THE THEATRE OF ERWIN PISCATOR AND THE BERLIN DADAISTS: POLITICS AND TECHNOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the interconnection between the Berlin Dada movement and Erwin Piscator's political theatre. In the aftermath of the First World War, Berlin Dada sought to transform the purpose of art and previous artistic traditions to comment on contemporary issues. During this period, Piscator also felt that the art of theatre needed to reflect current social and political problems. In 1919, Piscator was introduced to the inner circle of Berlin Dada, including John Heartfield and George Grosz who later became designers in Piscator's political theatre. Piscator's political commitment has been the main focus of scholarship about his theatre, but his personal involvement in Berlin Dada has remained largely unexplored. Since previous scholarship has merely focused on the influence of politics, this study focuses on Berlin Dada's influence on Piscator's theatre with the aim of proving a deeper influence than previously indicated. From a study of Piscator's collaborations with Heartfield and Grosz, it is clear that these Berlin Dadaists were influential in introducing new modes of technical innovation and artistic expression in Piscator's theatre.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Berlin Dadaist Manifesto by Richard Hülsenbeck evokes images of the effects left by the First World War on Germany and the rest of the Western world. In the following excerpt, we are reminded of the thousands of lives taken by the war and the thousands more who were left maimed, crippled and psychologically traumatized.

Art in its execution and direction is dependent on the time in which it lives, and artists are creatures of their epoch. The highest art will be that which in its conscious content presents the thousandfold problems of the day, the art which has been visibly shattered by the explosions of last week, which is forever trying to collect its limbs after yesterday’s crash.¹

These words also provide an answer to the question of art’s purpose in a world traumatized by the horrors of war. The art that the world needed was one that would not just be there to entertain, but also to articulate the problems of the day and open the public eye to the tribulations that affect society. Many artistic revolutionaries responded to the effects of war on society but the Berlin Dadaists were the most vocal and wide-ranging in their reaction.

Dada began in 1916 with the christening of the Cabaret Voltaire, a tavern directed by Hugo Ball and Emmy Hennings in Zurich, Switzerland. The Cabaret Voltaire was a meeting place where war dissidents including artists, poets and painters came to debate current social and political issues, prominently the First World War. Most of the artists

who met at the Cabaret Voltaire were from various European countries that were greatly affected by the war; they had fled to neutral Switzerland to escape the brutality of war. The participants of the Dada movement are described as “deserters, anarchists, revolutionaries, poets, painters, actors, and musicians who were united in their horror of the war” and disgust for the bourgeois rationality that had spawned the war.\(^2\) As they fled to Zurich, most were working in an Expressionist form; however, with the formation of Dada, which blamed Western civilization and temperament for the war, they revolted against past artistic movements and traditions associated with the attitudes they abhorred. During the “Dada Evenings,” the members expressed their views through nonsensical artworks and poetry that included automatic writing, performance art and collage. Upon the cessation of World War I, the artists migrated back to their respective homelands and the movement quickly spread as many members brought Dada to their home countries.

Richard Hülsenbeck, a member of the Zurich Dada, returned to Germany in 1917. In Berlin, Hülsenbeck encountered two literary periodicals, which became the precursors to the Berlin Dada movement. The first of these was *Neue Jugend* (New Youth), a left-wing literary and political paper formed in 1916 by brothers Wieland Herzelde and John Heartfield.\(^3\) The second was *Die Freie Strasse* (The Free Street), a periodical with anarchist tendencies, published by Franz Jung, Raoul Hausmann and Johannes Baader. With the help of these editors, Hülsenbeck followed the example of the Zurich Dada by organizing the “Dada Club” in 1918. The movement’s inauguration in Germany began

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\(^3\) John Heartfield’s given name was Helmut Herzfelde but had changed his name in protest of German government policies.
with the first Berlin Dadaist manifesto. The members of the self-named “Berlin Dada
Government” gave themselves official titles in the movement. These included:

Richard Hülsenbeck, the “Welt-Dada” (World Dada); Raoul Hausmann
“Dadasopher”; George Grosz, “Marshal Dada” or “Propagandada”;
Johannes Baader, “Uberdada” (Dada Superior), and John Heartfield,
Hannah Höch, Hans Richter, Viking Eggeling, Paul Citroën, Arthur Segal,
Rudolf Schlichter, Georg Scholz, and Otto Dix.\(^4\)

Their first exhibit containing the movement’s literature and art was entitled the “First
International Dada Fair” held at the Burchard Gallery in 1920. Once again, many of the
members’ earlier techniques originated in Expressionism. However they also revolted
against Expressionism for the same reasons as the members of Zurich Dada. In addition,
they revolted against Expressionism because it was “mere self expression [that] was
irrelevant in this critical period”.\(^5\) Instead, the Berlin Dadaists produced what they called
anti-art, or new-art, such as photomontage, a combination of the collage technique
practiced in Zurich with the “alienation” of photography. Other forms of this anti-art
were seen at the “First International Dada Fair”, which included paintings, collages,
sculpture, political posters and tracts, as well as a mannequin dressed as a Prussian officer
with a pig mask over its face and a sign that said “Hung during the revolution”.\(^6\)

Berlin Dada is described as a movement which “cannot be separated from the
political and social context of postwar Germany” because the effects of the war - the
masses of unemployed, wounded and disabled soldiers, and the horrifying collapse of the


\(^6\) Lemoine 32.
economy – were more visible in Germany compared to some other countries. Many of
the members of Berlin Dada had close ties to communist, anarchist and revolutionary
groups; a few of them were actually members of the German Communist Party.
Although the members of Berlin Dada worked closely, they were split into two groups
due to their sectarian political beliefs and activities. In the one camp were members such
as Raoul Hausmann, Richard Hülsenbeck and Johannes Baader who were not as vocal
about their political beliefs as their rivals. In the other camp, there were the left-wing
Marxists George Grosz, Wieland Herzfelde and John Heartfield who continued working
in various forms of political art and publishing even after the demise of Berlin Dada in
the mid 1920s. In light of the strong political beliefs of these Berlin Dadaists, social and
political problems dominated much of their artistic works and literary publishing.

In Dada Spectrum, Hans Kleinschmidt states that the Berlin Dadaist’s “weapon
was [their] pen.” At the same time, the stage was a weapon for German director Erwin
Piscator, who was using the art of theatre as a political platform and instructional tool.
Piscator was drafted into service during the First World War in 1915 and his war
experience drastically impacted his life from the very beginning of war:

My calendar begins on August 4, 1914.
From that day the barometer rose:
13 million dead.
11 million maimed.
50 million soldiers on the march.
6 billion guns.
50 billion cubic meters of gas.

7 Lemoine 31.
8 Foster 152.
Although he was visibly distraught, Piscator never thought of refusing the draft papers; he obeyed the call to arms as “a call of destiny,” like a good German.\textsuperscript{10} Piscator claims that he matured during the war and that his artistic principles were shaped during the time he spent at the front. At the front, he volunteered for one of the army acting groups that “entertained the troops with popular comedy, crudely performed”\textsuperscript{11}. He later reacted both against the type of theatre performed at the front and the conventional classical dramas that were revered in German theatre because he deemed that they “had no direct relevance to the real conditions of life and no [other] aim but amusement”\textsuperscript{12}. In the end, Piscator’s experiences in the war made his life in the arts seem trivial and irrelevant. He was converted to Communism, which offered him a new vision for an egalitarian social order. By 1918 Piscator had developed strong antimilitarist left-wing political views\textsuperscript{13}.

When Piscator returned from the front, he came back to a Germany that was ruined financially and where over one million soldiers were killed and over four million wounded in the First World War\textsuperscript{14}. At first, he aligned himself with the Expressionists who expressed subjective feelings and emotional experiences in a most compelling form.

\textsuperscript{10} Piscator 12.

\textsuperscript{11} C. D. Innes, \textit{Erwin Piscator’s Political Theatre: The Development of Modern German Drama} (Cambridge: University Press, 1972) 16.

\textsuperscript{12} Innes 17.

\textsuperscript{13} Piscator 1-2.

\textsuperscript{14} “World War I Casualties and Deaths”. The Great War and the Shaping of the 20\textsuperscript{th} Century. 8 May 2005. \url{http://www.pbs.org/greatwar/chapters/ch2_slaughter.html}
rather than depicting reality or nature objectively.\textsuperscript{15} However, by 1919 changes in Piscator’s world drove him to choose another path in his artistic life. In Revolution in German Theatre, James Patterson cites three specific events that prompted this change: the Russian Revolution, the revolution in Germany, and the First World War.

The Russian Revolution “proved to Piscator and others like him that the middle-class intellectual could play an effective political role.”\textsuperscript{16} Furthermore, even though the revolution in Germany was not entirely successful, some changes had taken place – such as the removal of the monarchy, the endorsement of a new constitution and the formation of a new socialist government. Patterson states that these changes “provided the impulse to employ art to politicize the proletariat in the hope that the Revolution might be finally achieved.”\textsuperscript{17} The event that had the most impact on Piscator and other Germans was the First World War. Patterson states that Germany was more strongly affected by the war than Britain because “middle-class intellectuals found themselves in the ranks, fighting alongside workers and peasants,” a situation that assisted in breaking down class barriers.\textsuperscript{18} An event that greatly affected Piscator’s view on the purpose of art occurred during his two-year period at the front. During the Ypres 1915 spring offensive, Piscator was ordered to dig in when shooting started. He could not dig as quickly as the others and the NCO yelled at him:

“Get on with it, damn you!”

\textsuperscript{15} "Expressionism," Microsoft® Encarta® Online Encyclopedia 2005, \url{http://encarta.msn.com}

\textsuperscript{16} Michael Patterson, The Revolution in German Theatre 1900-1933 (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981) 114.

\textsuperscript{17} Patterson 114.

\textsuperscript{18} Patterson 113-114.
"I can’t get down."
N.C.O.: "Why not?"
"I can’t."
He, scornfully: "What do you do for a living?"
"Actor."

The moment I utter the word actor among the exploding shells, the whole profession for which I had struggled so hard and which I held so dear in common with all art, seemed so comical, so stupid, so ridiculous, so grotesquely false, in short so ill-suited to the situation, so irrelevant to my life, to our life, to life in this day and age, that I was less afraid of the flying shells than I was ashamed of my profession. 19

This episode affected him throughout his life and shaped his views on the purpose of art at that time, especially for Germans. After recounting this event in his book The Political Theatre, Piscator states that it made him see that "art-true, absolute art-must measure up to every situation and prove itself anew in every situation. Art must not shy away from reality." 20

Piscator returned to Berlin after the war in 1919 with this view about art and a need to "start from scratch." 21

Art and politics ran two separate roads until 1919 – art for its own sake could no long satisfy [him]. [He] could see no meeting point for these two roads, at which a new concept of art would emerge, activistic, combative, political. 22

During this period of artistic awakening Piscator met with Wieland Herzfelde, a friend from the army-acting troupe, who was a prominent member of the Berlin Dada movement. He introduced Piscator to the Dada inner circle, including John Heartfield, George Grosz, Franz Jung, Walter Mehring, and Richard Hülsenbeck. Piscator took a

19 Piscator 13-14.
20 Piscator 14.
21 Piscator 17.
22 Piscator 17.
minor role in Dada demonstrations but was very involved in Dada political discussions that “convinced him that art could only have meaning as an instrument in the class struggle.”

There was a great deal of discussion about art, but always in relation to politics. We came to the conclusion that if art were to have a meaning at all it must be a weapon in the class struggle. Full of memories of what lay behind us, our hopes of life deceived, we saw the salvation of the world in terms of ultimate logic: the organized struggle of the proletariat, seizure of power. Dictatorship. World revolution. Russia was our ideal. The stronger this feeling became, the more clearly were inscribed the word “action” on the banners of our art, since instead of the victory of the proletariat we had hoped for, we saw it suffer one defeat after another. (So we abandoned our first exalted feelings and undertook the hard unemotional struggle.)

In postwar Germany, these artists from different backgrounds came together to bring the message of class solidarity to a disheveled nation. This can be seen in the case of the Dadaists in Berlin, as well as in the other forms of art that these Dada members influenced. This is exactly the case with two high profile Dada members, George Grosz and John Heartfield, who became involved with the political theatre of Erwin Piscator. The threesome collaborated to create productions that called upon not only their various artistic talents, but also their strong political beliefs, which came out of the conditions of postwar Germany. Most historians indicate some sort of relationship between Piscator and Berlin Dada, but they generally underemphasize the depth of Berlin Dada’s influence. It is clear, though, that Grosz and Heartfield had a profound effect on Piscator’s theatre in their collaborations.

23 Innes 17.

24 Piscator 21.
John Heartfield collaborated with Piscator on many productions, starting with Piscator’s early political theatre experiments at the Proletarian Theatre in a form of drama called agitprop. After Piscator left his Tribunal Theatre at Königsberg in 1920, he came back to Berlin to find a more politically organized Dada movement, which was more malicious in its attack against traditional forms of artistic expression. Piscator claims that he too now had a clear opinion on the political purpose of art.\textsuperscript{25} Piscator formed the Proletarian Theatre in 1920. It was conceived as an agitprop group “whose sole aim was to develop class consciousness and proletarian solidarity.”\textsuperscript{26} With the formation of the Proletarian Theatre in 1920, Piscator became a forerunner of the agitprop phenomenon. This phenomenon started later in 1927 after the Blue Shirts, a Russian agitprop theatre group, visited Berlin. The Proletarian Theatre was a traveling theatre that performed in various taverns and meeting halls and presented plays to members of workers’ unions. The opening production of the Proletarian Theatre consisted of three sketches titled \textit{The Cripple}, \textit{At the Gate}, and \textit{Russia’s Day}. John Heartfield designed the backdrops for \textit{Russia’s Day} and it was here that this Berlin Dada member made a clear impression on Piscator’s vision of political theatre. Piscator even remarked that Heartfield was the inventor of his version of Epic theatre.\textsuperscript{27}

Heartfield continued to work with Piscator in these early experiments in \textit{Despite All!}, a documentary drama in which the entire production was based on political

\textsuperscript{25} Piscator 37.

\textsuperscript{26} Piscator 39-40.

\textsuperscript{27} Piscator 91.
documents. A few years later Heartfield also designed the projections for *Hoppla, such is Life!*, one of Piscator's most successful productions. This production provided Heartfield with many opportunities for projection experimentation because of the complex set filled with canvas backdrops and a prologue that included over 400 newsreel projections. Throughout all of these productions, Heartfield proved to be an essential part of the collaborative team, and through the use of projections, Heartfield brought the Berlin Dada invention of photomontage into an entirely new realm of possibilities.

Although Piscator and George Grosz had a strong relationship dating back to 1917, the two did not formally collaborate on any theatrical productions until 1926, that is, well after the demise of the Berlin Dada movement. Before collaborating with Piscator, Grosz worked on a few theatrical productions, including Iwan Goll's *Methusalem*; but as Andrew DeShong states in *The Theatrical Designs of George Grosz*, Grosz previously worked with "relatively weak directors who could neither fully use nor dominate his talents." Working with Piscator, Grosz had the opportunity to fully exploit his talents because Piscator preferred to be a part of a collaborative team where director, designers, and writers worked in complete harmony. This free collaboration was something that suited Grosz because Dada performances and activities were arranged in the same manner.

The first production Grosz designed for Piscator was for Ernst Toller's *Transformation*, a play that was never presented. Following these plans, Paul Zech's *The

28 Piscator 91.

Drunken Ship was produced and Grosz’s projections earned critics’ praise. The projections were mainly used for scenery that attempted to fill “a role between illusion and information” and created a functional landscape on the stage. In the next Piscator production, Grosz created projected animation and film sketches that significantly reinforced the political messages Piscator sought to create in his productions. With the help of Grosz’s projections, The Good Soldier Schwejk was one of Piscator’s most successful productions in his entire career. The main purpose of Grosz’s projections and cutouts was to “provide caricatured views” of the main character Schwejk’s protagonists and to allow for political and satirical observations. Indeed, the projections and cutouts provided commentary to the action onstage helping the audience make the connection between the world of the play and the contemporary world. Piscator was aiming for this effect in his political theatre. When published in the portfolio Hintergrund in 1928, the lithographs of the projections slides for The Good Soldier Schwejk created such a stir that Grosz was taken to court on charges of blasphemy.

As previously stated, the problem with most scholarship focusing on Piscator’s theatre is that the influence of Berlin Dada is never fully explored. In his book Erwin Piscator’s Political Theatre, C. D. Innes states that “Piscator emphasized the effect of political events on his development, and minimized the artistic influence of Dada,” which may explain why the influence of Berlin Dada on Piscator is so unclear. However, Innes also states, which “Dada was an important transitional period and the most striking effects of his later productions formed part of the Dada repertoire” and the “[i]ncidental,

30 DeShong 68.
31 Innes 17.
Dadaist effects continued to appear in Piscator’s work until the 1930s. Innes goes on to state that the most important influence of Dada on Piscator’s development was its immediacy that Piscator used as a standard in his productions. Likewise, Piscator’s wife Maria Ley-Piscator, credits Dadaism for “paving the way” to Piscator’s political theatre. However, she downplays Dada’s significance and gives Expressionism the credit for “cradling” Piscator’s theatre with hardly any other mention of Dada’s importance, even though she names Piscator as one of the members who guided the movement.

In New Theatres for the Old, Mordecai Gorelik also names Piscator as a member of Dada and states that the movement “proved to be the cradle of Epic theatre,” a direct contradiction to Ley-Piscator’s statement. Like Innes, Gorelik states that Dada had a lasting effect on the theatrical world even after Dada’s demise, through productions like The Good Soldier Schwejk, designed by George Grosz. John Willet also mentions Piscator’s recruitment into Berlin Dada in The Theatre of Erwin Piscator: Half a Century of Politics in the Theatre, but states that “Piscator does not appear to have been especially active in the group, though he is said to have directed one or two of the Dada meetings in Berlin halls and galleries over the next months [from his arrival in Berlin].” Although Willet implies that the relationship between Dada and Piscator was not broadened, he goes on to say that Piscator’s contact with certain members of Berlin Dada, such as George Grosz and John Heartfield, were “fruitful” ones.

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32 Innes 17.


To further complicate matters, author Michael Patterson dismisses Piscator’s involvement with Dada as a “brief flirtation with the cabaret culture of Dada on his arrival in Berlin in 1919.”36 Richard Hülsenbeck, founder of the Berlin Dada movement, paints a different picture of Dada’s influence on Piscator’s artistic beliefs. In *Memoirs of a Dada Drummer*, Hülsenbeck states that Piscator’s ideas originated in Dada and that he “had all the dada and existential qualities characteristic of the creative people of our time.”37 Furthermore, Hülsenbeck states that Piscator “staged a sketch of [his] at a Dada celebration at the Tribune theatre in Berlin, which marked Dada’s entrance into the theatre”.38 It is clear that, from this Dadaist’s viewpoint, Piscator was deeply influenced by his involvement in Dada discussions. It is also clear from the timeline of events in the artistic practices of Piscator, Heartfield and Grosz that the three artists worked closely together to create theatre that used artistic techniques invented and used in Dada art.

