Even Objects Revolt Against Regimentation:

Art and Censorship in Post-WWI Germany and the Rise of

Dadaism. A Thesis and Film.

by

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A THESIS

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This thesis consists of three parts: this essay, a film called *Trumancy* based on Hans Richter's Dadaist film *Ghosts Before Breakfast,* and a performance recording of Paul Hindemith's Op. 25, No. 1 to be used as the score for *Trumancy.* Both Richter and Hindemith had their works censored and destroyed by the Nazi party, including *Ghosts Before Breakfast,* implying that their work was in some way influential socially or politically. To better understand why the film was perceived as a threat to the Nazi party, and to accurately represent and reimagine Richter's Dadaist intentions in *Trumancy*, it was necessary to research the historical context in which Dadaism was active and *Ghosts Before Breakfast* were created to better understand the symbolism of Richter and Hindemith's work. This first portion essay examines the social and political environment of Germany during Richter and Hindemith's lives, how politics and social issues intersected with their work, and why the Nazis censored *Ghosts Before Breakfast.* The latter portion of this essay charts how the research on Richter and Hindemith influenced and assisted the creation of *Trumancy*, and recording of Hindemith's Op. 25, No. 1.

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Introduction: Why This Thesis?

"The world of the artist seems to me to contain the responsibility NOT to invent anything for any purpose whatsoever. Because <u>inventing</u> something presupposes that the artist may be able to <u>make</u> something… in this sense I walked… the road of testing and searching without, even to this day, being sure where all that would lead to or whether it would be of any <u>use</u>."

-Hans Richter

This thesis consists of three parts: this essay, a film called *Trumancy* based on Hans Richter's Dadaist film *Ghosts Before Breakfast,* and a performance recording of Paul Hindemith's Op. 25, No. 1 to be used as the score for *Trumancy.* I chose to undertake the significant task of creating this body of work because I wanted to use my musical skills in a creative way, expand my artistry to include new mediums (in this case film), and explore my long-term fascination with Dadaism. 1920s Germany was home to a dichotomy in attitudes towards art, as some were celebrating a golden age of experimental art and delving into artistic movements like Dadaism that celebrated experimental unpolished art, while others were interested in art that was ornate and classical, and viewed the bizarre land of Dadaism with disdain. For my thesis, I wanted to first research and examine the forces at work that drove the differences of opinion between these groups, and then create a film that was a historically accurate representation of the different forms of art that were present in 1920s Germany. I achieved this by creating a Dadaist film, plus a musical performance of Hindemith's highbrow, albeit experimental, Op. 25, No 1.

Trumancy is a Dada-esque work based on Hans Richter's film *Ghosts Before Breakfast,* with Paul Hindemith's Op. 25, No. 1 as its score. I chose these works not

only because I found them to be engaging pieces of art, but also because I was fascinated by the historical context in which they were created. Both Hindemith and Richter were pushing artistic boundaries in their time, providing commentary on social and political issues through their art (particularly in the case of Richter), and eventually had their work censored and destroyed by the Nazis. I wanted *Trumancy* to reflect Richter and Hindemith's style and techniques as accurately as possible– but I also wanted to ensure that I understood any social or political commentary that might be included in Richter or Hindemith's works so that I could appropriately emulate such commentary in *Trumancy*. To achieve this, I researched the politics, cultural and artistic movements of the era during which Hindemith and Richter were artistically active and examined how these forces intersected in their works, and particularly in *Ghosts Before Breakfast*. I chose to research the era from German unification in 1870 through the rise of Hitler in the early 1930s– this period encompasses the early creative lives of Hans Richter (born 1888) and Paul Hindemith (born 1895) and provides broad social and political context for their work.

Politically and socially, 1870 to 1930 (and beyond) was a turbulent time for Germany. Germany was unified in 1870, which led to the formation of a new government, mass industrialization, huge population growth and migrations to cities. For some, these changes wrought profound impacts on their lifestyles, traditions and upended cultural norms. These changes were heightened through Wilhelmine Germany, as class divides became more pronounced, education and social services spread to the lower classes, and assumed power structures in politics and social life were challenged. Societal norms were changing, and so too

were norms in the arts. Artists began to create with more freedom of expression and break free of artistic expectations and norms put in place by the upper classes. After WWI and the German Revolution, these changes reached a fever pitch– politics in Weimar Germany became divided and contentious, post-war debt led to intense inflation and poverty, and for many in the face of all this chaos, societal norms and expectations no longer seemed to matter. This allowed extensive tolerance for freedom in self-expression and artistic experimentation, and the arts in Weimar Germany saw a golden age. Artists pushed boundaries in new ways, and movements like Dadaism and Bauhaus gained popularity in Germany and across Europe. These movements reflected the chaos of the day and prompted artist to experiment with new forms of art, music and architecture, no rules or societal expectations involved.

Dadaism was an artistic movement that rejected all rules for art and stated that anything could be art, and anyone could be an artist. Dadaist works included nonsense poems, abstract paintings, and urinals on display. Dadaism was often political, criticized bourgeois standards for art and society, and often leaned, overtly and subtly, towards leftist political ideas and even anarchism. In the post war chaos of the 1920s, many were receptive to these artistic and political ideas and Dadaism resonated with a wide audience across Europe and the United States. Dadaism's appeal was not universal, though, and some Germans, notably traditionalist elites, abhorred Dadaism and other experimental art. When the Nazis rose to power, this hatred was formally recognized through the Nazi's *Entartete Kunst* (Degenerate Art) campaign that censored and destroyed countless works

that did not conform to Nazi ideals. Artists like Walter Gropius, the founder of the Bauhaus School of Architecture and twelve-tone composer Arnold Schoenberg were very popular amongst certain circles in Germany, and abroad, but nonetheless had their works censored and destroyed by the Nazis, and were eventually forced to flee Germany. Richter and Hindemith had similar experiences and were also both forced to flee Germany in search of less oppressive artistic pastures. Artists that were forced to flee Germany often found great success across the Atlantic– Richter relocated to New York, where he taught at New York City College, and Hindemith to Connecticut where he taught at Yale, Gropius taught at Harvard and Schoenberg taught at UCLA. These tenures speak to the international and enduring appeal of the artistic experimentation of 1920s Germany.

Ghosts Before Breakfast, the specific work that inspired my film project, was a Dadaist film directed by Hans Richter and scored by Paul Hindemith. The film contains both live action and stop motion animation, and has no intended narrative. The film is not overtly political in the way that other works by Richter were, but it was nonetheless viewed as "Degenerate Art" by the Nazis, who destroyed its original film reel and score. Luckily, a second film reel survived, but the score was forever lost. A title card was added to the surviving film reel that read, "The Nazis destroyed the sound version of this film as 'Degenerate Art.' It shows that even objects revolt against regimentation." With this title card added, the film seems to stand as a political protest just by existing, even without any overt political elements included.

