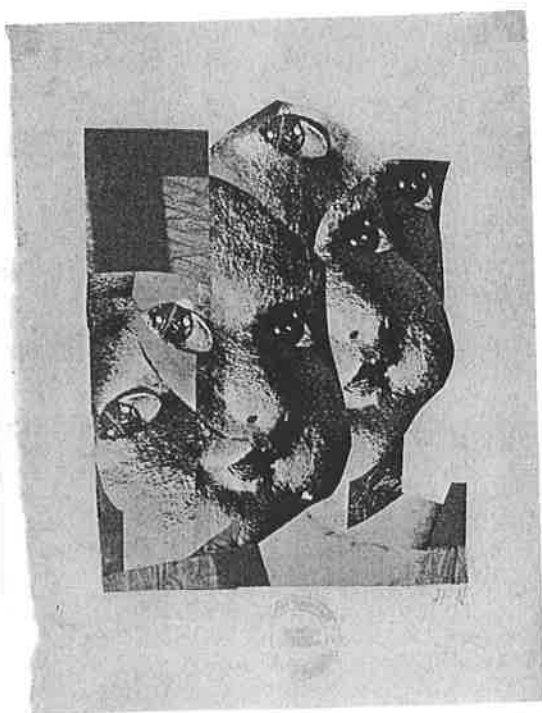
6 Hannah Höch, *Dada-Tanz* (Dada Dance), 1922, 32 × 23 cm., photomontage, Vera and Arturo Schwarz Collection, Milan. Photograph: S.A.D.E. (Surrealism and Dada, Even) Archives, Milan



7 Hannah Höch, *Chinese Girl with Fan*, 1926, 28 × 20.5 cm., photomontage, Louise R. Noun Collection



8 Hannah Höch, *Liebe* (Love), c. 1926, 13 × 27 cm., photomontage, Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Stuttgart ©1993 ARS, N.Y./Bild-Kunst, Bonn



9 Hannah Höch, *Zerbrochen* (Broken), 1925, 15.2 × 11.4 cm., photomontage, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; museum purchase with funds provided by the Brown Foundation Accessions Endowment fund



10 Hannah Höch, *Englische Tänzerin* (English Dancer), 1928, 23.7 × 18 cm., photomontage, Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Stuttgart ©1993 ARS, N.Y./Bild-Kunst, Bonn



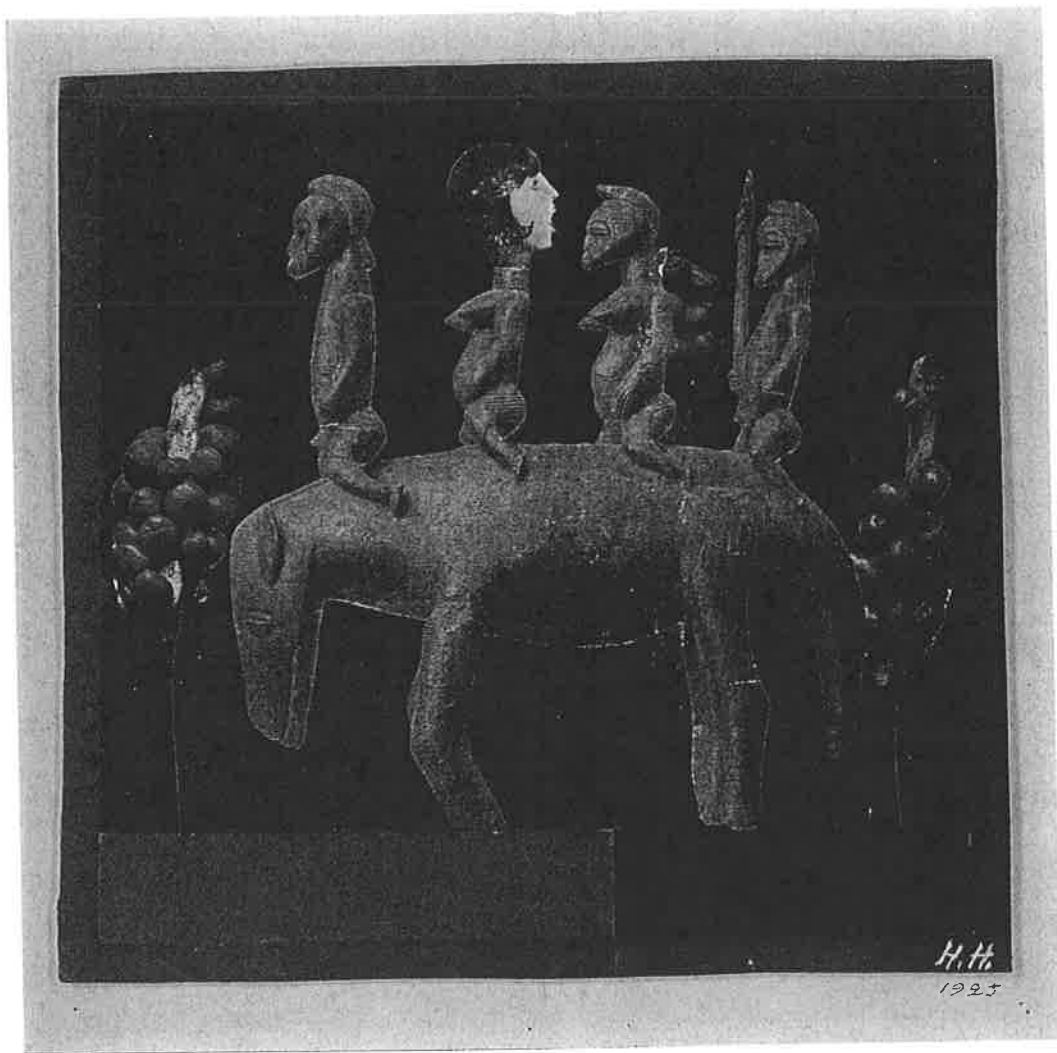
11 Hannah Höch, *Russische Tänzerin* (Russian Dancer), 1928, 30.5 × 22.5 cm., photomontage, Collection Dörries, Braunschweig



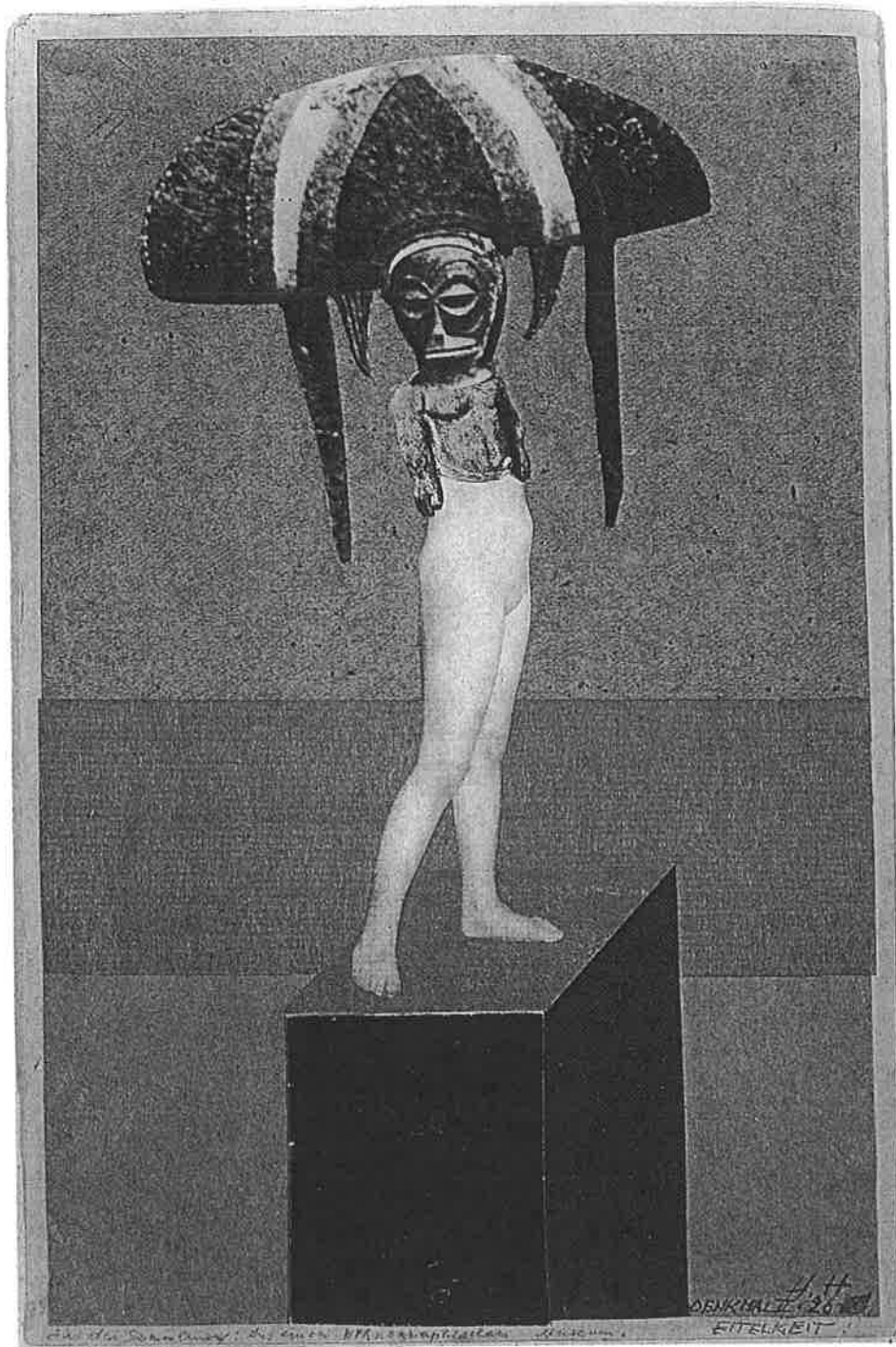
12 Hannah Höch, *Equilibre*, 1925, 30.5 × 20.3 cm., photomontage, Institut für
Auslandsbeziehungen, Stuttgart ©1993 ARS, N.Y./Bild-Kunst, Bonn



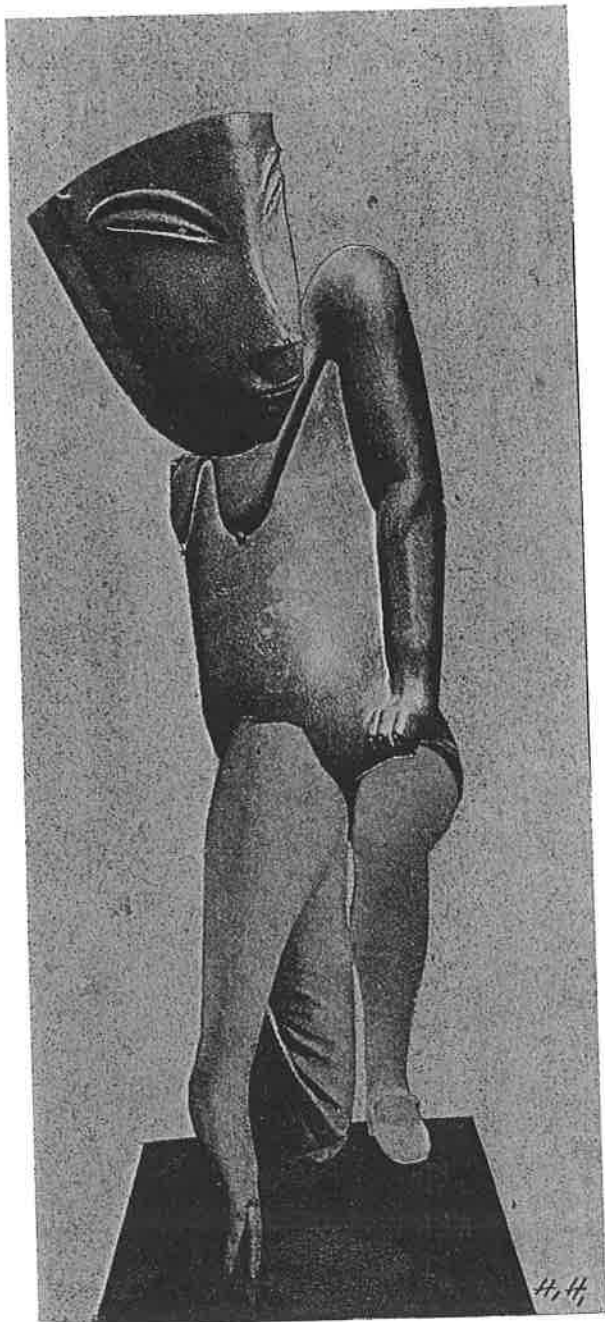
13 Hannah Höch, *Indische Tänzerin: Aus einem ethnographischen Museum* (Indian Female Dancer: From an Ethnographic Museum), 1930, 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 8 $\frac{7}{8}$ in., photomontage, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Frances Keech Fund



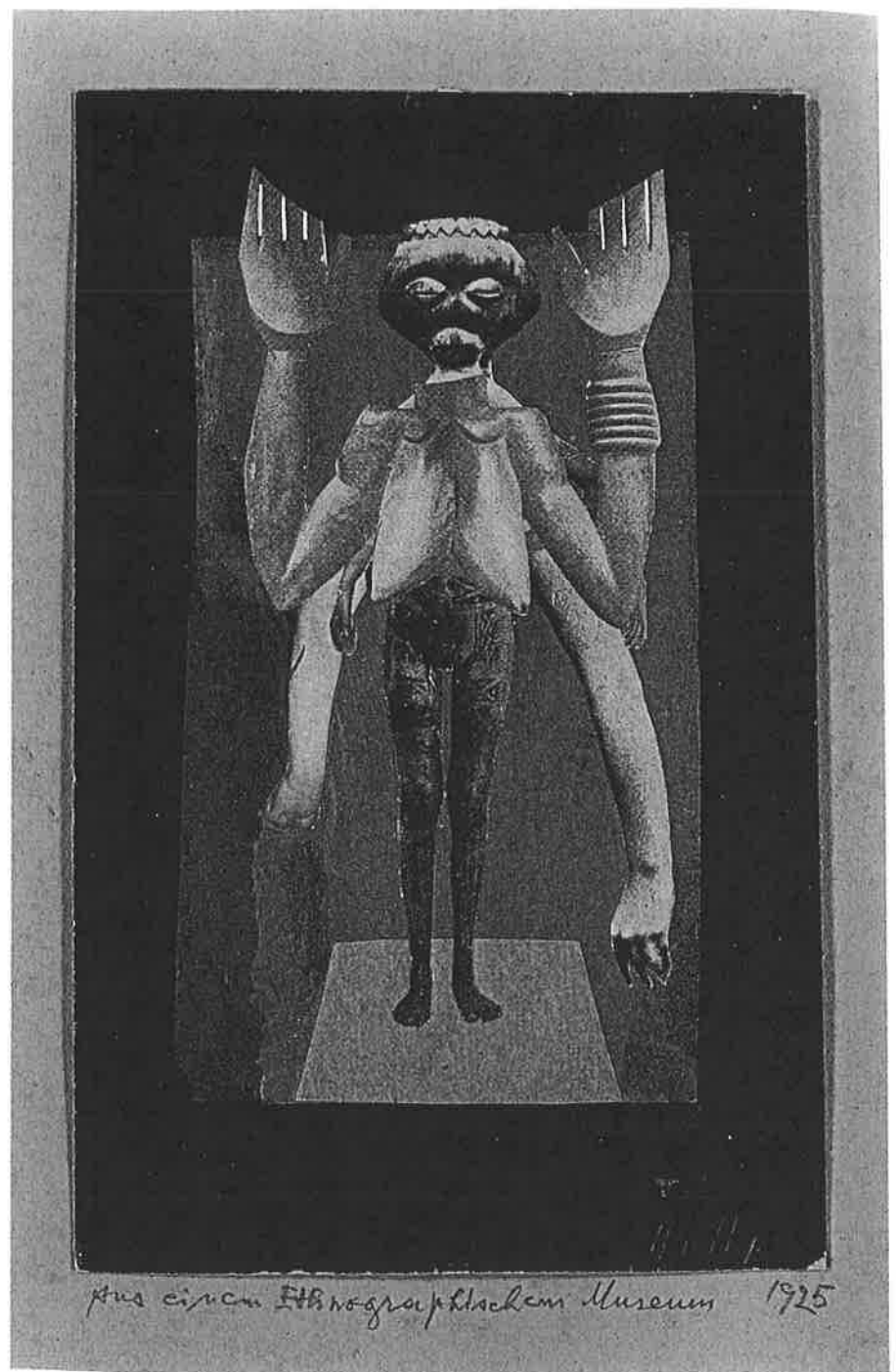
14 Hannah Höch, *Entführung: Aus einem ethnographischen Museum* (Abduction: From an Ethnographic Museum), 1925, 19.5 × 20 cm., photomontage, Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, ©1993 ARS, N.Y./Bild-Kunst, Bonn



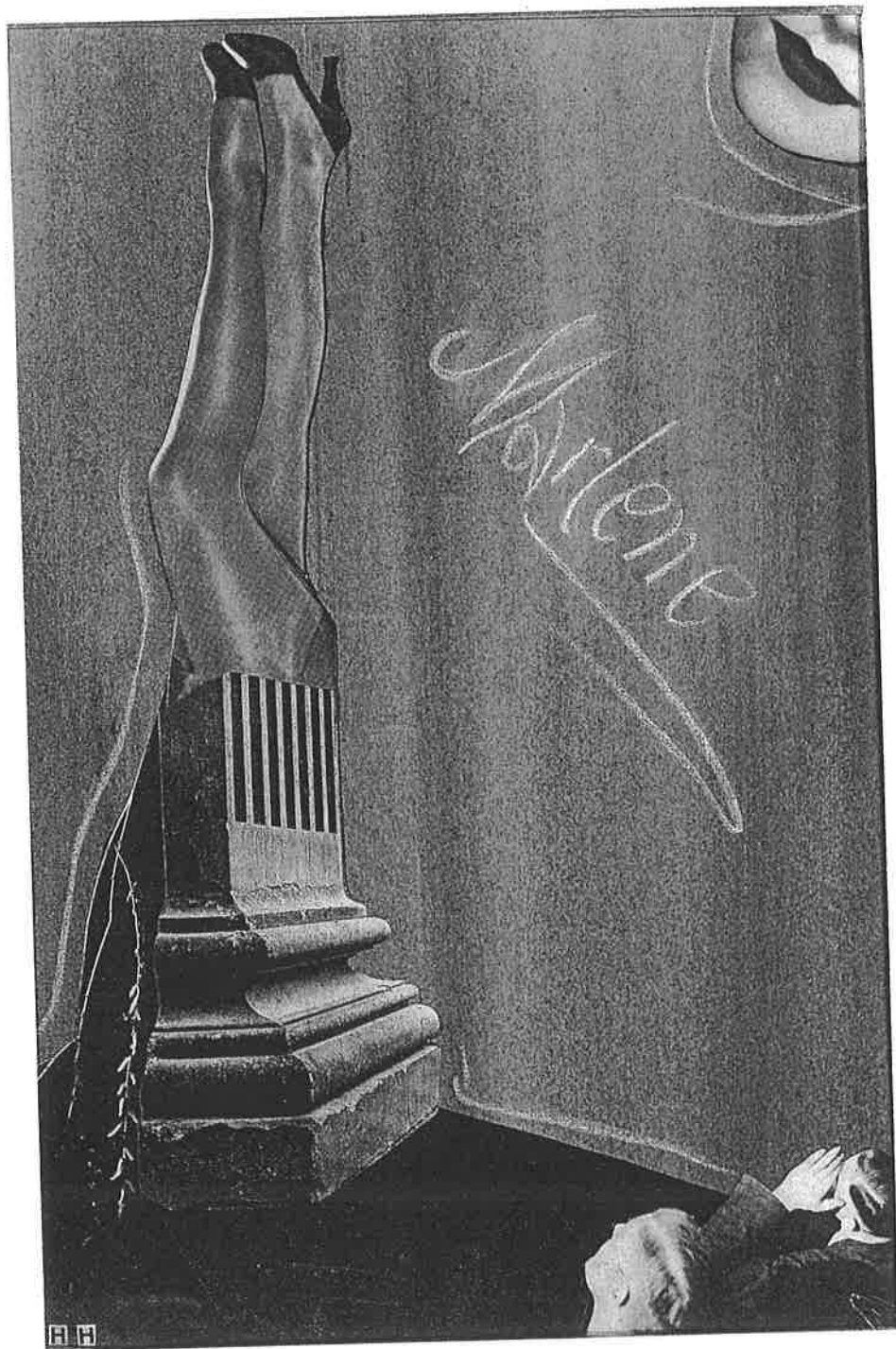
15 Hannah Höch, *Denkmal II: Eitelkeit* (Monument II: Vanity), from the series *Aus einem ethnographischen Museum* (From an Ethnographic Museum), 1926, 25.8 × 16.7 cm., Collection: Rössner-Höch, Backnang, Germany, ©1993 ARS, N.Y./Bild-Kunst, Bonn



16 Hannah Höch, *Denkmal I: Aus einem ethnographischen Museum* (Monument I: From an Ethnographic Museum), 1924, 19.6 × 15.5 cm., photomontage, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin, © Erbgemeinschaft Hannah Höch. Photograph: Hermann Kiessling ©1993 ARS, N.Y./ Bild-Kunst, Bonn



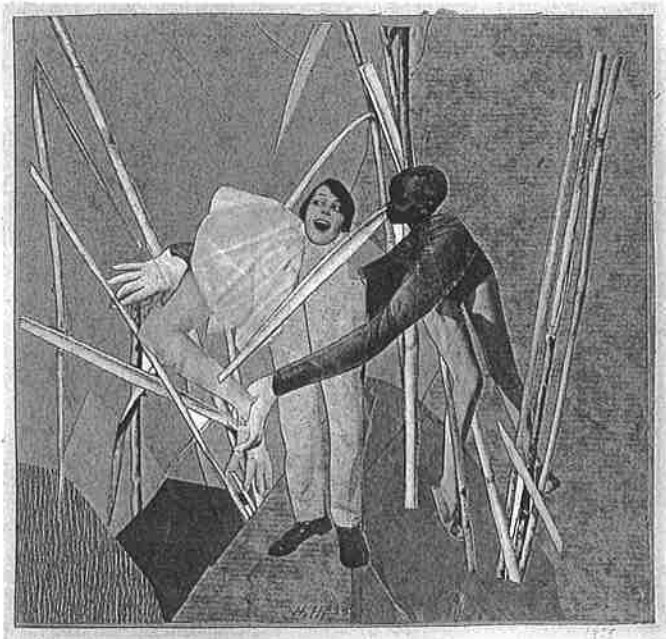
17 Hannah Höch, *Trauer: Aus einem ethnographischen Museum* (Sadness: From an Ethnographic Museum), 1925, 17.6 × 11.5 cm., photomontage, Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin ©1993 ARS, N.Y./Bild-Kunst, Bonn



18 Hannah Höch, *Marlene*, 1930, 36.7 × 24.2 cm., photomontage, Dakis Joannou, Athens



19 Hannah Höch, *Die Braut* (The Bride), c. 1933,
20 × 19.7 cm., photomontage, Thomas Walther,
New York



20 Hannah Höch, *Liebe'im Busch* (Love in the Bush),
1925, 23 × 24 cm., photomontage, Modern Art
Museum of Fort Worth, Museum purchase, The
Benjamin J. Tillar Memorial Trust

mass media, modernism, & the avant-garde

2

One of the predominant features of everyday life during the Weimar era was the experience of modernization. Almost no chronicle of the period failed to note or recall the sensations of life being speeded up and profoundly transformed. Everywhere one experienced new technologies, whether riding a trolley car on the street or watching the latest Charlie Chaplin movie in a film palace or working in a newly rationalized factory. In Germany in the 1920s, modernity meant experiences of speed, technology, consumerism, economic flux, fragmentation, urbanism, industrialization, and rationalization. The combination of the new modes of existence and the new form of government, combined with periods of extreme economic fluctuation, gave those who described the times feelings of instability, excitement, and fear.

Mass media both participated in and responded to the process of modernization. Film, photography, and photomontage represented the most up-to-date media available to depict new experiences and perceptions. As an organizing structure, montage was thought to echo the pace, the multiplicity, the disorientation, the thrill, and of course the fragmentation of modern everyday life. Montage in particular – whether in film, *Illustrierte* layout, or photomontage – was considered a skillful reflection of the urban scene and the new means of transportation. The designer Max Burchartz, for example, chose to use photomontage in his mass-produced prospectus for the city of Dortmund to combine scenes of the intersection of the railroad with the urban landscape. His expectations for the ability of montage to encapsulate modern, kaleidoscopic experience were ambitious, as he

described his railroad montage: "The eye does not control perspectival directions, rather receives only impressions of near, of far, of brightness, of dark, over and under, movement and quiet, diversity or simplicity."¹

The *Illustrierte* celebrated photography's ability to grab a moment of stillness from the modern rush and also its potential, through montage layout and serial photography, to give the reader a multiplicity of impressions, reflecting the daily, distracted experience of modern life. The photoweekly *Weltspiegel* ran a typical montage page in 1929 entitled ". . . And this all happened in $\frac{1}{100}$ of a second!"² From one long shot of a city intersection, a montage of five enlargements of details was offered to the reader. In one one-hundredth of a second, the time it supposedly took to snap the photo, people alighted from a trolley car, a bicyclist overturned in the gutter, a policeman gave advice, someone ran across the street, and two women stopped to talk in the middle of traffic. The marvel was not only that so much could happen so fast on the city street, but that photography could expand visual perception — offering multiple viewpoints of a scene whose details could not all be absorbed in one glimpse by the unaided human eye.

The avant-garde contributed to the images of modernization propagated by mass media. The disorienting viewpoints of New Vision photography, for instance, transformed the appearance of photojournalism and, in the increasingly popular photoweeklies, had tremendous influence in attracting readers and selling products. As free-lancers, Bauhaus instructor Laszlo Moholy-Nagy and the French artist Man Ray were among the photographers employed by Ullstein Verlag, and Bertolt Brecht was among the writers.

Therefore, one can argue that, in Weimar at least, the mass media was not just a source for avant-gardists. There was a reciprocal influence, although certainly the media had greater power. Literary critic Peter Jelavich's recent work on modernism suggests that we should consider different types of cultural production — say, an avant-garde photomontage and an illustrated newspaper photograph — as different aspects of a common culture joined by common questions.³ Both the media organs and the avant-garde were products of modernization and both responded to its pressures and its pleasures.

So how can the terms *modernism*, *mass media*, and *avant-garde* be constituted to represent the historical situation in the twenties accurately and allow for an understanding of the relationship among them? Such theoretical clarification is particularly necessary to determine the negotiations between avant-garde art and mass culture. In fact, literary theorist Andreas Huyssen usefully differentiates between *modernists* (modern artists) and avant-gardists precisely according to the relationship of each group to mass culture. Huyssen defines "modernists" as those (like Kandinsky) who wished to keep art pure from "the encroachments of urbanization, massification, technological modernization, in short, of modern mass culture."⁴ He contrasts these modernists with avant-gardists who desired to reintegrate art and life, for example, to involve art with mass culture, in order to make art more socially and politically viable.

Although Huyssen's categories are useful to distinguish these radically different types of artists working in the first decades of the century, I want to complicate how we use the term modernist. Most commonly, modernist is used as a narrow description of small groups of artists focused on formal concerns specific to various artistic media such as painting and sculpture. I would broaden the term to reconnect modern artists with the experience of modernity itself. For it was exactly the idea of linking modern art production to the representation and effect of modern life that was so empowering to artists in the twenties.

In the Weimar years, the term *moderne*, meaning that which is modern, contemporary, and fashionable, was associated with the conditions of mass communication and the sociology of urbanism. In cultural criticism, in particular, the word *moderne* alluded to that which was absolutely of the moment. Thus, in his famous 1927 essay on photography in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Siegfried Kracauer used *moderne* to signal the superficial and fragmentary aspects of contemporary life: "Photography's boundedness by time expresses precisely that of *fashion*. Since it has no other meaning than that of the contemporary human mask, what is modern [*moderne*] is transparent and what is old is left behind." Elsewhere in this essay it is clear that for Kracauer *moderne* also connoted an assault on memory and history, typified by the leveling of "high" and "low" cultures in illustrated newspapers: "If [images in illustrated newspapers] offer themselves as support for the memory, then the memory must determine their selection. But the current flood of photographs sweeps away its barriers. So powerful is the assault of collections of images, that it perhaps threatens with destruction decisive traits of present consciousness. Works of art also meet with this fate through their reproduction."⁵

Modernism, the cultural representation of modernity, signified the collective social response to the culture created by capitalism after the Industrial Revolution. It must be emphasized, however, that each industrialized country's pace and experience of modernization was quite different, so that, as a cultural response, modernism developed rather unevenly throughout Europe. In Weimar Germany, the process of modernization was greatly intensified by the penetration of American finance into the German economy. This had the immediate effect of stimulating the growth of consumerism and monopoly capitalism, but it also resulted in such unpredictable alterations in the way of life as the common use of electricity. Unlike elsewhere in Europe, businesses were larger and the state's role more pervasive when rationalization took place. Yet, while modern industrialization was occurring on a massive scale, many people lived in marginal economic situations – that of the small businessman or even the peasant farmer. Citing Bloch's concept of nonsynchronicity (*ungleichzeitigkeit*) to describe the coexistence of different modes of production in modern Germany, historian Jeffrey Herf reminds us of Weimar's "selective embrace of modernity."⁶

In the cultural world too, the relationship to modernization was not a uniform one. "Selective embrace" is a key phrase in describing the relationship between the international avant-garde centered in Germany and modern culture. While liberal

or radical members of the avant-garde celebrated certain aspects of modernization, particularly a fostering of utopianism, often but not always predicated on technological romanticism, they were also often engaged in a critique of the bourgeoisie from within.⁷

Any recognition of the avant-garde's fascinated exploration of the boundaries between high art and mass media culture in Weimar demands a redefinition of what we have come to think of as the historic antagonism between the artistic avant-garde and the bourgeois organs of mass culture. My thesis is that the majority of both mass media and avant-garde production at this time is concerned with crossing these supposed boundaries and addressing contemporary social issues – such as those arising from rationalization and urbanism. Accordingly, I consider Peter Bürger's theory of the interwar avant-garde to be historically inaccurate and hermetic in its concern with defining the avant-garde exclusively in relation to earlier artistic movements.⁸

In his *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, Bürger defines the European avant-garde of the 1920s by contrasting them to the previous artistic tradition of aestheticism, represented by such movements as Art Nouveau and Expressionism. He calls this aestheticism "modernism." By the twenties, however, particularly in Germany, the meaning of the term modernism was no longer restricted to a hermetic aestheticism. In Weimar Germany, the term *Modernismus* had more powerful connotations due to its association with the words *moderne* (modern, contemporary, fashionable) and *Modernität* (modernity, the experience of modernization). Although *Modernismus* could refer to an art movement such as Expressionism, it could also mean the culture of contemporary life, including representations of the experience of technology, electricity, urbanism, speed, mass media, and consumerism. For our purposes in considering the relationship between artists and mass culture, this multiple use of the term is significant. As literary critics Andreas Huyssen and David Bathrick have recently pointed out, Bürger's theory "represses the largest truth about modernism itself . . . namely . . . the heterogeneity of its response to the maelstrom of modernization."⁹

Still, Bürger is correct when he contrasts an avant-garde group like Berlin Dada with earlier aesthetic movements. Or, to be more precise, his definition echoes their intentions. The goal of the avant-garde, Bürger claims, was to rebel against the institutionalization of art in order to reengage art with life, for example, to break art away from its ghettoization in museums and galleries and redirect it toward mass media and performance. If one attempts to apply this definition to the localized activities of the Berlin Dadaists, one finds it an apt, if incomplete description.

After Berlin Dada dissipated as a movement, however, that is, after 1922, the chief priority for the German avant-garde was no longer to separate art from art institutions. Instead, the avant-garde began to ask how it might intersect with and participate in the institutions and forms of mass culture. A principle topic of debate among these artists was how to respond to commerce, politics, and new forms of mass communication, and with which appropriately modern styles. So, Bürger misses the point when he associates modernism solely with an art world aestheticism against which the avant-garde is in constant rebellion. This reductive concept of the

tensions surrounding the acceptance of modernist culture glosses over the prevailing, historically specific circumstances.

Bürger's definition of artistic modernism conforms to a 1960s model of the avant-garde and tends to obstruct our understanding of the complexity and variety of responses to modernization in the twenties. In Weimar, the notion of modernity was tied less to the latest advances in studio painting than to factories, speed, movies, newspapers, cars, urbanism, and internationalism, in short, the representation and experience of modernization. Such images of modern life were to be found more often in mass culture than in high art. The burning issue for the German avant-garde from 1922 until Hitler's seizure of power in 1933 was not a rebellion against art institutions at all, but rather a serious and prolonged negotiation with mass culture, an engagement emboldened primarily by the practices of the much-admired Russian Constructivists.¹⁰ Instead of regarding the avant-garde as Bürger does, as a collection of artists committed primarily to "the dismantling of the false autonomy of the institution of art," we must see the 1920s avant-garde more broadly as an international group centered in Germany involved with a "selective embrace" of modernity, in various ways more affirmative than critical.¹¹ While this makes it less easy to transform avant-garde artists into revolutionary heroes, this approach redefines the avant-garde as a bourgeois subculture struggling to explain their own engaged but ambivalent experience of modern, industrialized capitalism.

Above all, the relationship between modernism and the avant-garde was mediated by the institutions of the mass media. The magazine and newspaper publishers, radio stations, film studios, and book companies that proliferated during the Weimar era signaled a completely new formation of production and spectatorship. In the area of illustrated newspapers alone, there was an explosion of new and popular publications. Following the success of the prototype *BIZ* (its circulation was already one million by 1914), *Münchener Illustrierte Presse* was founded in 1923 and *Kölnische Illustrierte Zeitung* in 1926, among many others. After the German economy stabilized in 1924, domination by and experimentation with photography characterized all the leading newsweeklies. There was a mass media boom in Weimar, and a cultural history of its images and their reception requires an understanding of the institutions that produced them.

The most emblematic institution of modern German print media was the massive Berlin publishing conglomerate Ullstein Verlag. By the time of the Weimar Republic, Ullstein was the largest publishing empire in Germany, with a mass-market book division, nineteen newspapers and magazines, a large advertising department, and a profitable sewing pattern business. Ullstein Verlag was by far the most popular – and the self-described most modern – press in Weimar Germany, and its best-selling *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* had a circulation of approximately 1.85 million in 1930, at least twice the circulation of its nearest competitor, *Münchener Illustrierte Presse*.¹² As such, Ullstein clearly emerges as a key institution within the public sphere.¹³

Significantly, Ullstein Verlag's institutional identification, which can be found throughout its many publications as well as in its promotional and advertising

materials, was directed toward an association with liberalism and modernity.¹⁴ A 1928 issue of *BIZ*, for example, included an advertisement for the Ullstein family weekly *Die Grüne Post*, which aligned the magazine's reader firmly with the modern masses.¹⁵ A full-page photograph of a crowd of people milling outdoors is cropped so that the crowd seems to continue in all four directions; the caption reads: "Scarcely 500 people wait here – 750,000 readers wait each week for *Die Grüne Post*." This huge, urban crowd massed outdoors would have been read as a quintessentially modern scene. Ullstein demonstrated its self-consciously modernist position in its support of the Republic, its embrace of American culture, its moderate reformism, its progressive stance, and its devotion to the most advanced means of communication.

Ullstein Verlag was founded in 1858 by Leopold Ullstein, a wholesale paper merchant who had built a successful business supplying paper to the growing newspaper industry. He was a liberal, a term whose meaning varied at different stages of German history; in the late 1850s it meant that he was against the Kaiser and for the formation of a democratic republic.¹⁶ For Ullstein, liberalism was not merely a political stance but a cultural and deeply personal position as well. As a Jew concerned with the survival and prosperity of his children, he raised them as Christian and assimilated his family as much as possible into mainstream German bourgeois culture.¹⁷ The Ullsteins moved in social circles that were comprised, however, almost exclusively of Jews (or assimilated Jews) and that remained their family identity.¹⁸ Beginning in 1867, the ownership and management of Ullstein Verlag was passed on to Leopold's sons: from eldest to youngest, Hans, Louis, Franz, Rudolf, and Herman. In the 1920s, Herman Ullstein was responsible for the magazine division and the house's publicity, the two areas most concerned with photography.¹⁹ He also oversaw Ullstein's profitable *Schnittmuster* (sewing pattern) business; the patterns were advertised in *Die Dame* and *Blatt der Hausfrau* and sold in department stores in Germany and throughout the world.

An alignment with Weimar modernism, particularly through the mass media, was integral to the self-image and newly increased power of the Jewish bourgeoisie after World War I. Historians have argued that Jewish involvement in German mass media was initially motivated by Kaiser Wilhelm II's ambivalent attitudes toward Jews in the late nineteenth century, particularly as Wilhelm succeeded the more tolerant Friedrich III, who had insisted on maintaining full civil rights for Jews.²⁰ In fact, Wilhelm II was considered a potential threat to the Jews' citizenship status, and the mass media provided a public arena for Jews to voice criticisms of the Kaiser while still patriotically supporting the nation.²¹ In the specific case of the Ullstein family, their self-definition and claims to empowerment derived from their strong allegiance to progressive modernism and to the reformist potential of outsiders now invited inside. For instance, when Ullstein Verlag acquired *Vossische Zeitung*, the oldest and most prestigious German newspaper, Herman Ullstein recalled, "We Ullsteins, heralded by our reputation for modernism, were welcomed as liberators."²²

Like the New Women of the Weimar era, Jewish liberals tied their self-identity to a utopia of a technologically superior, rationalized, capitalist, consumerist, and

more equitable society.²³ Both women and Jews had previously been barred from the privileges of a bourgeois identity to greater or lesser degrees. But during Weimar they could suddenly imagine occupying positions within bourgeois society – and sometimes actually achieve them. Because of the relative newness of this possibility and the fact that it occurred during the twenties, at the same time as intensified modernization, both groups chose to identify with modern elements of German society. Propagating modernity, even representing it, provided the opportunity to negate or repress the sometimes painful contradictions of assimilation into a still inequitable society.²⁴

During Weimar, Ullstein published a wide range of newspapers and periodicals. Most were daily newspapers; the others included: *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, a photoweekly; *Die Dame*, an “ultramodern social magazine of women’s fashions,” as Herman Ullstein described it;²⁵ *Blatt der Hausfrau*, a housewives’ magazine; *Die Grüne Post*, a petit bourgeois Sunday photoweekly; *Koralle*, a magazine covering science, technology, and nature; *Uhu*, an urbane culture and humor magazine; and *Querschnitt*, an intellectual culture magazine originally published by Alfred Flechtheim. Kurt Szafranski was the manager of the magazine department, and the various editors under Szafranski also served as picture editors of their respective publications. Along with the artistic directors (*künstlerische Beirats*), the editors did layout as well. Kurt Korff, the top-ranking editor (*Chefredakteur*) of *BIZ* and *Die Dame*, and his artistic director Karl Schnabel were perhaps the most influential editor/art director team at Ullstein during Weimar.

In her autobiography, novelist Vicki Baum, who worked as an editor at Ullstein from 1926 to 1931, describes the idealism, energy, and optimism of the Verlag.²⁶ But more important, she insists that these qualities influenced the content of the periodicals and the photo selection. Both she and Eva Noack-Mosse, an editorial staffer on *Uhu*, recall with some irony Herman Ullstein’s insistence that all photos represent *Lebensfreude* (joy of life).²⁷ And for Baum, as for many others who wrote memoirs of Weimar and possibly for many readers of Ullstein publications as well, *Lebensfreude* truly did seem to reflect the exhilaration of living in twenties Berlin – in spite of material hardships and severe economic fluctuations. As Baum writes about the Verlag and Berlin: “Somehow the demand for *Lebensfreude* and optimism gave the Ullstein house its good atmosphere, releasing in each person an inner momentum . . . Berlin was so marvelously lively, so charged with a strange electricity. . . . For us though it was exactly the freedom that we wanted and needed.”²⁸

This ineffable *Lebensfreude* was, of course, well suited to the concrete demands of the market and its promotions. The desire for optimism on the part of consumers helped determine the nature of the photographic representation in the advertisements as well as feature photographs. Modernity itself was a sign of optimism, specifically representing the new with the most up-to-date techniques and styles of photography. Accordingly, photographs commissioned and selected for the *Illustrierte* and magazines were to represent the best in modern photography. As a mode of representation, photojournalism – particularly that in the *Illustrierte* – was virtually

synonymous with modernity. Although photojournalism had been common as early as the 1890s, it was the founding of the trade union Verband Deutscher Illustrations-photographer in 1908 and its institution of minimum fees for photographs that established photojournalism as a force in the modern news business. In the prewar years, picture agencies were also founded, beginning with Zander and Labisch in 1895.²⁹ However, it was not until 1923–24, when the German mark was stabilized by American penetration into the economy, that photojournalism fully established itself as a profession. At the same time, the Weimar *Illustrierte* achieved their standard format, with the successful *BIZ* as the acknowledged prototype. Established practice for the illustrated weeklies was to use free-lance photographers and to commission them either directly or through photo-agencies such as *Dephot* (*Deutsche Photodienst*, founded in 1928) or *Wide World* (the Berlin office of the *New York Times* photo service).³⁰ Ullstein had some in-house photographers and a studio, used primarily for advertising produced by the Verlag; but more often, and particularly for feature photography, the house repeatedly employed certain free-lancers.³¹

The free-lance structure of the photojournalists' profession discouraged explicitly political content; photographs or photo-stories were often shot without the assurance of a commission, and apolitical material could be sold either to the liberal magazines (such as those of the Ullstein press) or to the more conservative ones (such as those of Alfred Hugenberg's right-wing Scherl House). The communist-affiliated *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* was not so adaptable; in *AIZ* there was a direct relationship between image, form, and text.³²

Technical developments in cameras and film in the twenties enabled photographers to take pictures in low-light conditions (the small Ermanox camera, invented in 1924, allowed Erich Salomon to take candid photographs of diplomatic and state occasions) and in serial format (the Leica, which used 35mm film, was produced as early as 1925 but was in widespread use only after 1930).³³ Most photographers, however, still worked with large-format cameras on tripods, so the Leica alone cannot be credited with the development of the picture story, as often is stated in photography histories. Instead, *BIZ* editor Kurt Korff relates the rise of the picture-story layout to the concurrent popularity of film, a significant analogy.³⁴ The montaging of images wrenched from their temporal sequence as well as from their spatial context corresponds to the Weimar viewer's desire to extend the powers of the eye through the camera in the *Illustrierte* as in film.³⁵

The analogy between film and *Illustrierte* photography is also useful in speculating about who actually read the illustrated newspapers. Although we can extrapolate the existence of a large female readership for Ullstein publications from the regular presence of feature and advertising photographs aimed at women, it is difficult to characterize readers in terms of class. Mass media historian Wilhelm Marckwardt hypothesizes that "the *Illustrierte* in the twenties were bought predominantly by white-collar workers and civil servants, and hardly at all by workers . . . while the majority of the audience for cinema came from the proletariat."³⁶ Such tidy class divisions for the different media, however, are unlikely. Film historians Sabine Hake

and Miriam Hansen have illustrated that before World War I film spectatorship was primarily a proletarian activity, whereas after the war it spread through all classes.³⁷ Middle-class acceptance can be documented, for example, by the new cinema architecture, the “palace” structures imitating deluxe stage theaters. We can speculate, then, that the readership for mainstream *Illustrierte* was also multiclass. In the case of *BIZ*, the readership was so large that it could not have been confined to one class: In January 1931 Berlin’s inhabitants between the ages of twenty and sixty-five numbered 2,775,296; *BIZ*’s circulation that month was 1,753,580.³⁸

For the most part, market surveys identifying different categories of newspaper readers did not yet exist in the 1920s. Only *AIZ* polled its readers – and the results are hardly the conclusions of a disinterested survey. In 1929, when its weekly circulation was 350,000, *AIZ* found that 42 percent of its readers were skilled workers, 33 percent unskilled workers, 10 percent white-collar workers, 5 percent youths, 3.5 percent housewives, 3 percent self-employed, 2 percent independent, and 1 percent civil servants.³⁹ This does not mean, however, that workers did not read such mainstream press as *BIZ* and *Münchener Illustrierte Presse*. Prices were low due to competition, despite the tendency towards monopolistic concentration in the newspaper industry during Weimar.⁴⁰

Although the Ullstein Verlag has been described as a bourgeois press, it is difficult to define with any precision the class of its readership based on the content of its publications. The fact that *BIZ* showed innumerable images of foreign countries does not mean that its readers were only those who could afford to visit them. By the same token, though *Die Dame* frequently illustrated upscale fashion, it was not read by only bourgeois women. Such a reductive treatment of what were, after all, vehicles of fantasy and entertainment would be useless. Again I would draw a parallel between the *Illustrierte* images and contemporary film in terms of the multiclass appeal of technical innovations (such as serial photography), novel points of view, access to unfamiliar worlds (aerial shots, glimpses of exotic lands, enlargements through a microscope), dazzling montage layouts, and the general sensuous appeal of the images. In the case of the *Illustrierte*, the seductive nature of the photographs was meant not only to entertain readers but to sell newspapers and the products they advertised. Photohistorian Herbert Molderings has argued that, particularly in the context of the ongoing monopolization of industry accelerated during Weimar, “the constant renewal of things from within is a structural principle of advertising as it is of . . . [New Vision] photography.”⁴¹ So at the time of monopolization there was increased pressure on advertising to achieve instant recognition for brand names by constantly striving to renew its enchantment of the (primarily female) consumer.⁴² Photography contributed new subjects, new angles, and new layouts to this shifting appeal.

In 1926, Ullstein Verlag began to publish its circulation figures for its advertisers; this publication, called *Ullstein Berichte*, was an early example of self-promotion through reporting of notarized circulation levels. In a full-page ad for *Die Dame* on September 6, 1926, the *Berichte* emphasized the importance of female readers as

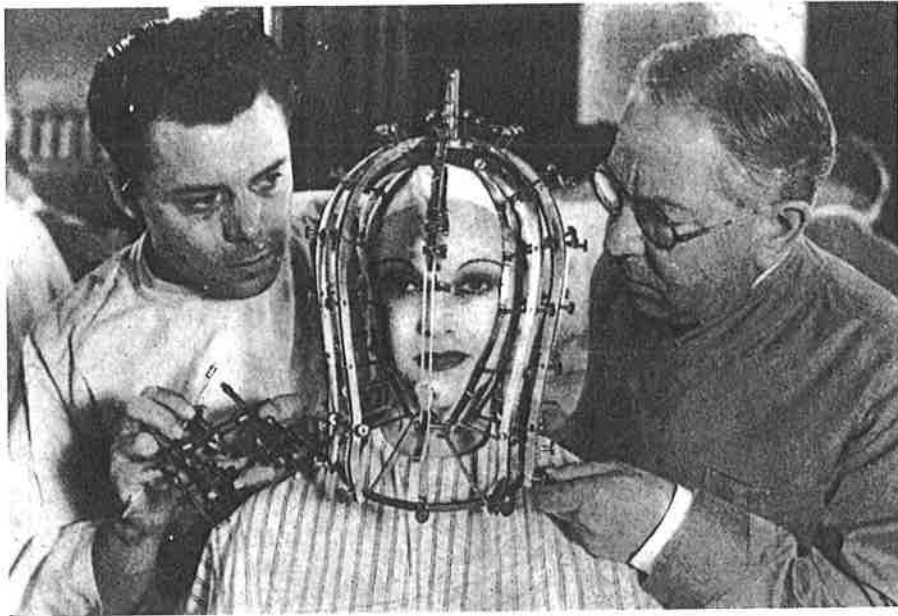
buyers, explaining that not only were women responsible for the daily shopping, but they also gave advice to men on their personal purchases, and in general had the last word on all buying decisions. As the *Berichte* reported in January 1927, Ullstein circulation levels ranged from the ever-popular *BIZ* (1,563,880), to the housewife's *Blatt der Hausfrau* (146,400), to the witty, urbane *Uhu* (170,360), to the elite cultural journal *Querschnitt* (13,000).⁴³

It is important to consider the appeal of *BIZ* in terms of consumerism. Because about ninety percent of the advertisements were produced in-house,⁴⁴ a feature photograph from *BIZ* could reappear, some time later, as a photograph in an advertisement. Approximately half the income generated by *BIZ* came from ads (the rest derived from newspaper sales), usually for cosmetics, food, cigarettes, automobiles, and toiletries.⁴⁵ Advertising maintained its importance even during the Depression. Due to its high circulation *BIZ* could command steep prices for its advertising space: 12,646 RM per page as compared to the bimonthly *Die Dame* (2,200 RM) and the monthly *Uhu* (1,200 RM).⁴⁶

The commercial success of the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* can also be measured by the percentage of the photoweekly's pages filled by advertising. The German historian Otto Löffler, in a 1935 doctoral dissertation on the advertising market in newspapers, computed that on average, in the years 1926–32, *BIZ* devoted 35.4 percent of its space to advertising, as compared to 27.3 percent for the *Frankfurter Illustrierte Zeitung* and 19.3 percent for the *Münchener Illustrierte Presse*. He noted the prevalence of consumer goods advertisements: perfumes, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, homeopathic medicines, and tobacco products.⁴⁷

Given the close relation between the modernist identity of *BIZ* and its consumerist function (to bring in profit from sales and advertising), it comes as no surprise to see equivalences in the feature and advertising photography and the high numbers of images of women, particularly the modern New Woman, in both. For example, a feature photograph of the dancer Maria Leeser doing a leg-lift in the water in the August 14, 1921 issue reappeared later in advertisements.⁴⁸ Other images of modernity, such as those involving technology as prosthesis – photographs of zeppelin travelers and deep-sea divers, for example – also appear frequently.⁴⁹

It is even possible to see the evolution of images of woman-as-commodity occur hand-in-hand with the rise of advertising expenditure in the photoweeklies. As Löffler demonstrated, the newspaper advertising market in Weimar peaked in the years 1928–29, the same period that mannequin imagery (connoting woman as machine-made commodity) became prevalent. While I do not want to suggest a simple cause and effect relationship, suffice it to say that by 1928 connections between femininity, consumerism, and the *Illustrierte* were highly visible and integral to the photoweeklies on several levels. One *BIZ* feature photograph represents the myriad examples of the bizarre appeal to female consumers through images of women depicted as modern, rationalized commodities. In a 1932 issue of *BIZ*, an American woman (the very emblem of modern rationalization) was shown with her face encapsulated by a wire cage designed to measure beauty scientifically (fig. 30). The caption attrib-



30 "Eine Maschine, die die Schönheit misst" (A machine that measures beauty), *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* 41, no. 46 (1932): 1531

uted both beauty and efficiency to this contraption, describing it as: "A machine that measures beauty. With the help of this apparatus invented in America, one can check the facial measurements exactly and determine how far they deviate from the ideal."⁵⁰ In Weimar Depression-era advertising, women were frequently encouraged to aspire to the status of mannequins. The commodity itself was offered as an ideal with which to identify.

Throughout the Weimar period there was an increase, though not a precisely linear one, in the influence of consumerism on the representation of women in the Ullstein press. In *Die Dame*, for example, early photographs of expressive dancers were replaced around 1924 (the beginning of economic stabilization) by images of women with their cars. Throughout the twenties, there was a continued preoccupation with female film stars, themselves figures of conformity, but in late Weimar, around 1930, in *Die Dame* and *Uhu*, there was a sudden proliferation of woman-as-mannequin images, inflected by a homogeneity measured by a particular fad for "looking Greek" (fig. 31).⁵¹ A similar trajectory can be traced in *BIZ*, which provided a much wider range of images. For instance, mid-twenties photographs in *BIZ* showed a noticeable preoccupation with androgyny and mass ornament.⁵² After 1928, the celebration of technology and modernism intensified; in 1928 and 1929, *BIZ* seemed to have a virtual editorial mandate that there be a picture of a zeppelin in every issue.

It is no accident that so many images in Höch's photomontages were taken from Ullstein press periodicals, particularly *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, *Uhu*, and *Die*



Hätten Sie gelacht, gnädige Frau, daß Ihr moderner, von Morgensgymnastik, Massage und Haartönen gestrafftes Gesicht ...

Zieh Dich aus -

Ein verblüffendes
Experiment

und Du bist Grieche

Von
Herbert Bayer.



... würde heute, mit Oberhemd, Kragen und Schlips, samt Sockenlatern alle Kälteheit einbüßen und mehr einem jüdischen alten Professor gleichen.

Die Vorstellungen, die wir von Griechenland haben, sind die sogenannten klassischen.

Als in den neunziger Jahren durch die Ausgrabungen Schliemanns das allgemeine Interesse des breiten Publikums auf Griechenland und die Griechen gerichtet wurde, fing man an, die Begeisterung für das Klassische zu persiflieren. In den Witzblättern wurden hässliche Szenen berühmter Griechen in spielfürgerlicher Art geschildert. Im-



... dem Grund Aphrodites, die Schönheitsgöttin des alten Griechenland, - schallt Sie den modernen Hut abzuwaschen.



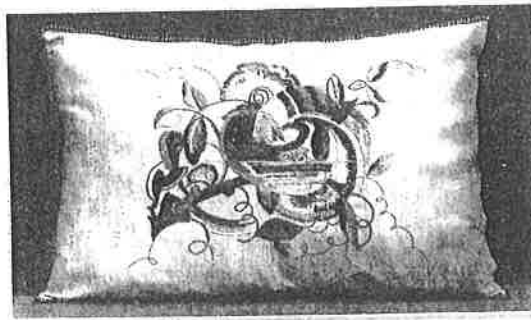
Marsyas, der kühne Säng, der Apoll zum Wettstreit herausforderte ...

mer wieder wurde Sokrates mit seiner Xanthippe in einem zweiseitigen Gespräch dargestellt, und immer wieder konnte man den gelährten Menelaos sehen. Diese Richtung wurde unterstützt von den Offenbachschen Travestien „Die schöne Helena“ ... „Orpheus in der Unterwelt“ usw. Man hatte sich in diesen Zeitalter der Humanität einfinden etwas übernommen mit Griechenbegeisterung, Griechenverehrung und Griechen-Nachäferung, und es kam die gesunde

28

29

31 Herbert Bayer, “Zieh Dich aus und Du bist Grieche” (Undress and you are Greek), *Uhu* (Sept. 1930): 28–29. Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin



32 Hannah Höch, “Rechteckiges Leinenkissen” (Right-angled linen pillow), *Die Dame* (mid-Feb. 1924): 20. Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin



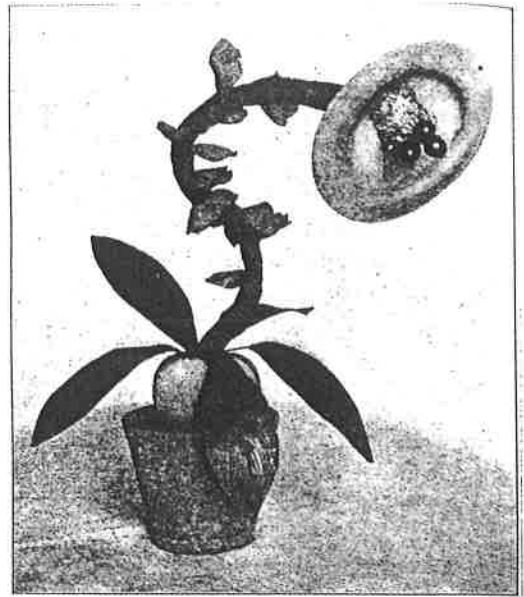
33 Hannah Höch, “Viereckige Decke mit reicher Tüllstickerei” (Square cover with elaborate tulle embroidery), *Die Dame* (late June 1923): 21

Dame. Ullstein Verlag (and the assimilated Jewish family who owned and managed it) promoted a modernism typical of Weimar not only through the content of its periodicals but also in its business practices, particularly in its devotion to high-quality technical production and innovative sales and subscription methods. Indeed, this identification with modernity may have been responsible for Ullstein's success. As an institution, Ullstein best exemplifies how the mass media of the period represented women, how photographs of the New Woman participated in allegories of modernity, and how these allegories in turn were consumed by women who read the *Illustrierte*. Höch was associated with Ullstein in several ways: from 1916–26 she was employed there as a handicraft designer. But as a reader, Höch was also part of the large urban constituency served by the press, sharing to some extent Ullstein's attitudes characterized by its promotion of technology, modernism, and utopianism.

Despite her work for Ullstein, Höch's participation in mass culture was less direct and active than that of many of her male colleagues who worked as designers, illustrators, and commercial photographers (although she did design a few book jackets in the early thirties). In fact, her experience at Ullstein was somewhat mundane. Höch started in 1916, working three days a week while she was enrolled in Emil Orlik's graphics classes at the Kunstgewerbemuseum. She was a pattern designer for handicrafts such as embroidered tablecloths and children's stuffed animals. These were sold through Ullstein's *Schnittmuster* outlets in department stores and separate Ullstein pattern shops. Until 1929, prototypes of some of the patterns were made, photographed, and displayed in two-page spreads in the glossy *Die Dame*, a magazine that catered not only to wealthy bourgeois women but also to many others who identified with modernity. Typically, the July 1929 cover of the magazine boasted a self-portrait by the Art Deco painter Tamara de Lempicka (a frequent *Die Dame* contributor), showing her flamboyantly posed at the wheel of her sports car, sleek in her aviator's racing cap and leather gloves.⁵³

Despite the magazine's highly selective appeal to New Women, traditional handicrafts were also presented, yet another example of the coexistence of different modes of production in Weimar and the ease with which these were incorporated into even *Die Dame*'s highly tailored definition of the New Woman. Höch enjoyed handicrafts herself. She did needlework and designed patterns throughout her life, and she saved many of the patterns she created for Ullstein. Unfortunately most were not credited in the magazine, so one can only guess which patterns in her collection were designed by her. Going by the few that are identified as hers in *Die Dame*, her patterns are sometimes recognizable by the presence of abstract folk motifs.⁵⁴ In turn, Höch used materials from the Ullstein handicraft designs in several early montages in which she dealt with the abstract qualities of the patterns themselves.

More important, perhaps, in terms of Höch's attitude towards the mass media, is an early Höch work published by Ullstein, an *Aprilscherze* or April Fool's joke from *BIZ*, April 1, 1921 (figs. 34, 35). Such *Aprilscherze* jokes were a tradition at Ullstein and the *BIZ* versions always turned on the credibility of the photograph. Höch's example is photographs of two plants made of cloth and other materials. One is

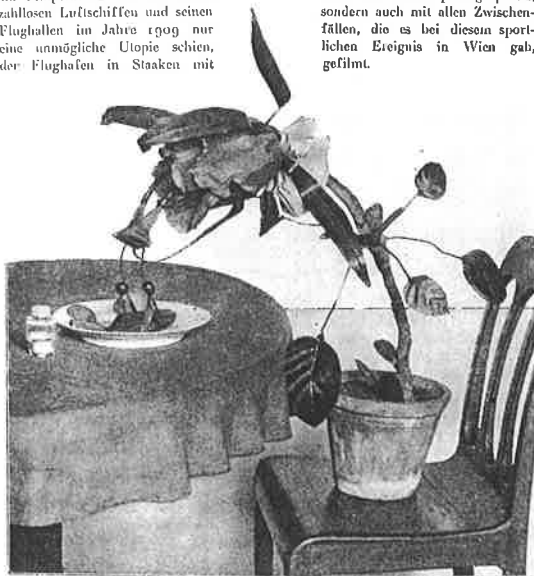


34 Hannah Höch, "Interessante Neuwerbungen des Botanisches Gartens" (The Botanical Garden's interesting new acquisitions), *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung* 30, no. 14 (April 1, 1921): 200

Itiesen Bolschew, des Vaters des Bolschewismus, sei.

Vieles von dem, was die „Illustrirte“ als phantastischen Aprilscherz ihren Lesern vorsetzte, ist im Lauf der Zeit Wirklichkeit geworden. Wenn der Flughafen am Tempelhofer Feld mit seinen zahllosen Luftschiffen und seinen Flughallen im Jahre 1909 nur eine unmögliche Utopie schien, der Flughafen in Staaken mit

seinen regelmäßig abgehenden Post- und Passagierflugzeugen hat ihn übertrumpft, und selbst die Straußenrennen, die der Photograph im Jahre 1907 nur durch kühne Retouche konstruieren konnte, wurden im vergangenen Sommer nicht nur eifrig photographiert, sondern auch mit allen Zwischenfällen, die es bei diesem sportlichen Ereignis in Wien gab, gefilmt.



35 Hannah Höch, "Fleischfressende Pflanzen" (Carnivorous plants), *Uhu* (April 1925): 96. Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin

sitting down to dinner at a table with a plate of food and a saltshaker; the other is just resting decoratively on a surface. The caption describes the first as a flesh-eating plant from Java, "carnivora maxima smithsonii," and the other as female, "a vacuum plant from Burma that collects the pollen of nearby flowers." In addition to this pseudoscientific take on romance, Höch is also parodying one type of photographs that appeared in *BIZ*, the positive, encyclopedic survey of wonders found in zoos, parks, and foreign lands, since her caption begins in typical *BIZ* style: "Interessante Neuerwerbungen des Botanischen Gartens in Dahlem bei Berlin" (interesting new acquisitions of the Botanical Garden in Dahlem near Berlin).⁵⁵ The image so pleased Höch's close friend Kurt Schwitters that he reproduced it as a postcard.⁵⁶

And this Aprilscherze is illustrative both of the lack of mystique newspaper photographs had for Höch and the ease with which she and her avant-garde circles of the mid-twenties traveled between the arenas of the art world and those of mass culture. Clearly Höch felt no awe for photographs in the mass media even though she was enraptured by many individual images. In the letters she kept from friends and in her own calendars and notebooks, material now in the Höch Nachlass at the Berlinische Galerie, there are remarkably few references to Ullstein. She later referred to her job at Ullstein as *Broterwerb* (a way to earn a living), and it is clear that she kept the job primarily out of financial necessity.⁵⁷ She was one of some ten thousand Ullstein employees, and she never had much power in the elaborately hierarchical and male-dominated institution. (She did not even eat lunch in the same place as the magazine editors). Yet it is most likely that because of her proximity to the entire process of publishing, she felt free to cut out, manipulate, and re-present photographic images in her photomontages – all in a day's work, so to speak. Not only her Dada critical faculties exercised in her Dada views of the world but also her quotidian commercial work made this possible.⁵⁸

While still working at Ullstein (but after the breakup of Berlin Dada and her split with Hausmann), Höch became a key figure in the European avant-garde network loosely called International Constructivism. In fact, if Höch were to be identified primarily with one segment of the avant-garde, this is perhaps more appropriate a designation than Berlin Dada (where she remained on the periphery). As she later recalled, it was not until after 1922 when she was on her own that she established lasting bonds or strengthened existing ones, both personally and professionally, with such artists as Kurt Schwitters, Theo and Nelly van Doesburg, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, and Hans and Sophie Täuber Arp.