Furthermore, depending on how seriously we can view Piscator’s comments, John Heartfield may even be the inventor of Piscator’s Epic theatre.

The following will be a study of the roles of two Berlin Dadaists, John Heartfield and George Grosz, in various Piscator productions and an exploration of the impact the two had on the theatre of Erwin Piscator. This study will establish a clearer connection between the Berlin Dada movement and the political theatre of Erwin Piscator than previously summarized by theatre and art historians. In Heartfield’s case the focus will be on his involvement in Piscator’s early agitprop theatre through productions at the

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36 Patterson 121.


38 Hülsenbeck 71.
Piscatorbuhne in 1927. In the case of Grosz, the focus will be his involvement in Piscator’s Epic theatre from 1926 and after. However, now that a brief history of the paths that brought these men together has been established, it is important to have a clear understanding of the Berlin Dada movement and the members’ political beliefs, artworks, and publications produced out of the movement. This will be undertaken in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 2

BERLIN DADA

Defining Dadaism would be an impossible task that seems contradictory to its message, given that even the founders of the movement struggle to define the movement or refuse to do so. Dada in Berlin was a reckless and unpredictable movement that took place in riotous meetings, often advertised as harmless lectures that they had no intention of presenting, where an unsuspecting audience found itself provoked from the platform as a ‘bunch of idiots.’ Berlin Dada was also contradictory in nature, preaching “anti-art” while still creating art. Regardless of the movement’s negative attributes, Berlin Dada was an explosive movement that had a passionate desire to comment upon political, social and artistic issues emerging out of postwar Germany. While unable to particularly define Berlin Dada, one is able to trace a history of the movement through the proclamations and works of art produced by Berlin Dadaists. In that, the history of Berlin Dada is one of close political ties, one vehemently against preconceived notions of art and focused on creating new forms of art that could present the problems of the day.

As previously stated, the Berlin Dada movement was put into motion upon Richard Hülsenbeck’s return from Zurich in 1917. In Berlin, Hülsenbeck stumbled upon publications by Wieland Herzfelde, John Heartfield, and Raoul Hausmann who were also horrified at the aftermath of war. Their works became the precursors to Berlin Dada.

39 Richter 129.
Politics were always at the forefront from the very start of the movement. In fact, one of the landing pads of the Berlin Dada movement, Herzelde’s Malik-Verlag Publishing House, is described as having little to do with Dada but a lot to do with political class struggle.\(^40\) The publishing house was founded in 1917, and although said to never have been the official organ of the German Communist Party (KPD), it “produced a growing stream of left-wing literature”\(^41\) that included *Neue Jugend, Erste George-Grosz-Mappe*, and *Kleine Grosz-Mappe*. Some of the first works of the movement in Berlin were through these precursor mechanisms, as the ‘Dada Club’ began publishing reviews in 1918 in publications such as *Die Pleite* and *Der Dada*. Thus, Dada was born into a political stance and continued to be associated with politics in its first publications, such as in *Die Pleite*, which included an invitation to the First Congress of the Communist International, broadcasted by the Soviet Government on January 25\(^{th}\) of 1919.\(^42\) Predicatably, this association with politics would often result in clashes with the law, starting on March 7, 1919, when Herzelde was arrested by the Freikorp, private armies led by right-wing extremists, for the Communist views expressed in the *Jedermann sein eigner Fussball* publication.\(^43\)

More politically inclined than Zurich Dada, Berlin Dada was extremely focused on the political revolutions surrounding the postwar atmosphere in Germany, as described by Hans Richter:

\(^{40}\) Richter 110.


\(^{42}\) Sheppard 52.

\(^{43}\) Sheppard 52.
In Berlin they had a real revolution, and they decided to join in. There was the sound of firing in the streets and on the rooftops. Not only art but all thought and all feeling, all of politics and society, had to be drawn into Dada’s sphere of influence. Dada applied itself to this task uninhibitedly, vigorously and with no holds barred – full of enthusiasm, as always, for the idea of personal freedom.44

Through the works created by the Dadaists in Berlin, it is clear that “their strong political commitment determined all of their activities.”45 That being said, the members of the Berlin Dada movement were fiercely politically motivated and their convictions fueled their passionate beliefs about the purpose of art in their society. Although the Berlin Dadaists worked together in a seemingly harmonious collaboration, their political commitments varied:

The political commitment of Berlin Dada was not uniform, but bifurcated—a fact which Schwitters accurately identified when, writing in 1924 in the Polish journal Blok, he distinguished between those Berlin Dadaists for whom Dada was a political weapon and those for whom Communism was a Dadaistical weapon. Wieland Herzfelde, his brother John Heartfield and George Grosz formed the core of the first (Marxist) group, while Hülsenbeck, Hausmann and Johannes Baader formed the core of the second (Anarchist) group.46

This split can be seen in the artworks created at this time, as the Marxists members such as Grosz and Heartfield increasingly used Dada and their art to expose a corrupt society, more so than members such as Hausmann who used politics to preach the ideals of Dada. The members of the Marxist group, such as Grosz, Herzfelde and Heartfield, the only known members of Berlin Dada to have joined the KPD, were the more politically involved.

44 Richter 101.
45 Lemoine 30.
46 Sheppard 51.
Regardless of how vocal each member was in terms of his, or in the case of Hannah Höch, her political beliefs, it is clear that contemporary social and political problems determined much of the movement’s artistic works and literary publishing. Berlin Dadaists as a group have been described as being “acutely sensitive to the political collapse of the country and the horrifying aftermath of the war – the dead, the wounded, the disabled, and the starving, unemployed masses.”\textsuperscript{47} Furthermore it is evident from the start of the movement, in works exhibited during the First International Dada Fair, that “Berlin Dada was anti-Prussian, anti-bourgeois, and anti-capitalistic.”\textsuperscript{48}

This political commitment can be seen in the First International Dada Fair, which not only included paintings, collages and sculptures, but “numerous posters and tracts containing provocative slogans.”\textsuperscript{49} The fair was an exhibition and sale of close to two hundred works of art that was held at a gallery owned by Dr. Otto Burchardt from June 30 to August 25, 1920. Hans Richter describes the overall tone of the fair as being “set by a number of provocative political pieces expressing hatred for the Authority that had brought us to this.”\textsuperscript{50} In all, the fair was intended to “attack the institution of art and the bourgeois cultural order that sustained it.”\textsuperscript{51} Most Berlin Dada artists provided works for the exhibition, which were described by the Berlin newspapers as “gags” and “amusing nonsense”, but the fair also included banners that shouted political statements, such as

\textsuperscript{47} Lemoine 30.

\textsuperscript{48} Lemoine 30.

\textsuperscript{49} Lemoine 32.

\textsuperscript{50} Richter 133.

“Dada fights on the side of the revolutionary proletariat.” Most notable was the declaration against the Prussian government that literally hovered over the gallery room:

“a mannequin dressed in a Prussian officer’s uniform, its face hidden by a mask of a pig’s head. A sign attached to the dummy announced: “Hung during the revolution.” The figure also included the following comment: “If you want to understand this work, you should drill for twelve hours every day on the Tempelhof parade grounds carrying a full field pack.”

In his forward to the exhibit catalog, Herzfelde defined Dadaistic works as ones that “destroy illusions...without regard for public values or government authority.” They spring from a need “to advance the present-day world by determining the status quo.” According to Hans Richter, “it was the grisly scenes of war and revolution by [Otto] Dix and [George] Grosz that made a lasting impression on the minds of Berliners.” One of the items exhibited by Grosz was his portfolio *Gott mit uns*, which contained nine lithographs. The portfolio blatantly attacked the military and caused such a controversy that it was confiscated and destroyed by the police, and Grosz was charged – and fined 300 marks – for “insulting the German army.” One example of the works included in *Gott mit uns* is the lithograph “The Faith Healers,” a hospital scene where a doctor is

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53 Lemoine 32.

54 Schneede 107.

55 Schneede 107.

56 Richter 133.

57 Schneede 171.
examining a skeleton in front of a panel of men that appear to be military generals or other high ranking officials. The military officers look smug and joyful, smoking cigars and sitting back in their chairs as if they have just gluttonously eaten a huge meal. Their robust bodies are in sharp contradiction to the skeleton they are declaring fit to serve in battle. The text of the lithograph states: “Die Gesundbeter oder die K.V.-Maschinen” (The faith healers or the fit-for-active-service machines). From this title, it is exposed that the doctor is a kind of machine ruled by the military officers that will declare anyone fit for duty, even a worm-eaten skeleton.

This image is an excellent depiction of the type of political views held by some of the Dadaists in Berlin. The military and bourgeois are seen as hovering over, much like the mannequin at the exhibit, and controlling the scene in the image. It furthermore shows the way capitalists and militarists govern society and profit from the plight of the working class. This is a type of political declaration that was meant to rouse the people into seeing that the military and the doctors do not care about the people they are sending to war. The soldiers are anonymous and are not seen by the ruling class as actual people, but merely as a means to fight for their cause.

Even though its harsh political nature is what separates the Berlin movement from the Dada movement at large, Berlin Dadaism was more than just a political reaction to the aftermath of war. From the founding of “Club Dada,” Dadaists were very concerned with the abolishment of preconceived notions of art, which they saw as unconnected to the people. This can be seen from the moment Dada was declared in Berlin, especially during the “Saal der neuen Sezession” in February 1918 where Hülsenbeck delivered the “First Dada Speech in Germany.” Hans Richter explains one part of the speech where
“[Hülsenbeck] then launched into a ferocious attack on Expressionism, Futurism and Cubism, and heaped curses on abstract art, proclaiming as he did so that all these theories had been defeated by Dada.”\textsuperscript{58} From this point on, Berlin Dada became vehement in its protest against these previous art forms in manifestoes, publications and artworks.

After this speech, Hülsenbeck went on to write a “general declaration of policy”, the \textit{Dadaist Manifesto}, which declared reasons to abolish previous art forms.\textsuperscript{59} Rather than the strong political focus seen during the First International Dada Fair, we see in this manifesto that Hülsenbeck’s declaration is primarily a declaration of “anti-art”. The form of the manifesto was something employed by Zurich Dadaists and provocation was one important feature of the manifesto according to Tristan Tzara:

We had no time to lose; we wanted to incite our opponents to resistance, and, if necessary, to create new opponents for ourselves. We hated nothing so much as romantic silence and the search for a soul: we were convinced that the soul could only show itself in our own actions.\textsuperscript{60}

Sticking to this same formula, the Berlin manifesto has a clear sense of urgency in its form (the huge letters exclaiming “DADA!”) and the language presses the reader as a rallying cry meant to rouse the people. Hülsenbeck’s manifesto was “directed at putting art, dislocated by a number of false artistic movements, back into its proper place,” and did so by first putting forth ideas of what purpose art should serve:

The highest art will be that which in its conscious content presents the thousandfold problems of the day, the art which has been visibly shattered by the explosions of last week, which is forever trying to collect its limbs after yesterday’s crash. The best and most extraordinary artists will be

\textsuperscript{58} Richter 103.

\textsuperscript{59} Richter 104.

\textsuperscript{60} Richter 103.
those who every hour snatch the tatters of their bodies out of the frenzied
cataract of life, who, with bleeding hands and hearts, hold fast to the
intelligence of their time.  

The manifesto evokes images of the effects of the First World War on Germany and the
Western world, so we are reminded of the thousands killed and the thousands more who
were left crippled and psychologically destroyed. These words also provide an answer to
the question of art’s purpose in a world devastated by the horrors of war. Hülsenbeck
exclaims that the world needs a form of art that can expose the world and its problems,
not just to entertain, but also to open the public eye to the tribulations that affect society.
Hülsenbeck goes on to state that previous artists have merely preferred their “armchair to
the noise of the street” and he once again passionately attacks previous forms of art for
not satisfying the needs of the day:

Has expressionism fulfilled our expectations of such an art, which should
be an expression of our most vital concerns?
   No! No! No!
Have the expressionists fulfilled our expectations of an art that burns the
essence of life into our flesh?
   No! No! No!
Under the pretext of turning inward, the expressionists in literature and
painting have banded together into a generation which is already looking
forward to honorable mention in the histories of literature and art and
aspiring to most respectable civic distinctions. On a pretext of carrying on
propaganda for the soul, they have, in their struggle with naturalism, found
their way back to the abstract, emotional gestures which presupposed a
comfortable life free from content or strife.  

Just from this short passage, it is clear that Berlin Dada was extremely passionate
considering the large repeated type “Nein! Nein! Nein!” jumping out from the page.
Here Hülsenbeck accuses the Expressionists of not fulfilling these needs because they did

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61 Richter 104.

62 Richter 104.
not actually express the people’s concerns. He further accuses members of the
Expressionist movement of basically being sentimental, lazy and merely aiming for
distinction among artists. Expressionism started as a movement around 1905, and is “the
subjective expression of an inner world (vision); in representing his personal reality the
artist has to free himself from all academic rules and traditional aesthetic concepts
-especially traditional norms of beauty.”63 However, Dadaists believed that while
Expressionists may have broke the rules of traditional art, their art merely served personal
interests rather than the interests of the people, which needed to be addressed in postwar
Germany. Interestingly, many of the Berlin Dada members’ techniques originated in
Expressionism but they revolted against it because it was “mere self expression [that] was
irrelevant in this critical period.”64

From 1918 to 1920, there were twelve staged readings of Dadaist manifestos in
Berlin. At these meetings or “soirées”, Dadaists continued this aggressive method of
inciting the public, not merely entertaining them. Hans Richter describes the meetings as
“anti-art activities” that were the place of frequent riots because the meetings were falsely
advertised as “harmless lectures” which [the Dadaists] had no intention of presenting.65
The members would read manifestoes that were “directed against bourgeois
decomposition, lunatic Expressionism and every kind of false emotionalism.”66 Also

63 Renate Benson, *German Expressionist Drama: Ernst Toller and Georg Kaiser*. London:

64 Foster 151.

65 Richter 129.

66 Richter 129.
during these meetings, the artists would perform sound poems and parade works in front of the audience that would reflect the form of new art.

In his *Dadaist Manifesto*, Hülsenbeck offers a description of this new art, one that would be a solution for the problems of art and will have something “in common with the effort of active men”⁶⁷: Dada. Dada, as the manifesto states, was constructed by men who “gathered together to put forward a new art, from which they expected the realization of new ideals.”⁶⁸ Here, Dada is claimed to be the progressive artistic revolution that the whole world needed. It is an “international expression of our times, the great rebellion of artistic movements, the artistic reflex of all these offensives, peace congresses, riots in the vegetable market, midnight suppers at the Esplanade, etc., etc.”⁶⁹ According to Hülsenbeck, Dada is a solution not only to the problem of art, but also to world problems that couldn’t be resolved in previous attempts.

This new art would take the shape of many different types of art, from photomontage to caricatures, but they all held in common the concept that the traditional forms of art had to be abolished. One example of this new art is George Grosz’s *Faith Healers*, one of nine lithographs contained in the *Gott mit uns* portfolio exhibited in the First International Dada Fair. This image was produced during Grosz’s temporary abandonment of easel painting, which was prompted by an incident during the March 1920 Kapp putsch, when a skirmish between workers and the Freikorp outside the Dresden Academy led to a bullet flying into the museum which hit a Titian painting.

⁶⁷ Richter 106.
⁶⁸ Richter 106.
⁶⁹ Richter 106.
Oskar Kokoschka, artist and teacher at the academy, wrote an article to the local newspaper that implored people to take the fighting elsewhere because an heirloom was destroyed. Grosz thought Kokoschka was being insensitive in this article because so many people had been killed, but Kokoschka was only concerned with this painting. This event led to Grosz's abandonment of easel paintings, which he felt were bourgeois and linked to the abstract. This also prompted his switch to drawings and prints, which he felt were art for the masses because they could be cheaply and widely disseminated, had popular appeal and were overall better for class struggle.

It is important here to point out that Berlin Dadaists' views on art cannot be easily separated from their political views. Grosz states that "The answer to the question, whether my work can be called art or not, depends on whether one believes that the future belongs to the working class." 70 Grosz's type of art, such as the ones previously described, seemed to be one that satisfied the Dadaists' new view of art because it reflected the problems of the day and exposed the ruling class. Grosz's art launched a bitterly satiric attack to show the injustices of the bourgeoisie on the working class, the military's control over them, and the profiteering schemes undertaken at the expense of the worker. Furthermore, the images are not supposed to be aesthetically pleasing, but are meant to show the grisly reality of the working class. The images are simplistic in form and defy aesthetic convention; they are not meant to be beautiful images, they are meant to evoke anger and revolution in the hearts of the working class. As stated previously, the First International Dada Fair intended to "attack the institution of art and

70 Richter 113.
the bourgeois cultural order that sustained it.” Grosz definitely satisfied this intention with links between the rejection of aesthetic norms, with social and political interest in class warfare propaganda represented in these lithographs.

This idea of this function of art is very important to Grosz, who published an essay about the condition of painting called “Art is in Danger” in 1925. In this essay Grosz spoke of his choices in the art world being either technology or class-warfare propaganda. He felt that technology ended up polluting and exploiting the world, so he chose to produce art as a reporter, critiquing and exploring the problems of the time. Grosz’s choice to produce art as a report is reflected later in his career when designing for Piscator’s theatre. In the essay Grosz described his art as being for truth; he claimed that he was an objective observer who tried to convince the world that the bourgeoisie was dishonest. He also stated that abstract art is not only ineffectual but that it contributed to the status quo.

However, even when Grosz was using oil painting, a more traditional form of art that he deviated from, we can see that he used this form to make a statement about art and politics. Another work of art exhibited at the First International Dada Fair, Germany, A Winter’s Tale (1917-19), depicts a gluttonous bourgeois man sitting with utensils in hand before a table of food and drink. A newspaper is resting on the table with the words “Workers! Soldiers!” printed upon it. It appears to be a rallying cry for the masses and a statement in which the bourgeois man is not willing (or possibly is unable) to see as he is diverting his eyes from the paper. At the bottom of the painting, there are three figures of authority: a priest, a general and a flag-waving professor. This painting is somewhat

71 McClosky 70.
similar to another lithograph in Grosz’s *Gott mit uns* portfolio, “The Communists Fall-and the Exchange Rate Rises” where gluttonous bourgeois men are feasting in front of a bloody image of the protestors being slaughtered. In terms of theme, there is a link between the lithograph and the painting; one may think that the image in the lithograph is what happened when the bourgeois man in *Germany, A Winter’s Tale* and his friends actually pay attention to the people: their suffering was used for profit. And the fact that the two men are only looking at each other, instead of the slaughter, may make the viewer feel that they may have noticed the commotion caused by people, but do not really care to understand or listen. Also, the men of authority hovering around the periphery is a common theme, seen in the “Faith Healers,” where the military officers laze around while doctors are committing skeletons to their army, supposedly with a little urging from the military. In the end, *Germany, A Winter’s Tale*, is far from a traditional oil painting and defies all previous notions of aesthetically pleasing art.

