Surrealism, Dada, and the Refusal of Work: Autonomy, Activism, and Social Participation in the Radical Avant-Garde

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Discussions of the relatively recent notion of 'activist-art' have two common art-historical frames. The first is formal: the post-modern move towards collective or participatory art practices.[1] The second is critical and historical: that of the revolutionary ambitions of the historical avant-garde, and their 'failure' or 'success'. This frame, made central by Peter Bürger in 1974, has produced a wealth of criticism.[2] Perhaps due to this weight of criticism, these two frames are often considered in isolation from one another. Meanwhile, the narrative of the failure of the radical avant-garde[3] project has become a common one. However, this tragic historical narrative is far less clear cut than it is often presumed to be. Against these melancholy readings of history, it is possible to trace another, joyful, trajectory: a history not of the failure of the radical avant-garde, but of its *success*. But rather than defending the 'success' of later 'neo-avant-garde' art, this article will attempt to offer a historical rethinking of the frame of radical avant-gardism in the art and writing of Dada and Surrealism by drawing on the ideas of autonomist Marxist theorists such as Antonio Negri, Mario Tronti, and others.[4] This is a tradition that, while still Marxist, is opposed to the philosophical Western Marxist tradition[5] to which Bürger belongs in its emphasis on the primacy of revolutionary agency over ideological critique. This reappraisal of the radical avant-garde begins by examining the theme of the refusal of work in Surrealism and Dadaism.[6] But to do so first necessitates a critical return to accounts of the avant-garde's use or negation of the autonomy of art, alongside an examination of their engagement with cultural practices beyond this autonomy.

On Strike against Society: Aesthetic and Political Autonomy

In the bourgeois era, as cultural production was enclosed by the market and art was increasingly separated from the social institutions which had previously supported and conditioned it, a theoretical tendency emerged which conceived of art as self-governing and autonomous from other social institutions: what is usually called 'the autonomy of art'. The ideological character of this autonomy, which is bound up with bourgeois ideas of a free, independently rational subject, has been accounted for by a number of Marxist critics.[7] However, in writing on art and aesthetics from the Romantic period onwards, this idea also began to appear to celebrate a subjective freedom to, as well as a freedom-from, often variously aligned with radical positions opposed to capitalism. One can sense this tension, for example, in Mallarmé's ambiguous assertion of art's autonomy via a metaphor of social engagement, when he claims that 'in our time the poet

1. See for example, Blake Stimson and Gregory Sholette, *Collectivism After Modernism: The Art of Social Imagination After 1945* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, MN, 2007). And the debate between Claire Bishop and Grant Kester in *Artforum*, Feburary–May 2006.

2. Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant Garde* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, MN, 1984), Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real: Art and Theory at the End of the Century* (MIT Press: Cambridge, MA, 1996), Benjamin Buchloh, *Neo-Avantgarde and Culture Industry* (MIT Press: Cambridge, MA, 2001), and David Hopkins (ed.) *Neo-Avant-Garde* (Rodopi: Amsterdam/New York, 2006). Bürger's own position can be seen to be modified in Peter Bürger, *The Decline of Modernism* (Polity Press: Cambridge, MA, 1992) and Peter Bürger and Christa Bürger, *The Institutions of Art* (University of Nebraska Press: Lincoln, NE, 1992).

3. I have employed the prefix 'radical' rather than 'revolutionary' to refer in less-totalising terms to that section of the avant-garde which sought anti-capitalist social change through its practice.

4. Autonomist thought develops as *Operaismo* (Workerism) in the 1950s and 1960s in Italy, but has parallels, precedents, and post-*Operaist* tendencies in Italy and elsewhere. Its first classical statement is Tronti's essay for issue 1 of *Classe Operaia*. Mario Tronti, 'Lenin in England', in Red Notes (ed.) *Working Class Autonomy and the Crisis – Italian Marxist Texts of the Theory and Practice of a Class Movement: 1964–79* (Red Notes/CSE Books: London, 1979), pp. 1–6.

5. By Western Marxism I intend principally the dialectical tradition, exemplified by Theodor Adorno and the Frankfurt School, which has focused primarily on critiques of art and culture. See Adorno's own defence of Modernism, Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, MN, 1996).

6. 'The refusal of work' is a concern in autonomist Marxist theory which examines work-refusal in positive terms as not only a moment of the de-alienation of labour, but also as the necessary basis of Marxist political strategy and organisations: 'The working class confronts its own labour as capital, as a hostile force, as an enemy'. Mario Tronti, 'Struggle Against Labour', *Radical America*, vol. 6, no. 3, 1972, pp. 22–5. p. 22. See also Mario Tronti, 'The Strategy of the

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can only go on strike against society'.[8] In the early twentieth century, these divergent tendencies reach a point of crisis. The freedom implied by aesthetic autonomy began to be taken to imply a freedom beyond the limits of aesthetic production. This is the historical condition of possibility of the avant-garde which Bürger describes as 'the systemic self-criticism of art'.[9] This situation was a result of historical changes in the composition of the role of 'artist'. The aesthetic discourses above diagnose the artist as a peculiar figure. As an ideal of genius and creation, the artist is celebrated for a rejection of measure and fixity, and provides a refuge of non-normative behaviour. In others words, the artist was a sovereign figure. But, in Modernity, the class-relations which support this sovereignty altered and threw it into crisis, in the separation which emerges between art's social autonomy (artistic production's functional, institutional separation from its earlier economic basis, in the move from aristocratic patronage to a market system – that is, a move into more openly performing a social role) and the ideological value, or cultural capital, which remained around this work and its products: its autonomy as a *value*.

Bürger's *Theory of the Avant-Garde* defines the radical avant-garde as an attempt to bring art into everyday life. However, Bürger argues that this self-critical Icarian vault is doomed by its historical inheritance. He characterises the avant-garde as an attempt to dialectically realise the autonomous value of the bourgeois artwork; an attempt which ended in tragic failure. Its subversive anti-art works, intended as a refusal of art and of the commodity-form, were bought up as artworks and commodities. After this, history repeats itself as farce. The 'neo-avant-garde' exemplified by Warhol's pop art produces a neo-Dadaism which repeats the rejection of art *as* art, in 'a manifestation that is void of sense'.[10] The avant-garde has become impossible. He concludes that the avant-garde's political strategies are dead. But it is possible to locate an open element in this smooth dialectical narrative, a minor thread which breaks with it. Bürger's reading has been powerful and valuable in identifying one set of limits to art that has attempted political critique or counter-representation within the commodity-form, which the avant-garde were first to experience. However, it does so by exclusively emphasising that the autonomy of art is an ideological value which is a function of the commodity-form. But it is possible to make a reading of this autonomy-as-a-value which also emphasises both its positive content despite its basis, and the re-articulation of this content in relation to non-commodity social forms and relations. Such a reading throws positive light on other less tragic strategies of the radical avant-garde.

It is possible to sketch a brief genealogical reading of this autonomy-as-a-value and its positive content. The autonomy of art held a positive sense of embodied autonomous labour-power. This positive sense of art's autonomy was already present in nascent form in earlier articulations of aesthetic autonomy. The establishment of aesthetics as a separate sphere of knowledge, and a conception of artistic production as an activity distinct from all other social production, is articulated through a complex dialectic between notions of work and play, purpose, and disinterest. There is not space to explore this fully here, but it perhaps finds its clearest articulation in Schiller's 1795 *Aesthetic Education of Man*, in which he argues that artistic production and aesthetic contemplation resolve the rational and sensuous aspects of man in the form of a *play drive*. This harmonious free play of one's faculties embodies the autonomy of art such that 'man ... *is only fully a human being when he plays*'.[11] This moral function attributed to play owes

Refusal', in Notes (ed.) *Working Class Autonomy and the Crisis – Italian Marxists Texts of the Theory and Practice of a Class Movement: 1964–79* (Red Notes/CSE Books: London, 1979) and Antonio Negri, 'Domination and Sabotage', in Lotringer and Marazzi (eds), *Italy: Autonomia: Post-Political Politics* (Semiotext(e): New York, 1980).