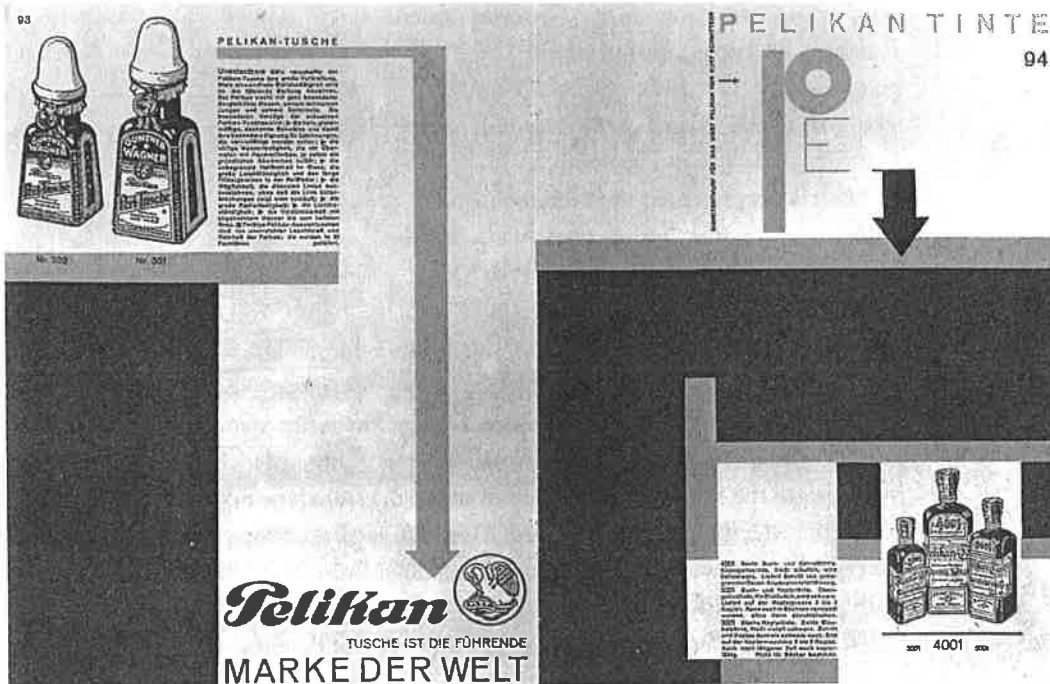
In the 1920s, avant-garde institutions in Germany attracted an international community of artists, among them the Hungarian Moholy-Nagy, the Russian El Lissitzky, and the Dutch Theo van Doesburg; there they collaborated with such German artists as Walter Gropius at the Bauhaus, Kurt Schwitters, who created his Merz productions in Hannover, and Hans Richter, who published the periodical *G. International Constructivism* included a wide variety of artists who worked with planar abstraction, aspired to the status of designers/engineers, and, most important,

shared a faith in technological progress as a cornerstone of societal improvement. The vagueness and elasticity of the term "International Constructivism" is appropriate because what was important to this network of Dutch, German, Soviet, and Eastern European artists was the communication and interchange among associates rather than a coherent group identity, the sharing of certain interests and questions rather than a formation of a monolithic group or style.

Russian Constructivists defined their purpose in utilitarian terms as that which best served the new communist order, whereas the political positions of the European Constructivists were much more ambiguous. Like the Soviets, they stressed the need for functional, efficient design to best serve contemporary technology; the Europeans also created images intended to inspire progress toward a utopian society. But instead of a clear affiliation with communism, most of the European artists tended to describe their utopian visions of the future in vague, often quasi-spiritual, "socialist" terms. Typically oblique was the manifesto issued by Moholy-Nagy in 1922 in which he tried to align his abstract art with the fight for a classless society: "We, who today have become one with the necessity and the condition of class struggle in all respects, do not think it important that a person should find enjoyment in a picture, in music or in poetry. The primary requirement is that those who have not yet reached the contemporary standard of mankind (. . . the standard of the living artist . . .) should be enabled to do so as soon as possible through our work. . . it is our duty to open all the channels of intuition so that we may influence the maximum number of people."⁵⁹

Still, major contradictions arose between the European Constructivists' ideological conceptions of the future and their artistic practices in the present. Often, the same aesthetic principles used for socialist projects were employed in the posters, advertising, and typography designed for capitalist industry. The German leftist avant-garde in particular was caught between its admiration for the Russian-Constructivist vision of communist society and its commissions from Weimar businesses. As a result, a particular hybrid image of a technological utopia was generated by these artists, one that tended to subsume the revolutionary potential of utopianism within messages of continuity, tradition, social stability, and corporate power.

In this regard, we might consider the advertising and promotional graphics produced in the mid-twenties by one of Höch's closest friends during these years, Kurt Schwitters. Although Schwitters is known today primarily as a fine-art collagist, in the twenties he was one among many modernists who believed in advertising with a reformist, pedagogical zeal. In Hannover in 1924 Schwitters founded his own advertising agency, the *Merz Werbezentrale*, and he operated it for the duration of the Weimar Republic, until 1933. This was by no means only a money-making sideline for the artist: Schwitters was a prolific commercial designer in the twenties, and he considered his publicity work central to his role as an artist. Using a consistent Constructivist style Schwitters created modern, clean-cut designs for subway notices, stationery, and other graphics for the municipalities of Hannover and Karlsruhe; advertisements for Hannover companies; letterheads for doctors; business cards for



36 Kurt Schwitters, "Typoreklame," *Merz* 11, 1924

salesmen; and, with a somewhat more dramatic flair, publicity material for himself, his *Merz Werbezentrale*, and his publishing house Aposso Verlag (fig. 36).⁶⁰

Schwitters was no Heartfield and no Kollwitz. If they turned to mass-produced means to send an explicitly political message to a broader audience, Schwitters was more entranced with the modernity of the means of communication itself, the ability to persuade great numbers of people with great speed. Even El Lissitzky and Jan Tschichold, two of Schwitters's design colleagues publicly identified with communist politics, expressed enthusiasm not about the context of graphic messages but about the formal possibilities of the new media of photography and film and of an expanded press.⁶¹ The avant-garde's writings on advertising in the twenties make surprising reading in their almost complete refusal to question the capitalist ends their work was serving. Manifestos published in such magazines as *G*, *ABC* (Zurich), *Merz*, and *Typographische Mitteilungen* were concerned less with what advertising sold than how – with the persuasiveness and popularization of modern form in and of itself. Schwitters's manifestos on typography put forth clarity and persuasion as his goals.⁶²

Like Höch, Schwitters operated very much in the context of an international community. In 1927, for example, he co-founded the ring "*neue werbegestalter*," the circle of new advertising designers. The ring united designers from Germany, the Netherlands, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Switzerland in group exhibitions and

publications. Such internationalism was of particular importance for Germans who had been so cut off during World War I and its immediate aftermath.⁶³ As Höch recalled, "We were among the first German artists to develop contacts after the war with like-minded avant-garde groups in New York, Paris, and Moscow. In 1922 the German Dada group even held an international conference in Weimar, at which El Lissitzky represented the Moscow Constructivists, Theo van Doesburg and Cornelius van Eesteren [represented] the Mondrian de Stijl group, Tristan Tzara and Hans Arp represented Zurich and Paris Dadaists."⁶⁴

Höch was invited to but did not attend the 1922 conference as she was in southern Germany at the time.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, she had regular interchanges with many of the participants in subsequent years. In 1923, she joined the Arps and the Schwitterses for a vacation in Sellin on the island of Rügen. Hans Arp visited her shortly afterward in Berlin and remained there for a time working in Höch's studio. During a 1923 visit to the Schwitterses in Hannover, Höch created the first of two of her grottos in the Merzbau, since destroyed. This one, incorporating photomontages, was described by Schwitters as "das Brodell mit einer Dame mit 3 Beinen" (the bordello with a woman with three legs).⁶⁶

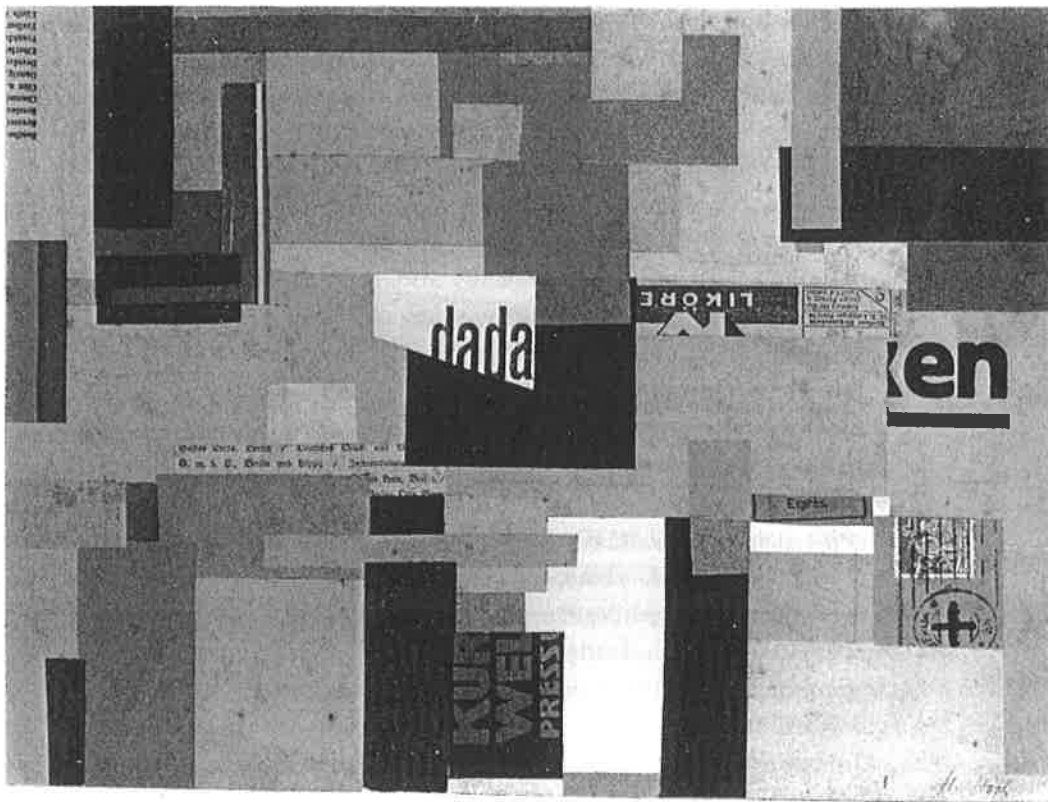
When Höch later wrote notes on her memories of the time, each friendship (fig. 37) naturally triggered the thought of another: "In 1925 I was in England, finally with Theo van Doesburg and Nelly on Belle Isle in the Atlantic. From his time in Weimar until his death I maintained a warm friendship with Doesburg. Laszlo Moholy-Nagy also remained a close comrade for me until his departure from Germany. Together we watched the first elaborate documentary films, saw Nurmi race, and heard the first jazz concerts. . . . Otto Freundlich was another of my oldest friends."⁶⁷ Höch continued her collaboration with Schwitters during 1925; with the composer Hans-Heinz Stuckenschmidt, they worked on producing an *Anti-Revue* (never accomplished) for which Höch drew the set and costume designs. In 1925 Höch also built her second grotto in the Merzbau. In this creative international community Höch was not the lone female artist; Nelly van Doesburg performed music and Sophie Täuber Arp was active in design and fine artwork.

Höch continued to show mainly paintings in the large Berlin group art exhibitions: She participated in the Novembergruppe from 1920–26, at the Juryfreie Kunstausstellung in 1923 and 1925, and at the Deutsche Kunstgemeinschaft (in the Berliner Stadtschloss) in 1925–26. She also sent two paintings to a 1924 German art exhibition in the Soviet Union. As a direct homage to Russian Constructivism, Höch painted and collaged a number of works in the mid-twenties using a Constructivist grid format and repeating geometric shapes, such as *Collage (Dada)*, 1922–24 (fig. 38), a grid composition of multicolored pasted papers forming a field around the word "dada" in the left-center. It is significant that Höch continued to exhibit paintings in the mid-twenties while she also produced more radical photomontages and worked at Ullstein designing handicrafts. This mixture of commercial and fine art venues was shared by Schwitters, Moholy-Nagy, and other colleagues.

In 1926 Höch visited Kurt and Helma Schwitters in Holland where they intro-



37 Nelly van Doesburg, Piet Mondrian, and Hannah Höch in Theo and Nelly van Doesburg's studio in Clamart near Paris, 1924



38 Hannah Höch, *Collage (Dada)*, 1922–24, 24.7 × 32.8 cm., collage, Merrill C. Berman, Scarsdale, New York

duced her to the writer Til Brugman, architects J. J. P. Oud and Gerrit Rietveld, and other artists.⁶⁸ From 1926 to 1935 Höch lived with Brugman, who was also associated with International Constructivism. Brugman's earliest published writings, sound poetry, appeared in the journals *De Stijl* (May–June 1923) and *Merz* (October 1923). The *De Stijl* poem, entitled "R," was presented in a complex Constructivist grid format.⁶⁹

During her years in Holland, 1926–29, Höch's international visibility as an artist increased. She had her first one-person exhibition in 1929 and others thereafter (see chronology). In late Weimar, she was also included in several major international group shows. This intensified exhibiting can be attributed in part to need; she and Brugman were always short of money, and, after moving to Holland, Höch no longer had the security of her Ullstein job. So Höch actively pursued gallery exhibitions and sales in the Netherlands, showing watercolors, paintings, and photomontages.⁷⁰ In general, photomontage was widely represented in the major photography exhibitions of the late 1920s, and Höch was often included as a principal innovator in this genre.

Höch's work was well represented in the Werkbund's Film und Foto exhibition of 1929–31 and in the 1931 Berlin Fotomontage show, as well as in important photography exhibitions outside Germany – Brussels in 1932 and 1933 and Philadelphia in 1932. Photomontage no longer connoted revolutionary politics but had become an accepted advertising design tool equated with consumerism and modernity. The medium of photomontage was specifically adaptable to the single-impact demands of poster and advertising design. Such commercial photomontages were produced both by those who self-consciously defined themselves as avant-garde, such as Herbert Bayer or Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, and by those who identified exclusively with advertising, publishing, and industry, such as Vilma Frielingsdorf, photo-editor at Ullstein's *Grüne Post*.⁷¹

Photography and design exhibitions of the period reflected an easy mix of fine art and mass culture, celebrating the formal qualities of the commercial designs as well as the affinities of fine art with mass-produced design. Film und Foto, a major international exhibition that traveled for two years (1929–31), presented posters, advertising, scientific photography, abstract photography, fine art photomontages (including seventeen montages by Höch), portraits, fashion photography, and, at some locations, photojournalism. Many montage artists of late Weimar relinquished the complexity of Dada photomontages for a simplified, high-impact format that focused on a single, highly legible message. This more direct approach typified montages produced as commercial posters and advertising images, as well as (though less frequently) overtly political photomontages, such as John Heartfield's photomontages for the *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung*.

During mid- and late Weimar, Höch also participated in the group periodicals of International Constructivism.⁷² Her correspondence shows that she was regularly invited to contribute to various group publishing ventures. Höch even provided an illustration for Ernest Hemingway's "Banal Story" in the New York-based *Little Re-*

view in 1926. Schwitters published one of her drawings in *Merz* 1 (January 1923) and her collage *Astronomie* in *Merz* 7 (January 1924). Lissitzky and Arp included one of her oils in their 1924 book, *Die Ismen*, and Moholy-Nagy reproduced a photographic self-portrait and one photomontage, *Hochfinanz* (mistitled by Moholy-Nagy as *Der Milliardär*), in his 1925 Bauhaus book, *Malerei Photographie Film*.⁷³ Later, Höch was included in Franz Roh's *Foto-Auge* of 1929, the *Photofreund Jahrbuch* 1930–31, *Berlin* 1930, and *Merz* 21, as well as important catalogs for the Film und Foto and Fotomontage exhibitions. A one-person exhibition of Höch's work was planned to open at the Dessau-Bauhaus in 1932, but it was cancelled due to local National-Socialist pressure.

In the Netherlands, Höch received collegial support from the design-oriented de Stijl group, whose members were also associated with International Constructivism. She painted in a studio in Brugman's apartment designed by Vilmos Huzár with furniture by Gerrit Rietveld (fig. 39). The modernist architect Jan Buijs, along with J. B. van Loghem and Ditte van der Vies, arranged Höch's first solo exhibition, at van der Vies's avant-garde gallery, De Bron, in The Hague in 1929. The exhibition traveled to Rotterdam and Amsterdam but received poor reviews: "These *Fotoschnipsels* have nothing to do with art," snapped one Rotterdam newspaper critic.⁷⁴

Nevertheless, Höch's associates in Holland – architects, designers, and artists – continued to support her work. Her one-person exhibitions in 1934 and 1935 at Kunstzaal d'Audretsch were more favorably reviewed, including an article by van Loghem in the avant-garde architectural periodical *De 8 en Opbouw*. In praising the disturbing and "spiritual" qualities of Höch's montages, van Loghem noted, "While she discovers the limitations of photography, she has cut up and put the images together in such a way that suddenly a new image and a whole new world appears."⁷⁵

Höch's post-Dada work and the efforts of the International Constructivists in general tend to refute claims that the avant-garde was resistant to the culture industry. This supposed polarity is clearly anachronistic to the situation of the European international avant-garde engaged with design, advertising, and the mass media of photography and film. Their strategies, while sometimes critical, were more often additive and reformist – specifically, based on a belief in avant-garde designs as carriers of utopian messages. In her photomontages of the mid-1920s Höch actually remained closer to the overtly political strategies of Berlin Dada than did her International Constructivist colleagues such as van Doesburg, Schwitters, and Lissitzky. These strategies coexisted, however, with the representation of pleasure connoting a celebration of modernity and a reworking of its terms.

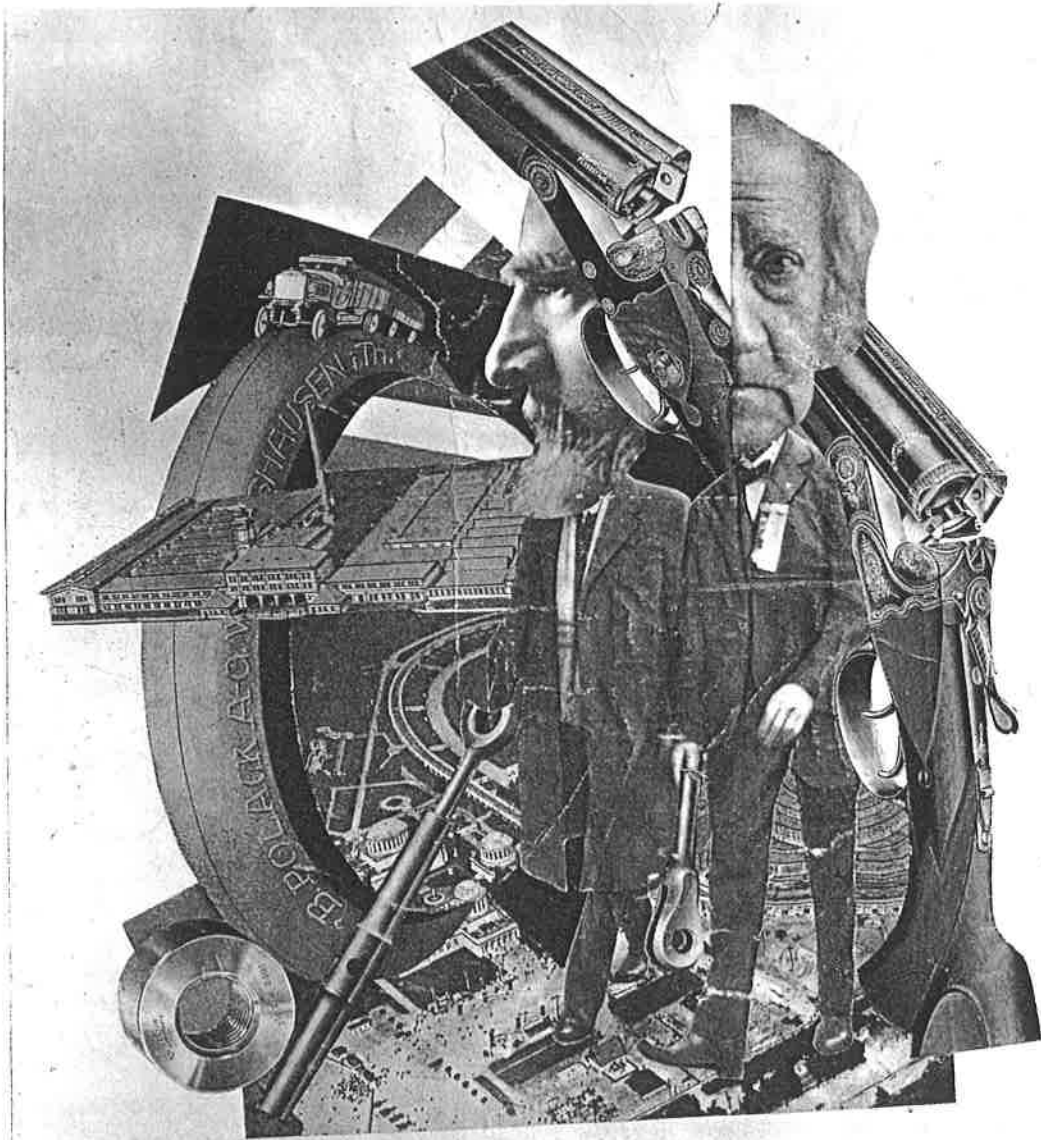
One of Höch's most explicit societal critiques, *Hochfinanz* (fig. 40), subtitled "Das zwiefache Gesicht des Herrschers" (the two-sided face of those in power), was reproduced in Moholy-Nagy's Bauhaus book.⁷⁶ *Hochfinanz* was created in 1923 and referred to the exploitative behavior of financiers during the war and the subsequent inflation that peaked in that year. In this photomontage, two giant financiers stroll through an urban landscape; arching over their heads are parts of two huge cocked



39 Hannah Höch and Til Brugman's apartment on Ligusterstraat in The Hague

rifles. The financiers hold tools and are thus associated with industry and technology. Next to them is a large tire that partially frames the composition. A truck rides on it; a factory overlaps it; and a roller bearing borders it. A series of curves interlaced with diagonals suggests movement through and around the tire. This movement signals the widespread enthusiasm in the twenties for technology and its representation in the media. But this excitement was not deemed incongruous with a caricature of two industrial financiers implicitly linked to arms profiteering and runaway inflation.

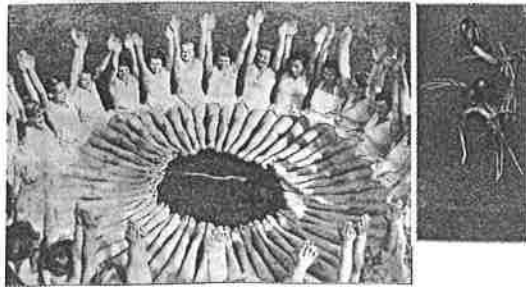
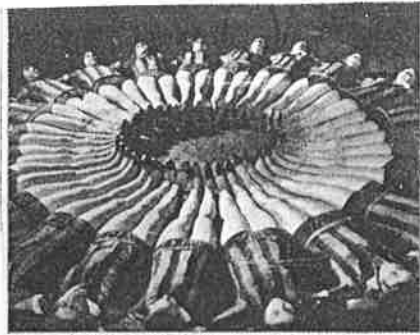
Such ambivalence toward industrial capitalism provokes several key questions about Höch's representation of the New Woman in her photomontages. Did her works in any way resist or critique the stereotypical Weimar mass media characterization of woman as commodity, the equation of woman and machine, and the use of the New Woman image to transcend and elide class distinctions? Or did Höch selectively embrace the image of the New Woman, inflecting her representations with personal concerns, directing her images away from the consumerist, "progressive" ones of the media? What was Höch's own contribution to the utopian myths of modernity and *Lebensfreude*? How much was her response determined by the mass media archive, its commodified representation of the New Woman, its preoccupation with modernity? And how much was she able to disrupt, to reshuffle and reconstruct that archive, even on an individual level?



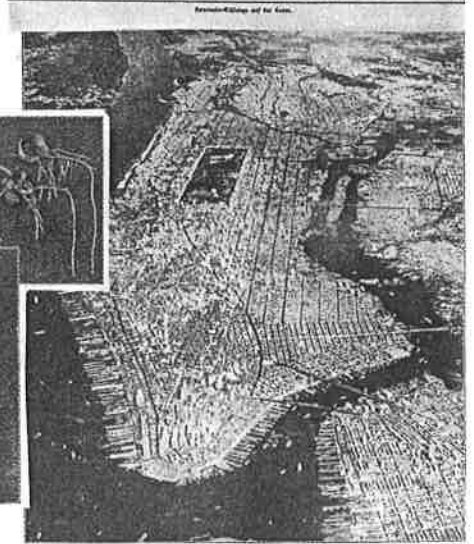
Die Hochfinanz von Hannah Höch.

Hochfinanz 1923

40 Hannah Höch, *Hochfinanz* (High Finance), 1923, 36 × 31 cm., photomontage, Robert Hughes, Shelter Island, New York



41 Hannah Höch, *Scrapbook*, c. 1933, 36 × 28 cm.,
page 16, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin



42 Hannah Höch, *Scrapbook*, c. 1933, 36 × 28 cm.,
page 17, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin

hannah höch's

mass

media

scrapbook

3

utopias of the twenties

Every time and place has its own dreams of what the present can yield, what the future could be. In many ways, the utopias of Weimar were distinct from the utopias of today. The different attitudes toward technology then, for instance, were frequently represented by glorious images of what modern machines could provide: everything from a reconciliation of man and nature to the formation of a classless society. The scrapbook of mass media photographs that Hannah Höch compiled around 1933 provides many examples of images glorifying rationalization, in particular as depicted through images of the bodies of women.¹

On pages 16 and 17 (figs. 41 and 42), Höch created a layout that harmoniously blends an aerial shot of Manhattan, a photograph of a tree branch, a close-up of a sprouting plant, and two bird's-eye view photographs of women lying down, feet toward the center, forming a circle. This utterly modernist composite was made by Höch, but it could just as easily have been put together by Moholy-Nagy or by any photo editor at *BIZ*. In many ways, it summarizes the excitement and utopianism of twenties photomontage. In one two-page spread, Höch valorizes new technology (the camera, the airplane, New York City skyscrapers), reverence for nature (the sprouting plant that connects the disparate images), rationalization (people arranged in precise patterns), and collectivism (the circles of women, one of which is a student group from the new Soviet Union). For Höch, as for many Weimar-era readers, the mass media was itself a triumphant sign of modern technology, a vast archive from which to compose personal dreams of utopia.

Despite the importance of the mass media to Weimar society and the attention ac-

corded its management and structure, there is little information available on reader responses to the media, on how its stories and images were received.² In this respect, the 116-page media scrapbook of Hannah Höch is a unique document that in addition to being a significant example of montage by an avant-garde artist is also a rare example of one reader's private, seemingly celebratory reading of the mainstream media.³ In contrast to her avant-garde photomontages, which combine visual pleasure with explicit critique, Höch's scrapbook illustrates the selective reading of a fan and reveals a more purely admiring relationship to the mass media. There are no extant statements by Höch about the scrapbook. Höch's selection of particularly compelling photographs and her reiteration of standard iconographic categories from the photoweeklies, however, emphasize her enthusiastic and largely uncritical reading of the publications of mass culture. Images of the New Woman, presented in conjunction with photographs of nature, technology, sports, dance, work, and film, predominate in Höch's scrapbook. Her utopias, then, center around the media's representations of women.

Most of Höch's scrapbook images were drawn from such Ullstein press publications as *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, *Uhu*, and *Die Dame*. All but one or two images were from German periodicals, the exceptions being from Dutch photomagazines. Höch constructed the montage scrapbook by gluing cut-outs of photographs onto the pages of one issue (May 1926) of *Die Dame*, in the process mimicking the content and flow of mainstream publications like *BIZ* and *Uhu*. Unlike her photomontages, where mass media images are fragmented or juxtaposed in a disruptive way, Höch here seems to be recontextualizing the photographs in a personalized version of popular press layouts.

In contrast to Höch's working method for her photomontages, in which she cut out images without regard for original outlines and compositions, in the scrapbook she left small margins between the photographs and often retained the captions and photographer's credit. She shared with the *Illustrierte* an emphasis on the content and formal qualities of the photographs themselves, although sometimes she cut along the contours of a central figure and eliminated the background. There is still a clear sense in the scrapbook that respect was being paid to the original photographers; not coincidentally many of the photographers Höch identified with captions were women, notably Hedda Walther, Margaret Bourke-White, and Tina Modotti.

Again, as in the *Illustrierte*, the composition and subject matter of the photographs established motifs and recurring combinations of form and content. Visual rhymes were set up in the repetition of images of women, colonial scenes, sports, film stars, animals, landscapes, and religious ritual. In terms of *Illustrierte* iconography, all that is missing from Höch's scrapbook are the representations of machines that were ubiquitous in the magazines. This omission is curious given that other signs of technological romanticism surface from time to time in the scrapbook, either explicitly or implicitly. In this assemblage, however, Höch's emphasis seems to be on nature and spirituality. Indeed, these montages are significant for their utopian blend of the modern (particularly variant images of the New Woman) with the organic. In

this sense, the scrapbook is both more nostalgic and, in Bloch's terms, more non-synchronous than the typical Ullstein press publication. This balance is particularly evident in the ethnographic photographs, usually of women, which are signs of both a heightened feminine spirituality and an exotic, pre-modern "primitive" state.

Due to the rigorous visual coherence of the scrapbook and the continuity of the layout of its two-page spreads, it seems clear that it was assembled at one time, probably in 1933. In this sense, the word "scrapbook" is something of a misnomer; more accurately, the book can be described as a montage in the form of a scrapbook. Most pages have four images, some two, some six. The logic of the layout is based on continuity between two pages in a spread, as well as formal equivalences between individual images and variations on a grid format (at times respecting, at times disrupting the grid).

Höch apparently created the scrapbook for her own pleasure. In this regard the compilation would be in keeping with Höch's working method of assembling files of mass media images organized by subject matter throughout her adult life. There is no evidence in Höch's journals or correspondence that she intended to publish the book (though such subjectively organized books of photos were not uncommon at the time), and there is no text accompanying the images as was the norm for published photobooks of the time. Whether intended for publication or not, the scrapbook reflects a shared excitement, most often identified with Weimar women, for the media boom in film and photography that so thoroughly and deliciously transformed everyday visual experience.⁴

In some ways, Höch's scrapbook bears a striking resemblance to Laszlo Moholy-Nagy's *Malerei Fotografie Film* (Painting Photography Film) published by the Bauhaus in 1925. Moholy-Nagy's book features full-page photographs pulled from their context in the mass media, emphasizing those that showed expanded possibilities for vision through new technology (such as an x-ray photograph of a frog). These are combined with avant-garde photographs, photograms (cameraless images made with photographic paper and light), and photomontages. Although the final section of the book consists of pages with a grid layout of montaged photos, film stills, and text, Moholy-Nagy's book is not, on the whole, concerned with an intricate visual montage structure like that employed on every page of Höch's scrapbook. Like Moholy, Höch includes avant-garde photography in her book but concentrates far more on images from the *Illustrierte*. While Moholy's book emphasizes the formal and technical potential of different photographic processes, Höch's book is private, and the formal concerns, though related to the standards of New Vision photography like Moholy's, are more interdependent with her thematic editorial selection. As reviewers recognized at the time, though, Moholy's book is also a celebration of contemporary film and the *Illustrierte*. Adolf Behne wrote in *Die Weltbühne* in 1926, "In his Bauhaus book *Painting, Photography, Film* . . . Moholy brought together the best from German and foreign periodicals to create a gripping, surprising, capital book, which gathers much of the technical wit of our time."⁵ There are similarities, too, between Höch's scrapbook and Albert Renger-Patzsch's well-known 1928 photo-

book *Die Welt ist Schön* (The World is Beautiful), in that nature and technology are linked through form and a utopian belief in the organic and progressive grounding of technology. And indeed, Höch included photographs by Renger-Patzsch in her book.

Höch's scrapbook distinguishes itself from these earlier published books, however, by her concerted inclusion of women, a theme central to her project, on 51 of its 116 pages. Höch's representations of women fall into several categories: mass ornament (images of groups of people displayed in patterns); physical energy (photographs of dance and sport); procreation and stages of life (portraits of mothers and children and of people of different ages); ethnography (images of women from African and Polynesian cultures); and movie stars (head shots of popular German and American film actresses). Homologies and overlaps between these categories create an illusion of a continuous flow of images. Most important is the pleasure evident in Höch's rearrangement and re-presentation of many different stereotypes of the New Woman, often themselves joyful or utopian images (women dancing together, women communing with nature, and so on). Höch's scrapbook, then, suggests how Weimar women, particularly those who, like Höch, considered themselves to be New Women, may have interpreted New Women stereotypes.

Ernst Bloch, the Marxist philosopher who shared Höch's interest in combining montage, mysticism, and utopianism to achieve a state he called "anticipatory illumination," also sought a formal aesthetics intended to shock his readers into a vision of a better future using traces evident in everyday life.⁶ But the dislocating effects of montage can function in different ways: in some instances montage can be used to create a disruptive critique; in others – most notably the leading Weimar *Illustrierte* – montage resituates an image in such a way as to give a wondrous sense of seeing anew or of seeing more than before.

In the 1920s, the technique of photomontage was still relatively fresh and could convey the excitement of modernity by offering innovative ways of seeing and experiencing the world. If certain of Höch's photomontages impart a particularly modernist mix of wonder and irony, the scrapbook is almost exclusively about wonder. The concept of wonder was of particular importance to Bloch, and his translator, Jack Zipes, highlights Bloch's use of the German word for wonder, *Staunen*. Zipes translates *Staunen* as "intended to startle us in a mysterious and mystical sense . . . not only startlement but astonishment, wonder and staring."⁷ Even today, a related word is frequently used by Höch's sisters Grete König and Marianne Carlberg in describing their feelings for nature: *bewundert* or being in a state of wonderment.

What is clear from a close examination of Weimar *Illustrierte* and of Höch's scrapbook is that this state of wonderment was associated with the reception of both nature *and* technology, in particular as it related to photography and mass media. Among those on the critical left, however, including in different ways both Höch and Bloch, there was a desire to use montage to connect this state of wonderment to a desire for a better, classless future society based on specific aspects of present-day reality. In other words, there was a dialectical approach to utopianism that incorpo-

rated radical fantasies of the future and concrete elements (*Spuren*) of contemporary life. Thus utopianism was not a starry-eyed fantasy but a legitimate form of social critique, and montage was an essential formal aspect of its construction.

Photomontage, in particular, played a key role in this process. Because montage disrupts many of the fetishizing and relying tendencies of photographic representation, allowing a photographic fragment to have multiple meanings, it introduces a shift between the real (seemingly indexed by a photograph) and the utopian (triggered by allegorical associations). An example would be a typical early Weimar photograph of a New Woman as a dancer. The stereotypes of the modern woman are immediately recognizable: on the one hand, she is a woman one might actually encounter on the streets of Berlin (although here wearing different clothes) and, on the other hand, a woman represented as flying through the air with no earthly constraints, embodying liberation and indicating utopian fantasy. In the scrapbook, such New Woman images are common and provide a thematic thread.

The "flow" of the scrapbook from page to page relates most directly to the Weimar Illustrierte, in which very different one-, two-, or four-page photostories were juxtaposed. Often the apparently unrelated images were linked by similar formal principles of organization and a consensus about their function in the publication (to create wonderment, to sell the Illustrierte), thus establishing many correspondences of content and form.⁸ Each double-page spread in Höch's book forms a self-contained montage; the book as a whole functions as a montage as well. As a sequential viewing experience, it could even be called filmic.⁹ Turning the pages, "reading" the book, introduces the element of time.

A brief review of the first third of the book reveals how this concept of reading through time works in practice. As in *Die Dame* itself, the scrapbook starts out with two ads, but Höch has put one of them on the cover. The photomontages begin on the third page, which includes animal and landscape shots. The next three spreads are of animals and humans, with primarily formal connections between the images. For example, a baby's round head in the upper left corner of page 4 is echoed by the shape of the balloon-breasted bird in the upper right corner of page 5, establishing a symmetry as one looks at the two pages. In addition, many of the photographs were apparently selected for their formal interest; typical is the New Vision photograph (on page 4, upper right) of a man viewed from below so that his foot appears larger than his head. Pages 10 and 11 (figs. 43, 44) combine shots of nudity, nature, prostitution, and women; pages 12 and 13 depict animals; pages 14 and 15 show animals and landscapes. Images of animals and landscape form a sort of refrain throughout the 116-page book, weaving it all together and creating an overall sense of a calm

travelogue.¹⁰ The major themes of the scrapbook are addressed in individual page layouts. The interrelated theme of women, rationalization, and modernity, for example, appears in the two images of young women arranged in circular patterns, displayed on page 16 (fig. 41); photographed from above, they face an aerial view of Manhattan on



FOTO: FINA WOODS

Die glücklichste Yacht



Die Züchtungsstätte: Säuglinge, die vor Verlassen der Mütter die Taufe erlangen, im Tauffaß.
Australien, Nord-Pole.

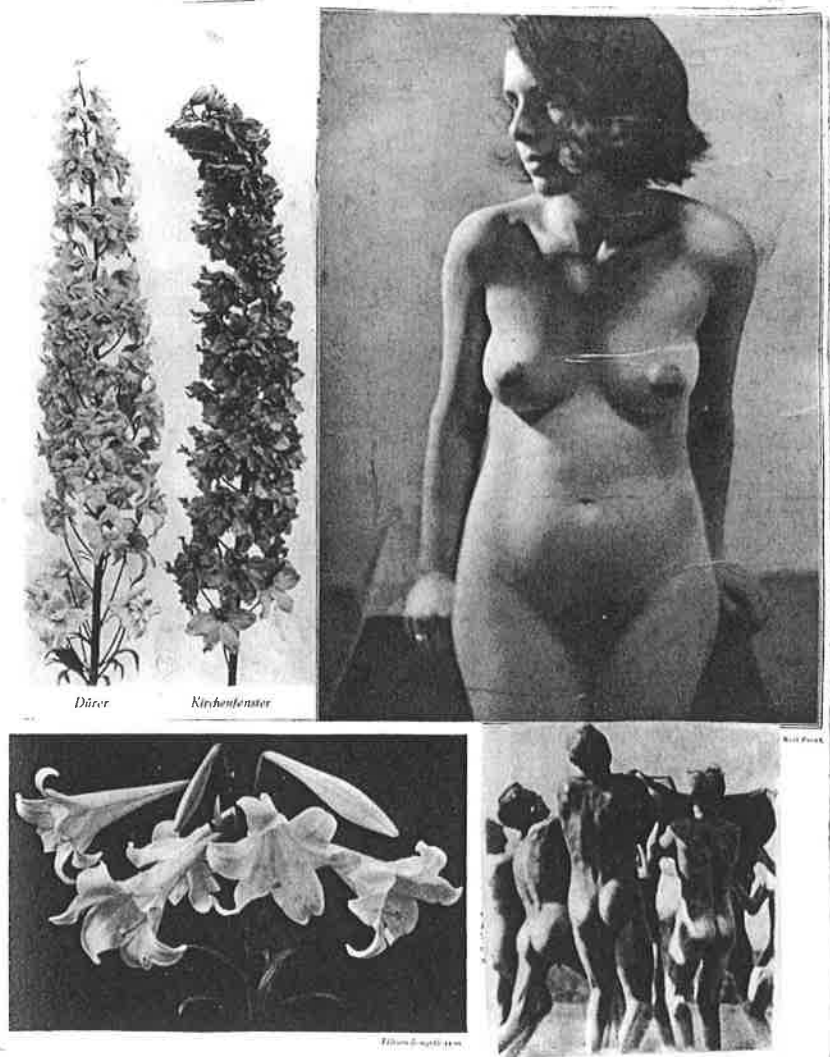


„Darf ich jetzt reinkommen?“
Schönheitswettbewerb für die „Baker im Heide“ in Berlin

43 Hannah Höch, *Scrapbook*, c. 1933, 36 × 28 cm., page 10, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin

page 17 (fig. 42). On pages 20 and 21 (figs. 45, 46), shots of leaping European dancers and a pole vaulter, with little connection to the ground, face photographs of exotic sports figures and dancers, including Josephine Baker.

Of particular significance here are two photographs that recur within the structure of the scrapbook. Originally used in a *BIZ* feature story entitled “Child dancing in a trance on Bali,” these photographs are from a series depicting a young Balinese girl in elaborate ritual costume performing a trance dance of religious significance.¹¹ Pages 22 and 23 (figs. 47, 48) continue the ethnographic theme but the photographs concern mainly the daily life of African women. Pages 28 and 29 (figs. 49, 50) contain glamorous images of female movie stars, one of which is repeated on both pages,



44 Hannah Höch, *Scrapbook*, c. 1933, 36 × 28 cm., page 11, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin

again echoing the tendency of the mass media to reuse the same shots of stars in different contexts. Pages 36 and 37 (figs. 51, 52) juxtapose shots by Bourke-White of women arranged in patterns or, as it was called at the time, mass ornament (rows of girls in gymnastic costume with arms linked); modern dance, taken from the famous 1925 *Körperkultur* (body culture) film, *Wege zu Kraft und Schönheit* (Ways to Strength and Beauty); ethnographic images of spirituality (again the two Bali photos); and European folk dance. The two-page spread is dominated by the mass ornament photograph on page 37 that bleeds across onto page 36. Thus a complex relationship is established between the controlled movements of the lines of athletic girls squeezed tightly together, the leaping and twirling dancers, and the Balinese girl in a trance.



Stehende mit Knieauf.

Prof. Arndt



Starke Geste im modernen Ausdruckstanz
(Die Wigman-Schülerin Vera Skocnel)
Prof. Sore Byk

45 Hannah Höch, *Scrapbook*, c. 1933, 36 × 28 cm., page 20, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin



Im Freizeitsport ungarische Krieger auf der Sunda-Insel 3511.



Sumo: Beinstellen ist erlaubt und eine ganze Reihe von Griffen, welche bei unserem Ringkampf streng verboten sind.

46 Hannah Höch, *Scrapbook*, c. 1933, 36 × 28 cm., page 21, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin



Photo Mare Alvares (Gale-Film)
Fülle-Mädchen

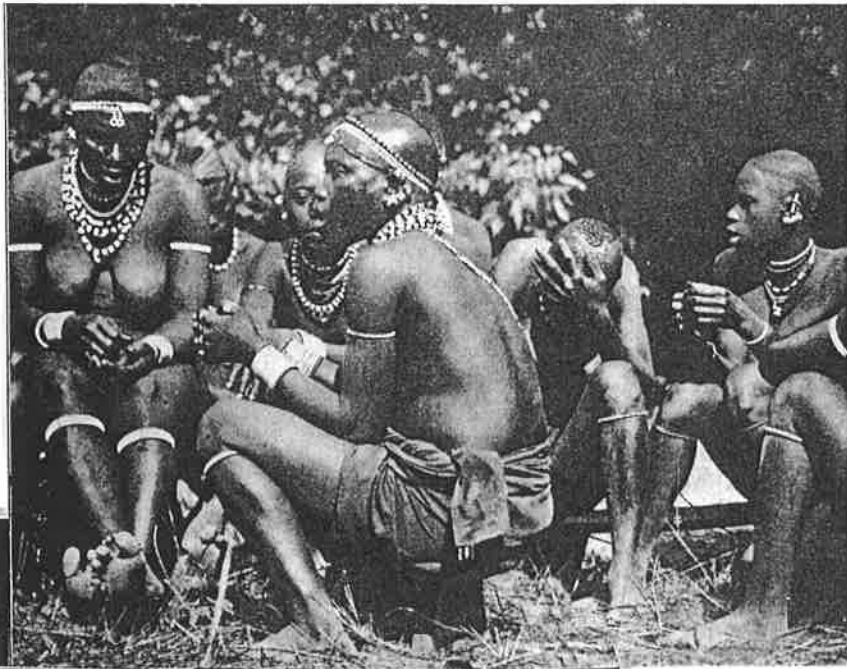


Photo Mare Alvares (Gale-Film)
Fülle-Mädchen



47 Hannah Höch, *Scrapbook*, c. 1933, 36 × 28 cm., page 22, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin

H. 57



Aufnahme Yella Nidas



Frau eines Sonalidüngling

Photo Healy Walker

48 Hannah Höch, *Scrapbook*, c. 1933, 36 × 28 cm., page 23, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin



49 Hannah Höch, *Scrapbook*, c. 1933, 36 × 28 cm., page 28, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin (*top*)
 50 Hannah Höch, *Scrapbook*, c. 1933, 36 × 28 cm., page 29, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin (*bottom*)



51 Hannah Höch, *Scrapbook*, c. 1933, 36 × 28 cm., page 36, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin (top)

52 Hannah Höch, *Scrapbook*, c. 1933, 36 × 28 cm., page 37, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin (bottom)

In the first thirty-seven pages, then, Höch created a continuous stream of images, establishing equivalences between images of man and nature, Eastern and Western religions, dance and mass ornament. Despite the disruptive use of montage, there is a wholeness and a logic to the sequence of photographs. As in most magazine layouts of the time, montage was used not to shock or to fracture but to establish continuity. These equivalences must be read in the context of twenties attitudes toward mass ornament.

mass ornament

As the critic Siegfried Kracauer recognized in the 1920s, the ongoing rationalization of Weimar manufacturing was reflected by the entertainment industry, in particular the widespread fascination with Tiller Girls and other troupes of female dancers who moved in long rows with exquisite precision. He defined these spectacles as “mass ornament,” referring to the elaborate geometric patterns the dancers formed as well as to their synchronization. The Tiller Girls were actually a British troupe in residence in Berlin beginning in 1924 (fig. 53); they performed for sold-out audiences at the Admiralspalast theater and were widely imitated. Indeed, they were so popular that the proper name “Tiller” (for John Tiller, the founding director of the group) was used to signify the whole dance tendency as well as to connote Americanism and Taylorism (the principle of dividing labor into small, repeatable tasks to save time).¹² The popular cartoonist Paul Simmel captured the industrial connotation when he caricatured the Tiller Girls as products popping off an assembly line (fig. 54).¹³

In his 1927 essay “The Mass Ornament,” Kracauer analyzed the enactment of rationalization in such performances, noting the effects of precision and control on female bodies. “The hands in the factory correspond to the legs of the Tiller Girls,” he wrote. “The mass ornament is the aesthetic reflex of the rationality aspired to by the prevailing economic system.”¹⁴ To Kracauer, the spectacles of mass ornament – primarily dance but also public gymnastic events – were significant for the ways they reflected the daily realities of the participants, that is, the experience of being overwhelmed by mute patterns of rationalization. He regarded the aesthetic pleasure of such spectacles as legitimate because it was part of the viewer’s recognition of the reality of contemporary culture, as opposed to the “self-deceptive” culture of the professionals and the white-collar class. This self-deceptive culture, he wrote, served only to promote the outmoded values of individualism and differentiation from the working class and was pathetically inappropriate in Weimar since the dispossessed *petit bourgeoisie* had in fact been reduced to the economic level of the working class. On the other hand, Kracauer also criticized mass ornament performances and the related *Körperkultur* as mere ends in themselves and therefore distractions from much-needed social change.

For Kracauer, the role of the spectator was critical. “The fact is that nobody



Die Tillergirls. Foto, das hier diese Woche veröffentlicht.

Drei Jahre Tillergirls in Berlin



Die drei Jahre...
Drei Jahre sind es nun, seitdem die Tillergirls in Berlin auf den Bühnen der Stadt aufgeführt werden. In dieser Zeit haben sie sich einen Namen gemacht und sind zu einer der beliebtesten Attraktionen geworden. Ihre Leistungen sind nicht nur in der Provinz, sondern auch in der Hauptstadt hoch geschätzt. Die Tillergirls sind nicht nur Sängerinnen, sondern auch Tänzerinnen und Schauspielerinnen. Sie haben eine große Anzahl von Fans gewonnen und sind zu einer der erfolgreichsten Gruppen der Berliner Bühnen geworden.



„Du hast man sich ein neues Verfahren, die Häuser bauerhaft anzufertigen: die Farbe wird einfach mit einer Motorpumpe aufgetragen.“
„Sich es da nicht ein Heures Modell, Männer, das man in der Fuderbohle unterbringen könnte?“
„Ich hoffe, Herr Bäcker, Sie werden heute Abend mit mir tanzen?“
„Aber natürlich, gnädigste Fräulein! Dochten Sie, ich bin bloß zum Vergnügen betrogen?“
„Du hehst mich nicht mehr!“
„Doch, Liebste, natürlich liebe ich dich!“
„Das ist nicht wahr. Kein Mann kann eine Frau mit solchen alten Klüften lieben.“
„Tochter, das Altvater kann ich doch mitnehmen, wenn ich belästigt?“
„Vater: „Gewiß, mein Kind, aber sag deinem Väterchen nicht vorher.“
„Ostler: „Nun sag mir mal, mein Junge, was ichst du zuerst, wenn ich dir, sagst mir mal — 200 Mark für dich?“
„Junger: „Nachhaken, Ostler.“



Frau Schmann hatte etwas Geld verdient und kurz entschlossen mietete sie ein kleines Landhäuschen und begann eine Schnerzucht. Sie kaufte ein Huhn und legte ihm 12 Eier unter. Damit aber war ihre ganze Willenskraft erschöpft und die Erträge funktionierten nicht. Sie schrieb alle an ein landwirtschaftliches Blatt und bat um kurze Anleitung. Unversehens hatte sie den Befehl: „Drei Wochen Fastzeit, bis die Hühner, und vier Wochen bis die kleinen Enten herauskommen.“ — Nach Verlauf von drei und einer halben Woche erhielt die Redaktion des Blattes ein Schreiben von Frau Schmann: „Geben Sie besten Dank für Ihre Ratshilfe, aber nach der angegebenen Zeit von drei Wochen waren noch keine Küken ausgekrochen, und da mir an Enten nichts liegt, hab' ich die Glucke von den Eiern runtergenommen.“
Im Jellalter des Hundtums. Der kleine FFG-Schule kommt vom ersten Schultag nach Haus. „Nun,“ fragt die Mutter, „hat der Lehrer schon mit dir gesprochen, Väschen?“
„Nein, Mutter,“ erwidert der Kleine, „aus der Herr Detektor.“

Ford übernimmt die Herstellung von Tillergirls. Reproduktion: 15.000.

- 53 "Drei Jahre Tillergirls in Berlin" (Three Years of Tiller Girls in Berlin), *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung* 36, no. 43 (Oct. 23, 1927): 1739
- 54 Paul Simmel, "Ford übernimmt die Herstellung von Tillergirls" (Ford takes over production of Tiller Girls), *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung* 35, no. 13 (March 28, 1926): 411

would notice the pattern if the crowd of spectators, who have an aesthetic relation to it and do not represent anyone, were not sitting in front of it," he wrote. "These products of American 'distraction factories' are no longer individual girls, but indissoluble female units whose movements are mathematical demonstrations . . . One glance at the screen [newsreels] reveals that the ornaments consist of thousands of bodies, sexless bodies in bathing suits. The regularity of their patterns is acclaimed by the masses, who themselves are arranged in row upon ordered row."¹⁵ Thus the spectator was simultaneously identified with the participants and with a position of control, above the dancers, as in aerial photography. Moreover, the spectator embodied the role of the camera as an organizing vision without which the spectacle could not exist.

The embrace of technological romanticism through the viewing of mass ornament can be considered a projection of the experience of rationalization onto multiple, interchangeable women's bodies. This projection has the added attraction of maintaining a position of control, or to use Kracauer's crude reflection theory, it promotes an identification with factory owners, not workers.¹⁶ This is a visual experience of rationalization as that which is desired but perhaps also feared, a fantasy of women embodying modern industrial technology, a condition specific to 1920s attitudes toward technology. And keeping in mind the Simmel cartoon, it is easy to see that, at the most reductive level, viewing women as mass ornament is congruent with identifying women as commodities.

In the scrapbook, Höch echoed the popular fascination with mass ornament with numerous depictions of people arranged in patterns. On page 16, for instance, Höch juxtaposed two bird's-eye view photographs of young women arranged in ornamental circles, dressed alike and making the same movements. The lower photo is identified in its original caption as a picture "from a modern dance and movement school in Hannover: Exercises in light and sun," thereby connecting mass ornament to dance and healthful physical culture. The upper photo appeared in *BIZ*, linking mass ornament to the admired Soviet film industry, and again, to the training of girls – thus girls not only reflect rationalization in their formations but also in their adaptability to the new social order: "In the Moscow cinema college: A class sunbathing under the studio lamps."¹⁷ Through the use of sun lamps, even nature is rationalized. As Kracauer points out, a desire for organic and spiritual communion often goes hand in hand with the rational. On the opposite page, Höch complemented these mass ornament images with a photo of a plant seedling (perhaps a reference to the 'unformed' aspect of the girls) and an aerial view of New York City.¹⁸

One of Höch's most complex arrays of humans as ornaments is on the double-page spread comprising pages 68 and 69 (figs. 56, 57). The series of dramatic images include: a dancer spotlighted so that she throws five identical shadows; a water ballet; an aerial view of people climbing a net (the people are so small they are nearly indistinguishable); women forming a human clock on a beach; generic, identical German kitsch Christmas figurines; and two particularly masculine shots, a group of wrestlers and a figure in a diver's suit (the mechanical robot man being

an image of special fascination in Weimar *Illustrierte*). All the photographs in one way or another refer to people and images of them synchronized and standardized to resemble machines.

Stop-action photographs of a leaping woman frozen in different stages of her jump (fig. 55) appear on pages 36 and 37.¹⁹ The image is from the highly idealized Körperkultur film *Wege zu Kraft und Schönheit*. But even this emancipatory and romanticized leap – in silhouette, at dusk on a hillside – is rationalized by being broken down into its component parts. At the same time, this image is related by its proximity on the page to the mysticism of the Bali trance dancer and also to the Tiller Girls and the folk dancers. Höch clearly intended to link female participation in the mass ornament to spirituality. Here and throughout the scrapbook, Höch's juxtapositions signify similarity rather than difference; she constantly stressed the formal equivalences between the photographs she placed together. This is a technique commonly seen in *Uhu* and in such photobooks as Renger-Patzsch's *Die Welt ist Schön*.

Film theorist Richard Dyer also points out that utopian depictions in popular culture can be read as desires for what is lacking in specific historical conditions. The popularity of a film about independent women, for example, can signal that independence for women is exactly what is lacking in a society. This observation is particularly relevant to the extreme status anxiety, class antagonism, and political polarization of Weimar Germany during the Depression. By 1930, the Nazis were rising to power and street violence was a daily reality in Berlin. In contrast to this discord, mass ornament photographs could represent unity and the harmony of individuals working together and, at the same time, signal the larger socialist dream of progressive application of technology through compliance with industry.

Immediately preceding and following the constellation of mass ornament images (pages 68 and 69) are pages devoted to plant forms (pages 66 and 67) and a series associating women, nudity, and sports (pages 70 and 71) (figs. 58 and 59). These show how Höch sought to align her views of the mass ornament with utopian montages of nature and the New Woman. Indeed, it was thoroughly typical of Weimar mass culture and especially of the avant-garde artists with whom Höch was associated to



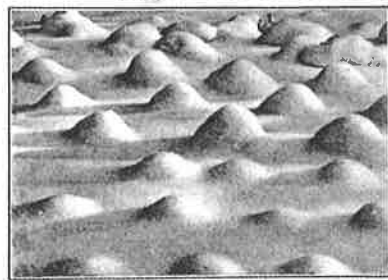
55 "Interessante Sprungbilder aus dem neuen Film 'Wege zu Kraft und Schönheit'" (Interesting jumping picture from new film "Ways to Strength and Beauty"), *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* 35, no. 22 (May 29, 1926): 676



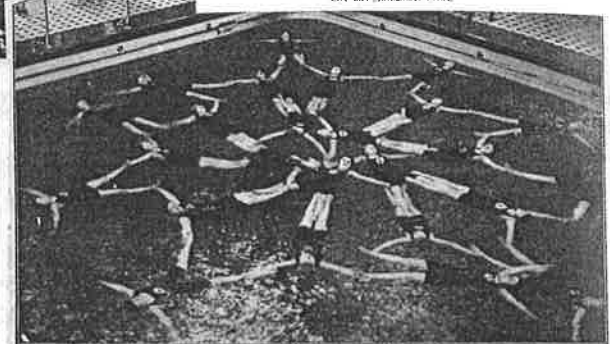
die Arbeiter im
Kuppelraum des Plane-
tariums der Stadt Berlin



Die Tänzerin als Gestaltgruppe: Senja Pohn in einem neuartigen
Schallentanz in der neuen Reijou-Strasse,
Litzky und Aufwaktins: Stone.



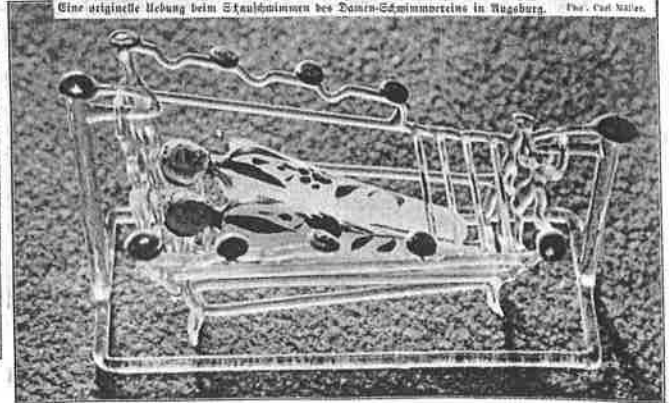
Es ist eine verfeinerte Ebornung



Eine originelle Übung beim Schwimmverein des Damen-Schwimmervereins in Neuguburg. Foto: Carl Müller.