Another example of this “new art” is the creation of photomontage, an art form in which two members of Berlin Dada, Hausmann and Heartfield claimed to have invented. Photomontage, a technique that actually originated in advertising, was being used at the same time in the Soviet Union by Gustav Klutsis. In his autobiography, Hülsenbeck reminds us that photomontage “is more than just a paste-up of parts of various photographs.”

Photomontage is related to the collage but far more radical. It is not content with beauty, nor is it placidly based on “inner laws”. It has an everyday, sober character, it wants to teach and instruct, its

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72 Hülsenbeck 73.
rearrangement of parts indicates ideological and practical principles. Thus, photomontage is connected to life itself.\textsuperscript{73}

Photomontage is a combination of collage, which was explored in Zurich Dada, but with the added dimension of photography, which was used as a form of "reporting for purposes of political attack."\textsuperscript{74} Hans Richter explains that "total liberation from preconceived ideas and previous relationships created new possibilities,"\textsuperscript{75} so for the Berlin Dadaists "the conventional style of presentation was no longer good enough"\textsuperscript{76} for their publications and artworks. Photomontage satisfied this need and the Berlin Dadaists' urge to build upon the use of "chance", which was used widely in Zurich Dada and became an important concept of this new art:

[Chance] had abolished logic; so much the better. Whatever came along would do — and it was preserved just as it was. For periodicals, manifestos, bookbindings, posters and other printed matter, the conventional style of presentation was no longer good enough. Something new was needed. They cut up photographs, stuck them together in provocative ways, added drawings, cut these up too, pasted in bits of newspaper, or old letters, or whatever happened to be laying around — to confront a crazy world with its own image. The objects thus produced were called photomontages. In this way they produced flysheets, poems, and political obscenities or portraits; they created inflammatory book-jackets and a new typography . . . .\textsuperscript{77}

Berlin Dadaists built upon his notion of chance to "reveal the nature of the press’ manipulation of word and image."\textsuperscript{78} One common practice in the field of photomontage

\textsuperscript{73} Hülsenbeck 73.

\textsuperscript{74} Richter 116.

\textsuperscript{75} Richter 114.

\textsuperscript{76} Richter 114.

\textsuperscript{77} Richter 114-116.

\textsuperscript{78} Foster 117.
was to use news photographs to comment on the media, a practice Hanne Bergius claims that "was the most modern of their time." Bergious explains the practice as "consciously not distancing themselves from their metropolitan surroundings through the use of news photography [the Dadaists] carried out their diagnosis of the times directly on the minds of their contemporaries." They would take quotations and rip them out of their "propagandistic context, advertisements from their commercial context, photographs from their conventional framework, [thereby] alienating them from their usual function, robbing them of their original meaning, juxtaposing them satirically, and confronting them with counterarguments." In essence, alienating these items in order to establish a new meaning, or as Bertolt Brecht describes alienation effect, to "restore reality" for those who had been easily drawn out of it by commercialism and the media.

The most well known of the collages were ones of free association that would be pieced together to create juxtapositions commenting on society, the most renowned of which were created by Raoul Hausmann, Hannah Höch and John Heartfield:

Heartfield cut up photography and text and changed and reassembled them in free association. Bourgeois faces juxtaposed machine parts, monstrous caricatures of disabled soldiers in pieces juxtaposed texts in a variety of fonts. Disorder and bodily chaos were the result. Portraits and obscenities shared the same piece of cardboard. The photograph, dismembered, created a tension between reality of subject and the unreality of

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79 Foster 108.
80 Foster 108.
81 Foster 117.
82 Foster 118.
discontinuity. A powerful resource, easily readable, it had a volatile force.\textsuperscript{83}

One example of a photomontage that creates this effect of tension between reality and unreality is Hannah Höch's \textit{Cut with a Kitchen Knife Dada Through Germany's Last Weimar Republic Beerbelly}. This montage plays with ideas of gender and power by juxtaposing machines and men, people and big cities, and putting men's heads on a ballerina's body. It also draws attention to how a photomontage is made by implying through the title that the photographs and images were cut with a kitchen knife, even though the precision of the cuts leads one to believe otherwise. Also, in that a kitchen knife is largely seen as a domestic instrument, and so "feminine," the montage further plays with the idea of gender through this association.

Another well-known photomontage was Hausmann's \textit{Tatlin at Home}, a supposed portrait of Russian Constructivist artist Vladimir Tatlin. The technique of photomontage owed much to Russian Constructivism, an art form becoming well-known in Soviet Russia and throughout Europe. The beliefs held by the Constructivists were comparable to Dada beliefs about art. The Constructivists "did not see themselves as artists in the conventional sense, and the objects they produced were not to be construed as art." although they exhibited their works as art, a contradiction close to the Dadaists' view of "anti-art."\textsuperscript{84} The Constructivists created works with found objects and industrial materials that were constructed together in a manner that would call attention to the

\textsuperscript{83} Foster 180.

\textsuperscript{84} Briony Fer et al, \textit{Modern Art Practices and Debates: Realism, Rationalism, Surrealism Art between the Wars} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) 96.
'faktura', or the "evidence of its having been made." The Berlin Dadaists deeply respected the work of the Constructivists, including Tatlin, which was referred to by the Dadaists as "machine art." The Berlin Dadaists even held up large signs at the First International Dada Fair exclaiming "Art is Dead, Long Live the New Machine Art of Tatlin!"

Russian Constructivism began to help shape the ideas of how Dadaists created and viewed art and even became the subject of their artworks, notably Hausmann’s photomontage introduced above, which was another artwork featured in the First International Dada Fair. This photomontage features a portrait of a man whom one presumes to be Tatlin, only not actually him, juxtaposed with objects of technology and machinery, notably a machine located on "Tatlin’s" head. It plays with the idea of the construction of art not only through the construction of the actual piece, but because the featured machine here is located in "Tatlin’s" brain; the image suggests the notion of the artist as a kind of machine that puts materials together to construct an object.

It is unclear who among Berlin Dadaists invented the technique of photomontage. Both Hausmann and Heartfield lay claim to having invented the method in 1917 and 1916, respectively. It is clear from works created that photomontage became an important medium of Dadaist creations; more importantly, photomontage was key in developing a new art. Furthermore, it is clear from all of the works of art described above that the Dadaists were trying to find a "new way of self-expression" in anti-art that

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85 Fer 100.
86 McCloskey 69.
would reflect the Berlin Dadaists' conception of art as put forth in Hülsenbeck's *Dadaist Manifesto.*

Although trying to define the Berlin Dada movement in one simple and neat definition may be virtually impossible and moreover contrary to the movement's ideals, the features of Berlin Dada can be pinpointed. It is clear that the history of Berlin Dada has three important features, being political in nature, seeking to abolish previous art forms, and desiring to create new forms of art that will serve society justly. The strong political nature of the Berlin Dada can be seen in the political commitment and beliefs held by the individual members. Some were directly involved in politics and were active members of the KPD, while some others merely used politics as a means to put forth ideas of art. All members were passionate about politics and were anti-authoritarian. As Hans Richter says, "There was a revolution going on, and Dada was right in the thick of it. At one moment they were all for the Spartakus movement; then it was Communism, Bolshevism, Anarchism and whatever else was going." This can be seen in the works exhibited in the First International Dada Fair, which attacked political leaders and the military. Lithographs such as "Faith Healers" in George Grosz's portfolio *Gott mit uns* were meant to expose the bourgeoisie and army for profiting from and otherwise taking advantage of the working class to fulfill the needs of the ruling class. The Berlin Dadaist's political art was a rallying cry to incite the people to revolution.

Although politics was a central theme in the Berlin Dada movement, it is clear that a political revolution was not the only aim of its members; they also wanted a

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87 Richter 123.

88 Richter 109.
revolution in art. In his *Dadaist Manifesto*, Richard Hülsenbeck lays down the foundations for Dada as a movement that will respond to a void in the art world. Hülsenbeck claims that previous forms of art, with an emphasis on Expressionism, have merely focused inward instead of outward to the social and political problems of the day. Hülsenbeck describes the art that society needed at the time as one that will respond to the horrors of the war, one that cannot be separated by contemporary events and issues, and one that reflects the needs of society.

Dadaism would be the movement in Berlin that would respond to this void in the art world, bring with it a new art or “anti-art.” From the examples explored above, this art was intended to be political and to defy previous artistic conventions by “doing away with the past to find entirely new forms for expressing the human struggle.” Examples of this new art were conceived as aesthetic experiments and took the form of caricatures, collages and photomontage. Examples of “anti-art” are offered in George Grosz’s satirical drawings, such as “Faith Healers,” that are void of aesthetic beauty, roughly caricaturizing the darker side of society. As previously seen, even when using the traditional means of oil painting, in *Germany, A Winter’s Tale*, the canvas is littered with nontraditional subject matter, the dark images of the bourgeoisie, military, church, and capitalism. Further forms of “anti-art” are seen in the photomontages of John Heartfield, Hannah Höch and Raoul Hausmann that “confront[ed] a crazy world with its own image,” juxtaposing various photographs, text, and illustrations to comment upon social, political and artistic issues.\(^{90}\)

\(^{89}\) Foster 148.

\(^{90}\) Richter 116.
In the following chapters, a connection will be established between not only two members of the Berlin Dada movement and Erwin Piscator, but also between the concepts of the Berlin Dada and the concepts of Piscator’s political theatre. Hans Kleinschmidt states “Erwin Piscator’s debt to dada is undeniable. He fully agreed with their insistence that art was too separated from life, and that art could have meaning only as a weapon in class struggle.” In the following chapters, the involvement of two Berlin Dadaists, John Heartfield and George Grosz, in Piscator’s theatre will be explored in order to prove that these views of art founded in Berlin Dada had a major influence on their collaborative performances, mainly in the realm of technological techniques for the stage.

\[91 \text{ Foster 173.}\]
CHAPTER 3

PISCATOR'S DEBT TO DADA AND JOHN HEARTFIELD

In his book *Erwin Piscator's Political Theatre*, C. D. Innes describes the Dada movement's influence on Piscator's theatre as being limited to encounters with the movement's members and shared political and artistic beliefs. Innes goes on to state that Piscator minimized the artistic influence of Dada even though it was an important transitory phase. Innes then sums up Piscator's debt to Dada only in the supposed influence of Iwan Goll, a leading Expressionist who later joined the Dada movement. Innes claims that Piscator's ideas for theatrical technology were solely influenced by Goll's productions, although Innes also shows that the extent of this influence may just be that Piscator considered two of Goll's plays for production. On the other hand, Piscator claims that "this [the 1924 production of *Flags*] was the first time to my knowledge that slide-projection had been used *in this fashion,*" signaling that Piscator may not have been aware of these techniques being used in Goll's productions.\(^{92}\) In his views on Piscator's debt to Dada, Innes leaves out two significant Dadaists, John Heartfield and George Grosz, who became integral figures in Piscator's productions and who, unarguably, were the two most crucial Dada influences on Piscator in terms of design. In this chapter and the next, it will become apparent that Piscator's real debt to Dada, in terms of technical innovation, was in fact Heartfield and Grosz through their

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\(^{92}\) Innes 17.
designs for many of Piscator’s productions. This chapter will focus on Piscator’s debt to John Heartfield in terms of how his design influenced the development of theatrical techniques in the earlier experiments Piscator’s political theatre. It will prove that Innes disregarded a key Dada influence when he discussed Berlin Dada’s influence on Piscator’s technical innovations in the theatre.

Crippled in the war, Heartfield started working as the head of cartoon and natural science films for a new film company that would later become the UFA. Here, George Grosz and Heartfield, who met in 1915, worked on Heartfield’s animated film *Pierre in St. Nazaire*, which was meant to be a propaganda film for “the German war machine,” but was “turned into its exact opposite by the two artists.” This animated film was a groundbreaker in terms of photomontage in both artists’ works. Heartfield’s brother, Wieland Herzfelde asserted, “Through this work…Grosz and Heartfield came into the theatre.” Unfortunately, the film reel was stolen from Heartfield in a burglary in 1920 and it was never shown, so the content of the film remains unknown.

When the Berlin Dada Club was formed, Heartfield was at the forefront of the movement in the more political camp of the Berlin Dada with Herzfelde and Grosz, all of whom joined the German Communist Party (KPD). Prior to the formation of the Berlin Dada, Heartfield’s brother Wieland formed the publishing house Malik-Verlag in 1917 which published left-wing literature and was linked to Dada not only because of its founder but because of the large numbers of portfolios it published for Dada artists – such

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93 DeShong 5.
94 DeShong 6.
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as Heartfield’s photomontages and Grosz’s drawings which launched brutal attacks on the ruling class. Heartfield became a very prominent Berlin Dadaists and earned the nickname “Dadamonteur” from his fellow artists for his talents creating photomontage.

Heartfield’s ventures in the world of theatre were through his involvement with the Berlin Dada, in which “the supreme novelty of Dadaism was the punishment of a nonparticipating audience.” Dada performances were improvised and characterized by “a willingness to incorporate into the most essential parts of the performance not only the response of spectators but also the reaction of performers to physical properties and surroundings.” This later also became important in Piscator’s theatre. Hence, the site of performance is of the utmost importance: “Since the Bourgeois thought of dramatic art as taking place behind a proscenium arch, the Dadaists took pleasure in shattering such notions by spontaneously performing in almost any locale.” Although the Dadaists engaged in frequent performances, their first step in the conventional theatre world was the production of the Orestie in 1919.

Heartfield, Grosz, and Walter Mehring’s puppet play the Orestie was the first venture outside of strictly Dada performance, but the techniques created in Dada were very prevalent in the performance. The Dadaist’s Orestie was concurrent with Max Reinhardt’s inaugural performance of Aeschylus’ Oresteia for the Grosse Schauspielhaus and was held in the cellar of the playhouse while the main production was upstairs. The space itself, which previously housed circus animals, was a bare cellar with only tables and a stage that lacked intimacy and had poor acoustics. However, this did not deter the

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96 DeShong 15.

97 DeShong 15.
team, who mocked the space and its previous occupiers. The *Orestie* performance was a cabaret “antimasque” to the main production upstairs with film and variety acts. 98 The film before the main play was an animated cartoon portraying a day in the life of the President of the Reich, Friedrich Ebert. This theme would be carried over into the puppet play, a parody of the play upstairs, featuring “quips at the expense of the army and President Ebert.” 99 Heartfield, Grosz and Waldemar Hecker designed marionettes for the play, which were caricatures (later known as “Grosztypes”) of well-known personalities. In the end, the team had succeeded in amusing and provoking their audience and critics in “true Dadaist’s fashion.” 100 The performance, which had a more fixed structure than previous Dada performances, had undeniably impressed Reinhardt and the Hollaender management because both Grosz and Heartfield were asked to become more involved in his theatre. They accepted the offer and, after the puppet play, both men began to design settings for more conventional stagings and did publicity posters for the cabaret. 101

After his work in Reinhardt’s theatre, Heartfield joined the team of Erwin Piscator, who recently formed his Proletarian Theatre with Hermann Schüller in 1920. As previously stated, Heartfield and Piscator met upon Piscator’s return to Berlin from the First World War through Heartfield’s brother Wieland Herzfelde, who served with Piscator in Flanders. During this time, Piscator’s experiences in the trenches during the First World War had made him change his views on the purpose of art, and his engagement with the Berlin Dadaists solidified his desire for political involvement in

98 DeShong 18.
99 DeShong 20.
100 DeShong 23.
101 DeShong 23.
theatre. It was these views that prompted him to found the Proletarian Theatre.
Piscator’s new theatre wanted to “break the cultural stranglehold of the bourgeoisie”\(^{102}\) and was conceived as an agitprop (agitation + propaganda) group. The sole aim of the Proletarian Theatre was “developing class consciousness and proletarian solidarity for the struggle ahead.”\(^{103}\) The opening production of the Proletarian Theatre was a performance of three sketches for which John Heartfield was the designer: *The Cripple*, *At the Gate*, and *Russia’s Day*.

From the beginning, it is clear that John Heartfield and the Berlin Dada movement influenced the origination of Piscator’s Proletarian Theatre. For instance, the advertising for opening night, a sort of Proletarian Theatre manifesto, was published as a special issue devoted to the Proletarian Theatre by Heartfield’s brother’s publishing house Malik-Verlag, which heralded left-wing literature and Berlin Dada artists. Obviously the aim and content of Piscator’s Proletarian Theatre would need to be closely aligned with the views and goals of these contributors and publishers, such as the Berlin Dadaists. Indeed, the Proletarian Theatre’s political and artistic aims did mirror these contributor’s artistic aims, so as Malik-Verlag was a mouthpiece for Berlin Dada, it would now become a mouthpiece for Piscator’s theatre. The pamphlet was meant to be an advertisement for the opening night of the Proletarian Theatre on October 14, 1920 – the third anniversary of the October Revolution – but also doubled as a program of the performance. In a comparison of this pamphlet and the Berlin *Dadaist Manifesto*, it is clear that the two had three things in common: the insistence that art be involved in

\(^{102}\) Piscator 37.

\(^{103}\) Piscator 37.
contemporary events and politics, the belief that previous forms of art were not effective, and the assertion that a new art was needed in the contemporary climate of Germany.

The Proletarian Theatre pamphlet begins with a description of each sketch in the opening performance but makes it clear to the reader that the message of each sketch is political and is meant to be interpreted as such. For instance the beginning section reads:

You are about to see *The Cripple (Der Kruppel)*. The capitalists’ war for which the proletariat has worked and is still working has destroyed millions and left millions begging on the streets. Who helps them? The middle class perhaps, flippant, nasty, oozing charity, each according to type, who walk past these cripples on the other side of the pavement, salving their conscience with remarks about do-nothing rabble, and calling upon the State to remove these offenses to public decency from the streets?

Do you sympathize with the anger of these cripples?

There you stand. You – a worker who may tomorrow get the boot from your employer. You, the unemployed, thrown on the street because there are no more profits to be made. To you, the workers, we say: Solidarity with your unemployed comrades.

To you, the unemployed: form a revolutionary central organization for the unemployed! Elect political councilors for the unemployed. Nobody can help you but yourselves.

Either socialism – or the decline into barbarism. 104

It is clear from this passage that Piscator wanted the political message of this performance to incite the reader and is a rallying cry to rouse them into action. In the previous chapter, the *Dadaist Manifesto* was explored pertaining to these same categories and it is apparent the *Dadaist Manifesto* and the Proletarian Theatre program have the same message for what contemporary theatre needed to be – to be not only motivated by politics, but also to be a political agitator. The *Dadaist Manifesto* also had this same sense of urgency and used language to press the reader to act as a rallying cry to rouse the readers.