7. See Herbert Marcuse, *Negations: Essays in Critical Theory* (Free Association: London, 1988), pp. 88–133.

8. Stéphane Mallarmé, *Mallarmé: Selected Prose Poems, Essays and Letters* (John Hopkins Press: Baltimore, 1956), p. 22.

9. Bürger, *Theory of the Avant Garde*, p. 20.

10. Bürger, *Theory of the Avant Garde*, p. 61.

11. Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man: In a Series of Letters* (Thoemmes: Bristol, 1994), p. 107.

much to Kant, who makes a distinction between crude 'mere enjoyment', excluded from his definition of the aesthetic, and 'disinterested' play. Nonetheless, disinterested play serves an edifying moral purpose for him, too. These tensions reflect a historical fact, which Bürger notes, that the formation of a sovereign aesthetic, disinterested and non-instrumental, reflects the development that for classes among whom, 'at least at times, are free from the pressures of the need of survival, a sensuousness could evolve that was not part of any means-ends relationship'. This 'moment of truth'[12] in theories of art's autonomy can be read as an ambiguous and perverse ideological valorisation of labour-power. Not only was this freedom from labour the reverse of the medal of the mass social creativity enclosed by capital in the rise of these classes, but also the cultural valorisation of freedom, creativity, and individuality in the autonomy of art also enshrined its economic values. Yet, this ambiguous tension between aesthetic play and capitalist work meant that it was possible for the notion of art as play to be reactively articulated against work. The sovereignty of art, expressed in autonomy-as-a-value's ideal of free play, could be imagined as allied with *attacks* on other forms of sovereignty, such as that of capital or the state.

This imagination is, for Bürger (and many other Western Marxist critics), subject to an ideological critique in which autonomy-as-a-value's embodiment of life's unfulfilled ideals, enclosed in the commodity-form, can only serve to affirm, legitimate, and stabilise a capitalist society. For Bürger, the form of the separation is conditioned by a 'negative' reading of autonomy-as-a-value purely as embodied reification, as separation from life, which the avant-garde then attempts to realise.[13] In this argument, beginning with the capitalist products of art-work in the alienated commodity-form of art, autonomy-as-a-value is only ever circularly defined within the limits of the commodity-form. In crude terms, art is defined ultimately only a function of exchange value. However, focusing on this positive aspect of autonomy-as-a-value, it is possible to identify it functioning, despite its contradictions, also as a language for, and a means to imagine, other forms of rupture with the institutions of art and the commodity-form which the above accounts' critical programme is blind to. Radical aspects of Romanticism had already formulated a celebration of creative vitality as an 'impossible' return to play, childhood, or nature contra capital, the urban centre and work, yet coupled to a cult of paralysed retreat into isolation, poverty, madness, and death. But this potential counter-valorisation of play was placed in a new context as the relative composition of 'work' and 'free' time altered in the West from the late nineteenth century onward. These valorisations of play came into coincidence with the increased visibility of play as an other to high culture, both through the colonial project (for example in the work of Herbert Spencer and Karl Groos)[14] and through the rise of urban mass culture and leisure. The new spaces, practices, and objects of leisure and non-work time made possible, and were often the site of, the avant-garde's valorisation of play in new terms. The play-ideal embedded in the autonomy of art could be reiterated as a refusal of work. Art's autonomy-as-a-value provided the language for a move from subjection, the negative disciplinary definition of a subject by discourse, to subjectification: the self-creation of a new subject-position through the imagination and performance of other forms of (artistic, social) subjectivity. For many avant-garde groups, the role of 'artist' would be appended to other imaginations of labour-identity. *Other* values were articulated through the language of the autonomy of art, within and against the ideological

12. Bürger, *Theory of the Avant Garde*, p. 46.

13. Bürger, *Theory of the Avant Garde*, p. 34.

14. Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Sociology* (Transaction: New Brunswick, NJ, 2003), pp. 145–52 and Karl Groos, *The Play of Man* (Heinemann: London, 1901).

discourses it was taken from, which forged a new political language of sovereignty. The values of bourgeois art provided a hope that exceeded their basis. Through attention to this positive aspect of autonomy-as-a-value, it is possible to identify less visible forms of artistic-political engagement amongst these groups. Perhaps, not accidentally, the moment of the radical avant-garde's *disappearance* from art histories is a crucial moment of its success as a radical tendency.

Surrealism and the Refusal of Work

For some artists, the systemic self-criticism of art meant autonomy-as-a-value comes to stand for something *other* than the production of art objects. The working role of the 'artist' is thrown into crisis. Avant-gardes often did not conceive of themselves as a vanguard of artists leading the way, but as artists refusing the role *of* artists. This rupture with the idea of art was bound up with a rupture with the idea of *work*, which became a common theme among avant-garde groups, for whom dissidence was a matter of disidentity. The abolition of art was first a self-abolition. Proclamations of this suicide of the author arose particularly consistently in Surrealist statements by André Breton, Louis Aragon, and André Thirion, in different contexts between 1920 and 1930. Aragon, performing a manifesto later published in the journal of the group of Parisian Dadaists that would become the Surrealists, announced, 'No more painters, no more writers, no more musicians, no more sculptors . . . enough of all these imbecilities, no more, no more, no more, no more, no more'.[15] Helena Lewis details how in the initial period of Surrealism, 'all literary and artistic productions had to be approved by the group before they could be published or exhibited' and 'regular work, especially anything that could lead to a successful career, was forbidden'.[16] In 1925, issue two of *Surrealist Revolution* contained an essay by Breton attacking the sacred character of work.[17] The ideas' centrality was reiterated by a collective declaration the same year, 'We have nothing to do with literature . . . . We are specialists in Revolt'[18] and issue four came unambiguously emblazoned with the slogan 'And War On Work' across its cover. By 1929, André Thirion would produce the most developed Surrealist expression of this position in an article, 'Down With Work',[19] whilst the dissident Surrealist Georges Bataille wrote, in his first essay on the political meaning of Surrealism, that

> We must insist from the outset that a still relatively new form of intellectual activity, not yet castrated and domesticated, is linked by the force of things to the uprising of the lower classes against present-day work.[20]

Having earlier written that 'there is no use being alive if one must work',[21] Breton attempted, in the Second Surrealist Manifesto, to reassert the centrality of this refusal even as it slipped from view:

> There are still today, in the lycées, even in the workshops, in the street, the seminaries and military barracks, pure young people who refuse to knuckle down. It is to them and them alone that I address myself, it is for them alone that I am trying to defend Surrealism against the accusation that it is, after all, no more than an intellectual pastime like any other.[22]

The Surrealists would also codify their refusal of work partly through a dis-identitarian pantheon of those who assert 'I am an other', from cultural

15. Louis Aragon, 'Manifeste du Mouvement Dada', *Littérature*, vol. 13, May 1920, pp. 1–2.

16. Helena Lewis, *Dada Turns Red: The Politics of Surrealism* (Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh, 1990), p. 23.

17. André Breton, 'La Dernière Grève', *La Révolution Surréaliste*, vol. 2, 1925, pp. 1–3.

18. Bureau of Surrealist Research, 'Declaration of 27th January 1925', in Michael Richardson and Krzysztof Fijalkowski (eds), *Surrealism Against the Current: Tracts and Declarations* (Pluto: London, 2001), pp. 24–25, p. 24.

19. André Thirion, 'A Bas le Travaille!', in Breton and Aragon (eds), *Variétés. Le Surréalisme en 1929* (Didier Devillez (Fac-Similé): Brussels, 1994), pp. 41–7. Thirion would later place this article in the context of a book-length 'Elegy to Laziness'. André Thirion, *Éloge de l'Indocilité* (Laffont: Paris, 1979). One might be tempted to then assume Thirion is indebted to Paul Lafargue's 1883 *The Right to be Lazy*, but Thirion claimed never to have read it. André Thirion, *Revolutionaries without Revolution* (Cassell: London, 1976), p. 170.