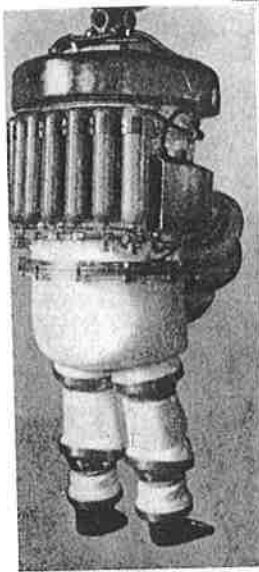


Abbl. 9: Der Mann mit der Riesenhand
Wenn man mit der Kamera den Dargest. zu nahe rückt, kann man ganz
groteske Perspektiven erzielen

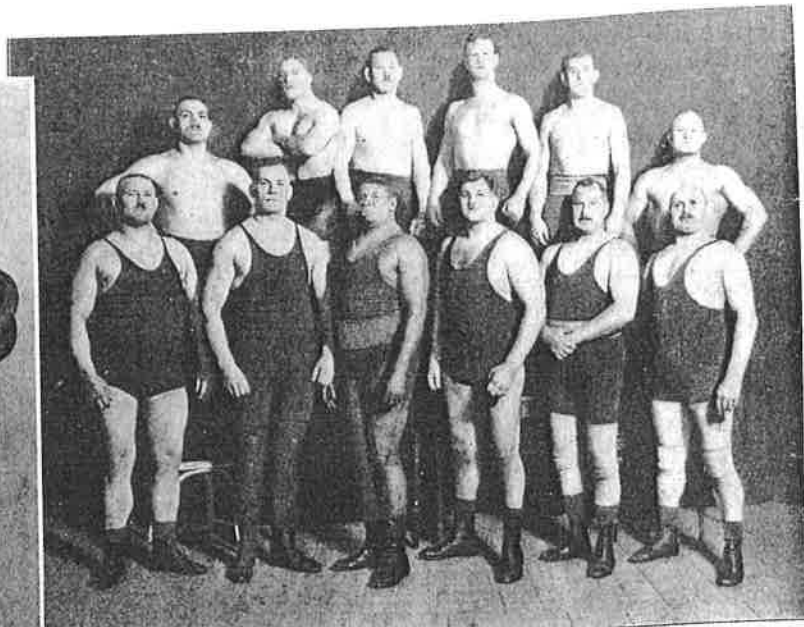


Die gläserne Wiege, ein „Simulacrum-Spielzeug“

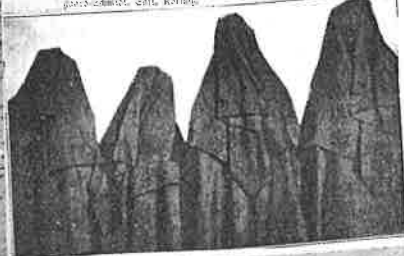
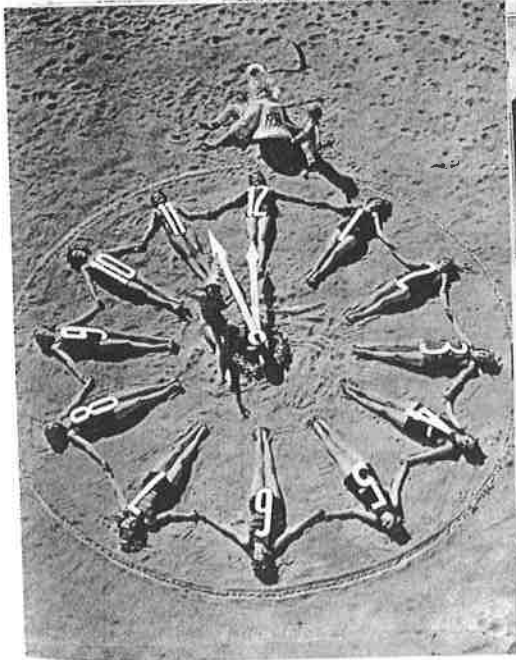
56 Hannah Höch, *Scrapbook*, c. 1933, 36 × 28 cm., page 68, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin



Above: Bauart, Hinteransicht



Einige der hervorragenden Teilnehmer an der Ringkampf-Wettkampfsport im Reichsaerobiker in Berlin
 (v. links nach rechts): Hermann Cohn, Schöber, Krawinkel, Walter Krich, Otto-Santow, Krawinkel, Heide, Walter
 Krawinkel, Otto-Santow, Krawinkel, Walter Krich, Otto-Santow, Krawinkel, Heide, Walter Krawinkel, Otto-Santow



57 Hannah Höch, *Scrapbook*, c. 1933, 36 × 28 cm., page 69, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin



Die Bergner als Juana
in dem Institut des Park Alameda in Valencia



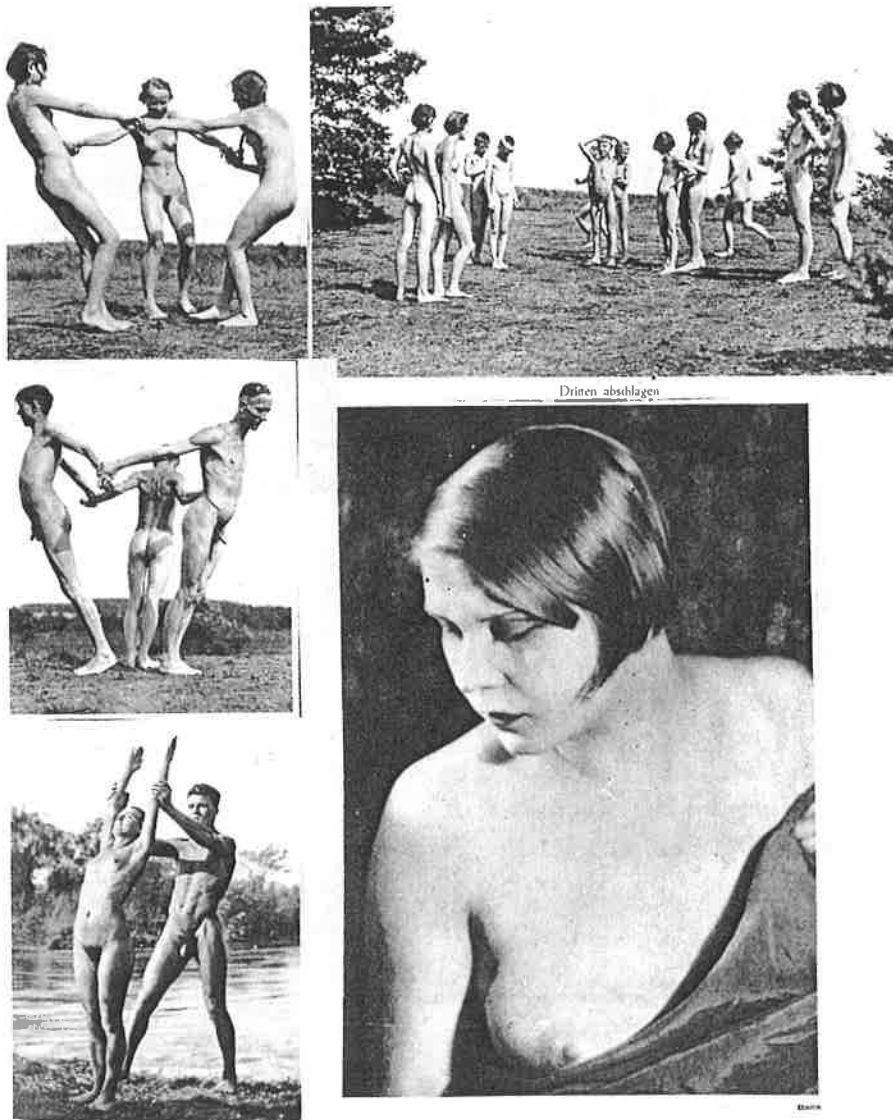
Die Sitzende
Aufgabe Bild 1



Die riesigen Fundamente der Arena

58 Hannah Höch, *Scrapbook*, c. 1933, 36 × 28 cm., page 70, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin

attempt to establish similarities between the mechanical and the natural. The easy juxtaposition of the rational and the organic is found, for example, in stories about the inherent beauty of technology in *Uhu* and *BIZ* as well as in the special issue of *Merz* (no. 8–9, 1924) edited by Schwitters and Lissitzky (figs. 60, 61). Höch used fewer images of mechanical hardware than the *Ullstein Illustrierte*, but the images she did choose clearly demonstrate an interest in the “organic” aspects of technology



59 Hannah Höch, *Scrapbook*, c. 1933, 36 × 28 cm., page 71, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin

and an appreciation for their formal qualities. Her fascination with technology is also indirectly evident in the mass ornament photographs of women she selected. In Höch's scrapbook, these modern images are juxtaposed with nonsynchronous views of nature and folk spirituality and removed from explicit connections to consumerism and individualism.

But the new consumer culture of Weimar, perpetuated by the mass media boom,

8MERZ9

DIESES DOPPELHEFT IST ERSCHEINEN UNTER DER REDAKTION VON
EL LISSITZKY UND KURT SCHWITTERS

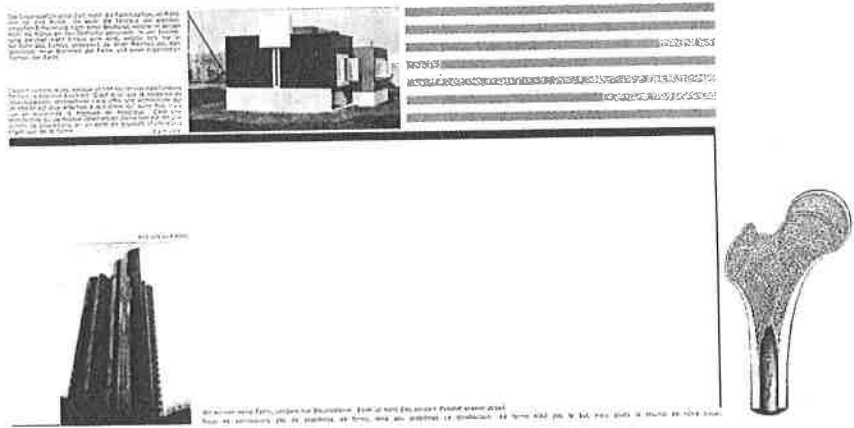
REDAKTION DES MERZVERLAGES
KURT SCHWITTERS, HANNOVER, WALDHAUSENSTR. 5
PROPOSALNE ANGEBIEN VON EL LISSITZKY
UND KURT SCHWITTERS

NATUR VON LAT. **NASCI**
D. I. WERDEN ODER ENT-
STEHEN HEISST ALLES,
WAS SICH AUS SICH
SELBST DURCH EIGENE
KRAFT ENTWICKELT
GESTALTET UND BEWEGT

BAND 2, Nr. 69
APRIL
JULI
1924

NASCI
NATURE, ou tout ce qui se développe, prend forme, s'étend à travers son propre effort
et se crée lui-même, se développe, se forme, se meut.

60 Kurt Schwitters and El Lissitzky, "Nasci," *Merz* 8-9, 1924, cover



61 Kurt Schwitters and El Lissitzky, "Nasci," *Merz* 8-9, 1924

also attempted to address women through the devices of the mass ornament, creating a tension between appealing to women as private individuals and as a public group. In advertisements, women were often represented as modern, precision-crafted, and identical. This seemingly positive state, the advertisements stressed, could be achieved or enhanced through the acquisition of such products as cosmetics, shampoo, or labor-saving devices for the home. Beauty and efficiency were equally attributed to the machine. Women were encouraged to aspire to the status of mannequins with the help of commodities, and the commodity itself was offered as an ideal with which to identify. Fascination with the mass ornament meant, however, that not all inducements to conform to a technocratic modernism were necessarily merely individualistic but could also have spoken to the desire to be part of a smoothly functioning collective unit or a unified "class" of modern women. In addition, the interest of a female viewer in the public nature of this mass ornament presentation could be interpreted allegorically as a desire for the creation of a legitimate female public sphere.

physical energy: dance and sports

If the mass ornament displays reflected the fragmentation and repetitions of modern life for Kracauer, then modern dance, particularly *Ausdruckstanz* (expressive or free dance), stood for the opposite. As suggested by melodramatic *Illustrierte* photographs of famous modern dancers like Mary Wigman, *Ausdruckstanz* emphasized individual experience and extreme emotion, not a rational mechanization. In his essay "Reise und Tanz," published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* in 1925, Kracauer writes of dance and travel as specific alternatives to the disjointed experience of time and space under rationalization, describing dance and travel as experiences of transformation that trigger feelings of connection to the unending and the eternal:

Civilized people, so it is said, use travel and dance today to compensate for those experiences denied to them. . . . Travel and dance have achieved a theological meaning, they are characteristically opportunities based in reality to lead an illusionary double existence.²⁰

As it happens, dance and travel were also two of the primary themes, along with sports, shared by the mainstream *Illustrierte*. Photographs of dance and travel provided audiences with fantasies of autonomy and unity, a simultaneous sensation of unhindered passage through space or time and a connection with other individuals. True, some forms of dance could connote the opposite, a choreography of control, as we have seen in the repetitive motions and set vocabulary of Tiller Girl performances, but modern, expressive dance, as depicted in the *Illustrierte*, was widely perceived as liberatory. Dramatically photographed, modern dance signified a break with the rigid, formal vocabulary of traditional dance, shedding at once gravity and social convention. The most popular dance photographs in the *Illustrierte*, particu-

larly in early Weimar, represented dance as an allegory for flight. This association was rooted in a contemporary passion for the pleasures and adventure of physical movement and for the exhilaration of the recent phenomenon of airplane travel.

In addition to Kracauer's suggestion of expressive dance as an escape from rationalization, images of dancers also connoted the various liberations associated with the New Woman. In early Weimar there was great optimism about women's new freedom to work, to experience their sexuality, to vote, to participate in politics; voting patterns and other indexes supply ample evidence.²¹ But, as the economic nightmares of Weimar persisted and as women's new roles seemed too often like a more exhausting version of the old, the ever-present dance images of early Weimar *Illustrierte* gave way, around 1923, to a new range of visual imagery that reflected women's growing anxiety over their social status.

What Höch's scrapbook illustrates is the *ambiguity* of the image of the modern dancer prominent in the *Illustrierte* from roughly 1918 to 1923. The open-endedness of these photographs allowed individual viewers to read them either as literal documents or as utopian allegories. As Bloch points out, this ambiguity is a necessary component in the creation of radical utopian dreams from the materials of everyday existence. That is to say, utopian ideals derived from mass culture are not necessarily radical (in that they are produced by institutions strongly invested in the status quo), but elements within them can be utopian, depending on how they are read. The first requirement in this process is that the meaning not be restricted by the producers so that it allows only a narrow spectrum of readings. For this reason, Bloch privileges the allegory over the symbol:

This intention toward an arrival engages the symbol, in contrast to allegories, which shift around in blossoms, which devote themselves to the constant undecidedness of the way. . . . Yearning, anticipation, distance, concealment that continues to endure – these are destinations in the subject as well as in the object of the allegorical and symbolic. They are not destinations of any lasting kind but tasks to illuminate increasingly what is still uncertain in the allegorical and symbolic. In short, they are tasks for the increasing dissolution of the symbolic.²²

In her photomontages, Höch took the existent ambiguity in certain mass media images and emphasized it, providing the viewer with specific readings of utopianism, alienation, and, at times, overt political critique. But as her scrapbook clearly shows, Höch based this ambiguous and critical reading of mass media images on a foundation of pleasure in, fascination with, and appreciation of the original photographs. Contemporaries recall her appetite for the *Illustrierte* in particular. Grete König, for instance, remembers sending her sister clippings from German photoweeklies, which Höch missed while living in Holland.²³ On 27 January 1928, Höch wrote thanking Grete for one such shipment: "The *Illustrierte* – they are a great pleasure – you can absolutely not know how great. One hears and *sees* for once what is going on."²⁴ Höch was part of the generation that grew up with the mass media boom in Weimar and fully shared in its delights.

Höch's pleasurable (and largely uncritical) association of dance with exoticism,

for instance, appeared frequently in early Weimar *Illustrierte*. But Höch reconstitutes these images by translating the magazine's signs of energy and intensity into messages of freedom. She links photographs of Western dancers with those of Eastern mystic dancers in a transcendental response that seems related more to her own fantasies of universality than to the emphasis of ambiguity in her montages.

In typical mass media photographs of the period, one can easily see the allegorical operation of dance photographs, connecting images of the New Woman to signifiers of travel, orientalism, and flight. A May 1920 *BIZ* photograph from an article entitled "New from the Dance Stage" (fig. 62) shows the celebrated dancer Anna Pavlova with her partner, both attired in elaborate dress and tall, pointed, medieval-looking hats. The text notes, "The reappearance of Pavlova in London after a five-year world tour: The artist with her partner Alexander Wolinine in a new and experimental oriental dance."²⁵ Several oriental photographs (figs. 63, 64) are juxtaposed on a page from *BIZ* four years later (9 March 1924). In one, a female tourist poses between two gigantic stone pharaohs ("The most modern photograph: The actress Sorel between statues of kings in Egypt"); and in two others, an English dancer performs the latest dance craze ("And now: the Tutankhamen-dance! An English variety-dancer.")²⁶



62 "Pawlowa in London" (Pavlova in London), *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* 29, no. 20 (16 May 1920): 223

63 "Zwischen Statuen der Könige in Aegypten" (Between statues of the kings in Egypt), *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* 33, no. 9 (March 9, 1924): 183



Images associating dance and flight abound as well. In a photograph from *BIZ*, 15 April 1923 (fig. 65), a female dancer leaping with outstretched veils/wings is juxtaposed with drawings of bird anatomy; the caption reads, "A human butterfly: The American dancer Lada doing dance exercises in her garden."²⁷ Stop-action photography was effective in condensing and intensifying the already heightened experience of dance, often preserving the illusion that the dancers were really flying by cropping out the horizon. Many of these photographs even seemed to dissolve the distinction between the material and the utopian, implying that the world depicted was already approaching the ideal.²⁸

And how is dance represented in Höch's scrapbook? In each of the four quadrants on page 20 appear photographs with a single dancing or leaping figure whose energy and direction point toward the center of the page. The lower left and upper left photographs are of Gret Palucca jumping without restraint into the air; the horizon line is cropped out, and the only background is her shadow against the wall. (Palucca, a former student of Mary Wigman, was known for the wit and energy of her dance). In the upper right is a view from below of a pole vaulter having just crossed the barrier; even though the crotch is central, it is impossible to tell whether the figure is male or female. And in the lower right a woman with bobbed hair and gymnast's clothes (like Palucca) reaches upward in a dramatic *Ausdruckstanz* gesture. Again there is virtually no background. Höch has left two of the captions intact: "Running high jump. Phot. Sennecke," and "Powerful gesture in a modern expressive dance (the Wigman student Vera Skonorel) Phot. Suse Byk."²⁹ The two Palucca photographs on page 20 were taken from from a February 1926 *Uhu* feature: "Gret Palucca in High Jump Phot. Charlotte Rudolph" (fig. 66) and "Gret Palucca Phot. Ursula Richter."³⁰ In an earlier (mid-November 1923) feature in *Die Dame* (figs. 67, 68), Palucca was portrayed in almost the same way – outdoors, but again leaping high above the invisible horizon.³¹



64 "Tutenkhamen-Tänze" (Tutenkhamen Dance), *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* 33, no. 9 (March 9, 1924): 183

65 "Ein menschlicher Schmetterling" (A human butterfly), *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* 32, no. 15 (April 15, 1923): 288





Gret Palucca im Hodsprung

Photo: Ullrich, 1926



Die Tänzerin Palucca



66 "Palucca," *Uhu* (Feb. 1926): 24. Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin (*top*)

67 "Die Tänzerin Palucca" (The dancer Palucca), *Die Dame* (mid-Nov. 1923): 6. Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin (*center*)

68 "Die Tänzerin Palucca" (The dancer Palucca), *Die Dame* (mid-Nov. 1923): 7. Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin (*bottom*)



Sumo: Beinstellen ist erlaubt und eine ganze Reihe von Griffen, welche bei unserem Ringkampf streng verpönt sind

69 "Sumo," *Uhu* (Sept. 1925): 53. Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin

On the facing page of the scrapbook (page 21) are four photographs of exotic figures. At the top are the two photographs of the child Bali dancers in trance; this is their first appearance in the scrapbook, though they reappear together or individually throughout). In the lower left are two sumo wrestlers, and in the lower right is a photograph taken by the fashion photographer d'Ora of Josephine Baker in one of her fruit costumes. Captions remain with all the photographs except that of Baker. The male wrestlers are portrayed in the media more directly as figures of exotic strangeness. This particular photograph was cut out from *Uhu*, September 1925 (fig. 69), and was captioned: "Sumo: Tripping is allowed and a whole series of hosts that are strictly forbidden in our wrestling."³²

Clearly, the photographs of Bali child dancers in trances had special significance for Höch, one that, in a first reading, links dance to an Eastern spirituality. The photographs show a physical incorporation of a higher spiritual state, as reported in the *BIZ* article that accompanied the photographs: "First the children breathe willingly and deep; then the eyes become glassy; the body falls from one side to another as it fights the poison. Finally, after perhaps a few agonizing hours, the small body suddenly draws up and the child falls back unconscious into the arms of his sister."³³ In addition to their inclusion in the mass ornament pages already discussed, the Bali dancers appear on page 85 as part of a two-page spread (figs. 70, 71) portraying women of different countries, including Japan, China, and India.

In certain pairs of pages toward the end, Höch summarizes some of the central concerns and fascinations of the scrapbook. Pages 106 and 107 include, in addi-

tion to a dancer, a man with a bald head (aging), a male priest's head (religion), primitive statues (ethnography), folk dancing (popular culture, dance), three cats, and in a separate image a hatching baby chick (animals, cycles of life), swimming fish (nature), and the child actress Dolly Haas (movie stars, children, girls).³⁴ Again we have essentially a set of equivalences, a noncritical reading of utopian images available in the mass media, one that avoids issues of social disparity or contradictions such as great wealth side by side with great poverty, and one that shows that a compensatory response to the deprivations of a capitalist culture can handily be provided by capitalism itself.

On another level, the scrapbook reflects the popularity of documentary *Kulturfilme*, visual travelogues that provided an enthusiastic view of new worlds available through cinematography and montage. These films, usually but not always short subjects, were produced by Ufa and other film companies starting in about 1924. As Kracauer has pointed out, the *Kulturfilme* avoided social and political issues and instead focused on exotica, marvels of science, trips to foreign countries, and new visual possibilities offered by the camera. They had titles like *Natur und Liebe* (Nature and Love) and *Wunder der Schöpfung* (Miracles of Creation). After the success of Walter Ruttmann's 1927 montage film *Berlin, die Symphonie einer Grossstadt* (Berlin, Symphony of a Metropolis), the montage structure of the films was emphasized; intricate and fast-moving montages offered a cross-section view of a given theme such as in *Die Wunder der Welt* (Miracles of the Universe), 1929, a new montage of old footage from explorer films.³⁵ Kracauer later summarized the encyclopedic and wonder-filled world of *Kulturfilme*:

According to an Ufa brochure of the time, the *Kulturfilme* included the following items: 'The heart at work . . . bundles of palpitating nerves . . . ghostly hissing snakes, iridescent beetles . . . infusoria . . . rutting deer, sluggishly staring frogs . . . Oriental cult rites . . . fire-worshippers and Tibetan monasteries, living Buddhas . . . gigantic bridges . . . powerful ships, railways, glaciers luminous with a bewitching alpenglow . . . Mexico's wild buffalo herds . . . confusion of the time.' The adjective-laden prospectus ends with the assertion: 'The world is beautiful, its mirror is the *Kulturfilme*.'³⁶

One of the most popular *Kulturfilme* was *Wege zu Kraft und Schönheit* (Ways to Strength and Beauty), 1925, which capitalized on the Weimar engrossment with athletics and physical culture. This feature-length, Ufa-produced film praised the ancient Greek cult of sports and body worship, bemoaned the unhealthiness of modern men and women (which it attributed to modern city life), and promoted exercise as a path to health and beauty. A cinematographic feast of nude bodies, *Wege zu Kraft und Schönheit* represented the utopian vision of a disciplined community of men and women at one with nature. Enormously popular in Weimar, the film was shown in mainstream movie houses as well as in schools.³⁷ Moreover, the film had a direct influence on the *Illustrierte*, reflected in a marked increase in their coverage of gymnastics and calisthenics.³⁸ And Höch incorporated sports photographs in her scrapbook very much in the spirit of *Wege zu Kraft und Schönheit*.³⁹

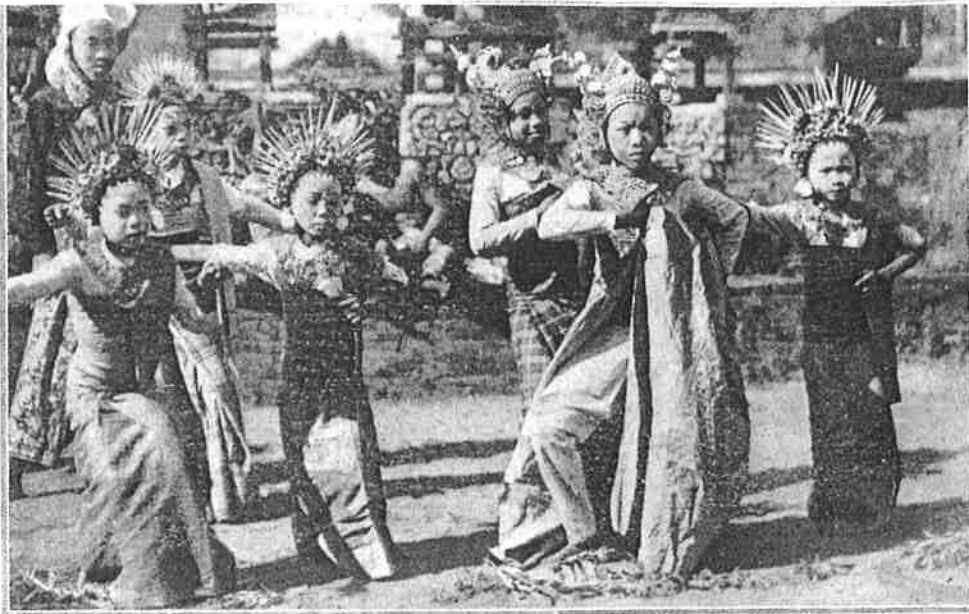


Ein Ensamble und Kōjin, Paris
sicherer in einem ähnlichen Tempo



Japanischer Schauspieler
Aurélien Mada

70 Hannah Höch, *Scrapbook*, c. 1933, 36 × 28 cm., page 84, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin



Tänzer und Tänzerinnen auf der Insel Bali.

Aufnahmen: Wide World.



Tänzerinnen von der Insel Madoera bei Java

(Phot. Wab)

Schönheiten

Anna May Wong

71 Hannah Höch, *Scrapbook*, c. 1933, 36 × 28 cm., page 85, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin



72 "Die Sitzende" (The sitter), *Uhu* (Feb. 1930): 44.
Kunstabibliothek, Staatliche Museen Preussischer
Kulturbesitz Berlin

Sports, particularly those played in the nude, are well represented in Höch's scrapbook, as they were in the contemporary media, but with one difference: the photographs of athletes that Höch used were primarily of women. Höch repeatedly selected body culture photographs that idealize women's nude and fit bodies in nature. These also provide a utopian view of female comradery, as most show women exercising in groups, often holding hands. Rhythmic gymnastics as a force organizing human bodies and linking them with patterns of organic beauty and repetition in nature was a popular motif in Weimar Körperkultur and in the Höch scrapbook. Thematically, the photographs of sports occupy an intermediate position between those of the mass ornament and those of dance; that is, while the sports images were less regimented and more concerned with physical pleasure than images of the Tiller Girls, they were less individualistic and spontaneous than the dance photographs. In this sense, sports photographs of women also represented the fundamental tensions between individualism and collectivism that characterized the struggle of Weimar women for greater status in the public sphere.

Ullstein and other media outlets often featured formal homologies between nude female bodies and forms in nature. For instance, *Die Sitzende* (The Sitter), a three-quarters view of a sensuous nude female torso by František Drtikol (fig. 72), was given a full page in *Uhu*, February 1930, opposite an article by Sabri Mahir entitled "Muscle mass: How to get the best biceps." The text also included photographs of female javelin throwers.⁴⁰ Although the nude torso by Drtikol was not directly related to the article, its location equated sensuous eroticism with sports and exercise.

The close-up view also recalls the photographs by Karl Blossfeldt and others that *Uhu* would occasionally run in a similar full-page format in order to illustrate the beauty of plant forms.

In Höch's scrapbook, *Die Sitzende* appears on page 70 (in the upper left) facing a page with four examples of nude men and women exercising in groups and one larger photograph of a woman with one breast uncovered (figs. 58 and 59). This photographic juxtaposition echoes *Uhu's* equation of female beauty, close-ups of female nudes, and sports activities. Höch set up a play of form on page 70 by organizing the photographs along diagonal axes, with the torso echoed in scale by a close-up of a woman sleeping in the lower left. Along the other diagonal are two long perspectives of rows: one showing the tiny form of the film star Elisabeth Bergner running between rows of trees, the other illustrating a receding series of archways in a cloisterlike setting.⁴¹ Thus photography and montage serve as functional elements in the rhythmic equation of body culture and nature.

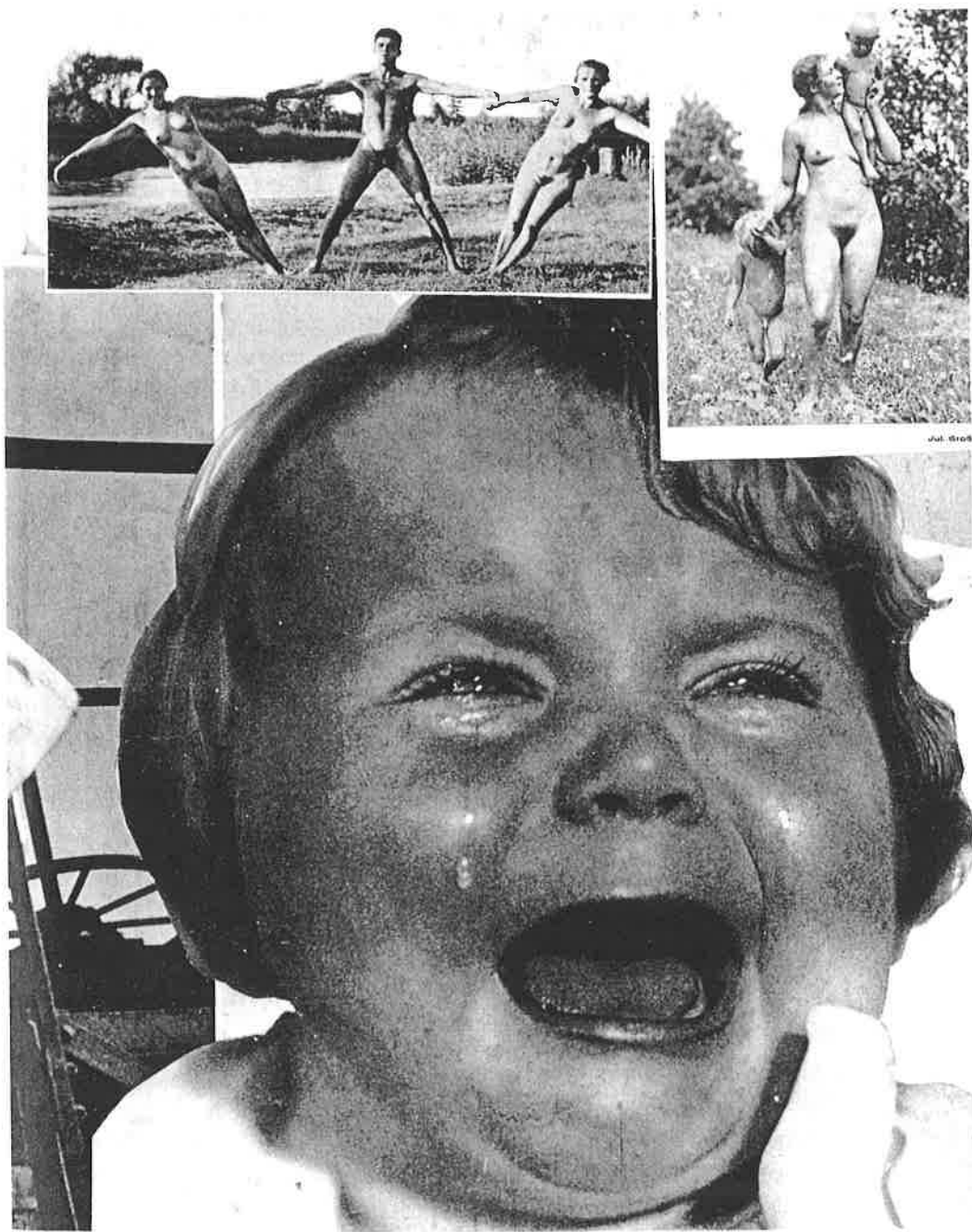
procreation and stages of life

In Weimar mass media representations of sports, photographs were often used to reinforce a humanistic idealization of woman's role in a "natural" life cycle. In general, Höch placed such generic life-cycle photographs in the context of nudes in outdoor settings or near other signifiers of the natural. We have already seen instances where she established homologies between patterns in nature and human body parts through the repetition of formal rhythms. This more specific treatment of the theme links her notion of the natural woman to the evolution of a human over a lifetime.

Across one two-page spread in the scrapbook (pages 108 and 109), Höch provided her most succinct comment on this media trope (figs. 73, 74). From the upper left corner of the layout, an old man's face looks down at and across a photograph of a younger woman's face; below him is a landscape. The woman's portrait bleeds across the gutter, and its right edge is covered by a photograph of a crying little girl from which Höch eliminated the background. Above the child are two smaller photographs of nudes, one a man who supports two women leaning away from him with outstretched arms, and one of a mother with two children. Typically, such media representations of the "natural" roles of men and women often led to a glorification of motherhood and a reduction of feminine identity to that role exclusively. Höch's inclusion of familiar New Woman dancer images in a scrapbook grounded in equations of women and nature underlines a tendency already nascent in the media: to depict the New Woman in such a way as to elicit pleasures and anxieties in the reader and then in turn subsume these images under reminders of women's "natural" place (that is, as mother).⁴² Although in her photomontages Höch is critical of the reactionary stereotypes of certain traditional feminine roles such as the bride, in this scrapbook she goes beyond the liberal Ullstein press in her construction of a rather banal evocation of woman in nature.



73 Hannah Höch, *Scrapbook*, c. 1933, 36 × 28 cm., page 108, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin



74 Hannah Höch, *Scrapbook*, c. 1933, 36 × 28 cm., page 109, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin



75 "Darf ich jetzt reinkommen?" (May I come in now?)
Die Woche 32, no. 52 (Dec. 27, 1930): 1526

Two comments about Höch and motherhood should be made here. First, the whole topic was painful for Höch.⁴³ She had wanted to have children, but because of the untenable relationship with Hausmann and his refusal to divorce his wife she decided, against his wishes, to have two abortions. Second, the issue of motherhood was hotly debated during Weimar as the birth rate fell and people bemoaned "the suicide of the Volk." Motherhood became a rallying cry for reactionaries and others who wanted women out of the workplace and the political sphere.⁴⁴ Although Höch contributed work to the well-known 1931 *Frauen in Not* (Women in Need) exhibition, organized to protest the illegality of abortion, she may have had particularly strong conflicting feelings about the motherhood debate during the Depression years when she was composing this scrapbook.⁴⁵

Yet in her scrapbook, Höch fully accepted the humanistic depiction of a life cycle of men and women centered on procreation. She was surprisingly uncritical of the fact that such photojournalism, while pretending to document the human experience, actually promoted the status quo by implying that everyone fulfills his or her "natural" role in society and ignored the economic and social structures that actually determine the individual's status.⁴⁶ Tellingly, Höch expurgated almost all photojournalistic images of work and poverty from her scrapbook.

One scrapbook grouping of photographs of mothers, babies, children, and a family in the nude is particularly relevant to an understanding of Höch's special brand of humanism. A Tina Modotti photograph of a child suckling on page 10 is placed next to a photograph captioned "The hardy family," showing a naked man and woman outdoors holding a child aloft. In the lower left of the page is an overhead shot of nine babies sleeping together (captioned "The baby parade: Babies baptized

before leaving the clinic”) and next to this is a Hedda Walther photograph of a girl with her hand to her ear (captioned “May I come in now?”).⁴⁷ This last image was part of a schmaltzy Christmas photostory by Hedda Walther for *Die Woche*, a weekly rival of *BIZ* (fig. 75).⁴⁸

Throughout the scrapbook, Höch showed a great affinity for Walther’s photographs. Understanding Höch’s complex view of women requires attention to these preferences. Walther was a “womanly” photographer celebrated for her sensitive (or, to unsympathetic eyes, sickeningly sweet) photographs of children and animals. Although Höch was a modernist and a leftist, she shared with Walther a nostalgic reverence for the natural, the rural, the preindustrial, and the sentimental.⁴⁹ So this preference for Walther’s photographs can be considered an everyday example of a selective embrace of modernity and an enthusiasm for the nonsynchronous.

ethnography

Nostalgia for the premodern is also evident in the predominance of ethnographic images in the scrapbook. The ethnographic photographs that Höch selected are all highly romanticized, and they often have only a tenuous claim as documentation of another culture or of German colonialism. Germany had lost its colonies in 1918 as a result of the Treaty of Versailles, and the photographs published in Weimar mass media tended to be nostalgic for empire. In general, Weimar photojournalism ignored urban and middle-class Africans and the many rural military groups then rebelling against European rule. Instead, they represented Africans and Pacific islanders as pastoral peoples, primitive, even childish, in their relation to the modern world – in other words, an idealized peasant class. This imaginary representation of non-European cultures conformed in some ways to German fantasies of its own rural agricultural past: living in harmony with nature under the protection of a strong paternal ruler. The actual German presence in the colonies, when depicted in photographs, was generally shown as a benign guardianship – the vision of a peaceful colonialism that had never existed.

Among the German middle class, rapid social and economic changes after 1918 contributed to a sense of dislocation and status anxiety; this in turn led to a longing for the country’s imperial or even precapitalist past.⁵⁰ But it is valuable to recognize that these longings (and even nonsynchronous economic forms like peasant farming), existed alongside full-blown modern development and the emergence of an equally romantic view of technological advances. In the *Illustrierte* this apparent contradiction was represented by the juxtaposition of photographs that equated the spiritual and the natural with others that celebrated mechanical reproduction. Not surprisingly, this overriding of contradictions (nostalgia and contemporaneity, nature and technology, primitivism and new media) can be identified as well in ethnographic photography of previously colonized peoples.⁵¹

The colonial past evoked by the *Illustrierte* photographs was hardly as ideal as it was depicted. Through treaties and military coercion (carried out largely by private companies in the name of the government), Chancellor Otto von Bismarck had acquired numerous colonies for Germany in the period 1883–85. In Africa he colonized Southwest Africa, Togo, Cameroon, and German East Africa; in the Pacific he claimed northeastern New Guinea, part of Samoa, the Bismarck Islands, the Marshalls, the Carolines, the Marianas, and the city of Kiaochow on the Shantung peninsula in China. On the whole, the colonies were unprofitable, but proponents of economic colonialism argued that they were necessary for raw materials and trade. Advocates of settlement also insisted that the colonies provided crucial opportunities for German “pioneers,” farmers emigrating in response to economic pressures within Germany.

Imperial policy varied from colony to colony. The only profitable colonies were Togo and Samoa; not coincidentally, these were also the colonies where the indigenous populations were least disrupted and least victimized by violent military rule. In Samoa, for instance, violence was meted out instead to imported Chinese coolie labor; the local population was not coerced into labor on the plantations principally because the Germans believed that native islanders were incapable of hard work.⁵² In Southwest Africa, however, the largest German settlement population implemented an official policy of genocide against the Herero tribe from 1904 to 1907. The rule of German East Africa was also marked by violence associated with an attempt to “upgrade” the existing peasant culture through a forced overlay of Germanic *Volk-skultur*. As part of this plan, African farmers were removed from their homes and forced to work at labor camps in order to learn improved farming techniques. Evidence of colonial practices, particularly of violence, was missing from contemporary European photojournalism or ethnographic photography.

Because fantasies and representations of an ideal African peasant life paralleled nostalgia for preindustrial German peasant life, they were therefore related directly to the nonsynchronism of contemporary German culture. In fact, German agricultural life during Weimar was undergoing major changes. As the historian Woodruff Smith explains:

The restructuring of agriculture in many areas of Germany, which caused massive cycles of emigration throughout the nineteenth century, also helped to create a colonialist theory that looked to overseas colonies as a solution to the problems of emigration. . . . Emigration was the product, not of absolute overpopulation, but of the development of German agriculture toward larger-scale capitalistic forms under severe economic pressure, compounded by a gradual reduction in the size of individual farms through their division among the sons of farmers.⁵³

During Weimar, Ullstein press’s nostalgic depiction of formerly colonized people reinforced its political position on the former colonies. In Imperial prewar Germany, the most well-known proponent of reformist economic colonialism had been Bernhard Dernburg, head of the Colonial Department from 1907 to 1910. Dernburg

came from the same class and culture as the Ullsteins. Although baptized at birth, Dernburg was an assimilated Jew, and his public image was that of a successful Jewish businessman. Moreover, he shared with the Ullsteins and other assimilated bourgeois Jews an enthusiasm for nationalism, reform, and modern information services.⁵⁴ Like the Ullsteins, Dernburg understood modern means of propaganda and the power of the press; apparently his publicity techniques had been learned during a stint in the U.S. working for the Deutsche Bank.⁵⁵

In 1926, the Ullstein magazine *Uhu* published an important article on colonialism by Dernburg, adding a laudatory introduction.⁵⁶ The editorial posed the key nationalist and expansionist question: With relations now improved between Germany and the other European powers, do the German Volk still have work to do in the colonies?⁵⁷ In response, Dernburg's article reviewed his shifting attitudes toward the issue of colonialism. In 1906, Dernburg recalled, he felt that the ownership of colonies was necessary for world prestige and important for the provision of raw materials. (In actuality, the German economy depended on very few raw materials from the colonies, but such was not the perception at the time). But after World War I, according to Dernburg, tensions between whites and blacks in Africa increased, suggesting that it was not a good time to be involved in the colonial situation. For postwar Germany, Dernburg advocated the pursuit of "inner colonialization," that is, land reclamation within Germany for farming and strengthening the German economy. His hope for the future was that the Germans would be invited back into Africa by the other European powers when it became clear that their support was needed to insure the continued predominance of the white race there. Dernburg's expression of paternalism, racism, and loss clearly links nostalgia for a colonial past to utopian dreams for the future.

In the ethnographic photographs Höch selected for the scrapbook, the German political context is gone, but the primitivizing of formerly colonized peoples is evident. Höch replicated the media's vision of natural paradises by selecting photographs showing women and animals apparently at one with nature. On one double-page spread (pages 96 and 97), each page includes four portraits of African or Pacific island individuals taken from intermediate or close range (figs. 76, 77). In six of the eight studies, the subjects look down shyly, their clothing scant and non-Western; all are dramatically lighted to show glowing dark skin and "exotic" beauty. Page 96 consists of a young Samoan boy (upper left), a Samoan mother and child (upper right), an African mother and child (lower left), and a Javanese mother and child (lower right). On page 97 are a young Samoan girl (upper right), a young Samoan man (lower right), a young Japanese woman (lower left), and in the upper left a close-up of a Balinese girl, whose large dark eyes gleam from beneath a spider-shaped orchid on her forehead.

The Bali photo, "Orchid as Head Jewelry," was taken by the German photographer Krause (fig. 78), and originally illustrated the article "Bali: The happy isle in the Indian Ocean," published in *Uhu* in June 1925. Krause focused on two images



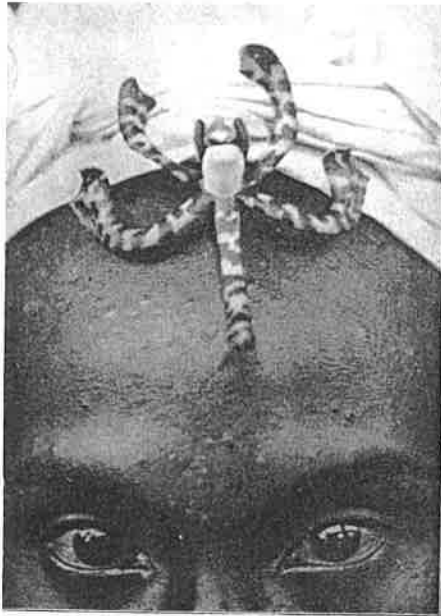
Leuchtende
brige De'a, „Fliegendes Fulu“
1933, 28. 11.



Mutter und Kind auf Samoa



76 Hannah Höch, *Scrapbook*, c. 1933, 36 × 28 cm., page 96, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin



Ondidee als Kopfputz

Flac. Krieger



Melior, Nipponmarun

bei „Luzern“ von Robert J. Flanagan



77 Hannah Höch, *Scrapbook*, c. 1933, 36 × 28 cm., page 97, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin



78 "Orchidee als Kopfputze" (Orchid as headdress),
Uhu (June 1925): 53. Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche
Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin

in the photograph: the ambiguity of the orchid, which looks more like a tropical spider than a flower, and the exotic black skin of the woman's face, which looms large and dark in the frame. The lack of cultural context and the interchangeability in texture among the black skin, the orchid, and a spider echoes the claims made in the accompanying text. The author declares that "the natives see animals as their friends. Nature, animals, and people are a trinity that brings everything that exists and comes into existence into harmony on tropically fertile and creative Bali. . . . The people of Bali live in huts cloaked amid the palm groves, so nature's unified rhythm is not disturbed."⁵⁸ This direct identification of the Balinese people with nature precludes any consideration of intellect, culture, or individual subjectivity. The author can thus cast the Balinese into a timeless past, alien and idealized, a locus of adoration and projection, the site of fantasy for Europeans: "The people of Bali are beautiful. Dream embodiments of classical-antique ideals. What we have lost in beauty and grace still lives on this island in the Indian Ocean."⁵⁹

All but one of the Samoan photographs come from another 1925 *Uhu* article, "Sacrifice of a civilization: A Polynesian tribe becoming extinct."⁶⁰ Atypically, this article (fig. 79) bemoans the attrition of native culture due to European presence (in this case the British). Yet there is no mention of the politics or brutality of colonialism; the reader has the impression of only a slow fading away. The article glorifies the patriarchy of Polynesian society as the natural order of things, whereas women are described in clichés of femininity and nobility (the tribal leader's daughter is "the most beautiful maiden in the village," a phrase that might have been taken from



79 "Aussterbender polynesischer Stamm," (A nearly extinct Polynesian tribe) *Uhu* (Sept. 1925): inside cover. Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin

a German fairy tale). Höch selected a photograph of a man named Moana; it is captioned: "The 18-year-old Moana embodies the healthy spirit of masculinity on Samoa."⁶¹ She also chose photos of a mother and child and of a young boy nicknamed "Fliegende Fuchs" (flying fox). On another page of the scrapbook (page 58) is a different image of "Fliegende Fuchs" but a similar message. It shows "the fox" climbing a palm tree and is captioned "The happiness of the uncivilized."

On the two-page spread that features this second photograph of "the fox" (pages 58 and 59) (figs. 80, 81), are several images of African women and children. One photograph is captioned "Mode im Urwald" (fashion in the jungle) and shows a young African woman with naked breasts posed leaning against a hut (fig. 80, center right). In the *BIZ* article from which this picture is taken, the author admits begrudgingly that although the Africans have no talent for technology, they do have a way with gold jewelry.⁶² Often the media separated African life from modern technology, as in a 1927 *BIZ* article by the explorer-journalist Colin Ross entitled "The black with the machine: An African problem."⁶³

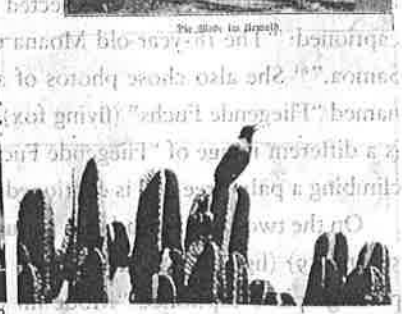
On page 59 is a photograph from another Ross article showing a cluster of African women and children wearing only scanty loincloths; the image foregrounds the buttocks of one of the women.⁶⁴ Höch combined this picture with travel photographs showing the beauty of African women and children. In the scrapbook, Höch was rarely critical of contemporary ethnographic attitudes, but she eschewed the more overt forms of racism for a kind of female-based universalism of beauty and spiri-



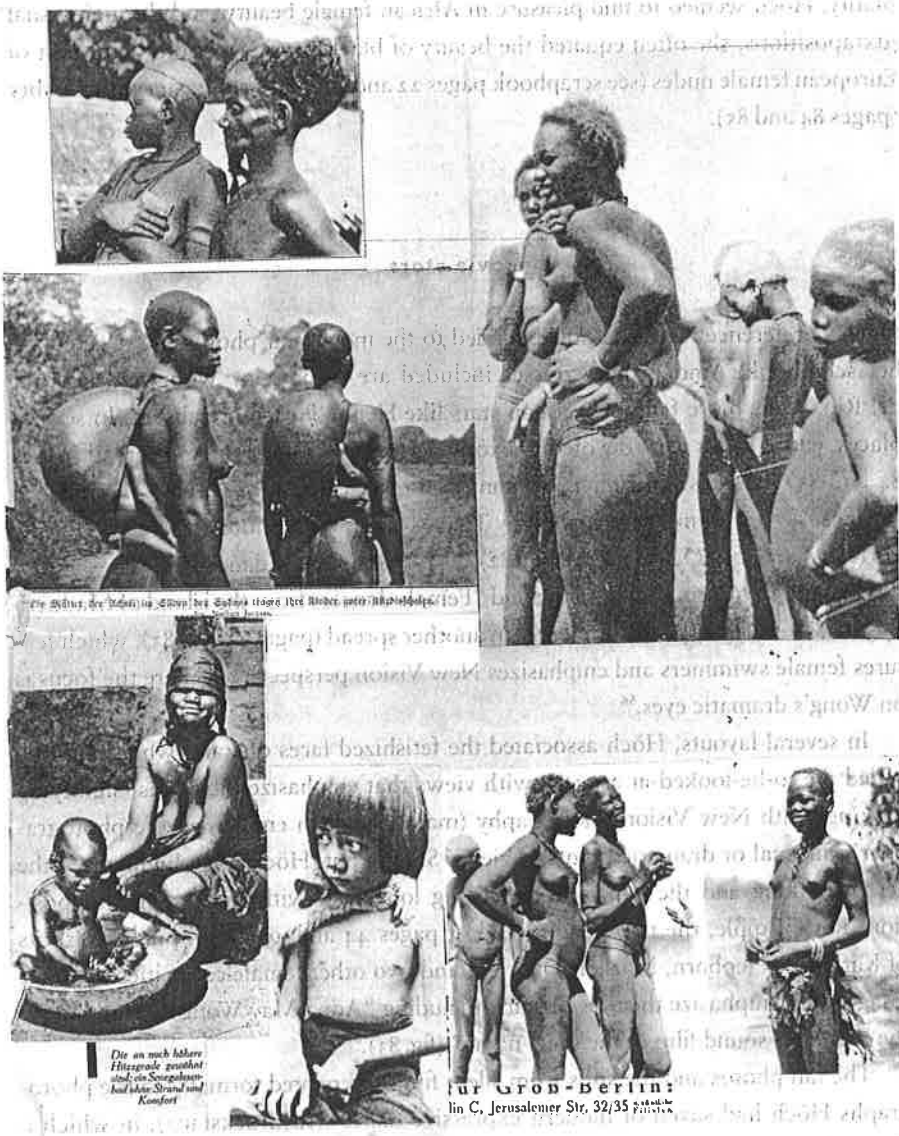
Das Glück der Uazivilisiererten: Durchschleichen des „Eijegende Tschai“ grannet, kein Eisklittern einer steinernen Palmen.



HET TOEKOMSTIGE GESLACHT VAN MASSALAND



80 Hannah Höch, *Scrapbook*, c. 1933, 36 × 28 cm., page 58, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin



81. Hannah Höch; *Scrapbook*, c.1933, 36 × 28 cm., page 59, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin

tuality. Höch seemed to find pleasure in African female beauty, and through visual juxtapositions, she often equated the beauty of black women's bodies with that of European female nudes (see scrapbook pages 22 and 23) and with Eastern spirituality (pages 84 and 85).

movie stars

Höch's preference for the exotic extended to the movie star photos she selected for her scrapbook. Among the actresses included are Anna May Wong and Dolores del Rio, while more famous German stars like Henny Porten are absent. In several places, entire pages were devoted to exotic performers. One dramatic spread (pages 84 and 85) includes: an Indian woman; a "Prayer-caller in a Chinese Temple"; a "Japanese actor" from a photograph by Tina Modotti for a photostory titled "Exotic Portraits" in *Uhu*, October 1931 (fig. 82); "Male and female dancers on the island of Bali"; a photo of Anna May Wong; and "Female dancers from the island of Madoera by Java."⁶⁵ Wong appears differently in another spread (pages 82 and 83), which features female swimmers and emphasizes New Vision perspectives. There the focus is on Wong's dramatic eyes.⁶⁶

In several layouts, Höch associated the fetishized faces of stars (what might be called the to-be-looked-at aspect), with views that emphasize their eyes (signifying looking) with New Vision photography (many of which emphasize the photographer's unusual or dramatic points of view). Simply put, Höch often highlighted the act of looking and the experience of being looked at within the same composition. For example, the two-page spread of pages 44 and 45 shows publicity shots of Katharine Hepburn, Marlene Dietrich, and two other female celebrities opposite images that emphasize the eyes of stars, including "Anna May Wong as Haitang: in the Eichberg-sound film of the same name" (fig. 83).⁶⁷

The fan photos and the stills from silent films are related formally to the photographs Höch had saved of modern expressive dance (*Ausdruckstanz*), in which a dramatic moment was frozen. Höch makes this point visually on pages 90 and 91 (figs. 84, 85) where she combines a photograph of hands; a shot of "Elisabeth Bergner als Heilige Johanna" (Elisabeth Bergner as St. Joan) kneeling, her body forming an expressive gesture; an image of a leaping dancer; and, significantly, a photograph taken by Man Ray of her close friend Nelly van Doesburg that was used on the title page of *Die Dame* in January 1925, introducing a series entitled "Modern types of women from different lands" (figs. 86, 87).⁶⁸ Nelly van Doesburg, who appears in her letters to Höch as a warm and unpretentious friend, is shown here surrounded by black; she sits in the lower right corner looking cool and elegant, a composition in white and black as befits a *Die Dame* photograph. Thus the shifting between identification and distance in the viewing of celebrity images would here be weighted toward identification through the inclusion of a friend within a glamorous star-photo format.



82 "Japanischer Schauspieler" (Japanese actor), *Uhu* (Oct. 1931): 42. Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin (left)



83 "Anna May Wong als Haitang" (Anna May Wong as Haitang), *Uhu* (March 1930): 52. Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin (right)

But perhaps the most dramatic and sensual presentation of movie stars is the first set of celebrities the reader encounters (pages 28 and 29): French, Egyptian, and Spanish movie stars are interspersed with colored drawings and photographs of flowers. Page 28 includes facial shots of "Kiki/Photo Man Ray," an image of "Die ägyptische [Egyptian] Prinzessin Leila Bevertahn/d'Ora Paris," and a portrait in the lower right of the actress Dolores del Rio (fig. 88).⁶⁹ One photo of a wild-eyed curly-haired woman looking over her shoulder is repeated on both page 28 and page 29; this is "Raquel Meller, the star of the Palace-Revue, Paris, for whom 'Violettera' was written."⁷⁰ On page 29 her image takes up one quadrant of the page; drawings of violets and a color photograph of flowers in violet and lavender entitled "Berghimmel" fill the remaining three quarters of the page. Assembled here are the exotic, the sensual, the fetishized woman, the cherished and collected photographs, the rhythmic arrangement on a two-page spread that emphasizes homologies between the female, the primal, and the natural. These homologies can also be found in the mass market publications, such as *Uhu* and *BIZ*, though there the effect is somewhat diluted and complicated by other visual images of modernity and technology.

In the scrapbook, Höch does not critique the media. Rather, she shifts the focus onto themes of femininity and spirituality. On occasion these themes are tied to technology (primarily through the cataloging of modern photographic techniques



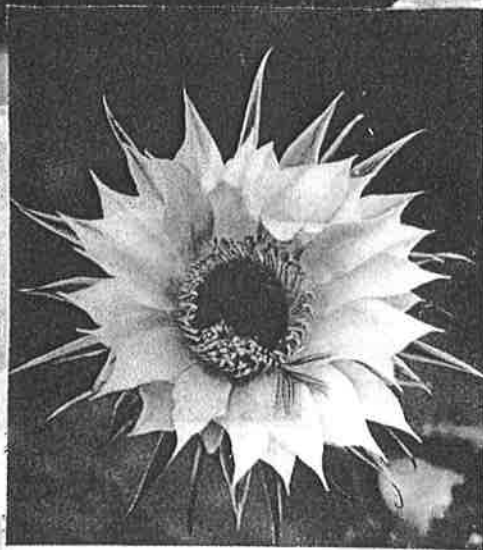
84 Hannah Höch, *Scrapbook*, c. 1933, 36 × 28 cm., page 90, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin



Zwei A. Lohm.



Elisabeth Bergner als „Heilige Johanna“



Blumen Porträts
Eckelrotten

85 Hannah Höch, *Scrapbook*, c. 1933, 36 × 28 cm., page 91, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin

and the “New Vision”), but the strongest impression one gets from looking through Höch’s scrapbook is that this is a collection compiled for her own intense visual, sensual, and spiritual pleasure. This private view differs from the representations in Höch’s public and more critical photomontages, and as such the scrapbook can be considered as a mediation between the presentations of the Weimar mass media and the exhibition displays of one avant-gardist.

Höch’s scrapbook is intriguing as well because we know these photographs originally came from the mass media, where they served the purposes of utopia, information, and fantasy in conjunction with the primary purpose of advertising – selling the *Illustrierte* and the products they advertised to the (female) consumer. Appropriating the same image to serve multiple purposes – say, of education, of utopian allegory, and quotidian advertisement – was not always an easy task. And studying these incongruities makes the scrapbook an important historical document for its illumination of the transitions back and forth between private desire and public images.



Elizabeth Bergner als „Heilige Johanna“

Elizabeth Bergner als „Heilige Johanna“ (Elizabeth Bergner as St. Joan), *Die Dame* (early Feb. 1925): 7. Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin



86 “Elizabeth Bergner als Heilige Johanna” (Elizabeth Bergner as St. Joan), *Die Dame* (early Feb. 1925): 7. Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin

D I E * D A M E
1925



87 Man Ray, "Frau van Doesburg" (Mrs. van Doesburg), *Die Dame* (early Jan. 1925): cover. Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin



88 "Dolores del Rio," *Uhu* (Oct. 1928): 73. Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin



89 Hannah Höch, *Deutsches Mädchen* (German Girl), 1930, 20.5 × 10.5 cm., photomontage, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin

portraits,
dancers,
& coquettes

the modern woman in höch's photomontages, 1923-35

4

One of Höch's most iconic yet most harrowing photomontages of the post-Dada years is the innocently titled *Deutsches Mädchen* (German Girl), 1930 (fig. 89). In standard portrait format, a young woman's face and neck are seen in three-quarter profile against a forest green background. She wears a string of pearls and a demure smile. Her nose turns up slightly. But she is missing a forehead, and her hair, tied in a bun, comes down to the middle of her nose. Disconcertingly, her eyes do not match; they are different sizes and gaze in different directions. The effect of this photomontage is the opposite of the standard mass media portrait in which the subject is exalted through a focus on the eyes. In portrait photography, female beauty is conventionally denoted by the subject's conformity to social standards of femininity and also through the photographer's compliance with photographic norms of pose and attention. In *Deutsches*

Mädchen, the "normal" representation of the eyes is disrupted and the sanctity of the subject is mocked: she looks idiotic.

The *Deutsches Mädchen*'s hair is cut out from a black-and-white photograph of a traditional Japanese model, and its effect here is to render the German woman also as traditional, or at least not a modern young woman in a Bubikopf. As art historian Annegret Jürgens-Kirchoff has noted, this montage can be seen as a caricature of the image of the traditional German woman.¹ During the Depression years, in fact, old-fashioned representations of German women were suddenly prevalent in the mass media, a revival that coincided with the rise of the political right.

If Höch's scrapbook illustrates the utopianism of her reception of mass media

representations of women, her photomontages of the same period demonstrate a more complex interpretation of public messages about feminine identity. During the 1920s, Höch created scores of photomontages whose compositions mimicked mass media formats, particularly newspaper portraits, photographs of dancers, and close-up reportage photographs. The figures in these photomontages are generally depicted in front of an abstract background, quite unlike the Dada montages filled with explicit references to Weimar society. The largest number of the mass media format photomontages are a part of an open-ended series called "Porträts" that Höch began in 1923 and continued working on until at least 1930.² In these "portraits," Höch focused on allegories of identity, creating composite figures representing a feminine characteristic or "type." In these works Höch used montage to defamiliarize conventional representations of femininity, looking instead for the ambiguities and contradictions of various feminine poses. Although Höch continued to address issues of women and modernity in these photomontages, her concerns were more behavioral and individual; in the portraits, she addressed such topics as flirtation and norms of beauty.

Almost all of Höch's Weimar photomontages included images of women, but she was selective in the aspects of New Women imagery she addressed. Ethnography and androgyny were two subjects she treated in depth (see chapters 5 and 6), but she also gave extensive attention to the uses of the photographic portrait in constructing female identity. Her mass media format photomontages of the 1920s explore an entire repertoire of feminine poses from the everyday to the ceremonial. She employed dolls, mannequins, dancers, and other staples of New Woman imagery to address issues and contexts of feminine behavior, particularly romantic subjects – love, coquetry, and marriage. Only occasionally did Höch set aside female imagery to caricature men.

As with Höch's Dada works, her later Weimar photomontages continued to employ pleasure in the aesthetic aspects of media photographs mixed with an angry critique of certain societal stereotypes. The ambiguous emotional responses elicited by this combination of pleasure and anger are only seemingly explained by irony. When Höch focuses on recomposing and distorting faces, for instance, the disruptions of scale, the lack of fit between disparate features, and the deliberate deformations seem to illustrate the interiorization of the critique, almost as if the disfigurements were actual signs of psychological stress. Yet the montage portraits are too discordant to be taken literally or even as symbols or reflections of particular psychological states, and must be seen in general as allegories of conflict and fragmentation.

In her book *Joyless Streets: Woman and Melodramatic Representation in Weimar Germany*, film historian Patrice Petro argues persuasively that in popular films of the 1920s and in *Illustrierte* photography, female spectators were often addressed through standard conventions of melodramatic representation: images of excess, exaggeration, and unambiguous iconography. Such staple melodramatic symbols as the exhausted proletarian mother with a heart of gold were reiterated throughout the Weimar years with a deliberate inattention to psychological depth or complexity.

But Petro suggests that the exaggerations of melodrama could also have a positive or critical effect, rendering visible those elements of ordinary life most often ignored, trivialized, or treated as if invisible. The everyday emotions of a woman receiving a letter from her lover or of a mother caring for her child, for example, are typical fodder for melodrama. Thus, at various historical moments melodrama has had a particular appeal to less powerful segments of society, such as women. Not surprisingly, then, when the Weimar *Illustrierte* courted a female audience, they often employed a melodramatic style in the two forms that were their strongest selling points: one was the serialized novel and the other was photography.³

Certain of Höch's portraits refer directly to the melodramatic style in *Illustrierte* photography, particularly in its use of expressive and personalized close-ups of faces. But Höch did not merely appropriate the style. On the contrary, she deconstructed melodrama by magnifying and exaggerating features in her portraits, by introducing ambiguity into the conventional iconography of femininity, and by adding irony to the depiction of emotional states. It is significant that when Höch took up the melodramatic portrait in such works as *Der Melancholiker*, *Kinder*, and *Die Tragödin*, she chose to treat it with a modernist, defamiliarizing irony.

In her photomontages, Höch was similarly ambivalent about photographic reportage. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, serial reportage became prevalent in the *Illustrierte*, engaging stylistic elements of melodrama, narrative, and New Vision photography. Höch occasionally quoted from this reportage format, as in the montages from the "Liebe" (Love) series that focus on flirtations between two figures. These scenes seem excerpted from a narrative but are missing the overt conflicts between individual identity and societal conditions typical of contemporaneous photoessays (or, in a different way, Höch's own Dada photomontages). These later photomontages lack the utopianism typical of Höch's Dada works; many are commentaries rather than calls for change. Yet in other works, such as those that address androgyny, where feminine identity is radically restructured in a way that emphasizes flux and instability, the dialectical nature of montage once again serves utopian ends. This is a somewhat different utopianism, however; it questions the construction and fixity of gender and explores the fluctuant character of identity.

Still other montages, often those with ethnographic subjects, deal with spiritual themes, yet another type of utopianism. *Chinese Girl with Fan*, 1926 (fig. 90), for example, exhibits a sort of mandala over the joyful girl's forehead, like a third eye.⁴ (The circular form is not, in fact, a mandala but a fragment of a handiwork pattern cut to look like one.) The Chinese girl is flanked by two dainty, sepia-colored lace fans; one is held delicately between thumb and finger, emphasizing its tactility. Throughout the composition, various textures evoke touching, equating it with sensuality, the Far East, femininity, and spirituality.