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104 Piscator 44.
Piscator maintains that this pamphlet “states all need be said about the nature and intention of the Proletarian Theatre.” This is because it clearly informed the readers that “it was not a question of a theatre that would provide the proletariat with art, but of conscious propaganda, not of a theatre for the proletariat, but of a Proletarian Theatre.” He goes on to state that the word art was banned from the pamphlet because “our ‘plays’ were appeals and were intended to have an effect on current events, to be a form of ‘political activity.’” This denial of art in the conventional sense is also a belief stated in the Berlin Dadaists’ manifesto as they accuse the Expressionists of not fulfilling the needs of the day because they did not actually express the people’s concerns. They further accuse members of the Expressionist movement of basically being sentimental, lazy and merely aiming for distinction among artists. Likewise, the Proletarian Theatre pamphlet makes a point to denounce former art forms, especially Expressionism:

Everything that is said must be unexperimental, un-Expressionistic, relaxed, subordinated to the simple, unconcealed will and aims of the revolution. For this reason, all Neoromantic, Expressionist and similar styles and problems, emerging as they do from the anarchistic, individualistic, personal needs of bourgeois artists, must be eliminated at the outset.

After this, the Proletarian Theatre pamphlet lays out the goals and operations of the new form of theatre needed for contemporary Germany, and it does so much like the Dadaist Manifesto, which proclaimed that the world needed a form of art that can expose social problems. Instead of entertaining audiences, it would open the eyes of the public

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105 Piscator 44.
106 Piscator 44-45.
107 Piscator 45.
108 Piscator 45.
to the problems of society. The Proletarian Theatre sets forth an agenda to debate contemporary issues, to strengthen the notion of class struggle, and to serve the revolutionary movement. To do so, Proletarian Theatre set out to exploit the new technical and stylistic possibilities of recent movements in the arts, so long as they served the artistic aims that were described earlier” and “do not serve some stylistic purposes of their own as part of some private artistic revolution or other.” To continue the comparison with the Berlin Dadaists, Piscator will later do exactly this by using Berlin Dadaist technical innovations in his theatre.

From this comparison it is clear that when Heartfield joined Piscator’s team he joined an artistic group not far removed from the Berlin Dada movement. The two had much in common and the artists started to develop new artistic beliefs in the movement. Thus, the similarities between Berlin Dada and the Proletarian Theatre most likely emerged because Piscator’s beliefs and views on the purpose of art in contemporary Germany were grounded in his involvement with people like Heartfield in the Berlin Dada movement. Now that the Proletarian Theatre’s goals were established, how did John Heartfield’s designs contribute and help shape this form of theatre?

As stated previously, the Proletarian Theatre aimed for less art and more politics and this was rudimentary in terms of choosing a performance space. All Proletarian Theatre productions were to be held at workers’ halls and meeting places. The opening production fittingly was held at Kleim’s Dining Rooms, a traditional meeting place for

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109 Piscator 45.

110 Piscator 45.
the workers in Berlin.\footnote{Piscator 44.} This is because, as Piscator stated, “the masses were to be met on their own ground.”\footnote{Piscator 49.} However, the space proved to be problematic:

Anybody who has ever had anything to do with these rooms and their little stages which scarcely even deserve the name, and who knows the smell of stale beer and men’s toilets, the little flags and banners left over from the last beer festival, can imagine the difficulties which faced us as we attempted to put over our idea of theatre for the proletariat.\footnote{Piscator 49.}

Because of this difficulty and that Proletarian Theatre denounced the decorative, Heartfield’s sets were primitive, but nonetheless “introduced a new concept of stage design” through audience interaction, alienation, and pedagogy.\footnote{Patterson 125.}

The designs by Heartfield for each sketch were simple, hastily painted canvasses. For instance, in \textit{Russia’s Day}, a play about the revolution in Russia, the set was a mere backdrop of a map of Europe and the acting area’s borders which were “marked out by frontier-barriers each painted in the national colours of one European nation.”\footnote{Innes 27.} This design is the only remaining evidence for any of the sketches. Although the set was sparse, Piscator commented on the positive impact of the design on the production:

In \textit{Russia’s Day} there was a map which made the political meaning of the play’s setting clear from the very geographical situation. This was no longer purely “décor,” but also sketched in the social, politico-geographical and economic implications. It had a part to play. It intruded into events of the stage and came to be an active dramatic element. And at this point, the performance began to work on a new level, a pedagogic level. The theatre was no longer speculating on their emotional responsiveness – it consciously appealed to their intellect. No longer mere
élan, enthusiasm, rapture, but enlightenment, knowledge and clarity were to be put across.\textsuperscript{116}

From these positive and energized remarks, the set designed by Heartfield obviously met the criteria Piscator had set forth for his theatre. The backdrop brought to the sketch a place for the audience to ground themselves. More importantly, it brought an essential pedagogic level to the text, which forced the audience to identify and unify with the Russian cause in the play.

Not only did the design enforce a pedagogic level in the opening production, but Heartfield also haphazardly helped Piscator's theatre achieve a goal most important to Piscator's later goals for theatre, that is, the beginning of "alienation" and "epic theatre", by achieving critical distance through destroying the illusion of the stage. Piscator describes the birth of the epic theatre during the performance of Proletarian Theatre's performance of \textit{The Cripple}:

John Heartfield, who had produced a backdrop for The Cripple, was as usual late with his work and appeared at the back of the hall with his backdrop rolled up under his arm when we had reached the middle of the first act. What happened might have looked like a director's gimmick, yet it just happened. Heartfield: "Stop, Erwin, stop! I'm here!" All heads turned in astonishment toward [Heartfield]. We could not simply go on, so I stood up, abandoned my role as the cripple for the moment, and called down to him: "Where have you been all this time? We waited almost half an hour for you [murmur of agreement from the audience] and then we had to start without your backdrop. Heartfield: "You didn't send the car! It's your fault! I ran through the streets, the streets, the street cars wouldn't take me because the cloth was too big... [Increasing amusement in the audience.] I interrupted him: "Calm down, Johnny, we have to get on with the show." - Heartfield [highly excited]: "No, the cloth must be put up first!" And since he refused to calm down I turned to the audience and asked them what was to be done, should we continue to play, or should we hang up the backdrop? There was an overwhelming majority for the backdrop. So we dropped the curtain, hung up the backdrop and to

\textsuperscript{116} Piscator 49.
everybody’s satisfaction started the play anew. (Nowadays I refer to John Heartfield as the founder of the “Epic theatre”.)

Even though by all accounts Piscator “jocularly credited [Heartfield] with the founding of epic theatre,” this event obviously stood out in Piscator’s mind as the foundation of Piscator’s use of alienation and audience participation in his productions. This event destroyed the illusion of the stage by calling attention to the fact that this was not to be construed as reality, but as a play and it further allowed the audience to make a practical choice in the production.

Heartfield’s involvement with Piscator’s early attempts at political theatre shows that Heartfield’s background in Berlin Dada influenced Piscator’s Proletarian Theatre in terms of its agenda and performance methods. Piscator’s early agenda sought to provoke indignation, class-consciousness and to stimulate audience participation. By his side stood Heartfield to make sure the design reflected these goals. The agenda put forth by the Proletarian Theatre mirrored the goals of the Berlin Dadaists as stated in their manifesto. John Heartfield, a prominent Berlin Dadaists and now an integral part of the Proletarian Theatre helped to bring the Dadaists’ views even closer to Piscator’s theatre by bringing out the political message of the sketches in his set designs and by provoking the audience, methods that Heartfield used during his experiences in the Berlin Dada performance of the 1919 production of the Orestie.

In The Theatre of Erwin Piscator, John Willet states that “there was a prophetically documentary flavour to John Heartfield’s use of a map for scenery” in

\[117\] Piscator 39-40.

\[118\] Piscator 39.
Russia's Day. Indeed, Heartfield’s next production with Piscator was a 1925 production of In Spite of Everything!, during the self-described “Documentary Play” phase of Piscator’s theatre. Prior to this, Piscator had directed the plays Flags and Red Riot Revue where he used or planned to use film techniques. However, in the production of In Spite of Everything! he developed the documentary technique using film, “which became a spectacular element in his theatre.”

This technique was to turn the script into a multi-stage, multi-media production.

In Spite of Everything! was commissioned by the KPD for the Tenth Party Congress in July of 1925 and it was meant to clarify the party line due to its recent split into two factions – Leninist and Fischer-Maslow. The chosen play was said to have been of “immediate relevance and practical use” because the main intention of the production was pedagogic, that is, it “must inform the audience and exert a direct influence on their actions.” In Spite of Everything!, which depicted the years from 1914 to 1919 from a Communist perspective, took a revue style and made agitprop develop from a “propagation of dogma to a discussion of doctrine.” Heartfield’s designs for this production helped Piscator make the transition from the inadequate Proletarian Theatre to a type of theatre that could be an effective and precise means of propaganda. This was

119 Willet 49.
120 Patterson 125.
121 Innes 51.
122 Innes 51.
123 Innes 51.
achieved by technical innovations, mainly the incorporation of a multi-media, multi-stage
designed by Heartfield.

In the set, "photography, film and stage sequences interacted to build a composite
picture of the war years and the activities of Communist leaders."\textsuperscript{124} The production was
held in Reinhardt's massive Grosse Schauspielhaus, so the amphitheatre stage called for
"free standing three-dimensional scenery of monolithic proportions."\textsuperscript{125} With only a
three-week preparation, Heartfield's designs were simplistic. The set was a terraced
construction of platforms, stairs and ramps mounted on a revolving stage with no scenery
and acting spaces in various niches and corridors. "The predominant principle was that
of a purely practical acting structure to support, clarify and express the action."\textsuperscript{126} Hence,
the set "gave Piscator more opportunity for movement which made it practicable to run
scenes into one another, creating a sequential overlap of cause and effect" — an effect
lacking in his previous plays.\textsuperscript{127} The separated stage levels eased these transitions so that
juxtapositions could be drawn out. For instance, in one scene the set would
simultaneously show the reactions of different sections of society to the war.

In the previous chapter it was established that photomontage was developed by
the Berlin Dadaists —either Hausmann or Heartfield— as a means to teach and instruct
viewers, mostly in the form of political attacks:

Photomontage is related to the collage but far more radical. It is not
ccontent with beauty, nor is it complacently based on "inner laws". It has

\textsuperscript{124} Innes 52.

\textsuperscript{125} Innes 49.

\textsuperscript{126} Piscator 94.

\textsuperscript{127} Innes 49.
an everyday, sober character, it wants to teach and instruct, its rearrangement of parts indicates ideological and practical principles. Thus, photomontage is connected to life itself.\textsuperscript{128}

The Dadaists used photomontage to "confront a crazy world with its own image" by juxtaposing various photographs, text and illustrations to comment upon social, political and artistic issues.\textsuperscript{129} In \textit{The Theatrical Designs of George Grosz}, Andrew DeShong states "considering his association with Heartfield and Grosz, one is not surprised that Piscator was among the first to exploit the techniques of photomontage, developed by Grosz and Heartfield during their Dada period, on stage."\textsuperscript{130} If photomontage is the combination of these various images and texts together in the visual arts, photomontage in the theatre is the combination of these elements with the action on stage to create a new composite picture. Hans Richter describes photomontage as "the simultaneous juxtaposition of different points of view and angles of perspective, as in a kind of motionless moving picture,"\textsuperscript{131} so it is easy to see how this could pertain to the stage with a true moving picture. The created composite picture acts to either reinforce the actions on stage or to comment upon them, such as by having a projected image juxtapose the actions to create a new meaning based on the contradictions between the two images. Heartfield is responsible for bringing the Berlin Dada innovation of photomontage into an entirely new realm of possibilities on Piscator's stage.

\textsuperscript{128} Hülsenbeck 73.
\textsuperscript{129} Foster 117.
\textsuperscript{130} DeShong 57.
\textsuperscript{131} Richter 118.
Heartfield did this in his designs for *In Spite of Everything!* through the integration of platforms and film projection. That is, the events on stage were illustrated and counter-pointed by old slides and newsreel clips. Piscator’s use of film in his productions was not a new technique, but what made the technique new in this case was that the film was not merely for decorative purposes:

The film used in *In Spite of Everything!* was documentary. From the archives of the Reich which were made available to us by one of our contacts, we used authentic shots of the war, of the demobilization, of a parade of all the crowned heads of Europe, and the like. These shots brutally demonstrated the horror of war: films had not yet come into “fashion,” so these pictures were bound to have a more striking impact on the masses of the proletariat than a hundred lectures.\(^{132}\)

The effect of the projections on the whole production was that clean transitions were made between scenes and clear juxtapositions and connections were made between the stage and screen. For instance, in one scene a “film sequence of [Karl] Liebknecht distributing anti-war pamphlets in 1913 merged into a stage re-enacting his protesting against military preparations in the parliament, which was drowned by a sabre-rattling speech by the Kaiser over loudspeakers.”\(^{133}\) Piscator goes on to comment upon the influence the projections had on the production as a whole:

The drastic effect of using film clips showed beyond any theoretical consideration that they were not only right for presenting political and social mechanisms, that is, from the point of view of content, but also in a higher sense, right from the formal point of view… The momentary surprise when we changed from live scene and film clip derived from one another was even stronger [then in *Flags*]. They interacted and built up each other’s power, and at intervals the action attained a *furioso* that I have seldom experienced in theatre…What emerged was that the most

\(^{132}\) Piscator 94.

\(^{133}\) Innes 51.
effective political propaganda lay along the same lines as the highest artistic form.\textsuperscript{134}

In \textit{Revolution in German Theatre}, Michael Patterson states that the film projected on the screens behind the actors was "an indispensable component of the documentary revue" because the production needed to show "mass movement to show a nation at war."\textsuperscript{135} He goes on to state that the projections were even more effective because "an audience not yet familiar with the newsreel was particularly receptive to the disturbing images of the First World War" and it became "concrete evidence of the assertions of the performance."\textsuperscript{136} In the end, the production was a success. The audience was roused and the performance is said to have turned into a "mass display of political fervor, participation in the finale [the singing of the \textit{International}] was spontaneous and overwhelming, and the play became a public demonstration."\textsuperscript{137}

To sum up the second phase of Heartfield's involvement with Piscator's political theatre, it was in the Documentary Theatre where Heartfield's Dada invention of photomontage influenced Piscator's visions for the theatre. Where Piscator's Proletarian Theatre had been deemed inadequate due to insufficient equipment, the production of \textit{In Spite of Everything!} was a success because of its technical innovations. Heartfield helped Piscator make the transition from his experiments with Agitprop into a realm where the equipment used, the techniques of photomontage in film, finally achieved the theatrical goals Piscator was aiming for previously: political propaganda, a new form of theatre,

\textsuperscript{134} Piscator 97.

\textsuperscript{135} Patterson 125.

\textsuperscript{136} Patterson 125.

\textsuperscript{137} Innes 51.
and audience participation. Innes states that the artistic success of this production “can be demonstrated by the constant recurrence of “teaching plays” at the time and that it was solely responsible for the Communist Party Congress’ “resolution to use the theatre as a means of propaganda. ”138 The additional use of film, not as decoration but as commentary, and the juxtaposition of the events on stage amplified the effect of the production. Clearly, Heartfield’s Berlin Dada innovation of photomontage was partly responsible for the indispensability of filmic elements in this production.

The next production Heartfield worked on with Piscator was the 1927 production of Ernst Toller’s *Hoppla, such is Life!* at the Theater am Nollendorfplatz. Although Heartfield did not design the sets for this production, he was asked to be in the team that designed the film projections, which is a further evidence that his work on *In Spite of Everything!* impressed Piscator. Film was to be an integral part of the production and once again Heartfield and the team used the techniques of photomontage developed in the Berlin Dada by incorporating the projections with the scenic elements in juxtaposition to the actions on stage.

Piscator, along with Ernst Toller, Wilhelm Herzog and Otto Katz decided in 1927 to form a new theatre, the Piscator-buhne, to develop their ideas for theatre.139 The opening production was slated to be *Hoppla, such is Life!* at the Theater am Nollendorfplatz, while he commissioned Walter Gropius of the Bauhaus to start preparations for the building of a Total Theatre for his company. The opening performance was meant to present the techniques of political theatre that Piscator and his

138 Innes 54.
139 Piscator 174.
previous teams had practiced with a script that was factual and documentary, thus the team had to cut portions of Toller’s script, mainly the Expressionistic speeches.\textsuperscript{140}

Again, for Piscator it was important that the sets for his productions were not merely decorative. Traugott Muller, who designed the set for \textit{Hoppla, such is Life!} defined his aim as “the abolition of stage-scenery.”\textsuperscript{141} The set was “intended to be a concise channel of optical communication,” that is, the set would be the lens through which the audience was introduced to critical thinking.\textsuperscript{142} Thus, the four-storied structure for this production consisted merely of wooden boards and iron scaffolding supporting open canvases. The intention was to be “no longer just a decorative stage-picture, but a constructive stage. Purposeful building.”\textsuperscript{143}

Playwright Ernst Toller had managed to hint at a cross section of society in the choice and groupings of the settings. In Piscator’s \textit{Political Theatre}, he describes the creative process of creating the stage design for \textit{Hoppla!} in terms of Toller’s suggestion:

\begin{quote}
We had come up with a stage-set that would display this cross section and lend it precision: a multistoried structure with many different acting areas above and beside one another, which would symbolize the social order. According to the preliminary sketches, the spectator was to see this structure as a huge projection screen, on which the introductory film would run. At the moment when we cut from the filmed introduction to the first live scene, a square hole would open at the appropriate point (prisons, cut from film to cell No.1). In this way there would be a perfect fusion of film and stage.\textsuperscript{144}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{140} Piscator 201.

\textsuperscript{141} Innes 58.

\textsuperscript{142} Innes 88.

\textsuperscript{143} Innes 88.

\textsuperscript{144} Piscator 210.
Piscator agreed with Toller’s vision, so he asked designer Traugott Müller to build a set that reflected this cross section of society. In his book, *Political Theatre*, Piscator describes the set built for *Hoppla!*:

A scaffolding 25 feet high, 35 feet wide and 10 feet deep was built on rails on the revolving stage (Photo 1). It was divided vertically into three sections, the outer ones having three cubicles one above the other, while the center one was an undivided shaft surmounted by a dome. External stairs at the sides and back afforded entrances at each level. A screen 25 feet by 35 feet could be lowered in front for film and black-and-white gauzes for projections. The acting areas were backed by translucent, cloth-covered screens, some of which hinged upward to allow projection from the rear, while others could be rolled forward to mask off part of the cubicle. The tall screen at the back of the shaft could be both pushed forward and hauled up into the flies.\(^{145}\)

Obviously, the stage setting was a huge undertaking by the design team and it seems as though this massive structure would overtake the action on the stage. However, it was the areas of the structure that were devoted to the projection screens that saved the play from being overshadowed by the scenery. In the end, the stage was an interactive system that engaged the audience’s attention to certain parts of the stage by fusing the stage action with the film projections put together by Kurt Oertel, Ernst Koch, Victor Blum and John Heartfield.

To do this, the designers created a means of developing the live action straight out of the screen action. They “created a synthesis by placing the screen on the same visual plane as the stage.”\(^{146}\) The hotel rooms for *Hoppla!* were a “white screen with “doors” that opened in the middle of the film to reveal the actor’s in various rooms.”\(^{147}\) In the

\(^{145}\) Piscator 202.

\(^{146}\) Innes 111.