When I created *Trumancy*, I implemented my historical research as much as possible. For the technical aspects of my film, I filmed on a Super 8 camera and attempted to emulate Richter's filming techniques in a technically, stylistically, and historically accurate manner . When I recorded Hindemith's Op. 25, No. 1 for *Trumancy*, I performed in long takes to emulate a live performance. When I shot *Trumancy*, I avoided including any elements or scenes that were overtly political, as Richter did not include such things in his film, but did use props like Birkenstock sandals and tunic shirts in a nod to Eugene's counterculture, leftist history and to acknowledge that Richter's art was also subtly political. My historical research granted me an understanding of why Richter and Hindemith's artistic output was so experimental, and allowed me to create *Trumancy* in a way that felt like an appropriate and authentic reworking of *Ghosts Before Breakfast.*

The World into which the Artists were Born

This section outlines the vast social and political change that Germany underwent from German unification in 1871 to Hitler's rise to power in 1933. This era encompasses the early life of Hans Richter (born 1888) and Paul Hindemith (born 1895). The social and political turbulence of this era laid the groundwork for artistic movements like Dadaism and musical innovations to rise to prominence, and undoubtedly influenced Richter and Hindemith's work. Richter's work often engaged with the politics of his day, both overtly and subtly. Richter and Hindemith found both inspiration and audiences in societal changes– and both faced the censorship of the Nazi party as a result of their artistic experimentation. Arts and politics were intertwined during this era, and to understand Richter and Hindemith's artistic output, it first seems necessary to understand the social and political climate in which they lived and created art.

German Unification

German unification prompted a period of great change in Germany. Industrialization and a population shift to urban centers led to a monumental restructuring of society and a national reckoning of identity. As the lower classes were packed into cities to work as disposable laborers in industrial jobs overseen by the elite, class divisions were amplified and social unrest began to fester. Empowered by a rewritten constitution that gave them some political power, the working classes began to push back against systems that favored the elite. Throughout this burgeoning social

unrest, German citizens continued to search for new identities after being decentralized from their small, agrarian communities, and some turned to strong German nationalism.

Germany unified in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian war in 1871, when German Chancellor Otto Von Bismarck orchestrated the alliance of disparate German speaking states into German Empire. A constitution for this new Empire was drawn up, and a government was formed consisting of two chambers: the *Reichstag,* a people's representative assembly chosen through elections, and the *Bundesrat,* "an upper chamber in which the princes were represented; the German Empire was in fact not a monarchy but an oligarchy of federated princes" (Schulze & Schneider, p.155). The two chamber system, in which laws had to go through both houses to be passed, made for "an almost perfect balance between a popular democracy and an authoritarian state" (Schulze & Schneider, p.155). Despite acquiring some democratic features in the *Reichstag*, the German Empire's new government system heavily favored both the influence and the vote of the elite and monarchical classes. Nonetheless, *Junker* (Prussian nobility) dominated government was initially generally accepted by the capitalist middle and upper classes, as they experienced great economic prosperity under this new government, and by the lower, working classes, because it gave them a vote.

Societal change post-unification was profound. Perhaps the most widely felt, especially among the lower classes, was industrialization. Driven in part by war repayments from the Franco-Prussian war, Germany underwent a "veritable fever of entrepreneurial activity and speculation…. Industrial capacity was increased without any guarantee of profitability, and huge fortunes were made within a very short span of

time" (Schulze & Schneider, p.156). An industrial revolution swept over Germany and transformed it from an agrarian to industrialized nation. Across a land that "fifty years earlier had been dotted with farming villages and sleepy provincial towns there now sprawled giant industrial tracts and acres of new housing" (Schulze & Schneider, p.157). Cities grew at alarming rates, and agrarian workers began to move to urban centers en masse in order to continue making a living in Germany's new industry driven society.

Germany's population centers "dramatically transformed as industrialization forced people to leave the countryside and take up work in factories in the big cities" (Ringmar). Coinciding with mass migration was a huge population boom, ushered in by the rapid development of science and medicine, or "population explosion's midwives" (Hagen, p.95). The German citizenry grew from 49 million in 1890, to 67 million in 1913. As the population increased, so too did the number of relocations to urban centers. In 1800, "90 percent of the population lived in the country and only 5 percent in large cities, but by 1871 more than 50 percent lived in towns with more than 5,000 inhabitants. While there were only two cities in Germany with populations above 100,000 in 1800, a century later there were 33" (Schulze & Schneider, p.164).

Mass migrations caused huge societal shifts for Germans, with varied outcomes. Some found that urban environments provided them better access to education, social services, and higher standards of living, but other began to feel negative effects from society's shift from natural, community centric agrarian environments. In contrast to rural lifestyles where "individuals had had an identity which was determined by the place where they lived, by their occupation or by their

family and its connections, the new city-dwellers had no given place and position, and thereby no clear identities" (Ringmar). Industrialization also led to a massive sweep of health issues resulting from poor working and living conditions in cities, pollution, and overworking. Mass migration to cities decentralized some from their previously held identities and traditions, leaving them socially adrift.

Some Germans who previously felt community through their small and disparate rural identities now turned to "*kinship* through language, culture, and history [as] the most indispensable and potentially the strongest, if also most explosive, social cement" (Hagen, p.95). This fostered strong nationalism in some, as new emphasis was placed on social community "in contrast to modern alienation…. [and] society, whose members led inauthentic, atomized, competitive, and perhaps ultimately meaningless lives. [These feelings] reinforced a romanticist inclination toward nationalism" (Hagen, p. 118). Socially uprooted Germans increasingly adopted the view that the Nation was "the ideal form of community to encompass such a newly structured social world" (Hagen, p. 95).   German nationalists tended to be conservative, and held convictions about Germany's right to empirical, expanding power. These ideas proved dangerous during and after World War I.

Germany's societal restructuring also stirred up a collective consciousness about class disparity, due in large part to the rise of education among the lower classes. To further scientific, industrial and technological innovation, the German government invested in nation-wide education, as it was "the ticket of admission to the more lucrative and prestigious professions, and the government encourages the trend…. 'Knowledge is power'– this motto applied to the country as a whole as well as to

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individuals" (Schulze & Schneider, p.183) Education programs spread widely, allowing a greater number of people across socioeconomic lines to access classrooms. For the first time, attitudes shifted to imagine a nation of "self-sufficiency and proud consciousness of German originality and accomplishment…. [Education] drew the aristocratic-monarchical ruling elites closer to the educated middle class's cultural achievements" (Hagen, p. 112). As educational gaps between classes began to close, awareness about class inequities rose. The German middle and working classes used education to gain social clout, and formed movements and unions to gain social and political power. Members of the Labor Movement "saw self-improvement as the best means to bring down social barriers. Workingmen's associations represented the first real centers of adult education in Germany" (Schulze & Schneider, p.183). As socialism rose in prominence, lower classes continued to become more education and social mobility, but all the while Bismarck and other elites attempted to tamp down the influence of the lower classes.

Highlighting contrasts between classes even more was the elite and bourgeois' newfound interest in pomp and circumstance. Along with Germany's newfound economic success came "a change in Germans' appearance. The traditional plain ways of the old upper class– dictated by the Prussian motto *Mehr sein als scheinen,* 'Be more than you seem,' and a chronic lack of money– gave way to excessive pomp and *nouveau riche* ostentation in all areas of life, including architecture, interior decoration, clothing, and personal habits" (Schulze & Schneider, p.156). As Germany's lower classes became empowered through education and political clout, the German elite clung to the increasingly antiquated social hierarchies that allowed them to

hold on to power. Conflict began to arise between classes, highlighting "the deep antagonism which still prevailed between social groups and classes…. This antagonism had its roots in the tensions of a modern industrial society governed by a traditional feudal elite. The deeply engrained rigidities and hostilities made it impossible for the political structure to adapt to the modern era" (Raff, p. 183). The vast societal change that Germany experienced post-unification, coupled with unfairly distributed governmental power and a rising awareness of class disparity birthed a period of increasing social unrest that manifested itself in class tensions and political strife, and eventually in artistic movements.