In *Fröhliche Dame* (Happy Lady), c. 1923 (fig. 91), subtitled "'Porträts'" (Tänzerinnen)" ("Portraits" [female dancers]),⁵ Höch combines three photographs of beautiful women within one facial contour. The smooth outline implies a conventional portrait, whereas the smiling lips, made-up eyes, and bejeweled ear are of



90 Hannah Höch, *Chinese Girl with Fan*, 1926, 28 × 20.5 cm., photomontage, Louise R. Noun Collection



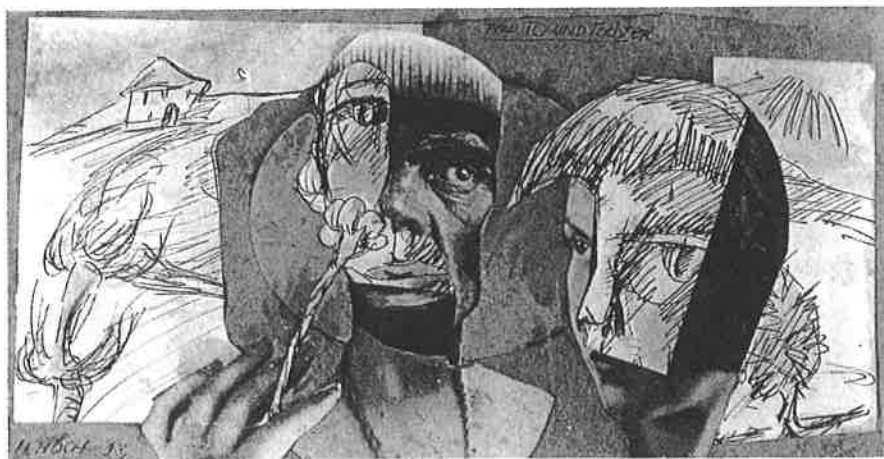
H. HÖCH

91 Hannah Höch, *Fröhliche Dame* (Happy Lady), 1923, 13 × 11.3 cm., photomontage, private collection

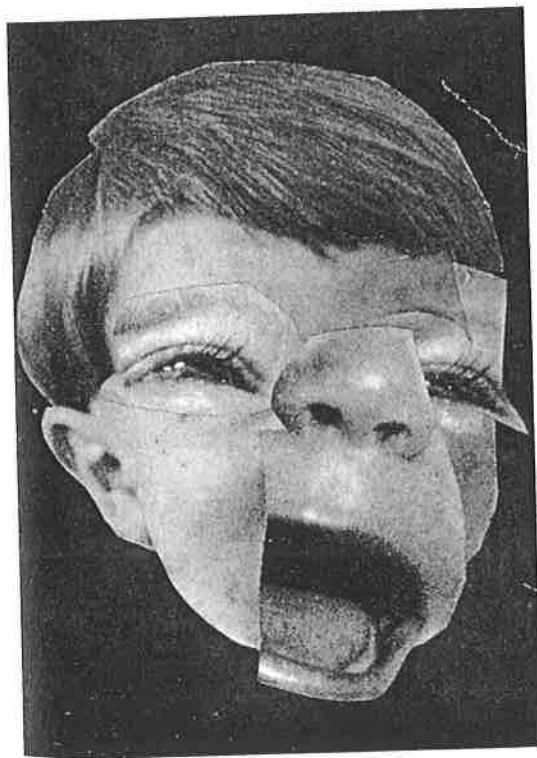
jarringly different scales, disrupting the sense of seamless, classically proportioned beauty. The makeup and large earring identify the subject as a New Woman – according to Höch, a dancer. The cheerfulness of the cut up and reassembled features is disturbing, if ironic.

But Höch was known to manipulate facial features even in works representing actual people she knew. In a portrait of two Parisian acquaintances, *Frau To und Tochter* (Mrs. To and Daughter), 1927 (fig. 92), Höch used drawings and photographs to compose different segments of the faces; curiously, the drawn sections seem calcified, less “real” than the photo fragments. Another caricature of an actual person is *The Clown*, c. 1926 (fig. 93), identified by Höch as a portrait of her companion Til Brugman. Although the composition does not resemble Brugman physically (the photograph it incorporates is not of Brugman), Höch used her well-known wit by putting a rumpled, mannish clown hat over a woman’s face.⁶ The figure looks somewhat pathetic with its tiny hat and oversized face, but the clown guise masks this pathos behind the role of the comedienne.

In *Der Melancholiker* (The Melancholic), 1925 (fig. 94) and *Kinder* (Children), 1925 (fig. 95), the dissection of the faces allegorically represents the fragmentation of personality in different stages of despair. Again, it is the reconfiguring of the eye and its gaze that is most disorienting for the viewer. The child crying is not simply a portrait of a youngster shedding tears but an image of hysteria. The child’s features are enlarged to the point of being grotesque, yet they still fit within the facial contour, suggesting the disfiguring capacity of emotional stress. This representation of deformity, then, contradicts and questions essentialist notions of the child in mass media imagery as merely cute or endearing.⁷ Höch used a similar technique to portray a melancholic male adult.⁸ One eye is cut out completely; the other seems to be partially enlarged (it is overlaid with a larger eye) and looks out at the viewer.



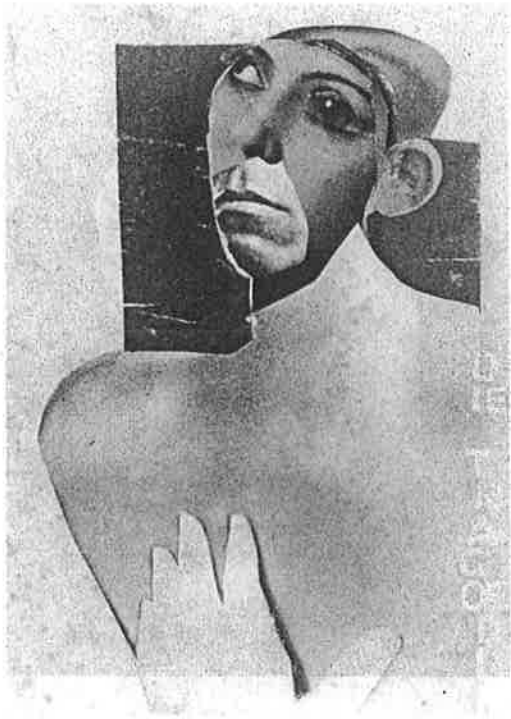
92 Hannah Höch, *Frau To und Tochter* (Mrs. To and Daughter), 1927, 10.3 × 20.1 cm., photomontage, Collection Grete König-Höch



93 Hannah Höch, *Clown*, c. 1926, 12.5 × 9.5 cm., photomontage, Fischer Fine Art, London (*top left*)

94 Hannah Höch, *Der Melancholiker* (The Melancholic), 1925, 16.8 × 13 cm., photomontage, Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Stuttgart (*top right*)

95 Hannah Höch, *Kinder* (Children), 1925, 19.5 × 13.3 cm., photomontage, Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Stuttgart (*bottom*)



96 Hannah Höch, *Die Tragödin* (The Tragedienne), 1924, 16.8 × 12.8 cm., photomontage, Sprengel Museum Hannover

The mouth seems shrunken, covered by a smaller mouth, implying timidity. These portraits reproduce and caricature various media conventions for representing extreme emotions. The melancholic pose is melodramatic in its excess, and Höch has exaggerated it here even further.

Although all the portraits borrow from the photographic portrait close-ups so prevalent in the *Illustrierte*, some are more explicit than others in their references to the media and its standards of attractive appearance. *Die Tragödin* (The Tragedienne), 1924 (fig. 96), is modeled after a modernist film poster; the off-center composition and rectangular background forms echo the Constructivist-influenced modernist poster design then in fashion. And along the right side Höch has placed the melodramatic title in block letters as part of the image. Though designated by the title as female, the tragic figure lacks hair and thus appears somewhat androgynous. She looks upward with one eye; the other eye has been partially replaced by an oversized one so that the white of the eye is almost completely filled in by the large, dark cornea and pupil. A downturned mouth is superimposed over the original. The figure's bust and hand are rendered as silhouettes. It is the darkened eye staring off obliquely, its pupil dilated and unfocused, that gives this portrait its tragic cast.

The proliferation of portraits in Weimar *Illustrierte*, coupled with a deep-seated cultural interest in physiognomy and what it suggested about individual character, tempted several clever photo editors of the time to mix and match facial parts to form different mass media stereotypes. In *Uhu* the assembly line of interchangeable features from "acceptable" faces was both utilized and mocked in a two-part

500 Frauen nach Ihrer Wahl

Ein lustiges Zusammensetz-Spiel für große Leute
oder
Der Mann nach Ihrem Herzen

500 Frauen! Bitte, wählen Sie die
500 größten 8 Seiten aus. Sie werden
einen Schatz erhalten. Tragen Sie
Name und Adresse Name und Haus-
nummer. Dieser Schatz ist für
jeden Sonntag 3 Teile. Sie haben also
3 und 3 Teile, aus denen Sie sich das
Frauenbild nach Ihrer Wahl zusammen-
zusetzen können. Günstig Ihnen die
Jahre 1929 nicht, bitte denken Sie
an die Männer, die Sie nach
Ihrem Geschmack wählen wollen. Sie
sind die Frauen, die Sie wählen
wollen. Sie sind die Frauen, die Sie
wählen wollen. Sie sind die Frauen,
die Sie wählen wollen. Sie sind die
Frauen, die Sie wählen wollen.



97 "500 Frauen nach Ihrer Wahl" (500 women of your choice), *Uhu* (May 1929): 76-85. Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin

500 Männernach Ihrer Wahl

Ein lustiges Zusammensetzspiel für die Damen
oder
Der Mann, den Sie sich wünschen...

500 Männer! Bitte, wählen Sie die
500 größten 8 Seiten aus. Sie werden
einen Schatz erhalten. Tragen Sie
Name und Adresse Name und Haus-
nummer. Dieser Schatz ist für
jeden Sonntag 3 Teile. Sie haben also
3 und 3 Teile, aus denen Sie sich das
Männchenbild nach Ihrer Wahl zusammen-
zusetzen können. Günstig Ihnen die
Jahre 1929 nicht, bitte denken Sie
an die Frauen, die Sie nach
Ihrem Geschmack wählen wollen. Sie
sind die Männer, die Sie wählen
wollen. Sie sind die Männer, die Sie
wählen wollen. Sie sind die Männer,
die Sie wählen wollen. Sie sind die
Männer, die Sie wählen wollen.



98 "500 Männernach Ihrer Wahl" (500 men of your choice), *Uhu* (Aug. 1929): 52-60. Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin

series called "500 Frauen/Männernach Ihrer Wahl" (500 women/men according to your choice), May and August 1929 (figs. 97, 98). Nine pages of *Uhu* were devoted to full-page, frontal portraits of different male or female "types." The first installment, published in May 1929, was all women; the next, published in August 1929, was all men. These faces were die-cut width-wise into three horizontal strips so the reader could lift the strips and combine them to form his or her perfect mate.⁹ Thus, even in the photomagazines themselves, media stereotypes of gender formation were explored and, at times, parodied.

These mix and match games were echoed in several of Höch's photomontages of the mid-1920s. The cosmetically perfect smile of a man (again similar to what would be found in a contemporary advertisement) is caricatured in *und Schatten* (And Shadows), c. 1925 (fig. 99) by cutting it out of a face, isolating it in the frame, and echoing its outlines with shadows. The media conventions employed in making male athletes heroic are caricatured in *Der Sieger* (The Victor), 1927 (fig. 100), in which Höch montages two facial halves (top and bottom) and a male body to compose a bare-chested man looking into the sky, chin up, with a glint in his eye. *Zweigesichtig* (With Two Faces), c. 1928 (fig. 101) doubles a mannequinlike, artificial face (similar to that found in advertisements of the time – for example, Elizabeth Arden ads in late Weimar) so that they appear on two sides of the same head.¹⁰ One is shadowed, possibly to serve as an illustration of the expression *das zweite Gesicht* (second face) meaning prophetic seeing (as “second sight” does in English).

As the circulation of the *Illustrierte* grew (with as much as half of their income derived from advertising revenue), the representation of women – in ads and in feature photography – began to dovetail more and more smoothly with an image of women as rationalized consumers. Women as mannequins, a prominent trope for linking women to the world of mass-produced commodities, began to appear consistently in the *Illustrierte*, in photographs of shop windows in the advertising trade journal *Gebrauchsgraphik*, and in the work of avant-garde photographers.¹¹ Even the clothing fashions of the time tended to make women look like mannequins. In the 1927 film documentary *Berlin, die Symphonie einer Grossstadt* (Berlin, Symphony of a Metropolis), the streets are full of women wearing fashionable bell-shaped hats that cover the upper half of their faces and shade their eyes, effectively transforming these women into eyeless, and implicitly subjectless, automatons.

Within this framework, the representation of women in advertising was crucial and fraught with contradictions. Women were advertising's primary market; in 1932 the trade journal *Gebrauchsgraphik* estimated that 85 percent of all commodities were bought by women.¹² Statistics were similar in the United States, and historians of American advertising have demonstrated the pressures it brought to bear on women by encouraging them to regard themselves as rationalized consumers.¹³ But German advertisements, particularly during the Depression, often portrayed women as idealized mannequins or literally as machine-made commodities (fig. 102), leading one to question how these representations of women both promoted and restricted myths about Weimar Germany's New Woman and to consider what effect this might have had on female viewers.

Although advertising sought to attract female consumers, it did not simply generate positive images of women. Rather, advertising images were complex representations of the anxieties and desires concerning new identities for women in Weimar Germany. In beauty product ads, for example, women often were addressed as “empowered” buyers, but only insofar as their consumer function was restricted to purchasing products that would enable them to construct themselves – through makeup, hair-care items, and clothes – as interchangeable products, commodities. The images look perfect, machine-made.



99 Hannah Höch, *Und Schatten* (And Shadows), c. 1925, 14 × 18 cm., photomontage, private collection



100 Hannah Höch, *Der Sieger* (The Victor), 1927, 22.5 × 18 cm., photomontage



101 Hannah Höch, *Zweigesichtig* (With Two Faces), 1927–30, 10.7 × 16.2 cm., photomontage, Collection Marianne Carlberg

Vorliebe für WEISS – und welches Make-up?



Weißer Kleider sind diesen Sommer besonders in Mode. Sie sagen, daß Sie weiß nicht tragen können — Sie sind zu blaß?

Miß Arden hat Präparate geschaffen, die mit jedem Kleide harmonieren. Sie werden erkannt sein, wie eine kleine Schattierung hier — eine geschickte Betonung da — Ihre ganze Erscheinung zu Ihrem Vorteil verändert. Weiß und die neuen, lebhaften Farben sind nicht schwer zu tragen, wenn Sie durch ein Make-up ausgeglichen sind, das zu ihnen gehört, und diese besondere Beratung ist ein Teil jeder Behandlung in Miß Ardens Salon.

- SPEZIAL AUGENWASSER
säht und erhellt die Augen
- EROSTA CREME ROUGE für
den rosigen Sommerhauch
- PROJECTA CREME für ausge-
zeichnete Schutzcreme für den
Sonntag und für den Abend
- ISAMAE LIPPENSTIFT
in hellem, individueller Ton,
breitet das Lippen erhellende
Lackweiss ab
- ARDENA PUDER
in 48 neuen Tönen,
garbend für jede Hautfarbe

Erhalten Sie Ihre Haut gesund und klar durch die Elizabeth Arden Toiletten-Präparate. Verlangen Sie unverbindlich die Broschüre „Das Ideal der Schönheit“.

ELIZABETH ARDEN
BERLIN W. LENNÉSTRASSE 5

PARIS — BRUXELLES — LONDON — NEW YORK — MADRID — BARCELONA — TOKYO — HONGKONG

102 “Vorliebe für Weiss – und welches Make-up?” (Predilection for white – and which makeup?), advertisement for Elizabeth Arden, *Die Dame*, June 1931

Fotograf. Illustr. Zeitung

Die Frau als Mutter

Mit welcher Inbrunst wühlt des Kindes spielendes Händchen in der Mutter erdensen Haar. Seine ganze Zärtlichkeit liegt in den ruhrenden tippischen Bewegungen

Die Mutter von heute braucht ihren Kinde nicht zu wehren. Keine Sorge um den leicht zerstüßbaren Zauber einer kunstvollen Coiffure gefährdet dem Spießer des Kindes Einhalt. Von karezen anderen Schmitt, läßt sich das Haar durch weiche Striche des Kammer in seine korrekte Lage bringen. Es ist natürlich mit Pixavon gepflegt. Woche um Woche wird es sorgfältig mit Pixavon gewaschen. Deshalb ist es nicht nur den bestürkenden Fall, den herrlichen Schimmer, sondern auch seine leichte Friesebarkeit. — Zärtliche Mütter pflegen nicht nur das eigene, sondern auch des Kindes Haar ständig mit Pixavon.

Keine der geschickten Damen
kann sich nicht leisten ohne ein
Fläschchen des Schimmers und
Purpur. Denken Sie bei der
Pflege Ihrer Haare auf
das Beste. Pixavon ist
das Beste. Pixavon ist
das Beste. Pixavon ist
das Beste.

103 "Die Frau als Mutter" (Woman as mother), advertisement for Pixavon shampoo, *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung*, July 21, 1929

PIXAVON
jetzt auch Pixavon-Shampoo!

Advertising relied heavily on photography to promote idealization and fetishization.¹⁴ Advertising photography was often heavily retouched, allowing it to connote both art (in its idealization) and document (in its putative objectivity). The tension produced by this ambiguity was often emphasized in page layouts by using a photograph to bridge an artful "lifestyle" scene and a hard-edged image of the machine-made product. In a Pixavon shampoo ad from a 1929 issue of *BIZ* (fig. 103), for example, the photograph of a female consumer (a softly focused, retouched, signed portrait) is placed between the idealized art image (a drawing of the consumer as a mother with her child) and a precision-crafted drawing of the modern product (the shampoo bottle). The implied message to the consumer is that the product is the means to the woman's accession to the ideal.¹⁵ If a woman can achieve perfection by using a product, then according to a certain logic the commodity itself can be considered an ideal for the woman. Disruption of this process, and in particular fragmenting the woman-as-mannequin-as-commodity images, then, was an effective and critical use of photomontage.

Höch returned again and again to images of women as mannequins, dolls, and puppets.¹⁶ These mass-produced versions of the modern female (even of Höch herself) seemed to be the alter ego of the New Woman. During her Dada period, Höch had costumed herself as an avant-garde puppet and had created female Dada dolls (figs. 104, 105). On occasion, men also were parodied in this mechanized state, as in Höch's painting *Er und sein Milieu* (He and his Milieu), 1919. By the mid-twenties,



104 Hannah Höch with one of her Dada dolls around 1925 (left)



105 Hannah Höch with her Dada dolls in the court of Otto Burchard's art dealership, 1920 (right)

Höch was regularly using doll or mannequin images to comment ironically on the cultural construction of femininity.

One of the most popular dolls marketed during Weimar had a child's face and large, half-moon eyes – an expression filled with innocence, humor, and wonderment (fig. 106).¹⁷ In *Der Meister* (The Master), 1925 (fig. 107), Höch cut out a photograph of this doll's face in such a way as to make its outline smaller and added it to a bust covered with rough clothing. Here the eyes loom too large and the polite smile is missing a corner, creating an ironic and somewhat sinister caricature of the doll's otherwise cheerful and girlish mask. The same doll's face reappears in *Liebe* (Love), c. 1926 (fig. 108), again cut inside its contours, here missing an eye as it looks toward, but not directly at, a male face, which is also glancing outward obliquely. In *Liebe*, Höch mocks the conventional representation of the enraptured state of love with a man and a woman gazing into one another's eyes. This work is from a series that Höch entitled "Liebe"; it also includes *Liebe im Busch* (Love in the Bush), *Kokette I* (Coquette I, fig. 109), *Kokette II* (fig. 110), and possibly related works (fig. 111).

The *Kokette* montages are heavily ironic in the way they dramatize flirtations. But the figures, instead of matinee idol and leading lady types of contemporary films, are weird composites of men, women, and animals. Arranged in dramatic tableaux, *Kokette I*, 1923–25, and *Kokette II*, c. 1925, show figures that are mainly female flirting with figures that are part man, part animal. In *Kokette I*, a woman wearing a

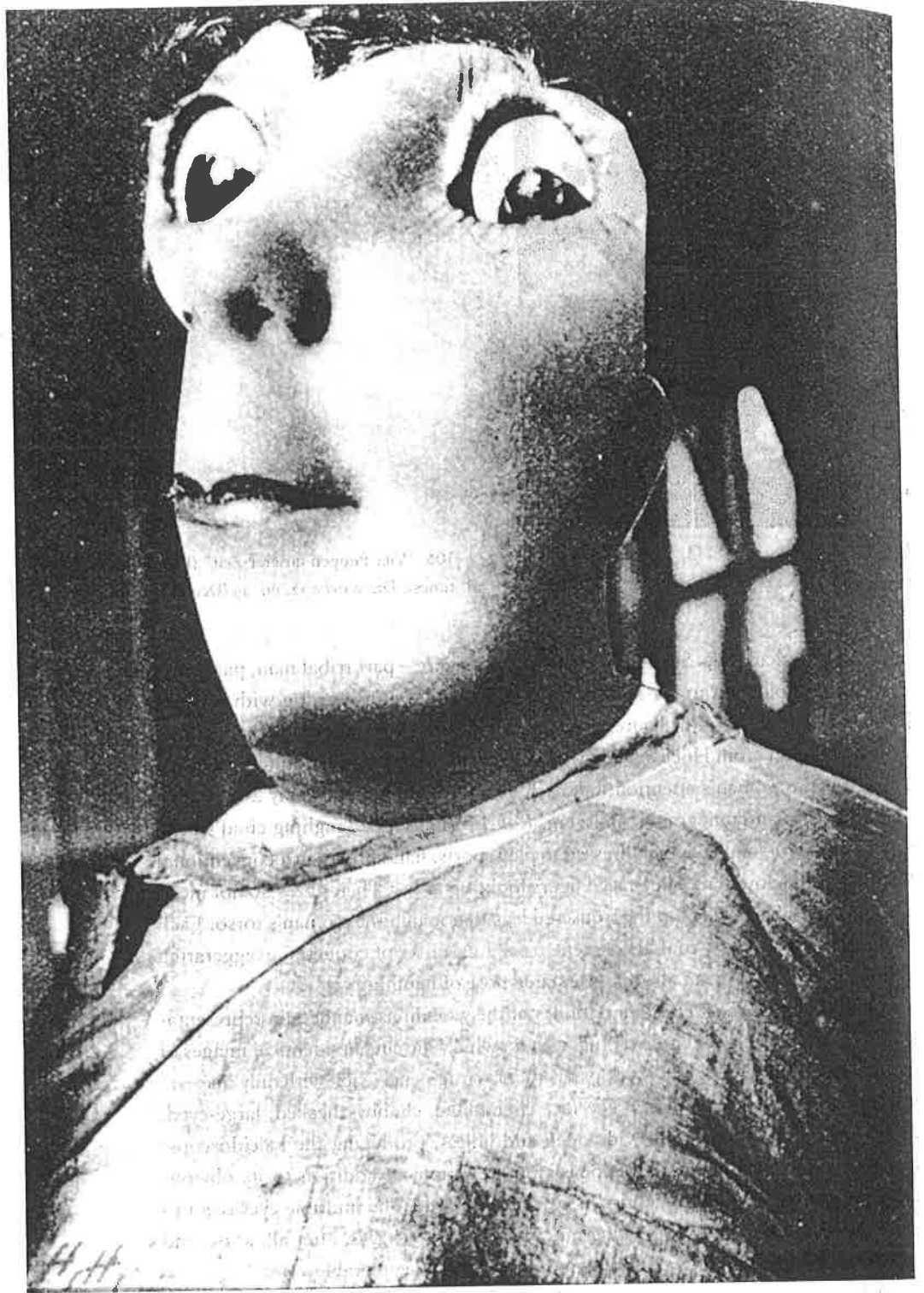


106 "Vier Puppen unserer Zeit" (Four dolls of our times), *Die Woche* 32, no. 49 (Dec. 6, 1930): 1459

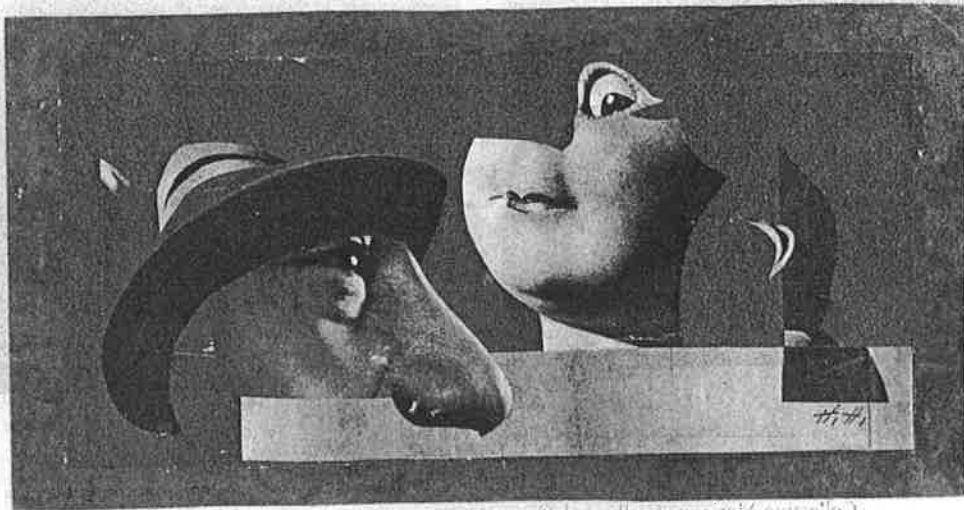
mask sits, gesticulating. She is looking down at a figure – part tribal man, part dog's head – that holds out to her some kind of gift. Behind him is a dog with a man's head and scarf. Each of the figures is on its own base or pedestal. Above them crawls a beetle familiar from Höch's Dada works. The man-dog figures seem to be waiting in line for the woman's attention, but each also seems to be on display as a type of mammal as in an ethnographic museum. *Kokette II* shows a laughing child's head on top of the torso of a woman dressed to play sports, hand on hip in a conventional flirting pose. Below, a monkey-faced figure looks up at her. Their gazes do not meet. The monkey's head sits atop the trousered legs that match the woman's torso. Each of these weird tableaux could be a scene from a narrative of coquetry, exaggerating a moment of flirtation, an already overstated pose of femininity.¹⁸

One of Höch's most effective critiques of the woman-as-mannequin representation is *Zerbrochen* (Broken), 1925 (fig. 112), in which she cuts up identical images of a doll's face, and repeats and overlaps the various fragments (each with only one eye) six times within the montage.¹⁹ The face is childlike, chubby-cheeked, large-eyed, and hairless. All the eyes are wide open and lidless, producing the kaleidoscopic effect of six startled eyes. The emphasis on repetition, in addition to its obvious allusion to mass-produced identity, is particularly eerie. The multiple eyes seem to stare out at the viewer, exaggerating the subjectivity of what is, after all, a toy, and transforming the doll into something more human, even vulnerable.

A female spectator of the 1920s might well have read Höch's photomontages of dolls and mannequins as an indictment of the many Weimar media representations of



107 Hannah Höch, *Der Meister* (The Master), c. 1926, 16 × 11.2 cm., photomontage



LIEBE

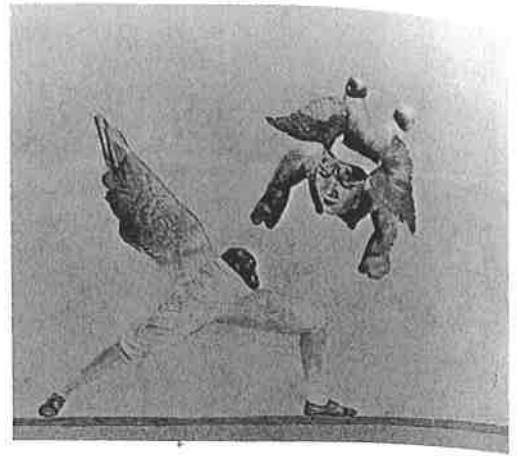
108 Hannah Höch, *Liebe (Love)*, c. 1926, 13 × 27 cm., photomontage, Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen



109 Hannah Höch, *Die Kokette I (The Coquette I)*, 1923-25, 18.5 × 20.5 cm., photomontage, Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Stuttgart



110 Hannah Höch, *Die Kokette II* (The Coquette II), c. 1925, 13 × 13.4 cm., photomontage, Collection Marianne Carlberg (left)

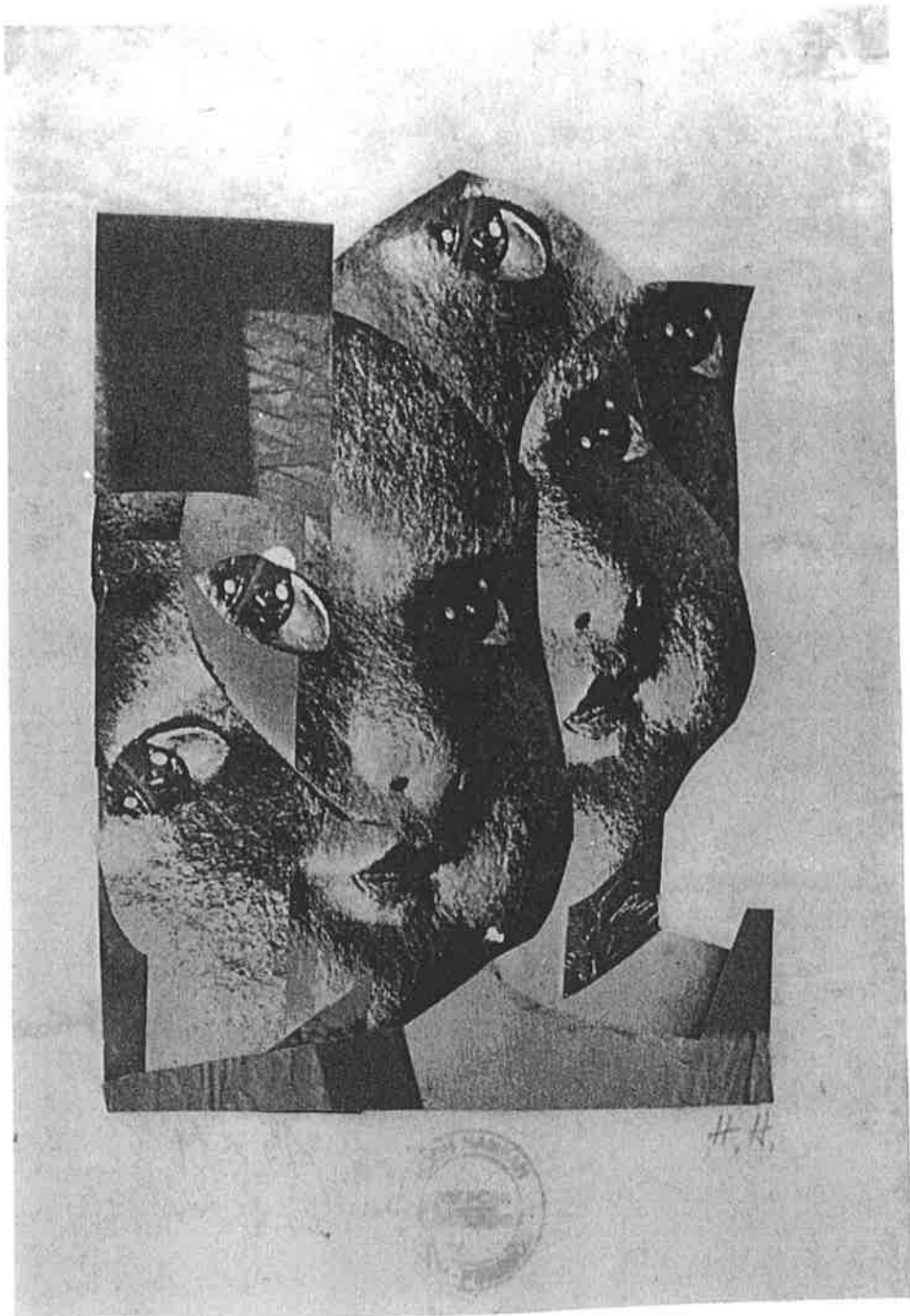


111 Hannah Höch, *Der grosse Schritt* (The Big Step), 1931, 23 × 25 cm., photomontage (right)

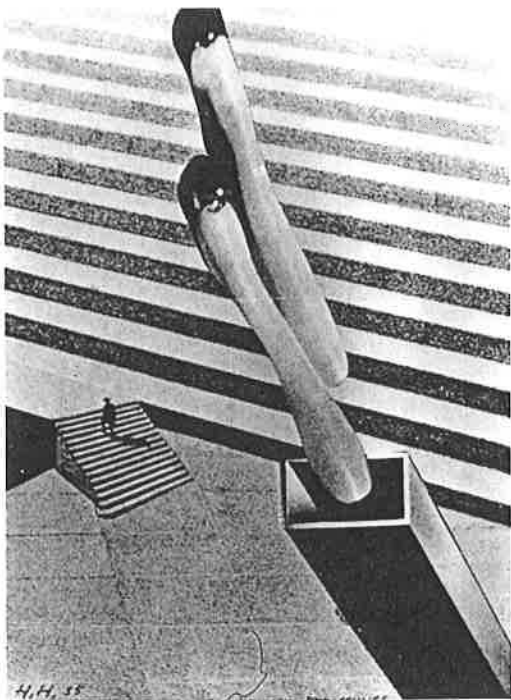
women as metaphors for rationalization and mass production.²⁰ Such advertisements were ubiquitous in the Weimar press. A particularly chilling example was published in *BIZ* in 1930, near the height of the Depression, when 14 percent of all German workers (3,076,000 individuals) were unemployed.²¹ This particular ad (fig. 113) is for a facial cream called *Crème Mouson*, and it shows a seemingly infinite progression of almost identical female secretaries, cast in the same pose, bent to the same task, receding into space. Using unsubtle scare tactics, the ad warns that, in order to stand out from the masses and to succeed at her job, the reader must use *Crème Mouson*.²²

But typically, Höch's work mixed humor with her critique of the mannequin status of femininity. In a slightly later work called *Der Schuss* (The Kick), 1935 (fig. 114), a woman's truncated legs appear upended, one a pedestal and one on steps in an ironic treatment of both shoes and body parts as commodities. *Modenschau* (Fashion Show), 1925–35, depicts three identical antique dresses with a different composite face above each. And in *Mit Schleife* (With Bow), also c. 1935 (fig. 115), Höch adorns a mannequin with a large bow, again a parody of fashion.

Both Höch and Brugman shared a sophisticated critique of commodity culture, mixing explicit humor and implicit irony with an anger at its manipulations. Brugman's short story "Schaufensterhypnose" (Shop Window Hypnosis), published in Höch's and Brugman's collaborative book, *Scheingehacktes*, parodies a man afflicted with "commodity sickness." He compulsively buys everything he sees displayed in mass quantities in shop windows. The story is written as his confession: "Oh yes, I bought, I had to buy; instead of being stricken by yellow fever, I had an Americanism for quantity! I could not resist a well-designed shop window! The total weight



112 Hannah Höch, *Zerbrochen* (Broken), 1925, 15.2 × 11.4 cm., photomontage, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston



114 *Der Schuss* (The Kick), 1935, 18 × 23 cm., photomontage (top left)

115 Hannah Höch, *Mit Schleife* (With Bow), 1930–35, 27.5 × 17 cm., Collection Grete König-Höch (top right)

116 Hannah Höch, *Die Sängerin* (Female Singer), 1926, 28.5 × 29 cm., photomontage, Galerie Berinson, Berlin (bottom)

who makes its hands as dirty as the circumstances are and who, in the midst of the goings-on, only takes care to observe alertly what it encounters.²⁵

Thus the light irony applied to the female performer in *Die Sängerin* (The Female Singer), 1926 (fig. 116), (who wears ballet shoes on point, her head bald, and who appears on stage next to a piano with human legs), becomes a more complex and possibly self-directed irony in the pair of portraits from 1928 called *Englische Tänzerin* (English Female Dancer, fig. 117) and *Russische Tänzerin* (Russian Female Dancer, fig. 118).



117 Hannah Höch, *Englische Tänzerin* (English Female Dancer), 1928, 23.7 × 18 cm., photomontage, Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Stuttgart



118 Hannah Höch, *Russische Tänzerin* (Russian Female Dancer), 1928, 30.5 × 22.5 cm., photomontage, Collection Dörries, Braunschweig

Many observers have recognized *Englische Tänzerin* as a montage self-portrait,²⁶ and it seems likely (as some have speculated) that *Russische Tänzerin* was meant to represent Brugman. Höch was lithe and wiry, and the English dancer has this aspect of lightness with an elongated face, exotic flowers springing from her head, and feet clad in satin shoes. The Russian dancer appears more stout, with a slightly fuller face, her legs coming out from directly under her head; these characteristics suggest Brugman's general appearance. But the Russian dancer sports a monocle, a sign often associated in Höch's work with Dada, implying that this dancer could be considered as an alternate self-portrait.

The dancing figure in *Englische Tänzerin* is poised on one foot and lists slightly, as if running across stage. Her head is decked with flowers and silhouettes of flowers that seem to be their shadows. Beneath the huge head is a swath of satiny dress material and feet clad in satin high-heeled shoes. Portraying the self as a dancer elicits issues of identity – tensions of movement and control, the balancing of a fragmented self. And, of course, in Höch's iconography the dancer frequently stands for the New Woman, female liberation, and Dada. But the two figures of the English and Russian dancers are almost all head with small dancer's legs, like accoutrements – as if the dancer identity adds fantasy and pleasure to otherwise more staid portraits.²⁷ The Russian dancer is more exotic. Her background is sepia and orange as compared to the blue-green behind the the English dancer. In addition to the monocle, the Russian is decorated with feathers, gauzy material, and flowers. She wears ballet shoes and stands on point. Interestingly, the work was subtitled by Höch *Mein Double* (My Double). Characteristically ambiguous, this "double" could refer either to her lover (Brugman) or to another side of herself.

Whether or not these two montages are intended as portraits of Höch and Brugman, they take up the themes of doubling (the couple, the other as self) in their complementary subjects and poses – the English dancer balances on one foot, the Russian dancer on the other, mirroring her. Allegorically, they reflect each other and they share one identity, the dancer, as if they are two sides of one coin. Tensions existing between individual identity and that of a couple, and between the self and the other, are magically resolved in the shared identity of the dancer. The English dancer photomontage addresses doubling on several formal levels. Her face is composed of two different faces, one laid over the other like a mask, the eyes and mouth of the original showing through. The formal treatment of the flowers on her head also addresses the theme of doubling; at least one silhouette form functions as a shadow, echoing the form of one of the flowers, and the other, a double flower, functions as a double mirror image in that it faces the opposite direction of the flower it seems to reflect. The theme of doubling in dance is also related to the mass ornament where rationalized women replicate each other and share a group identity.

Höch's portrayal of herself and her lover as dancers, each balancing delicately on one foot, suggests a desire for equilibrium. A recurrent theme in Höch's photomontages, equilibrium could imply a harmonious relationship between disparate parts – grace in the midst of instability. In Höch's work, equilibrium is depicted both

metaphorically, as balancing dancers, and literally, as a balancing of fragments. This is especially evident in her photomontage *Equilibre*, 1925 (fig. 119), where a child-dancer balances on the hand of an androgynous man-woman, with a bright and abstract ground of red, yellow, and purple.²⁸ Indeed, this composition may be another allegorical double self-portrait; the dancer could represent Höch, and the androgynous figure, wearing a monocle (the left eye is enlarged as if seen through a monocle) and an earring, could be read as a reference to Höch in her female Dada dandy persona. Yet, the question of the gender of this figure cannot be clearly resolved. In fact, the parted and slicked-back hair could also refer to Hausmann balancing the child-dancer Höch on his hand. But the monocled figure is too audaciously androgynous to be reduced to simply a portrait of Hausmann. The two figures cannot be easily identified – even their genders and ages are ambiguous – and the couple's identity is mysterious, fragile, fragmented, and precariously balanced. Both figures are posed on one end of an inclined plane, one that improbably supports their weight and their complicated balancing system.

For Höch, dance was about equilibrium, the metaphorical implication being that any stability was a fragile and temporary one. As much as Höch derived pleasure from *Illustrierte* images of leaping dancers, in her photomontages she never represented a whole image of a dancer. Thus, even the liberatory myths associated with modern dance were unstable in Höch's representations. Fragmented, ungainly, and unfamiliar, Höch's dancers confounded any identification female viewers might have had with photographs of dancers as ideals.

Related to *Equilibre* is *Ertüchtigung* (Training), also 1925 (fig. 120). The film *Wege zu Kraft and Schönheit* (Ways to Strength and Beauty) was also released in 1925, and it was the highpoint of the German craze for gymnastics and *Körperkultur*. Although Höch's scrapbook shows some interest in the nature-loving side of *Körperkultur*, in *Ertüchtigung* the emphasis is on a metaphorical equilibrium more than muscles. Two composite figures are situated on a delicate wooden structure (echoed twice in the background); one has a child's head, the other that of an old man. Instead of the wholeness of the body-as-well-oiled-machine, Höch depicts the body as composed of ill-fitting parts stuck together with a humorous awkwardness.

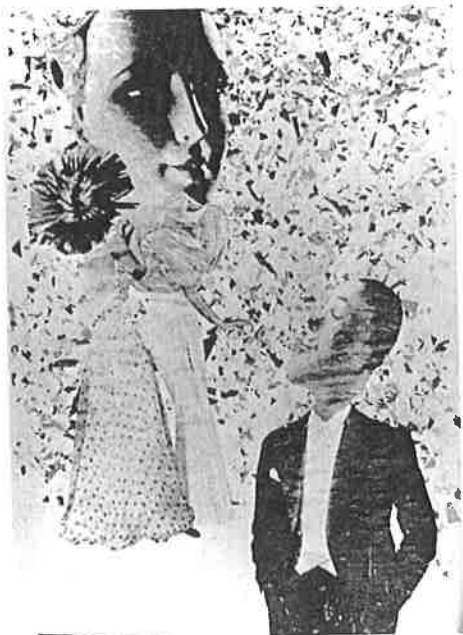
Even more directly related to the faddish *Körperkultur* is *Die Gymnastiklehrerin* (The Female Gymnastics Teacher), c. 1924 or 1925, now missing. As in the fitness manuals that often included before-and-after images, *Die Gymnastiklehrerin* contrasts two dramatically different images of women. On the left is a silhouette of the ideal, an athletic woman with perfect posture, her chin up, hair in a modern *Bubikopf*, barbells at her feet. Beside her is a stubby figure in an apron (possibly a rural *Hausfrau*) whose head is that of a male tribal figure. On the one hand, this can be interpreted as a racist allegory of the "progress" of modern woman: the stumpy, neckless woman of premodern culture is contrasted with the heroic female athlete of modern Germany. On the other hand, the two figures could represent an ironic confrontation between the old and the New Woman, with the old as a grotesque caricature and the New Woman a sleek, commodified profile.²⁹



119 Hannah Höch, *Equilibre*, 1925, 30.5 × 20.3 cm.,
photomontage, Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen,
Stuttgart



120 Hannah Höch, *Ertüchtigung (Training)*, 1925,
28 × 18.7 cm., photomontage



121 Hannah Höch, *Gigolo*, 1931, 38 × 26 cm., photomontage

In striking such contrasts regarding the changing role of women, Höch criticized conventional standards of gender and courtship (fig. 121). Höch's commentary on marriage, for example, was acerbic throughout the Weimar years. In *Der Traum seines Lebens* (The Dream of his Life), c. 1925 (fig. 122), Höch cut up a series of fashion photographs of a bride and arrayed them throughout a sort of grid composed of overlapping frames. The bride is shown wearing a gorgeous all-white outfit with an elaborate and oversized floral headdress, many layers of sumptuous fabrics, a short hemline, and shoes resembling dancing slippers. A heavy wooden frame, as would be found in a bourgeois home, is repeated across the composition. From within these frames, the figures look out coquettishly at the viewer, performing for the male gaze, constructing his "dream." At times the frames separate body parts – a head from a torso, feet from legs. The bridal outfit becomes a costume, transforming the woman into an object for display within the frames. And the ironic title suggests the anger behind Höch's repetition and emphasis of this masquerade of the overly flower-decked bride. *The Dream of his Life*, his bride, is defined by fashion, photography, and domestic display, her behavioral response reduced to that of the coquette. Typical of Höch's work, even in this sharp and explicit critique the woman (and correspondingly the female viewer) seems to be enjoying herself, playing with her image, her pose, her gaze, the camera's point of view, the frame, her clothing, and her body.³⁰

In late Weimar, Höch created a companion piece to her earlier Dada parody of an urban bourgeois bridal couple, *Bürgerliche Brautpaar*, 1919. This was *Bäuerliches Brautpaar* (Peasant Wedding Couple), 1931 (fig. 123).³¹ At the top of the composition is a schematized farm landscape of cows and a barn; two disembodied arms hold



122 Hannah Höch, *Der Traum seines Lebens* (The Dream of his Life), 1925, 30 × 22.5 cm., photomontage, private collection, New York

a large milk canister. In the foreground is the couple: the man consists solely of a black man's face with his eyes half-closed, a hat, and leather boots; the woman is composed of blond hair in braids draped over a wild boar's face, and a child's socks and shoes. This broad caricature carries racist overtones. Whereas in other works Höch incorporates African faces and bodies in respectful, if somewhat voyeuristic ways, here the man's sleepy face paired with the unattractive animal face suggests a racist lampooning of the couple. The rural characters are also presented as buffoons in Höch's *Die ewigen Schuhplattler* (The Eternal Schuhplattler [a Bavarian folk dance]), c. 1927 (fig. 124), but here the humor is milder and the figures are merely infantilized. This montage gives a playful jab to New Vision photography as well: one figure kicks out so that his shoe looms extremely large in the foreground, the sole parallel to the picture plane; the other thrusts his hands forward, and these too are magnified. Both dancers are constructed as if photographed from below to emphasize their legs.

In other works Höch explores race more sensitively. In yet another bridal allusion, the photomontage *Die Braut* (The Bride), c. 1933 (fig. 125), she combines a white woman's neck and shoulders with another white woman's large lips, and a non-Caucasian, possibly Polynesian, face. Lace seems to stream from the figure's head, like a bridal veil. The pattern is echoed in the background. The facial features are tightly fit together so that the viewer oscillates between the two parts, unable to define the woman's race clearly. And in *Der Mischling* (Half-Breed), 1924 (fig. 126), Höch took a black-and-white photograph of a beautiful and dignified African woman's head (that was also included on page 58 of the scrapbook), cut off her hair, and replaced her mouth with a white woman's small, red-lipsticked, Cupid's bow mouth. The result is a somewhat androgynous African figure intruded upon by what appears in this context to be silly and less mature. Again this creates an oscillating effect: the viewer cannot reconcile the features associated with the different races and cultures in one face.

Two slightly later works, *Priesterin* (Priestess), 1930–34 (fig. 127), and *Platonische Liebe* (Platonic Love), c. 1930 (fig. 128), use montage to establish homologies between primitivism, sensual landscapes, and the female body, together forming an intricate allegory of feminine spirituality. In *Priesterin*, a curling motif repeats in shadows, in the headdress, and in the curves of the female priest's arms and hands. She sits with eyes closed and arms held out expressively. Her fingertips reach out and only one thumb and one finger touch. It is as if she is tracing the alternations of light and dark patterned throughout the scene. The foreground is dominated by two burning candles and curvaceous shadows. In this moving and sensual montage, there is a subtle interplay between touch and sight.

In *Platonic Love*, a nude, headless female figure, which Höch made thin by cutting inside its contours, drifts above a nocturnal, dunelike landscape. The dark sky is filled with stars. A disembodied female head shoots upward across the sky like a comet. An arm, related by skintone to the bodiless head, holds hands with the headless body. Despite this strange and ethereal joining of the two women, there is a



123 Hannah Höch, *Bäuerliches Brautpaar* (Peasant Wedding Couple), 1931, 21.6 × 20.9 cm., photomontage, Galerie Berinson, Berlin



124 Hannah Höch, *Die ewigen Schubplattler* (The Eternal *Schubplattler* [Bavarian Folk Dance]), c. 1933, 25.2 × 26 cm., photomontage, Thomas Walther, New York



125 Hannah Höch, *Die Braut* (The Bride), c. 1933, 20 × 19.7 cm., photomontage, Thomas Walther, New York

palpable sensuality established between the female form and a smooth, earthly landscape. Part of the landscape even resembles the curve of the body. And the parts of the two female figures taken together would form one whole body. This again raises questions of dividing or doubling the self and of viewing the self as other. Perhaps it is significant that both *Platonische Liebe* and *Priesterin* were created during Höch's lesbian affair with Brugman, a relationship that Höch chose to characterize to her sister in spiritual terms, using a rhetorical convention common to lesbian writing in early twentieth-century Germany.³²

In her allegorical portraits of femininity, Höch often created ambiguous combinations of genders, races, ages, and poses. Although at times Höch used her photomontages to create harsh critiques of such culturally based gender constructions as the woman-as-mannequin or woman-as-bride, she was sharply critical of the way these conventions of femininity were perpetuated in the mass media. Höch used

what Sloterdijk has described as a particular Weimar form of irony, to deconstruct the mass media's conscriptive definitions of femininity – the bride, the coquette – particularly as these stereotypes were reinforced through new photographic mass culture forms. Yet, in her witty repetition and recombination of media imagery, Höch also conveys her own pleasure in the mass media, combining affirmation with negative critique.

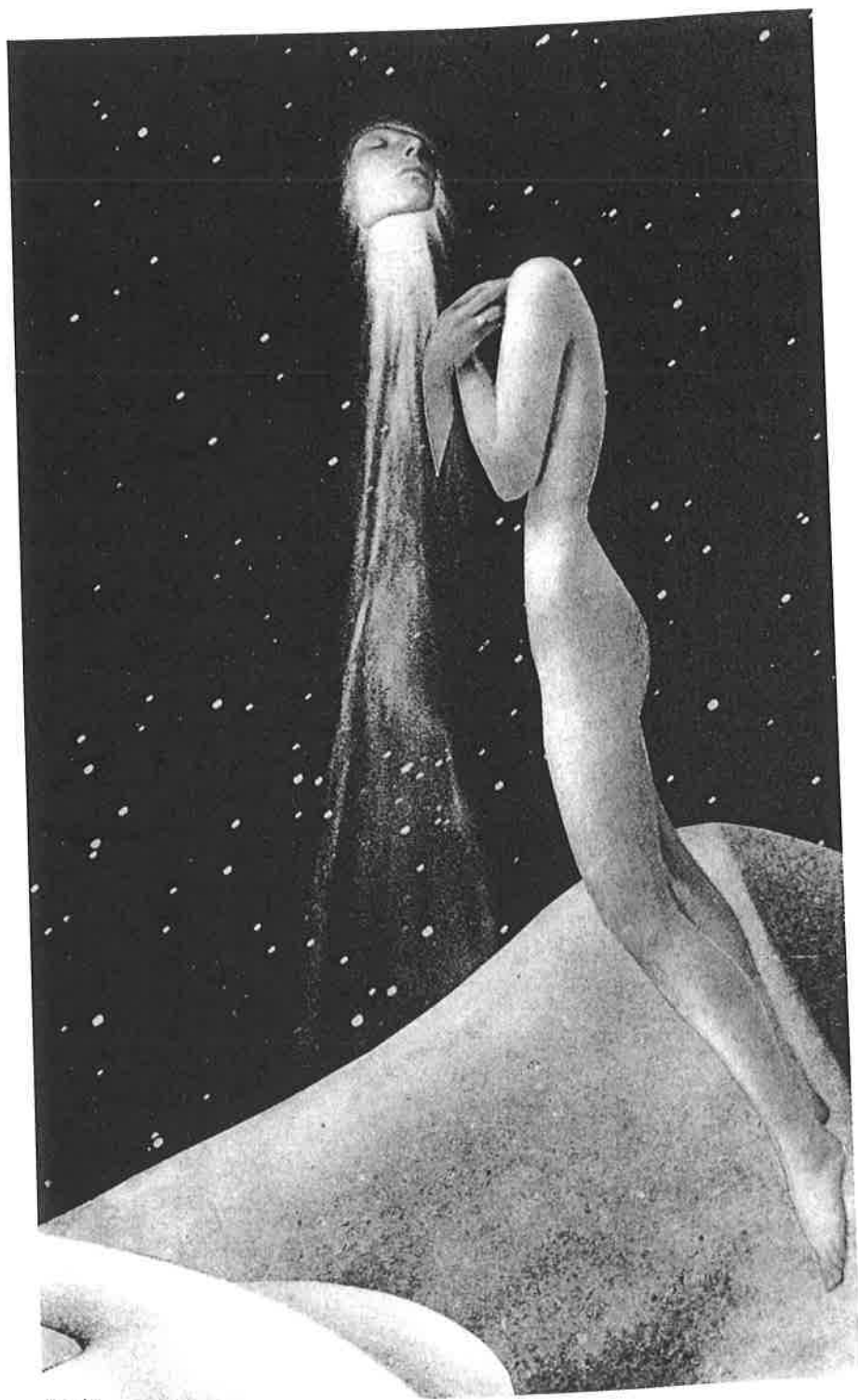
Despite Höch's evident enjoyment of the media's expansion of the visual menu and her own control over and recombination of these new possibilities, she demonstrated great ambivalence in her photomontages when representing the female gaze. By interrupting the unified gaze of her female figures and reconfiguring the eyes, she both drew attention to vision and problematized its representation.³³ Instead of identifying the female viewer with a focused and controlling gaze, Höch developed a subjective position that is frustrated and disoriented. Through the dismantling of modernist, "objective" vision, with its associations of subjecthood and intelligence, Höch gives a sense of the female viewer as a disrupted self. Yet even Höch's most disconcerting portraits are treated with ironic wit, both eliciting and disrupting empathy. For female viewers, Höch's ironic and disturbing portraits serve as a reminder that humor is often a mask for anger.



126 Hannah Höch, *Mischling* (Half-Breed), 1924, 11 × 8.2 cm., photomontage, Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Stuttgart



127 Hannah Höch, *Priesterin (Priestess)*, 1930/34, 33 × 24 cm., photomontage



128 Hannah Höch, *Platonische Liebe* (Platonic Love), 1930, 24 × 15.5 cm., photomontage



129 Hannah Höch, *Mutter: Aus einem ethnographischen Museum* (Mother: From an Ethnographic Museum), 1930, 18 × 24 cm., photomontage, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

from an
ethnographic
museum

5

Several critics have argued that Höch's post-Dada works lack the political intensity of those made alongside Heartfield, Hausmann, and Grosz. Critic Manuela Hoelterhoff, for example, contrasts Höch's work unfavorably with Heartfield's, even denying Höch's work any political meaning:

Hannah Höch continued to devote herself to the photomontage, but her work bears little similarity to Heartfield's. She is certainly a whimsical observer of social conventions, but her ideological commitment is nil. What happened when both of them, presumably accidentally, used the same photograph of a listless, overworked and pregnant proletarian woman in 1930, is fascinating to note. In *Mothers, Let Your Sons Live!* [fig. 130] Heartfield montages a photograph of a dead boy with his rifle, right behind the woman. The message is clear – agitate for change! Rouse yourself! Help prevent these kinds of atrocities! In contrast, Höch has no sense of mission. She cloaks the woman's face surrealistically, with a primitive mask, thereby deflecting the impact of the original photograph. *La Mère [sic]* is possibly an affecting but not a politically engaged image.¹

Although it is true that Höch's work does not convey the explicit and often prescriptive political messages of Heartfield's photomontages, it is important to recognize that other political strategies were available. As we have seen, Höch developed a sophisticated critical language of social commentary concerning the typology and conditions of the modern woman.

The highly political nature of this project is particularly evident in her extended photomontage series "From an Ethnographic Museum," on which she worked inter-

mittently from 1924 until at least her Czech exhibition in 1934. In the example Hoelterhoff cites, *Mutter: Aus einem Ethnographischen Museum*, 1930 (fig. 129), the photomontage does in fact signify politically on several related levels. By covering the pregnant proletarian mother's face with a tribal mask, Höch allegorically re-aligned this stereotype of exhausted maternity, associating it with "primitive" art and possibly suggesting the proletariat woman as a kind of Ur-mother. And Höch added a modish, New Woman's eye to one side of the face, again perhaps alluding to a kind of universal femininity. Moreover, the addition of the mask further designates the pregnant, discouraged figure as "Other." In addition, *Mutter* connotes a specific political issue: pregnancy itself, represented in the context of proletarian exhaustion, is a clear reference to the broad-based battle then going on in Weimar over an act called Paragraph 218, which outlawed abortion.² The working-class woman was a prevalent symbol in the fight to legalize abortion since her poverty made unwanted pregnancies and births especially cruel. Höch participated in the campaign to overturn Paragraph 218 by contributing to the *Frauen in Not* (Women in Need) exhibition. And Höch had had two illegal abortions herself. Whether linked to a specific political event or not, Höch's works can be described as political in their challenging reconfigurations of contemporary female stereotypes.

In general, the photomontages in Höch's *Ethnographic Museum* series combine signs of collected and categorized ethnographic objects with those of contemporary women. The series, which Höch also called "der Sammlung" or "the collection," consists of eighteen to twenty works made over a period of more than five years. These include: *Masken*, c. 1924; *Entführung*, 1925; *Trauer*, 1925; *Denkmal I (Nr. VIII)*, c. 1925; *Mit Mütze*, c. 1925; *Die Süsse*, before 1926; *Nummer IX (Zwei)*, c. 1926; *Hörner (Nr. X)*, c. 1926; *Denkmal II: Eitelkeit*, 1926; *Der heilige Berg*, 1927; *Negerplastik*, 1929; *Fremde Schönheit*, c. 1929; *Untitled*, 1930; *Mutter*, 1930; *Indische Tänzerin*, 1930; *Untitled*, c. 1930; *Buddha*, c. 1930; and *Untitled* (*Kunst-Sammlung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*), c. 1930; and possibly other related works (figs. 131, 132).³ It is doubtful that all of the montages of the *Ethnographic Museum* series were ever exhibited together, though Höch included twelve of them in her one-person photomontage exhibition in Brno in 1934.⁴

If Höch's politics concerning women are legible, her politics on race and ethnography as represented in the *Ethnographic Museum* series are less clear. An exploration of the ways in which her representations of women and ethnography function independently and intersect partially illuminates her intentions. In the series, Höch was not particularly critical of contemporary ethnographic attitudes; instead, she used images of tribal objects and the exhibition format in ethnographic museums almost exclusively to comment on contemporary European gender definitions. Höch never substantively or explicitly challenged contemporary racist or colonialist ideas, although her irony often functions as implicit criticism. If, as Hoelterhoff suggests, some of Höch's montages are "whimsical," more are sharply ironic. But even the whimsy Höch employed satirizes the notion of primitivism as somehow analogous

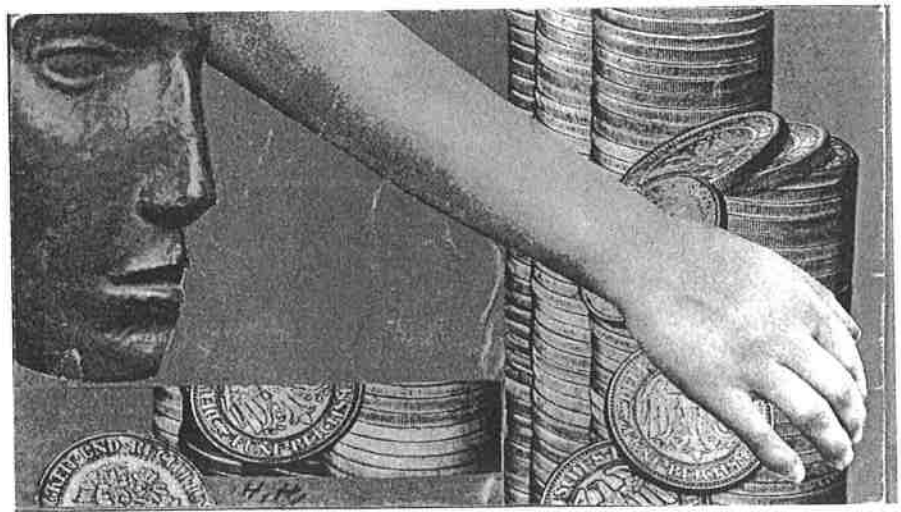


ZwangslieferantIn von Menschenmaterial Nur Mut! Der Staat braucht Arbeitslose und Soldaten!