\(^{147}\) Innes 111.
hotel set, characters were related only by a spotlight moving from the radio-operator’s attic to the banker’s suite, to the servant’s cellar, returning to the radio-operator and back to the banker. The hotel set provided eight separate stages for film or action. The stages were integrated by projecting images onto a screen, and then two gauzes would fall through onto the stage in which the whole became a projection.\textsuperscript{148} This was repeated at the end, only in reverse merging the actors back into the film. In this method, the film was transformed into the movements of the actors and the actions on the stage and vice versa.\textsuperscript{149}

The integration of the acting space with film created a pedagogic experience for the audience, which as previously stated is a primary goal of what Piscator envisioned for his theatre. One of the most intriguing ways this was achieved was during the prologue in \textit{Hoppla!}, which contained over 400 political, cultural, economic, social and sporting scenes and photographs. In seven minutes, the following reminders of a desperate decade flashed before the eyes of the audience:

- **1917** – March 8, Russian Revolution begins.
  - April 6, U.S. enters World War I.
  - July 16, Czar Nicholas II and Family shot.
  - November 11, World War I ends.
- **1919** – June 28, Versailles Treaty signed.
- **1920** – January 10, League of Nations officially inaugurated as Versailles Treaty goes into effect.
  - January 16, Prohibition in U.S.
  - March 19, U.S. Senate rejects Treaty of Versailles because of League of Nations proviso.

\textsuperscript{148} Innes 111.
\textsuperscript{149} Innes 111.
1922 – October 27, Mussolini marches on Rome.
1923 – November 8-9, Munich Beer Hall putsch led by Hitler put down; Hitler sentenced to five years, serves less than one; writes Mein Kampf in jail.
1925 – July 20-21, Scopes evolution trial held in Dayton, Tenn.
1927 – May 20-21, Lindbergh flies solo across Atlantic.
   August 23, Sacco and Vanzetti executed.
   November, Trotsky expelled from Communist Party\textsuperscript{150}

The scenes shown document the "world's history during the hero's eight years in prisons and mental hospitals."\textsuperscript{151} As stated in Piscator's \textit{Political Theatre}, "No medium other than film is in a position to let eight interminable years roll by in the course of seven minutes."\textsuperscript{152} The sequence of scenes mimics the cross sectioning of the set through the different layers of society, from the proletariat to the aristocracy. By using these images, Piscator and the designers gave the audience an introduction to the play that allowed them to think critically about what they were going to see in the following scenes.

Indeed, what the audience saw after the opening prologue was another film sequence that showed a General's tunic covered with medals, an army in retreat, the advancing war, and the General's medals being ripped off. The play that followed was the story of a man who believes that the world itself is so insane that he wishes to return to an asylum. In the end, the audience is forced to look at this man's suicide as a desperate attempt to escape from an insane world. The audience is driven to critically view the political and social tensions of the world in \textit{Hoppla!} through the film prologue. Furthermore, they are

\textsuperscript{150} Ley-Piscator 80.

\textsuperscript{151} Willet 85.

\textsuperscript{152} Piscator 212.
made to view the stage's cross-section of society as their own, thus not only critically evaluating this fictional world, but also their own world.

In the end, the production involved ten thousand feet of film and four projectors, which was never seen before in a theatrical production. With the integration of the film and the massive cross-sectioned stage, this production marked new possibilities in technical innovation for the stage. In this performance, Piscator found the medium that allowed him to not only communicate with the audience but to enable critical thinking on their part. In *Hoppla!,* film widened the scale of reference for a present-day action by drawing historical parallels.⁵³ Through the integration of political film with the socially based stage the audience was forced to view the play through the lens of what has happened in their own world, thus inciting critical thinking as a collaborative learning experience. In the end, the scenes accomplished what Piscator imagined for his theatre, they gave the audience the backbone of the political commentary that had the ability to be discussed over and over again.

During this time of Heartfield's involvement with the Piscator-buhne, Heartfield may have only helped design for *Hoppla, such is life!%; however, Piscator also enlisted Heartfield's talents for the publicity designs and programs for his new company. Heartfield designed programs for three Piscator-buhne productions: *Rasputin, Boom* and *Singing Jailbirds.* These programs are further evidence of the influence of Dada photomontage on Piscator's Theatre and are almost identical to the photomontages and layouts that were published in brother Herzfelde's Malik-Verlag's book-jackets. Hans Richter describes Heartfield's photomontages as "classically composed" and "direct,"

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⁵³ Innes 90.
mostly in comparison to fellow Dada artist Raul Hausmann, who composed “fiercer and more uninhibited photomontages.”

Heartfield’s programs for the Piscatorbuhne are true to this description by directly juxtaposing various photographs, illustrations and textual elements. For instance, the program for Singing Jailbirds shows two photographs, one of a huge battleship and one of a prison cell with the words. “Amerika, du hast es besser…!” (America, you have it better…!). The program juxtaposes the two images to comment upon the idea of the play, the capitalistic government in America imprisoning protestors, but to also make an attacking satirical comment on the belief that the American system is better than the Communist system for Germany. Clearly, throughout his involvement with Piscator’s theatres Heartfield used Dadaists techniques not only on the stage, but also off the stage to promote and introduce the plays.

The last play Heartfield and Piscator worked on together in Germany was the 1931 production of Friedrich Wolf’s Tai Yang Awakes, for the second Piscator-buhne at the Wallner-Theatre. The script is about the “development of a Chinese factory worker to class consciousness.” At one point during the play, the European actors drew “a map of China on his mirror, which is in fact a light which throws the map on a screen…The actors [made] themselves up and [changed] before the audience’s eyes into the characters in the play, the Chinese…” From this passage, it is clear that design would be an important aspect of the production. Heartfield “draped the stage and the auditorium with banners and posters- “Down with the imperialists’ interventionist wars,”

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154 Richter 118.
155 Piscator 343.
156 Piscator 343.
“Fish and meat make up only 3 percent of the Chinese diet” – which turned the theatre into a party meeting hall . . . Film of events in China illustrated phases of the action on a screen at the back of the stage.”\textsuperscript{157} Here, Heartfield continued to use the film techniques he and Piscator had carried on throughout Piscator’s political theatre, although not to the great extent it had been used before. Heartfield only used projection for the “fluttering banners, which bore political (or statistical) inscriptions on one side and nothing on the other, so that they could be turned round and used for projections.”\textsuperscript{158} This performance was the last of Piscator’s in Germany for the time being, as he soon departed for the Soviet Union to make a film.

In all, John Heartfield collaborated with Piscator on many productions starting with Piscator’s early political theatre experiments at the Proletarian Theatre to his later plays in the second Piscatorbuhne. In his first production with Piscator at the Proletarian Theatre, the influence of Berlin Dada is apparent both in the pamphlet/program for the performance and in the designs for the productions by Heartfield who introduced a pedagogic element into the theatre through stage design. Heartfield continued to work with Piscator in these early experimental productions, such as in \textit{In Spite of Everything!}, a documentary drama in which the entire production was based on political documents.\textsuperscript{159} It was here that Heartfield took Piscator’s previous use of film and tweaked it so that elements of photomontage, developed with the Berlin Dadaists, exploited the stage to bring a stronger political dimension to the production. A few years later, Heartfield also

\textsuperscript{157} Piscator 343.

\textsuperscript{158} Willet 105-106.

\textsuperscript{159} Piscator 91.
was part of the design team for the projections in *Hoppla, such is Life!!* one of Piscator’s most successful productions. This production provided Heartfield with many opportunities for projection experimentation because of the complex set filled with canvas backdrops and a prologue that included over 400 newsreel projections. Throughout all of these productions, Heartfield proved to be an essential part of the collaborative team and, through the use of projections, Heartfield brought the Berlin Dada invention of photomontage into an entirely new realm of possibilities.

To conclude, although C. D. Innes leaves out the impact of John Heartfield in Piscator’s debt to Dada, it is apparent that Heartfield was a huge influence in terms of technical innovation throughout the span of Piscator’s theatre career in Germany. J. L. Styan remarks that the theatre Piscator sought to achieve was one that was “rational, rather than an empathetic, [and that would] report on some social or political theme, and, free from realism, it would open out its content for inspection.” In practice, mechanical devices and mixed media helped Piscator achieve this goal. Through the introduction of photomontage in the theatre, Heartfield was the principal aid to Piscator’s effort to introduce these mechanical devices by introducing an element of Berlin Dada art and utilizing it to achieve Piscator’s desires for the new theatre he was embarking upon. Through these collaborative productions, Heartfield not only brought Berlin Dadaist elements into more conventional theatre but also more importantly used these elements to help enforce Piscator’s ideas for his new vision of theatre. A theatre that would provoke audience participation, highlight contemporary events and was an instructional device. In

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his discussion concerning Piscator’s debt to Dada, Innes disregarded Heartfield, a key Dadaist involved in Piscator’s theatre, who is truly a large part of Piscator’s debt to Dada.
CHAPTER 4

PISCATOR’S DEBT TO DADA AND GEORGE GROSZ

As stated earlier, C. D. Innes in *Erwin Piscator’s Political Theatre* claims that Erwin Piscator’s sole debt to Dada is in the work of Iwan Goll, a playwright whose work Piscator once considered for production. However the second chapter has shown how John Heartfield contributed to Piscator’s versions of political theatre with his stage designs and the use of photomontage, a Berlin Dada innovation, proving that Heartfield was indeed an important facet in Piscator’s debt to Dada. In this chapter, Piscator’s theatre will be explored focusing in the context of productions that featured George Grosz, another Berlin Dada artist, as designer. Grosz collaborated with Piscator on three productions: *Transfiguration*, *The Drunken Ship* and *The Adventures of Good Soldier Schwejk*. In his designs for these productions, Grosz aided in the development of Piscator’s formulation of epic theatre by using techniques of illustration coupled with biting social commentary. Thus, Grosz is as another Dada artist that was not fully appreciated by Innes’ discussion regarding Piscator’s debt to Dada.

Piscator’s ideas about the nature of art and techniques for the stage were tested during the early experiments discussed in the previous chapter, and they culminated in his concept of the Epic theatre. Innes in *Erwin Piscator’s Political Theatre* states that Piscator’s epic is defined as an approach, which “not only portrays the dramatic action,
but also describes what social and political conditions determine modern fate.”\textsuperscript{161} To achieve this, Piscator was fond of adapting novels for the stage to produce “episodes of the age.”\textsuperscript{162} According to Innes, the novel already possessed the “ability to alter the perspective or give an independent viewpoint at will … to control the reader’s judgment,” something Piscator deemed as “epic.”\textsuperscript{163} However, the novels never seemed to satisfy Piscator because they did not seem to live up to his expectations of creating this link to the “modern fate.” Because his strong political and social viewpoints that were founded in the Berlin Dada, Piscator believed that art was valuable only if it served the class struggle. So Piscator had to find ways of linking “epic dramaturgy to new areas of subject matter with which he wished theatre to deal.”\textsuperscript{164} These subjects included the social and political background of the German Revolution and it’s aftermath. According to Jon Willet in \textit{The Theatres of Erwin Piscator}, the problem then was to find “the new forms which would still contain this material within that theatre.”\textsuperscript{165}

To successfully dramatize these novels while not only staying true to their content and meaning, but also while creating this link to current events, Piscator and his designers employed the use of many contemporary technical innovations in their designs. According to Innes, the various design techniques attributed to Piscator’s epic theatre are

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{161} Innes 102-103.
\item \textsuperscript{162} Innes 102.
\item \textsuperscript{163} Innes 102.
\item \textsuperscript{164} Willet 107.
\item \textsuperscript{165} Willet 108.
\end{itemize}
projection and film, simultaneous staging, and the use of commentators.166 While no technical apparatus used by Piscator was new, what made his use of these techniques innovated was the emphasis Piscator put on these devices in his productions. For instance, according to Willet, “No other director used film so extensively or thought about it so systemically as Piscator, who came to employ front projection, back projection and simultaneous or overlapping projection from more than one source.”167 However, we must keep in mind that these technical devices were not used on stage to merely strike awe in the audiences. They were on stage to situate the audience’s mind not only in the events unfolding onstage but also to the political and social climate of the present day. Piscator, writing in his diary in 1955, shows that the political nature of his epic theatre was of the utmost importance to him. He wrote that his starting point is “political fatality” which was to be demonstrated on a large scale because he “wanted to comprehend fate as a whole, showing how it is made by men and then spreads beyond them (hence the machinery, film, etc.).”168

This description of Piscator’s epic theatre makes it clear that design played an extremely important role in Piscator’s vision. The design elements were the main way Piscator illuminated the link between the text and 1920s Germany. Piscator employed designers such as Grosz who effectively communicated and commented upon this link. Piscator’s choice was guided by his knowledge of Grosz’s strong political beliefs, which he had voiced during the Berlin Dada movement, and especially through his artworks,

166 Innes 103.
167 Willet 113.
168 Willet 187.
which attacked society with bitter satire. Piscator was also aware of Grosz’s experiences
during the First World War. These experiences were similar to Piscator’s, so Grosz could
effectively comment upon current social conditions that exposed Piscator’s views on art,
the theatre, and society.

Grosz volunteered for military service in 1914 but was discharged a year later for
health reasons and was declared “unfit for service.” In 1917, he was drafted for service
again but was sent to a military hospital the following day. Grosz, who was haunted by
his previous one year military service in 1914 stated: “My nerves went to pieces this time
before I even saw the front, the rotting corpses and the bared wire …” 169 Grosz was
transferred to a mental hospital and two months later he was discharged from the army as
permanently unfit for service.170 He returned to Berlin fueled by a hatred for war: “My
hatred was concentrated on the people who wanted to force me to go to war. I saw the
war as a monstrously degenerate manifestation of the ordinary struggle for
possessions.”171 Grosz turned to art to pour out his anger and these sentiments would be
reflected in his works in the period following the war: “Whenever I had time, I gave vent
[to] my anger by drawing. In notebooks and on letter paper, I sketched everything in my
surroundings that offended me” trying to “capture the ridiculous and grotesque aspects of
a world swarming with busy little ants bent on death.”172 While Grosz vented his
frustrations, he also formulated his artistic techniques teamed with aggressive social
commentary that he perfected when joining the Berlin Dada movement. In the years

169 Schneede 28.
170 Schneede 28.
171 Schneede 28.
172 Schneede 31.
from 1915 to 1919, Grosz’s drawings were caricatures of the world around him, highlighting the chaotic urban landscape dominated by crime, prostitution, and war profiteering.

When the Berlin Dada movement was founded, Grosz was at the forefront of the movement and was clearly one of the most politically motivated of its members. Grosz reflected on the impact of Dada, “The movement I was caught up in influenced me so strongly that I considered any art worthless that could not be put to use in the political struggle. My art, at any rate would be a rifle and a sword.” Accordingly, the works Grosz created were politically charged, such as lithographs included in *Gott mit uns* described in the first chapter. In the years following the formation of the Berlin Dada, Grosz’s drawings were published in magazines and publication of Malik-Verlag, the publishing house created by Dada member Wieland Herzfelde. This included the Herzfelde, Heartfield, Grosz publication *Jedermann sein eigner Fussball*, which was a combination of political commentary with bitter satire on the SPD government. Another publication featuring Grosz was *Die Pleite*, a magazine specializing in political satire that targets protagonists of the counterrevolution such as Ebert. Other publications featuring Grosz’s work were *Der Gegner* and *Der blutige Ernst*. “Satire was the essence of the periodicals and the informing principle for Grosz’s drawings.”

In these publications, Grosz also put forth his theories on the function of art such as in “Art is in Danger,” discussed in the first chapter. He attacked bourgeois art, claimed that the painter in bourgeois society was “a mere ‘machine producing securities,

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173 Schneede 94.

174 Schneede 96.
a machine that the rich exploiter and aesthetic fop’ took advantage of to invest [the exploiter’s] money for profit and to improve his public image by playing the patron of the arts.”\textsuperscript{175} He urged artists to use their brushes and pens as weapons and to let themselves “be inspired by the ideas of the working people” to “[h]elp them in their battle against a corrupt society.”\textsuperscript{176} To Grosz the duty of a revolutionary artist was “to produce propaganda” to “rid the world of supernatural forces, of God and the angels, and sharpen men’s eyes so that they can see the realities of their relationship to the world around them.”\textsuperscript{177} These ideas would provide the background for many of the works Grosz produced during the Berlin Dada movement and would accompany him while working in Piscator’s theatre.

Grosz and Piscator met through Wieland Herzfelde during the First World War and their similar war experiences brought them together. The friendship continued during the Berlin Dada movement in which both artists developed similar views about the function of art and felt contempt for previous art forms. Echoing Grosz’s sentiments about the purpose of art, Piscator commented as following: “We spent a great deal of time discussing art and much of that discussion concerned the role of art in politics. We came to the conclusion that our art had to be turned to the service of the class struggle if it was to have any value at all.”\textsuperscript{178} These sentiments, along with Grosz’s experiences with the First World War and his subsequent views on art will later become important.

\textsuperscript{175} Schneede 98.

\textsuperscript{176} Schneede 98.

\textsuperscript{177} Schneede 98.

\textsuperscript{178} Schneede 94.
components in the theatrical works produced by Piscator and Grosz. By the time Grosz started collaborating with Piscator, he was a well-established and successful artist, with works that were exhibited in several one-man shows in major galleries around the world. Grosz was also notorious for the controversies surrounding his work as several periodicals of his and fellow Dadaists were confiscated by the authorities and they were not allowed to publish any further issues.

Prior to his professional association with Piscator in 1926, Grosz had worked with relatively weak directors, who according to Andrew DeShong in The Theatrical Designs of George Grosz, could “never fully use or dominate his talent.”\(^{179}\) From the above description of Grosz’s work, it is hard to see how any work of Grosz’s could not be influenced by his own political beliefs. According to DeShong, this was because the designs for these previous productions were controlled by directors who hardly exploited any of Grosz’s personal techniques.\(^{180}\) Piscator’s collaborative style of directing seemed to suit Grosz who was now free to do what he did best, political satire. According to DeShong, Grosz had trained himself to “stand aside, to observe and to comment upon events and people.”\(^{181}\) This talent was perfected during his Dada years and was ready to be transferred on to the stage via Piscator and the technical innovations Piscator had incorporated through Heartfield. However, this proved to be a slow journey, as Grosz’s full potential in the theatre did not fully peak until his last production with Piscator.

\(^{179}\) DeShong 55.

\(^{180}\) DeShong 55.

