

## Berlin DADA: a few remarks.

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*Visible Language* XXI 3/4 413 - 451

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

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

\*2. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, *Movimento Futurista*



n.d. Letterhead, 29 x 23 cm.,

1 leaf.

Drawing by Giacomo Balla.

3. Umberto Boccioni and Carlo Carrà, *Manifesto dei pittori futuristi*

Milan, February 11, 1910

Manifesto, 29 x 23 cm., 4 pp. (1 folded sheet).

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

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

## The Avant- Garde and The Text: Exhibition Checklist

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

### Futurism

\*1. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti *Fondazione e manifesto del futurismo*

Milan, n.d. Manifesto,

29 x 23 cm, 4 pp.

(1 folded sheet).

Published in *Figaro*, Paris,

February 20, 1909.

1. Although fundamentally nationalistic, the deeply political manifesto provided a paradigm, or model, for subsequent twentieth-century avant-garde movements. Its specific program was a rejection of Italian passeism, on the one hand, and of European traditions incapable of reflecting the modern industrial world, on the other.

The manifesto provided an effective means for Marinetti of staging his propaganda events throughout Europe and Russia, and introduced artists to simultaneity and brutism.



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

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

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

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

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

**n o t e s**

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Artists and Revolution: Dada and the Bauhaus, 1917-1925 (1979), "The Dadaists and the Cabaret as Form and Forum" (1985), and "Reflections on the Cabaret: Art, Transaction, Event" (1988).

1. Stanley Burnshaw, *The Seamless Web: Language-Thinking, Creature-Knowledge, Art-Experience* (New York, 1970), p. 252.
2. Franz Marc, "Geistige Güter," in *Der Blaue Reiter* (Munich, 1965; documentary new edition), p. 23.
3. Robert N. Wilson, "The Poet in American Society," in R.N. Wilson, ed., *Arts in Society* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1964), p. 13.
4. Arnold Hauser, *The Sociology of Art*, trans. K.J. Northcott (Chicago and London, 1979), pp. 432-433.
5. Charles M. Solley and Gardner Murphy, *Development of the Perceptual World* (New York, 1960), p. 26.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 327.
7. Lewis Carroll, "The Hunting of the Snark," in *The Annotated Snark*, ed. M. Gardner (New York, 1957), Fit the Eight, Verses 8-9.

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

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

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

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

**They hunted till darkness came on,  
but they found**

**Not a button, or feather, or mark,**

**By which they could tell  
that they stood on the ground**

**Where the Baker had met with the Snark.**

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

**In the midst of his laughter and glee,**

**He had softly and suddenly vanished away--**

**For the Snark was a Boojum, you see.**

He had softly and suddenly vanished away--

For the snark was a Boojum, you see.<sup>7</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Raoul Hausmann and Huelsenbeck appeared together

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

In no instance in an audience's consideration of a text are there absolutes that must prevail. There is neither one framework nor one set of values that determines how one *must* read a text, although at the same time there are expectations that may be derived from historically-understood symbols and signs employed as part of the text. Clearly, if this concern were the

creator's intent, then there would be ONE appropriate way to meet a text, and failing to discover this way, the audience will have failed—*this time*. This would also be the case if one were charged with tracing precise connections between any given text and some successor creation or deed, or if one were seeking to assess responsibility, identifying it with the text and its author as opposed to an interpreter or interpretation of the text rooted in some other normative or value context. And so, again, how different individuals or audiences understand texts will depend, at least in part, on their reference base: a limited

base may result in a narrow interpretation or understanding of a text; as that base evolves, so might the way in which one understands or interprets a text. At the same time, we do well to consider the text from a number of different perspectives in relation to its audiences (rather than one audience).

Understanding the avant-garde works of the Kleinschmidt collection is a sig-

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.....

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

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

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

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

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

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

The February 6 meeting in the Rheingold center which

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*"Dada Evening.* Approximately 10 years ago, in the Berlin Hasenheide in the Hall of the New World which has a capacity for 10,000 people, a certain architect, Herr Baader, lectured an audience of 100 on his plan for a tower of Babel with a base of two square kilometers. He called it "A Monument to Humanity" with drawers in which every man should have his life's work entombed. Since this was no more acceptable to the audience than his tomb-design, the architect worked in nightclubs, and as they also brought him little money, he had himself committed in the mental hospital in Jena for free bed and board.

Meanwhile, however, he has discovered the goldmine Dada, and yesterday in the hall of the *Kaufmannschaft*, the racketeer business was brisk. That the local public, in spite of preliminary press-information with excerpts like "Bruruhihi-Hosenbandschoso" and the advertised introduction of the Oberdada as global president and leader of the world court,<sup>17</sup> etc. - that they came with reasonably high expectations and that they then screaming, thrashing, whistling, cursing, fell on the four stand-up manikins on the podium - that was also a disgrace for the public of many hundreds. I would have wished Dada the only devastating humili-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

the understanding of the new text. The nature of the interaction between senders and receivers of texts must significantly affect perception. Many types of interaction may take place between individuals and texts. There is "interaction" between audience and work, between audience and intermediary (e.g. critic, exhibitor), and between audience and creator. The last of the three is in most settings the least likely interaction (exceptions would be the reception for a literary artist, or performances which invite interaction — such as the cabaret). The second situation

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 assumptions an audience may bring to it . . .*  
 .....

in which the audience takes its clues from critics, exhibitors, or commentators is the most common form of "interaction," although this situation is hardly interactive in any true sense. The text-audience relationship determined by the intermediary tends to be unidirectional (critic, exhibitor 'to' audience), with perspectives and understanding being passed on to an audience which can take it or leave it, at will. The first situation is the most desirable, and involves individual and work. This, too, is hardly "interaction," but rather involves the individual "reacting" to the work. In this situation, the text, becomes a stimulus for an audience, and here the audience is seen in a strictly singular and isolated way. One of the major concerns of the avant-garde was to develop an environment in which individuals would become increasingly willing to "risk" approaching the text directly, allowing the creator to speak to them without human (and often doctrinaire) intermediaries.