Wilhelmine Germany

Under Kaiser Wilhelm II, social unrest in Germany was further amplified. Wilhelm II's ostentatious lifestyle was adopted by many elites, heightening class divides and disparities in political power. Lower classes became increasingly educated and politically organized, gaining some clout. As social unrest increased, so too did the search for antidotes. Conservative Germans continued to turn toward strong nationalism. Others began to explore more radical political and social ideas and experimented with new lifestyles and art forms. People in both camps turned to WWI as a way out of their fraught lives.

Ignoring the festering tension between classes seen post-unification, Wilhelm II and the elite attempted to increase their power. The elite, conservative parties of Wilhelmine Germany "drew their strength not from sheer numbers but from their intimate relationship with the traditional social elite of landed nobility, military officers,

government bureaucrats and Protestant clergymen" (Raff, p. 182). The Prussian-German *Bundesrat* branch of the government took charge over everything from social welfare to cemetery regulations, and held that "Its institutions, its bureaucracy, and above all its military cherished the belief that they existed on a plane above the fray and represented the good of the whole, an idea that at its core was antidemocratic" (Schulze & Schneider, p.176). Additionally, the *Bundesrat* viewed the *Reichstag,* the other branch of German government and actual representatives of the people, as "a crowd of jabbering, brawling incompetents" (Schulze & Schneider, p.176). Seeing this, the liberal middle-class were increasingly resentful of the power discrepancies in the German political system. Middle-class liberals supported Bismarck's policies, but after he was dismissed, they were pushed "further and further into the role of the opposition, while the conservative parties moved to the fore" (Schulze & Schneider, p.170). The middle class "drawing on its economic power, rose to prominence in many aspects of socialism, civic and cultural life, but was still largely excluded from political power by the existing constitution" (Raff, p. 183). The emboldened middle classes began to challenge their position in the political hierarchy and protest the extravagance of the ruling elite.

The lower classes too were becoming politically emboldened through the formation of unions and other groups representing the working classes. In the 1890s, trade unionism became a mass movement, and groups like "the German Agricultural Council, representing owners of small and middle-sized farms in Prussia, the Catholic Central Federation of Agricultural Associations… [and' *Bund der Landwirte* (Agrarian League)" (Schulze & Schneider, p.174) formed. These groups were formed to put

pressure on governmental agencies, and "Besides their traditional concern for social issues, the unions took a strong interest in working conditions and strove to improve the workers standard of living" (Raff, p. 180). These social, economic and political pressure groups had "a strong and immediate influence on political parties... the social transformation engendered by industrialism caused the political parties to evolve from loose associations of local notables with similar views into tightly-knit organizations…" (Raff, p. 181). As unions and their adjacent political parties rose in power, they gained "influence over the list of candidates and thereby over the entire Reichstag.... Trade unions gained increasing leverage within the Social Democratic Party" (Raff, pp. 181-182).

In social spheres, resentment of the conservative elite led to the formation of communities focused on exploring new philosophical ideas, artistic experimentation, and new political ideas like anarchism and socialism. Resentment towards Germany's industrialized, urbanized, and hierarchical society was deep rooted, and many Germans desired a return to a natural, more primal world. Flourishing communities of artistic and philosophers formed in rural settings that "hoped to renew the old unity between people and nature. Oases of anarchism, anthroposophy, and other radically new lifestyles vied with one another to produce a new kind of human being; they all pulsed with vitality and creativity" (Schulze & Schneider, p.182). These communities birthed youth movements that opposed the "rigid convention and the strict separation of the social classes. Rebelling against life in the big cities, youths set out on country hikes to discover nature and a new relationship with the common people. They sought to unite Germans of all social strata and classes" (Raff, p. 183). These youth movements also

challenged the systems imposed by elite conservatives, and they rejected "the narrow rigidity of the German home and school, they demanded greater personal freedom– a freedom which they hoped to transmit to society and the state in order to forge a nation based on true community" (Raff, pp. 183-184). A desire for greater liberty took hold of Germany's youth, and manifested through new forms of art and radical political ideas– these would eventually lead to more formal art movements, like Dadaism.

Germany's emerging leftists adopted ideas from philosophers like Friedrich Nietzsche that called for "a reaction against the bourgeois world and the ideals it proclaimed…. Intellectual youth reacted by discarding all traditional rules" (Raff, p. 184). Berlin Philosopher Friedrich Paulsen analyzed this phenomenon and concluded that:

"Intellectual anarchy is the individual's reaction to the incessant admonishment and censure he suffers at school and in church, at the hands of society and the state. The 'proper' attitude towards all things… it pounded into us…. Therefore we tear everything down and throw it away– the proper views and old truths, the conventional standards and the spent icons, finally even logic and morality. We throw ourselves into a Saturnalia of paradox celebrating the re-evaluation of all values" (Raff, pp. 184-185). Rejection of assumed identities and societal roles was widespread, and leftists began to push for political and societal changes that would move Germany away from the rule of the elite.

In tandem with new political ideas, rejection of tradition and standards of acceptability were spreading through the arts too. German artistic fields at this time were "characterized by glaring contrasts, with academic taste and pomp on one side,

and the avant-garde on the other. The contradictions had never been so sharp" (Schulze & Schneider, p.176-177). Academic styles of painting that were "highly esteemed by the establishment and received official commissions, was rejected by many younger artists, who instead took their inspiration chiefly from France and from movements like symbolism, impressionism, and art nouveau…. The stylized simplicity of their exhibition posters represented an intentional contrast to the reigning ornate taste of the Wilhelmine period" (Schulze & Schneider, p.176). Music and art followed these trends. "Music around 1900 was dominated by Richard Wagner…. Art Nouveau carried on the rejection of historical subjects and furthered the trend towards aestheticism and symbolism. The early German Expressionists then spurned both historicism and aestheticism in order to portray elemental, primordial experience" (Raff, p. 186). Wilhelmine Germany saw modernism and class structures become highly contentious– tensions rose between the classes as societal change grew, and new social, political and artistic ideas came into prominence.

World War I and the German Revolution:

As news of impending war spread across Germany, the majority of the German citizenry supported joining the military conflict. Two of the main factors driving support for the war were strong nationalism, and the strong desire to return to a more primal society. Historian Eric Leed noted that attitudes about the war were due to a desire to "'escape from modernity'; a chance to abandon one's ego and one's 'sense of social isolation;' 'a rebirth'; 'a celebration of community, a festival … an outbreak of unreason, a madness …'" (Ringmar). War was, in a sense, a return to a communal

(nationalist), primal (natural) way of life, and these factors combined led "middle-class young men to march enthusiastically off to way in August 1914, into the longed-for apocalypse" (Raff, pp. 183-184). In the Reichstag, all major political parties supported joining the war, and so Germany entered "The Great War" in 1914 with a strong sense of nationalism and 11 million soldiers enlisted to fight.