20. Georges Bataille, 'The "Old Mole" and the Prefix Sur in the Words Surhomme [Superman] and Surrealist', in Stoekl (ed.), *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–39* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, MN, 1988), p. 32.

21. André Breton, *Nadja* (Grove Press/ Evergreen Books: New York, London, 1960), p. 60.

22. André Breton, 'Second Manifesto of Surrealism (1930)', in Seaver and Lane (eds), *Manifestoes of Surrealism* (University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbour, MI, 1969), pp. 119–87, p. 134.

figures such as Rimbaud and Sade; Chaplin the clown and Fantômas the criminal; to a celebration of contemporary lumpen vagabondage, in their own heroes of the art of living, Arthur Cravan and Jacques Vaché. This tendency persisted elsewhere, too. Aragon later presented his *Treatise on Style* not as an aesthetic guide to writing, but an ethical guide to living in which ‘it is necessary to study the episodic forms of rebellion’.[23] This Surrealist emphasis on the refusal of work was a product of autonomy-as-a-value’s systemic self-criticism of the role of the artist. Neither was this an aristocratic gesture of personal retreat or of pure negation. Instead, as I will argue below, this rhetorical refusal to participate in the production of capitalist values was one side of the avant-garde’s positive participation in composing alternatives. Most negative accounts of the bold claims of the avant-garde for art’s potential to change society, by focusing on recuperation and commodity-fetishism, overlook the ‘other labour’ which often lay behind the refusal of work.

Aesthetic Composition

To examine this other labour, I would like to place the radical avant-garde in the context of the history of labour studies. This might seem an unusual perspective,[24] but framing these issues in terms of the changing role of what Marx called labour-power[25] rather than the critique of ideology reveals another possible narrative of the avant-garde.[26] We can read the radical avant-garde from this perspective by drawing on the notion of ‘class composition’ in autonomist Marxist thought. There is a long, albeit fragmented, critical discourse on work and its composition. Marx uses the term ‘the composition of capital’ to account for capital as, at any one point, made up of a particular organisation of the ratio between living and dead labour. Autonomists have since proposed to view things from the other side, asserting the composition of the working class against capital. Class composition[27] rejects the idea of a working-class perspective ‘valid for all human history’[28] or that this perspective could be identified with a particular philosophical method. Instead, it attempted to measure the actually existing form of the working class. The term denotes two antagonistic forces. On the one hand, *technical* composition – the shaping of the working class by the demands of capital, for example, by management discipline and economic restructuring. On the other hand, political composition – the composition from below of the working class as a force against capital, in the everyday emergence of new forms of work-refusal, subversion, and organisation.[29] This analyses places in Marxist terms what Foucault termed ‘subjection’ and ‘subjectification’[30] – labouring participation in the making of one’s identity and social relations.

This attention to labour and identity is intended to address a methodological gap. Though art history is sensitive to subjective aesthetic encounters with objects and performances, its social extension of these has mostly addressed them through ideological critique. Conversely, the potential agency of performances and objects in ordering the social world has been explored by anthropological studies of material culture, but these have tended to be structural and macropolitical. This is even more so the case for Sociology, despite focusing a specific field of studies, for example, on the culture of social movements. Addressing art in terms of labour studies, and class composition specifically, allows us to appreciate the moving aesthetics of such encounters, whilst also exploring the connection between affect and social

23. Louis Aragon, *Treatise on Style* (University of Nebraska Press: Lincoln, 1991), p. 37.

24. However, recently see also John Roberts, *The Intangibilities of Form: Skill and Deskilling in Art After the Readymade* (Verso: London, 2007).

25. This term, used by Marx to denote ‘the aggregate of those mental and physical capabilities existing in a human being, which he exercises whenever he produces a use-value of any description’, is often interpreted merely as a commodity within the self-valorisation of capital. However, it should be interpreted as referring also to the capacity to produce self-valorisation and values other to that of capital, within and despite capitalist forms of production. Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume 1* (London: Penguin, 1990), pp. 270–282.

26. Walter Benjamin has already suggested this perspective in his essay ‘The Author as Producer’, where he looks beyond labour that ‘supplied a productive apparatus without changing it’ to that with ‘revolutionary use-value’. Walter Benjamin, ‘The Author as Producer’, in Jennings (ed.), *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings 1931–1934* (Harvard University Press: Harvard, 2005), pp. 768–82, p. 775.

27. This term first appears in Tronti’s essay ‘The Factory and Society’, but undergoes a series of shifts in meaning and emphasis in the hands of other theorists. See Steve Wright, *Storming Heaven: Class Composition and Struggle in Italian Autonomist Marxism* (Pluto Press: London, 2002).

28. Mario Tronti, ‘Workers and Capital’, *Telos*, vol. 14, Winter 1972, pp. 23–62, p. 60.

29. The notion of class composition has been broadened at various times to include issues of gender, sexuality, race, and ability. Thus Berardi suggests the simpler ‘compositionism’. Franco Berardi, *The Soul at Work: From Alienation to Autonomy* (Semiotext(e): New York, 2009).

30. Foucault develops different emphases on the term subjectification, but here it is understood as an active, autonomous subject-formation counter to the ‘constitution of subjects’ through disciplinary ‘subjection’. Michel Foucault, ‘Two Lectures’, in Gordon (ed.), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–77* (Harvester: Brighton, 1980), pp. 78–108, p. 97. At this micro-level, we might compare the moment of subjectification to Negri’s notion of work-refusal as ‘self-valorisation’ against the valorisation of capital.

movement. Class composition has been compared with Foucault's notion of biopower, but, unlike his critique of governmentality and control, focuses on biopower in production.[31] Both consider the 'base' of social reproduction not only as economic but also as cultural, bodily, and subjective. As such, we can complement the autonomist approach to subjective agency in historical materialism with more recent broadly post-structural accounts of a materialism that is affective and performative.[32] The notion of political composition identifies *as political* moments of otherwise invisible or illegible performative social relation. These are often primarily affective, emotional, sensory and possess a fugitive history in official discourses, even as they compose more visible social struggles.[33] In this way affect, central to biopower, has a role in producing and reproducing society. As will hopefully become clear, this perspective is helpful in grasping the particular aesthetic-social condition and role of activist-art forms, in that these forms are irreducible to and cross the critical divisions of 'art' and 'propaganda', or 'aesthetics' and 'ethics'. In the above analysis, aesthetics and affect play a materialist role in the composition of social identities, fostering some relations and not others, and we might speak in terms of aesthetic or affective composition. As a compound noun, affective composition denotes a particular situation or relationship, connected to what is termed at the broadest social level, 'emotional habitus' by Gould or 'structure of feeling' by Williams.[34] It can be addressed as both technical and political.

Political composition offers a means to focus on relations of cultural and social production partly outside or against capitalist relations. This other production has been explored by, for example, Rancière's *Nights of Labour: The Workers' Dream in Nineteenth Century France*, but for a collective model of artistic production, we might look to the context of social movements,[35] which have their own art taking the form of material culture and performance, which developed not from a tradition of aesthetic autonomy but of social conflict. Accounts of such art have usually been divided amongst several analytical categories of extra-institutional art, as political 'propaganda'; socially-marginal 'outsider art' or treated anthropologically, as 'folk art'. Instead, we might identify an independent history of unique properties and values in the art of social movements. This art is unabashedly instrumental. E.P. Thompson provides a seminal example in his study of 'rough music' in Britain, a very broad set of popular folk-cultural performances which he identified from at least the late seventeenth century, part of a broader European practice of *charivari*. As a ritual collective performance and an act of social ordering, it could involve a din of various instruments, pots and pans, laughter and obscenity, inverted values (blasphemy, transvestism), humiliation and often mock-funeral processions, concluding in the destruction of an effigy. It was directed against those who broke the order of a community, and became central to the cultural vocabulary of popular dissent and demonstration.[36] In the nineteenth century, such forms became increasingly homogenous:

> Action in the eighteenth-century repertoire differentiated greatly according to the task at hand and the setting; one donkeyed a weaver who worked for less than the locally-agreed rate; gave Rough Music to a wife-beater; wrecked the house of an unscrupulous baker, and the exact routine . . . varied from region to region. Nineteenth century Britons had far fewer choices, but applied them to a much wider range of problems.[37]

31. See, for example, Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, *Empire* (Harvard University Press: Harvard, 2001), p. 27.