\(^{181}\) DeShong 65.
The first production Grosz collaborated on with Piscator was actually never produced. In 1926 Piscator enlisted Grosz to design for a performance of Ernst Toller’s *Transfiguration*, a play Piscator wanted to produce since his founding of his Tribunal in 1919. At that time, Piscator “wanted to rewrite it as a vehicle for depicting reality according to his own war experiences.”182 He stated that he wanted the production to “differ in principle from the Berlin production,” directed by Karlheinz Martin and designed by Robert Neppach, in that the setting was to be constructed as realistically as possible.183 This production was never mounted but Piscator’s vision for the play never faltered from this concept when he decided to produce it at the Volksbühne am Bulowplatz in 1926. Piscator still wanted to produce the play “in a more radical and, to him, more realistic manner,” and to do this he invited Grosz to join his production team. Piscator hoped that because Grosz had similar war experiences, he would present Piscator’s views and experiences in his scenography.184

The text of Toller’s play never satisfied Piscator, which was typical in many of his script choices. *Transfiguration* is the story of Friedrich, who “undergoes a variety of metamorphoses,” particularly, the “change from a militant patriot to humanist-revolutionist.”185 Piscator voiced that the “play dealt with war in terms of the revolt of an individual rather than in the perspective of a collective fate. It made the war a conflict of

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182 Innes 4.
183 Piscator 222-223.
184 DeShong 59.
185 DeShong 60.
men rather than the negation of humanity by machines."\textsuperscript{186} Thus, Grosz was employed to create settings that would "bolster the realism" and to "provide an arsenal of attack when Toller's outrage faltered or became to individualized."\textsuperscript{187} To do this, Grosz stayed far from the distorted and fragmented Expressionistic style of the Martin-Neppach production. Instead he paid close attention to realistic detail.

DeShong states that Grosz had decided to take "advantage of the abundant technical resources of the Volksbuhne" by setting the fourteen scenes of the play on a revolving stage.\textsuperscript{188} The revolve was to be a permanent fixture on the stage in which platforms and backdrops were positioned. The designs for the production showed that Grosz strictly adhered to realistic setting, keeping in tune with Piscator's wishes. Grosz methodically sketched designs with precise proportions and laborious perspective even in the tiniest of details, such as a row of shops in the background of one scene. DeShong states that Grosz may have been hampered by his necessity to use "conventional techniques of scenography"\textsuperscript{189} so much so that he even chose to present the dream scenes of the play in a realistic manner, not through projections. DeShong speculates that Grosz was anxious about the physical execution of his setting "so employed conventional painted scenery which because of its familiarity he could control."\textsuperscript{190}

\textsuperscript{186} DeShong 59.
\textsuperscript{187} DeShong 59-60.
\textsuperscript{188} DeShong 62.
\textsuperscript{189} DeShong 63.
\textsuperscript{190} DeShong 63.
In all, DeShong states that the ground plans “show [Grosz] considering the production from its practical vantage and demonstrated his deeper immersion in the craft of stage design.” Indeed, the proposed design focuses on the craft of realistic stage design and Grosz’s satirical commentary that became his staple is missing from the proposal. Ultimately, the Volksbühne halted the production because it was deemed “too radical for their governors.” Hence, perhaps the biting commentary located in the play itself was adequate enough. Although the design proposals lacked almost all of the technical elements of Piscator’s epic theatre, the production is a stepping-stone to the others that followed. One reason for this is because the production wished to take an existing text and tweak it so it would not focus on and individual but would present the harsh realities of a “collective fate” as termed by Piscator. Also, some illustrative images would be recalled in Grosz’s later designs, such as the skeletons conversing in a field of crosses and a parade of cripples at the end, both of which would later appear in The Adventures of Good Soldier Schwejk. “There are,” DeShong states, “a group of drawings which seem equally appropriate to either production.” In the end, Piscator and Grosz were well on their way to creating an epic theatre production after the proposal for Transfiguration.

Although it seemed that Grosz’s true artistic spirit would not translate well into the theatre by his first designs for Piscator’s stage, the next production designed by Grosz shows that Grosz was merely slow to start off in this new collaborative atmosphere.

\[191\] DeShong 62.
\[192\] Willet 64.
\[193\] DeShong 63.
Shortly after the plans for *Transfiguration* were proposed Piscator and Grosz collaborated on a 1926 production of Paul Zech’s *The Drunken Ship* at the Volksbuhne. It is in this production that Grosz employed the use of Heartfield’s projections used in *Despite All!* Heartfield previously only used projection for films or photos of actual events. Here Grosz took the invention further by adding animated cartoons to the projections. Grosz also helped Piscator expand on aspects of the ‘alienation effect’ in this production.

The script for the play once again did not suit Piscator. It was a dramatic biography of Arthur Rimbaud, a French poet, and it showed sixteen “stations” in his life “from his meeting at seventeen with Paul Verlaine to Africa and back to Europe to die full of regrets.” In the following passage, it is clear that Piscator felt the script was too Expressionistic:

> There were points at which he was beginning to come to grips with the stuff of the times (the War of 1870, the Paris Commune, the Third Republic in France, the whole transitional period of French history from which a figure like Rimabaud is inseparable). But he, too, unfortunately never got beyond individual psychology and even there he could not see Anarchism of the individual clearly enough for the good of the play.

Here Piscator was ultimately “disappointed in Zech’s failure to reintegrate his hero into the political events of his time.” He saw that Zech’s work was the story of a bourgeois individualist but Piscator decided to do what Zech failed to: “to set the poet’s life

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194 Piscator 116.

195 DeShong 63.

196 DeShong 63.
against his times, the Paris Commune and the Third Republic in France, and for this he used film and projections by George Grosz.”\textsuperscript{197}

For the design, Piscator at first wanted a double revolve on the stage so the actors could use both acting areas and be swung into view while already playing their roles.\textsuperscript{198} However, the director and designer opted for a triptych of screens with mobile side sections for back projections of cartoons by Grosz. The drawings were projected on the triptych so that a panoramic shot enveloped the actor on the stage. The mobile side screens could be moved independently so that various settings could be produced, such as with the screens moved inward the stage became a room.

In the last chapter, it was explained that Piscator started using film projections in his theatre with the aid of John Heartfield’s application of photomontage integrating stage and screen. Innes in \textit{Erwin Piscator's Political Theatre} states that, at first, film and projection were only previously used “as the simplest means of reinforcing the text.”\textsuperscript{199} With the production of \textit{Despite All!} Piscator and Heartfield showed that film and projection had such a powerful effect that they could activate an audience more compellingly than any other means.\textsuperscript{200} From this point on, projection and film started to play an increasingly more important role in productions. Grosz decided to continue the use of projections in \textit{The Drunken Ship}, but added a new dimension to it: the illustrated cartoon that Grosz had become famous for in his Berlin Dada artworks.

\textsuperscript{197} Piscator 116.

\textsuperscript{198} Innes 101.

\textsuperscript{199} Innes 81.

\textsuperscript{200} Innes 81.
The projections functioned in many different ways during the production, but the main function was to provide the historical background where the story took place. Some of the projections functioned by "providing the 'local color' necessary to Rimbaud's imaginary and real voyages."\textsuperscript{201} For instance, during Rimbaud's ship voyage, "gauze was used for a film projection of waves"\textsuperscript{202} to give the illusion of tumultuous waters. The projections also functioned as a "guide indicating locale to the audience which was not provided by the bare construction of platforms and steps.\textsuperscript{203} As an example, the set was transformed into a prison cell by folding the wings of the triptych inward and projecting vertical bars across the screen "to make an entirely enclosed cell" then "unfolded so as to show Grosz's cartoons."\textsuperscript{204}

Even if the projections seem to dominate the set, there was "no attempt to compete with the actors" on stage.\textsuperscript{205} In The Theatrical Designs of George Grosz, Andrew DeShong states, "the projections had their own visionary identity, and a role midway between illusion and information."\textsuperscript{206} To exploit this function, actors were placed behind the center screen projecting shadows while an illustration of a café at Arden was also projected on the screen. In this way the players and projections were

\textsuperscript{201} DeShong 67.
\textsuperscript{202} Willet 61.
\textsuperscript{203} DeShong 61.
\textsuperscript{204} Willet 61.
\textsuperscript{205} DeShong 67.
\textsuperscript{206} DeShong 68.
placed “on the same level of reality”\textsuperscript{207} to express a certain idea set forth about the historical background information.

The projections also effectively aided in the conception of the alienation effect. As previously stated, Piscator originally wanted a large revolve on the stage so that the actors could be swung into the audience’s view while already playing their roles. Instead, Piscator and Grosz opted for the triptych screen without a revolve. With this setting, the actors walked into audience views “while the stagehands were still changing the setting, taken their positions as actors and then altered their style of gesture to portray their roles.”\textsuperscript{208} Michael Patterson, in \textit{Revolution in German Theatre}, notes that this had been done before out of necessity because of the stage limitations in the 1919 production of \textit{Transfiguration}, but that his was the first time anyone had made the deliberate choice of changing the scene in full view of the audience.\textsuperscript{209} The audience was now forced to acknowledge this as a stage with a created setting placed up on it. In addition, the actors entered as themselves then allowed the audience to see them become the character; the audience was further forced to forgo their suspension of disbelief by acknowledging the people on stage as actors playing characters. This is an instance of Piscator laying the groundwork for the alienation effect, a concept Bertolt Brecht was to later theorize.

As previously stated, the illustrated cartoon was a new dimension that Grosz added to the use of projection in Piscator’s theatre. According to DeShong, never before

\textsuperscript{207} DeShong 68.

\textsuperscript{208} Innes 118.

\textsuperscript{209} Pattrerson 153.
had the artist's hand entered the production so greatly. 210 Audience members familiar with Grosz's work, which many would have been due to his notorious standing in the art world, would have recognized this hand as an extremely political and satirical one. Perhaps due to Grosz's hesitancies to make such overtly political commentary on stage, political statements were rare in the production. *The Drunken Ship* was permitted because it was less overtly political compared to the proposal for *Transfiguration*, which was halted by the Volksbühne management. However, because political statements were so few and far between, the statements that were made were much more poignant.

In a *Berliner Borsen-Courier* review, Herbert Ihering describes the function of the projections as suggesting "both the place and the thoughts behind the screen. [Grosz] illustrated the content and the reality, the idea and the location. He gave both the historical background and its relevance to the present." 211 In order to portray this sense of relevance to the present, Grosz used caricature instead of the landscapes that were predominantly used. Caricatures were used in three scenes of the production: the Jail at Mons, the Café in Paris, and the Cypress scene. In these scenes, Grosz makes the political commentary needed to introduce a link between Rimbaud's experiences in France with present day issues in Germany.

In the jail scene at Mons, the projection is a caricature of a Prison Warden and a Priest; both looking down on a group of prisoners marching in a circle in the prison courtyard. The buffoon-like priest is holding an open bible with a paragraph sign, a distinguishable mark in German law, stamped upon it. Grosz began to use this symbol

210 DeShong 70.

211 Piscator 116.
frequently “in order to portray the verbal rationalization of the evils of the establishment.” In this projection, Grosz had used a simple sign to make a quick connection between authority at work in the play and the authority figures and methods in contemporary Germany, therefore creating a link to the ‘modern fate’ as Piscator desired. Furthermore, the image starkly resembles a lithograph called “Light and Air to the Proletariat” in his *Gott mit uns* portfolio released during Dada in 1920. Anyone familiar with the lithograph would recognize the link between the authority figures on the stage and the authority figures in present-day Germany as represented by the lithograph.

Another projection that made the link between the world of the play and present day Germany was the scene projected to portray the Café at Arden. The drawing depicts the various members of French society in an exaggerated manner. In this café are bourgeois pigs and their prostitutes conversing at a table, a cripple begging on the street next to a military officer who scolds him, and a religious woman with wide eyes staring at her surroundings among others. This scene caricatures types in Rimbaud’s world but also caricatures types in the world of Germany at the time. This drawing is actually an extension of Grosz’s drawings depicting the “hypocrisies of a social class” in tune with his outrage at the bourgeois class in Germany. Many of Grosz’s drawings during the Berlin Dada movement exhibit this outrage, such as *Germany, A Winters Tale* and numerous lithographs in the *Ecce Homo* (1922) and *Gott mit uns* portfolios. This and the aforementioned projection are both good examples of linking the action of the text to modern day as desired by Piscator’s epic theatre but also are good examples of Grosz’s Dada art coming into Piscator’s theatre.

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212 DeShong 80.
In the end, Grosz’s projections were not only used to suggest locale and add local color, but also to comment upon the action onstage, sometimes making correlations to present-day Germany. The set design also added the alienation effect to the production through the actions of the actors. By using the set in these manners, this production was a small step in integrating Piscator’s idea of epic theatre, and a large step in paving the way for Piscator and Grosz’s next production in which all theories of Epic theatre were encompassed.

The last production in which Grosz designed for Piscator was a 1928 dramatization of Jaroslav Hasek’s popular novel *The Adventures of Good Soldier Schwejk*. Hasek’s novel recounted the experiences of Schwejk, a Czech soldier in the Austrian army, during World War One.\textsuperscript{213} The unfinished novel was first adapted by Max Brod and Hans Reiman, but adapted further by Piscator, Bertolt Brecht, Leo Lania and Felix Gasberra. The end result was a text that transformed the story of an individual “into a present day indictment of church duplicity in Germany’s resurgent militarism.”\textsuperscript{214}

In *George Grosz and the Communist Party*, Barbara McCloskey lends this link to the modern day to the events in Germany at this time:

The organized church had supported a strong militarist defense against the threat of Bolshevik atheism since early days of the Republic. In the late Weimar years, the KPD accused the SPD ever more vociferously of aligning with Catholic Center Party in an effort to use religion to divert workers from the revolution. Schwejk attempted to intervene in the growing appeal of organized religion among the German working class in the late 20s.\textsuperscript{215}

\textsuperscript{213} McCloskey 132.

\textsuperscript{214} McCloskey 132.

\textsuperscript{215} McCloskey 132.
By applying this novel to a different situation while still adhering to the basic moral of the text, Piscator and his collaborators succeeded in taking a popular novel and applying it to current political events in Germany, an element of Piscator’s epic theatre. Neither could be done without the aid of certain design elements, proving that design is truly an essential facet of Piscator’s theatre.

In *The Piscator Experiment*, Maria Ley-Piscator states, “It is the paradox of the artistic life of Piscator that this master of the stage lit his most beautiful fires when other artists, such as George Grosz, inspired him.” As we have seen, Grosz’s work had been used in Piscator’s two previous productions to suggest locale, but hadn’t made the extreme political commentary that we may expect from Grosz’s art in Berlin Dada. However, Piscator identified the opportunity to use Grosz’s talent in his satiric illustrations for the commentary he needed epic theatre. So, Piscator called upon Grosz to design “slide projections and cardboard cutout figures” that were used as “an additional commentary on, rather than as a naturalistic setting for his production.”

Andrew DeShong states in *The Theatrical Designs of George Grosz*, “Throughout the collaboration Grosz had trumpeted more ferocious notes than others. He wished the performance to be not simply a social satire but a biting indictment of war.” Thus, his designs functioned as caricatures of Schwejk’s antagonists and to comment upon the

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216 Ley-Piscator 227.

217 McClosky 125.

218 DeShong 77.
moral of the text in a way that would also comment upon present-day Germany, fulfilling an element of Piscator's epic theatre.

The set for *The Good Soldier Schwejk* was a synthesis of stage machines and film on a bare stage, which according to DeShong, had only been partially effective in earlier productions but here would be combined to create a totally integrated stage. In Erwin Piscator's *Political Theatre*, the stage is described as:

Two pairs of white flats joined by borders stood 10 and 20 feet behind the proscenium arch, masking the flies and side stage. A conveyor belt 9 feet wide was built into the stage in front of each pair of flats, parallel to the front of the stage. At the back was a huge white backdrop. The electric conveyor belts were controlled independently. They served as a treadmill on which Schwejk marched, and brought on props like the wooden latrine or the bar for the court scene. The side screens and backdrop were used for projections (the contents of letters or order written onstage) and filmed scenery (the streets of Prague) or commentary (George Grosz's cartoons).

One of the main stage machines in the production was the use of conveyor belts that were placed parallel to each other and could independently move backward or forward. Piscator conceived of the play's movement as representing Schwejk's impassivity before a flood of events and to implement this interpretation two conveyor belts were put on stage. The conveyor belts allowed comic movements by actors, such as Schwejk's march to Budweis where he marched on the conveyor belt with film and cutouts passing by, providing the illusion that he was progressing, but in reality marching blandly into the bloody war without moving from the spot. There was no set

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219 DeShong 72.

220 Piscator 250.

221 DeShong 73.

222 Willet 91.
in the usual sense; instead “Piscator called in George Grosz and made him draw what was needed in his characteristically spiteful, yet light, comic, economical style of cut-out marionettes, projected backgrounds, sequence of cartoon film.”

In his view of epic theatre, Piscator set out to give art a far wider sphere of influence and sought to make the stage far more effective at the same time. To do achieve this in *The Good Soldier Schwejk*, Piscator employed the help of the artist George Grosz. One day during rehearsal of *The Good Soldier Schwejk* in 1926, Piscator set up a gigantic drawing board in the auditorium. He placed it in front of George Grosz, who was watching the rehearsal, then walked away. George Grosz remembers the day Piscator encouraged the cartoons and comments on the medium of this type of art in the production program:

Erwin provided me with an enormous drawing board covered in white paper. This was set up at the back of the stage, and as events took place on the stage I accompanied them with huge symbols, my hands darting back and forth across the paper. Thus I could emphasize or suggest meanings, sketch in some wicked Hasek-type remark, produce unspoken captions. In fact, Erwin created a whole new artist’s medium, a variety of possibilities far more tempting to the artist of 1928 than the stuffy business of aesthetics, or producing cheap high-brow trash for posh people with culture. Here is an opportunity for the often acclaimed ‘Daumiers’ of our time to issue their warnings and paint the horrors on the wall – far better to have your art in strips than stuck under glass in a beautiful frame or stuffed away in cupboards. What a medium for the artist who wants to communicate directly with the masses! Here, young artist of 1928, is a wall. If you have something to say, use it!

Grosz definitely used this opportunity to the fullest extent and the projections were used in conjunction with other technological innovations to provide an extra layer to

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223 Willet 91.

224 DeShong 82 and Piscator 266.
the script. An example of the integration of stage and screen is when Schwejk went to have his medical examination in order to join the military. The examining doctor was a Grosz drawing, a huge face with a dueling scar and an enormous cigar, all projected on the screen, and he prescribed alternately, “Physic and aspirin!” and “Stomach pump and quinine!” excusing no one from duty.\(^{225}\) Grosz used his cartoons to comment on the action of stage, thus inspiring the audience to think critically about the ethics of the war and its masterminds.

Upon having a conversation with Grosz about the aim of the production, Piscator stated that Grosz, “the intellectual draftsman, as he like to call himself . . . immediately began to develop my ideas with his own peculiar brand of wholehearted objective enthusiasm.”\(^{226}\) With this enthusiasm, Grosz created these cartoons which were a “substitute for the narrators’ voice in the novel.”\(^{227}\) As Felix Gasbarra pointed out: At the beginning of each chapter where Hasek made direct general comments on his theme, Piscator projected cartoons, drawn by George Grosz. In this way he could effectively condense the forces which were opposed to Schwejk.”\(^{228}\) Thus, Grosz was given free resign to make editorial comment, which he did so by caricaturizing the antagonists of the play. Piscator stated that naturalist or documentary film material could not be used because the film “had to conform to the element of satirical caricature in the overall production,” so Grosz “produced political and satirical cartoons in which the puppet

\(^{225}\) Styan 135.