Germany entered World War I with the expectation that it would be a short affair and made little effort to appropriately plan for any economic consequences. No stockpiles of food or supplies were made, no plans were made to support a workforce diminished by military enrollment, and as German Field Marshal Count Von Schlieffen opined, "the survival of the nation depended upon the uninterrupted continuation of trade and industry" (Feldman, 123). When it quickly became apparent that WWI would in fact be a lengthy conflict, the unprepared German government, as well as German industrial forces, had to rapidly adjust their course. Employee shortages on the home front led to the slow production, and industries began to recruit prisoners, women and children to work. Coal mining operations were hit particularly hard by these employee shortages, and when Germany started "total mobilization", or an "all in" approach to the war, no thought was given to "the strain which the program would impose on the nation's transportation network and coal supply. In the winter of 1916-17 there was a major transportation crisis; in the spring there was a serious coal shortage" (Feldman, 139-40). The British set up a naval blockade stopping the flow of goods and food in and out of Germany, and the German homefront began to profoundly feel the effects of war.

The German government's incompetence at supporting the war effort appropriately seeded a deep distrust of the government from many. As food was redistributed to support soldiers abroad, Germany began heavy rationing on the homefront, which was initially well received as Germany's "surge of patriotic fervor [at the start of the war] made possible the most important piece of wartime social policy: the regulation of the food supply" (Allen, p. 372). However, as time progressed, and the war carried on far longer than expected, Germany's feelings toward rationing cooled. "No plan existed to replace the intricate network of shops, warehouses, and processing facilities that had delivered bread to the peacetime masses…. The new rationing measures exacerbated relations between city and countryside" (Allen, p. 371). Rationing also heightened class tensions. As Regine Eller, "a very busy housewife" from Berlin put it, "the well-paid gentlemen at City Hall have everything they need. With warm stoves and attentive staff, they suffer no privation. What's more, their private stashes of milk, meat, and flour enable them to gorge themselves whenever they feel like it" (Allen, p. 378). Public opinion was that "authorities seemed to have breached the pact between society and state, a social contract of loyalty and sacrifice in return for adequate and fairly apportioned food supplies. The rupture of this informal but palpable understanding undermined the authority and legitimacy of the state" (Allen, p. 372). Negative feelings towards the German government's mismanagement of the war grew, and as the war came to an end, conflict shifted away from international territory and onto German soil.

As WWI came to a close, Germany surrendered one conflict, only to start another on their own soil when they revolted against their own government. Fed up with

incompetent, antidemocratic elite rule, the German Revolution of 1918 began with the "toppling of the monarchy in November 1918 and end[ed] with the 'liberation' of Munich by government forces in early May 1919" (Jones, p. 1). The revolution was inspired in part by the Bolshevist takeover of the Russian state during the winter of 1917-18, that sent shockwaves throughout the world, and "provided European revolutionaries with a new and more radical example of class conflict" (Jones, p. 7). The German revolution ended Germany's monarchy, and established Germany's first fully democratic state, the Weimar Republic.

Germany had been ushered through World War I by Generals Erich Ludendorff and Paul von Hindenburg, "the effective dictators that had ruled Imperial Germany since 1916" (Jones, p. 8). Upon realizing that German surrender was imminent at the end of WWI, Ludendorff suddenly demanded the creation of a new civilian government. This was a clever ploy to "exculpate the army leadership from dealing with Germany's impending defeat, [Ludendorff] demanded that civilian politicians take responsibility for bringing the war to an end on favourable terms – even though he had excluded civilian politicians from decision-making for much of the war" (Jones, pp. 8-9). Ludendorff's tactics were also guided by his fear that Russian Bolshevism would take hold of Germany's leftists, and lead to the government being overthrown. Ludendorff's demand led to the foundation of a new government that "made socialist politicians government ministers for the first time" (Jones, p. 10). on Oct 3rd, a new parliamentary government was formed in hopes that "a 'revolution from above' would help prevent the collapse of the political and social order" (Raff, p. 228).

This 'revolution from above' proved to be only momentarily effective. In October of 1918, while Lundendorff and German political leaders publicly promised governmental change and an end to the war, military leaders on the front were unwilling to accept defeat and continued to engage in combat. As these leaders gave orders to mobilize naval forces, "a small number of soldiers refused to ready their ships in an act of mutiny" (Jones, p. 12) Over the next few days, this mutiny prompted "the anti-war and anti-imperial movement [to] spread quickly across the rest of the country.... The protesting soldiers were joined by workers, soldiers, and women; in the words of one observer, the empire suddenly 'collapsed like a house of cards'" (Jones, p. 12). Socialist leftists like Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemborg took leadership roles in this revolution, and it continued to spread across the country. The revolution culminated in Berlin on November 9th, 1918, when Kaiser Wilhelm II was forced to flee to Holland, Social Democratic Party leader Freidrich Ebert was appointed Chancellor, and an Armistice was signed to bring an official end to Germany's military involvement in WWI. Wilhelm II's departure was welcomed by the German people, as he "was blamed by much of the population for continuing the war and had become the object of their anger and despair…. The revolution swept through the other cities and states of the *Reich,* toppling not only the Hohenzollerns but all the ruling dynasties" (Raff, p. 230). Monarchical rule was gone, and now Germany was faced with the task of forming a new, fully democratic government.

With the monarchy gone, new leadership needed to be established. Ebert's Social Democratic Party proved to be an unstable party for leadership, as it had split into two factions: the majority (Social Democrats), and the minority, the Independent

Socialists led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemborg. Leftists Liebknecht and Luxemburg had been imprisoned during the war, which "turned them into political martyrs amongst all who shared their criticism of the regime" (Jones, p. 13). Liebknecht was released just before the revolution, and pushed for the formation of a six person council with three representatives from each party to head the new government and oversee the Council of People's Representatives, rather than have Ebert as the government's sole leader. Liebknecht's idea was enacted, but it proved to be an unsuccessful experiment, as serious discord between its two political groups forced it to combust when "the compromises between the Independents and Social Democrats came to an end. At the end of December 1918, the shared government split irrevocably and by mid-January the initial hopes that the German Revolution might proceed lay in tatters" (Jones, p. 15).

After the two socialist parties proved incapable of agreeing on how to form a new system, the German government once again needed to be reformed. The leftist Independent Socialists were largely forced out of power after Ebert ordered a takedown of the ongoing left-wing revolution. Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were murdered by Freikorps soldiers soon after organizing the Spartacist Uprising, prompting further waves of violence that led to the deaths of thousands of Communist and Independent Socialist revolutionaries. Social Democratic leadership took charge, and "elections were held across Germany for the first time since before the First World War. This was also the first time that the vote was based on universal suffrage – including women" (Jones, p. 15). The newly elected assembly members were tasked to write a new constitution for the Republic, and chose to do so in the town of Weimar. The new

Social Democratic government supported the formation of *Freikorps* to act as government soldiers. The Weimar Constitution was adopted in August of 1919 forming a new government, officially ending the revolution and marking the beginning of Weimar Germany.

Weimar Germany and the Rise of Hitler:

The new Weimar government brought democracy to Germany, but it was a shaky government rendered nearly powerless by war debt, societal unrest, and fractured post-war infrastructure. The instabilities of the Weimar government and society left the German people desiring stronger and more stable leadership. Left leaning parties remained fractured and were unable to provide strong leadership. Instead, conservative nationalist parties stepped in as a more united front focused on rebuilding Germany as a European power. One such conservative nationalist was Adolf Hitler, who painted himself as a strong figure who could bring order to the chaos of Weimar Germany.