32. These have been variously termed performative, affective, material-semiotic, or non-representational. See Judith P. Butler, *Bodies That Matter* (Routledge: London, 1993). Judith P. Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power* (Stanford University Press: Stanford, 1997). Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2005), Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (Routledge: London, 2002). Patricia Ticineto Clough and Jean Halley (eds), *The Affective Turn: Theorising the Social* (Duke University Press: Durham, NC, 2007). Nigel Thrift, *Non-representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect* (Routledge: London, 2008).

33. We can read Negri's notion of 'self-valorisation' and Guattari's micropolitics, as not only political but also aesthetic encounters which re-perform social relations.

34. Deborah Gould, *Moving Politics* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 2009), Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1977).

35. The term 'social movement' refers to organisations of mass, collective direct action outside political institutions. Coined by Heberle, it has been given numerous emphases of meaning since. Rudolf Heberle, *Social Movements* (Appleton-Century-Crofts: New York, 1951), Alberto Melucci, *Nomads of the Present* (Radius Hutchinson: London, 1989), Mario Diani, 'The Concept of Social Movement', *The Sociological Review*, vol. 40, no. 1, 1992, pp. 1–25.

36. E. P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (Merlin Press: London, 1991), pp. 467–538.

37. Charles Tilly, 'Social Movements as Historically Specific Clusters of Political Performances', *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, vol. 38, 1993, pp. 1–30, p. 17.

Thereafter, the forms of social movement art become those we are most familiar with, associated with the urban crowd. Like Saint-Simon's notion of an avant-garde, the forms which developed, whether banners and posters; parades and marches; or even barricades, borrowed from the existing religious and military arts of disciplining, ordering, and composing a mass of people as much as from eighteenth-century popular folk culture.

Modernity represented a new high-point of technical composition. The war encouraged the rapid development of a mechanised factory system and a new wave of technological development. In 1911, Frederick Taylor published his *Principles of Scientific Management*, which extended the logic of Fordist production into the micro-control of working subjects. We can read this text as a capitalist reiteration of governmental discourses of subjection. Taylor's text develops a particular Modernist discourse on performance and identity in the field of business strategy. Taylor understood the identity of worker not as a fixed status but as a role which may be more or less well performed. His 'process management'[38] and its attempt to control workflows tied the gestures and movements that make up the performance of the role of worker to the *economic* performance of a company as a whole. In this discourse, performance was a synonym for success or failure: a term of measure of surplus value and exploitation which could be either 'high' or 'low'. The greater the increase in Fordist machine-production and the attunement of its various parts, the smaller the affective play-element of work's performance became. Taylorism's micro-discipline made the subjective refusal of work a primary, if rarely documented, class battleground. The linear ground of performance as a measure was opposed by performing otherwise, refusing the role of worker by developing other techniques producing valorisations other to that of capital. Taylor's work was archetypal of another utopian imagination of the future: an intensified pace of 'rationalised' social performance after World War I. This discipline of the identity of worker coincided with a turn to address 'use' in culture, as maintaining the effective or efficient performance of social roles. Following Taylor, and in France Henri Foyol, there was an attempt to shape the performance of 'free' time outside of work in rational managerial–governmental terms. Society, too, was a factory that required management. Many began to imagine a culture expressing this industrial logic in machine-metaphors, against accounts of culture as without use. Courbusier would famously rethink the architecture of the home as a 'machine for living'.[39] Others would apply the lessons of management-discipline to government, education, healthcare, advertising and consumer behaviour, city planning, and urban-space management. In culture, such strategies often approached affect on the side of capital, not least in the work of Edward Bernays, or Walter Lippman and his 1922 performative-industrial metaphor of the 'manufacture of consent'.[40] But these social changes led some artists to examine the function of their work in terms of the social role *it* performed, whilst taking an anticapitalist line on the role of dreams, desires, and feelings in the production of social roles.

38. Frederick Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management* (Harper and Brothers: London, 1911), p. 23.

39. Le Corbusier, *Towards an Architecture* (Frances Lincoln: London, 2008), p. 151.

40. Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (Dover: New York, 2004), p. 231.

The Manufacture of Dissent

Though most famously codified by the Surrealists, their rhetorical refusal of work was directly preceded by refusals which were tied to the imagination of other models of artistic labour. The production of non-normative labour identities and the 'other' objects they produced have been most clearly framed in the very different social context of revolutionary Russia. There,

the situation was more open: the industrial division of labour was far less developed, whilst Communism was endeavouring to recompose the working class as part of a new society, from debates on playful/machinic movement to the free-time-as-labour of 'subbotnik'.[41] Among Russian avant-garde artists, there was both a clear rejection of the role of artist and an iterative play with naming which established a queer status with regard to art and political institutions and discourses. The identity of 'artist' became liminal in relation to various recompositions of artist–constructor, artist–engineer and artist–inventor:

> Things are hard for the constructivist production artist. Artists turn their backs on him. Industrialists wave him away in annoyance. The man in the street goggles.[42]

Recent scholarship has explored this new identity and its labour.[43] Elsewhere, performative subject-formation found direct expression in participatory mass spectacles in which new identities were literally performed. A new calendar of secular Communist holidays was introduced. Pre-revolutionary demonstrations that had been civil disobedience were reiterated as institutional urban festivals and Proletkult theatre such as 'The Mystery of Freed Labour'. Most famously it was possible for Nikolai Evreinov to have 8–10,000 people restage the storming of the Winter Palace on its third anniversary in November 1920, watched by another 100,000; whilst Arseny Avraamov's 1922 'Symphony of Factory Sirens' recomposed the machines and labour skills of an entire city as flags and pistol-shots conducted an orchestra composed of huge choirs, factory sirens, two batteries of artillery, the foghorns of the entire Soviet Caspian flotilla, hydroplanes, and a specially-built giant steam whistle playing, among other refrains, the *Internationnale*.[44] These festivals manufactured myths of (not-yet unitary) revolutionary identities, as the People's Commissar for Enlightenment put it, 'in order to acquire a sense of self the masses must outwardly manifest themselves'.[45] He saw these revolutionary-state festivals as the telos of the popular festivals of the French revolution, themselves partial institutionalisations of rough music.[46]

Dada and the Art of Social Movement

The scholarship on Constructivism reveals that the troubling of the role of artist by collective social engagement was clearest where there was a concomitant cycle of working class struggles troubling work more generally. Though it has been less examined in these terms, this was also the case among the Dadaists in Weimar Berlin, in a period of mass strikes and violent street battles, the Spartakist uprising and an attempted fascist putsch. Here too there was a reiteration of names and identities which reflected an attempt to forge a new presentation of selfhood and a new social role for artists. John Heartfield and George Grosz stamped many of their works 'mont', 'meta-mech', or 'meta-mech constr'. Haussman explained, 'The term translates our aversion at playing the artist, and, thinking of ourselves as engineers ... we meant to construct, to assemble [montieren] our works'.[47] Meanwhile, Johannes Baader neglected his job as a trained architect and gave himself over to, in the words of his collaborator Haussman, 'an activity which is difficult to define',[48] yet continued to use the title *Architekt*, employing architectural construction as a metaphor for building a new society analogous to the Constructivist artist-engineer.[49] The role of names

41. See Vladimir Lenin, 'A Great Beginning: Heroism of the Workers in the Rear "Communist Subbotniks"' in *Collected Works: Volume 29* (Progress: London, 1965), p. 408–34.