\(^{226}\) Piscator 256.

\(^{227}\) DeShong 80.

\(^{228}\) DeShong 80.
representatives of the Army, of the Church, of the Police acted out their gruesome comic ritual."  

The political satire that was characteristic of Grosz drawings was presented from the start of the production. In the opening cartoon film prologue “Grosz’s wiggling line trac[ed] a German and Austrian general, a death’s-dead judge and a priest juggling with a crucifix symbolizing the forces with which Schwejk has to contend.”  

Here, from the beginning Grosz, as embodied by his hand, is commenting on the characters the audience will soon see on the stage, already prescribing the characteristics these characters are meant to embody.

As the play progresses, so does Grosz’s satirical cartoons, frequently employing the use of a symbol Grosz had previous used in The Drunken Ship, the paragraph sign. For instance, as Schwejk and the police spy converse, a cartoon sequence starts that satirically plays with the paragraph sign “familiar to all who have dealings with German law.” The top of a “stupid-looking head,” as described in instructions transcribed by Grosz, “springs open and paragraph signs swarm out, moving off to the left. The accompanying lines are to suggest hissing steam” and continues until the screen was covered with “the squirming signs.”  

Here, Grosz links the use of the paragraph sign as used in present-day Germany to the world of the play, where audiences can make the correlation between the characters who are spewing war rhetoric, such as the priest, and

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229 Piscator 256.
230 Willet 91.
231 Willet 91.
232 Willet 91.
those who are spewing the rhetoric in the world surrounding the audience members, fittingly the church's influence over the working class.

Though some real film shots were worked in – of the streets of Prague for instance, one of the main techniques that were emphasized in this production were the illustrated drawings by Grosz that were projected on the screen, and as John Willet states in *The Theatre of Erwin Piscator*, "the general effect of the production was of a highly mobile show being illustrated in passing by one of Europe's most brilliant draughtsman."\(^{233}\) Even though the projections were supposed to be supplementary to the action on stage, it seems that they may have dominated the whole play. Film projection was most striking and, therefore, dominating element of Piscator's productions, dwarfing the actors who appeared static against the moving scenery of the screen, so the stage machinery always had to be used in conjunction with film to be effective.\(^{234}\) Since film was the most striking part of the performance, George Grosz's cartoons dominated but also enhanced what was seen onstage so as to comment on the action onstage. By being used in this manner, the projections, along with the cutouts, contributed to the idea of the alienation effect by breaking "the tradition of theatrical illusionism in an effort to provoke a critical response on the part of the viewing audience to the issues address in the play."\(^{235}\)

One of the properties Grosz designed to use in conjunction with the stage machinery was larger-than-life-sized two-dimensional cutout figures. These figures

\(^{233}\) Willet 91.

\(^{234}\) Innes 89.

\(^{235}\) McCloskey 133.
stood in place for characters in the play that would have been considered as supernumeraries, or extras, in more conventional productions. At first Piscator wanted to do away with all live actors, except for Max Pallenburg as Schwejk, and use cutouts and cartoon characters as the “actors”. However, the team decided to use some thirty cutout figures in place of just the extras that may have crowded the stage.\textsuperscript{236} In this way Schwejk would still be the only real human in a world of lifeless dolls, even if human actors played them. The cut-out’s function was not only to stand in for actual actors, but to serve as caricatured types “which populated the political and social life of prewar Austria.”\textsuperscript{237}

The cutouts, along with some live actors, formed three categories of characters: semipuppets (cut-outs), puppetlike types (human actors) and semihumans (human actors).\textsuperscript{238} The puppetlike types and semihumans had exaggerated makeup and costumes that exaggerated “the single figures into clownlike symbols” of their principle function, such as a prison ward with a huge fist and a police spy with a huge ear.\textsuperscript{239} The semipuppets consisted of Grosz’s cut-outs which were “lifeless dolls in horribly exaggerated poses,”\textsuperscript{240} closely taking after the grotesque puppets (Grosztypes) created by Grosz for Dada works such as the \textit{Orestie} play mentioned in the second chapter.

\textsuperscript{236} DeShong 81.

\textsuperscript{237} Piscator 264.

\textsuperscript{238} Piscator 264.

\textsuperscript{239} Piscator 264.

\textsuperscript{240} Piscator 264.
Andrew DeShong in *The Theatrical Designs of George Grosz*, that where extras are usually used to extend illusionism, these cutouts as extras actually functioned to extend the anti-illusionism by setting off the live actors in an unnatural scale.\(^{241}\) For instance, cutouts were used in a scene where the priest was preaching his military propaganda in the detention barracks. His audience (except for Schwejk) was represented by cutout figures scratching lice and playing cards, allowing the real audience in the theatre to focus on the priest’s speech and on Schwejk’s reaction to it. However, the cutouts also functioned to “dispel audience identification” with the sole live listener, Schwejk who is deeply affected by the sermon.\(^{242}\)

The cutouts also contributed to the idea of linking the moral of the text to present-day Germany. On his march to Budweis, Schwejk fumbles along the conveyor belt while sixteen cutout figures pass him by, including members of the working class and the bourgeoisie. The figures are reading newspapers and the expressions on their faces signal various reactions to what they read: a delighted officer with a sly smile and cigarette but a butcher is downtrodden and dismayed. DeShong states, “The 16 figures of newspaper readers that Grosz designed form an impressive human comedy of Berlin (more than Prague) types.”\(^{243}\) A reason the sixteen cutout may have been so recognizable as Berlin types is because audience member familiar with Grosz’s previous work would automatically be reminded of his previous caricatures of the bourgeoisie in Berlin Dada and make a connection between what was shown on stage and these types existing in the

\(^{241}\) DeShong 83.

\(^{242}\) McCloskey 133.

\(^{243}\) DeShong 75.
contemporary world. Here, Grosz’s work in Berlin Dada provided a quick point of recognition in the production to enhance the link to present day Germany and the social and political conditions existing in it. Thus, the cutouts fulfilled an important element of Piscator’s epic theatre – making a link to modern fate by commenting upon the social satire in the play.

Even though Grosz was extremely successful in caricaturing these ossified types in the production, according to Piscator, Grosz’s “main achievement in this film was not simply his inspired delineation of types,” but that “he managed in the film to extract Schwejk or rather Schwejk’s world from its historical period and establish a link with the present.” 244 Through the use of poignant symbols, such as the aforementioned paragraph sign and caricatured types of antagonists who threatened Schwejk’s world, Grosz created a link to the people in control of the fate of Germany directly after the First World War. As Piscator states, “the medical officers, officers and public prosecutors were figures that are still alive today in Prussia/Germany. And so the play carried on the struggle on the political level of the day.” 245

In the end, the film used in The Good Soldier Schwejk incorporated around three hundred of Grosz’s cartoons. Grosz used these cartoons to comment on the action of the play, mainly for things that were left unsaid on the stage. The scenes mentioned above are excellent examples of this use. These scenes use cartoons to emphasize meaning that Piscator wanted the audience to view analytically so they could question what is being acted onstage in terms of what is happening in Germany in the 1920s. That is, these

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244 Piscator 265.

245 Piscator 265.
scenes function as a collective learning experience in that they engage the audience in political questions that prompt the audience to think analytically about the war and its effects on Germany through the fictional character of Schwejk and those around him. At the end of the premier performance, it seemed to the majority of the audience that Piscator’s *The Good Soldier Schwejk* had beyond doubt made history in the theatre.\textsuperscript{246} According to DeShong, the production is considered to be among the ten or so most important productions during the Weimar Republic.\textsuperscript{247} The production was so popular it kept the first Piscatorbuhne afloat, if only at least for a little while. The cartoons proved to be successful in grabbing attention after they were subsequently published by Malik-Verlag in the portfolio *Hintergrund*. After the publication in 1928, Grosz was charged for blasphemy in response to the lithographs from the production in a trial that would last until 1930. Found guilty, Grosz commented that his was his intention to “fight against the idea of war and to attack any actions on the part of the church that lend support to the idea of war.”\textsuperscript{248}

In conclusion, these three productions have shown the progress of Piscator’s utilization of Grosz’s Berlin Dadaist techniques on the stage as he was developing his theory of epic theatre. Another component of Piscator’s debt to Berlin Dada is George Grosz’s artistic techniques and art produced during the movement that were translated successfully on the stage. Fueled by his outrage at the war and the people who profited from it, Grosz created art that attacked society with satire. This, along with his theories

\textsuperscript{246} Ley-Piscator 88-89.

\textsuperscript{247} DeShong 72.

\textsuperscript{248} Schneede 172.
on the function of art, would become Grosz’s palate that he would apply to Piscator’s epic theatre. Piscator’s epic theatre, as described earlier was characterized by the desire to politicize prior text and to make a link to the present, many of the elements used to do so were design elements, such as film and projection. The three productions that Grosz designed for Piscator are a progression in the use of these characteristics and elements culminating in the last production, which encompassed almost all techniques of Piscator’s epic theatre. In the first production, *Transfiguration*, we see in Grosz a designer who is somewhat hesitant, not fully using the techniques in his palette of satirical talent. However the production does show the desire tweak a text to show the realities of the war to a whole, not an individual, experience, which Grosz designed by strictly adhering to realistic designs. In *The Drunken Ship*, Grosz combined naturalistic projections with his own illustrated projections, not only to provide picturesque scenery, but to also comment upon the action on stage. Grosz further used this technique to make some political commentary and linked these issues to Germany in the 1920s, along with designing a set that would enable the alienation effect. For the last production, *The Adventures of Good Soldier Schwejk*, Grosz’s animated and cartoon projections provided a sense of locale to a bare stage and were used to create caricatures of Schwejk’s antagonists, which also made a link to present day antagonists in Germany. Grosz’s projections and cutouts were synthesized with the stage machinery and the actors even more than before, enabling the alienation effect by breaking the illusionism of traditional theatre and provoke critical response in the audience. Through this exploration of Grosz’s collaborations with Piscator, it is clear that Grosz is another key Berlin Dadaist who was improperly discarded in Innes evaluation of Piscator’s debt to Dada.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In Erwin Piscator’s Political Theatre, C. D. Innes states that “the sources of the dramaturgical forms that came from [Piscator’s] work can be traced by following his personal involvement in [Berlin] Dada and his commitment to Communism.” This commitment to Communism has been the main focus of scholarship about Piscator but his personal involvement in Berlin Dada has remained largely unexplored. Since previous scholarship has merely focused on the influence of politics, this study has focused on the influence of Berlin Dada on Piscator’s theatre with the aim of proving a deeper influence than previously indicated. From the study of Piscator’s collaborations with John Heartfield and George Grosz, it is clear that these Berlin Dadaists were influential in introducing new modes of technical innovation and artistic expression in Piscator’s theatre. Starting with the Proletarian Theatre and ending with Tai Yang Awakes, Heartfield’s Berlin Dada invention, photomontage, was incorporated into Piscator’s theatre through screen projection and proved an essential element in bringing Piscator’s theories to life on the stage. Grosz took this element further by incorporating his projected illustrations with actors on stage and also to create a link with events in Germany in the 1920s. This study has shown that Piscator was deeply influenced by

\[249\] Innes 3.
Berlin Dada in terms of artistic theories and experimentation in technology, thus proving that Piscator’s debt to dada is more substantial than alluded to in previous scholarship.

Innes states that Piscator’s collaborative experiments “have been seminal in the development of new stage forms” and his productions affected “every aspect of theatre.” While he was celebrated during his time for his revolutionary ideas, interest in scholarship focusing on Piscator has dwindled for two reasons. These are that his contemporary, Bertolt Brecht progressed further in his theories surrounding epic theatre and secondly, the financial failures that plagued Piscator’s theatres.

Although he is recognized as the originator of epic theatre, Piscator is now largely overshadowed by his contemporary, Brecht, who also formulated a version of epic theatre. Brecht states in a 1927 interview in the Frankfurter Zeitung that “the essential point of the epic theatre is perhaps that it appeals less to the feeling than to the spectator’s reason.” This pedagogic aspect of epic theatre is something the two versions had in common, along with desire to rebel against German realism and expressionism. Brecht’s epic theatre was derived from Piscator’s version and continued to aim at a political examination of society and its working elements. While the aims of their versions of epic theatre are similar, it is the styles of their versions that differ. In his diary in 1955, Piscator cites the differences between his version and Brecht’s version:

B[recht’s] starting point is episodic succession.
P[iscator’s] is political fatality.
B[recht] demonstrates it in miniature.

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250 Innes 2.

P[iscator] on the big scale. I wanted to comprehend fate as a whole, showing how it is made by men and then spreads beyond them. (Hence the machinery, film etc.)\textsuperscript{252}

Here Piscator addresses their different practices of epic theatre, noting Brecht's as the concentration on disconnected structure and his own focus as politics discussed through large-scale machinery. The episodic succession to which Piscator refers is Brecht's focus on the structure of the performance in which each scene, if shown independently, was "fully capable of life."\textsuperscript{253} Piscator also comments upon Brecht's demonstration of political fatality on a much smaller scale than Piscator. This references Brecht's desire to discuss moral dilemmas in terms of an unheroic individual whereas Piscator's sought to discuss the fate of a collective whole.

Piscator also refers to Brecht's demonstration in the "miniature" in relation to Piscator's use of stage machinery, which was not used in Brecht's productions in such a massive scale as it was in Piscator's. Brecht did incorporate some elements of Piscator's machinery in his performances though, such as film. However, the way in which Brecht used film was vastly different. Piscator used film to connect with the audience, to involve them and confront them with images that would expand upon events on the stage. Piscator's use of film was meant to lessen the distance between the audience and the performance in order to induce communal thought and action by making a link to current events in Germany. Brecht, however, used film as a narration and dramaturgical device for purposes of the alienation effect - that is, Brecht used film to distance the audience from the events onstage in order to reduce the illusionistic quality of performance by

\textsuperscript{252} Willet 187.

\textsuperscript{253} Willet 70.
using projection as a narrator summarizing events calling attention to performance as a created event, not reality.

While Brecht credits Piscator as the “master builder” of epic theatre, the theory is largely attributed to Brecht because as John Willet states, “it is often the people who talk most about an idea who become most commonly associated with it, and so it is not surprising that Brecht should in many eyes have appeared to be epic theatre’s sole originator.”

According to Willet, “Piscator’s occasional references to the point were much more off-the-cuff” where Brecht was “more anxious to reach a consistent theoretical position.” Throughout his lifetime, Piscator had written little about his theory of epic theatre, whereas Brecht had appeared in countless newspaper articles and interviews to discuss his theory of non-Aristotelian epic theatre. Thus, Brecht largely overshadows Piscator because of Brecht’s success in publicizing his theatrical views in a much wider scope.

Another reason Piscator has been largely ignored in theatrical scholarship is the financial failures of his companies. While there were many successful productions, such as The Good Soldier Schwejk, that “broke box-office records with receipts of between 7,000 and 9,000 marks a night,” the Piscatorbuhne companies were far less successful financially. According to John Willet, “Piscator once said he had a moral right to

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256 Piscator 270.
bankruptcy and it is true that without it his work would hardly have got done.»\textsuperscript{257} Even after the success of \textit{The Good Soldier Schwejk}, the first Piscatorbuhne collapsed at the end of the 1927-28 season because of the “unexpected cost the stage machinery”\textsuperscript{258} incurred during the season. The second Piscatorbuhne followed in the same path when the company collapsed in 1929, a “victim of inflation”.\textsuperscript{259} The stage machinery that caused Piscator’s financial failures were not just on stage to bedazzle the audience, but were essential in executing his political statements. The large-scale means to which Piscator refers is the use of technology that Piscator deemed essential to the “validity of the theatre as a means of handling 20\textsuperscript{th} century issues.”\textsuperscript{260} The stage machinery may have been essential to his theatre, but they were expensive and drained his resources.

In \textit{Revolution in German Theatre}, Michael Patterson states: “Piscator’s inventiveness often outran what was financially or technically viable.”\textsuperscript{261} Innes agrees that Piscator “constantly overreached himself in his efforts to create contemporary theatrical forms with insufficient materials.”\textsuperscript{262} Piscator often had to use the innovative media forms with the available outdated machinery. This combination often lead to problems such as technical malfunctions, loud, grinding machinery and cumbersome stage forms. The cost of using the machinery and the cost of repair or silencing noises

\textsuperscript{257} Vallance 4.

\textsuperscript{258} Vallance 4.

\textsuperscript{259} Innes 154.

\textsuperscript{260} Innes 2.

\textsuperscript{261} Patterson 147.

\textsuperscript{262} Innes 158.
drained the financial resources of the Piscatorbuhnes. At that time, "Piscator's machinery had seemed to complicated, heavy, specialized [and costly] to form a permanent addition to the theater's armory of expression."\textsuperscript{263}

Likewise, Berlin Dadaists are also largely overlooked in theatre scholarship. Dadaism has been deemed "one of the most famous and important movements in the history of 20\textsuperscript{th} century art, a movement that, despite its early demise, radically altered the course of artistic creation in [the 20\textsuperscript{th}] century."\textsuperscript{264} Recognizing this impact, there have been thousands of books and articles devoted to the entire movement and many focusing on Berlin Dada. Richard Sheppard notes that "the production of numerous secondary works and bibliographies all indicate an increasing awareness that the problems to which Dadaists proposed their own, zany solutions half a century ago are still with us now."\textsuperscript{265}

As much as has been written about the Dadaists, works devoted to the Berlin Dadaists' involvement in theatre are few and far between. Books on Dada involvement in theatre, such as \textit{Theatre in Dada and Surrealism} highlight members of Zurich Dada, such as Tristan Tzara and Andre Breton. The consensus of this scholarship would lead one to believe that Berlin Dada was not involved in theatre. However, many critics consider Dada to have continued in Grosz's designs for \textit{The Good Soldier Schwejk}. The Berlin Dadaist designers Grosz and Heartfield have become generally forgotten. Yet their work in the theatre, especially for Piscator, was widely celebrated in the 1920s. For instance, Grosz's designs were exhibited in various museums and at a theatre exhibition

\textsuperscript{263} Innes 159.

\textsuperscript{264} Lemoine 4.

\textsuperscript{265} Sheppard I.
at Madgeburg in 1927.™ Furthermore, in a list of the “two hundred most significant productions on German-language stages” from 1900-1933, Grosz designed three, two being productions with Piscator.™ Likewise, Heartfield designed four productions in the same list, in which two were productions with Piscator. Given the success of their theatrical careers, the involvement and impact of these two designers on theatre is something that should not be ignored.

Putting aside the financial failures of their collaborative productions and Piscator’s lack of fame in the world of theory, the collaborative productions were successful in changing the face of modern performance. Styan states: “The influence of Piscator’s work has been strong in Germany, both before Hitler’s accession to power in 1933 and with the popular revival of documentary drama since the Second World War.”™ In the realm of political theater, Piscator’s impact is undeniable. Piscator’s work influenced many other theatre artists in Germany, such as Bertolt Brecht. Other parts of the Western world have also been influenced by the Piscator collaborations, such as Joan Littlewood’s Theatre Workshop in England, Roger Planchon in France and Elmer Rice’s Living Newspaper in America.