The Weimar government was immediately tasked with the profoundly difficult task of dealing with the fallout of WWI. Germany was "in a state of shock.… The world seemed out of joint. Citizens wandered the streets poorly fed and barely clothed. They had sacrificed their gold for the fatherland, their sons were dead or in prison camps and those who did return were cruelly changed" (Raff, p. 232). Allied peace terms after the war lost Germany "six and a half million inhabitants [through territory losses], one-quarter of her coal production, three-quarters of her ore deposits and almost half her pig, iron and steel-producing facilities" (Raff, p. 240). The army was reduced to a fraction of its original size, merchant ships were confiscated, and

enormous monetary reparations were demanded. Upon accepting the Allied terms of peace, Social Democrat Paul Löbe said, "This is the inexorable consequence of the outcome of war. But what is impossible remains so even after our signature. A crushed and hungry people is not able to work; an abused and violated people is not only deprived of its own pleasure but deprives its violator as well" (Raff, p. 241). And so a crushed and hungry people, with 1.7 million dead from the war, set out to complete the seemingly impossible task of repaying their war debt.

Reparations owed by Germany wreaked havoc on an already fractured German economy. The repayment demanded by the Allies was five billion dollars in gold, which depleted German treasuries and led to soaring inflation levels. As one German citizen recalled, "My father had left a fortune of 800,000 marks… but by the summer of 1922, the value of the mark had dropped to 400 per dollar. Every month it got worse" (Friedrich, p. 122). The value of the mark continued to drop and went from 400 to the dollar, to 160,000, to a whopping 1.3 trillion in 1923, rendering printed money worthless. Germany functionally existed "without any currency at all. Everything had collapsed" (Friedrich, p. 142). In 1923, Germany sank into delirium, and "whoever had a job got paid every day, usually at noon, and then ran to the nearest store with a sack full of banknotes, to buy anything he could get, at any price. In their frenzy, people paid millions, even billions of marks for cuckoo clocks, shoes that didn't fit, anything that could be traded for something else" (Friedrich, p. 124).

Within the government, the Social Democratic Party attempted to deal with the burdens of defeat, while "conservative politicians and military leaders strove to deny their own failure by claiming that the army had not been defeated in the field but

rather stabbed in the back by socialists, anti-war agitators and the November revolutionaries" (Raff, 231). Despite the obvious disdain between political parties, the Social Democrats were forced to include conservative parties in the new government as "The republic could only support the great burden it bore if substantial portions of the bourgeoisie were committed to its survival and prosperity…. It was essential as a matter of self-preservation to lure bourgeois republican parties into the government" (Raff, p. 235). Meanwhile, trade unions were largely content to leave governing up to the industrial elite as long as demands for good wages, hours and working conditions were met, functionally negating their presence in the German government and stymying radical change. Political systems had changed, but power hierarchies remained, and class conflict had not subsided.

Weimar Germany saw continued political uprisings on both sides of the political aisle. After the Spartacist Uprising, radical action was seen from conservative nationalists when the Kapp Putsch uprising occurred in protest of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, which officially reduced the German army to a fraction of its original size. Disgruntled, nationalist and conservative soldiers felt that politicians had betrayed them by signing the treaty, and believed that Germany could have won the war. These soldiers resisted the disbanding of their units by forming Freikorps and "openly revolted and attempted to seize power, occupying Berlin and proclaiming the installation of a new government" (Raff, pp. 241-242). The Kapp Putsch uprising proved unsuccessful when industrial workers and civil servants were unwilling to lend their support to the conservative nationalists Freikorps.

One such soldier who believed that the German army could have won the war, had they not been betrayed by politicians and leftist protesters, was Adolf Hitler. After proudly serving in the German army, Hitler blamed Germany's military collapse on leftist political revolutionaries, and "was consumed by a violent hatred for the 'November criminals' to whom he imputed full responsibility for the catastrophe, and he determined to take up the sword against them" (Raff. p. 273). Hitler joined the far-right nationalist German Workers party, quickly rose to the top of the party, and renamed it the National Socialist Workers Party (Nazi for short). From his Nazi pedestal, Hitler spread his poisonous rhetoric and fanatical nationalism in an attempt to unite all German speaking people to build his Aryan utopia. Employing disbanded nationalist soldiers, Hitler started the Munich Putsch, a failed attempt to take over the government. This short uprising ended in a "short but bloody confrontation with the police…. Hitler, who had fled, was captured two days later. He was later sentenced to a minimal prison term in a trial scandalously biased in his favour" (Raff, p. 246). Hitler ultimately spent only 9 months in prison, due to his sentence being given by a right-wing jury of his admirers. Hitler's uprising and prison stint increased his notoriety, and he began to be viewed as a strong figure who could bring stability back to a chaotic government and society. as American reporter Ben Hecht put it, "There were no orders given… It looked like a revolution in which anybody could do anything he wanted" (Freidrich 25). Hitler began to portray himself as a figure who could right the chaos.

Soon after he was released from prison, Hitler gained power through legal channels by running for office alongside many of his fellow Nazis. The Nazis' campaign was successful, and many were elected to office, including Hitler who was

appointed as the Chancellor of Germany. This success was due in part to Germany

economic crisis escalating once again when the Great Depression hit the United States

and it led to serious collateral economic damage in Germany. Politicians in government

proved unable to handle the financial crisis, and the left was too fragmented to get

anything done. Capitalizing on a dysfunctional government, Hitler continued to spread

propaganda that he could bring order to the chaos, and the conservative *Kreuz-Zeitung*

proclaimed, "Is it not wonderful that from the midst the German people, crushed by the

war and continually weakened thereafter by a blind government policies, a new

government has sprung with… the leader of a most passionate nationalist movement as

its chancellor" (Raff, p. 272).

Once in office, "Hitler set out with the utmost speed and determination to

gather all the reins of power into his own hand" (Raff, p. 277). After a fire was set by an

unknown figure in the parliamentary buildings, Hitler was granted emergency law

making powers by the German president Paul Von Hindenburg to deal with such

situations. Wielding this power, Hitler "sought to gain control of the army, the police

and the bureaucracy, usurp the legislative authority of the *Reichstag* and the

Reichspräsident [president], eradicate the constitutional rights of the provinces, ban

non-Nazi political and social organizations, and crush opposition from within his own

party" (Raff, p. 277). Upon the untimely death of President Hindenburg soon after

taking office, and Hitler assumed the role of president in addition to his chancellorship

and enacted his dictatorship. Hitler had successfully capitalized on Germany's social

and political chaos, gained popularity, and seized power over the entire German

government.

Arts and Culture in Post-WWI Germany

While both Richter and Hindemith were actively creating art and music before WWI, their artistic careers took off post war. This section examines the period in which they were creating some of their most exciting work, and demonstrates how politics, social issues, and art overlapped. This overlap occurred most overtly when the Nazi party rose to power and began to heavily censor artistic output in Germany.

Weimar Culture:

Weimar culture was not just a period of political unrest and chaos, but also a period of extreme artistic experimentation and progress. The breakdown of societal norms and structure that occurred in Weimar Germany allowed artists to discard past rules for art, and create with a new sense of freedom. Ideas of anarchism and artistic experimentation that were burgeoning before the war were now allowed to flourish in a society where structure and order no longer seemed to exist.