42. Osip Brik, 'Into Production!', in Stephen Bann (ed.), *The Tradition of Constructivism* (Thames and Hudson: London, 1974), pp. 83–85.

43. Maria Gough, *The Artist as Producer: Russian Constructivism in Revolution* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 2005) and Christina Kiaer, *Imagine No Possessions* (MIT Press: Cambridge, MA, 2005).

44. See Frantisek Deak, 'Russian Mass Spectacles', *Drama Review*, vol. 19, no. 2, 1975, pp. 7–22 and James Von Geldern, *Bolshevik Festivals, 1917–1920* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1993).

45. Anatolii Lunacharsky, 'On Popular Festivals, 1920', in Tolstoy, Cooke and Bibikova (eds), *Street Art of the Revolution: Festival and Celebrations in Russia, 1918–33* (Thames and Hudson: London, 1990), p. 124.

46. Anatolii Lunacharsky, 'Revolution and Art, 1920–22', in Bowlt (ed.), *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism, 1902–1934* (Thames and Hudson: London, 1988), p. 194.

47. Haussman, 'Courier Dada' (1958), p. 42.

48. Haussman, undated typescript, cited in Timothy Benson, *Raoul Haussmann and Berlin Dada*, p. 130.

49. Benson observes 'For the 'OberDada', the 'President of the Globe', and 'Architekt Johannes Baader', the avoiding of the tradition of 'playing the artist'... was practically superfluous'. Benson, *Raoul Haussmann and Berlin Dada*, p. 130. OberDada, a name coined by a hostile theatre reviewer, was gleefully adopted as an absurd name for an anarchic collective. It parodied leadership itself as much as Heartfield's famous collages of civil and military leaders. Sudhalter argues this serendipity tallied with Baader's reading of Nietzsche's *Ecco Homo*, which presents ironic self-aggrandisement as the only means to escape even one's own system and identity. Adrian Sudhalter, *Johannes Baader and the Demise of Wilhelmine Culture* (New York University: New York, 2006), p. 265, 287.

in this attempt to be otherwise was also important for the mythical composition of revolutionary organisations and the mimicry/mockery of the party-form which became common among Dada, Surrealist, and associated groups; from the Dada Central Office of the World Revolution; The Anti-National Committee for Unpaid Workers; Dada Advertising Company, Christ GmbH; a tendency which continued later in Paris with the Surrealist Party and the Bureau of Surrealist Research. But alongside this focus on revolutionary identities, Dada's renaming was at the same time open and less focused than Constructivism's, for example, in their paradoxical and nebulous self-definition in terms of a broad way of acting:

> Dada is not limited to any art. The bartender in the Manhattan Bar, who pours out Curacao with one hand and gathers up his gonorrhoea with the other, is a Dadaist. The gentleman in the raincoat, who is about to start his seventh trip around the world, is a Dadaist.[50]

This reflected their different relation to communism from within a capitalist society. Dada's tautologies and use of irony embodied this position of a worker opposed to capital who must be opposed to himself as capital, to the identity of worker: 'being a Dadaist means being against Dada'.[51]

Kiaer argues that the presence of 'achieved socialism' meant that Constructivism was unique in that this made its imagining of other artistic identities 'more than utopian dreaming'.[52] But the autonomist notion of the refusal of work permits a reading of Dada and Surrealism's utopian imagination in parallel terms within Western capitalism. Western Europe did not have state socialism, but did have actually existing social movements of various kinds with their own forms of class composition, art, and culture. The Berlin Dadaists' rhetorical refusal of the artists' role under capital was accompanied by the establishment of various relationships with the historical vocabulary of the art of social movements. Kiaer has described how several Constructivists turned their artistic labour towards the industrial mass-production of stoves, dishes, clothing, packaging, architectural plans, and the 'industrial agitation' of advertising – performance as other than a worker led to an attempt to produce 'communist objects' which performed a role somehow other to that of a commodity. In Constructivist terms, 'production' replaced the art work of 'composition', but we might equally frame this as a move from aesthetic composition to aesthetic class composition. In the unique position of being able to enter Communist production and to do so with at least some state support, in a form that in the West perhaps only architects and advertisers were in a position to, Constructivist objects and revolutionary theatre attempted to enter the technical recomposition of working class identity. In Berlin, radical working class movements did not hold institutional power, and artists who wanted to engage with the composition of the working class lacked these official resources. Rather than entering technical composition, Berlin Dada had to begin from below, with political composition. Instead of entering the institutions of the mass-production of material culture, Dada entered the production of social movements, whose primary mode was the extra-institutional and unsanctioned collective bodily performance of subjects. Grosz and Herzfeld argued:

> Today's artist, if he does not want to run down and become an antiquated dud, has the choice between technology and class warfare propaganda. In both cases he must give up 'pure art.' Either he enrols as an . . . advertising artist in the army . . . which exploits

50. Richard Huelsenbeck, 'En Avant Dada', in Robert Motherwell (ed.), *The Dada Poets and Painters* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA, 1989), p. 28.

51. Richard Huelsenbeck, *Memoirs of a Dada Drummer* (University of California Press: Berkeley, CA, 1991), p. 139.

52. Kiaer, *Imagine No Possessions*, p. 26.

> all the world; or . . . a propagandist and defender of the revolutionary idea and its partisans.[53]

Disobedient Performance

Much has been written on Grosz and Heartfield's production of montages and drawings for political newspapers, but there were other more artistically novel entries into social movement production among the Berlin Dadaists. The increased visibility of social movements at the turn of the century had multiple formal influences on avant-garde art internationally, and not least of these was on Dada's turn to performance. In Tzara's retrospective account, Dada in Zurich re-imagined the role of the artist by drawing on the traditional forms of social movement performance, 'In the presence of a compact crowd Tzara demonstrates, we demand the right to piss in different colours, Huelsenbeck demonstrates, Ball demonstrates . . . '.[54] Tzara codified it, 'the new artist protests, he no longer paints'.[55] Albeit indoors with a paying audience, Dada took a protest-form. Their particular imagination of protest was indebted to the language of libertarian nineteenth-century working-class movements. These movements tended to account for protest and direct action in reactive terms of incitement, provocation, outrage, and offense, even after the vogue for propaganda-by-the-deed, dynamite, and assassination had passed. This language of the radical break influenced Modernists more generally, but working in these negative terms, the measure of success for these 'demonstration' performances was to produce an agitated crowd – the very same unruly and irrational 'mob' feared by bourgeois social critics. For the Dadaists, the artist–organiser was replaced by the artist–agitator, whose symbolic assault on Culture also had precedents in social movement practices, most recently in suffragette attacks on art during 1914. Later, a Parisian Dada event at the Université Populaire du Faubourg Saint-Antoine combined this form with a working-class audience, but things did not go as planned. Tzara was unable to agitate the crowd by attacking poetry. When this 'merely elicited polite requests for explanations, he struck out against Lenin and Marx. This the workers refused to accept and though they did not break out in a riot, they held the Dadas for hours, forcing them to explain their position again and again'.[56]

But, in Berlin, this mostly formal artistic play with social performance moved out of the cabaret and into the relations of social movement production from which it had initially been drawn. Huelsenbeck's formulation also took protest as a performative model:

> The abstract artist has become . . . a wicked materialist . . . Dada is German Bolshevism . . . The technical aspect of the Dadaist campaign . . . was considered at great length. Our best instrument consistent of big demonstrations at which . . . everything connected with spirit, culture and inwardness was symbolically massacred.[57]

But as this suggests, not only did the Berlin Dadaists draw more specifically on the art forms of social movements, of public parades with music, costumes, banners, stickers, and posters; but the functional framework of these forms became that shared by social movements. We might frame this in terms of their engagement with the ideas of the anarchist Gustav Landauer. Herzfeld, editing the proto-Dada *Neue Jugend*, published Landauer, and Jung had been a member of the *Tat-Gruppe*, a local branch of his *Sozialistischer Bund*. Landauer saw not work, but the state, as a matter of performance, 'The state is a

53. George Grosz and Wieland Herzfeld, 'Art Is in Danger', in Lippard (ed.), *Dadas on Art* (Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River, NJ, 1971), p. 85.