130 John Heartfield, *ZwangslieferantIn von Menschenmaterial Nur Mut! Der Staat braucht Arbeitslose und Soldaten!* (Forced supplier of human ammunition! Take courage! The state needs unemployed and soldiers!), *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* 9, no. 10, 1930, page 183, 38.2 × 28 cm., Museum of Fine Arts, Houston



131 Hannah Höch, *Lustige Person* (Jovial Person), 1932, 18.5 × 24.5 cm., photomontage



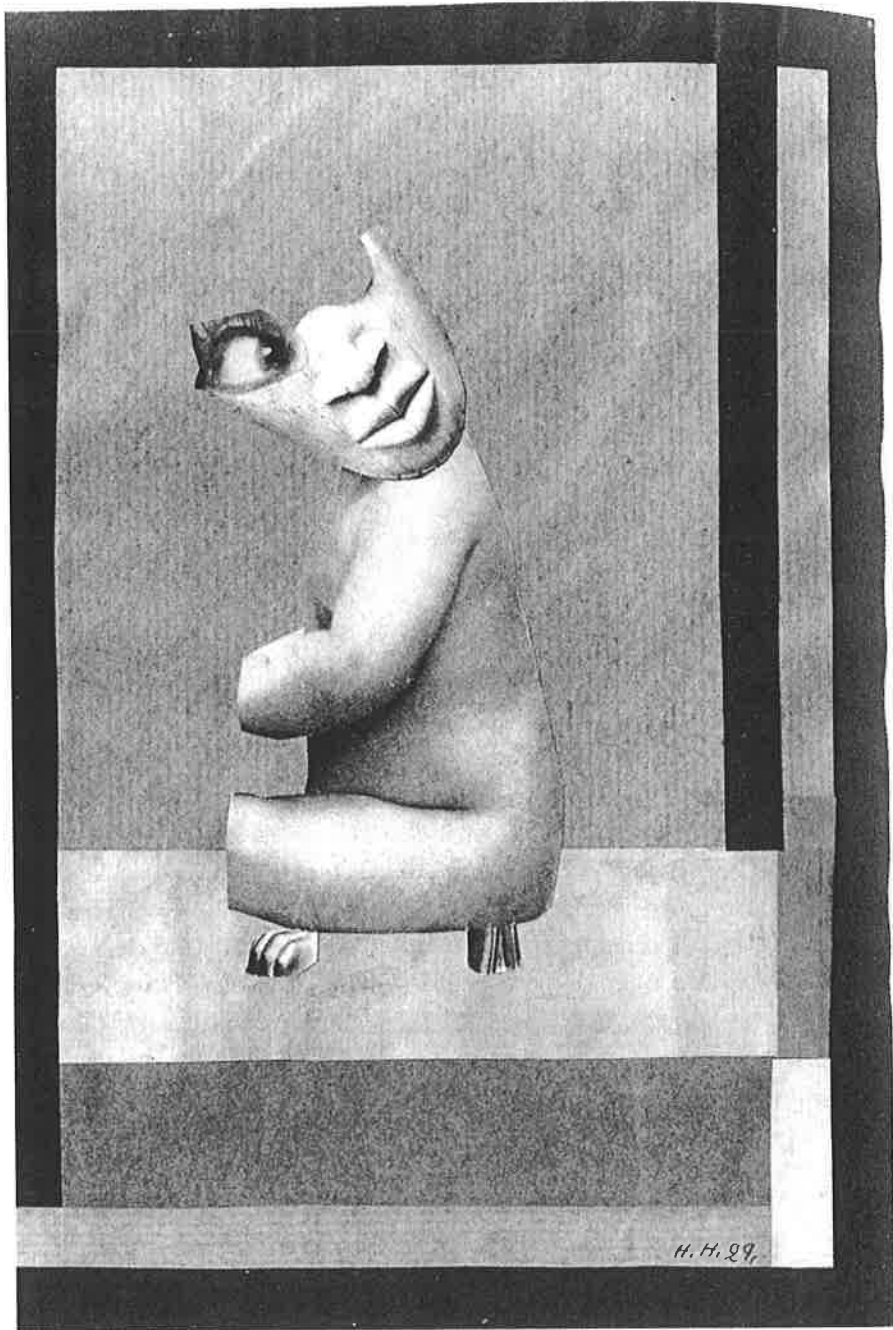
132 Hannah Höch, *Geld* (Money), c. 1922, 10 × 17.5 cm., photomontage, Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Stuttgart

from an ethnographic museum

to the primordial creativity embedded in the spirit of the artist (an attitude evident in some of Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's paintings, for example).⁵ As Höch later wrote of the series, "The expansion of ethnographic research at that time only took in the 'primitives,' especially Negro art. The German Expressionists manifested this often in their oil paintings. I enjoyed experimenting in a less serious, but always precise, way with this material."⁶

Höch was careful in this statement to distinguish her intentions from those of the German Expressionists. In the Ethnographic Museum series as well as her scrapbook, however, she also participated in the rather derogatory trend toward romanticized negrophilia. In the work Höch referred to as *Kinderkörper Negerplastikkopf* (Children's Body/Negro Sculpture Head) or simply *Negerplastik*, 1929 (fig. 133),⁷ Höch placed an image of a carved African head over a photograph of a baby's body. The head is, in fact, an ivory pendant mask from the court of Benin, most likely one now in the British Museum. The great size of the head, in addition to the softness of the body, the wide-open eye, and the way the head is cocked to one side as if in surprise all give the figure a quality of childishness. Although one eye is cut out and the other is covered with a large, made-up woman's eye, the scale relationships between head and body are not interrupted; even the truncated arm and leg do not diminish the representation of the figure's childlike proportions. Of course, the suggested equation of infantilism with primitivism and Africanness reiterates a familiar stereotype from *Illustrierte photoreportage of Africa*.⁸ Yet even in this childlike image, there is a critical subtext. Höch used the base on which the figure is perched (a miniature stool in the lower right and a small claw in the lower left) as a frame within a frame. This important device, deployed throughout the Ethnographic Museum series, makes an ironic comment on the categorization and display of people as objects. The base, which traditionally presents the wholeness and perfection of an object on display, is used by Höch in these works as a pedestal for her fragmentary, grotesque, and sometimes humorous montages of multi-cultural fragments. Mocking the ideal of plenitude, with its illusion of homogenization (difference subsumed by wholeness), the discordance of Höch's montages raises fundamentally political issues regarding the representation of race and gender.

Where Höch diverged from the use of primitivism in the works of the Expressionists and other contemporaries is in her ironic focus on Western representation of racial difference and its application to gender politics. To counter such rigid characterizations, Höch created allegories of modern femininity, montages that often overtly criticize aspects of the status and representation of Weimar women. Among the more explicit allegorical critiques in Höch's Ethnographic Museum series are *Indische Tänzerin* (Indian Female Dancer), 1930 (fig. 134) and *Fremde Schönheit*, (Strange Beauty), c. 1929 (fig. 135).⁹ In *Indische Tänzerin*, a woman's head is thrown back and half of the face of an Indian statue is clamped over her mouth and right eye. For a headdress, she wears multiple cut-out silhouettes of knives and spoons. The resulting composite figure is recognizable as a modern woman by her haircut, a trendy *Bubikopf*, the short bangs of which are visible beneath the silverware tiara. The fron-

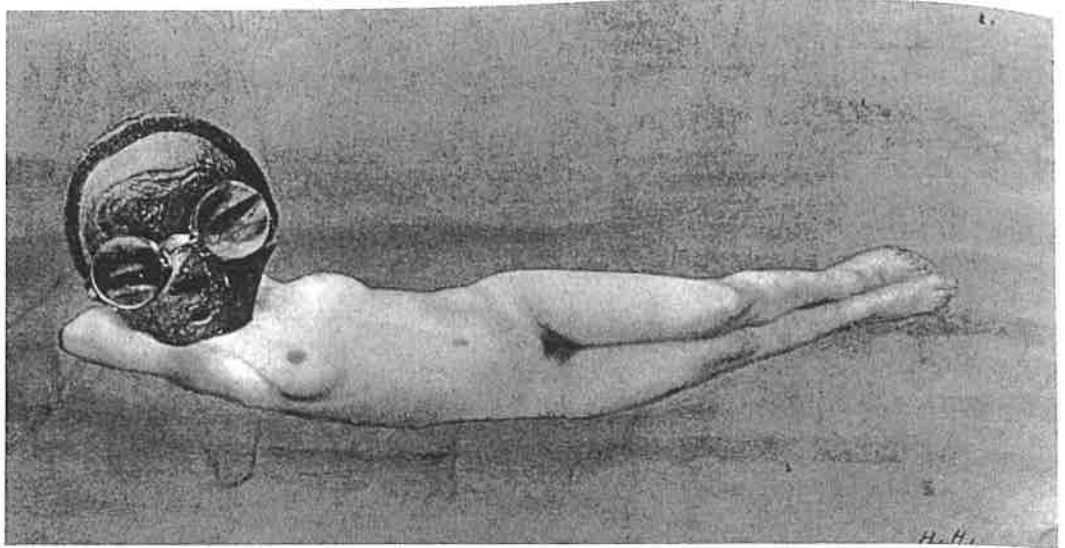


133 Hannah Höch, *Negerplastik* (Negro Sculpture), from the series *Aus einem ethnographischen Museum* (From an Ethnographic Museum), 1929, 26 × 17.5 cm., private collection

from an ethnographic museum



134 Hannah Höch, *Indische Tänzerin: Aus einem ethnographischen Museum* (Indian Female Dancer: From an Ethnographic Museum), 1930, 10 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 8 $\frac{7}{8}$ in., photomontage, the Museum of Modern Art, New York



135 Hannah Höch, *Fremde Schönheit* (Strange Beauty), 1929, 32 × 23 cm., photomontage, private collection, Paris

tality of the sculpture face (positioned parallel to the picture plane) superimposed over the backward inclination of the head gives the juxtaposition the connotations of oppression and calcification. Certainly the headdress, with its combination of honorific and militaristic connotations, is a double-edged joke; while crowning the New Woman, its use of table settings secures her identity with the domestic emblems of the stereotypic drudgery of a housewife.¹⁰ The source for the face of the woman is a fan photo of the popular actress Marie Falconetti portraying the title role in Carl Theodor Dreyer's 1928 film, *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* (The Passion of Joan of Arc). There are many layers of feminine identity here – film star, heroic battle maiden, modern woman – all cloaked in the garb of domesticity.

In a similar way, Höch used the photomontage *Fremde Schönheit*, c. 1929, to question contemporary norms of feminine beauty. A photograph of a young, naked white woman in a traditional alluring pose – lying on her side with one elbow angled behind her head – is dramatically surmounted by a dark, grotesquely wrinkled, possibly shrunken head. To further exaggerate this shocking juxtaposition, Höch added to the face a pair of skewed eyes, magnified by eyeglasses that distort the figure's gaze and in turn emphasize the viewer's own act of looking at the figure's eyes, face, and body.

Art historian Annegret Jürgens-Kirchoff has argued persuasively that Höch's use of montage in *Fremde Schönheit* demonstrates the arbitrariness of all canons of beauty, both familiar and exotic. By rendering beauty strange, she asserts, Höch revealed the representation of beauty as a cultural formula rather than a natural given. By combining the beautiful and the grotesque, Höch blurred the boundaries between different aesthetic categories of representations of the body. Jürgens-Kirchoff

quotes Höch's own statement published in conjunction with a 1929 exhibition in The Hague: "Ich möchte die festen grenzen verwischen, die wir menschen, selbstsicher, um alles uns erreichbare zu ziehen geneigt sind" (I want to blur the firm boundaries that we as people tend self-assuredly to draw around all that we can achieve).¹¹

Through the alienation effect of montage, both the European body and the tribal shrunken head (or grotesque mask) appear strange. Specifically in many of Höch's Ethnographic Museum montages and androgynous works, it is the New Woman as icon that is fractured, brought into question, and made to appear as a construction.¹² But the New Woman is not parodied; rather, contemporary femininity is paired disturbingly with the grotesque in such a way that differences and similarities are blurred.¹³ If one interprets *Fremde Schönheit* as a statement about the contradictions and arbitrariness of canons of feminine beauty and operations of the gaze, then one is reading the montage as an allegory; many montages in the Ethnographic Museum series lend themselves to such readings.

The use of tribal objects and references immediately invokes the embattled tradition of Western ethnographic interpretation. Poised between scientific "objectivity" and a sort of moralistic storytelling, ethnographic representations are, according to anthropologist James Clifford, often thinly masked allegories. "Allegory prompts us to say of any cultural description," Clifford writes, "not 'this represents or symbolizes that' but rather, 'this is a (morally charged) story about that.'" ¹⁴ This comparative mode, Clifford points out, is a fundamentally humanistic one, producing "controlled fictions of difference and similitude" ¹⁵ in which the standard for locating either the self or the Other is a universalizing humanism. Clifford also describes how many ethnographic writings establish distance through the use of irony: "We note . . . the ironic structure (which need not imply an ironic tone) of such allegories," he writes. "For they are presented through the detour of an ethnographic subjectivity whose attitude toward the other is one of participant-observer, or better perhaps, belief-skepticism." ¹⁶

What might be perceived as Höch's humanistic linking of the subjecthood of Western and tribal peoples through montaging body parts (or often ethnographic artifact fragments representing body parts) is made ironic through her use of allegorical displacement. In structure as well as in tone, her exploration of self through a representation of the Other is explicitly ironic. Because of the fluid operations of reading a montage, however – the Blochian flowering of allegory – such a distanced irony is not a static or ever-present element of reception. With corporeal identification, the figure in *Fremde Schönheit* can also seem disturbingly close and grotesque – uncanny. Oscillation is therefore important in Höch's montages – prompting a disjunctive shift between one allegorical reading and another, allowing different types of identification and distance.

Late in life, Höch recalled that the series "Aus einem Ethnographischen Museum" had been inspired by a visit she made with Kurt Schwitters to the Rijks Ethnographisch Museum Te Leiden.¹⁷ This visit took place in 1926, but certain of Höch's ethnographic montages may have actually been made earlier, predating the idea of

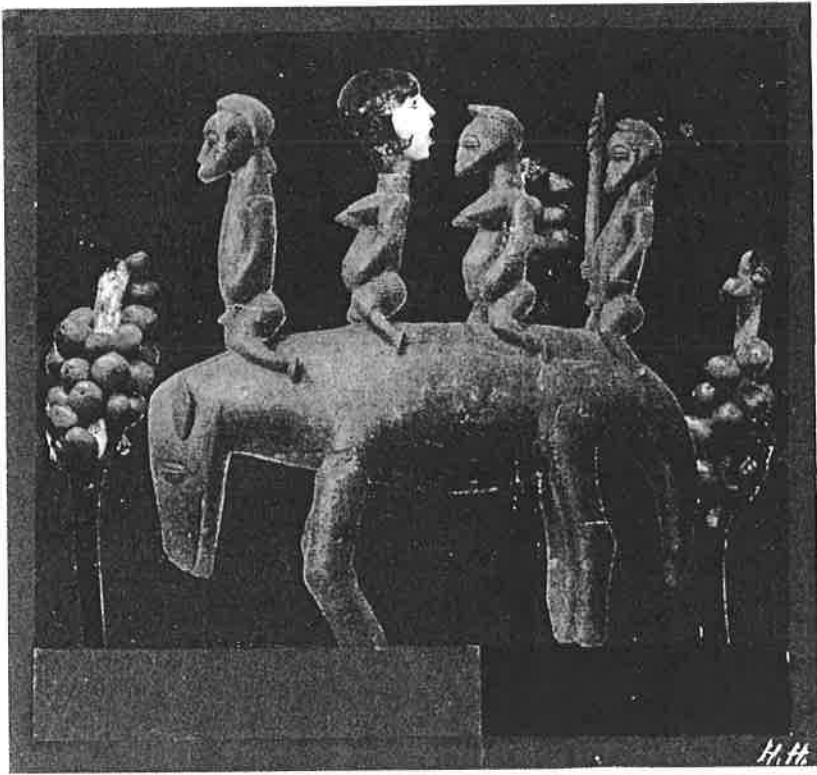
the series or collection.¹⁸ Grete König remembers that Höch was interested in ethnography during the Berlin Dada years: "She had a great interest in Negro sculpture, and in all ethnographic things. That did not have to do with Til. It was from the Hausmann times; she retained a lot from then."¹⁹ Whether or not the series originated with the visit to the Leiden ethnographic museum, the concept of the ethnographic museum as an institution was important to Höch's creation of the series.²⁰

It is useful, then, to look back at the Leiden museum as it was in 1926 and to consider the nature and meaning of ethnographic display.²¹ In 1926, the African collection of the Rijks Ethnographisch Museum Te Leiden (which changed its name in 1931 to Rijksmuseum van Ethnographie and in 1935 to Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde) were housed in the museum building on the Heerengracht.²² Separate buildings contained ethnographic collections from Africa, the Far East, the South Sea Islands, and other regions. Although catalogs from these years show mainly photographs of isolated objects, they do include pictures of some objects displayed as if in everyday use, for example, placed in and around huts.²³ One photograph, of Buddhas in the museum garden (an image Höch used in her scrapbook), illustrates an effort to recreate the "spirit" of an anthropological setting.

Occasionally, the museum included life-size mannequins in its anthropological dioramas, demonstrating how various tribes dressed and used tools. Viewers of such anthropological *mise-en-scènes* in the 1920s would undoubtedly have made two associations: with commercial mannequins, usually female, in department store windows and with actual humans once displayed in international expositions, theaters, and even zoos.

Although mannequins were widely used in the 1920s, they were still enough of a novelty to warrant extensive photographic documentation in the mass media and advertising trade journals.²⁴ Their presence in an ethnographic diorama suggests an odd equation between the store mannequin as bearer of commodity fetishes and the museum mannequin as bearer of tribal fetishes. But in her photomontage series, Höch avoided any simple equation between tribal and commodity fetishism. Instead, these associations are combined with fragments of tribal objects placed on bases (referring to the ethnographic museum) and with fragments of Western female bodies (referring directly to shop window displays). Although any framing of ethnographic objects as commodities in Höch's series inevitably raises the specter of nineteenth-century colonialism, these connotations are viewed through various representations of the feminine, particularly the New Woman as mannequin and object of ethnographic inquiry.

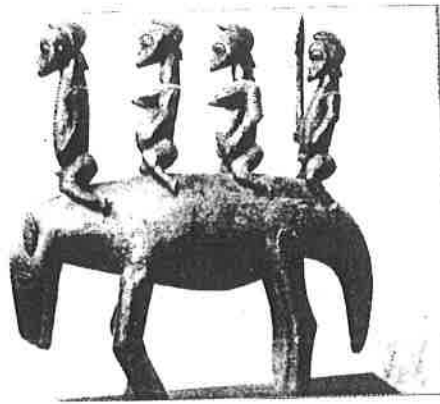
The second and more shocking association raised by ethnographic museum mannequins was a bizarre exhibition and zoological practice common in turn-of-the-century Europe, something a 1920s viewer might have remembered from childhood. As cultural historian Sander Gilman has documented, non-European tribal peoples were actually put on display in ethnological settings in zoos in Vienna and elsewhere in Europe, including Germany. Gilman notes that "the 'ethnological' exhibition was a natural extension of the ethnographic museum, placing living 'exotics' within the



136 Hannah Höch, *Entführung: Aus einem ethnographischen Museum* (Abduction: From an Ethnographic Museum), 1925, 19.5 × 20 cm., photomontage, Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin

daily experience of the European.” Peter Altenberg’s 1897 novel, *Ashantee*, about Africans on exhibit in an Austrian zoo, describes this practice: “In the zoological garden there stands a cage inhabited by exotic beasts from the Amazon, two pampas hares, sitting quite humanlike on their haunches nibbling the sweets tossed to them by the crowd. Next to this cage are the Ashantis, seen performing a native dance.”²⁵

A key element in Höch’s highlighting these issues of acquisition and display of the Other was the representation of sculptural bases within the montages. In *Entführung* (Abduction), 1925 (fig. 136), Höch situated a German New Woman within a distinctly African narrative, represented by a tribal object set on a prominent base. The central image, a wooden African sculpture entitled *The Abduction of the Virgins*, derives from *BIZ*.²⁶ In the *BIZ* photograph (fig. 137), the sculpture sits on a base with nothing in the background, suggesting a museum display. The sculpture consists of two carved male figures, one carrying a spear, transporting two female figures between them; all four figures ride on an oversized animal statue, probably



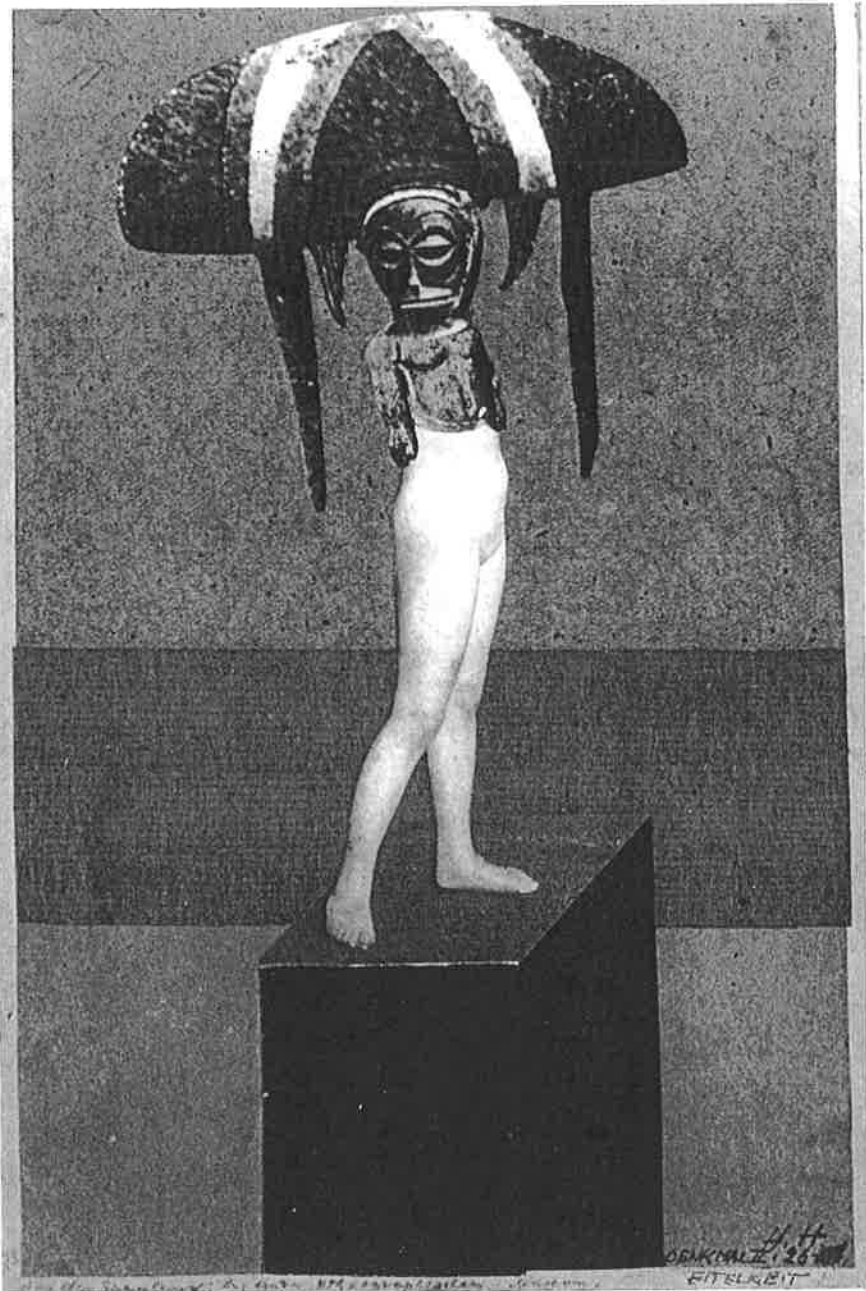
137 "Raub der Jungfrauen," (Abduction of the virgins)
Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung 33, no. 38 (Sept. 21, 1924):
1095

representing an elephant. Höch carefully cut out the reproduction along the contours of the sculpture, then placed the image on an even larger base, added to the dark blue background three cherry red fruit trees (which look like cartoon versions of jungle foliage), and substituted a New Woman's face for one of the female heads. The New Woman, recognizable by her modern hair style, is twisted around so that her head is backwards and her mouth is open as if she is yelling, making the whole narrative slightly ridiculous. The abstract wooden faces of the African sculpture are by contrast placid, expressionless, and facing forward.

It is an ironic joke: the replacement of an image of the Other with one of self. Although inclusion suggests similarity, ironic humor suggests distance and difference, and the composition invokes a shifting between these two attitudes. The base, with its museum connotations, puts the whole scene on display, offers it for containment and categorization, and provides a frame within a frame for the narrative, which is itself about entrapment and abduction.

In other works in the Ethnographic Museum series, the base fortifies the allegorical reading of the images, linking the concept of the religious fetish or ethnographic object on display with modern femininity and even androgyny. In *Denkmal II: Eitelkeit* (Monument II: Vanity), 1926 (fig. 138), a figure poses on a tall base (which stretches from below the frame to above the horizon) in a classical posture of self-display, turned three-quarters in contraposto, against a background of pink and blue colored papers.²⁷ From the waist down, the figure is a seminude female, but its chest and dwarfed arms are male. This androgynous personage produces a temporarily unsettling oscillation in the gender identity of the engaged viewer.

The head, an African mask, bears a wide, fanned headdress. This dominant photographic image appeared in the June 1930 issue of *Uhu* (fig. 139), where its caption read: "The medicine man: Masked dancer and sorcerer of the African Masai tribe."²⁸ In the magazine, the African image not only provides the seductive photographic illustration of the text; it also draws a parallel between the Western magician and the African medicine man. The photograph is particularly apt: instead of making



138 Hannah Höch, *Denkmal II: Eitelkeit* (Monument II: Vanity), from the series *Aus einem ethnographischen Museum* (From an Ethnographic Museum), 1926, 25.8 × 16.7 cm., Collection: Rössner-Höch, Backnang, Germany



Der Medizinmann
Maskentänzer und Zauberer der afrikanischen Kana-Stämme

139 "The medicine man," *Uhu* (June 1930): 56.
Kunstabibliothek, Staatliche Museen Preussischer
Kulturbesitz Berlin

the African medicine man exotic, it shows him sitting in an everyday pose of rest and contemplation, dressed to practice his trade, with villagers and huts in the distance. It is Höch who made the image exotic by appropriating the medicine man's symbolic headgear and recontextualizing it within the frame of the sculptural monument or museum display. She has also given the figure human legs, which make it appear to display him/herself. Hence the title *Vanity*. If Höch retained any sense of the magical and religious from the original *Uhu* photograph, it is here mixed with parodic commentary on the vanity of monuments and self-display.

The tension that Höch established between self-display (one that follows the patriarchal dictate to women to redefine their bodies as commodities or to men to embody the phallus-power) and selflessness (according to European myths about African religion as embodied in their art objects) was discussed at the time in terms of transcendence and anonymity. In particular, these ideas were identified with the work of the cultural critic Carl Einstein, author of the first German book devoted to African sculpture, *Negerplastik* (1915), and a member of the same Dada and proto-Dada circles as Höch and Hausmann. Einstein co-edited the Dada journals *Der blutige Ernst* (Bloody Seriousness) and *Der Pleite* (Bankruptcy) with George Grosz and John Heartfield in 1919. As a tribute to Einstein, Hausmann created an abstract woodcut cover for his copy of *Negerplastik*.²⁹ Both Hausmann and Höch probably knew Einstein personally. Given Höch's interest in ethnography, chances are that she had read *Negerplastik* and his later *Afrikanische Plastik* (1921).

One idea in Einstein's work that may have engaged Höch was the tension he

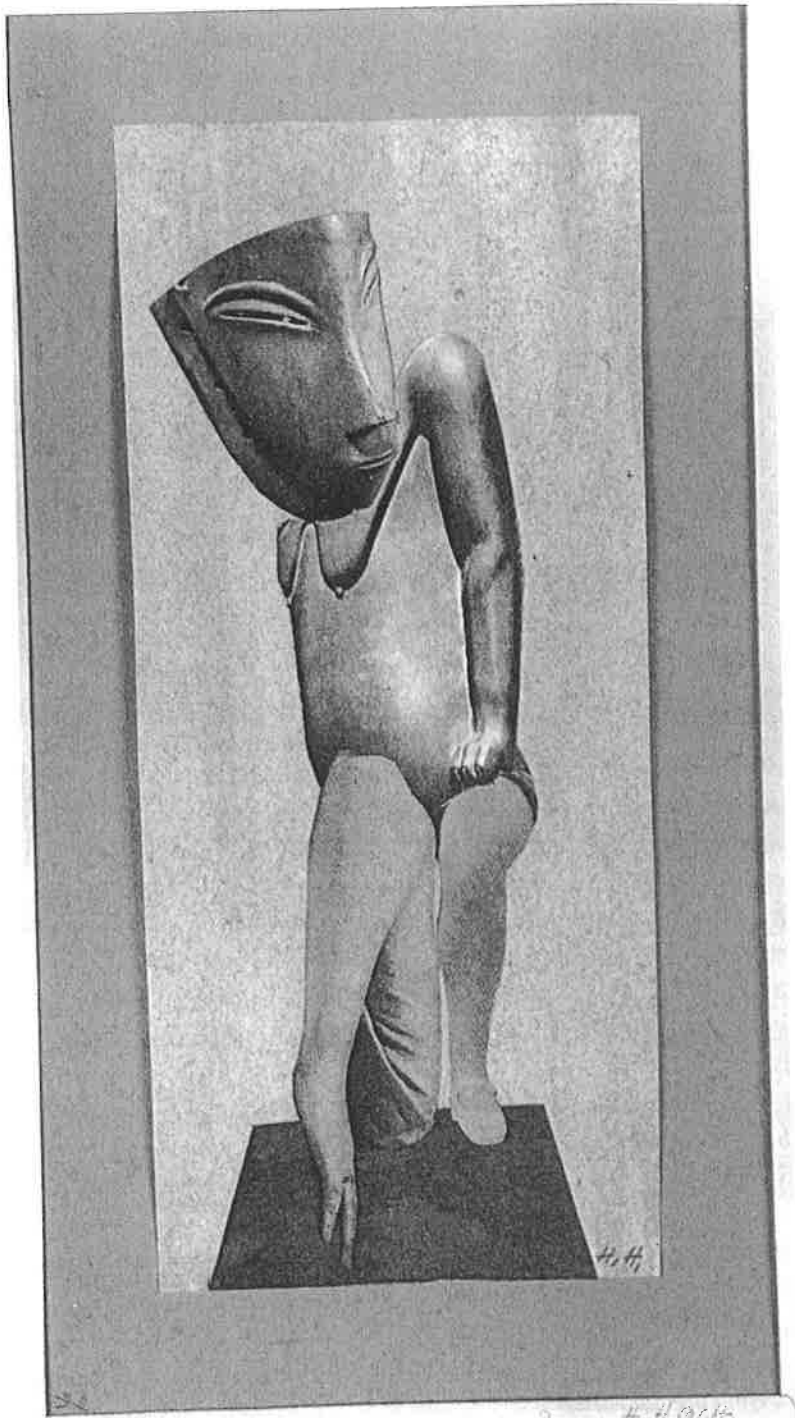
established between individualism and anti-individualism. In *Negerplastik*, Einstein wrote of African masks: "With this transformation he [the mask-wearer] becomes a balance to negating adoration. He prays to the god, performs an ecstatic tribal dance, and the mask transforms him into both the god and the tribe. This transformation gives him the most powerful idea of the objective; he incarnates the objective itself and becomes that in which all particularities are destroyed. Therefore the mask only makes sense when it is inhuman and impersonal; that is, constructive and free from the experience of the individual. It is possible that he reverses the mask as a deity when he is not wearing it."³⁰

Einstein generally disavowed ethnography and in his discussion of African religion saw primitive art as the carrier of a condensed spirituality. He attributed this same spirituality to Western contemporary art.³¹ In a similar fashion, Höch placed emblematic images in settings that refer to the ethnographic museum, not to their original tribal context. At times she retained their spiritual connotations even while employing them for cultural critique. This is in keeping with Höch's own interest in spirituality, one that is evident from her scrapbook as well as her correspondence with the artists Otto Freundlich and Thomas Ring.³²

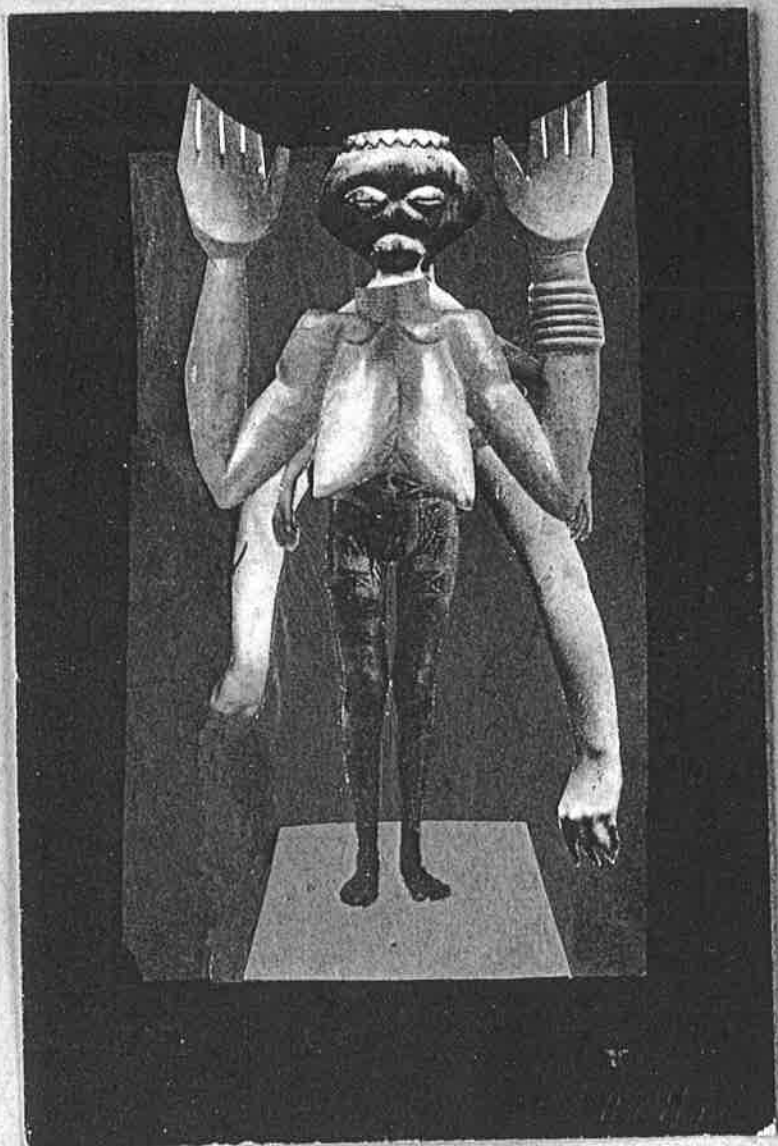
Einstein describes the function of art within African religion as one universal, monolithic practice: "Negro art is, above all else, religiously intended. Artworks are revered, as in any ancient community. The creator fashions his objects to be the divinity or its custodian, that means he possesses an initial and lasting distance from the object based on the fact that it is or contains the god. His work must be characterized as religious service."³³ In *Afrikanische Plastik*, Einstein decries the use of the word "fetish" as vague and meaningless.³⁴ Nevertheless, Einstein retains the concept of African art objects as religious fetishes and links it to his formalist analyses, providing a moral claim for his methodology.

Einstein's ideas of tribal art as religious fetishes and as embodiments of the magical and the spiritual are addressed throughout Höch's Ethnographic Museum series, most notably in *Denkmal II: Eitelkeit* (Monument II: Vanity), 1926; *Denkmal I (Nr. VIII)* (Monument [No. VIII]), c. 1925 (fig. 140); *Untitled* (Kunst-Sammlung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland), c. 1930; and *Trauer* (Sadness), 1925 (fig. 141). But these ideas vie for importance with her own ironic commentaries on femininity. The "primitive" sculpture is always combined with body parts of modern European women, often with jarring or grotesque results.

In *Monument I*, perhaps the most grotesque work in the entire series, the figure's sculptural trunk (with flattened, stylized breasts) has an amphibious quality. The "monument" has three mounted legs: one is unidentifiable as human, but its "foot" looks like an animal hoof; another is attached from behind and appears to be a trousered leg, perhaps amputated at the knee (extra trouser material is folded upward at the end); the third is a woman's leg wearing a dancing shoe. The "woman" appears to shrug one shoulder, lurch forward, and look askance. Both tense and flaccid, she digs her chin into her chest and clenches her fist. The face is an abstract sculptural mask, with long, slit eyelids through which eyes are just barely visible,



140 Hannah Höch, *Denkmal I: Aus einem ethnographischen Museum* (Monument I: From an Ethnographic Museum), 1924, 19.6 × 15.5 cm., photomontage, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin



Aus einem ethnographischen Museum 1925

141 Hannah Höch, *Trauer: Aus einem ethnographischen Museum* (Sadness: From an Ethnographic Museum), 1925, 17.6 × 11.5 cm., photomontage, Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin

giving the face a mysterious expression. The figure stands on a base or platform. The slinking, ungainly quality of the body is a bitter comment on the heroic pose of the (usually male) figure commemorated in the conventional monument. The standard heroic pose is supplanted here by a self-denigrating one with the head buried in the chest, a shoulder uncomfortably raised, the body misshapen. The effect is one of turmoil, black humor, and an inwardly inflected anger. If it were not for the barely visible eyes and the tangled posture, this would be merely a grotesque figure without identification for the viewer. But these attributes, together with the New Woman's leg, argue for a reading of this image that involves a threatening degree of closeness for the female viewer.

Trauer, though also a portrait of misshapen femininity, appears less corporeal and more sculptural and is therefore less disturbing. The androgynous, multilimbed figure is displayed frontally, almost symmetrically, connoting the solemnity of a tribal fetish – in this case borrowed as a Western emblem. The cutout reproduction of a carved head is made to seem continuous and in scale with a photograph of a tribal man visible from the waist down. Two very small white arms and hands, also in scale, dangle from the body's sides and are raised slightly in a graceful gesture. Behind these arms are two larger out-of-scale arms, probably female but unmatched. Layered over the tiny dangling hands, almost obliterating them, is a photograph of a sculptured torso with pendulous breasts and huge, upraised wooden hands. These hands extend beyond edges of the rectangular background, as if pushing the pictorial boundaries of the composition.

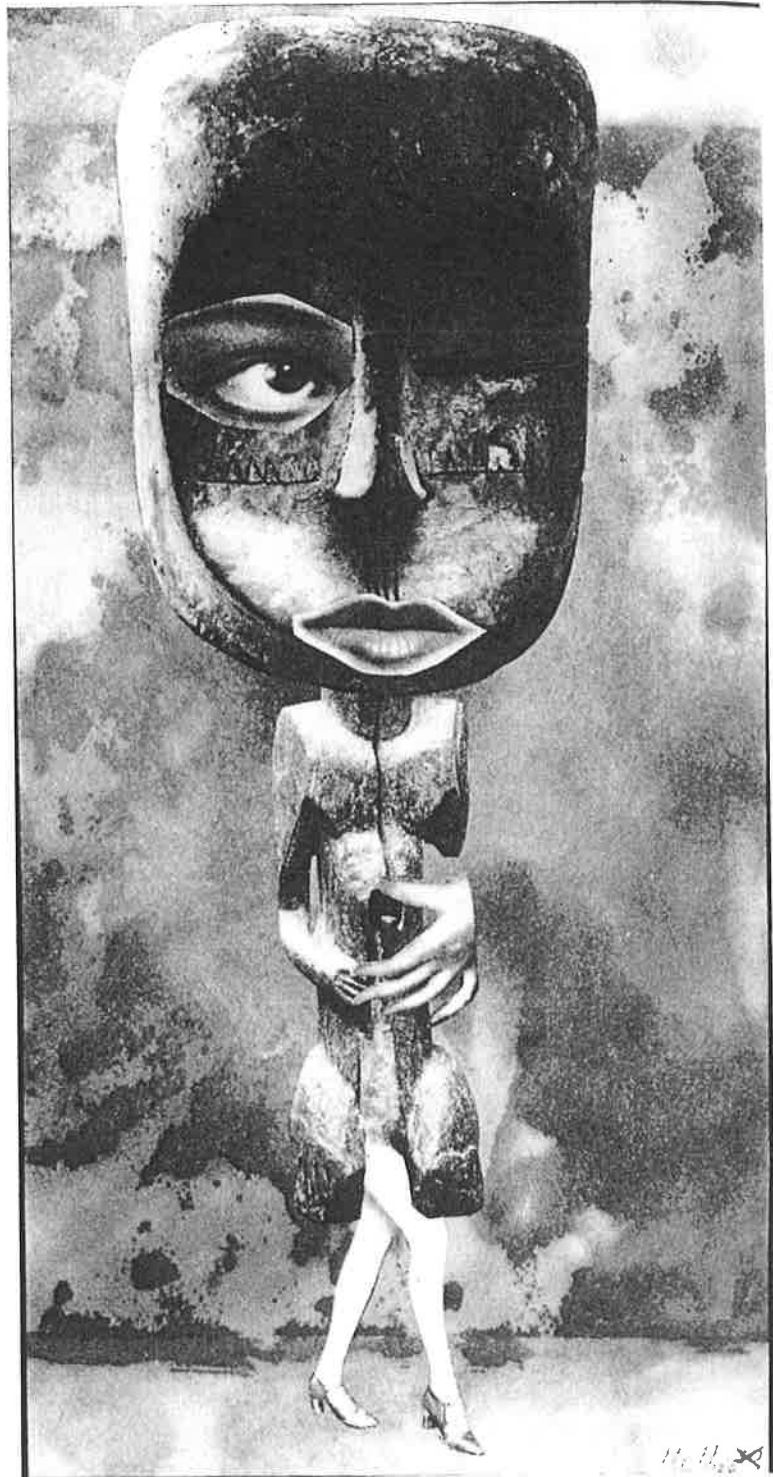
In *Trauer*, the androgyny of the figure seems to indicate not only unstable gender identity but also the Otherness of tribal magic. The body's male and female sexual organs are both marked as tribal (taken from images of tribal sculpture and costume), and together they form part of a fetish figure that seems to stand in front of and overwhelm the European women (signified by the two sets of hands and arms); the smallest figure seems almost completely engulfed. Tribal spirituality and anonymity appear to be adorned with an emblematic expression of sadness, as if, as Einstein would have it, the wearer of the tribal mask embodies the deity of sadness. In *Trauer*, Höch ambitiously combined elements of several different cultures and genders as well as the animate and the inanimate to create an imaginary fetishlike object. Eerily, the actual female limbs, though adorned by the ethnographic fragments, are superfluous: engulfed, they are both too contained and too excessive.

In *Untitled*, (fig. 142) a figure rises up out of a pyramid base that seems like a skirt or a part of the body. The torso and head are cut from a photograph of an ethnographic sculpture. The head with exaggerated eyebrows and a tusk through the nose seem masculine. The torso is overlaid with a European woman's nude breasts and arms, perfectly in proportion with the sculpture as if she is wearing them. In this display of sexuality and exoticism, a delicate fitting together of parts, the figure is not grotesque but curious, *fremd*.

At times, Höch's figures or "monuments" seem to play a double role, as weird ethnographic composite fetishes and as psychosexual phallic fetishes. By titling two



142 Hannah Höch, *Untitled*, from the series "Aus einem ethnographischen Museum" (From an Ethnographic Museum), 1929, photomontage, 49 × 32.5 cm., Kunstsammlung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn



143 Hannah Höch, *Die Süsse* (The Sweet), c. 1926, 30 × 15.5 cm., photomontage, Collection: Rössner-Höch, Backnang, Germany

from an ethnographic museum

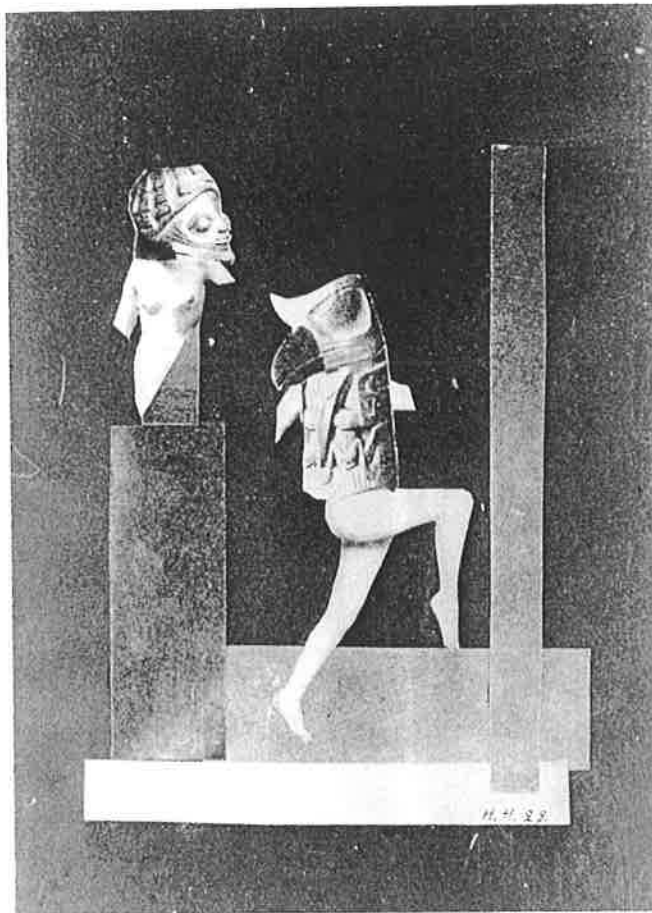
of the works in the series *Denkmal* (monument), Höch reminds us of the function of a monument as a psychosexual fetish. And in a work such as *Die Süsse* (The Sweet), c. 1926 (fig. 143), a woman seems transformed, playfully, into an ethnographic object and a phallus-shaped fetish. According to Freud's definition of fetishism, the psychosexual fetish is both an object of the male gaze and a figure of denial. In the fetishist's mind, a woman (or an object standing for her) is substituted for the missing phallus. This act of objectifying the woman of course negates her identity as a subject.

Combined with the image of tribal sculptures in Höch's Ethnographic Museum series, the female is doubly distanced, doubly marked as "Other." And yet, for female viewers, she is also the site of identification, an uncanny identification of the Other as self. *Die Süsse* is one of many works in the series in which Western body parts are montaged with ethnographic anthropomorphized sculpture: a single eye (a familiar sign of fragmented subjecthood), lips, an oversized hand, and tiny legs in dress shoes are added to a wooden sculpture. In *Die Süsse*, the New Woman is presented as a fetish object on display. It is as if the fetishized woman is dancing on stage, and the bright, multicolored background adds to the theatricality of the display.

The "sweet one's" legs recall the dancing legs Höch added to figures in Berlin Dada montages to signify dance, Dada, and femininity. The tribal entered into the equation at times, as in *Dada-Tanz* (Dada-Dance) 1922 (fig. 20), where an affinity is established between an African man and Dada dance by montaging the man's head and chest with a dress and with dancing legs. In *Masken* (Masks), c. 1924 (fig. 144), one of the figures is also dancing. In these early works and possibly *Die Süsse*, the ethnographic is used to align the Dada "spirit" with the Other and to differentiate it from Western rationality.³⁵

The few images of men in the Ethnographic Museum series tend to be simpler in signification than those of women or androgynous figures. They lack bases and so are without the overt museum reference. They seem to be mere caricatures for whom Höch borrowed from ethnographic objects to provide a masculine costume. *Nummer IX*, c. 1926 and *Hörner (Nr. X)* (Horns [No. 10]) c. 1926 (fig. 145) have anti-militaristic and humorous connotations.³⁶ *Nummer IX* depicts an androgynous pair of standing figures. They wear metal masks, and the one with a moustache carries what appears to be a weapon. This moustachioed figure has female legs and wears women's evening shoes. Any gender ambiguity here is overridden by the ironic feminization of the man, a ploy often used by Höch in her early Dada works. *Hörner* is more straightforward: it consists of a man's somewhat childlike face wearing the top half of a stone sculptural head with horns as headgear. The helmet gives the man a Viking appearance. The montage can appear humorous (chubby cheeks and bulbous nose adorned with a too-large helmet) or, like *Indian Dancer*, *Hörner* can be read as a human being adorned with and partially calcified by a heavy-handed gender role (in the case of *Indian Dancer*, a domestic woman, in the case of *Hörner*, a male warrior).

Similarly, in *Mit Mütze* (With Cap) c. 1925 (fig. 146), a man wears a military role like a mask. His upper face, topped by a cap, is montaged with the lower part of a



144 Hannah Höch, *Masken: Aus einem ethnographischen Museum* (Masks: From an Ethnographic Museum), 1929, 25 × 16 cm., photomontage, Collection: Rössner-Höch, Backnang, Germany

somber stone face, giving him the general appearance of a military or police officer.³⁷ The view is three-quarters, and the man's eyes look to the side suspiciously. There is no base or background. *J. B. und sein Engel* (J. B. and his Angel), 1925, is not from this series but is related in that Höch used a tribal sculpture in it to portray Johannes Baader (most likely) and his "angel" allegorically. And finally in *Der heilige Berg* (The Holy Mountain) 1930 (fig. 147), Höch invoked the spirituality believed to be associated with Eastern culture by using two Asian male heads of stone to which she added glasses and what looks like knitted doll clothing for a mocking effect. This pair of male bodies was probably intended as a mild parody of the intense male bonding in the film *Der heilige Berg* that was released in 1927. In this popular film, starring Louis Trenker as a mountaineer and Leni Riefenstahl as the dancer Diotima, the love of the two men (Robert and Franz) for Diotima is a pretext for expressing their love for each other. Their devotion is revealed during their trip up the mountain, when they reestablish their loyalty to each other in a melodrama that ends with their self-sacrificial deaths.



145 Hannah Höch, *Hörner*: *Aus einem ethnographischen Museum X* (Horns: From an Ethnographic Museum), c. 1926, photomontage, 19.5 × 12.5 cm., Berlinische Galerie, Berlin

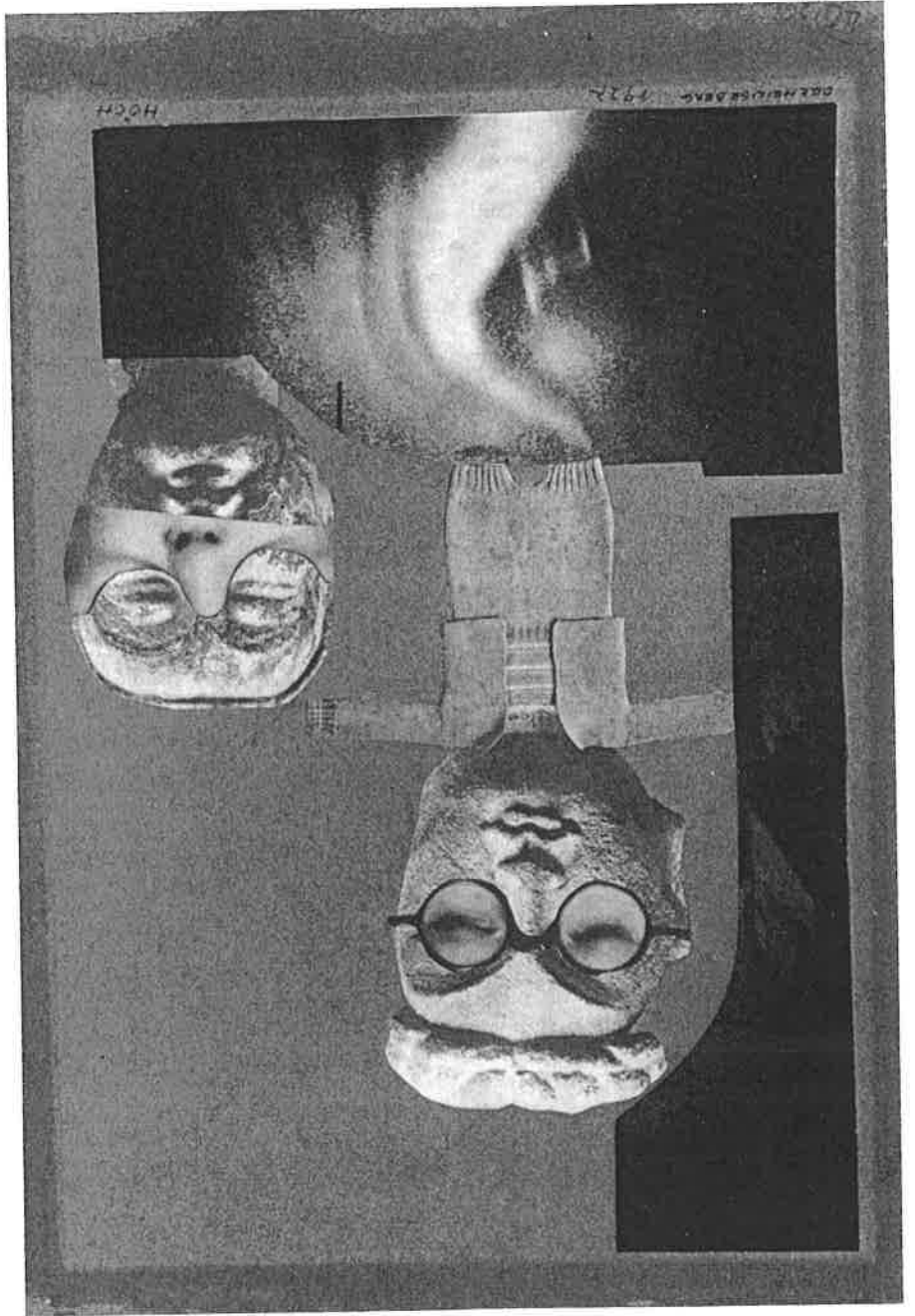


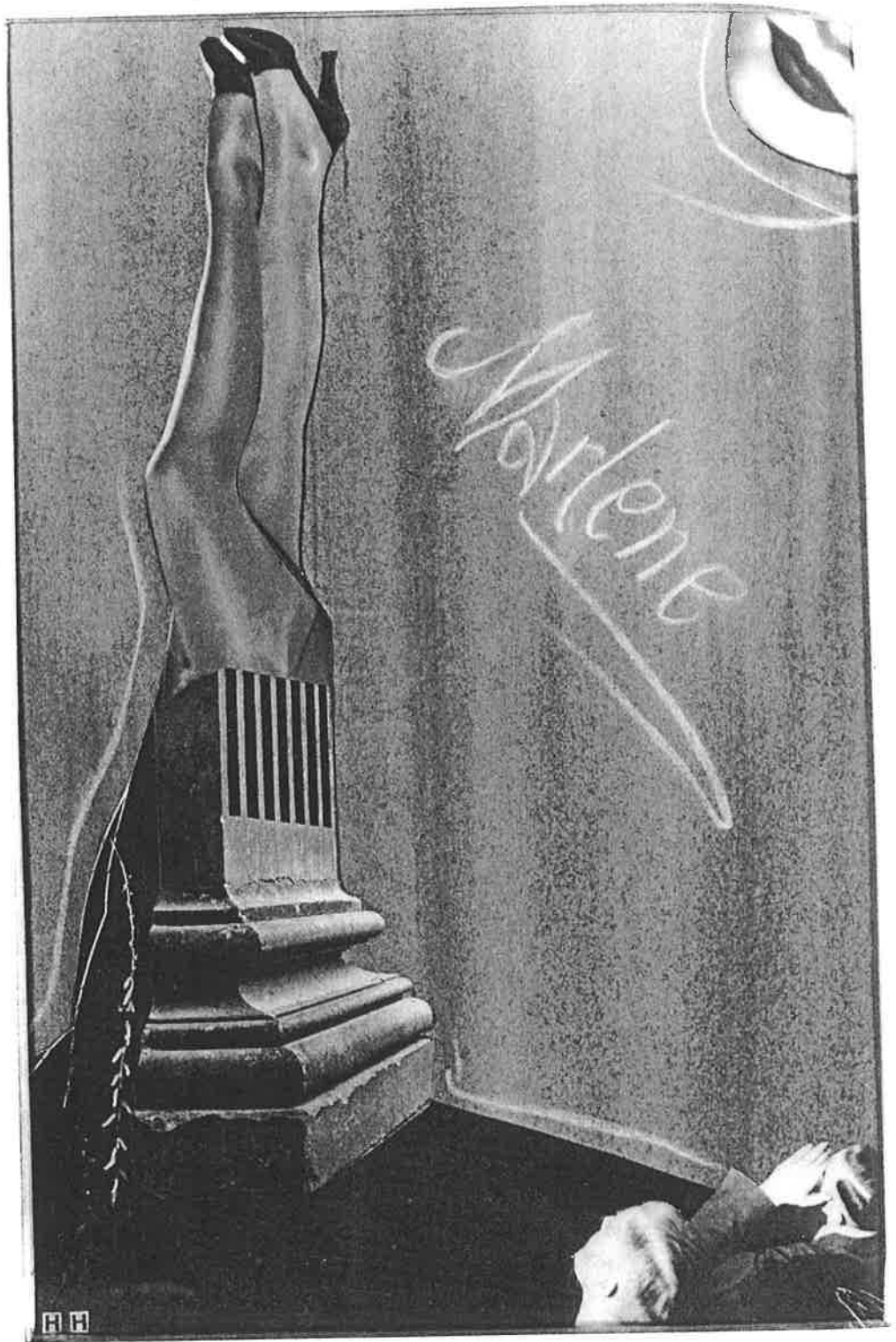
146 Hannah Höch, *Mit Mütze*: *Aus einem ethnographischen Museum IX* (With Cap: From an Ethnographic Museum IX), 1924, 27.5 × 15.5 cm., photomontage, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin

On the whole, although these male portraits comment on masculine roles, they lack the shifting and uncanny repetitions and fetish significations of the female figures in the Ethnographic Museum series. In the museum series, Höch used images of women to formulate allegorical montages that demonstrate complex representations of the contexts of gender politics for Weimar Germany's New Woman by connoting the Other, the commodity, and the psychosexual.³⁸

To conclude, I want to return to Höch's *Fremde Schönheit*, which challenges stereotypical representations of the grotesque and the normal, particularly in relation to non-Western cultures. The figure's eyes, which would usually be the site of identification for the female viewer, are located in the face of a grotesque Other. They are also magnified, suggesting an identification with the disfigured face as well as the conventionally beautiful body. The self is re-presented as the Other – revisited and rendered uncanny. Thus, as in other Ethnographic Museum montages, there is a shifting between identification and differentiation with tribal peoples (and the myths attached to their objects on display). By emphasizing this fluctuation, Höch deviated from the nonambiguous, folkloric representation of African and other tribal peoples in the *Illustrierte* and lays the foundation for a critique of racism, even if she did not pursue it further. The series' primary referent is not race, however, but the way race is socially coded in the ethnographic museum. What concerned Höch in these works is the display of culture marked as different – for the Other as well as the self in Höch's photomontages is the modern European woman.

147 Hannah Höch, *Der heilige Berg, Aus einem ethnographischen Museum XII* (The Holy Mountain: From an Ethnographic Museum XII), 1927, 33.7 × 22.5 cm, photomontage, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin





148 Hannah Höch, *Marlene*, 1930, 36.7 × 24.2 cm., photomontage, Dakis Joannou, Athens

androgyny & spectatorship

6

In 1930, the same year that Marlene Dietrich's film *The Blue Angel* was released, Hannah Höch made the photomontage *Marlene* (fig. 148). In the montage, two men gaze upward at a pair of gigantic legs adorned with stockings and high heels, mounted upside down on a pedestal. A bright red mouth is positioned in the upper right corner, outside the line of the male gaze. The mouth is instead offered directly as an object of desire to the male or female viewer of the montage. The name "Marlene" is scrawled across the sky in large letters, as if by a fan. With its challenging array of sexual signs and its deliberate allusion to Dietrich, an actress well known for her androgynous image and her ambiguous sexual identity, the photomontage provokes a wealth of questions about gender identity and sexuality, strategies of representation, and the reading of imagery by a Weimar audience. Viewed in its historical context, Höch's

image takes its place amid a proliferation of images of androgyny during the Weimar years, produced both by avant-garde artists and by mass culture institutions.

Today, many critical or theoretical treatments of gender promote the androgynous ideal as a liberation from constricting masculine and feminine roles. But if we examine this strain of imagery in the historical context of Weimar culture, we see that representations of androgyny and of ambiguous sexual identity functioned in two fundamentally opposed fashions at that time.¹ For both the producer and the viewer in the Weimar era, images of androgyny might have suggested the possible realization of a utopia of shifting and antihierarchical gender identities. On the other hand, such representations might also have fed reactionary ideologies of individual-

ism. Only by returning to the social context of such images and by examining their specific strategies of representation can we determine the significance of particular depictions of androgyny.

In representations of the Weimar period, androgyny stood for gender roles and sexual identities that were themselves often blurred in German society, particularly in the depiction of lesbians, bisexual women, or modern (New) women. The prevailing beliefs in Weimar about sexuality generally posited an inherent androgyny or bisexuality as a foundation for understanding heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual practices. Though the various schools of psychologists conceived of this fundamental bisexuality in radically differing ways, the postulate of inherent dualism had wide acceptance among sexologists and psychologists and among nonspecialists as well. Even Freud, in formulating his remarks on the psyche's fundamental bisexuality, strove to dispel belief in the idea of a "third sex," the widely held idea that homosexuals comprised a biological category apart from both men and women. Freud hoped to lead his readers toward his own more sociological concept of the formation of sexual identity. In contrast, sexologists Otto Weininger and Magnus Hirschfeld were outspoken proponents of the "third sex" concept, even arguing that female homosexuals were biologically more masculine than other women – and that this difference was congenital.² This argument, commonly accepted at the time, is most familiar today from British author Radclyffe Hall's 1928 novel, *The Well of Loneliness*.

Today the concept of the third sex seems bizarre, but for homosexual writers of the first decades of the century it was important in forging an identity and self-acceptance within the homosexual community.³ Activist homosexual groups such as Hirschfeld's Scientific Humanitarian Committee used the third sex myth as a tool in the fight for legal reform, arguing that as this so-called perversion was a result of nature, not criminality, it should not be punishable by law.⁴ Understandably, Hirschfeld's work was greeted with ambivalence by many Weimar homosexuals; although they supported his legal activism for homosexual rights, they resented his definition of homosexuality as a deviation.

The dangerous side of the third sex myth is most apparent in Otto Weininger's work. Theories of congenital sexuality underlay the construction of Weininger's biological hierarchies. He claimed that every individual is constituted with a fixed ratio between masculinity and femininity, thus allowing him or her to be typed accordingly. He held that one is born with this ratio and that this thesis could be extended to a belief in bisexuality. This seemingly benign idea was clearly stated in the 1906 edition of his *Sex and Character*: "In my view all actual organisms have both homosexuality and hetero-sexuality."⁵ Such pronouncements addressed widely perceived anxieties about the ambiguities of gender identity and made this turn-of-the-century book popular during the Weimar era.