As the German Count Harry Graf Kessler, a diplomat and patron of modern art, said, "The German people… were reeling deliriously between blank despair, frenzied revelry, and revolution. Berlin had become a nightmare, a carnival of jazz bands and rattling machine guns" (Friedrich 36-37). Societal chaos did create nightmare situations with political uprisings and Freikorps running the streets, but it also saw a golden era for the arts. Upon visiting Berlin in the 1920s, American musician Yehudi Menuhin said that "Berlin had a most advanced and neurotic society… a new society based on new money, and on extravagance, brashness, show. The neurosis was the clash of values, between the old and the new. Everything became possible. Everything

became experience, with a capital E– and a capital X" (Friedrich, p. 11). Artistic communities began to form like the November Group, a group of artists and architects who wrote in their manifesto that, "We believe that our first duty is to dedicate all our energies to the moral regeneration of a young and free Germany. We plead to the moral regeneration of a young and free Germany…. We insist upon unlimited freedom of expression" (Friedrich, p. 154). Indeed, freedom of expression reigned in Weimar culture, and artists were liberated to create in ways previously considered unacceptable.

Self expression became freer, and people began to push the boundaries of gender binaries and norms. Women received political liberation during this era through receiving political suffrage, and social liberation through cabarets and jazz clubs, where women began to perform on stage and often wore traditionally male clothing. Men too explored gender fluidity, and as writer Anita Loos said, "Any Berlin lady of the evening might turn out to be a man" (Friedrich 128). Jazz clubs became hugely popular, and "Hundreds of men costumed as women and hundreds of women costumed as men danced under the benevolent eyes of the police. In the collapse of all values a kind of madness gained hold" (Freidrich 192). Gender fluidity and exploration of sexual orientation could be seen in clubs, in paintings, film, plays, and many other art forms of the era.

Authors and playwrights were among those charting newly liberated territory, and they began to write about a range of previously taboo topics. Authors like Lion Feuchtwanger wrote anti-Nazi propaganda, and the playwright Bertold Brecht wrote *The Threepenny Opera,* a socialist critique of capitalist Germany, was hugely popular among Berliners. Playwright Carl Zuckmayer wrote *The Merry Vineyard,* a comedy that

mocked Nationalists, and thus inspired "no less than sixty-three different riots [by the Nationalists]. For Germany was approaching the time when a riot was the measure of theatrical success" (Friedrich, p. 259). One such work that earned a scandalized reaction from Germany's conservative elite, and scorn and censorship from the Nazis, was Ernst Krenek's opera *Jonny Spielt Auf* (Jonny strikes up) that follows Jonny, a black jazz violinist and womanizer. The opera was premiered to wild success, and was "a quintessential product of the Weimar era, calculated to titillate and jar all sensibilities in its exaltation of hot American jazz over icy European conservatism. It certainly offended the right people, figuring prominently in the Nazis proscription of decadent music" (Oestrich). The Nazi party later used a poster from *Jonny Spielt Auf,* depitcting Jonny playing saxophone with the star of David on his lapel, for their Entartete Musik (Degenerate Musik) campaign as it neatly encompassed everything they saw wrong with contemporary music movements.

  The advent of film at the turn of the century created a new medium for German artists to explore. Unlike opera or theater, film was an accessible performance medium for almost all social classes and "To a great extent, huge film 'palaces' designed as splendid and glamorous buildings replaced the opera house during the Weimar Republic" (Monchik, p. 510). The movie industry grew rapidly, and "During the war, the German government merged all film production companies to create a national film monopoly for the creation of propaganda films. At the start of the Weimar era, the government extracted themselves from the film business, abolished all censorship, and turned the movie-makers loose to produce whatever the public wanted. What the public wanted, as might be expected, was sex" (Friedrich, p. 65). As is the

nightlife scenes of Germany, film began to show sexual freedom in films like *Hyenas of Lust* and gay relationships in films like *Different from the Others.* Film was also used to critique class divides and societal organization in films like Frits Lang's famous *Metropolis* which depicted an urban dystopia with stark and wide class divides. Filmmakers Carl Mayer and Hans Janowitz made the famous work, *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari,* which they intended "not just as a horror movie but as a kind of revolutionary allegory. Caligari, according to Janowitz's subsequent account of the affair, was supposed to represent the insane evil of 'an unlimited [state] authority that idolizes power'" (Friedrich, p. 67).

Architecture was another field that notably departed from previous societal expectations. Walter Gropius founded the school of Bauhaus architecture, about which he said, "The governing principle of the enterprise will be to make these houses comfortable, not in terms of overdone gilded pomp, but rather in clear and open spatial arrangements" (Friedrich 158). This idea of practical, simplistic architecture was a huge break from previous architectural styles valued by Germany's pomp and circumstance loving elite, and though it was initially scorned, Bauhaus soon gained traction and became prevalent and influential. The Bauhaus school's teaching philosophy "put more emphasis on the process of education than on the concrete results. Teamwork was encouraged" (Hatulla Moholy-Naga). The Bauhaus era also had a leftist political tinge, and "Bauhaus students had become thoroughly involved in politics…. [in 1932] the Nazi-dominated government of Dessaus demanded that the Bauhaus close down" (Freidrich, pp. 371-372).

Dadaism:

> "[Dadaism was] a stone that broke over the world of art as the war did
> over the nations. It came without warning, out of a heavy brooding sky,
> and left behind it a new day in which the stored-up energies released by
> Dada were evidenced in new forms, new materials, new ideas, new
> directions, new people– and in which they addressed themselves to new
> people."
> -Hans Richter

Dada was one such subversive, irreverent, and new art form that took root in Weimar Germany. Like many other artistic movements of the day, Dada rejected bourgeois standards for art and "questioned the myth of originality, of the artist as genius, suggesting instead that everybody should be an artist and that almost anything could be art" (Kuenzli, p. 14). Dada similarly rejected any rules and restrictions on art– instead, "Dada not only had *no* programme, it was against all programmes, Dada's only programme was to have no programme" (Richter, Dada, p. 34). Confronted by a society in which one lacked "worth or significance, one either retreated into the abyss of the self (a self that had dissolved into nothingness), or tried to reclaim the self by individuating (authenticating) it (by seeking to create radically intense forms of experience). That is, one either retreated into one's own nothingness or revolted. DADA did both" (Elder, 111). Dada created a space for people to express total freedom, far from any "rules" that governed art or societal norms.

Dadaism came to prominence in the post-war era, but was present in some forms before the war making it difficult to pinpoint an exact start to the movement. Raoul Hausmann, a leader of the Berlin Dada movement, noted that "where and how

dada began is almost as hard to determine as Homer's birthplace." Despite its

ambiguous start date, Dadaism was inextricably linked to the uncertain and chaotic era

of WWI. Hugo Ball, widely regarded to be the founder of Dadaism, was set on

searching for "a *meaning* which he could set up against the absurd and meaninglessness

of the age in which he lives" (Richter, Dada, p. 13). During the war, Ball resided in

Zurich where artistic freedom reigned. As Dadaist Hans Arp put it, "Revolted by the

butchery of the 1914 World War, we in Zurich devoted ourselves to the arts" (Richter,

Dada, p. 25). It was in Zurich that Dadaist ideas were explored, and cohorts of similarly

minded artists began to form. In April 1916, Ball proposed calling his artistic

community *Dada*.