54. Tristan Tzara, 'Zurich Chronicle', in Motherwell (ed.), *The Dada Painters and Poets*, p. 236.

55. Tristan Tzara, 'Dada Manifesto 1918', in Tristan Tzara, *Seven Dada Manifestos and Lampisteries* (Riverrun Press: New York, 1992), pp. 3–13, p. 7.

56. Annabelle Melzer, *Latest Rage the Big Drum: Dada and Surrealist Performance* (UMI Research Press: Ann Arbor, MI, 1980), p. 143. Accounts of this and other performances can also be found in Michel Sanouillet, *Dada in Paris* (MIT Press: Cambridge, MA, 2009).

57. Richard Huelsenbeck, 'En Avant Dada', p. 44.

relationship between human beings, a way by which people relate to one another; and one destroys it by entering into other relationships, by behaving differently'.[58] For the Berlin Dadaists, it was not only a case of misperforming the role of artist-worker, but also a case of artist-citizen, in a context where the public sphere was deeply threatened and contested. The Berlin Dadaists reiterated the art of activism as one of the fine arts. By increasing the play-element of their production, which Ford had excluded from factory work, they conducted an avant-garde experiment with, and re-imagination of, the art forms of social movements.

As a group, the Dadaists paraded the streets, giving speeches, inventing new slogans and putting up stickers.[59] Little of this is recorded, but a photograph of Grosz dressed as Death, allegedly either before or after he paraded along the Kurfürstendamm in 1918, has become iconic. The most intense of their actions came in early 1919 during the left-communist Spartakist revolt, in which they rook an active part. The government fled, allowed the proto-fascist Freikorps to violently suppress the revolt, and elections were held in late January. Two days after the murder of one of the revolt's leaders, Rosa Luxemburg, the Dadaists began planning for a procession they organised in 15 February, which we might read as a practical precursor to their call later that year for 'Immediate organisation of a large scale Dadaist propaganda campaign with 150 circuses for the enlightenment of the proletariat'.[60] They ironically combined religious, military, and political forms of public performance with distributing a political paper, *Every Man His Own Football*:

> We hired a horse-carriage such as those customary for Pentecost outings and hired a brass band, complete with frock coats and top hats, which used to play at veterans' funerals, while we the editorial staff, six men deep, walked behind carrying bundles of *Every Man* ... instead of wreaths.
>
> If we incited more mockery than inclination to buy in the fashionable West, our sales rose rapidly the farther we penetrated into North and East Berlin's petit-bourgeois and working-class areas.
>
> Along the streets of grubby tenements, riddled by the machine-gun fire of the Spartakist struggle and sliced open by the Howitzers of the Noske Regime ... our Dada-carnival was greeted with delight. ... The periodical looked like becoming a bestseller – and would have, if we had not been arrested on our way home from serenading the government offices in Wilhelmstrasse. (We carried a supply of stickers saying 'Hurrah Dada!' for sticking on the walls of police cells.)[61]

By the time they reached Potsdamer Platz, they had sold every one of their 7,600 copies, before spotting the arresting officers on Alexanderplatz. Herzfelde received four weeks in prison and a fine. Their collaborators escaped by losing their identity: the two-horse carriage covered the *Jedermann* ... posters on its sides while the musicians left their instruments and disappeared into a nearby pub. Pageants and funeral-protests in particular were a longstanding form in social movement art but rather than a funeral for a specific figure, this played with the form, incorporating and parodying elements of the nationalist military funerals given to Freikorps members, which were regularly visible on the streets of Berlin at the time (the band played the Preußenlied, the national anthem of the early nineteenth-century Prussian Kingdom; I Had a Comrade, a military funeral-lament of the same period; and the popular song The Grassy Bank by my Parents Grave). However, travelling East they also repeated the general route of the Spatakist Karl Liebknect's funeral parade towards Friedrichsfled cemetery a month before, which had involved 40,000 people. According to Herzfeld, their own

58. Gustav Laundauer, '"Weak Statesmen, Weaker People" Der Sozialist, 1910', in Graham (ed.) *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas. Volume 1: From Anarchy to Anarchism (300CE–1939)* (Black Rose: Montreal, 2005), p. 165.

59. On their stickering campaigns, see George Grosz, 'A Little No and a Big Yes' (1946), pp. 185–86. One such sticker can be found in Haussman's montages *Dada Siegt* and *Dada Cino* (1920).

60. Richard Huelsenbeck and Raoul Haussman, 'What Is Dadaism and What Does it Want in Germany? 1919', in Harrison and Wood (eds), *Art in Theory 1900–2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas* (Blackwell: London, 1999), pp. 259–60, p. 260.

61. Walter Mehring, *Berlin Dada: Ein Chronik mit photos und dokumenten* (Verlag der Arche: Zurich, 1959), pp. 67–70 (reprinted with very minor differences in Walter Mehring, *Verrufene Malerie: Berlin Dada* (Claassen: Dusseldorf, 1983), pp. 178–80. Herzfeld also offers accounts, in Wieland Herzfeld (ed.), *Der Malik-Verlag 1916–1947 (exhibition catalogue)* (Deutsche Akademie der Kunste zü Berlin: Berlin [DDR], 1969), p. 24, Wieland Herzfeld, *Die Pleite* (Zentralantiquariat der DDR: Leipzig, 1978), pp. 1–2,Wieland Herzfeld, *John Heartfield: Leben Und Werk* (Veb Verlag Der Kunst: Leipzig, 1962), pp. 23–4. It is also described in Josef Bornstein, *Das Tagebuch*, vol. 10, no. 5, 1927, reprinted in Jo Hauberg, Guiseppe de Siati and Thies Ziemke, *Der Malik Verlag: 1916–1947* (Neuer Malik Verlag: Kiel, 1986). My thanks to Michael White for drawing my attention to the last of these.

parade was joined by a few sailors. The social impact of Dada street actions is difficult to gauge now, but they were often reported in the press,[62] their lives were threatened by the Freikorps and their announcement of a 'Dada-Republik of Berlin-Nikolassee' led to the local council having a regiment of soldiers ready to protect the district (this taking place after the failed Spartakist revolt and a short-lived fascist putsch, and apparently reiterating Liebknecht's 1918 announcement of a 'Free Socialist Republic' from a balcony hours after the official announcement of the Weimar Republic).[63] Mehring's account above notes a more positive impact as 'Every man his own football' found itself adopted by working class movements as a popular slogan.

While some aspects of the avant-garde have become central to twentieth-century cultural history, this trajectory remains subaltern. Records of the Berlin Dadaists' performances are fragmentary, and virtually non-existent when it comes to their actions in the street. Beyond the context-based ephemerality of these practices, by engaging with the art-forms and relations of production particular to social movements, they lost the historical visibility of official cultural spaces of production and have tended to pass out of art, and other, histories.