Weininger's book also revealed the dark side of its author's ideology. Weininger, a Jewish anti-Semite, was also, in the most exact sense, a misogynist. He argued that a woman's worth depended entirely on the amount of masculinity she possessed:

"Manlike women wear their hair short, affect manly dress, study, drink, smoke, are fond of mountaineering, or devote themselves passionately to sport. . . . A woman's demand for emancipation and her qualification for it are in direct proportion to the amount of maleness in her."⁶ Weininger rigorously followed this logic to the conclusion that lesbians were superior to other women because they were more masculine. He suggested "the possibility that homo-sexuality is a higher form than hetero-sexuality. For the present, it is enough to say that homo-sexuality in a woman is the outcome of her masculinity and presupposes a higher degree of development."⁷ Theories such as Weininger's, then, ascribed bisexuality to a *visible*, physical combination of masculine and feminine attributes. This created a climate in which images of androgyny could refer not only to issues of gender roles but ones of basic sexual identity as well. In this new context, the visual stereotype of the lesbian as androgynous woman could cut two ways: it could promote self-identification, but by the same token it could lock the lesbian into a rigid hierarchical classification.

Though Freud's writings on bisexuality were also based on biology, they aimed at refuting the congenital theory of bisexuality and homosexuality. Freud argued instead that familial and social pressures shaped sexual preference. In his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905), Freud maintained that manifestations of homosexuality were common in puberty and that later developments toward heterosexuality were in part socially determined. Freud saw its "authoritative prohibition by society" as one of the chief factors leading to the renunciation of this juvenile homosexuality.⁸

In his 1920 article on "The Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman," Freud twice insisted that his subject, a young bourgeois woman sent to him by her parents to "cure" her homosexuality, was in no way neurotic. Indeed, he objected at length to the whole idea of curing homosexuals.⁹ He argued that conversion to heterosexuality is not possible; that at most a willing patient could be introduced to her or his inherent bisexuality. Freud did validate the desire to live a heterosexual life, but primarily for such pragmatic reasons as social acceptability. He wrote: "One must remember that normal sexuality too depends upon a restriction in the choice of object. In general, to undertake to convert a fully developed homosexual into a heterosexual does not offer much more prospect of success than the reverse, except that for good, practical reasons the latter is never attempted."¹⁰

In the early twentieth-century German debates on sexuality, Freud's speculations about the beliefs held by his readers are significant for cultural history. The persistence of the congenital third sex myth can be detected even in Freud's text in his perception of the biases of his hypothetical readers in 1920.¹¹ There, as usual, Freud addressed potential objections to his arguments, and thus we learn what he assumed to be his readers' prejudices: "The mystery of homosexuality is by no means so simple as it is commonly depicted in popular expositions – 'a feminine mind, bound therefore to love a man, but unhappily attached to a masculine body; a masculine mind, irresistibly attracted by women but alas! imprisoned in a feminine body.'"¹² He continues later: "In addition to their manifest heterosexuality, a very consider-

able measure of latent or unconscious homosexuality can be detected in all normal people. If these findings are taken into account, then, clearly, the supposition that nature in a freakish mood created a 'third sex' falls to the ground."¹³ The concept of universal bisexuality, then, seems to have had a widespread currency in Weimar Germany, whether in Freud's formulation, or in those of the sexologists he opposed.

According to some theorists, this innate bisexuality was manifest in a person's physical appearance. Any representation of androgyny during Weimar, therefore, had the potential to signify bisexuality or a degree of homosexuality. This potential, however, was unequally distributed between male and female images of androgyny. Male homosexuality remained illegal throughout the Weimar years despite the widespread acceptance of a theory of universal bisexuality.¹⁴ Lesbianism, on the other hand, was never against the law – less an index of toleration than of non-recognition. This double standard suggests that whereas an image of a feminized man may have appeared to the Weimar viewer as obviously and illegally homosexual, an image of a masculinized woman may not have been so easily categorized. Such images of androgynous women, then, allowed for varying significations. The masculine roles newly occupied by women in labor and political spheres offered another and related set of connotations for female images. A matrix of significations was possible, depending on the image and the arena of reception, linking androgyny, modernism, the New Woman, and a new sexuality.

By late Weimar, Hannah Höch's own sexual identity had changed radically. She had left Raoul Hausmann in 1922 and by 1926 had begun a lesbian relationship with the Dutch writer Til Brugman, whom she had met through her close friends Kurt and Helma Schwitters. By the fall of 1926, Höch had moved to The Hague to live with Brugman.¹⁵ The two lived together there until 1929, when they moved to Berlin (fig. 149). Their relationship lasted nine years, until 1935, making it one of the most enduring and stable bonds of Höch's life.

Höch's relationship with Brugman may have further sensitized her to gender issues, but it is not clear whether Höch identified herself as lesbian or as bisexual (these distinctions were not so sharply drawn in Weimar as they are today). Between themselves, Höch and Brugman did not seem to feel it necessary or desirable to define their relationship as lesbian; in their letters, they discussed it simply as a private love relationship.¹⁶ In one quite moving letter to her sister Grete, Höch expressed her deep love for Brugman:

I am and will be very happy with Til. We will be a model of how two women can form a single rich and balanced life. Each day I find out wonderful new things about Til that enrich me and allow me to see life in a new light. My dear Gretelein, you are probably the only one who realized *how* thoroughly the chapter "man" is finished for me. The beautiful and the awful endured, explored, and exhausted. I knew there could not be another man in the world who had something new to offer me, so I began to withdraw and exist only for myself in the purest sense of the term. Besides *you* and your children, no one got close to me – inside – I had



149 Hannah Höch and Til Brugman around 1930

ruled out further adventures. I didn't want to give anyone any of myself, and in truth I didn't desire anymore. Now, all the gates have been thrown open again, and I stroll happily out from myself and "it" marches back into me. To be closely connected with another woman for me is something totally new, since it means being taken by the spirit of my own spirit, confronted by a very close relative.¹⁷

Although Höch's relationship with Brugman was eventually accepted by her family and friends, neither Höch nor Brugman were active in homosexual organizations at this time, and, outside a small circle, Höch apparently had no public identity as a lesbian. (In 1935 Höch began a relationship with Kurt Matthies, a younger man whom she married in 1938; the marriage lasted until 1944).¹⁸ Her shifting sexual preferences were not, for the most part, directly reflected in her paintings and photomontages. Rather, in keeping with representations of the New Woman and certain leftist ideologies of Weimar, her androgynous images depict a pleasure in the movement between gender positions and a deliberate deconstruction of rigid masculine and feminine identities.¹⁹

Höch's photomontage *Vagabunden* (Vagabonds), 1926, probably alludes to her new homosexual relationship with Brugman. In *Vagabunden*, affectionate caricature replaces the stinging irony of the earlier Dada photomontages. Although Höch had previously given male figures female bodies in order to mock them, in this work it is clear that her use of composite male-female figures was changing. In the montage, two women are shown traveling together; one is in sports clothes and the other, heavier one is in a combination of masculine and feminine attire. This seems to be a

double portrait of Höch and Brugman holding hands, arms raised, and may celebrate Höch and Brugman's actual or projected travels.²⁰

Höch did not write about her positions on homosexuality. To some degree, however, Höch's attitudes toward the prevalent theories of bisexuality and homosexuality can be inferred from Brugman's early short stories and grotesques, which Höch read and edited between 1926 and 1935.²¹ Brugman's position is clearer. Her short story "Warenhaus der Liebe" (Department Store of Love), c. 1934, shares the widespread homosexual ambivalence toward Hirschfeld's sexology. The story is a thinly veiled parody of Hirschfeld's Berlin Institute for Sexology, which was in operation from 1919 to 1933 and provided people of all sexual persuasions with sex counseling and therapy. Brugman makes an analogy with the department store, then a newly arrived mecca of consumerism and entertainment in Germany's big metropolises. Brugman's story describes a scientific department store where everyone can purchase their favorite fetish objects and achieve complete satisfaction of their desires. But the military objects to the store, claiming that it curtails aggression and that, by making old-fashioned sexual intercourse obsolete, it endangers population growth. As a result, the military closes the department store. Brugman's story derides the National Socialists, but her humor at Hirschfeld's expense is sympathetic. The story was most likely written after May 10, 1933, the date the Nazis plundered the Institute, closed it, and burned its books.

An ambiguous and androgynous representation of the New Woman was central to Höch's late Weimar work; her montage techniques encouraged a sense of oscillation between gender roles in her viewers. Ambiguity and oscillation between gender positions do not function uniformly for all spectators, however, and I want to consider specifically what Höch's work may have meant for female viewers. At least in theory, different individuals encounter visual texts in markedly different ways, and part of any female viewer's anxiety in looking at images lies in a conflict between identification with the masculine or the feminine.²² As feminist film theorists such as Laura Mulvey and Miriam Hansen have pointed out, women in male society, although socialized as feminine, have also generally had to identify with the masculine position as the primary location of action and power. Self-conscious oscillation between the two roles offers women multiple pleasures: first, the possibility or fantasy of occupying both gender positions; second, the perception of both as unfixed or unstable, which is a pleasure certainly to those at the bottom of the gender hierarchy; and third, the destabilization of the hierarchy itself. What is privileged in this case is not oscillation itself but forms of reception in which the personal pleasures derived from viewing are connected to the broader desires to dissolve class and gender hierarchies.

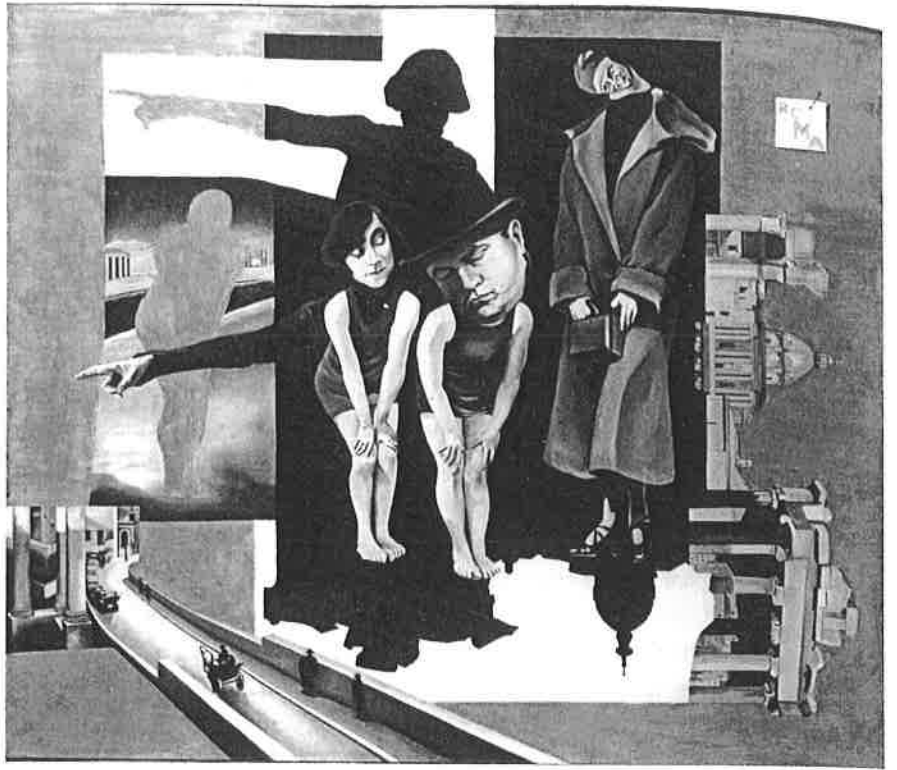
As the degree of ambiguity in Höch's montages increased in her late Weimar representations of androgyny, she used irony and narrative less often and in new ways. In particular, the absence of a distancing irony as a technique of resolution reduces stability in the gender and sexual identities portrayed. *Der Vater* (1920),

from Höch's Dada period, reads as quite openly ironic. As in her famous *Cut with the Kitchen Knife* of the same time, she uses a centrifugal composition that rotates around a central figure, employing many signs of modernity and motion: images of technology, dancers, gymnasts, and boxers, superimposed on packaging and advertising materials, signs of consumer culture. In the center is "the father," a composite figure with a man's head and a woman's body, holding a baby. Around him circulate stretching and leaping athletes, one a black boxer, the others three New Women. These three figures derive from the same stereotype, familiar from the *Illustrierte*, in which the joy of movement and springing into the air are read as signs of new female emancipation and modernity.²³

The viewer is not offered an idealized androgynous New Father. Rather, the montage is ironic, and the ineffectual paternal figure bears the brunt of its humor. While the father protectively holds the infant, the boxer seems to aim a punch at the baby's eye. The superimposition of cutout eyes formally disrupts the wholeness of the heads of the man and baby. The effect of *Der Vater's* irony is that the androgynous father appears not so much as a figure of two genders but rather as a ridiculed man. As has often been noted, the feminization of men is usually used to elicit humor, whereas the masculinization of women has more varied functions.

In general terms, the mechanism of irony can be defined as simultaneously representing a sign and its opposite, reconciling the two through a distancing humor. In other words, irony is saying one thing and meaning its opposite, usually signaling detachment from the statement as a whole. Thus a distanced irony can be seen as overriding potential ambiguity or double readings to produce a unified meaning. Irony can synthesize oppositions; within the dialectical motion between disjunctive photomontage fragments – which variously signify masculine and feminine gender roles – this synthesizing function enables irony to halt the operations of oscillation.²⁴ By 1925, when Höch painted *Roma* (fig. 150), a composition that imitates her photomontages, she employed a less distanced irony and showed greater interest in representing gender ambiguities than during the Dada years. In the painting, the actress Asta Nielsen, dressed in a bathing suit, crouches coquettishly next to Mussolini. Pointing vigorously to the right, Nielsen seems to be ordering Il Duce out of Rome. A theater and film actress particularly popular with women, Nielsen was known for her portrayal of such male roles as Hamlet.²⁵ In Höch's painting, Nielsen serves as a figure of identification for the viewer. She is shown from the shoulders up, in her Hamlet persona. In fact, the image is based on a publicity photograph for a film version of *Hamlet* published in *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung* in 1920 (fig. 151).²⁶ Mussolini is also presented androgynously in this painting, with his head attached to a woman's body. Ambiguity and contradiction in the echoed pair of women's bodies signify flirtation, athleticism, mockery, and command.

Höch's 1925 photomontage *Liebe im Busch* (Love in the Bush) (fig. 152), depicts two figures, composites of masculine and feminine, black and white, romancing in a natural setting. The two figures embrace among oversized stalks of grass; the black figure hugs the white one, who is a montage of jutting arms, trousered legs, and a



150 Hannah Höch, *Roma*, 1925, 90 × 106 cm., oil on canvas, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin



151 "Asta Nielsen als Hamlet" (Asta Nielsen as Hamlet), *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* 29, no. 37 (Sept. 12, 1920): 423 (left)



152 Hannah Höch, *Liebe im Busch* (Love in the Bush), 1925, 23 × 24 cm., photomontage, Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth (right)

trunkless head; the white head is a woman's, her hair cut in a short, modern style and her eyes and mouth open in excitement. The montage also connotes primitivism, the jungle (*Busch*), and the myth of African culture for the German avant-garde (which Höch explored in her Ethnographic Museum series). *Liebe im Busch* was exhibited in the 1931 Berlin Fotomontage exhibition where it would have contrasted sharply with the rational *Sachlichkeit* (matter-of-factness) of advertising photomontages by Piet Zwart and Paul Schuitema representing mass-produced electrical parts juxtaposed with brand name logos.²⁷

Höch's works produced later in Weimar focus increasingly on the pleasures and confusions of gender oscillation. In *Siebenmeilensteifel* (Seven-League Boots), c. 1934 (fig. 153), two female legs, naked except for midcalf laced boots, fly above a village, spread in a full straddle leap.²⁸ Strapped around the crotch (there is no torso) is a spiral-shaped shell whose point faces forward, metaphorically like an erect penis. Male genitalia are also suggested by the bulbous section of the shell that hangs between the legs. The spread-eagled legs and the strapped on phallus set up for the viewer a reading of this surreal body fragment as not only androgynous but transsexual.

Perhaps Höch's most ambiguous and sophisticated image of androgyny is *Domp-teuse* (Tamer), c. 1930, (fig. 154). The central figure has a female mannequin's head but masculine, muscular, hairy arms and a flat-chested torso. The figure wears a sleeveless, ornamented top that could be part of a circus costume and a skirt. The mannequin's head is taken from a black-and-white photograph, the arms, torso, and skirt from color photographs, and the sea lion's eyes in the lower right from a black-and-white photograph tinted sepia. The viewer is always aware of looking at photo fragments, and so the constructed nature of the figure is evident, preventing a reading of the figure as "natural." The pieces are skillfully fitted together and carefully proportioned to avoid any discrepancy of scale. The impossibility of reading a single gender is even more pronounced than in earlier works like *Roma*. Here, even the remarkable framing device is a contradictory montage of a traditional frame (barely visible behind the figure), surrounded by brass studs and covered by the torn edges of the central montage – signifiers of both containment and overflow, connoting a controlled violence.

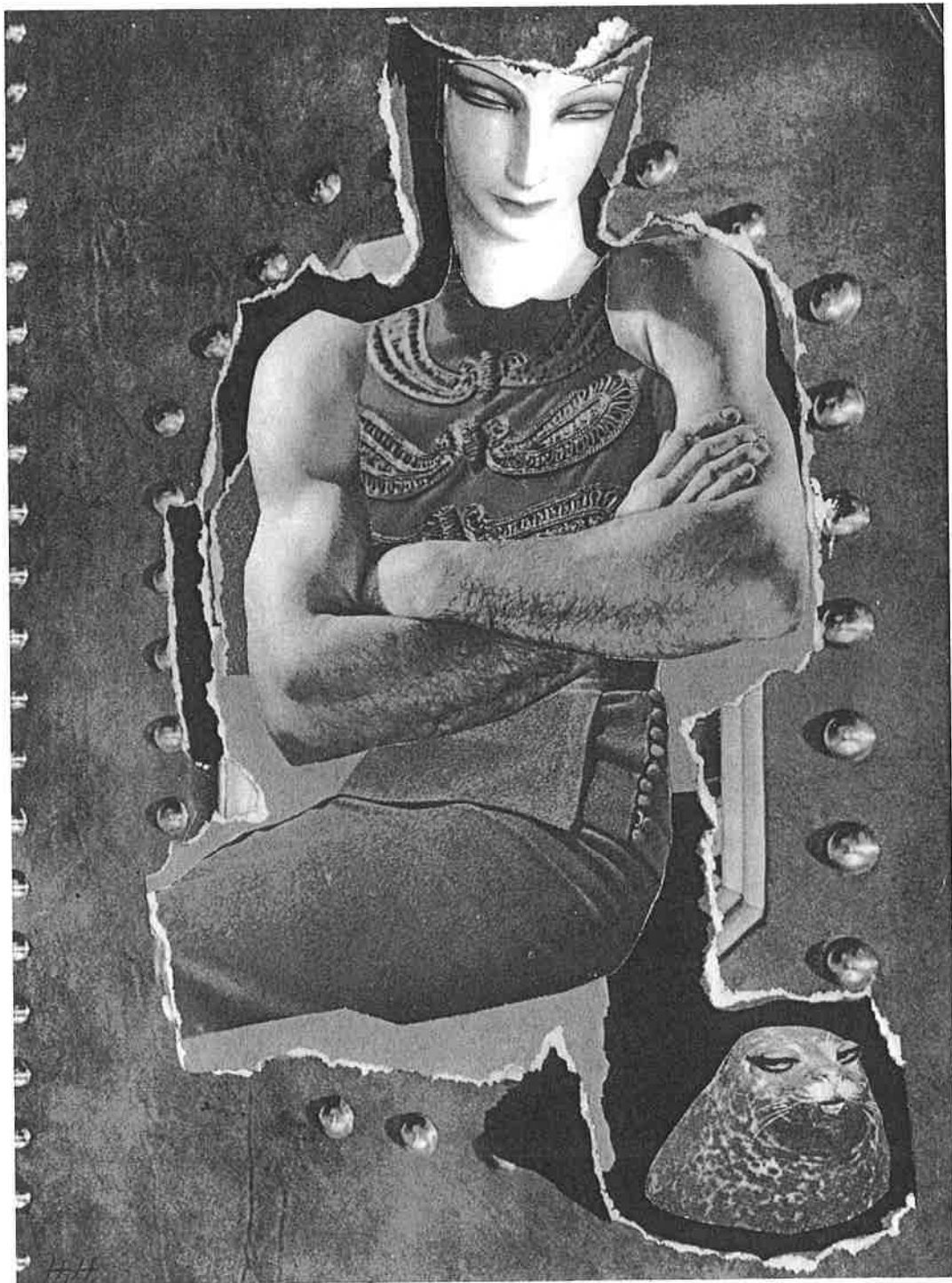
The mannequin figure of *Tamer* is seated, arms crossed, and seems to look down at the sea lion; along with the title, *Tamer*, the pose suggests domination. The contrast of scale between the large mannequin and the small sea lion creates a sense of anxiety. Yet the tamer is also strangely beautiful, appearing somewhat meditative, whereas the sea lion looks outward, engaging the viewer with a sly, uncanny gaze. As the viewer looks back and forth between the mannequin and the animal, in fact, it is unclear who is dominant. On a closer look, the mannequin's face appears quite passive. The contradiction between the two faces – the mannequin's blank and porcelainlike, the sea lion's darkened as if with makeup – denies a unified, narrative reading and promotes double meanings. Although there is a contrast between the artificial mannequin and the natural animal, the shapes of the two sets of eyes, which



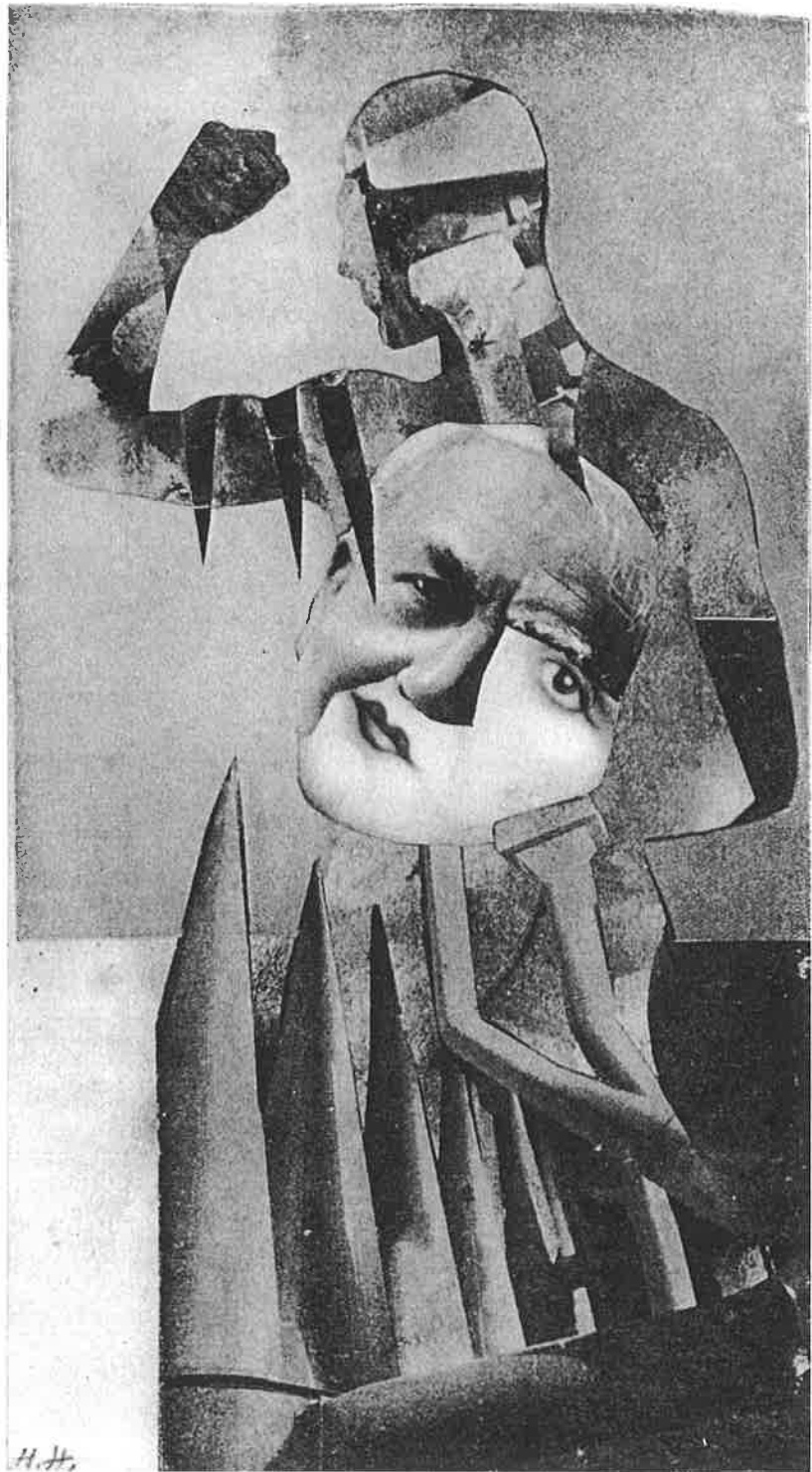
153 Hannah Höch, *Siebenmeilenstiefel* (Seven-League Boots), c. 1934, 22.9 × 32.2 cm., photomontage, Hamburger Kunsthalle

echo one another, establish a formal similarity. The androgyny of the mannequin seems to be part of a secret; the figure is inaccessible, enclosed within itself by its self-reflective gaze and folded arms.

Equally complex is Höch's slightly later *Die starken Männer* (the title could mean literally *The Strong Men* or, idiomatically, *Male Weight Lifters*), 1931 (fig. 155). In this work, a composite face of an older man and younger woman is superimposed over the silhouette of the boxer Max Schmeling flexing his biceps. (Schmeling was an athlete much admired and feted by the male avant-garde, including George Grosz and John Heartfield).²⁹ The head is surrounded by jagged forms, circled as a precious object, doubly framed yet precariously balanced. Although Höch usually distorts scale and proportion within a face, making one eye too large, for instance, here there is a close fit in the joining of the masculine and feminine faces. Both eyes engage the viewer directly in this central image. Even though both halves match in scale, the photographic facial fragments differ in skin tone and degrees of aging so that the parts do not quite meld into a whole. For the viewer the tendency is first to



154 Hannah Höch, *Dompteuse (Tamer)*, c. 1930, 35.5 × 26 cm., photomontage, Kunsthaus Zürich



155 Hannah Höch, *Die starken Männer* (The Strong Men), 1931, 24.5 × 13.5 cm., photomontage, Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Stuttgart

engage one half, then the other, through the different gazes. Thus subject-object confusion can occur in terms of gender, posing the question of whether one is viewing a representation of self or Other. The constant shifting is aided by the off-balance position of the head. At the same time, in the middle ground the jagged, phallic forms connote masculinity; two of these forms encroach on the outline of the male face. The background silhouette of Schmeling flexing his arm is painted in with warm red and brown watercolors, and the buttocks are carefully delineated. The focus on these two sites – arm and buttocks – presents the boxer as the object of his own gaze and of others' desire. Although he looks inward at his arm muscle (and thus completes a closed circuit of a narcissistic gaze), his body is turned so the buttocks face outward, emphasizing the crevice that resembles a feminine sign of availability. Jagged forms continue in a diagonal line beneath the buttocks, creating a juxtaposition of sharply phallic shapes with the dark crevice. Below the waist the athlete's body is feminized, but above it is made overtly masculine.

In spite of the fact that feminine elements here are inserted into a frame of primarily masculine attributes, what is exceptional about Höch's montage is that the head can never be resolved into a unity; it is always two genders. Images from Weimar mass media in which androgyny has been commodified as fashion appear, finally, as women who have taken on the attributes of men. In contrast, Höch's *Strong Men*, in preserving ambiguity, also maintains the radical potential of photomontage at a time when commercial design had emptied that potential through its emphasis on pure form and clean design.

Clearly there are a range of identifications and objects of desire offered here. Through juxtaposition and denial of closure, Höch's representation of androgyny encourages the mechanisms of the fetishizing gaze to shift between masculine and feminine objects. *The Strong Men* is not only a representation of androgyny but a deliberate destabilizing of the viewer's gaze. It institutes an oscillation between polarized positions of masculinity and femininity, establishes a bisexual relationship to the object of desire, and shifts between disavowal and recognition of that bisexuality. All of these responses can be described as fundamental conditions of female spectatorship. In the case of Höch's *Strong Men*, both male and female viewers are put in the feminine position.

Höch's images differ sharply from most other Weimar representations of androgyny, bisexuality, and lesbianism. The broad array of representations of gender and sexual roles in Weimar is complex and demands a more thorough analysis than is possible here. Certain androgynous images used in Weimar-era advertisements, however, are of particular relevance to Höch's montages – if only by their marked contrast. Body culture images were frequently used to advertise products in the new mass media market, and in these, androgyny could be read as a sign for intensified individualism embodied in a single consumer. It comes as no surprise, for example, that immediately after the release of the enormously popular Körperkultur film *Wege zu Kraft und Schönheit* in 1925, stills from the film were used in advertisements in the

fashionable Ullstein bi-monthly magazine *Die Dame* and elsewhere.³⁰ These body-as-machine images claim a fantastic plenitude or abundance for the body: that it can be at once masculine and feminine, nature and machine, youth and immortality.

Print media images in Weimar almost always showed women “improved” through masculinization. What was presented as plenitude was actually a subsuming of femininity under masculine signs. And yet not all images in the mass market print media promoted such plenitude. The popular illustrated newspapers often carried jokes about the difficulty of distinguishing between men and women. For example, *BIZ* ran a contest in May 1920 called “Bub oder Mädcl?” (Guy or Girl?), offering readers a variety of rewards totaling approximately two thousand marks for correctly identifying the gender of young people in six different photographs (fig. 156). The photos were published a second time and answers given on June 18. Thus, both in ads and in contests, some sort of resolution was offered—either through buying a product or naming the correct gender. Although one cannot underestimate the pleasures these images provided by exploring gender confusions, one must question how these pleasures were being redirected into easy resolutions.

Despite their limitations, these androgynous images could have provided an important sense of identification for Weimar women involved in new gender roles. This is most clear for the lesbian subculture with regard to images readable not only as androgynous but also as lesbian or bisexual. As Michel Foucault warns in the first volume of his *History of Sexuality*, speaking about alternative sexualities is not necessarily liberating and can, in fact, feed the myth of sexual liberation as integral to political revolution. According to Foucault, the inverse of this myth actually takes place: by obeying the command to speak about sexuality, to represent and explore it constantly, the speaker participates in the promotion of sexuality; this, in turn, contributes to the self-image of the bourgeoisie as all-powerful, life-enhancing, body-intensified, expanding, and eternal. Foucault’s warning is particularly apt for images of androgyny circulating within the discourse of *Körperkultur* in early twentieth-century Germany.

In the case of Weimar’s lesbian subculture, however, Foucault’s logical neatness fails. Despite the prevalent images of lesbian culture and nightlife in twenties Berlin, for the most part lesbian life at that time and earlier was marked by invisibility and silence.³¹ For lesbians during early Weimar, the creation of androgyny as a *fashion* cut two ways, a sign of both acceptance and co-optation or dismissal. This duality confronts the reader in many Weimar mass media photographs. In *Uhu* (also published by Ullstein), for instance, images of androgynous women were often accompanied by ultra-“feminine” signs (such as a childish hands-to-mouth gesture of a model) to counter a lesbian “masculine” identification.³² Thus representations of bisexuality and homosexuality in Weimar cannot be seen simply as a form of repressive tolerance in Foucault’s sense. For lesbians, such images, however problematic, could enforce the basic and crucial functions of identity and a belief in the right to exist at all.³³

Both the usefulness and limitations of Foucault’s argument are made clear by a famous example of mass culture representation of homosexuality during Weimar,

Bub oder Mädel?

Die Angliederung im Typ

Unsere neue Preisfrage



A



B



C

Sieht man einen Typus Flabber oder überwandert durch die Feder gehen, beobachtet man junge Menschen im Ranee oder im Huberboot, so fragt man sich oft: Sind es Jungen oder Mädel? Die Mode des kurzgeschulterten Frauenhaars, der immer geringer werdende Unterschied in der Kleidung führt dazu, daß man manchmal die Knaben von den Mädchen kaum unterscheiden kann. Betrachtet man aber die Gesichter der Halberwachsenen aus der Nähe, so zeigt sich, daß die wertvollste Angliederung der Typen nicht nur auf Äußerung, Haltung und Gebärden beschränkt bleibt, sondern daß auch die Gesichter nicht mehr deutlich mädchenhaft oder knabenhaft sind. Es hat sich bei vielen jungen Menschen eine Art Einzeltypus des Weiblichen herausgebildet, in dem besondere männliche oder weibliche Merkmale nicht mehr zu erkennen sind. Die weichen Züge hier eine Weiblichkeit und fordern unsere Leser auf, die Bilder physiognomisch zu prüfen und zu erraten, welche von den photographierten jungen Leuten Knaben und welche Mädchen sind. Bei dem Lösungserfolg ist zu jedem



D



E



F

der sechs unter den Weiblichen lebenden Aussehen angegeben, ob die dargestellte Person für ein Mädchen oder für einen Knaben gehalten wird. Für die besten Lösungen, d. h. für diejenigen, die alle oder, wenn das Lehren gelingt, die meisten richtigen Geschlechtsbestimmungen enthalten, sehen wir

Prize im Gesamtwert von 2000 Mark aus

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1. Die Lösungen müssen die Aufschrift tragen: An die Redaktion der „Berliner Illustrierten Zeitung“

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- 6. An diesem Wettbewerb kann sich jeder mit einer Antwort beteiligen. Wer mehr als eine Antwort schickt, scheidet aus dem Wettbewerb aus.

Die „Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung“ erscheint wöchentlich einmal, überall erhältlich, kostet zu beziehen durch alle Post- und Zeitungsvertriebsstellen und jede Verkaufsstelle. — Verantwortlich in Berlin: Hans Böttcher, Reichsstraße 22/23. — Druck: H. Böttcher, Reichsstraße 22/23. — Redaktion: Hans Böttcher, Reichsstraße 22/23. — Druck: H. Böttcher, Reichsstraße 22/23. — Verantwortlich in Berlin: Hans Böttcher, Reichsstraße 22/23. — Druck: H. Böttcher, Reichsstraße 22/23.

the lesbian film *Mädchen in Uniform* (Girls in Uniform), which premiered in Berlin in December 1931 (figs. 157 and 158). Foucault's warning allows us to see how easily this filmic representation of lesbianism was incorporated, legitimized, and sanitized by its critical reception (representing yet another sexual difference collected by the all-encompassing power of the bourgeoisie). At the same time, the limitations of Foucault's thesis are evident when we recognize the tremendous importance of this film for the identity of the lesbian subculture, as well as the overt political radicality of the film's thematic interlacing of anti-militarism and alternative sexualities. At the very least, the film represents the *desire* to link leftist political revolution and homosexuality. Nevertheless, the way *Mädchen in Uniform* represents lesbianism compromises its reception. The film's lack of ambiguity and oscillation seriously narrows its ability to address subjectivity. It provides, therefore, a useful contrast to Höch's aesthetic strategies.

Mädchen in Uniform was the product of the collaboration of a lesbian director, Leontine Sagan, and a lesbian writer, Christa Winsloe. Produced collectively by the Deutsche Film Gemeinschaft, the film is set in a Prussian boarding school for the daughters of military officers. In the film, Manuela (Hertha Thiele) has lost her mother and develops a crush on her teacher, Fräulein von Bernburg. Though such crushes are not uncommon within the school and are generally tolerated, this crush grows beyond normally accepted limits into a more serious lesbian love, shown explicitly only once – through a kiss. Manuela's love is reciprocated by von Bern-



157–158 Leontine Sagan, director, *Mädchen in Uniform* (Girls in Uniform), 1931

burg, who tries to deny her feelings. The narrative builds to a crisis – Manuela's thwarted suicide attempt and the other schoolgirls' and von Bernburg's defiance of the principal.

Since *Mädchen in Uniform* has been discussed at length elsewhere,³⁴ here I will focus only on the significance of its narrative and the critical response it received. Upon its release the film was immediately highly celebrated, particularly as an anti-militaristic, anti-Prussian, and antiauthoritarian statement. But outside homosexual journals, contemporary critics never mentioned the explicit lesbianism, instead referring to the central relationship as merely adolescent.³⁵ Moreover, as androgynous images are specifically avoided in the film,³⁶ the issue of naming and speaking about homosexuality (and, conversely, the repression of this speech) is a tension at many levels of *Mädchen in Uniform*, including its production and its critical reception. Ironically, although the film pivots around the crime of publicly naming lesbian passion, lesbianism is never spoken of directly. Rather, such euphemistic expressions as “the great spirit of love that has a thousand forms” or “Manuela's suffering” are used (an elision that Hertha Thiele speculated in a 1981 interview was an attempt to make the film acceptable to a broader audience).³⁷ This pressure to name, which both bursts out and is repressed in the film, cannot be dismissed (as Foucault might suggest) as merely a confession compliant with the bourgeoisie's need to claim sexual investigation and therefore sex itself for its deployment of power. As film critic Ruby Rich has pointed out, the homosexuality in this case is clearly connected to a revolutionary activism and exemplifies an alternative to the principal's definition of the girls: “You are all soldiers's daughters, and God willing, you will all be soldiers's mothers.”³⁸ The audience's understanding of the narrative development is entirely dependent on a reading of Manuela's love as lesbian – why else is she sent to the infirmary after proclaiming it?

But was the proclamation salient enough? Unfortunately, *Mädchen in Uniform* fit easily into contemporary myths that saw lesbianism as schoolgirl crushes, an immature phase on the route to adult (hetero)sexuality. Critics were quick to describe the film in these terms, dwelling on von Bernburg's maternalism or on the idealistic nature of Manuela's crush. Ullstein's *Uhu*, in an advance publicity feature, promoted the movie by focusing on the nonprofessional actresses who played the majority of the boarding school population, stressing that they were all from good bourgeois families and that most had ambitions for nonstage careers.³⁹ Most tellingly, the film was not banned by the Nazis, despite its antimilitarism. Historian Rosi Kriesche's explanation is two-fold: that lesbianism was not officially recognized, and that the heroine Fräulein von Bernburg inculcates her students with the virtues of work and duty, qualities the Party also demanded of its youth as in the Bund Deutscher Mädchen.⁴⁰

My purpose is not to argue that naming alone – or a more explicit naming – would have been a “better” strategy for the propagation of alternative sexualities and politics. Rather, I find that the stereotypical representation of alternative sexuality in *Mädchen in Uniform* involves limitations that are worth examining. In essence,

my question is this: what strategies of representation were most effective in linking gender subjectivity to nonhierarchical societal change?

Höch was not involved in simply representing or propagating homosexuality; her montages instead recombined masculine and feminine gender identities. In this way, her representation of androgyny introduced a radical and nonhierarchical sexual ambiguity. Unlike images of thoroughly masculinized women, as in some forms of fashion photography, her montages suggested fluctuating gender roles. In the context of late Weimar exhibitions, this sexual ambiguity would have had a specific political meaning for the audience, demanding at least temporarily an unsettling oscillation in the gender identity of the engaged viewer. As these images expressly deny resolution, it is important to consider the effect of this fluidity on the Weimar viewer. A lack of representational resolution could have a particular meaning, for instance, for Weimar women whose economic and sexual roles were in a state of flux. These representations could have the potential to contradict – at least in fantasy – efforts to circumscribe the New Woman's roles as well as attempts to assure that “new” places were still firmly anchored at the bottom of the social hierarchy.

With this range of connotations in mind, I want to return to the discussion of androgyny in Höch's 1930 photomontage, *Marlene*. For the female viewer, *Marlene* provokes an oscillation between a male heterosexual position and a female homosexual one. Although the fetishized legs are viewed by two men in the lower right corner, both the mouth and the word “Marlene” – presented frontally, out of the narrative space – are offered directly to the viewer as objects of desire. For female homosexuals in Berlin during late Weimar, this montage would have held specific connotations, as any image of Marlene Dietrich would be read as either androgynous or lesbian. As actress Hertha Thiele recalled, Dietrich was a cult figure for lesbians in Berlin: “There was at that time a trend . . . to appear like Dietrich . . . and each would call herself Marlene.”⁴¹

Given this special status accorded Dietrich's image, Höch's highly eroticized representation of a fragmented mouth and legs beneath her name would seem to offer the female viewer a fetishized image of Dietrich as an object of lesbian desire. In fact, the viewer can choose either to engage the name and fragmented body parts as objects of desire or to identify with the two men as surrogates, as the men are defined as spectators. The female viewer faces a choice between a female gaze of homosexual desire (directly confronting the enticing lips and the admired name) and a male gaze of heterosexual desire (represented explicitly if somewhat ironically) – or both. Since the two possibilities are represented alluringly within the montage, the female viewer is encouraged to construct herself as androgynous.

Today, this consideration of the female viewer raises questions concerning the differences between male and female spectatorship, specifically in viewing photographs, and with particular relation to notions of fetishism, an explicit theme of Höch's *Marlene*. Freud described fetishism as a psychic mechanism operating in men and arising from both a disavowal of castration and a substitution, through visual-

ization, of an image for the woman's missing penis. It is significant that this double action – disavowal and substitution – occurs in one crucial moment and is then repeated in future viewings of fetish objects.⁴² Referring to Freud's definition, theorist Victor Burgin has made an analogy between the elements of the fetishizing process (such as vision, disavowal, the frozen moment, and repetition) and the mechanisms brought to bear in viewing a photograph. But Burgin introduces the concept of oscillation, placing the viewer in a shifting position: between recognition (of the photograph as representation) and disavowal (a belief that the photograph is in some way real), as well as between an identification with the photographer (the camera's point of view) and with the object photographed.⁴³ Unfortunately, embedded in Burgin's claim that shifting is inherent in the process of viewing photographs is an idealization of the medium of photography as a privileged site for unmasking fetishistic viewing mechanisms. Certainly, not all photographs and their viewing contexts foreground this process of oscillation. Indeed, many photographs encourage reification; others stimulate an awareness of fetishism's contradictions, while retaining its pleasures. Disparate elements of reception – disavowal, pleasure, and so on – can be either emphasized or suppressed by presenting photographs in different venues (a newspaper, a fan magazine) and in different formats (portrait photography, photomontage).

When these issues of fetishism and representation are applied to female spectatorship, two questions frequently arise: Is the fetishism experienced when viewing photography exclusively a condition of the male viewer? And, conversely, is oscillation between gender positions exclusively female? To both these questions, I would say no. Although it may be desirable to consider fetishism in relation to the phallus and power, I see no reason to keep the concept of fetishism contained wholly within Freud's theory of the castration complex and therefore maintain it as exclusively male. Jacques Lacan's discussion of fetishism in "Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in *Hamlet*" emphasizes a confusion in subject-object relations and a neurotic fixation on time and repetition.⁴⁴ While Lacan's remarks focus on the place of fetishism in male fantasy, the rethinking of identity provoked by the *Hamlet* essay need not be restricted to the male viewer. For the purposes of cultural history, Freud's emphasis on the castration complex may be usefully supplemented by considerations of disavowal and subject-object confusion.

Fetishism in the Freudian sense, however, is more central to a male viewing (or to a neurotic male viewing) than to a female one. Even in this sense, fetishism can be considered part of the female viewing process if one believes that women in our society are required to shift constantly between masculine and feminine positions. And certainly, though masculine and feminine may be binary oppositions in abstract theory, in actual experience there are no pure and completely differentiated gender identities; it is misleading to apply a dichotomized definition of gender to actual individuals and cultural constructs, which are much more complex. Oscillation between gender positions can also be experienced by men, of course, but I would assert that while it *can* be experienced by men, it *must* be experienced by women in any relation to forms of societal power gendered as masculine.

The mechanisms of viewing photography – and the degree to which they evince shifting confusion, pleasure, and self-consciousness – bear directly on the reception of photomontage. The fragmented nature of photomontage can encourage – if not an escape from fetishism – an awareness of fetishistic operations and of the viewing mechanism itself. Therefore, when montage is used astutely to represent gender, it can encourage questions in the viewer vis-à-vis the gender identities portrayed. Contrasting the representation of androgyny in photomontage with “straight” photography, the viewer’s dialectical assimilation of montage fragments whose connotations are binary opposites can, hopefully, lead to a rethinking of the conventional, monolithic norms of gender identity in society.⁴⁵

conclusion

Shortly after World War II, Hannah Höch jotted down some autobiographical notes in which she reflected on the early Berlin Dada years. In these notes she recalled with some anger the sexism of many of her fellow avant-gardists: "Enlightened by Freud – in protest against the older generation and [drawn to] . . . the emerging will for freedom of those pioneering women, this New Woman was desirable to him. But [the men] . . . rejected rather brutally that a new orientation was also necessary on their part. This led to those truly Strindbergian dramas that marked the private lives of these men. To complete the [history] . . . many volumes would need to be written telling of these women's fates."¹

Within Höch's avant-garde circle and throughout Weimar Germany, the images and attitudes of modernity were consistently projected onto women. Often these representations signaled greater freedom for women, but they also meant greater risks and some old inequities redesigned in modern packages. Clearly, a selective embrace of the New Woman stereotype was required; ambiguity toward the New Woman and what she represented was a strategy of survival. Yet ambiguity was rarely foregrounded in the melodramatic images of Weimar films or in the utopian *Lebensfreude* photographs of the *Illustrierte*.

One great strength of Höch's photomontages is that they preached ambiguity to the converted. To women consuming images of the New Woman in the 1920s, Höch presented a dialectical rethinking of perceptions of modern femininity. In individual works like *Dada-Ernst* and *Fremde Schönheit* and in her Weimar photomontages as

a whole, there was both pleasure and celebration, conveyed by Höch's incorporation of images of liberated New Women – dancers, gymnasts, movie stars. But the euphoric attitude conveyed by such illustrations went hand-in-hand with a recurrent dislocation of subjectivity through the disruption of the female gaze. Höch created alienating effects by using the practice of photomontage to juxtapose the beautiful and the ugly, the feminine and the masculine, the witty and the violent. Hers was a disquieting mix of utopianism and anxiety.

Höch did not oppose the consumerist images of the mass media, nor did she reproduce them unquestioningly. The willful gaps in her representation of the New Woman left room, instead, for viewers of the 1920s – especially female viewers – to construct their own interpretations. Höch's work disallowed the comfortable closure of even private interpretations. In reading her androgynous montaged figures, for example, it was difficult for viewers to identify them 'simply as masculine or as feminine. Similarly, Höch's montage compositions of images of modern European women combined with tribal artifacts eluded hierarchical classifications or easy melding.

Mass media representations of the New Woman, often in conjunction with other signs of modernity, created a fantasy site where women could be aligned with bourgeois power. Given the clear class demarcations in Weimar society and the impoverishment of the working class, most visual fantasies of individual empowerment for women adhered to a bourgeois image, a supposedly secure economic identity.² Through the mass media, a new norm and consensus about the modern woman was in the process of being created during Weimar – a representational (if not actual) inclusion in the public sphere. The new images of modern women served a number of purposes for the mass media and for women during this period of transition – encouraging identification with the bourgeoisie, whether the woman was a member of it or not, and a related identification with technology and rationalization, especially as consumers. It is impossible to generalize about whether or not such images were empowering. Through an alliance with modernity, these images represented dreams of individual and sometimes collective freedom. Yet, these utopian images also existed in a society that circumscribed women's earning power, political participation, and reproductive freedom.

Still, the wave of wonderfully seductive mass media images of the New Woman that swept over Germany in the 1920s was enticing for women, especially when compared to earlier Wilhelmine stereotypes. Höch re-presented these images of the New Woman with their appeal intact but their contours fractured in order to expose the contradictions of the new female stereotypes. The mass media images of the New Woman that Höch employed were familiar to women in her audience, who were already participating in the mixed blessings of modernism in a changing, yet persistently unequal, Weimar society. Her allegories, with their combination of anger and humor, depended on an audience in the know, particularly other women who went to the movies, read the photoweeklies, worked hard for little money, wore their hair

short, worked at home and in the office, perhaps had had illegal abortions, voiced political concerns, and argued about changing roles in a new society.

Then, as today, questions of feminine subjectivity and external politics were linked. The redefinition of women's roles through representation takes on a political meaning when it challenges the distribution of power in society. The questions Höch addressed in the 1920s remain critical today, though in different contexts; especially pressing are those issues concerning the production and reception of images of women. Höch's work provides important evidence of the necessity – indeed the right – of women to shape those images and even to establish their own new definition of utopia. Tapping the anger and the pleasure associated with femininity and legitimizing ambiguity is crucial to destabilizing societal definitions of femininity and creating the conditions that lead to empowerment.

chronology

1889

Born 1 Nov. as Johanne Höch in Gotha (Thüringen). Her father had a managerial position in an insurance company, and her mother was an amateur painter. Eventually four younger siblings were born.

1904

Left the Höhere Töchterchule (girls' high school) to care for her youngest sibling, Marianne.

1911

Worked for a year in her father's office.

1912

Enrolled in the Kunstgewerbeschule in Berlin Charlottenburg and studied glass design with Harold Bengen.

1914

Traveled to Cologne to see the Werkbund exhibition. Outbreak of World War I. Returned to Gotha; Red Cross work.

1915

Moved back to Berlin. Studied graphics with Emil Orlik at the Staatlichen Lehranstalt des Kunstgewerbemuseums. Met and became lovers with Raoul Hausmann (1886–1971), an Austrian living in Berlin since 1901. Met Johannes Baader through Hausmann.

1916–26

Worked three days a week at the Ullstein Verlag designing handiwork patterns for *Illustrierte*, magazines, pattern books, and patterns sold in department stores.

1917

Berlin Dada circle, in which Höch was marginally involved, unofficially formed.

1918

Höch and Hausmann "invent" avant-garde photomontage, inspired by popular photomontages from the front which they saw on vacation in Gribow on the Ostsee.

1919

Participated in the first Berlin Dada exhibition in the Graphischen Kabinett of I. B. Neumann with Hausmann, Grosz, Baader, Mehring, Golyscheff, Stuckenberg, and Deetjen.² Höch and Hausmann met Kurt Schwitters. First critical mention of Höch in Adolf Behne, "Werkstattbesuche. Über Jefim Golyscheff," *Der Cicerone* Nov. 1919.

1920

First exhibited in the Novembergruppe annual exhibitions, subsequently participating in 1921–23, 1925, 1926, 1930, and 1931. Took part in the Erste Internationale Dada-Messe at Dr. Otto Burchard's in Berlin. Included in *Dada-Almanach* edited by Richard Huelsenbeck. Hans Hoffmann, as a member of the Münchner Expressionistischen Werkstätten, wrote to Höch to invite her to exhibit in a show of young German artists in Chicago and asked to purchase two of her puppets. With her sister Grete and the poet Regina Ullmann, Höch hiked from Munich to Venice over the Alps and then continued on alone to Rome. "Brief an der Novembergruppe" published in the Malik Verlag publication *Der Gegner* and signed by Höch, Hausmann, George Grosz, Otto Dix, and others.

1921

Took part in an evening of readings entitled "Grotesken," with Mynona and Raoul Hausmann in the Berlin Secession. Published "Italianreise" in Heft 1 of *Novembergruppe*, Hannover. Traveled with Hausmann and the Schwitterses to Prague on a performance tour by the two men, the "Anti-Dada-Merz-Tournee."

1922

Separation from Raoul Hausmann. Closer contact with the Schwitterses; Höch's first grotto in the Merzbau, Hannover. Met Theo van Doesburg.

1923

Vacationed with the Schwitterses and Hans and Sophie Täuber Arp in Sellin on the island of Rügen. Hans Arp worked for a while in Höch's Berlin studio. Exhibited in the Juryfreie Kunstausstellung in Berlin in 1923; also exhibited there in 1925.

1924

First Parisian visit, at which time Höch met Mondrian. Participated in the Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung in the Soviet Union. Published in *Die Ismen* edited by El Lissitzky and Hans Arp.

1925

Second grotto for Schwitters's Merzbau. Planned a revue called the "Anti-Revue" with Schwitters and Hans-Heinz Stuckenschmidt, for which Höch designed sets and costumes. Exhibited in the Deutschen Kunstgemeinschaft in the Berlin Stadtschloss in 1925 and 1926. Second Paris trip. Vacationed with the Doesburgs at Belle-Ile-en-mer in Brittany. Published in Laszlo Moholy-Nagy's *Malerei Photographie Film*.

1926

Met Til Brugman (1888–1958) in the Netherlands through Kurt Schwitters. Lived with Brugman in The Hague through 1929. Contact with the de Stijl group.

1928

Participated in Onafhankelijken group exhibitions in the Netherlands in 1928 (also in 1929). Mentioned in a review of one of these exhibitions in an unknown Dutch periodical: Kasper Niehaus, "'De Onafhankelijken' Openen de Deuren" (n.d., n.p., in Höch Nachlass, Berlinische Galerie, unnumbered file on Dutch criticism of Höch). Exhibited with the Kölnischen Kunstverein in Essen, Barmen, and other cities. Published in Hans Hildebrandt, *Die Frau als Künstlerin* and Will Grohamnn, "Kunst der Zeit" in *Sonderheft 10 Jahre Novembergruppe*.

1929

First one-person exhibitions: Kunsthuis de Bron in The Hague, Rotterdamische Kring in Rotterdam, and Kunstzaal Van Lier in Amsterdam. Published a statement, "Ich mochte die Grenzen verwischen" (I want to blur the boundaries) in the catalog for the exhibition at De Bron, The Hague, May 1929

which was slightly altered for the Galerie Van Lier catalog. Reviews appeared: M. V. "Hannah Höch," *Algemeen Handelsblad von Woensdig* 2 Oct. 1929: n.p. (exh. Oct. 1929 Kunstsaal van Lier, Amsterdam); "Kunstzaal Van Lier: Hannah Höch," *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* n.d., n.p.; L. W. "Wat der Wereld???" *Het Vaderland* 28 June 1929: n.p. (de Bron); "Tentoonstelling Hannah Höch 'De Bron,'" *De Residentiebode* 7 May 1929; "Expositie Hannah Höch," *Haagische Courant* 15 May 1929: n.p.; "Kunst en Wetenschap: Tentoonstelling Hannah Höch 'De Bron,'" *De Residentiebode* (Den Haag) 18 May 1929: n.p.; Just Havelaar "Hannah Höch: De Bron," *Vaderland* 17 May 1929: n.p.; P.K. "Kunst in den Haag," *Het Algemeen Handelsblad* 5 June 1929: n.p.; "Kunsthandel 'De Bron,'" *Nieuws Rotterdamsche Courant* 22 May 1929: 2; "Letteren en Kunst: Mevrouw Hanah Höch," *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 17 Sept. 1929: 2 (Rotterdamische Kring); these reviews are all in the Höch Nachlass, Berlinische Galerie unnumbered file on Dutch criticism of Höch. Mentioned in Franz Roh, "Mechanismus und Ausdruck – Wesen und Wert der Photographie" in *Foto Auge*. Participated in the international exhibition *Film und Foto* (1929–31). Moved back to Berlin with Brugman.

1930

Exhibited in the Grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung in 1930 and 1931. Published in *Photofreund Jahrbuch* 1930/31.

1931

Took part in Berlin Fotomontage exhibition at the Staatliche Kunstbibliothek and in *Frauen in Not* in the Haus der Juryfreien, Berlin, an exhibition organized to protest the anti-abortion Paragraph 218. Mentioned in *Merz* 21 (1931) and in Dr. A. E. Brinckmann, *Handbuch der Kunstwissenschaft* Lieferung 277, Potsdam, 1931.

1932

Höch exhibition in preparation at the Dessau Bauhaus cancelled due to the rise of National Socialism. Took part in a collage exhibition at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Exhibited in the first Exposition Internationale de la Photographie at the Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels.

1933

Took part in the second Exposition Internationale de la Photographie at the Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels. "Hannah Höch," *Les Beaux Arts* (Paris) June 1933.

1934

One-person exhibition at Kunstzaal d'Audretsch in The Hague. One-person exhibition of forty-two photomontages in Brno, Czechoslovakia, organized by František Kalivoda, opened March 1. Published "Nekolik poznamek o fotomontazi" (A few words on photomontage) in *Stredisko* (4, no. 1) in conjunction with Brno exhibition [see appendix]. Period of serious illness.

1935

Review of second exhibition at Kunstzaal d'Audretsch (closed 15 Nov. 1935): "Fotomontage van Hannah Höch," by J. B. van Loghem in *De 8 en Opbouw*. 14-Daagsch Tijdschrift van de architectengroep "De 8", *Amsterdam en "Opbouw"*, Rotterdam 6, no. 24 (23 Nov. 1935): 267-69. (In the same issue, Höch's work was also mentioned in K. L. Sijmons, "Het surrealisme en de jongere generatie," 269-70, and these two articles prompted a response in the next issue: Willy La Croix, "Nog eenige opmerkingen bij het werk van Hannah Höch," no. 25 [7 Dec. 1935]: 282). Other reviews of this exhibition (located in the Dutch criticism file, Höch Nachlass, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin): W. Jos. de Gruyter, "Hannah Höch: Bij d'Audretsch," *Vaderland*, n.d., n.p.; Jos. de Gruyter, "Aquarellen en Fotomontages door Hannah Höch: Kunstzaal d'Audretsch," *Het Vaderland* (s'Gravenhage) 8 Nov. 1935: n.p.; "Tentoonstelling Hannah Höch," *Haagische Courant*, n.d., n.p.; C.M., "Tentoonstelling van Werken Door Hannah Höch: Kunstzaal d'Audretsch, Noordeine," *Nederlander*, n.d., n.p. Met the pianist Kurt Matthies. Separation from Til Brugman. *Scheingebacktes* by Brugman with illustrations by Höch published in Berlin.

1937

Mentioned in Wolfgang Willrich, "Säuberung des Kunsttempels" (*programmatische Schrift zur NS-Aktion "Entartete Kunst"*).

1938

Married Kurt Matthies.

1939

Moved to Heiligensee in north Berlin.

1942

Separated from Matthies.

1944

Divorced from Matthies.

1945

Began exhibiting again, first at the Galerie Rosen, Berlin. Exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

1962

Guest of the Villa Massimo in Rome.

1976

Retrospective in the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris and the Nationalgalerie Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

1978

Died in Berlin-Heiligensee.

Sources

Höch Nachlass, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin; "Biographische Dokumentation," in Adriani, ed., *Hannah Höch*, 7-52; Güssefeld, "Hannah Höch," 18-23; Ohff, *Hannah Höch*, 42-8; *Hannah Höch: Ihr Werk, Ihr Leben, Ihre Freunde*.

appendix

selected writings by hannah höch

lebensüberblick (a glance over my life), 1958

I was born on November 1, 1889 in Gotha, Thuringia. I have four younger siblings. At the time I was born my father was a supervisor for Stuttgart Insurance, and he later set up its office in Thuringia. I grew up in a very comfortable family. Even as a child my fondest desire was to be a painter. Mother had modest artistic ambitions. She painted replicas of oil paintings. My youngest sister was born when I was fifteen. I was pulled out of the girl's high school to care for this child from the time she was three days old until she was six. I loved her very much, but my studies suffered. This was all to my father's liking, since he shared the general turn-of-the-century bourgeois opinion that held a girl should get married and forget about studying art. So I was almost twenty-two years old when I sent in works to apply to the Charlottenburg School of Applied Arts. I didn't even dare to attempt admission to the Art Academy, the object of my dreams, since "a craftswoman, after all, was still no artist."

I was accepted into Professor Harold Bengen's class. After a year and a half I received a travel stipend to visit the 1914 Werkbund exhibition in Cologne. I traveled with four male fellow students, but we were ambushed at the Rhine on September 1, 1914, by the First World War. Just as I was emerging from the dreamy years of youth and becoming ardently involved with my studies, this catastrophe shattered my world. Surveying the consequences for humanity and for myself, I suffered greatly under my world's violent collapse.

In 1915, the Berlin art schools reopened, and I returned there to continue my studies. I hoped to come somewhat nearer my true desires by applying to the school of the Applied Arts Museum, which had a status in art education somewhere between the Academy and the School of Applied Arts. I was accepted into Professor Emil Orlik's graphic arts class.

A short time later, in 1915, I got to know Raoul Hausmann, who impressed me

incredibly. Our relationship lasted almost seven years. During this period I was a student of Orlik's three days a week and earned money working at Ullstein another three days. My years with Hausmann, 1915–22, took in war, the peace settlement, revolution, hunger, and inflation. Through Hausmann I got to know Herwarth Walden's *Sturm*, the Futurists, *Die Aktion*, the Franz Jung circle (Georg Schrimpf, Maria Uhden, Richard Öhring), the Mynona-Segal circle, and, finally, DADA.

Even before the war ended in 1918, Berlin's young people had become politically rebellious and were searching for new intellectual orientations. This was fertile ground for Richard Huelsenbeck, a very vital but also strict man, when he turned up from Switzerland, where he had already promoted DADA. He was like a match to gunpowder in Berlin. DADA began. The day and night lectures, performances, and exhibitions alarmed the press. But "bourgeois intellectuals" also tended to use this generally provocative protest as an outlet for their anger. DADA here was probably above all else a kind of negative eulogy for a form of government and life whose time and past and world view had gone up in flames. It took on a more political and nihilistic tone here in comparison with France, Italy, or later America and even [what was to become] West Germany.

So far as I remember, I took an active part in the following events:

April 1919: DADA Evening. Richard Huelsenbeck, Raoul Hausmann, Jefim Golyscheff. (I played a tin lid in Golyscheff's anti-symphony).

December 1919: DADA Matinee in the Tribüne theater, where I took part only as a hired clapper. On stage were: Johannes Baader, Heinz Ehrlich, George Grosz, Raoul Hausmann, John Heartfield, Wieland Herzfelde, Richard Huelsenbeck, and Walter Mehring. There were other, similar events. Usually we decided on them only just ahead of time. Mostly they were imaginative and impromptu, broadly ranging over the intellectual terrain, and sometimes breaking down into chaos. The course these raucous presentations took basically depended on the audience's attitude. The ending was never planned. I always had terrible anxiety about the ending. But the participants and their supporters always ended up quite satisfied and relieved, while the squares [*Spießler*] would get furious, which exposed who they were.

In April 1919 the first DADA exhibition was held in I. B. Neumann's Graphic Art Gallery [*Graphischer Kabinett I. B. Neumann*] on the Kurfürstendamm. The participants were Johannes Baader, Erika Deetjen, Jefim Golyscheff, George Grosz, Raoul Hausmann, Hannah Höch, Walter Mehring, Fritz Stuckenberg.