Defining the title "Dada" is a considerable task. Dada had "no unified formal

characteristics as have other styles…. Art historians, professionally trained to

distinguish the formal characteristics of particular stylistic periods, have been unable to

cope with the contradictions and complexities of Dada" (Richter, Dada, p. 9). Even

origins of the name Dada are unknown, and "it cannot be determined what the name of

this movement signifies nor who invented it" (Richter, p. 94). The movement was

clearly a rejection of societal expectations and rules, but to what level that rejection

went was rarely explicitly stated through art. Instead, Dadaists used random, bizarre

language to communicate what their movement was. According to Dadaist Tristan

Tzara, "Dada is a virgin microbe… / Dada has 391 different attitudes and colours

depending on the sex of the chairman / It transforms itself – affirms – simultanesouly

says the opposite / It doesn't matter – screams – goes fishing" (Kuenzli, p. 17). Dada's

opposition to society's sense and logic is further illustrated through the *Dada Manifest*o

authored by Dada founder Hugo Ball who wrote, *"Dada Tzara, dada Huelsenbeck, dada m'dada, dada m'dada dada mhm, dada dera dada, dada Hue, dada Tza"* (Ball). As Hans Richter wrote, Dada was "not an art movement in the traditional sense…. Dada has no unifying formal characteristics, but it had a new creative ethic from which, quite unexpectedly, new forms of expression arose" (Richter, p. 94).

Dada productions started mostly as literary works from writers and poets like Hugo Ball, Tristan Tzara, Emmy Hennings, and more. Early productions included works like *The Hyperbole of the Crocodile Hairdresser and the Walking Stick,* a cycle of poems performed all in unison by a Dadaist cohort. In 1916, Ball and Tzara founded the Dada Gallery in Zurich which allowed the Dadaists to hold frequent performances, and gave them a space to display visual Dadaist works. Photomontages, abstract painted works and sculpture were displayed at the gallery, and the Dadaists began to progressively expand their practice from written works to other mediums. Dadaist groups began to hold gallery exhibitions of their work around Europe featuring their visual works, poems, and abstract performances. Tzara was fond of writing poems by "cutting up logical sentence structures of a newspaper article, shaking them in a bag and then arranging the fragments arbitrarily" (Kuenzli, p. 20). In a 1919 Dada performance piece, Walter Serner read his 'The Last Loosening' and presented "flowers to a tailor's dummy [which] unleashed protests among the audience. Tzara was pleased with the commotion: 'Dada has succeeded in establishing the circuit of absolute unconsciousness in the auditorium which has forgotten the frontiers of education of prejudices, experienced the commotion of the NEW" (Kuenzli, p. 21). The Dadaists rejoiced in their chaos.

Dadaism was not always overtly political in nature, but often intersected with social and political issues. The bourgeois was not fond of Dada, and viewed it "as a loose-living scoundrel, a villainous revolutionary… with designs upon their bells, safe-deposits and honours. The Dadaist thought up tricks to rob the bourgeois of his sleep" (Richter, Dada, p. 38). Dadaism in turn was not fond of the bourgeois, and rejected and questioned the elite's rules for art and social norms, as well as challenged the conservative elite's beliefs about the war. Hugo Ball wrote in his journal about the war, "People act as if nothing had happened. The slaughter increases, and they cling to the prestige of European glory. They are trying to make the impossible possible and to pass off the betrayal of human beings, the exploitation of the body and soul of people, and all this civilized carnage as a triumph of European intelligence" (Kuenzli, pp. 16-17). Dadaists rejected the propaganda of the German government about the war as a noble effort and tried to awaken people to the horrors and futility of the war. We can decipher the intention of Dadaism by examining it in "relation to its opposite…. DADA represented the extreme wing of the anti-corporatism/pro-individualism faction. Those beliefs stood in contrast to the views of thinkers who proposed that the Great War called for a resolute decision that would found a new world order" (Elder, 86). Dada opposed conforming to a society that rewarded the elite and bourgeois and painted the horrors of the war as an admirable act. Instead, they denounced all order and reason imparted by the elite and ruling classes in favor of nonsense, anti-capitalism, and anti-bourgeois sentiment.

Many Dadaists were linked to Bolshevism and Anarchism, again mostly because of their revulsion about the German government's actions in WWI. As German

writer Richard Hülsenback said, "We were agreed that the war had been contrived by the various governments for the most autocratic, sordid and materialistic reasons" (Elder, 84). Hülsenbeck also noted that the political beliefs of many Dadaists appeared in their works, because:

> "Art in its execution and direction is dependent on the time in which it lives, and artists are creatures of their epoch. The highest art will be that which in its conscious content presents the thousandfold problems of the day, the art which has been visibly shattered by the explosions of last week, which is forever trying to collect its limbs after yesterday's crash. The best and most extraordinary artists will be those who every hour snatch the tatters of their bodies out of the frenzied cataract of life, who, with bleeding hands and hearts, hold fast to the intelligence of their time"" (Elder, 84).

Even if Dadaist works were not obviously political, they were deeply entangled with the politics of their era. In the 1970s, Hans Richter explained Dada's anarchist tendencies as "the kind of attitude one finds today about large bodies of students. We rebelled then, just as the young all over the world rebel today... Surely, Dada was an anarchist movement, but it was just as well an anti-anarchist movement with all shades of doubts, emotions and desires for more ordered human relationships" (Richter, p. 97).

NAZI CENSORSHIP:

Hitler's rise to power and control over German society was aided by an extensive propaganda campaign that painted him as a savior to bring Germany out of social and political chaos. Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's Reich Minister of Propaganda, oversaw the careful curation of material to promote this image of Hitler, and the censorship and destruction of anything that did not support Nazism. This included any art forms that did not conform to nationalist and imperialist ideas, which certainly

included Dadaism. Goebbels rounded up countless works of art, destroyed many, and put some on display as examples of "Entartete Kunst" (Degenerate Art) in a huge exhibit in 1937.

Dadaism and other avant-garde art movements of the day were decidedly incompatible with Nazism as they were individualistic, denounced order and rules, and often spoke against imperialism and the Nazi party. In 1936, Joseph Goebbels was given the mission of making music and art in Germany conform to Nazi ideals, and was appointed the Reich Minister of Propaganda by Hitler. Goebbels was a "brilliant producer and manipulator of images, ideas, and sounds" (Meyer, p. 174), and began a campaign of censorship and destruction of news, art, music and anything else that was in opposition to Hitler's image as a harbinger of order. Goebbels began a formal campaign against *Entartete Kunst* ("Degenerate Art"), and collected and destroyed countless "offensive" works. Goebbels ordered bands of Nazi youth to break "into every main library and haul out the works of the authors Goebbels hates.... They set them on fire" (Friedrich, p. 385). Nazi Storm Troopers "raided and then closed down the Bauhaus on the grounds that it had supposedly printed communist leaflets" (Freidrich, p. 386). Goebbels also commandeered the press, took over many German newspapers, and "issued a proclamation in which he banned art criticism…. By circumscribing the discourse about art, Goebbels both enhanced the government's ability to monitor critics and helped to monopolize the commerce of ideas" (Petropoulos 52-53).

Goebbels' reach was extensive, and he attacked countless artistic groups and centers, collecting their works to ridicule on display, or destroy. Goebbels seized many

painted works that had been deemed "Entartete Kunst" and held the 1937 "Degenerate Art Exhibition" in Berlin. Goebbels assigned a commision headed by Adolf Ziegler to confiscate modern artworks, and Ziegler "seized approximately 5,000 paintings and 12,000 graphic artworks from 101 museums" (Petropoulos 56), which were then turned into a "propagandistic installation– with elaborate embellishments such as insulting illustrations and vulgar captions" (Petropoulos 55). Ziegler described the work in the exhibit saying, "All around us you see the monstrous offspring of insanity, impudence, ineptitude and sheer degeneracy. What this exhibition offers inspires horrors and disgust in us all" (Lüttichau, p. 45). The *Degenerate Art exhibition* was a formal display of hostility towards experimental art.