Rebellious Objects and 'Activist-Art'

The contemporary conjunctions 'activist-art' or 'art-activist' were not generally used by the Berlin Dadaists. The term 'activist' itself, as an ideological suffix to 'action', referring to one who adopts the anarchist strategy of political direct action, was still a Modernist neologism in 1920 (used in the cultural sphere it perhaps also held resonances of new scientific discoveries such as Arrhenuis' 1899 chemical 'activation energy'). There were already cultural groups in Berlin around the journal *Die Aktion*, and in Hungary around *A Tett* and *Ma* (The Act, Today) which described themselves as activist, but these generally advocated models of artistic or literary 'activism' which treated the term in a more nebulous sense sometimes sympathetic to, but not taking the form of, direct action. More frequently, they referred to a modernising aesthetic/spiritual vitality within mediums such as painting and the use of political themes within traditional fine arts: 'for us art is active, agitative life itself'.[64] One isolated use of the term 'activist-art', referring to these currents, can be found in Berlin Dadaist writing from 1919.[65] However, in describing the Berlin Dadaists as 'art-activists', we might employ the term 'activist-art', not simply to distinguish the material and performative art forms of social movements from more institutional fine arts, but to describe a specific avant-gardist tendency, of which Berlin Dada is emblematic, to experiment with these social movement forms. Under this category, we might place not only their play with activist performance but their engagement with the material objects of social movements. We can read the Berlin Dadaists as experimenting with these objects' role in fostering anticapitalist social relations, by imagining and constructing queer, provocative 'performative objects' which were activist in a most literal sense.

The Berlin Dadaists' entry into social movement production primarily involved performance, but it also entailed the production of material objects. Whilst these were not art or commodity objects, they were also not the traditional folk-objects of social movement culture. Again, there is a precedent in studies of Constructivism. Constructivism's entry into mass cultural production treated objects as performative not only in terms of efficiency, but also in their contribution to the affective shaping of everyday

62. Hanne Berguis, 'Dada Berlin and its Aesthetics of Effect: Playing the Press', in Harriett Watts and Stephen Foster (eds), *Dada and the Press* (G.K. Hall: New York, 2004), pp. 67–152.

63. Raoul Hausmann, *Am Anfang War Dada* (Anabas-Verlag: Giessen, 1972), pp. 59–60.

64. Lajos Kassák, 'For the Comprehensive MA exhibition, 1918', in Benson and Forgács (eds), *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-Gardes, 1910–1930*. (MIT Press: Cambridge, MA, 2002), pp. 166–67, p. 166.

65. Johannes Baargeld, 'Bulletin D', in Lippard (ed.) *Dadas on Art* (1971), pp. 132–5, p. 134.

rituals. Against the fetish enacted by the commodity, these would encourage a counter-fetish of 'comradely' relations.[66] In contrast, these Dadaists attempted to fashion not comradely, but rebellious, objects. The forms born from the limited material–cultural resources of social movements: stickers, signs, costumes, and masks, were often tools appendaged to bodily performances. Such objects were often important in Dada performances, but the Berlin Dadaists also imagined new objects that modified the traditional objects of such movements. The most well documented of these was their engagement with the archetypal activist object of the pamphlet, in the form of *Everyman His Own Football*, the paper distributed during the action described above.

Their re-imagination embodied a distinct aesthetic tension, between Constructivism's Modernist industrial machine-aesthetic and the popular folk-culture aesthetics of social movements. Both evoked performance and use-value, but while folk-objects are usually tools for human performance, Constructivist aesthetics evoked use as independently embodied in the archetypal performative object, the machine. This tension was clearest in the use of photomontage, publicly employed by them for the first time in this publication.[67] Although as 'montiers' they thought of themselves as engineers, rather than drawing or designing original machine-forms Dada montage brought existing elements together, often from mass media, in shapes whose brute visible stitching identified them with handwork and popular skills rather than specialised machine-labour. This appropriation and misuse was a cultural transposition of the mode of the *sabot* who threw his traditional wooden shoe into the industrial machine. The Constructivists had attempted to be engineers, but turning tools into weapons, these Dadaists were first reverse-engineers. Reading this object, we might consider the section of Marx's *Grundrisse*, in which he argues that the fixed capital of factory machines materially embodies the 'general intellect'[68] of workers: their aggregate social skill and knowledge. Not only does this vouch for the primary compositional potential of general intellect, but it might prompt us to wonder what other, anticapitalist machines the general intellect might imagine and embody itself in. We might think of the objects and performances of social movements as just such machines, embodying labour otherwise. But the use of montage and parade-distribution of *Everyman* ... can be understood as an avant-garde experiment with the performative potential of the social movement object of the pamphlet, projecting upon it the independent performativity of a machine. Not just by engaging new identities through the conventional symbolic hailing of posters and manifestos[69] but by materially embodying the performativity of rough music. If Dada's activist performance was an affective self-dislocation of identity in order to dislocate others, they also attempted to grant this performative function to objects, which psychically implicated others in a mis-performance of their own identity.

The four-page pamphlet/paper distributed during the parade described above, *Every Man His Own Football*, used photomontage to visually re-engineer the form of mass-media newspaper or advertisement to serve the aims of the traditional social movement object of the pamphlet. As an object it maintained a liminal position. Although it contained committed political rhetoric, from its first page it appeared too ridiculous to be a straight political pamphlet, but was difficult to classify simply as satire. Satirical mock-newspapers were not new, but *Everyman* ... 's use of montage and performative presentation disturbed the subject-position of its reception such that it moved from a recognisable satirical genre to a tactical subversion of

66. Kiaer, *Imagine No Possessions*, p. 1.

67. Montage's 'exquisite' disjunctive objects and bodies have been read in terms of the trauma of war, consumerism, gender, and sexuality, but can also be read through this tension as embodying Berlin Dada's encounter with social movements. See Amy Lyford, *Surrealist Masculinities: Gender Anxiety and the Aesthetics of Post-World War One Reconstruction* (University of California Press: Berkeley, CA, 2007), Robin Adele Greeley, *Surrealism and the Spanish Civil War* (Yale University Press: New Haven, CT, 2006), Alyce Mahon, *Surrealism and the Politics of Eros: 1938–1968* (Thames and Hudson: London, 2005), Matthew Biro, *The Dada Cyborg: Visions of the New Human in Weimar Berlin* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, MN, 2009).

68. pp. 690–712 of Karl Marx, 'Grundrisse: Outlines of the Critique of Political Economy', trans. by Martin Nicolaus, 1973.

69. This model of performativity is explored by Martin Puchner, *Poetry of the Revolution: Marx, Manifestos and the Avant-Garde* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, 2006).

the object's social mediation—a dynamic closer to, but more complex than, that of 'fake' news issued for black propaganda purposes (such as that airdropped on Berlin during World War I).[70] Its object-ambiguity was founded on its use of photomontage to cut up and rearrange body, gender, and political identity. Mimicking the format of a newspaper, its nameplate incorporated a corresponding icon, of a dapper gentleman with cane and spectators (actually Herzfeld) doffing his bowler hat in a nonchalant greeting, seemingly not noticing that his body has been replaced by a football. Like this first absurd hailing, in the paper incitements to governmental or fascist–terrorist political participation were reiterated in the form of the fatuous calls for participation of advertising and headlines. A severe headline in a traditional heavy gothic font demanded 'Competition! Who is the most beautiful?' Beneath, photographic busts of powerful male government and military leaders were arranged like suitors upon a nineteenth-century style ladies' fan, placing their struggle for power on the camp terrain of a beauty contest.[71] Inside, it seemed a reactionary tendency had placed an advert, calling players for their own counter-revolutionary performance: 'Attention citizens! For a film-pantomime, *Wilhelm's Return*, approximately 2,000 sturdy German men are wanted immediately. Decorations preferred'.[72] This reverse-engineering of mass media advanced its distributive possibilities elsewhere by 'Dada adverts' taken out within press publications. Meanwhile, montage's method was oriented in *Every Man*... toward issues of identity-parody shared by the costumes and effigies of social movement art. But against the often serious, unitary declarative hailing of nineteenth century social movements, the front page of *Jedermann*... privileged apparently incoherent 'false' calls for participation above sincere demands. This Dada montage employed the growing access to modern mass-reproduction alongside a remobilisation of the polyphonous folk-cultural approaches associated with popular culture since the sixteenth-century, of laughter, obscenity and absurdity. This was perhaps because nineteenth-century movements had often become dominated by attempts to form party-leadership organisations, whilst Dadaist montage arose in the context of the more autonomous movement of the Spatakists, and made possible a return to the popular aesthetics evident in earlier forms such as rough music. Although less well documented, this political identity-play through a conjunction of parades and pamphlets was also employed by Baader, in releasing a 'special issue' of the one-off publication 'The Green Corpse' by showering it on the press boxes of the National Constituent Assembly before leading a children's procession around the statues of Goethe and Schiller, figures of both disinterested spiritual aesthetics and national pride.