In today’s political climate, it is also worthwhile to reexamine Piscator’s political theatre. With increasing warfare in the Middle East, it is important to see how nations at the front of war cope with tragedy, voice their opinions under oppressive regimes and create new means of artistic expression. For instance, a parallel can be drawn between

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™ DeShong xii.

™ Patterson 188.

™ Styan 136.
Piscator’s political theatre and Interventionist theatre, especially centering on conflict in Palestine and Israel. According to The Ohio State University’s Interventionist Theatre Symposium release, Interventionist theatre is “an emerging field within theatre studies, which lets people living in conflict areas develop new collaborative work generated from their personal experience and workshops with theatre specialists [sic].” Both Piscator’s works and Interventionist theatre works, such as Dr. Jim Mirrione’s Last Enemy, utilized collaborative teams focused on artistic expression to expose different experiences of war and aim to promote solidarity against oppressive governments.

The Piscator collaborations also left a lasting impression on the theatrical world in terms of how technology is used in the theatre. Willet states that “foremost among [Piscator’s] talents was his grasp of stage technology, which far excelled that of any other director of his time.” This focus on technology is what has left a large impact on the theatre even today. Willet also states that “what [Piscator] termed ‘technology’s dramaturgical function’, in other words its effect on the structure of the play, has proved so important on 20th century theatre . . . handing the playwright a whole set of new resources with which to master difficult subject matter.” Focusing on the use of a mass volume of mixed media, Piscator was ahead of his time by using technology to greatly affect the structure of his productions.

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271 Vallance 8.
As previously stated, Piscator’s inventiveness sometimes surpassed the technical and financial resources available to the designers, so the media was used with outdated machinery. This caused some technical and financial failures in his theatres, which led to a lack of interest in the collaborations. However, the ideas founded in these collaborations have continued in the 21st century where new resources are available to explore the use of mixed media in performance. Since the use of stage machinery such as conveyor belts and projections in Piscator’s theatres, these elements have become common in theatrical performances. For instance, DeShong notes the existence of these elements in Broadway musicals, “such as Annie, that use conveyor belts to move scenery and performers in a fashion similar to those in Schwejk designed by Grosz.” DeShong also notes that “the use of projection in innumerable modern stagings – and particular in the “avant-garde Czech presentation on the nineteen sixties – is an outgrowth of the techniques with which Grosz, [Heartfield], and Piscator experimented.”

However, the technical elements of Piscator experiments go largely unnoticed today, as Innes notes:

The mass media, which encourage superficiality and popularize new ideas, accustom the public to extraordinary methods of expression and can turn an original insight into platitude overnight. And as a result Piscator’s machinery passes unnoticed today – Palitzsch’s use of film, trick cartoons in the Grosz style, placards, projections, and a complex acting structure mounted on a revolve for his production of Toller hardly raised a mention from the critics – but the accompanying demand for continual novelty undervalues the effect of Piscator’s experiments.

272 DeShong xii.

273 DeShong xi.

274 Innes 159.
This is not to say that the Piscator collaboration should continue to go unnoticed. Piscator’s collaborative “introduced mass media on the stage in order to make the theatre capable of handling 20th century issues,” but the use of the technology “raised certain questions about the nature of drama.”\textsuperscript{275} One of the questions, according to Innes, was the “reevaluation of the actor vis-à-vis stage effects and machinery.”\textsuperscript{276} This is a question that many theatre artists are still dealing with at this point in time. In today’s theatrical world, the need for new, ground-breaking forms of expression is in constant demand. The new technologies of video, motion capture and digital animation have led to a resurgence of theatre artists who are now feeling the need to reevaluate the position of the actor in relation to technology once again.

For instance, the theatre company Big Art Group explores the ability of video recording to create alternate versions of performance out of simultaneous live action and video projection in works like \textit{House of No More}. This company performs with the aid of multiple screens and cameras to exploit the different ways actors are portrayed on screen through onstage live action juxtaposed to what is projected on multiple screens. In doing so, they call attention to how performance is created, something Piscator explored in his experiments. Another theatre company reevaluating the role of the actor in relation to new technology is the work of Lizabeth Goodman with SMARTlab. In works like \textit{The Féileacán Flies}, Goodman’s projects combine the use of three-dimensional graphic characters created by motion capture that interact with a team of live action performers ranging in different physical abilities. These projects examine the application of digital

\textsuperscript{275} Innes 2.

\textsuperscript{276} Innes 2.
media in the world of live performance and how young people with disabilities can explore movement through digital animation.

Since the time that Piscator and his collaborators had introduced the necessity of mixed media as a way to broaden the scope of performance and to discuss important issues, technology has played an important role in the theatre. The ideas founded in Piscator’s theatre have not diminished in spite of a lack of interest in his experiments. Although the Piscator collaborations have been largely forgotten, it is important to reevaluate Piscator’s experiments due to a resurgence of theatre artists who are now feeling the need to reevaluate the position of the actor in relation to technology once again. This reevaluation cannot be done without exploring the people who influenced Piscator’s theater, which deems the necessity to reevaluate the influence of Berlin Dada on Piscator’s theatre.

This study is merely a stepping-stone in further exploring the influence of the Berlin Dada on Piscator’s theatre. Its focus has been the impact of two Berlin Dadaists on only one aspect of Piscator’s theatre, the utilization of technology. Other Berlin Dadaists, such as Walter Mehring, were influential in the shaping of texts in Piscator’s theatre, and this would be a worthy study. Furthermore, it would be worthwhile to explore the other 20th century avant-garde artists who both influenced Piscator’s scenography and whom he had an influence upon, such as Laszlo Moholy-Nagy and Walter Gropius. These studies would further aid in the understanding of the collaborative experience of Piscator’s theatre.
This is a collection of historical information concerning the plays of Ernst Toller and Georg Kaiser. I focused on a section that was devoted to *Hoppla, wir leben!*, which gave a description of the events leading up to performance and the production itself. There is an analysis of the plot, descriptions of the stage and technical devices such as the film sequences. A diagram of the stage and selected stage directions are also included, as well as a picture of the set.

This book is a chronology of George Grosz's life in the theatre and the influence of Dadaism in his theatrical works. There is a brief biography of the time period he worked in Germany and afterwards, when he left for the United States. It records his involvement in scene designs for numerous productions from collaborations with Erwin Piscator to Georg Kaiser. There are sections for each play that Grosz was involved in and includes information about not only Grosz's designs, but also a span of information about the play itself. For example, it includes plot synopsis critical reactions, summaries of performances, and Grosz's designs for the stage and costumes. Lastly, there are forty-five plates of cartoon projections, costumes and designs that Grosz produced for the theatre.

In Chapter One, there is an explanation of the Dada movement's origins in Zurich along with excerpts of Tristan Tzara's manifesto. Also, there is a description of the movement in Berlin, the politics that characterizes this movement, themes explored and information about John Heartfield and George Grosz including samples of their work from this period. Further information that would be useful is the section titled "The language of construction and the construction of language" in the Chapter dealing with "The Language of Construction". This sections shows that Russian formalist literary theories were closely tied the Constructivist art movement. Dada artist Raoul Hausmann deeply admired this art movement, and one of its chief artists, Vladimir Tatlin.

In this biography about Grosz's life, the area most beneficial to my research is Chapter Two, which covers the years Grosz lived and worked in Germany from 1893 to 1932. The section entitled “Art in the Service of Revolution” includes material relevant to Grosz’s involvement in Berlin Dada and political art. Another section, titled “The Individual and the Masses” has some information on the production of *The Good Soldier Schweiß* and the trail that was the result of the publishing of lithographs from the production.


This book is a compilation of essays pertaining to the Dada movement discussing various themes Dada explored, problems Dada encountered and certain artists involved with the movement. Topics explored are definitions of Dada, Dada poetry, graphic design, and criticism, among others. For my purposes, the essay that will be most helpful is entitled “Berlin Dada” by Hans J. Kleinschmidt. This essay explores the transition of Dada from Zurich to Berlin, what made Berlin Dada different from its predecessor, politics, the artistic and journalistic products of the movement in Berlin, the members and Berlin Dada’s impact on successors.


This is a group of essays focused on the history of Dada, including the European and American movements. The essays discuss the culture that Dada came out of, the various artistic and literary techniques and mediums used, and the origin of Dada among other topics. The most useful essays for my research seem to be “The Cultural Politics of Dada, Dada: A Critical History of the Literature in Germany and Central Europe”, and essays titled “Performances” and “Conventions and Constructions: The Performative Text in Dada”, which will help to compare Dada performances with Piscator’s performances.


An examination of Weimar culture, this book focuses on art, literature, music and theatre in the Weimar Republic. This will be particularly useful in focusing in on political and social events that shaped the Weimar Republic and affected art and literature in the period that both Dada and Piscator flourished artistically in Germany. Other great resources are the appendices in the book that include a lengthy bibliography and a ‘Short Political History of the Weimar Republic”, which will be very useful in explaining the political nature of the time period.


This exploration of the trends in modern theatre focuses on certain styles of Western theatre and their main aims and purposes. The section titled “Theatre is Style” includes references to Dada’s influence on the art world and theatre.
Another section titled “Theatre is a Tribunal” covers Erwin Piscator’s theatre and focuses on the production of The Good Soldier Schwejk with very explicit production descriptions.

This is a translation of the Dada anthology edited by Richard Huelsenbeck in 1920. The anthology includes texts and photographs chronicling the rise of the Dada movement in Zurich to the different branches in Berlin, Paris and New York. Included are newspaper articles, poetry, manifestoes, lectures, and various quotes published in Dada periodicals. In the beginning of the book, editor Malcolm Green includes a preface that gives a short history of the Dada movement.

This essay is a study of The Good Soldier Schweik production and how it failed to live up to the political expectations the artists had sought. The article has a very useful background to the creation of the play with the adaptation of the novel by Piscator and Brecht. Further attention is given to the process of Grosz’s drawings that were projected in accordance with the dialogue. Also, there is information about the trials surrounding the Hintergrund portfolio after the production. Overall, this is a good resource for a historical chronology of the creation process for the play and the production itself.

This book is an introduction to Piscator’s art in the Weimar Republic. There are descriptions of Piscator’s work in Agitprop theatre, Documentary Drama, Total Theatre and Epic theatre. For my purposes, I would focus on his work in Epic theatre. Included in this section are descriptions of the development of Epic theatre, the integration of screen and stage, the use of file, the role of the acting collective and its style and conventions, scene structures, and literary techniques. Also, there are detailed descriptions of the productions that also include the points above. The rest of the book is devoted to critics and contemporaries of Piscator, such as Bertolt Brecht. Lastly, there are many pictures of productions and a “Chronological Table of Piscator’s work and other productions relevant to his development”.

This is Grosz’s biography that spans his life from childhood to his immigration to the United States. For my purposes, there is not a lot of information about his work in the theatre, but there is much attention devoted to his political views and the Dada movement that influenced his work in the theatre.
This autobiography includes Hülsenbeck’s memories about various artists he came in contact throughout his artistic career including George Grosz, Erwin Piscator and John Heartfield, which is helpful to my research. He also comments on memories and beliefs included in sections on Dada, modern art, and overall problems affecting artists.

This book is a collection of two essays studying George Grosz and Ernst Toller. They are primarily concerned with the moment during their lives that their respective art intersected with politics. The Grosz essay consists of some biographical material including his experience in the war, how and why he turned to a specific form of art, his work with the Dada movement. It also includes information about his portfolios Ecce Homo and Hintergrund (composed of the prints used for *The Good Soldier Schweik*) and the controversy and trials that followed. The Toller essay consists of biographical material, the political nature of his plays produced, critical analysis of the plays, and information about the Expressionist movement. Lastly, there are 27 plates from Grosz’s portfolio.

This book is a history of Erwin Piscator’s involvement in the theatre and how he sought to change the role of theatre in society. There is a lot of biographical information that documents the development of his theatrical career. It starts with Piscator’s term serving in the war and how that affected what he would later produce in the theatre. Theatrical information includes his work in adapting novels for the stage, his experimental theatres and the team of collaborators and the development of Epic theatre. For my purposes, I focused on the chapter titled “A Break with Tradition”, which documents the production of *Hoppla, wir leben!*. This chapter includes information on the production concept and the formulation of the production. The book ends with Piscator’s time spent in the United States and his focus on theatrical education.

This is an overall survey of Dada in the various countries and cities the movement was active in. For my purpose, this book includes a very useful section on Berlin Dada, the movement’s history, aims, members and art produced. Also, there are 14 illustrations of works produced by Berlin Dada artists and a chronology of events during the movement.
McCloskey, Barbara. *George Grosz and the Communist Party: Art and Radicalism in Crisis, 1918 to 1936*. Princeton: University Press, 1997. This book focuses on Grosz’s beliefs about the integration of art and politics. It is broken down into yearly periods of war and art movements. My focus was on the section about art and propaganda from 1924-1932. This section gives a history of the time period, Grosz’s involvement in the German Communist Party, membership in the Red Group, his work with John Heartfield in photo montage, and the blasphemy charges and trials for *Hintergrund*, a portfolio of plates used for the Piscator production of *The Good Soldier Schwejk*. In the period between 1926 and 1928, there is description of the Piscator collaborations, the formation of the Theatrical Rot Klub (Red Club), and the transforming of the literary characteristic of theatre to a political one. There is production information for *The Good Soldier Schwejk* that includes pictures of the Hintergrund portfolio.

Olson, Paul. *Russian Formalist Criticism*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965. This collection of three essays include information about the origin and uses of the Formalist literary theory, which may be useful to discuss in terms of a movement coming into existence almost at the same time as Dadaism and Piscator’s political theatre. This movement also inspired the Russian art movement Constructivism, which influenced Dada artist such as Raoul Hausmann. The first essay Victor Shklovsky’s *Art as Technique* lays out a formula for the Formalist theory. The Formalist methodology of analysis is put forth in the second essay, *Thematics*. By Boris Tomashevsky. The final essay, *The Theory of the “Formal Method”* was written by Boris Eichenbaum after significant attacks on Formalists by Leo Trotsky and Symbolists and acts as a defense by laying out an overview of Formalism and the basis of its theories.

Patterson, Michael. *The Revolution in German Theatre 1900-1933*. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981. This book is divided into two parts, the expressionist revolution and the political revolution in German theatre. The latter is my center of interest, which is divided into chapters about Piscator and Brecht. I focused on the chapter about Piscator’s theatre that discusses various themes pertaining to the elements distinctive to the political theatre. These elements are: the political function, the places of performance, the forms of political theatre, the texts of political theatre, technical innovation, acting style and audience involvement and alienation. Furthermore, the text explores the production of *Hoppla, wir leben!* in terms of the adaptation of the text, the set design and visual presentation, and the presentation of individual scenes. This book is very useful as a reference for the elements of Piscator’s political theatre and how the form differs from the previous existing forms. There is also a chronological table of important political and social events and theatre productions at the time in the Germany.

Piscator wrote this book as a manifesto and manual of instruction for political theatre. It includes some biographical information, but is mostly a collection of materials that document political theatre, its productions and a chronology of ideas. There is information about the productions, the foundation and development of the Piscator-Buhne, basic theories of his dramatic ideas and explanations of the technical side of this theatre. Included in this book are documents that would be the closest I could come to obtaining primary documents, as there are minutes from rehearsals and meetings, stage plans, programs, pictures of Piscator, the team and productions, and guideline from the collective. There are chapters devoted to certain productions such as *Hoppla, wir leben!* and *The Good Soldier Schweik*, that include the above information as well as acting techniques, ending choices for the play, samples of stage movements, explanations of technical devices such as film and the conveyor belt. The last part of the book focuses on the collapse of Piscator's theatre and a survey of achievements and prospects. There is also a chronological table of political and theatrical events.


This survey of the Dada movement was written by an artist involved with the movement from its beginning in Zurich. Richter uses manifestos and documents from the movement to trace Dada's history. The section on Berlin dada includes the Berlin Dada manifesto, illustrations of some of the periodicals, art and poetry produced, a section on photomontage, types of poetry and important members and activities.


This is a biography of George Grosz which is cut into five periods which consist of: Childhood-1913, War 1914-1918, Art and Revolution 1918-1923, Consolidation and Contradiction 1924-1932, and Emigration 1933-1959. For my purposes, I have focused on the dates from 1918-1932, which document Grosz's changes in artistic technique and the politics surround his work. Topics of interest include his involvement in the Red Group, Association of Communist Artists, his theories of art, artists protesting injustice, and the trials for obscenity and blasphemy for two portfolios of work.


This is a collection of essays about the Dada movement in the various countries that the movement inhabited. For my purposes, the essay useful for my research is titled "Dada and Politics" by Richard Sheppard. A section of this essay includes information on Berlin Dada and how the movement in Germany was split into two parts, based on political and social beliefs while working together in
the movement. This section also discusses what impact these political beliefs had on the products produced out of the movement in the Dada periodicals.

This is a survey of expressionism and epic theatre in the United States and in Europe. There are chapters pertaining to certain authors and/or certain periods in the development of the theatre movement and corresponding productions. The section most useful for my study is Chapter 13 titled “Epic theatre in Germany: Piscator and after.” The production that is the focus of the chapter is *The Good Soldier Schweik.* The chapter discusses the elements of Piscator’s theatrical ideas and practices, such as the relationship the audience. However, the bulk of the chapter seems to focus on the use of mechanical devices, such as conveyor belts, and the use mixed media, mainly film. The chapter uses the production of *The Good Soldier Schweik* to explore the use of film and technical innovation in Piscator’s theatre. The chapter ends with Piscator’s influence on artists such as Walter Gropius and Joan Littlewood.

This art anthology includes a short description of the development of Dada in Zurich and the various geographical branches in Chapter 27 The Early Twentieth Century: The Establishment of Modernist Art. There is a short description of the Berlin movement and the important artistic technique photomontage that developed from it.

This is an anthology of three plays by Ernst Toller, *Hoppla, wir leben!* (produced by Piscator), *Masses Man* and *Transformation.* The text of each play is followed by a note from the author that includes information about the production that includes photographs, which are useful for Hoppla, wir leben!, in which Heartfield designed the projections.

This publication is a collection of essays from Piscator, his friends and collaborators that accompanied a photographic exhibition honoring Piscator. The essays are about Piscator’s life, work and politics, the contributors experience in the theatre with him and his legacy left in the artistic world. The last half are essays by Piscator about the principles and tasks of political theatre, letters, accounts of his work, the use of film in theatre, a proposal for the theatre of the future, Epic acting, ensemble theatre and the Total Theatre. At the end, there is also a chronological list of productions.

This is a history of Piscator’s work in the theatre both in Germany and the United States. The main parts of the book that are useful for my research are Chapters 1-5, which includes descriptions of political theatre, Piscator’s theatre companies and the eight productions. There is also information about the political nature of the world Piscator lived and created it. There is a chronology of theatre events and productions and historical and biographical information. Lastly, there are 78 illustrations that include diagrams of scene designs, pictures of productions, rehearsals, film projections, production posters and programs.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