25 July–25 August 1920: the big DADA-Fair at Dr. Otto Burchard's on Lützowufer 13. I showed: *DADA-Doll I*, *DADA-Doll II*, *Ali Baba Poster*, *Collage with Arrow*, the reliefs *Human Bridal Couple* and *Dictatorship of the DADAists*, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife DADA Through German's Last Cultural Epoch*, two sculptures that Schwitters later enlarged, and a photomontage, *Panorama*, that, like some of my other works, was not included in the catalog.

On the sixth and seventh of September Raoul Hausmann and Kurt Schwitters staged DADA evenings in Prague, where Hausmann and Huelsenbeck had already staged events. Helma Schwitters and I went with them. Hausmann and Schwitters

got to feeling incredibly competitive, which led to a contest about who could produce the loudest noises. This certainly fascinated the Prague audience, and I was fascinated, too, but also concerned for the two men who seemed to be exploding. The actual reason for this clamor was that Schwitters's "Sound Sonata" had annoyed Hausmann by employing a series of sounds that Hausmann had developed. The whole trip was a farce. Hausmann has captured a bit of it very well, the night scene in the woods by Lobositz that I believe appears in "Quadro." We travelled in short stretches via milk trains to Dresden, Aussig, Lobositz. We took an express only once, when we wanted to make a proper impression on arrival in Prague. Kurt Schwitters managed to paste his little Anna Blume stamp everywhere: on the cushions, window panes, emergency brake, on the little sliding message board, and on the outside of the locomotive. He claimed that our Prague promoters had put them in all Czech trains. I believe it. This was my first trip with the unfathomable Kurt Schwitters. Many would follow.

In 1920, after more serious problems with Hausmann, I packed up and went to Italy. Much of the trip to Rome I made by foot. The borders had just reopened, mainly for trade. I needed a lot of help in order to reach my goal. I got my visa from the then-Nuntius Pacelli. Mies van der Rohe arranged it. In Rome I fell into the circle around Prampolini, who had supported DADA. I've often been in Rome, but in those weeks in 1920 I tramped through every alley of the eternal city, especially delighted and amazed. I stayed in the Cloister of St. Elizabeth, which a helpful Catholic dignitary helped to arrange. I had been floundering about helplessly among overbooked hotels in this foreign and very filled-up city. As I was raised a Lutheran, a Catholic's concern for someone of a different faith much impressed me, as it had already when I got my visa in Berlin.

The final break with Hausmann occurred in 1922. For eight years thereafter I had no contact with him. I now showed paintings regularly with the November Group and in the Jury Free Show, as well as in other exhibitions. Photomontages also. Since DADA and after the propagandistic element receded, I haven't ceased to be involved with these small format paste-up pictures. Right up to the present I've continued making collages, in an attempt to sublimate the aesthetic element into what for me are its ultimate possibilities.

In subsequent years many other people have entered my life, while others have simply crossed paths with me but left a lasting impression. A stream of new and interesting people flowed through the regular *jours* of the Mynona-Segal circle. The same was later true at Dr. Ernst Simmel's, where Freud and psychoanalysis set the tone. Ernst Simmel had settled in Berlin Tegel, where he opened a psychoanalytic sanatorium.

Kurt and Helma Schwitters were like brother and sister to me for many years, until he emigrated. We understood each other's work fully and were tolerant about our character differences. I often visited them in Hannover, and they visited us in Berlin. I often organized evening readings for him in my Berlin studio. There remains much to say about the personality of this consummate artist and his irreconcilable

contradictions. Aside from his Hannover "Column," that finally grew like a polyp all through his house, he himself was the most perfect Merz work, a continuum, so to speak. We corresponded until his death in 1948 in England. It grieved me deeply that we never saw each other again. Once, in the summer of 1923, both the Schwitterses, Hans Arp, Sophie Täuber, and I were all together at Sellin on the island of Rügen.

I consider Hans Arp the most artistic and wondrous of men. In 1924, when I was in Paris for the first time, I met [Tristan] Tzara, with whom I remained friendly and who kept sending me his publications up until the Second World War. In 1925 I was in England, finally with Theo van Doesburg and Nelly on Belle Isle in the Atlantic. From his time in Weimar until his death I maintained a warm friendship with Doesburg. Laszlo Moholy-Nagy also remained a close comrade for me until his departure from Germany. Together we watched the first elaborate documentary films, saw Nurmi race, and heard the first jazz concerts. And every now and then he would have a spare chocolate bar for me, something that was very rare at the time. He was always generous, even though he often quarreled with the other men. Otto Freundlich was another of my oldest friends. Johannes Baader naturally also played a big part in my life, and through his connection with Raoul Hausmann took part in our quarrels. Baader was one of the most puzzling of my acquaintances, not the least for his strange outlook and intermittent outbursts.

In 1926 Kurt Schwitters and Helma were in Holland. They summoned me to a house on the sea in Kijkduin, near Scheveningen, to which many other artists made day trips that summer. I got to know Til Brugman, Cornelis van Eesteren, J. J. P. Oud, Gerrit Rietveld, Vilmos Huszár and many others. Ida Bienert, that extraordinary woman and passionate collector, was also in Scheveningen at the time. Later, she often intervened generously in Til's and my life. Her beautifully selected collection of paintings in her house in Dresden was a great pleasure for me one summer. She had many advisers but relied most on her own Professor Will Grohmann.

During this stay in Holland Til Brugman came my way. A writer. A genius with language. She expressed her extravagant fantasies in never-ending drolleries. She knew the demi-monde. We became a couple. I moved in with her in The Hague for three years, and I had a series of retrospective exhibitions in Holland. We lived together another six years in Berlin. Til Brugman was an oppressively strong individual. We took many trips: Italy, Paris (Mondrian, with whom Til had been friends since her youth, quite impressed me), Switzerland, Dauphiné, Norway in 1928, and Czechoslovakia. We took many long hikes together: in Belgium, the Austrian mountains, Switzerland, etc.

1933: Hitler. In 1934 my thyroid became massively hyperactive. An operation was my last slim hope for survival. The doctors performed a miracle. I became healthier than ever before in my life. For a year, though, I was nothing but a creature struggling for life. In 1934-35 the pressure from Hitler became nightmarish. In 1935, in the Dolomites at an altitude of two thousand meters where I was supposed to recuperate, I met my future husband, Kurt Matthies. We married in 1938. He was much younger than I, but at the time we needed each other. He was thirsty for intellectual

knowledge but also hungry for adventure: a restless soul of great intelligence. When I met him he was in business, but he later followed his true calling and became a pianist. In 1942 he disappeared from my life. A divorce followed in 1944, and I was allowed to use my maiden name again.

Since 1942 I've lived alone in a little house with a big garden on the outskirts of Berlin. Here I survived the war, the bombs, the battle of Berlin, and the postwar years, often in dire circumstances. Around 1937 my great loneliness began. Friends went away and could not be reached by post. I had long since ceased to exhibit. Everyone was suspect. One ceased to speak with anyone. Language was forgotten. Of my old friends in Berlin there remained Adolf Behne and his wife. He had shown understanding for us DADA youths. Our friendship lasted until his death in 1948. Through him there developed contacts with Alfred Döblin, and especially with Heinrich Zille, who was a guest of the Behnes and practically a member of their household.

The arts, which had generated an unprecedented richness of ideas in painting, writing, and music, vegetated like a macabre wasteland. German architecture cultivated a bombastic style. We were hermetically sealed off from developments outside of Hitler's control, and only the illusionary world of National Socialism was proclaimed clamorously around us in the face of impending doom. The smallest insight revealed horror. All that was left for me to do was to save the remnants of that creative period that were at hand – my work and what was left of our contemporary library, which had been divided at our divorce.

1958: As before, I work diligently and am thankful that I have a garden in which many many flowers bloom.

From *Hannah Höch 1889–1978: Ihr Werk, Ihr Leben, Ihre Freunde, 195–99*, translated by Peter Chametzky.

(the painter) undated, probably 1920

Once upon a time there was a painter. He wasn't called Dribble, or anything like that, as he might have been in earlier times. It was around 1920 – the painter was a modern painter – so his name was Heavenlykingdom. Unlike the real painters of earlier times, he was not asked to work only with brush and palette. This was his wife's fault: she thwarted the boundless flight of his genius. At least four times in four years, he was forced to wash dishes – the kitchen dishes. The first time, actually, there had been a pressing reason. She was giving birth to the baby Heavenlykingdom. The other three times had not seemed absolutely necessary to Heavenlykingdom, Sr. But he wanted to keep the peace – because after all God had created the male to do just that – and so had no choice but to obey her Xanthippian demand. Yet the matter continued to weigh on him. He felt degraded as a man and as a painter under its dark shadow. On the days of crisis he would suffer nightmares. He kept seeing Michelangelo washing up the cups. He knew enough about psychoanalysis to confront the woman with the truth that such demands always arise out of the desire to dominate, no matter what other reasons there might be. As a modern person he felt that in theory he had to agree with the equality of the sexes – still, if one looked closely at the situation one could not – and then, especially in your own house – her demand seemed to him comparable to an enslavement of his soul . . .

Now one day he began to paint a picture. A dark force moved him, because he was full of dark forces. He wanted to represent, to cube really, the essential likeness between the nature of chives and the female soul. In theory the whole problem was solved. He saw the emptiness that fills both these objects precisely and with total intellectual clarity. There is more to genius than intellect, however, and, when he connected the herb's snake-like form with the previously mentioned soul, his unusually developed instinct gave him mystical knowledge. No genius would deny a certain complement of mysticism.

Our Heavenlykingdom was deeply wounded by something he had also heard about from his fellow men: although these little women are often really tiny, they can still not be shaped and modeled into the form one needs for physical and psychic comfort. Had he been a writer, he would have been compelled to enrich literature with a ponderous work on the theme, "When you go to Woman, do not forget the whip." But under the circumstances that you know about now, his painting was to be called, "The Chive and the Female Soul: A Comparison." I think it was already announced for exhibition, while the canvas still shone blankly, spotlessly receptive. One has to do everything in good time. Gotthold – that was Heavenlykingdom's first name – suffered under the female soul in the totality of his manhood. And we all need to confront what makes us suffer. No wonder, then, that Heavenlykingdom (secretly) began to think of himself as on a level with a redeemer – let's admit it, with Christ – because of the likeness he has discovered.

But you have to imagine the painting properly – as it were, a scientifically dissected representation – the female soul, totally clear in a segmented cubist painting – so that everyone able to adopt an abstract point of view could read, there she is, that's her innermost being. And next to that the analogy and parallel: chives. Wouldn't everyone see it as clear as day? We also know that when we recognize what ails us, we are cured. So what perspectives would open up with the creation of this painting? Wouldn't the most burning question of our time be solved? Yet we have had to admit too often that theory and practice don't coincide. He had worked on his picture for two years and two days already. He labored and labored mightily, unable to advance beyond the chives. In the first place, the painting remained green. As soon as he used a different color, the disturbance that resulted was so great that he covered it with green again. For a while he thought that the treacherous female soul (treachery no doubt its most important element alongside emptiness) could appear as a cubist lemon-yellow spiral among the green – a shape more or less like one of those sofa-springs that winds crookedly upward. But alas, painting is color as well as form. The yellow refused to meld with the massive green of his chive allegory. He had no choice but to remove the winding spiral. A painter must remain enough of an aesthete to refuse to paint badly for the sake of his idea. The same thing happened with the composition. He tried and tried, even falling into trances, but nothing beyond the dull repetitive up-and-down of the chive motif would develop. Over and over again he hoped to fix the damnable female soul in a fluted doughnut-shape. But his eye remained objective and told him the truth without pity: this fretwork muddies the powerful melody of the chive movement. His most intimate friend, looking at the painting, remarked that it had the kind of power that liberated itself in an overwhelming sense of bore . . . No, that's not what he said. He said, liberates itself in sameness. Then he decided with a heavy heart to abandon the female soul and to devote himself only to chives from now on.

A month later, and the President, who has just opened the exhibition, is propelling his presidential belly around the myriad chambers that display the works of all the painters of the realm. Suddenly he stops. His face displays emotion. His en-

tourage observes closely. He begins to speak. "A masterpiece," he stammers. Has my administration ever produced anything better? He questioned everyone around him. All that green – what can it remind me of? His adjutant (unless an assistant goes by another name in a Republic) suggested helpfully, "Of the revolution? Of the revolution, my President?"

"Absolutely right. The revolution."

They say the State bought the painting for the National Gallery. They say that when its creator was asked for the title, he omitted mention of the chives and proudly called it "The Female Soul." They say Gotthold Heavenlykingdom will be the next candidate for a Nobel Prize.

From *Hannah Höch: Eine Lebenscollage*, vol. 1, 747–49. Translated by Anne Halley.

a few words on photomontage, 1934

first photomontages

Photomontage is based on photography and has developed from photography. Photography has now been in existence for some one hundred years. Although photomontage is not as old, it is not, as is often thought, the product of the postwar era. The first instances of this form, i.e., the cutting and rejoining of photos or parts of photos, may be found sometimes in the boxes of our grandmothers, in the fading, curious pictures representing this or that great-uncle as a military uniform with a pasted-on head. In those days the head of a person was simply glued onto a pre-printed musketeer. Another picture might show us a ready-made landscape, perhaps of boat on a picturesque lake bathed in moonlight, with an entire family group pasted into that scene. Jocular images for picture postcards and such were also made earlier from cut-up and then re-pasted photographs. A sheet from 1880, belonging to Professor Stenger's collection (Berlin), shows us students who appear to be sawing one of their fellow students in pieces.¹

photomontage around 1919

When, in 1919, the Dadaists grasped the possibility of forming new shapes and new works through photography and made their aggressive photomontages, it happened, strangely enough and simultaneously, in a number of quite diverse countries, in France, Germany, Russia, and Switzerland. For the most part, the art groups of these countries did not have much contact with each other. The war had just ended and contacts were limited to initial diplomatic steps. That is why I would say "strangely enough," since this does not represent a new idea of one person or an idea created by

a group of people, but because in this instance photography itself revived this genre. This rebirth was due, in the first place, to the high level of quality photography has achieved; second, to film; and third, to reportage photography, which has proliferated immensely. For decades, photoreportage has used photographs cut up very modestly but quite consciously, and often pasted on parts of photographs whenever it felt a need to do so. For example, when a potentate was welcomed in Tröchtelborn, and the journalistic photo taken on the spot was not impressive enough, various groups of people from different photographs were glued to it, and the sheet was photographed again, thus creating an immense crowd of people when in reality the welcoming crowd was only a male choir.²

on today's photomontage

In the meantime, photomontage has proved its mettle conquering, in particular, the field of advertising. Posters, advertisements, publicity prints of all kinds demonstrate to us the multiplicity of uses. It was observed that the image impact of an article – for example, a gentleman's collar – could produce a stronger impression if a photograph of one of them were taken, cut out, and ten such cut-out collars were artfully arranged than if ten gentleman's collars were just laid on a table and a photograph made of them. Powerful decorative effects that could be obtained by means of photomontage were previously attainable only by draftsmen. The photographic approach had the advantage, however, that the detail would come out in the simplest manner, as naturally and clearly as one could desire. Furthermore, photomontage continues to be the best aid for photoreportage.

Finally, I come to what can be termed, in opposition to the "applied" photomontage that we have been discussing up to this point, "free-form photomontage," that is, an art form that has grown out of the soil of photography. The peculiar characteristics of photography and its approaches have opened up a new and immensely fantastic field for a creative human being: a new, magical territory, for the discovery of which freedom is the first prerequisite. But not lack of discipline, however. Even these newly discovered possibilities remain subject to the laws of form and color in creating an integral image surface. Whenever we want to force this "photomatter" to yield new forms, we must be prepared for a journey of discovery, we must start without any preconceptions; most of all, we must be open to the beauties of fortuity. Here more than anywhere else, these beauties, wandering and extravagant, obligingly enrich our fantasy.

Published in 1934 in the journal *Stredisko* 4, no. 1, a journal of the Literary Central in Brno, Czechoslovakia, on the occasion of Hannah Höch's one-person photomontage exhibition in Brno. Translated from the original German into Czech by František Kalivoda. Translated from Czech into English by Jitka Salaguarda.

notes

introduction

1 Rationalization is defined as bringing industrial production (or another type of process) into accordance with rules of scientific management. A key example would be the installation of an assembly line in a factory.

2 See, e.g., "Introduction," Bridenthal, Grossmann, and Kaplan, eds., *When Biology Became Destiny*, 1–29.

3 Grossmann, "The New Woman," 156–157.

4 Grossmann, "Abortion," 66–86.

5 Grossmann, "The New Woman," 156–58; "Introduction," Bridenthal, Grossmann, and Kaplan, eds., *When Biology Became Destiny*, 1–29.

6 Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland*, 45.

7 Grossmann, "The New Woman," 12.

8 Bloch, "Nonsynchronism," 22–38.

9 Bloch, "Nonsynchronism," 22–38.

10 I use the word "photomontage" for any montage whose composition depends primarily on photographic fragments. Höch also incorporated colored papers in her montages, particularly in her backgrounds. I designate as collages only works that are primarily made up of cut papers. For innovative design and avant-garde experimentation in Weimar Germany, photomontage was the medium of choice and was usually referred to by its practitioners as *Fotomontage*.

11 Höch's working method was to collect images from the print media and to organize them by subject matter in overflowing file drawers. In 1987, nine years after Höch's death, I visited her house outside Berlin in Heiligensee where she spent the second half of her life. There some files stored in boxes were still intact. Höch was a great, even obsessive collector, and there were still images from Weimar mixed in the files. To delve into one of these files, one devoted to women's faces, for example, was immediately to get the sense of someone who scanned magazines subjectively, clipping images that were, to her, delightful or beautiful or idiosyncratic. From these files, arranged under such subjects as dancers or nature, Höch would compose her photomontages, pasting down fragments. At times Höch incorporated fragments from her own photographs (say, an image of a friend) or bits of colored paper or segments of her own watercolors.

12 Höch would have been familiar with Max Ernst's

work from the 1920 Dada-Messe exhibition in which they both participated, but he was not an important figure for her. Therefore the title *Dada-Ernst* should be translated as Dada-Serious or Serious Dada.

13 For more on the boxer as the modern man, see Bathrick, "Max Schmeling on the Canvas," 113–36.

14 For a provocative discussion of the film *Die freudlose Gasse*, see Petro, *Joyless Streets*, 199–219.

15 Höch, "Erinnerungen an DADA," 207.

16 The call to both affirm and negate is articulated in Huelsenbeck, "En Avant Dada," 47. Huelsenbeck is quoting himself from the first Berlin Dada manifesto in 1918.

17 The literary theorist Fredric Jameson has written, "The proper political use of pleasure must always be *allegorical* . . . must always involve a dual focus, in which the local issue is meaningful and desirable in and of itself, but is also at *one and the same time* taken as the *figure* for Utopia in general, and for the systemic revolutionary transformation of society as a whole." (Jameson, "PLEASURE," 13). In other words, pleasure functions politically when it breaks through the closure of self-satisfaction and links up with the broader pleasure of desiring a utopian social structure. Höch's representation of pleasure, then, can be investigated for the connections it establishes between societal and individual spheres.

the berlin dada photomontages

chapter 1

1 Altogether six to nine of Höch's works were included in the Dada-Messe; the catalog's listing of Höch works is incomplete. Höch cited her works as they appeared in the Dada-Messe catalogue and added some not listed there in notes compiled after World War II: "Meine Arbeiten . . . in der Dada-Messe, Dr. Otto Burchard: Kat. Nr. 15 Hannah Höch Hausmann 2 Dadapuppen, Nr. 19 Hannchen Höch: Plakat Ali Baba-Diele, Berlin, Nr. 20 Hannchen Höch: Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser DADA durch die letzte weimarer Bierbauchkulturepoche Deutschlands, Nr. 21 Hannah Höch: Diktatur der Dadaisten (relief), Nr. 22 Hannah Höch: Mechanisches Brautpaar (relief), Rundschau DADA? Ich glaube ja, war auch da auch von anderen waren Arbeiten *nicht* im Katalog." BG HHC H496/79. In another document, BG HHC H148/79 entitled "Lebensüberblick," 1958 (Heiligensee, reprinted in appendix), Höch also mentions *Collage mit Pfeil* and

- "2 Plastiken" as having been in the exhibition. Höch Nachlass, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin.
- 2 Benson, *Raoul Hausmann*, 83.
- 3 For censorship arrests and trials involving the Malik Verlag, see Lavin, "Heartfield in Context."
- 4 Richard Sheppard has described the position of several Berlin Dada members as anarcho-communist. For a discussion of this label, see Sheppard, "Dada and Politics," 51–52.
- 5 For the multiclass and multiple audience strategies of Malik Verlag, see Fraser and Heller, *Malik Verlag 1916–1947*.
- 6 The writer Mynona was also associated with Berlin Dada.
- 7 Bergius, *Das Lachen Dadas*, 130.
- 8 For example, Höch contributed abstract drawings and watercolors to the I. B. Neumann exhibition in 1919.
- 9 See Behne, "Werkstattbesuche." In addition, a photograph of Höch with the Dada-Puppen appeared in an Italian newspaper *Noi & Il Mondo* (1 Oct. 1920), 748–52, in an article entitled "Dada" about the Dada-Messe (clipping in the Berlinische Galerie Höch Nachlass).
- 10 *Der Dada* 2 (1919–1920). The woodcut designated "M. Höch" is by Hannah Höch.
- 11 *Schall und Rauch* 5 (April 1920). In 1916 Höch created two female Dada dolls that she posed with several times throughout this period. In 1921 she dressed herself in a doll's costume to attend the *Dada-Faschingsball*. Hanne Bergius suggests this as an ironic commentary on Höch's relationship with Hausmann, a controlling personality. Bergius, *Das Lachen Dadas*, 130. In a less directly biographical interpretation, we can see Höch, albeit humorously, dismantling and recomposing feminine imagery to the point of using her own body as a montage.
- 12 Höch, "Italienreise." The issue of *NG* also contains articles by Hausmann, Friedlaender, and Otto Freundlich. *Umschlaggestaltung* (cover design) by Hannah Höch. In the Berlinische Galerie Höch Nachlass, there is a clipping from *8 Uhr Abendblatt*, 10 February 1921, of a review of the "Grotesken" evening in which the reviewer states: "Am besten gefiel mir Frä. Höchs 'Italienreise.' Sie hat den Witz Heinrich Heines und die Weltgewandtheit eines Pückler-Muskau in gut gespielter Preziosität verbunden."
- Höch also performed in 1919 in an *Antisymphonie* directed by Soviet-born Berlin Dadaist Jefim Golyscheff; her job was to clang some cymbals in this

noise concert. Höch exhibited in non-Dada contexts as well. For example, despite Höch's signing of the 1920 open letter to the Novembergruppe protesting its apolitical stance, she regularly participated in its group exhibitions.

- 13 Timothy Benson summarizes these claims in *Raoul Hausmann*, 110–16.
- 14 Stein, "The Composite Photographic Image," 39–45.
- 15 Roditi, "Interview with Hannah Höch," 29; Pagé, "Interview with Hannah Höch," 31.
- 16 Hannah Höch recalled this story when interviewed by Eduard Roditi, "Interview with Hannah Höch," 26.
- 17 Höch collected these in Paris in 1923, and they are now in the Berlinische Galerie Höch Nachlass, BG HHC 904–909/79. They appear in Berlinische Galerie, *Hannah Höch: Eine Lebenscollage*, 753.
- 18 Images of women appear in Hausmann's Dada photomontages in only a few cases, most notably in the photomontages *Fiat Modes* (1920), *Dada Cino* (1920), and *ABCD* (1920–23). *Dada Cino* was exhibited at the Dada-Messe next to Höch's *Cut with the Kitchen Knife* and, on a smaller scale, shares its centrifugal composition and celebration of modernity, as does *Fiat Modes*. In *Dada Cino* (fig. 9), the New Woman as a figure of sports and fashion establishes the circular motion through leaping and outstretched legs, setting in motion a montage that applauds Dada. "Dada siegt!" (Dada triumphs) is repeated twice alongside other images of the new: contemporary advertising, fashionably dressed men, a tank, and a modern woman ice-skating. Just above the signature is an image, probably a medical illustration, of a cross-section of a fetus in a womb. Similarly in *ABCD*, which features a photographic self-portrait and other signs of self (the ABCD pasted on Hausmann's mouth refers to his sound poetry), there is a medical illustration of two hands performing a pelvic examination on a woman. These two illustrations seem to relate to Hausmann's preoccupation with maternalism so often evident in his correspondence with Höch.
- 19 I am indebted to Julia Dech for much of the iconographic discussion here of *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*. Dech, *Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser Dada*.
- 20 Dech, *Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser Dada*. Dech has identified the referents in *Cut with the Kitchen Knife* and located their mass media sources. In addition, her study includes a cogent analysis of the montage's iconography and the relationships between images of women, male political figures, technology, and animals.

- 21 Bergius, "Femme-Artiste," 33–38.
- 22 Owens, "The Allegorical Impulse," 204. See also Buchloh, "Allegorical Procedures," 43–56; and Wallis, "Telling Stories," xi–xvii.
- 23 Buchloh, "Allegorical Procedures," 43–56.
- 24 Buchloh, "Allegorical Procedures," 43.
- 25 Freud, "Formulations of the Two Principles of Mental Functioning," 223.
- 26 For a discussion of Gross's role in Berlin avant-garde circles, see Mitzman, "Anarchism," 86–99.
- 27 *Die Erde* was a Berlin periodical on culture and politics whose contributors included Franz Jung, Otto Gross, and Karl Liebknecht. Pertinent here is Otto Gross's essay "Protest und Moral im Unbewussten," 681–685.
- 28 "Die kommunistische Bewegung wird zum Fiasko des männlichen Geistes führen, wenn in ihr nicht eine radikale Umstellung von bloss ökonomischer Gerechtigkeit zu einer Sexualgerechtigkeit vollzogen wird, die die Frau endlich zu Frau werden lässt." (Hausmann, "Zur Weltrevolution," 369). All translations from the German are by Peter Chametzky unless otherwise noted.
- 29 "Die Ehe ist die Projektion einer Vergewaltigung in ein Recht." (Hausmann, "Der Besitzbegriff," 242).
- 30 "Die Bildung einer weiblichen Gesellschaft, die zu einer neuen Promiskuität und in Zusammenhang damit zum Mutterrecht (gegen die Vaterrechtsfamilie männlicher Prägung) führt, hängt innigst zusammen mit der Umbildung der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft in den Kommunismus." (Hausmann, "Zur Weltrevolution," 370).
- 31 Roditi, "Interview with Hannah Höch," 29.
- 32 In 1921 Höch became acquainted with the communist writer Lu Märten. See postcards from Märten in the Höch Nachlass, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin. The friendship was renewed when Hannah Höch and Til Brugman moved back to Berlin late in the Weimar era. See, for example, the letter from Brugman to Höch dated August 4, 1931. Höch Nachlass, Rössners, Backnang.
- 33 "Lettre ouverte au Groupe Novembre," (Offener Brief an die Novembergruppe, *Paris-Berlin 1900–1933*, 171–172. Even later, during the Cold War years when it was impolitic, she admitted her earlier interest in communism. Roditi, "Interview with Höch," 24–29.
- 34 Hausmann letter to Höch, 18 June 1918, BG HHC K731/79. A large body of correspondence from Hausmann to Höch from 1915–22 exists in

the Höch Nachlass at the Berlinische Galerie. Most of this material has now been published in a two-volume set, Berlinische Galerie, *Hannah Höch: Eine Lebenscollage*. Höch saved Hausmann's letters but her side of the correspondence is missing (except for an occasional letter that found its way back into her hands). Her voice can be detected, however, from time to time when Hausmann quoted her indirectly. For example, in a 1918 letter Hausmann wrote: "Und im weiteren Verlauf gabst du mir zu verstehen, dass Du mich für neurotisch hieltest." (Hausmann letter to Höch, undated, probably 1918, BG HHC K734/79).

Another indirect quote reveals Höch's self-definition as an emancipated woman: "Und Du musst als geistiger Mensch, als Frau, die nicht mehr 'nur Frau' sein will, sehen, dass Du jetzt diesen Weg verwirklichen helfen musst." (Hausmann letter to Höch, 18 June 1918, BG HHC K731/79). Hausmann's letters are passionate, disturbed, analytical, manipulative, and self-serving.

35 "Und ist es nicht so, dass Du immer Bücher liest, [Dimitri] Mereschkowsky [Russian literary critic], [Alfred] Adler [psychoanalyst], aus denen Du nur Material gegen mich ziehst?" (Hausmann letter to Höch, 12 June 1918, BG HHC K726/79). Grete König reports that although both Höch and Hausmann were involved with psychoanalytic theory, neither entered into therapy of any kind. Interview with the author, 29 Oct. 1986, Murnau.

36 One of many examples: "In dem Augenblick, als ich die Tasse zerschlug, war der Tisch zwischen uns – von einem Mordversuch, wie Du Deinem Bruder [Danilo: Friedrich Höch] erzähltest, kann keine Rede sein. Die Tasse zerschlug ich, weil Du nochmals Deinen Vater verteidigtest . . . Warum bist Du für *ihn* gegen *mich*? Warum greifst Du mich ironisch und lügnerisch an, statt mit mir zu sein? Aus Liebe? Willst Du nie begreifen, was Du mir tust, so dass ich Dich schlage?" (Hausmann letter to Höch, 23 March 1918, BG HHC K714/79). Hausmann comes across as an extremely egocentric, neurotic, violent, and conflicted man who was incapable of living up to his own ideals of personal and societal revolution.

37 "Ich bin nicht für eine Doppelehe, und führe keine Doppelehe, denn ich bin gegen jede Form: Ehe." (Hausmann letter to Höch, 15 March 1918, BG HHC K713/79).

38 "Wie könnte ich sagen Ich liebe Dich und unseren Sohn, den ich von Dir haben will?" (Hausmann letter to Höch, 1915, BG HHC K796/79). In these early

letters, Hausmann often made an analogy between Höch and a virgin mother, by extension the Virgin Mary. The desired son then acquired a holy, Christ-like status, a sanctified embodiment of the New Man. See, for example, Hausmann's letter to Höch dated 19 June 1919, BG HHC K710/79.

39 These are the dates mentioned in a letter from Elfriede Hausmann-Schaeffer and Raoul Hausmann to Johannes Baader, 4 November 1920, as times when Höch "had to do what was necessary." BG HHC K4076/79. And these are also the dates reported by Bergius, *Das Lachen Dadas*, 134.

40 This comes up in a number of Hausmann's letters to Höch. See, for example, his letters of 29 May 1916 and 14 June 1916, and one undated (probably from 1918), BG HHC K748/79. There are many and major contradictions between Hausmann's feminist theories and his actual treatment of Höch. In this case, Hausmann's mythologizing of Höch is contrary to his critique of Otto Weininger's bourgeois idealization of women. Raoul Hausmann, "Zur Auflösung des bürgerlichen Frauentypus," 461–65.

41 Much later, in 1964, Höch reflected on how Hausmann and his male contemporaries attempted to define themselves as liberated, non-bourgeois men at the expense of the women with whom they were involved. She cites Georg Schrimpf and Maria Uhden (a painter and friend of Höch's from her hometown, Gotha, who died in childbirth in 1918); Franz Jung, his wife Margot, and Cläre Öhring; Baader and Erna Hähn; and Hausmann and what was to become a series of polygamous relationships. See Güssefeld, "Hannah Höch: Freunde und Briefpartner 1915–1935," 15. Höch explains that the New Woman served as an object of desire for men whose relationships functioned as protests against an older generation and as paths to unbridled freedom. The men, however, were not willing to make the necessary changes in themselves – thus the Strindbergian dramas of their private lives. Höch's notes are fragmentary: "Durch Freud aufgeklärt – Aus Protest zur ältere Generation und dem aufgebrochenen Freiheits willen der bahnbrechenden des Frauen. War ihn allem dieser neue wohl Frau begehrenswert. Aber – das auch von ihrer Seite Neueinstellungen nötig waren lehnten sie mehr oder weniger brutal ab. Dies führte zu diesem wahrhaft Strindbergischen Dramen, die das Privatleben dieser Männer beim zeichnen. Mit der Schicksalen dieser Frauen wären viele Bände zu füllen um das Zeitbild zu vervollständigen." (BG HHC H1569/79).

42 Bloch, "Nonsynchronism," 22–38. This essay was originally published as part of Bloch's book *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* in Zurich in 1935, now available in an English translation as *Heritage of Our Times*, trans. Neville and Stephen Plaice (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

43 Bloch, "Nonsynchronism," 25, 26, 28.

44 Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*. See also Bloch, *Utopian Function*.

45 Dech, *Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser Dada*, 101.

46 The BIZ caption reads: "Mit 15 Jahren ein Tanzstern erster Grösse! Die Tänzerin Nidda Impekoven, die mit ausserordentlichem Erfolg in Berlin auftrat, als Pritzel-Puppe."

47 Dech, *Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser Dada*, 159.

The same photograph can also be found in *Die Dame* 9 (Feb. 1919): 4. The Lotte Pritzel ad is in *Die Dame* 6 (Dec. 1919): 33; drawings of Impekoven's impish dances are in *Die Dame* 6 (Dec. 1919): 8.

48 BIZ (28 Jan. 1922): 93. The same advertisement also appeared in *Die Dame* 9 (Feb. 1922): 40.

49 Kendall, in *Where She Danced*, gives such a multileveled analysis of early twentieth-century modern dance, primarily in an American context.

50 Two significant essays on pleasure and female spectatorship are: Hansen, "Pleasure, Ambivalence, Identification"; and Modleski, "Femininity and Mas[s]querade."

51 Höch uses the image again in her montage *Staatshaupter*, 1918–20.

52 Hanne Bergius has pointed out how much this slogan sounds like advertising in her essay "Dada Rundschau," 104.

53 BIZ (24 Aug. 1919): 328.

54 Hanne Bergius has identified the source for this image of Anna von Giercke, member of the Deutschnationale party from Potsdam: BIZ (9 February 1919): 48: "Frau Abgeordnete! Einige Charakterköpfe aus der Nationalversammlung." Bergius, "Dada Rundschau," 106.

55 Hanne Bergius reports that Eva Grosz gave up her own art when she married George and thereafter served as his model. Bergius, *Das Lachen Dadas*, 181.

56 "Hausmann kam wahrscheinlich schon mit Monokel auf die Welt." Höch, "Erinnerungen an DADA," 202.

57 By 1922 Höch was experimenting with a variety of collage formats; the Arp-like *Poesie* (fig. 24) and the Constructivist (*Collage*) *Dada* both date from that year as do two works in which Höch collaged elements of sewing and embroidery patterns

(most probably from Ullstein publications) in Constructivist compositions: *Entwurf für das Denkmal eines bedeutenden Spitzenhemdes* (Model for the monument of an important lace shirt) (fig. 25) and *Astronomie* (fig. 26), which Schwitters included in *Merz 7* and Höch published as a postcard. (Possibly *Entwurf für das Denkmal* was intended as an ironic reference to Tatlin's *Model for a Monument to the Third International*; 1922 was after all the year of the First Russian Exhibition in Berlin.)

58 Tafuri, "U.S.S.R. – Berlin 1922," 121–81.

59 *Die Mädchen* is usually dated 1918 or 1919, but I redate it 1921 based on its mass media sources. In addition to the source mentioned in the text, another is from *BIZ* (28 August 1921): 536: "Vom Schwimmsport: Die Tänzerin Ilse Eilers an Seebad Zoppot. Phot. Döring."

60 For an exploration of the American connotations of German Girkultur, see Berghaus, "Girkultur," 193–220.

61 Images from advertisements were associated positively with the new and progressive by the Dadaists despite the artists' anticapitalist stance. Hülsenbeck celebrated advertising in the first Berlin Dada manifesto of 1918: "Hatred of the press, hatred of advertising, hatred of sensations, are typical of people who prefer their armchair to the noise of the street." (Hülsenbeck, "En Avant Dada," 47. Hülsenbeck is quoting himself from the first Dada manifesto of 1918).

62 De Grazia, "The Arts of Purchase," 227.

mass media, modernism, and the avant-garde

chapter 2

1 "Das auge [*sic*] kontrolliert ja nie perspektivische richtigkeiten, sondern empfängt nur eindrücke der nähe, der ferne, der helligkeit, des dunkels, oben und unten, bewegung und ruhe, mannigfaltigkeit oder einfachheit." (Max Burchartz, "Prospekt für die stad dortmund," in Rasch and Rasch, eds., *Gefesselter Blick*, n.p.).

2 *Der Weltspiegel*, 30 (1929): 5. Illustrated in Eskildsen, *Fotografie in deutschen Zeitschriften*, ill. 11.

3 Jelavich, *Munich and Theatrical Modernism*, 1–5.

4 Huyssen, "Search for Tradition," 27.

5 "Der Zeitgebundenheit der Fotografie entspricht genau die der *Mode*. Da sie keinen anderen Sinn als den der gegenwärtigen menschlichen Hülle hat, ist die moderne durchscheinend und die alte verlassen. . . .

"Böte sie sich dem Gedächtnis als Stütze an, so

müsste das Gedächtnis ihre Auswahl bestimmen.

Doch die Flut der Fotos fegt seine Dämme hinweg. So gewaltig ist der Ansturm der Bildkollektionen, dass er das vielleicht vorhandene Bewusstsein entscheidender Züge zu vernichten droht. Kunstwerke werden durch ihre Reproduktion von diesem Schicksal getroffen."

(Kracauer, "Die Photographie," *Frankfurter Zeitung* [28 Oct. 1927], reprinted in Wolfgang Kemp, ed., *Theorie der Fotografie*, [Munich: Schirmer-Mosel, 1979], 106, 109). The English translations are from Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity*, 153–54).

6 Herf, *Reactionary Modernism*, 5–6, 22.

7 I am not including artists who put their work at the service of the Communist Party, the KPD. But it should be noted that even John Heartfield participated in such exhibitions as Film und Foto. Thomas Crow has noted the equivocation between modernism and mass culture which is partly applicable to the avant-garde of the 1920s: "Modernism repeatedly makes subversive equations between high and low which dislocate the apparently fixed terms of that hierarchy into new and persuasive configurations, thus calling it into question from within. But this pattern of alternating provocation and retreat indicates that these equations are, in the end, as productive for affirmative culture as they are for the articulation of critical consciousness." (Crow, "Modernism and Mass Culture," 251).

8 Kracauer, "Cult of Distraction," 91–96; Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*.

9 Bathrick and Huyssen, "Modernism and the Experience of Modernity," 8.

10 For the political situation of the historical avant-garde in Weimar Germany see Lavin, "Contradiction and Utopia."

11 Buchloh, "Theorizing the Avant-Garde," 19; Herf, *Reactionary Modernism*, 22.

12 Kirchner, "Der Markt der Illustrierten," 331.

13 The term "public sphere" as used here and throughout the book derives from Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*. Although Habermas was writing about the late eighteenth century, there are provocative applications of the concept to the Weimar Republic, which was, after all, the one period in German history (before the reunification of 1990) when the nation, having established a constitutional state, promised to provide an open forum for democratic debate. And it was the first time that women gained the right to vote.

14 Herman Ullstein, head of the company's magazine and newspaper divisions during Weimar, was a

founding member – along with Georg Bernhard (editor of Ullstein's *Vossische Zeitung*), Theodor Wolff (editor of the competing Mosse newspaper *Berliner Tageblatt*), and others – of the Deutsche Demokratische Partei (DDP), a bourgeois, liberal, pro-Republic party active from 1919 to 1929.

The liberalism of the DDP is based on the shoring up of bourgeois power, as can be seen in its support for the formation of a national economic council. While it sought to retain participation of the leftist *Räte* (workers' councils), these were to be supervised and integrated into the state by bourgeois committees. As historian Charles Maier explains, "What the party ideologists envisaged was a pyramid of industrial planning organs that would include representatives of the entrepreneurs, labor and the state. With the power to set prices, allocate raw material and market shares, and generally determine economic policy, the new institutions were to embody the vision of class collaboration in the public interest." The idea "finally was incorporated in the [1919 Weimar] Constitution in a compromise form. A Reich Economic Council, *Reichswirtschaftsrat*, which would group employee, employer, and public representatives and would advise the parliament on legislative proposals. . . . It found its strongest champions among those bourgeois democrats, such as Georg Bernhard, who wished to keep labor in a partnership of moderation." (Charles S. Maier, "Between Taylorism and Technocracy," 45, 51).

The DDP was at its most popular in the early years of Weimar; in the National Assembly elections of 19 January 1919, the DDP received 18.6 percent of the vote. In general, voters supported the Republican parliamentary system; the three "Weimar" parties – the SPD, the Center Party, and the DDP – received 76.2 percent of the vote. Yet by 1920 this popularity was in decline. By 1925 the DDP formed a coalition with the other centrist bourgeois parties (Center and DVP [Deutsche Volkspartei, German People's Party]) to keep the SPD out of power. By 1930 it faded and became the Staatspartei. (Berghahn, *Modern Germany*, 66, 74, 284, 389).

Georg Bernhard, editor of Ullstein's *Vossische Zeitung* from 1920 to 1930, was one of the most influential editors in establishing the politics of the house. In early Weimar, he declared his support for the 1918 revolution but argued, even in those days of socialist enthusiasms, for the maintaining of private ownership of property and the inclusion of the bourgeoisie in forming the new state. Before World

War I Bernhard had been a socialist, but in Weimar, through his outspoken advocacy of the DDP, he became known as a liberal. Bernhard's 1919 pamphlet, *Demokratische Politik: Grundlinien zu einem Parteiprogramm Berlin*, proposes liberal social programs and limits on profits with the retention of private property.

See Luft, "Berliner Illustrierte," 107–08. Still, the party affiliation and activism of such Ullstein editors as Herman Ullstein and Bernhard did not always translate into a clear party identity for the publications. Instead, a more general representation of bourgeois modernity can be read in the press's publications, where they constantly promoted an image of a society unified by a progressive technological modernization instead of one divided by class antagonism.

The politics of the press were not a simple reflection of the politics of the owning family, either. The publications had no explicit identification with assimilated Jewry, for example. Nor was its version of modernity a restrictively Jewish one – it was, among other factors, marked by attitudes toward modernity particular to Berlin, a city with a strong left-liberal tradition. Nevertheless, the appeal of Ullstein Verlag's representation of modernity can be investigated as a contradiction; it was related to a minority, Jewish liberal one, yet it was also one of the most popular images of modernism in Weimar.

Historian George Mosse, himself the scion of another major Jewish-owned, Berlin-based press, the Mosse publishing house, has attributed the Jewish support of modernism to the German Jewish survivalist concept of *Bildung*, meaning an Enlightenment attitude toward self-improvement through humanistic education. Propagating modernism to a broad German populace, then, can be interpreted as a kind of pedagogy, an attempt to forge a new common culture between Jews and non-Jews and implicitly a plea for tolerance. Mosse also relates Jewish *Bildung* to a specifically bourgeois status. (Mosse, *German Jews beyond Judaism*).

15 *BIZ* 42 (1928): 1786.

16 Ullstein's liberalism should be considered in the historical context of modern German liberalism. In addition to standard liberal interests in continuity, reformism, and Enlightenment reason, German liberalism was also at times associated with Judaism and often internationalism and located its hopes for the future and social egalitarianism in technological progress. Particularly during the

phase of economic stabilization in 1924–1929, “technocratic visions found support among liberals eager to use technological advances to increase productivity and attenuate social conflicts.” (Herf, *Reactionary Modernism*, 41). Hence the pro-industry outlook of the international avant-garde, even with members like the Soviet communist El Lissitzky who created advertisements for German capitalist industry and embraced technological progress, are not far from bourgeois liberalism at this point. The stabilization phase was the time when the international (or International Constructivist) avant-garde extended, strengthened, and solidified itself as Germany reentered the European economic market and isolationism dissolved. This common ground is one reason that the majority of avant-garde artists of the 1920s cannot be simplistically diagrammed as opposed to hegemonic culture.

17 Herman Ullstein wrote about Leopold Ullstein and religion: “He had been a man of the liberal era, of the awakening and rising freedom which the succeeding century was once more to cast on the dung heap. Of Jewish origin himself, he had had his sons brought up in the Christian faith – because, as he said, the state we were destined to serve was Christian. ‘What’s the difference anyway?’ he used to ask. ‘We believe in one God. Jesus Christ, in the same sense as Judaism did, preached the love for one’s neighbor, abhorred dissension, hatred, and the warring of one race against another. He defended the poor and the oppressed. For this alone we ought to love Him. Whether His appearance on the earth as God’s Son is to be understood symbolically or literally, everyone must decide for himself.’” (Ullstein, *Rise and Fall*, 80).

18 It is difficult to discern this in sources colored by the Nazi experience; that is, any Ullstein or Ullstein employee writing after the Second World War would have no doubt as to the Jewish identity of the Ullsteins. But there seems to have been no doubt during Weimar. German class, ethnic, and occupational divisions have always been sharply drawn. Indirect evidence such as Herman Ullstein’s surprise that a doorman could have been a secret member of the Nazi party after having been so friendly to him during Weimar, or a look at the most prominent employees of the House – that is, the editorial staff primarily, showing that many of this inner circle were Jewish (such as Vicki Baum and George Bernhard as well as the Ullsteins’ close friends) – leaves little doubt as to the perception of the Ullsteins’ ethnic identity as Jewish.

In describing the Ullsteins as assimilated Jews, I am employing the terminology of the historian Marion Kaplan, who has distinguished between “acculturated” and “assimilated” Jews in Wilhelmine Germany, the era in which Leopold Ullstein ran the Verlag and raised his children, Herman among them. By “acculturated,” Kaplan means those who maintained a Jewish identity while accommodating themselves to mainstream culture, whereas “assimilated” defines those whose Jewish identity was relinquished in favor of adherence to mainstream culture. Yet, Kaplan notes that even for Jews who wanted to assimilate completely, routine anti-Semitism (Jew-baiting in schools, cultural injunctions against inter-ethnic socializing, and other acts of hatred) made this impossible, and, in fact, Jews who had converted and otherwise assimilated most often formed social circles with each other. See Kaplan, “Tradition and Transition,” 3–36.

19 Herman Ullstein was involved in major aspects of production. Historian Peter de Mendelssohn quotes Bernhard (without giving a source): “In Herman Ullstein vereinigen sich journalistisches Temperament, organisatorische Begabung und ein künstlerische modern gerichteter Geschmack . . . Sein ausgesprochenen Sinn für Aktualität, sein Fingerspitzengefühl für bildhafte Wirkung und Künstlerisches Arrangement liessen ihn zu einer immer neuen Quelle der Anregung für seine redaktionellen Mitarbeiter werden. Sein Witz, der ihn befähigt, in epigrammatischer Kürze Bildunterschriften und Propagandaschlagworte launig zu gestalten, schuf ganz neue Möglichkeiten der Propaganda.” (*Zeitungsstadt Berlin: Menschen und Mächte in der Geschichte der Deutschen Presse* [Berlin: Ullstein, 1959], 144).

20 On Wilhelm II’s private acquaintances among Jews and his public anti-Semitism, see Mosse, “Wilhelm II and the Kaiserjuden,” 164–94.

21 Wallenberg, “Zum jüdischen Beitrag,” 407–08.

22 Ullstein, *Rise and Fall*, 122.

23 Although seemingly independent of class and flexible enough to include both the stenotypist and the wealthy, fashionable Hausfrau, the stereotype of the New Woman was most closely linked, in bourgeois women’s magazines and in film, to images of upward mobility. See the excellent and provocative discussion of class in Petro, *Joyless Streets*, particularly the chapters on “Gender, Looking and the Address to Female Readers: *Die Dame* and the *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung*,” 110–39, and “*Dirnentragödie: Sexual Mobility, Social Mobility, and Melodramas of the Street*,” 160–73.

- 24 The analogy between Jews and women that has been articulated elsewhere – in terms of the victimization of both under Nationalist Socialist rule – trivializes the dramatic differences in forms of victimization. Much more to the point is the strong parallel between the participation, or dreams of participation, in Weimar culture and society of Jews and women and the Weimar myths with which both chose to identify. The Nazis later turned these associations against both Jews and New Women and used them as emblems of the despised Republic.
- 25 Ullstein, *Rise and Fall*, 87.
- 26 A number of autobiographical books and articles have been published by people who worked at Ullstein during the Weimar years. The writings of Baum, whose best-selling novels (including *Menschen im Hotel* and *stud. chem Helene Willfüer*) were serialized in *BIZ* and other Ullstein publications, are particularly useful to read on the working environment of the house. Baum is perhaps best known today for her bittersweet and absorbing screenplay for the Hollywood film *Grand Hotel* (1932), which she adapted from her novel.
- 27 Baum, *Es war alles ganz anders*, 366; and Noack-Mosse, “*Uhu*,” 187. Noack-Mosse paraphrases Herman Ullstein: “Kinder, ein bisschen mehr Lebensfreude muss in die Nummer! Habt Ihr nicht noch ein paar freundliche Fotos?”
- 28 “Irgendwie aber gab die Forderung nach Lebensfreude und Optimismus dem Ullsteinhaus seine gute Atmosphäre, verlieh jedem einen inneren Schwung. . . . Berlin war so herrlich lebendig, so geladen mit einer seltsamen Elektrizität. . . . Für uns aber war es genau die Freiheit, die wir wollten und brauchten.” (Baum, *Es war alles ganz anders*, 369).
- 29 Weise, “Photos für die Presse,” 184.
- 30 Eskildsen, *Fotografie in deutschen Zeitschriften*, 4–13.
- 31 Picture agents kept forty to fifty percent of the fee, which could vary anywhere between twenty and two hundred marks (Marckwardt, *Die Illustrierten*, 118). Herman Ullstein states that Ullstein Verlag paid the market’s highest prices to writers and photographers. There are no Ullstein personnel files in existence; the archive was “cleansed” in 1934 of all Jewish-related material, and, apparently, at that time information pertaining to both Jewish and non-Jewish employees was destroyed. Much of the photoarchive, however, remains intact.
- 32 Eskildsen, *Fotografie in deutschen Zeitschriften*, 12–13.
- 33 Eskildsen, “Photography and the Neue Sachlichkeit Movement,” 108.
- 34 “Es ist kein Zufall, dass die Entwicklung des Kinos und die Entwicklung der ‘Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung’ ziemlich parallel laufen.” (Korff, “Die ‘Berliner Illustrierte,’” 290).
- 35 Patrice Petro has connected film melodrama and its particular appeal to women and the highly dramatized and stylized representation of women in the *Illustrierte*. (Petro, *Joyless Streets*).
- 36 “Obwohl es keine Leseranlysen der zeitgenössischen Illustrierten gibt, lässt sich nach Meinung von Kirchner [*Publizistik* Nov.–Dec. 1958] aus der Entwicklung in den funfziger Jahren der Schluss ziehen, dass die Illustrierten in den zwanziger Jahren überwiegend von Angestellten und Beamten, kaum jedoch von Arbeitern gekauft worden . . . die Mehrzahl der Kinobesucher entstammte dagegen proletarischen Kreisen.” (Marckwardt, *Die Illustrierten*, 109).
- 37 Hansen, “Early Silent Cinema,” 147–84; Hake, “Writing Visual Pleasure.”
- 38 *Ullstein Berichte* (Jan. 1931): 7, 10–11. *BIZ* was also sold outside Berlin but primarily within.
- 39 *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* 41 (1931).
- 40 Marckwardt, *Die Illustrierten*, 23–34.
- 41 Molderings, “Urbanism and Technological Utopianism,” 93.
- 42 Haug, *Commodity Aesthetics*, 103–27.
- 43 Sales for most publications dropped during the Depression. The January 1933 *Ullstein Berichte* statistics show a small decline for *BIZ* (to 1,502,090) and a more serious drop for *Uhu* (to 117,790), but the Ullstein publications aimed at more modest households grew: *Blatt der Hausfrau*’s circulation increased to 528,860, and the new Sunday family paper *Die Grüne Post* reached 832,660 readers.
- 44 *Der Verlag Ullstein zum Welt Reklame Kongress Berlin 1929*, 121.
- 45 Advertising revenues as a percentage of total sales proceeds declined unevenly during the period 1928–33: in 1928, 2,600,000 to 2,575,000 RM, with advertising making up 49.7 percent of the proceeds; in 1930, 2,678,000 to 2,746,000 (50.6 percent); in 1932, 2,340,000 to 1,712,000 (42.2 percent); and in 1933, 2,132,000 to 1,788,000 (45.7 percent). Kirchner, “Der Markt der Illustrierten,” 332.
- 46 *Der Verlag Ullstein zum Welt Reklame Kongress Berlin 1929*, 126.
- 47 Löffler, “Der Inseratenmarkt der illustrierten Zeitung,” 31, 37. I thank Munich-based photohistorian

Brigitte Werneburg for making this dissertation available to me.

48 "Die Tänzerin Maria Leeser in Scheveningen," *BIZ* 33 (14 August 1921), 505.

49 For further discussion on prostheses and technology in Weimar, see Sloterdijk, "Depersonalization and Alienation. Functionalist Cynicisms I," and "Artificial Limbs. Functionalist Cynicisms II: On the Spirit of Technology," in *Critique of Cynical Reason*, 434–59.

50 "Eine Maschine, die die Schönheit misst. Fot. Ass. Press. Mit Hilfe dieses in Amerika erfundenen Apparats kann man die Gesichtsmasse genau prüfen und feststellen, wie weit sie von der Ideal-Maske abweichen." (*BIZ* 46 [1932]: 1531). The racist implications – the use of physiognomy to make value judgments about worth – are also significant here.

51 See *Uhu*, Sept. 1930, for Herbert Bayers' parody, "Zieh Dich aus und Du bist Grieche."

52 "Mass ornament" (*das Ornament der Masse*), an expression of the twenties, was best known through Siegfried Kracauer's writings. His essay "The Mass Ornament" was first published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* on July 9 and 10, 1927.

53 *Die Dame* came out twice a month. This was the cover of the early July 1929 issue.

54 I was able to find only four prototypes in *Die Dame* that were attributed to Höch: a rectangular linen pillow with colored wool embroidery, a rectangular cloth with embroidery, a round doily with a "new type of wide lace border worked in small ships," and a stuffed dog made out of bunched wool. The issues in which the patterns were published are as follows: *Die Dame* 9 (Feb. 1924): 20: Rechteckiges Leinenkissen mit farbiger Wollstickerei (fig. 32) Größe 66 zu 43 cm. Entwurf und Ausführung: Hanna Höch. Ullstein-Bügelmuster H2875; *Die Dame* 18 (June 1923): 21: Viereckige Decke mit reicher Tüllstickerei (fig. 33); *Die Dame* 4 (Nov. 1925): 24: Rundes Deckchen aus weissem Batist mit neuartiger breiter Randspitze in Schiffchenarbeit. Durchmesser: 27 cm. Entwurf und Ausführung: Hanna Höch, Berlin-Friedenau. Ullstein-Handarbeitsmuster H3566 mit Beschreibung als Handarbeits-Kleinigk; and *Die Dame* 12 (March 1923): 20: Handarbeiten für unsere Kinder, Photo: Lissner Berlin, King Charles aus grauer und schwarzer Straussenwolle. Höhe 14 cm., Länge 24 cm. Entwurf: Hanna Höch, Friedenau Ullstein-Handarbeitsmuster. H2546 also Handarb.-Kleinigk.

55 "Interessante Neuerwerbungen des Botanisches

Gartens in Dahlem bei Berlin: Eine fleischfressende Pflanze aus Java (*Carnivora maxima* Smithsonii L) bei einer Mahlzeit – Vakuumpflanze aus Birma (*Vacua grandiflora* Lemmis [sign for female]), die den Blütenstaub aus den benachbarten Blumen fängt. Phot. S.A. Wosen." (*BIZ* 14 [1 April 1921]: 200). The newspaper did not identify the Aprilscherze as Höch's; she acknowledged later that she was responsible (Ohff, *Hannah Höch*, 46). The fact that her archive contains a number of tearsheets of this page confirms this. The Aprilscherze was a success at Ullstein; one of the two images, the carnivore, was reprinted as "Fleischfressende Pflanzen: Aus dem Botanischen Garten Dahlem" in *Uhu* 7 (April 1925): 96.

56 The postcard is undated, but it was probably done sometime in the twenties. Ohff, *Hannah Höch*, 43.

57 It was a job particularly well suited for the economically disastrous inflationary climate of the years 1918–23, as Ullstein remained solvent and able to pay its employees during this period. Höch continued her lifestyle at approximately the same level, that is, she lived in a modest studio in Berlin and was able to travel during the summers.

58 An additional note on Höch's presence at Ullstein is that she seems to have drawn images for her photomontages chiefly from *BIZ*, *Die Dame*, and *Uhu* and not at all from certain other Ullstein publications such as the nature and technology magazine *Koralle*, which also had excellent photography. One reason for this could have been that Höch was perpetually on a tight budget and therefore would have bought only a few magazines, possibly even getting *Die Dame* or certain issues of it for free. *BIZ* would have been a must for any fan of photography and modernity; *Die Dame* would have answered Höch's purported interest in fashion in addition to the appeal of its high-quality production; and *Uhu* fits most closely with Höch's ironic wit – even the relations between photographs in the layout resemble those in Höch's scrapbook.

59 From "On the Problem of New Content and New Form," (originally published in *Akaszott Ember*, 3–4 [1922]) in Passuth, *Moholy-Nagy*, 287.

60 Lavin, "Advertising Utopia," 134–39, 169.

61 Lissitzky and Stam, "Die Reklame," n.p.: "Die Reklame ist in der heutigen Gemeinschaftsordnung eine Notwendigkeit geworden, eine Folge des Konkurrenzbetriebes." See also Tschichold, *Die Neue Typographie*.

62 Kurt Schwitters, "Gestaltende Typographie," in *Kurt Schwitters. Das Literarische Werk*, ed. Friedhelm Lach, vol. 5, 265.

Although Schwitters has been named as the preeminent friend in Höch's life during the period 1922–26 in at least two biographical statements on Höch, I find this paradigm of a romantic couple to be inaccurate and forced. It has even been stated explicitly that if it were not for the existence of Schwitters's wife Helma, he and Höch could have been happily married. At times this offensive reasoning is carried further, implying that if Höch could have been happy with Kurt Schwitters, she would have been spared the nine-year lesbian relationship with Til Brugman that was to follow.

Karin Thomas, "Hannah Höch," 72.

Höch's correspondence of the period – which reveals a wonderful, intense, and platonic relationship with Kurt Schwitters and a very affectionate one with Helma – refutes these assumptions. Höch enjoyed extremely close relationships as well with other members of the international avant-garde, particularly Nelly and Theo van Doesburg. The correspondence conveys a warm sense of community and exchange of ideas and materials – friendship, visits, shared new periodicals, contributions to one another's publications; these are the topics of the letters. And it is a great disservice to Höch and to the history of the 1920s avant-garde to mask this intense community activity and mutual support behind a myth of a frustrated love affair with Schwitters. This view further belies the constructive platonic relationship they did have and the emphasis on work and collaboration in their association.

63 The ring "*neue werbegestalter*" consisted of Kurt Schwitters, Jan Tschichold, Piet Zwart, Paul Schuitema, Max Burchartz, Cesar Domela, Walter Dexel, Willi Baumeister, Robert Michel, Georg Trump, and Vordemberge-Gildewart. They often invited other designers to participate in group exhibitions.

64 "Als der Krieg vorüber war, gehörten wir zu den ersten deutschen Künstlern, die mit ähnlich avantgardistischen Gruppen in New York, Paris und Moskau Beziehungen aufnahmen. 1922 hielt der deutsche Dada sogar eine internationale Konferenz in Weimar ab, auf der El Lissitzky die Moskauer Konstruktivisten, Theo van Doesburg und Cornelius van Eesteren die Mondriansche Stijl-Gruppe, Tristan Tzara und Hans Arp die Züricher und Pariser Dadaisten vertraten." (Höch in Adriani, ed., *Hannah Höch*, 31).

65 See Hannah Höch's undated note to herself, BG HHC F248/79.

66 Schwitters, "Erste Veilchenheft," in Adriani, ed.,

Hannah Höch, 33. In 1924, Höch made her first trip to Paris. In her notebook from this trip, Höch records time spent with Tzara and the Doesburgs. Through the Doesburgs she met Mondrian, Man Ray, and others, visiting Man Ray's studio several times. Tzara kept two of her works, which she referred to as *Klebebild I. mit grossem Kopf* (Pasted Image I. with large head) and *das bunte Dada (Klebebild mit Knöpfchen)* (the colored Dada pasted image with little buttons). (Notizheft, BG HHC H1405/79). In 1925 she returned to Paris where she updated her knowledge of contemporary Russian art and again saw the Doesburgs and other friends. (Notizbuch, BG HHC H346/79).

67 "1925 war ich in England" und später mit Theo van Doesburg und Nelly auf Belle Isle im Atlantischen Ozean. Mit Doesburgs [*sic*] verband mich schon seit der Zeit in Weimar. Auch Moholy Nagy stand mir bis zu seinem Weggang von Deutschland . . . kameradschaftlich sehr nahe und auch Otto Freundlich gehörte zu meinen ältesten Freunden." (Höch, "Lebensüberblick," 10–11).

Höch's lifelong friendship with Adolf Behne is also significant, as are Behne's writings in the twenties on architecture, design, and mass culture. Behne was an early supporter of Höch's and one of the first to write about her work. Behne, in "Kunstgewerbe," 783, describes Höch as having "eine seltene Begabung für das Ornamentale" (Höch Nachlass, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin, no identification number). This comment from Behne should not be suspect as a male critic's dismissal of a female artist's work as ornamental; for Behne, a design talent is highest praise. Noteworthy also is this postcard Behne wrote to Höch on 6 May 1922: "Ich habe Gelegenheit in der Fachzeitschrift 'Seidels Reklame' in farbiger Reproduktion *moderne* Reklamarbeiten zu publizieren. Können Sie mir mit Material helfen? Ich dachte an die Plakate für das Cabarett im Grossen Schauspielhaus. Wenn Sie *neuere* Arbeiten hätten wäre es mir *noch* lieber" (BG HHC K906/79).