Like some early Futurist paintings, montage's busy use of text amid jumbled bodies recalled a demonstrating crowd. The 1920 First International Dada Fair extended this aesthetic into physical space, placing social movement art forms in a gallery. Their montages were dwarfed by large slogans and exhortations on placards, which the Dadaists were also pictured raising by hand: 'Down with art', 'Dada is on the side of the revolutionary proletariat!'[73] The common folk and protest form of a sacrificial effigy hung on the ceiling: a soldier with a pig's head bearing a sign round its neck, 'hung by the revolution', whilst flyers and radical newspapers were strewn about the gallery. In another photograph, the Dada Fair is presented in the form of a 'walk-in demonstration' that ironically placed its audience as the absent crowd, lifting the effigy above their heads and surrounding themselves with placards in a protest

70. This newspaper was a very public, visible experiment with an object mediating social roles, but probably owed to Baader's early letters to public figures (the first of which was decisively employed to exempt him from military service on grounds of insanity) and Grosz and Heartfield's postcard proto-montages sent to soldiers on the front.

71. While fans with satirical designs were common in European material culture, the object itself is marshalled here for its gender-disjunctive force.

72. John Heartfield and others, *Jedermann Sein Eigner Fussball* (Malik Verlag: Berlin, 1919), p. 4.

73. The caption to this picture of Grosz and Heartfield holding up the placard, in Huelsenbeck's *Dada Almanach*, describes them as 'demonstrating against art'. Richard Huelsenbeck, *Dada Almanach* (Erich Reiss Verlag: Berlin, 1920), p. 41.

reflexively turned inside-out. Visitors' chairs placed in the centre of the room solicit just this position.[74] Other involuntary performances were elicited by more modest rebellious objects, now lost, in the form of antagonistic-gifts. Heartfield sent carefully wrapped 'presents' to soldiers on the front, 'two shirt fronts, one white, the other flowered, a pair of cuffs, a dainty shoehorn, a set of bags of tea samples, which, according to hand-written labels, should arouse patience, sweet dreams, respect for authority and fidelity to the throne'.[75] Later in May 1919, Baader, with a tone of less sympathetic antagonism, donated a large portrait of Schiller to the National Assembly via its President, inscribed with a prophecy that the Weimar Republic will be destroyed for despising the rights of the Spirit.[76]

Berlin Dada's cultural reverse-engineering provided influential innovations in the art of social movements. Both performances and material objects, rather than simply adopting an oppositional identity or attempting to speak from a position of authenticity or power, hybridised the roles of activist and artist, machine, and folk culture, in 'claiming' ironic identities – not to use them, but to implicate others in, and elicit, a misperformance of their own identity. This avant-garde activist-art emphasised material-affective, rather than simply ideological, agitation. Though they were little adopted at the time beyond the Dadaists' circle, these objects and performances were a model of creative aesthetic experiment with re-performing and expanding the potential of what social movement theorists would later variously term the 'repertoires of collective action', 'framing mechanisms', or 'constituent power' of social movements.[77] This reading of Dada's liminal art-activist practices stands in opposition to a reading of Dada as pure negation or disempowered gesture, or of Berlin Dada as a 'political' aberration which was no longer art. Instead, it was a coherent extension of Dada's trajectory, albeit different to the more institutional moves of Ball's Galerie Dada or Tzara's establishment in Paris.

Conclusion

In Paris, although this tendency to enter the production of social movements was weaker, there were more detailed theoretical engagements with the notion of the refusal of work and the potential role of affect in social change.[78] Famously, Eluard would announce '"Transform the world", Marx said, "change life", Rimbaud said. These two watchwords are one for us'.[79] French Surrealist artists and writers offered several imaginations of other approaches to revolution, other valorisations of autonomy.[80] Later, the Surrealist articulation of the refusal of work would find new contexts; for example, in Brazil, where Oswald de Andrade's 1928 *Cannibal Manifesto* re-digested Surrealist-Dadaist eurocentrism to valorise the native avant-gardism of indigenous social and cultural production free from capitalist control; and in occupied Paris, where under repressive conditions writing poetry became a subversive act for the Surrealists who published *La Main à Plume* on Resistance presses.[81] Its title borrowed from Rimbaud, 'I'll never work . . . I despise all trades. The hand that writes is worth the hand that ploughs!'[82]

Most notably, in the mid-1960s, Berlin Dada's avant-garde approach to social movement forms and Surrealism's rhetoric of work-refusal would be combined by a less documented other neo-Dada emerging from European and American social movements, through groups such as the Provos, Kommune 1, Diggers, Yippies, Black Mask, and Chicago Surrealists. These neo-Dadaists, who

74. The photograph showing this arrangement appears in Huelsenbeck, *Dada Almanach*, p. 128. It is fair to suggest that this is a reading, specifically, of Huelsenbeck's presentation of the fair through the 1920 *Dada Almanach*, in which the two photographs discussed here are the only ones of it used. However, the state shared this reading. Police and military intelligence were deployed to interfere with the fair, Grosz and Herzfeld served six weeks in jail, and others involved including the venue's owner were fined.

75. Wieland Herzfeld, 'John Heartfield: Life and Work', in Lippard (ed.) *Dadas on Art* (Prentice Hall: : Upper Saddle River, NJ, 1971), pp. 89–97.

76. Richard Huelsenbeck, *Dada Almanach* (Atlas Press: London, 1993), p. 139.

77. 'Framing mechanism' refers to the conscious strategic effort to fashion-shared understandings of the world and themselves which legitimate and motivate collective action. See David Snow and Robert Benford, 'Master Frames and Cycles of Protest', in Buechler and Cylke Jr. (eds), *Social Movements: Perspectives and Issues* (Mayfield: London, 1997), pp. 456–72, Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organisation of Experience* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA, 1974). On repertoires of action, see Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Addison-Wesley: London, 1978), pp. 151–66.

78. Reflecting on Berlin Dada, Richter argued 'It was not until the advent of Surrealism that a socio-political programme. . . was to reappear and be followed up systematically'. Hans Richter, *Dada: Art and Anti-Art* (Thames and Hudson: London, 1997), p. 176.

79. André Breton, 'Preface for a Reprint of the Manifesto (1929)', in Seaver and Lane (eds), *Manifestoes of Surrealism* (University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbour, MI, 1969), pp. ix–xi, p. 241.

80. See Lewis, *Dada Turns Red: The Politics of Surrealism*, Simon Baker, *Surrealism, History and Revolution* (Peter Lang: Oxford, 2007).

81. See Michel Fauré, *Histoire du Surréalisme sous l'Occupation* (La Table Ronde: Paris, 1982) and Anne Vernay and Richard Walter (eds), *Le Main à Plume: Anthologie du Surréalisme Sous l'Occupation* (Syllepse: Paris, 2008).

82. Arthur Rimbaud, *A Season in Hell and Illuminations* (BOA Editions: New York, 1991), p. 25.

returned to the problem of reimagining the aesthetics of social movement forms of collective direct action, are the more immediate forebearers of the contemporary art-activist 'interventionism' practiced by collectives such as the Yes Men, Reverend Billy, and the Church of Stop Shopping, Etcetera, the Laboratory of Insurrectionary Imagination, and the Centre for Tactical Magic. The passage of the radical avant-garde into the cultural canon is well documented, and often functions as the end of the narrative. But a non-teleological account of radical avant-gardism suggests an open dialectic, in which avant-garde re-imaginations of cultural production can be reiterated time and again, both by social movements and within and against institutional contexts.