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

## NOTES

1. Gerard Schaub. "Dada Avant La Lettre, Ein unbekanntes 'Literarisches Manifest' von Hugo Ball und Richard Huelsenbeck:" in *Hugo Ball Almanach* (Pirmanens, 1985/86, Bearbeiter: Ernst Teubner), pp. 63-180
2. Karin Füllner, Richard Huelsenbeck. *Texte und Aktionen eines Dadaisten* (Heidelberg, 1983), esp. pp. 58-67. See also her "The Meijster-Dada: The image of Dada through the eyes of Richard Huelsenbeck," in Richard Sheppard, ed., *New Studies in Dada. Essays and Documents*. (Dirffield, 1981), pp. 16-34.
3. Richard Huelsenbeck, *Ein Avant Dada: Eine Geschichte des Dadaismus*. (Hannover, 1920), p. 58.
4. Kasimir Edschmid, ed., *Briefe der Expressionisten*, (Frankfurt/Berlin, 1964), p. 70.
5. He stated that the first place where he went was the *Cafe des Westens* where he met his old friends Gottfried Benn and Else Lasker-Schüler. Richard Huelsenbeck. *Memoirs of a Dada Drummer*, trans. and ed., H.J. Kleinschmidt, (New York, 1974), pp. xxx-xxxii
6. *Neue Jugend*. No. 1, May 1917, weekly edition, p. 3. A more extensive translation of this article is published in Richard Huelsenbeck. *Memoirs of a Dada Drummer* (New York, 1974), pp. xxx-xxxii.
7. There are two versions of this speech with no indication which of the texts was read. *Dada Almanach*, Richard Huelsenbeck ed., (Berlin, 1920), pp. 104-108 and a shorter version in Richard Huelsenbeck ed., *Dada, eine literarische Dokumentation* (Reinbeck, 1964), p. 30.
8. Raoul Hausmann. *Am Anfang war Dada*, Karl Riha and Günter Kaempf, eds., 2nd ed. (Giessen, 1980), pp. 22 ff. See also Richard Huelsenbeck. *Dada siegt. Eine Bilanz des Dadaismus* (Berlin, 1920), where the critique of the *Berliner Börsenkurier* of April 4, 1918 is cited.
9. Werner Haftmann. *Painting in the Twentieth Century. An Analysis of the artists and their work*. trans., Ralph Mannheim. 8th printing, (New York, 1973), p. 186 states "The old Futurist techniques were employed..."
10. *Ibid.* p. 79.

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

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

11. Huelsenbeck, *Memoirs of a Dada Drummer*, p. 21 and 22
12. Ibid. p. 166. Riha remarks that a tape recording made by Hausmann in 1956/57 exists. I had no access to it.
13. in Nr. 14, (April 20, 1919), p. 163 f.
14. *Dada Berlin. Texte, Manifeste, Aktionen*. In Zusammenarbeit mit Hanne Bergius herausgegeben von Karl Riha. (Stuttgart, 1979), pp. 49-52.
15. Huelsenbeck in *The Dada Drummer* on p. 51 states: "I personally never had any inclination toward political activity" and on p. 54 repeats, "We weren't political..."
16. The other performances followed very similar programs as well as results: on February 18 in Hamburg, on the 24th in Leipzig, the 26th in Teplitz-Schoenau, on March 1st in Prague (during this performance Baader is supposed to have left with the receipts, leaving Hausmann and Huelsenbeck to carry on), on March 2nd another performance in Prague and finally on March 5 an appearance in Karlsbad. It is obvious that the performances had become the reason for Dada's existence, it had certainly become a money-making proposition. [To complete the list: Hausmann together with Klockmann gave a Dada evening on December 15, 1920 in the Berlin Sezsion: Baader gave two performances in Hamburg, in 1924 and together with Hans Harbeck on January 18, 1925 (!), calling it the "Matinee at the conclusion of the Dadaistic Movement.] Karl Riha, *Da Dada Da war ist Dada da, Aufsätze und Dokumente* (Munich/Vienna, 1980). p. 57.
17. H.J. Kleinschmidt's assertion is therefore arguable when he states that the Dadas in these performances were "always provoking the unsuspecting citizenry, whipping them into a state of uncontrollable frenzy but always escaping personal harm at the last moment." That was not an 'unsuspecting citizenry' when the press had announced the program. As to 'escaping personal harm', the Dresden performance does not permit such a categorical statement.
18. Kulicke is a street-jargon name of a person with low intelligence.
19. Raoul Hausmann in *Am Anfang war Dada* on p 116, states that the Baron von Lücken, a well-known "original" poet climbed the podium and announced to the public "I find Dada wonderful and it was a lovely evening. I dedicate to the Dadaists all the money I carry with me, 5 Marks!"
20. Special thanks are to the Robert Gore Rifkind foundation, and especially to Peter Ludewig and Hans-Jürgen Sarfert, for their friendship and help.

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

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