68 "1926 waren Kurt Schwitters und Helma in Holland. Sie riefen mich auch hin und in dem Haus an der See, in Kijkduin bei Scheveningen bei den Ebenets, kamen in diesem Sommer täglich sehr viele Künstler zusammen. Ich lernte Til Brugman, von Eesteren, Oud, Rietveld, Huszar und viele andere kennen. Auch Ida Bienert aus Dresden, diese aussergewöhnliche Frau und leidenschaftliche Sammlerin dieser Zeit, war in Scheveningen." (Höch, "Lebensüberblick," 10–11).

69 Brugman, "R," 54 and "Weg." Til Brugman's bibliography is published in Everard, "Graven," 28.

70 See the Brugman-Höch correspondence in the collection of Eva-Maria and Heinrich Rössners, Backnang.

71 Vilma Frielingsdorf, interview with the author and Ami Hürlimann, Berlin, Oct. 12, 1986.

72 Höch's library has been partially dispersed, but a section of it has been preserved in the Höch Nachlass, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin. The following magazines were owned by Höch: *G: Material zur Elementaren Gestaltung* (Hans Richter, ed.) Sept. 1923, June 1924; *ABC: Beiträge zum Bauen* 1924; *Merz* full run; *Mécano* (Leiden) 1922 (3), 1923 (4-5); *a bis z* (Cologne) 1929-33: 1-5, 7, 13, 19, 20, 22, 24-28, 30; *i 10: Int. Revue* (Amsterdam) 2 Jg. 1928, Nr. 15 and Nr. 16; *Typographische Mitteilungen* (Leipzig) Jg. 1925 Oct.; and *de Stijl* 1917-18: 5, 12, 1919: 6, 8; 1921: 6, 10, 11, 12; 1922: 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 1923-25: 2, 3-4, 5, 6-7, 8, 9, 10-11, 12, 1926-27: 73-74, 75-76, 77, 78, 79-84, 1928: 87-89, 1932: Jan. (dernier numéro).

73 Sometime after World War II, Höch wrote in a note to herself: "Collage *Hochfinanz* hat jetzt Herr Karsch. Moholy hat es *ohne* meine Zustimmung 'Der Milliardär' unterschrieben im Bauhausbuch. Ein Untertitel ist bei der Neuauflage dazu erfunden worden und bei der Neuauflage ist die Widmung an Moholy weggeschnitten!" BG HHC 531/79.

74 This comment from an anonymous critic in the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* is quoted in Rehorst, "Hannah Höch und die Niederlande," 48.

75 "Maar terwijl zij de tekorten van de fotografie ontdekt, heeft ze de beelden al verknipt en zoodanig saamgevoegd, dat meens uit het nieuwe ontstane beeld een heele wereld spreekt." Van Loghem continued, relating Höch's photomontage practice to his own architectural and design one: "Could it be possible that we architects, who in these times so often have to open old blind buildings through changes and reconstructions, that we are so unusually surprised by this work? Aren't we doing the same thing that makes these photomontages so lively?" ("Zou het mogelijk zijn, dat wij architecten, die in dezen tijd zoo herhaaldelijk oude blinde gebouwen door wijziging en verbouwing moeten openen, zoo bijzonder door dit werk gefraspeerd worden. Doen wij niet ook hetzelfde, wat deae fotomontage zoo levend maakt" - Review of 1935 exhibition at Kunstzaal d'Audretsch. Van Loghem, "Fotomontage van Hannah Höch," 268, 269. Translated by Barbara Bloom).

76 Moholy-Nagy, *Malerei Fotografie Film*, 104.

hannah höch's mass media scrapbook

chapter 3

1 Höch probably created the scrapbook in 1933, while she was living with the Dutch writer Til Brugman in Berlin, the two having returned from Holland in 1929 after living together in The Hague for three years.

The images selected date from 1921-33, but most are from mid- and late Weimar, 1925-31. I base my dating of 1933 on the fact that the latest images date from 1933 and that these do not appear to have been added on later.

This date, the year of Hitler's seizure of power, immediately invites the speculation that the scrapbook could have been created to commemorate the Weimar *Illustrierte*. This is, of course, possible, and the date could also partially explain the nostalgic quality of some of the images. Although the explicit political content of the *Illustrierte* changed abruptly in 1933, the format of *BIZ*, for example, did not, and most of its photographic themes and styles were still intact at this point.

2 *New German Critique* 40 (Winter 1987) explores the questions of female spectatorship and Weimar mass media in a special issue on Weimar film. This collection deals with a re-reading of Kracauer's theories of distraction in light of current discourse on female spectatorship, among other issues.

An important exception to the dearth of material available on German female spectators early in the century is Emilie Altenloh's 1914 survey of moviegoers cited in Hansen, "Early Silent Cinema," 176-79.

3 The scrapbook is located in the Hannah Höch Nachlass, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin, BG HHC G322/79.

4 See, e.g., Kracauer, "Die kleinen Ladenmädchen," 279-94.

5 "Moholy hat in seinem Bauhaus-Buch: 'Malerei, Photographie, Film' (bei Albert Langen in München) das schönste Material aus deutschen und ausländischen Journalen zusammengestellt, und das ist ein fesselndes, überraschendes, famoseres Buch geworden, worin ein gut Teil vom technischen Witz unsrer Zeit beisammen ist" (Behne, "Die Illustrierten," 187). It should be noted here that both Höch and Moholy-Nagy shared an interest in avant-garde film. As Höch recalled, "Im Verfolgen und Beurteilen des sich in neuen Formen entwickelnden Films ergänzten sich unsere Meinungen immer." (Ohff, *Hannah Höch*, 27-8).

6 Grete König recalls how familiar she, Hannah

Höch, and their intellectual circle were with Bloch's writings in the twenties. In what remains of Höch's library, there is a periodical (*Menschen: Zeitschrift Neuer Kunst*, Sonderheft Junge Tonkunst, 3, Heft II [Nov. 1920]) that includes Bloch's article "Geist der Utopic." *Menschen* was edited by Walther Hasenclever and Heinar Schilling and published in Dresden. BG HHC 409/79.

Later, after Höch's death, both her sisters and their families became close friends with Bloch's widow, Karola Bloch, well known for her communist activism. I bring this up not to imply a direct influence of Bloch on Höch or vice versa but rather to point out that they shared generational values and that they were members of the same Berlin intelligentsia if not the same circles.

Zipes quotes Bloch's discussion of montage from *Erbschaft dieser Zeit*: "The real fruit of "relativism" [in physics] is montage, not objectivity (*Sachlichkeit*), for it *improvises* with the context that has been exploded. Out of those (exploded) elements that have become pure and are made into rigid facades by objectivity, montage creates variable temptations and attempts in the empty space. This empty space originated precisely because of the collapse of bourgeois culture. Not only does the rationalization of a different society play in it, but one can see a new formation of figures arising out of the particles of the cultural heritage that have become chaotic." (Bloch, *Utopian Function*, xxviii; Zipes is quoting from Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit*, 214-215).

7 Bloch, *Utopian Function*, xxxi.

8 See the Dutch film programs in the Höch Nachlass, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin. Höch pointed out the importance of avant-garde film for the development of photomontage in her 1946 essay, "Fotomontage," for the catalog of the Galerie Rosen's group montage exhibition of the same name in Berlin.

9 Höch and Brugman saw abstract experimental films in Holland and no doubt in Berlin as well.

10 It should be mentioned again that the scrapbook was created during the Depression, which hit Germany hardest of all the industrialized countries and during which Brugman and Höch experienced much anxiety and hardship about finances. Höch's attitudes toward nature can also be guessed at using details from her later life; it is well known that she hibernated in or behind her elaborate garden, hiding away from National Socialist society beginning in 1939. She remained in Heiligensee the rest of her life.

Höch continued her interest in technology as well; as Linda Nochlin reports (in conversation with the author, June 1988) when she visited Höch in the 1970s, Höch was fascinated with space exploration, and Nöchlin sent her some maps of the moon.

11 "Im Trance Zustand tanzende Kinder auf der Sudaninsel Bali Aufnahmen von Lola Kreutzberg." Lola Kreutzberg, "Trance-Tänze auf der Insel Bali," *BIZ* (27 June 1926): 806.

12 "Drei Jahre Tillergirls in Berlin," *BIZ* (23 Oct. 1927): 1739-41. The girls were never named and were treated as interchangeable. For a concise and informative history of the Tiller Girls, see Berghaus, "Girllkultur," 200-02.

13 "Humor Zeichnung von Paul Simmel: Ford übernimmt die Herstellung die Tiller Girls. Tagesproduktion: 15,000" (Humor drawing by Paul Simmel: Ford takes on the manufacture of the Tiller Girls. Daily production: 15,000), *BIZ* (28 March 1926): 411.

14 Kracauer, "Mass Ornament," 70. Originally this article was published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, July 9 and 10, 1927.

15 Kracauer, "Mass Ornament," 69, 67. I doubt, however, that the presence of the girls was asexual; certainly this is not borne out in the photographs; see "Drei Jahre Tillergirls in Berlin," *BIZ* (23 Oct. 1926): 1739-41.

16 Dyer, "Entertainment and Utopia," 175-89.

17 "Bilder aus einer modernen Tanz und Bewegungsschule in Hannover," *BIZ* (23 Sept. 1928): 1620. This particular photograph is captioned: "Freiübungen in Licht und Sonne." The photograph of the Soviet girls is captioned: "In der Moskauer Kino-Hochschule: Eine Schulklasse bei einem Sonnenbad unter den Lampen des Ateliers," J. C. Abbe, "Kino-Hochschule in Moskau: Eindrücke aus dem neuen Russland," *BIZ* (18 March 1928): 469. The accompanying *BIZ* article inflects this photograph with a message of anti-individualism: "Unser Photograph wollte Einzelbilder der Schülerinnen machen. Aber der Leiter der Schule bat (nach dieser Aufnahme von Frä. Bazanowa) weitere Einzel-Aufnahmen zu unterlassen, denn 'Russland mache alles in Gruppen. Das Individuum zähle nicht.'"

18 Indirectly this could refer to a belief in equivalences between geometric forms found in technology and in nature evidenced in Weimar cultural products such as Renger-Patzsch's book and Kurt Schwitters's and El Lissitzky's organo-technical homologies in *Merz* 8-9 (1924).

- 19 "Interessante Sprungbilder aus dem neuen Film 'Wege zu Kraft und Schönheit, II. Sei!' Verschiedene Zeitlupen-Bildchen einer bestimmten Bewegung, die hier in Vergrößerungen aneinandergereiht sind." *BIZ* (29 May 1926): 676.
- 20 "Die zivilisierten Menschen, so sei behauptet, finden heute in Reise und Tanz den Ersatz für die Sphäre, die sich ihnen verweigert. . . . Reise und Tanz haben eine theologische Bedeutung erlangt, sie sind wesentliche Möglichkeiten der von Doppelsexistenz uneigentlich zu leben, die Wirklichkeit gründet." (Kracauer, "Reise und Tanz," 46).
- 21 Bridenthal and Koonz, "Beyond 'Kinder, Küche, Kirche,'" 33-65.
- 22 Bloch, "Art and Utopia," 139, 141.
- 23 "Ich habe alle Artikel geschickt von denen ich wusste dass Hannah Interesse hatte, nicht? Alle Zeitungen die ich grad las. Ich habe alles was mich interessierte, ausgeschnitten denn ich wusste Hannah möchte davon wissen. Dass sie sich auch orientierte über das was hier in Deutschland inzwischen herauskommt. *Die Dame* und *Die Neue Linie* waren damals Modezeichnung, das interessierte Hannah auch sehr." Grete König, interview with the author, Murnau, 29 Oct. 1986.
- 24 "Den Illustrierten. Die sind schon eine grosse Freude - Du kannst Dir garnicht denken eine wie grosse. Man hört und sieht doch mal was." Höch papers in the collection of Grete König, Murnau.
- 25 "Wiederauftreten der Pawlowa in London nach einer fünfjährigen Weltreise: Die Künstlerin mit ihrem Partner Alexander Wolinine in einem neuen und experimentvollen orientalischen Tanz. Phot Franz von Riel." "Neues von Tanzbühne," *BIZ* (16 May 1920): 223.
- 26 "Die modernste photographische Aufnahme: Zwischen Statuen der Könige in Aegypten Die Schauspielerin Sorel and Nun auch Tutankhamen-Tänze! Eine englische Varieté-Tänzerin." *BIZ* (9 March 1924): 183.
- 27 "Ein menschlicher Schmetterling: Die amerikanische Tänzerin Lada bei einer Tanz-übung in ihrem Garten. Mit Genehmigung der Zeitschrift 'The Tatler.'" *BIZ* (15 April 1923): 288.
- 28 Dyer, "Entertainment and Utopia," 185.
- 29 "Hochsprung mit Anlauf. Phot. Sennecke, and Starke Geste im modernen Ausdruckstanz (Die Wigmanschülerin Vera Skonorel) Phot. Suse Byk." The Palucca photographs are not identified, but Höch admired this modern dancer so much that she is the only figure in the entire scrapbook that Höch bothered to label by hand; she has written the dancer's name in pencil on page 106 next to a Palucca portrait captioned: "'Arc en Ciel' Figuren aus dem Stück 'Le mariage d'un nu.'" 30 *Uhu* 5 (Feb. 1926): 24, 27.
- 31 *Die Dame* (mid-Nov. 1923): 6-7, photographs by Erika Stroedel, Dresden.
- 32 "Sumo: Beinstellen ist erlaubt und eine ganze Reihe von Griffen, welche bei unserem Ringkampf streng verpönt sind." Accompanying an article by Hansu, "Sumo: Der Japanische Ringkampf," *Uhu* 12 (Sept. 1925): 53.
- 33 "Zum Trancezustand. Zuerst atmen die Kinder willig und tief, dann werden die Augen starr, der Körper fällt von einer Seite auf die andere, er wehrt sich gegen das Gift. Endlich, nach vielleicht anderthalb qualvollen Stunden, streckt sich der kleine Körper plötzlich, das Kind fällt ohnmächtig nach rückwärts in die Arme seiner Schwester." Kreuzberg, "Trance-Tänze auf der Insel Bali," 806.
- 34 "Phot Binder Die Schauspielerin Dolly Haas," *Uhu* 3 (Dec. 1929): 87.
- 35 Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 141-43, 151-52, 188.
- 36 Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 142.
- 37 Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 142-43.
- 38 *Die Dame* 14 (Early April 1925): 12.
- 39 Such images appear in Höch's scrapbook on pages 10 and 11, 18 and 19, 78 and 79, 82 and 83, and 108 and 109. Pages 18 and 19 combine a photograph of nude prepubescent girls, arms around each others' shoulders, with shots of "virginal" snowscapes and skiers flying through mountainous terrain.
- 40 "Die Sitzende," in Mahir, "Muskeln nach Mass: Was hilft der schönste Bizeps," *Uhu* 5 (Feb. 1930): 44. Sabri Mahir was a fashionable exercise trainer in Berlin and the personal trainer of Ullstein editor and novelist Vicki Baum.
- 41 The Bergner photograph is captioned: "Die Bergner als Juana: in dem berühmten alten Park Generalité in Granada."
- 42 Jameson, "Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture," 130-48.
- 43 Art historian Ellen Maurer has examined the representation of motherhood in Höch's paintings. Maurer, "Symbolische Gemälde Hannah Höch aus den Jahren 1920-1930," 106-13.
- 44 This was not exclusively a right-wing position. See the chapters on Weimar in Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland*.

- 45 *Katalog: Internationale Ausstellung: Frauen in Not*, 9 Oct.–1 Nov. 1931, Haus der Juryfreien, Berlin.
- 46 Barthes, "Great Family of Man," 100–02.
- 47 The original captions read, respectively: "Die abgehärte Familie Phot. Rieblücke"; "Der Säuglingsparade: Säuglinge, die vor Verlassen der Klinik die Taufe empfangen, im Taufstaat. Aufnahmen: Neofot-Fotog"; and "Darf ich jetzt reinkommen?"
- 48 *Die Woche* 52 (27 Dec. 1930): 1526.
- 49 In the life-cycle category, Höch's treatment of aging is also of interest. On page 99, opposite a page devoted to images of adults and babies and serene landscapes, is an array of eight photographs, five of which are about aging. Two derive from a *BIZ* photoessay on an elderly preacher giving an impassioned sermon: "Der Schluss der Predigt: '... So lasst uns denn singen: Halleluja... Redner-Typen im Londoner Hydepark: Ein 80jähriger Pfarrer, der eine Predigt hält.'" These are from a photoessay, a form gaining in popularity in the *Illustrierte* beginning about 1926, consisting of three photographs by Wolfgang Weber, two of the preacher and one of a listener (*BIZ* [28 Sept. 1930]: 1755). All portray aging in terms of facial expressions and gestures, a preoccupation not restricted to silent film but evident in general in the mass media and film criticism of the twenties. Almost all the old people are in motion – praying, hugging, preaching – a view of aging as an active and engaged part of the life cycle, not a stage of despair. Sabine Hake discusses this focus on physiognomy with regard to the criticism of Béla Balazs and his predecessors. (Hake, "Writing Visual Pleasure," 118–38). Two other captions read: "Wir lassen uns nicht scheiden!" "Das Portrait der amerikanischen Bäuerin, wie sie nicht in Filmen gezeigt wird: Diese Bäuerin aus dem Staat Tennessee Keystone View Co."
- 50 "Germany in general, which did not accomplish a bourgeois revolution until 1918 is, unlike England, and much less France, the classical land of nonsynchronism, that is, of unsurmountable remnants of older economic being and consciousness." (Bloch, "Nonsynchronism," 29).
- 51 "Over and above a great deal of false nonsynchronism there is this one in particular: Nature, and more than that, the ghost of history comes very easily to the desperate, to the bankrupt petty bourgeois, the depression which releases the ghost takes place in a country with a particularly large amount of pre-capitalist material." (Bloch, "Nonsynchronism," 29).
- The nonsynchronism conveyed by ethnographic photography can encourage the belief that a nostalgic utopia is implicit, not just in fragments of existence, but in all of the actual present. As Dyer points out in his analysis of American musical films: "The commonest procedure for doing this is removal of the whole film in time and space . . . to places, that is, where it can be believed (by white urban Americans) that song and dance are 'in the air,' built into the peasant/black culture and blood, or part of a more free and easy stage in American development." (Dyer, "Entertainment and Utopia," 187–88).
- 52 Moses, "Coolie Labor Question," 234–61.
- 53 Smith, *German Colonial Empire*, 9–10.
- 54 "Dernburg's political identification with the left liberals was not accidental, and like his friend Walther Rathenau he leaned toward a political philosophy that would protect traditional middle-class values while increasing national economic efficiency and productivity." (Smith, *German Colonial Empire*, 188). Smith is referring to the period 1906–07. Smith discusses Dernburg's friendship with Rathenau and his public identity as a Jew, stating, "Dernburg himself was usually considered a prime example of the Jewish businessmen who were becoming so important in Germany at the time" (*German Colonial Empire*, 187).
- And Herman Ullstein wrote of meeting Dernburg at George Bernhard's primarily Jewish political salon before World War I: "It was here, too, in these early days, that I myself met the Minister for Colonies, Dernburg, and, later, Stresemann, Rathenau, and many others." (Ullstein, *Rise and Fall*, 123).
- 55 Smith, *German Colonial Empire*, 187–89.
- 56 Dernburg, "Sind Kolonien für Deutschland nötig?" 21–25.
- 57 "Ob das deutsche Volk noch Kolonial Aufgaben zu erfüllen hätte." (Dernburg, "Sind Kolonien für Deutschland nötig?" 21).
- 58 The text to "Orchidee als Kopfputze" reads: "Die Eingeborenen sehen in den Tieren befreundete Wesen. Natur, Tier und Mensch sind die Dreieinheit, in der tropisch fruchtbare Schöpferkraft auf diesem Bali alles Sein und Werden zusammenklingen lässt. . . . Die Menschen auf Bali leben in Hütten, die von Palmenhainen verdeckt sind, so dass sie den einheitlichen Rhythmus der Natur nicht stören." ("Bali," 56).
- 59 "Die Menschen von Bali sind schön. Verkörperungen klassisch-antiken Idealen zu erträumen suchen. Was uns verlorenging an Schönheit and Güte, lebt noch auf diesem Eiland im Indischen Ozean." ("Bali," 60).

60 Flaherty, "Opfer der Zivilisation," 18–24.

61 "Eine der grössten Hoffnungen seines Stammes ist der 18 jährige Moano, dessen Körperbau antiken Vorbildern gleichkommt und von seltenem Ebenmass ist." (Flaherty, "Opfer der Zivilisation," 18). Höch selected a photograph of Moana captioned: "Der 18 jährige Moana verkörpert den gesunden Geist der Männlichkeit auf Samoa."

62 Wolfgang Weber, "Mode im Urwald," *BIZ* (14 March 1926): 352.

63 Ross, "Der Schwarze an der Maschine: Ein afrikanisches Problem," *BIZ* 37 (1927): 1469–70. Herman Ullstein notes that Ross later joined the Nazi party: "Now Director Ross [an Ullstein employee] was my eldest brother's son-in-law, and incidentally, a brother of Colin Ross, the National Socialist, who had traveled widely for Ullstein's as a journalist." (Ullstein, *Rise and Fall*, 14). Colin Ross is a particularly offensive writer in his patriarchal racism. See, for example, his story entitled "The black cook 'Our Emilie' at our house . . . and at her own," an idea one suspects he originated. He photographed his cook Emilie clothed in his house and almost naked in her own, thereby providing his readers a displaced classist fantasy of stripping a servant woman. Colin Ross, "Die Schwarze Köchin 'Unsere Emilie' bei uns . . . und zu Hause," *BIZ* (5 Dec. 1926): 1680.

64 The photograph is from Colin Ross, "Eine Reise durch Afrika: Mit Frau und Kindern durch die Wildsteppe" (A trip through Africa: With women and children through the wild steppe), *BIZ* (18 Dec. 1927): 2104–05.

65 "Gebetsrufer in einem chinesischen Tempel Foto International Graphic Press"; "Japanischer Schauspieler Aufnahme Modotti," from a photostory entitled "Exotische Porträts" in *Uhu* 1 (Oct. 1931): 42; "Tänzer und Tänzerinnen auf der Insel Bali Aufnahmen: Wide World"; "Schönheiten Anna May Wong"; "Tänzerinnen von der Insel Madoera bei Java (Phot. Wahl.)"

66 The photograph of Wong is from *BIZ* (28 June 1927): 1142. This spread also displays photographs by d'Ora and Renger-Patzsch and again juxtaposes admired New Vision photography with admired female figures. On page 82 of the scrapbook, the photograph captioned "Eine interessante Aufnahme aus den Tagen der Europa-Schwimmmeisterschaften in Budapest: Anne Borg, der schwedische Weltrekord-Schwimmer, nimmt ein Sonnenbad und gibt dabei einem Zeitungsmann Auskunft. Phot Hevesi" is from

BIZ 36 (1926): 1124. On page 83, the image described as "Die Ballmode: Pariser Abendkleid aus schwarzem Tüll mit einer Taille aus glänzender Seide und sehr moderner Riesenschleife d'Ora Paris" is of "Die Schauspielerin Baron, Premet-Modell" and is from *BIZ* (12 Feb. 1928): 278. And on the same page of the scrapbook, the Renger-Patzsch photo is identified as "Fabrikschornstein."

67 "Anna Mây Wong als Haitang; in dem gleichnamigen neuen Eichberg-Sprechfilm Aufnahme Gärtner." *Uhu* 6 (March 1930): 52. The photograph and caption bear no relation to the text.

68 Bergner: *Die Dame* 10 (Feb. 1925): 7. The photograph is by Zander and Labisch from an article by Friedrich Koffka reviewing Bergner's performance in Shaw's *Saint Joan* at the Deutsches Theater Berlin, directed by Max Reinhardt. The glowing review describes Bergner's persona in a way that could have appealed to Höch's admiration for the primitive: "Und kam nicht überall diese erfüllte Lustigkeit von ihr, eine Art von Witz, wie er bei Kindern und Zigeunern daheim ist?" (44). The photograph of Nelly van Doesburg appears in Man Ray, "Moderne Frauentypen aus verschiedenen Ländern," *Die Dame* 8 (Jan. 1925).

69 The del Rio image is captioned: "Das Gesicht, das die Zwanzigjährigen in ihren Träumen sehen: Die Filmschauspielerin Dolores del Rio als Carmen" and is from the article by Anita, "Sex appeal: Ein neues Schlagwort für eine alte Sache," *Uhu* 1 (Oct. 1928): 73.

70 "Raquel Meller, der Star der Palace-Revue, Paris, für die die 'Violettera' geschrieben wurde. Photo R. Sobal, Paris."

portraits, dancers, and coquettes
chapter 4

1 Jürgens-Kirchoff, "Fremde Schönheit," 134.

2 Ohff, *Hannah Höch*, 42. Some "portraits" were labeled by Höch as such, whereas others, clearly part of the series, were not. Photomontages created as far apart as *Der Melancholiker*, 1925, and *Deutsches Mädchen*, 1930, are designated as part of the portrait series.

3 Petro, *Joyless Streets*, 79–139.

4 *Chinese Girl with Fan* goes by its English title. It was originally mistitled in German as *Japanerin mit Fächer* (Japanese Girl with Fan).

5 Höch wrote this subtitle on the photograph of the work she saved in her photofile. Höch Nachlass, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin.

- 6 Fischer Fine Art has dated this as 1924 (*Hannah Höch* 1887–1978, Fischer Fine Art, 18), but I think it must be later, during the Til Brugman years, because there is a reproduction of this work in the Höch photofile that Höch labeled “Til Eulenspiegel.” Höch Nachlass, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin. Nevertheless, the work goes by its English title, one apparently given to it by Höch. Adriani, *Hannah Höch*, 137.
- 7 Linda Nochlin, conversation with the author, June 1988.
- 8 Höch used the masculine *Der Melancholiker* as the title of the work, but the face is androgynous.
- 9 “500 Frauen nach Ihrer Wahl: Ein lustiges Zusammensetz-Spiel für grosse Leute oder: Der Harem nach ihrem Herzen,” *Uhu* 8 (May 1929): 76–85; “500 Männer nach Ihrer Wahl: Ein lustiges Zusammensetzspiel für die Damen oder: Der Mann, den Sie sich wünschen” *Uhu* 11 (Aug. 1929): 52–60. Photographs from the ateliers of Yva and Bucovich.
- 10 For a discussion of the Elizabeth Arden ads, see Lavin, “Ringl + Pit,” 89–93.
- 11 Karl Schenker, whose photographs and paintings of highly idealized women were published by the Ullstein press, extended the representational practice of defining women as image-mannequin-commodity when he went into the business of creating lifelike female mannequins for shop windows. “Mannequins oder Wachspuppen? Künstlerische Wachsfiguren, modelliert von Karl Schenker für Schaufensterdekorationen,” *Die Dame* 23, (Aug. 1925): 6–9. In German, *Mannequin* generally refers to a live, female clothing model.
- 12 Meisel, “Ein Magazin auf dem Kriegspfad,” 52–53.
- 13 Sally Stein has done important work in the history of American advertising concerning photography, rationalization, and the female viewer. Stein, “The Composite Photographic Image,” 39–45. See also Ewen, *Captains of Consciousness*.
- 14 Jean Baudrillard, in his essay “Fetishism and Ideology,” discusses the “fetishism of the signifier.” According to Baudrillard, this “passion for the code” in turn motivates a fascination/fetishization with the commodity system as a system and a desire to participate in it. (*Political Economy of the Sign*, 88–101). See also Karl Marx on commodity fetishism in *Capital*, I, 125–77.
- 15 *BIZ* (July 21, 1929): 1314. This discussion is an excerpt from and revision of Lavin, “Ringl + Pit,” 89–93.
- 16 Dech, “Marionette und Modepuppe,” 178–79.
- 17 The doll is featured, for example, in “Die machen Augen! Vier Puppen unserer Zeit.” *Die Woche* (6 Dec. 1930): 1459.
- 18 A work related to the *Liebe* series is the more surreal *Der grosse Schritt* (The Great Stride), 1931 (fig. 111), in which a female winged figure seems to fly down toward legs that are spread in a lunge and that wear a monkey’s head. The female figure has a New Woman’s made-up face, and her torso, composed of a sculpture, shows her bare breasts and nipples.
- 19 Fischer Fine Art lists this work as c. 1920, but it is stylistically incompatible with Höch’s Dada works and should be redated to the mid-twenties. See the Fischer Fine Art catalog, *Hannah Höch 1889–1978*.
- 20 The critique of symbols of rationalized women in Höch’s photomontages contrasts with the more respectful and spiritual representation of women as mass ornament in Höch’s scrapbook. In the scrapbook’s mass ornament photographs, however, collectivism and movement-in-concert are also at issue, in addition to mass production.
- 21 Berghahn, *Modern Germany*, 266. Unemployment peaked in 1932 at 29.9 percent of the working population.
- 22 “Berufstätige Frauen! Denken Sie daran, dass Sie sich nicht auf Ihre Tüchtigkeit allein verlassen dürfen! Ihr Aussehen ist für Ihr Vorwärtskommen mindestens ebenso wichtig! Auch im geschäftlichen Leben wird man Ihnen dank Ihrer gepflegten Erscheinung mit ganz besonderer Achtung und Zuverlässigkeit begegnen. Creme Mouson gibt Ihrer Haut einen matten Schimmer, sie dringt restlos in die Haut ein und ist daher jederzeit anwendbar.” *BIZ* 39, 2 (1930): 55.
- 23 “Ach ja, ich kaufte, ich musste kaufen, war ich doch statt vom gelben Fieber vom Amerikanismus der Quantität befallen! Ich konnte einem gut aufgebauten Schaufenster nicht widerstehen! Die ganze Wucht des Endziels aller Reklamekunst hatte mich überwältigt!” (Brugman, “Schaufensterhypnose,” 26).
- 24 Brugman, “Schaufensterhypnose,” 20–31. Grete König, interview with the author, Murnau, 29 Oct. 1986.
- 25 Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason*, 441.
- 26 In his Höch catalog, art historian Götz Adriani places *Englische Tänzerin* opposite the painted self-portrait *Selbstbildnis*, 1929, whose features it resembles. Adriani, *Hannah Höch*, 178–79.
- 27 Another work should be mentioned in the context of self-portrait imagery. The montage *Auf dem Weg zum F. Himmel*, c. 1934, probably referring to *Frauen Himmel*, depicts two women who resemble Höch’s

Dada puppets. As with the English and Russian dancers, one's face is light and the other dark. It immediately suggests itself as another double-portrait of Brugman and Höch. A connection also could exist between this montage and Brugman's short story "Die Revision im Himmel," n.d. (between 1926 and 1935, BG HHC H1518/79. In this story, Brugman parodies psychoanalytic and biological (glandular) explanations of homosexuality and criminality as well as religion (she proves that God himself has glandular problems). The historical context of 1920s theories of homosexuality is discussed in chapter 6.

28 Dech, *Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser DADA*, 120-122.

29 This interpretation was suggested by Linda Nochlin, conversation with the author, June 1988.

In Höch's photofile, now in the Berlinische Galerie, she has written on a photograph of *Die Gymnastiklehrerin*: "Besitzer: Mr. u. Mrs. Brown/ Springfield, Ma./ 7 Drescent Hall."

30 Related to these issues of appearances and heterosexual relationships is Höch's montage *Gigolo*, 1931 (fig. 121), which parodies a male dandy with a thin moustache, wearing a tuxedo, as he eyes two well-dressed women in evening gowns, one with a large mannequinlike head.

31 In Höch's photofile, she noted on this: "Brünn, abgebildet in 'Stredisko.'" On the Brno exhibition, see chronology.

32 Höch, letter to Grete König, 14 Oct. 1926, Höch Nachlass, Murnau. This convention was not necessarily a cosmetic one meant to mask the physical side of lesbian attachments but rather an attempt to express them as intense and viable love relationships. Therefore a number of lesbian writers borrowed from German vocabulary on spirituality, a unrepachable form of discourse.

33 Höch also used this technique with some of her figures of men and children, but as the majority of her photomontages focused on women, the disruption of the gaze occurs most frequently in the representation of femininity.

from an ethnographic museum
chapter 5

1 Hoelterhoff, "Heartfield's Contempt," 62.

2 Grossmann, "Abortion and Economic Crisis," 66-86.

In Hoelterhoff's article, *Mutter* is dated c. 1925,

but the correct date is probably 1930, based on Hannah Höch's dating on a photograph of the work in the Berlinische Galerie Höch Nachlass photofile. Thus it would be the same year as the Heartfield montage that uses the same image of the proletarian mother.

3 Despite the Roman numeral numbers assigned to several of the works, the order appears haphazard, i.e., there is no overall sequence of signification or organization. It perhaps explains why Höch used the words "collection" and "series" interchangeably to describe the group of montages.

In addition to those designated as part of the series, there are others that are not labeled "Aus einem Ethnographischen Museum" but could be included on the basis of formal similarities, such as *Lustige Person* (Jovial Person), 1932 (fig. 131). Two of the untitled photomontages are missing; Höch left sketches of the works in her notes and described them as missing. A photograph exists of the one from 1930 in Höch's photofile, now housed at the Berlinische Galerie. Similar in composition to the portrait series, it consists mainly of a large composite head formed from several different masks and human eyes behind eyeglass lenses. The other untitled missing photomontage consists of a New Woman's head resting on her arms mounted with a female sculpture from the ancient Near East. See Höch's notes to herself dated Feb. 1941, Nov. 1941, and April 1952, BG HHC H1305/79.

4 The exhibition was organized by the architect František Kalivoda. In conjunction with the show, Höch published an article, "A Few Words on Photomontage," in Kalivoda's magazine, *Stredisko* (IV, 1, 1934; see appendix). In correspondence with Kalivoda, Höch wrote that montages from the ethnographic series were exhibited in "Deutschland, Wien, Japan, Haag, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Brussel, etc., etc." Hannah Höch letter to František Kalivoda, Berlin, 10 Oct. 1933. Collection Museum Brno, Brno. I would like to thank Dr. Lenka Krčálová the Museum Města Brna for sending me photocopies of the Höch-Kalivoda correspondence and of materials relevant to Höch's Brno exhibition.

The Brno photomontage exhibition, which opened March 1, 1934, included 42 works and was Höch's largest one-person exhibition prior to her "rediscovery" in the 1960s and '70s. In addition to twelve works from the Ethnographic Museum series, it included *Ländliches Brautpaar* (probably the original title of *Bauerliches Brautpaar*), *Liebe, Liebe im Busch*, *Die Kokette I*, *Die Kokette II*, *Der Melancholiker*,

Englische Tänzerin, Kinderportrait, Der Sieger, Siebenmeilenstiefel, Der Heilige Berg, Die ewigen Schuhplattler, Die Sängerin, Die Gymnastiklehrerin, Buddha, and others. *Buddha* is now missing but is probably the work reproduced on the invitation card in which four naked legs of European women are attached to a sitting Buddha sculpture (illustrated in the 1989 Berlinische Galerie *Hannah Höch* catalog on page 67). *Buddha* may have been sold in Czechoslovakia.

So few letters from Höch are extant (her archive consists mainly of letters she received) that the Höch-Kalivoda correspondence demands some commentary here. Apparently the two met solely on the basis of Höch's work and via letters, as Höch was required to write to Kalivoda on Oct. 16, 1933: "Sehr geehrter Herr Kalivoda – Besten Dank für Ihren Brief. Zu Ihrer Orientierung: ich bin *Frau* Hannah Höch."

Höch sent Kalivoda an unpublished 1932 manuscript she had written opposing the censorship of film in Germany, and in 1933 he asked her to write an article for the magazine *Der Monat* on the subject. She declined (Oct. 10, 1933), saying she had been traveling and that her information on the topic was out of date. Höch suggested instead she write an article on the development of photomontage and illustrate it with Ethnographic Museum montages. "A Few Words on Photomontage" eventually appeared in *Stredisko*.

Höch's article traced the evolution of photomontage from its popular uses in the 1880s, such as attaching one soldier's head to another's body in a postcard image, to the 1919 avant-garde photomontage in France, Germany, Russia, and Switzerland. This flowering of avant-garde works, she wrote, was influenced by the growth of photography in the mass media, particularly reportage, and by the growing popularity of film. She concluded with comments on contemporary photomontage (1933–34): applied photomontage, which she said dominated advertising and poster images because of its potential for strong design and clear detail, and "free-form photomontage," an art form "open to the beauties of fortuity."

Of interest is the fact that Kalivoda was able to send Höch money in 1934 when she was recuperating from a serious *Basedow* (exophthalmic goiter) illness. She wrote to him in 1934 that she has sold a work for 100 M to "Herr v.d. Heydt." This must refer to Baron van der Heydt, who had a considerable ethnographic art collection. Elsewhere Höch notes that she sold two

or three Ethnographic Museum series photomontages to van der Heydt in 1931. Undated note, BG HHC K1317/79.

5 Duncan, "Virility and Domination," 30–39.

6 This quotation is from notes for a letter Höch wrote to the Museum of Modern Art in New York when it acquired *Indische Tänzerin* in 1965: "Dieses Blatt *Indische Tänzerin* ist eines der zuletzt gemachten aus einer grösseren Reihe (1926–1932) die ich nannte: Aus einem Ethnographischen Museum. Das damalige Aufblühen der Ethnographischen Forschung brachte nur die 'Primitiven' besonders der Negerkunst nahe. Die Deutsche Expressionisten haben das in ihrem Ölbildern vielfach ausgesagt. Mir machte es Spass, auf weniger seriöse Weise, mit dieser Materien, aber doch möglichst prägnant, zu experimentieren." Höch, notes for letter to the Museum of Modern Art, 17 June 1965, BG HHC H1760/79.

7 Höch describes the work as "das Baby mit Maske" with a drawing of it in an undated note to herself, BG HHC H2205/79. And in another note to herself dated Feb. 1941 with postscripts dated Nov. 1941 and April 1952, she calls it "Kinderkörper Negerplastikkopf" with a drawing, BG HHC H1305/79.

8 *Negerplastik* was evidently important to Höch, and she exhibited it often: in *Film und Foto*, at the Philadelphia Second Annual International Salon of Photography in 1932, at her one-person show at the Gallery d'Autretsch in The Hague in 1934, and probably at her one-person photomontage exhibition in Brno, Czechoslovakia, also in 1934. For evidence of the inclusion in the Philadelphia exhibition, see correspondence marked BG HHC K4261/79.

Negerplastik was exhibited in the Werkbund's *Film und Foto* exhibition, cat. no. 327., Steinforth, ed., *Internationale Ausstellung*, 63. Evidence that the work was exhibited in the 1934 d'Autretsch gallery show is its illustration in a Dutch review of the exhibition: Van Longhem, "Fotomontage van Hannah Höch," 267–69. Also illustrated in this review are: *Der Melancholiker, Die Süsse, Deutsches Mädchen, Flucht*, and *Siebenmeilenstiefel*.

9 In the Berlinische Galerie photofile, Höch wrote on a photograph of *Fremde Schönheit*: "1929 (früher)."

10 In her notes for a letter to the Museum of Modern Art in 1965, Höch lists two places this work was exhibited, Brussels in 1932 (First International Exposition of Photography, Palais des Beaux Arts) and Brno in 1934 (her one-person photomontage exhibition consisting of 42 works). BG HHC H1760/79.

- 11 Jürgens-Kirchoff, "Fremde Schönheit," 128.
- 12 Jürgens-Kirchoff, "Fremde Schönheit," 127–37. Jürgens-Kirchoff's remarks on Höch's androgynous montages are in part a response to my analysis of these works, published in abbreviated form in the Berlinische Galerie's 1989 Hannah Höch catalog, 146–52. See also Lindner, "Beobachtungen," 92–96. The three essays together comprise a provocative discourse on ambiguity and alienation in Höch's representation of gender, particularly in her androgynous photomontages.
- 13 Höch continued to explore constructions of femininity throughout her career as can be seen in such later photomontages as: *Fremde Schönheit II*, 1966, where a European woman in a full-length evening dress wears a misshapen, grimacing tribal mask; *Das ewig Weibliche II* (The Eternal Feminine II), 1967, where a photoportrait of a woman is montaged with that of a cat and with images of materials and jewelry; and *Entartet* (Degenerate), 1969, where a woman's headless torso wears a strapless evening dress and conical nipples that gleam like weapons.
- 14 Clifford, "On Ethnographic Allegory," 100.
- 15 Clifford, "On Ethnographic Allegory," 101.
- 16 Clifford, "On Ethnographic Allegory," 111.
- 17 Ohff, *Hannah Höch*, 34. Höch told Ohff that the visit was in 1925; it was in 1926, however, that she visited Holland with the Schwitters.
- 18 On a photograph of *Die Süsse* in the Berlinische Galerie, for example, Höch wrote: "Vor 1926 . . . 1930 [crossed out] . . . ist viel früher . . . Vor Holland-Jahren also vor 1926" (Before 1926 . . . 1930 [crossed out] . . . is much earlier . . . Before the Holland years therefore before 1926). This is from the photofile in the Höch Nachlass, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin. On the montage itself, Höch crossed out the "30" and wrote "um 1926." And, although labeled "Aus einem Ethnographischen Museum," *Masken* is dated 1924. This label was written by Höch on the photograph of the montage in the photofile, Höch Nachlass, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin. In a 1965 letter to the Museum of Modern Art, Höch states the series started in 1926, but a number of the works date from 1924 and 1925. It is important to note that Höch often postdated works later in life. Her memory of when she had created a work naturally may not have been precise forty years after the fact. Many Ethnographic Museum montages were estimated by her as either c. 1925 or c. 1930.
- 19 "Die Negerplastik die haben sie sehr interessiert,

alle Völkerkundlichen Dinge auch so. Das hängt nicht mit Til zusammen. Das kommt ihr noch von der Hausmann Zeit; sie hat viel davon zurückbehalten."

Grete König, interview with the author, 29 Oct. 1986.

20 On page 41 of the Höch scrapbook there is a photograph of Buddha sculptures in the museum. The caption reads: "Asien in Europa: Garten des Ethnographischen Museums in Leyden."

21 Most likely Höch also visited the Berlin Museum für Volkerkunde, the kernel of whose collection had been formed at the beginning of German colonialism in the 1880s. The Berlin collection has been well-cataloged, and it is possible to determine that none of Höch's images came from there. In fact, it appears that in this series, too, most of Höch's sources are *Illustrierte* photographs. Some may have been a mixture of *Illustrierte* images and Höch's own photographs. As Höch reported to Edouard Roditi: "Later, in 1928, I returned to photomontages, which I have never really abandoned since 1917; but this time I worked in a museum and photographed examples of primitive art which provided me with some of the elements, as in this one [probably *Masken*, here left untitled and dated 1928], of an entirely new series of photomontages, in a style that was entirely my own." Most probably, she is referring to the Leiden museum. Edouard Roditi, "Interview with Hannah Höch," 27.

22 In 1928 the African collections were transferred to Breestraat 18. In June 1936, all ethnographic collections were established under one roof in a new museum building at Steenstraat 1. Roelof Munneke, Curator, Departments of Islam and Africa, Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, letter to author, 24 June 1988. Munneke writes that he is "not aware of the use of lifelike mannequins before 1937."

In 1937, a book entitled *Overzicht van de Geschiedenes van het Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde 1837–1937*, illustrating the new displays was published, showing that by this year (but possibly not before) lifelike mannequins were used in the exhibitions. The 1937 exhibitions were spacious and modernist; they following the tenets of International Constructivism, employing lean design and unadorned "scientific" cases. The museum space was divided according to the origins of its objects, and the large permanent collection was classified variously by country, continent, or religion, such as Java, Bali, Hindu, Borneo, Samoa, Japan, Africa, and South America. In reviewing the photographs of the displays, most surprising is to see the lifelike mannequins in tribal dress and with dark

skin color that were included in the exhibitions. Even within a small glass box on a display case three or four feet high, a crouching mannequin is enclosed with ethnographic objects, giving the ensemble a strange, airless, crowded look.

23 *Catalogus von 'sRijks Ethnographisch Museum*, n.p.

24 See *Gebrauchsgraphik* from late Weimar. For one of the many examples of the mass media fascination with mannequins, see Karl Schenker, "Mannequins oder Wachspuppen?" 6–9.

25 As quoted by Gilman, who notes "Altenberg's opening vignette provides the expected liberal condemnation of the Ashanti exhibition in the Prater." Gilman, *Difference and Pathology*, 110, 111.

26 *BIZ* (21 Sept. 1924): 1095. The caption reads: "Raub der Jungfrauen: Alte Negerplastik von der Elfenbeinküste." The photograph occupies the top half of the page and bears no relation to the text underneath.

27 In her photofile now at the Höch Nachlass, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin, Höch dated this work 1929, but I have redated it 1930 based on my discovering that one of its photographic sources first appeared in the June 1930 issue of *Uhu*.

28 The photograph of the African medicine man accompanies an article entitled "A sorcerer reveals his secret, told by Hans Kafka," which is the story of a Western magician and his trade and is illustrated by drawings by Otto Linnekogel. Hans Kafka, "Ein Zauberer Verrät sein Geheimnis," 57–64. The photograph, which takes up the entire page 56, is captioned: "Der Medezinmann: Maskentänzer und Zauberer des afrikanischen Masai-Stammes Fot. N. J. T."

29 Benson, *Raoul Hausmann*, 25, 28.

30 "Mit der Verwandlung stellt er das Gleichgewicht zur vernichtenden Adoration auf; er betet dem Gott, er tanzt dem Stamm ekstatisch und er selbst verwandelt sich durch die Maske in den Stamm und den Gott; diese Verwandlung gibt ihm das mächtigste Begreifen des Objektiven; er inkarniert dies in sich und er selbst ist dies Objective, worin alles einzelne zernichtet.

"Darum: die Maske hat nur Sinn, wenn sie unmenschlich, unpersönlich ist; das heisst konstruktiv, frei von der Erfahrung des Individuums; möglich, dass er die Maske als Gottheit ehrt, wenn er sie nicht trägt." Einstein, *Gesammelte Werke*, 102.

31 Timothy Benson notes that Hausmann echoes these beliefs in his 1921 essay "Die neue Kunst." Benson, *Raoul Hausmann*, 28, 175.

32 Ellen Maurer has shown that Höch's painting *Frau und Saturn* attests to the astrological and spiritual interests Höch had in common with Ring. And an interest in Eastern spirituality was shared by Höch and Hausmann with other contemporaries in the Dada years. Ellen Maurer, "Symbolische Gemälde," 108, 120.

33 This is from the section in *Negerplastik* on religion and African art: "Die Kunst des Negers ist vor allem religiös bestimmt. Die Bildwerke werden verehrt, wie bei irgendeinem antiken Volke. Der Verfertiger arbeitet sein Werk als die Gottheit oder ihr Bewahrer, das heisst, er besitzt von Beginn an Distanz zum Werk, das der Gott ist oder ihn festhält. . . . Seine Arbeit muss als religiösen Dienst bezeichnet werden." Einstein, *Gesammelte Werke*, 88.

34 "Man nennt die afrikanische Statuen oft Fetische und jeder gebraucht dies Wort; doch erklärt es nichts, bedeutet alles mögliche und verdeckt den Sinn dieser Skulpturen und vor allem unsere Unkenntnis. Unter der Bedeutungsmasse dieses Wortes verdunstet der genaue Sinn des Gegenstandes ins Vage." Einstein, *Afrikanische Plastik*, 7.

35 It is noteworthy that in *Dada-Cordial*, c. 1919 (fig. 8), a collaborative Dada work created by Hausmann and Höch, Hausmann incorporated a photograph of African men into his part of the montage.

36 Although *Hörner* (Nr. X) is usually dated c. 1924, I have redated it c. 1926 so that it sequentially follows *Denkmal I* (Nr. VIII), c. 1925, and *Nummer IX*, c. 1926. In any case, as discussed, these dates are approximations based on Höch's estimates later in life.

37 There is an accompanying watercolor for this work, *Zwei mit Mütze* (Two with Caps), also c. 1925. On the photograph of the montage in the Berlinische Galerie photofile, Höch wrote: "Schon 1925 auf die Internationale Werkbund Turne gegangen." I am not sure to what this refers; the only Werkbund exhibition I know of that Höch participated in was the 1929–31 Film und Foto. Perhaps she mixed up the dates. *Mit Mütze* is not listed in the Film und Foto catalog, but it could have been one of the four works designated only as "Porträts."

38 It is worth noting here several montages not in the Ethnographic Museum series but related to it (some discussed in chapter 4): in *Geld*, 1923 (fig. 132), an ancient, sculptural face watches impassively as an arm sweeps up piles of gold – an ironic comment on the 1923 rate of inflation; *Der Mischling* (The Half-Breed) or *Holländerin* (Dutch Woman) before 1926, includes a black woman with a white woman's lips;

Chinese Girl with Fan, 1926, has the face of a beautiful Chinese girl montaged with lace fans and orange and yellow colored papers; *Lustige Person* (Jovial Person) 1932, has elements of dancing legs, the feminine, and Eastern spirituality; *Die Braut*, c. 1933 (exhibited in Brno in 1934, there purchased by Dr. Faroslav Boucek according to the Höch photofile, and now owned by Thomas Walther, New York) a black girls' head with white lips and chin appears on a white woman's body wearing what might be a bridal veil; and in *Bäuerliches Brautpaar* (Peasant Wedding Couple) c. 1927, a rural couple has black faces, one human and male, one ape and female, the male wearing a farmer's hat, the female blond braids. This can be seen as a racist companion piece to another rural caricature, *Die ewigen Schuhplattler*, 1933.

androgyny and spectatorship

chapter 6

- 1 An earlier version of this chapter was published as "Androgyny, Spectatorship, and the Weimar Photomontages of Hannah Höch," *New German Critique* 51 (Fall 1990): 62–86. A pioneering analysis of representations of androgyny is Heilbrun, *Toward a Recognition of Androgyny*. For an incisive yet ahistorical analysis of androgyny as pre-Oedipal fantasy see Pacteau, "The Impossible Referent," 62–84.
- 2 Weininger, *Sex and Character*; Hirschfeld, *Die Homosexualität des Mannes und des Weibes*.
- 3 See, e.g., the writings collected in the anthology edited by Faderman and Eriksson, *Lesbian-Feminism in Turn-of-the-Century Germany*.
- 4 Baumgardt, "Das Institut für Sexualwissenschaft," 17–27.
- 5 Weininger, *Sex and Character*, 48.
- 6 Weininger, *Sex and Character*, 58, 64.
- 7 Weininger, *Sex and Character*, 66.
- 8 Freud, *Three Essays*, 95.
- 9 Freud, "Homosexuality in a Woman," 145–172.
- 10 Freud, "Homosexuality in a Woman," 145–172.
- 11 Freud's role is particularly useful for a construction of a historical spectator, a necessity discussed in Elseasser, "Film History and Visual Pleasure," 47–84.
- 12 Freud, "Homosexuality in a Woman," 170.
- 13 Freud, "Homosexuality in a Woman," 171.
- 14 Steakley notes that during the 1920s some thirty homosexual periodicals flourished, usually free of censorship, except for the intermittent application of youth protection laws in late Weimar. Somewhat

analogous to today's pornography laws, these statutes were used to close down the magazines temporarily and also sometimes to shut down both male and female bars in Berlin. The most serious consequence, imprisonment, could occur as arbitrarily (Steakley, *Homosexual Emancipation Movement in Germany*). Thus our popular image of wild nightlife among homosexuals in Berlin in the twenties should be tempered by recognition of its precarious existence under the law. One must also keep in mind that the participants were born in more conservative Wilhelmine times when acknowledgment of homosexuality was in its most fledgling state.

15 It is possible that Brugman may have had a stronger lesbian identification than Höch. Brugman had had relationships with women before (Kurt Schwitters letter to Höch, Oct. 24, 1926 from Rettelsdorf b. Schönberg i. M., BG HHC K438/79), whereas Höch had not, and only Brugman was explicitly referred to as homosexual in others' correspondence, as, for example, by the homophobic Theo van Doesburg. After the war, Brugman was active in the Dutch homosexual organization, COC. (Everard, "Graven," 24–27, 35).

16 Letters from the Höch Nachlass, Murnau, and the Höch Nachlass, Backnang.

17 "Ich bin und werde mit Til sehr glücklich sein. Wir werden ein Exempel leben wie zwei Frauen ein Ganzes reiches und ausbalanciertes Leben formen können. Jeden Tag erlebe ich neue schönen Dinge an dem Menschen Til, die mich bereichern, mir das Leben in einem neuen Licht erscheinen lassen. Du – liebes Gretelein bist vielleicht der einzige Mensch der begriffen hat *wie* gründlich das Kapitel 'Mann' bei mir erledigt worden ist. Erlitten, erforscht, erschöpft das Schöne und erschöpft das Schlimme. Ich wusste, dass es keinen Mann auf der Welt mehr geben könnte, der mir noch etwas Neues zu bieten hatte, und darum hatte ich schon begonnen mich einzukapseln, nur für mich allein zu sein in des Wortes reinsten Bedeutung. Ausser *Dir* und deinen Kinder kommt doch tatsächlich kein Mensch mehr an mich (an mein Inneres heran) und ich hatte wirklich einen Schlußstrich unter das Erleben gezogen. Ich wollte Niemandem mehr etwas von meinem Selbst geben aber ich begehrte in Wahrheit auch nichts mehr. Nun sind bei mir nochmal alle Tore aufgegangen – ich spaziere vergnügt aus mir heraus und 'es' marschiert in mich hinein. Einer Frau ganz nah verbunden sein heisst für mich deshalb ganz Neues – weil es bedeutet: Geist von meinem Geist erfassen – mit ganze nah Verwandten sich

auseinandersetzen." (Höch letter, den Haag, to Grete König, 14 Oct. 1926, Höch Nachlass, Murnau).

18 Theories that her marriage to Kurt Matthies may have been merely masking Höch's homosexuality from the National Socialists are contradicted by Höch's journals of the time in which she describes a passionate relationship.

19 This raises the question of the relationship between feminist and leftist movements in Weimar. Here I am referring only to leftist ideologies influenced by feminism or matriarchy such as Otto Gross's.

20 Travel was central to their relationship. After all, the two met while Höch was traveling through the Netherlands in 1926, and almost immediately Brugman asked Höch to continue with her to Grenoble. As Höch explained to her biographer: "She persuaded me to come with her to Grenoble. Then we stayed together for nine years" ("Überredete sie mich mit ihr nach Grenoble mitzukommen. Wir blieben dann neun Jahre zusammen" — Ohff, *Hannah Höch*, 25).

21 Brugman, "Warenhaus der Liebe," BG HHC H1511/79. I want to thank Myriam Everard for pointing out that this story reads as a parody of the Institute of Sexology. The collection of unpublished short stories by Brugman is in the Höch Nachlass, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin. In 1935, Höch and Brugman published a book together with Brugman as author, *Scheingehacktes*, which contained stories by Brugman parodying Nazism and consumerism and which was illustrated by Höch. Brugman and Höch also collaborated on a descriptive travel article with drawings: Brugman, "Von Hollands Blumenfeldern," 429–32.

22 Mulvey, "On *Duel in the Sun*," 12–15; and Hansen, "Pleasure, Ambivalence, Identification," 6–32.

23 Three issues of *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung* provided mass media sources for *Der Vater*: 1) the single female dancer, cut out from a photograph captioned "Die Tänzerin Maria Leuser in Schevingen," *BIZ* (14 Aug. 1921): 500, is the image of a free-spirited New Woman used repeatedly in the Ullstein press throughout Weimar in both features and advertisements; 2) the two female dancers from "Tanz im Freien: Die Fliegenden Tänzerinnen," Aufn. C. Hünich, *BIZ* (24 July 1921): 456; and 3) the black boxer from "Augenblicksbilder aus berühmten Kämpf um die Weltmeisterschaft in Reno (Amerika) 1910," *BIZ* (29 Aug. 1920): 399.

24 Kierkegaard, *Concept of Irony*, 336–42.

25 Hansen, "Silent Cinema," 147–184.

26 "Asta Nielsen als Hamlet," *BIZ* (12 Sept. 1920): 423.

27 Gewerbemuseum, *Fotomontage*.

28 This photomontage is usually dated 1937, but it should be redated c. 1934, concurrent with most of Höch's other androgynous works. It was included in Höch's 1934 photomontage exhibition in Brno, Czechoslovakia, and so must have been created that year or earlier. See Höch's handwritten list of works in the Brno exhibition, Collection Museum Brno.

29 Bathrick, "Max Schmeling," 121.

30 Stills from *Wege zur Kraft und Schönheit* advertised, for example, two health pamphlets, "Licht heilt, Licht schützt von Krankheit" and "Sonne als Heilmittel." *Die Dame* 23 (Early August 1925): 46.

31 Even later, under National Socialism, though lesbians could be denounced, committed to concentration camps, and killed, lesbianism still was not officially a crime. Kokula, "Lesbisch leben," 160–161.

32 For example, "Vom Chorgirl zum Bühnenstar: Dolly Haas," Aufn. Elli Marcus, *Uhu* (Sept. 1930): 80.

33 Even this brief speculation on the meaning of androgynous images to the lesbian subculture in Weimar shows how Foucault, in the first volume of *History of Sexuality*, elides certain questions of gender identity and subjectivity by oversimplifying previous discourses on sex as concerned only with liberation. He incorrectly subsumes the term "identity" under the term "liberation." As a feminist, I object to this overriding of current investigations on the identity of the gendered subject. Additionally, a critique of Foucault must consider theories of representation which explore the reception of cultural production and the work of this reception in the positioning of the gendered subject, including, for example, much of contemporary film theory.

34 Gramann, Schlüpmann, and Seitz, "Gestern und Heute," 32–41; Stiftung Deutsche Kinematek, *Hertha Thiele*, 6–23; Kriesche, "Lesbische Liebe," 187–196; Rich, "Repressive Tolerance," 100–130; and Dyer, "Less and More," 5–61.

35 For excerpts of contemporary criticism, see Stiftung Deutsche Kinematek, *Hertha Thiele*, 44–51 and Kriesche, "Lesbische Liebe," 187–196. Also see Schacht, "Ein Film setzt sich durch," 6–8, 52.

36 In an earlier stage version performed in Berlin and also directed by Leontine Sagan, Hertha Thiele had played Manuela opposite Margarete Melzer, but for the film version the artistic director, Carl Froelich, ruled out Melzer as too masculine and chose the more

feminine Dorothea Wieck to play von Bernburg. Thiele in Gramann, Schlüpmann, and Seitz, "Gestern und Heute," 32.

37 Thiele in Gramann, Schlüpmann, and Seitz, "Gestern und Heute," 41.

38 As quoted in Rich, "Repressive Tolerance," 103.

39 "Von der höheren Töcherschule zum Film," *Uhu* 12 (Sept. 1931): 34-42.

40 Kriesche, "Lesbische Liebe," 196.

41 "Es gab damals einen Trend, . . . sich wie Dietrich anzuziehen . . . und jeder nannte sich Marlene, wie sie." (Thiele in Gramann, Schlüpmann, and Seitz, "Gestern und Heute," 40).

42 Freud, "Fetishism," 169-77.

43 Burgin, "Photography, Phantasy, Function," 177-216.

44 Lacan, "Desire in *Hamlet*," 11-52.

45 I should like to comment on class issues, or their absence, in Höch's work. As we have seen, the techniques used by Höch were potentially effective in representing gender oscillation. This representation is not linked to issues of class, however. I point out this serious limitation not judgmentally, to set up Höch as a failed "ideal artist"; rather, this lack must be acknowledged in order for Höch's work to be revived responsibly and circulated in the context of today's issues, that is, for a sound use of history to occur.

Since the 1960s and the growth of the feminization of poverty, in American society, class and gender positions increasingly have come to determine one another, with race as a crucial contributing factor. Inadequate government support for welfare, health care, and day care have led to impossible demands on the single mother. In this context then, the representation of an idealized and androgynous woman is particularly suspect. Does a specific image represent oscillation or ambiguity or liberation, or rather the demand on *individuals* to personify the myth of androgynous plenitude, thus implicitly relieving the government of responsibility? Are these two types of androgynous representation so easily separable?

Similar issues surface in Weimar Germany, particularly during the Depression and the concurrent social service cutbacks, prompting an examination of whether or not images of androgyny — although celebrating new, modern possibilities for women —

also propagated an individualistic myth for women facing both poverty and lack of government support. And yet all images of androgyny cannot be dismissed as promoting an exaggerated individualism; certain representations encourage a reading of gender oscillation that potentially contributes to a nonhierarchical and fluid identity for women. This distinction between individualism and an empowered sense of self is in turn crucial for the use of gender representations in fueling political awareness and activism.

conclusion

1 Höch's notes are fragmentary: "Durch Freud aufgeklärt — Aus Protest zur ältere Generation und dem aufgebrochenen Freiheits willen der bahnbrechenden des Frauen. War ihn allem dieser neue wohl Frau begehrenswert. Aber — das auch von ihrer Seite Neueinstellungen nötig waren lehnten sie mehr oder weniger brutal ab. Dies führte zu diesem wahrhaft Strinbergischen Dramen, die das Privatleben dieser Männer beim zeichnen. Mit der Schicksalen dieser Frauen wären viele Bände zu füllen um das Zeitbild zu vervollständigen." BG HHC H1569/79. See chapter 1, n. 40.

2 As film historian Patrice Petro explains, even on the fashion pages of the communist *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* the images were more aligned with a bourgeois New Woman than a stereotypical proletarian woman (Petro, *Joyless Streets*, 164-69). Narratives of upward class mobility, say from secretary to boss's wife, were common in women's films and novels of the twenties (Berghaus, "Girllkultur," 206-07).

appendix: a few words on photomontage

1 Part of the German manuscript remains in the Museum Brno's files. In this original version, this sentence reads: "So zeigt uns ein Blatt aus dem Jahre 1880 (Sammlung Professor Stenger, Berlin) Studenten, die einen Kommilitonen zersägen." Erich Stenger was a pioneer historian of photography, later noted for his *History of Photography* (1939), which included a section on photomontage.

2 Art historian Catherina Lauer speculates that Tröchtelborn is probably just a fictive name referring to a place in the middle of nowhere.

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