One year after the *Entartete Kunst* exhibition, the Nazis held another exhibition called *Entartete Musik* (Degenerate Music) to "document the musicians and music that had already been purged and vilified during the past five years" (Meyer, p. 178). The Nazis acknowledged the cultural and ideological importance of music to their new regime, but sought to return German music to tradition and away from twelve-tone, atonal, and other experimental forms of music. The Nazis formed The Reichsmusikkammer (RMK, Reich Chamber of Music) to both represent and control artists, and music became "centrally controlled, and conservative traditionalists… were reassured" (Meyer, p. 175). Composer Richard Strauss was briefly the president of the RMK, before his private critiques of the Nazis were discovered. Nationalist composers with Nazi sympathies, like Wagner, were elevated to help "legitimize the new government [culturally]" (Meyer, p. 171). Experimental compositions that explored twelve-tone, atonality, jazz, or other non-German nationalist ideas were considered to

be "a symbol of threats to civilization itself, to an active anti-German international conspiracy" (Meyer, p. 171). Countless composers were forced to conform or flee Germany. One notable example was the twelve-tone pioneer Arnold Schoenberg who was "A giant to his admirers, a Jew and 'destroyer of tonality' to the Nazis, Schoenberg represented music's crisis, the embodiment of all the anathemas within the realm of serious music" (Barron, p. 173).

Film was also heavily censored by Goebbels, stifling a revolutionary industry. As film rose in popularity, "the world admired German filmmaking for both its bold experimentation and for its brilliant technical and artistic finish…. The Germans were famous for technical innovations such as the moving camera, complex editing on action, and special effects" (Moritz 185). When Goebbels attained power, he "recognized that film could realize its potential as the most effective means of mass indoctrination only if it remains a fascinating popular entertainment…. The entire film world operated under Goebbels' control, capricious as it was…. Almost all films produced in Germany before 1933 were effectively forbidden" (Moritz 185-186). Goebbels enacted a morally based censoring campaign on film, editing out unacceptable dialogue and scenes, and banning films that were not up to moral snuff. This censorship was largely aimed at Jewish people and homosexual content. However, Goebbels did not ban film altogether, but redirected filmmakers to make films within his censorship boundaries, and to make film as lucrative as possible. As experimental films infrequently made large sums, Goebbels was not fond of them, and "In the realm of experimental film and animation the filmmakers experienced as much control and restriction, and many fled" (Moritz 191).

Artistic freedom was squashed, and many artists fled Germany for safer, more liberated artistic pastures.

Ghosts Before Breakfast

This section introduces Hans Richter and Paul Hindemith more formally and tracks their early involvement with film. Both Richter and Hindemith enjoyed the golden artistic age of Weimar Germany and experimented a great deal with their art. This experimentation was not met well by the Nazi party, and both had their works confiscated and destroyed during the *Entartete Kunst* campaign. *Ghosts Before Breakfast* was one such work– while not overtly political, the film did not align with Nazi ideals, and the Nazis destroyed its original film reel and score.

Hans Richter:

Hans Richter was a prominent Dadaist filmmaker, painter, and artist. Born in Berlin in 1888, Richter experienced the horrors of WWI first hand as he, "served in the German army in World War I and witnessed the consequent inflation which impoverished his parents" (Richter, p. 14). After the war, Richter followed his radical artistic and political tendencies, joined the Zurich Dadaists, and "was led from them to the Anarchists" (Richter, p. 14). Though Richter did not always overtly intend his artistic work to be political, he wrote that "Art is politics. Everything that takes hold of the flow of life for its own ends is politics" (Richter, p. 170) and created politically tinged throughout his career, like anti-war and anti-Kaiser newspaper cartoons in the 1910s. During his Dadaist era, Richter began to make films, and is considered to have created some of the first surrealist films. *Ghosts Before Breakfast* is one of his best known films.

Richter's artistic career started with sketching and painting, mostly copies of pre-existing works. In 1912, Richter had his first encounter with modern art when his friend told him about Walter Rössner's painting *The Deer* which was "an enormous painting, in all colors, but you couldn't find the deer. Finally after searching for a long time you could discover the deer off in a little corner" (Richter, p. 24). Richter described this painting as "crazy," but was intrigued nonetheless and began to seek out exhibitions of modern art. Richter began to make cubist works, and noted that "The more I acquired this discipline, the more my self-confidence grew…. But soon even with Cubism I was not satisfied anymore. I joined the Dada group and tried to blow everything sky high as all the others did" (Richter, p. 20).

Before Richter could properly blow things sky high, he was inducted into the German army to serve in World War I. Richter's army service, like most, was an unkind experience filled with frozen nights, low rations, and eventually artillery fire. After an injury to his vertebrae, Richter was hospitalized, and after "a lot of electricity, massage, quiet and sleeping drugs, [he] was finally cured" (Richter 28). Richter's wound left him in severe pain, leading him to be referred to a hospital in Zurich– and in Zurich he met Dada once again. The attitudes resulting from the Dadaists war experiences created an atmosphere that fostered both the vibrancy of Dadaism, and strong political attitudes. Richter adopted anarchist tendencies, which allowed him to follow his "inner noise. [Anarchy was] Liberation of the unconscious, law of chance, a new ticket to life, feeling one's own strength, believing in oneself, disregarding the respect, judgement and acceptance of society!" (Richter, p. 32).

Upon reentering Dadaist circles, Richter soon "became the art editor of [Ludwig] Rubiner's magazine, *Zeitecho*, and in each number there appeared what he called a *Volksblatt*, a popular drawing by [Richter]" (Richter, p. 30). From this platform, Richter publically explored both "the terrifying cruelties of the war, on the other side satirizing the war machine" (Richter, p. 30). Richter wrote this caption for his drawings in a 1917 issue of *Zeitecho*:

> "What are we doing to oppose the battles that are raging all over Europe? Everywhere and continuously– battles, killers, the death of human beings! Is that not our concern? / Can anyone say that still-lives, nudes or any paintings, titled in some way or untitled, do anything in opposition? / Art is well established everywhere, and poor suffering men have the right to expect some artist to be the mouth of their soul (the soul of those who are less privileged in their ability to use image and word)– their mouth passionately cries out in their pain. / Artists flee from the banality of this simple request. But look at the earth now! THAT is the reality. And testify whether the most banal of our demands is fulfilled and whether the very least IS done according to our sincere convictions. / ...If something exists now in all men, it is the burning pain, disgust and shame of living and participating, at least morally, in such a devastating time even though our "good-will" or 'better judgement' might oppose it. / How can we quietly accept the responsibility that everything is so cruel, brutal, devoid of the spiritual values we have cherished all our lives? How can we stand this without exploding in a roar of pain?"
>
> (Richter, p. 31)

Richter recognized the importance of art as a place to express the pain, frustration, helplessness, and myriad of other emotions experienced by those who witnessed WWI, and the role artists could play in expressing these emotions.

Unsurprisingly, Richter's relationship with the Nazis was not a pretty one, and Goebbels' *Entartete Kunst* campaign "destroyed almost every early painting he made" (Richter, p. 16). After the release of his film *Everything Revolves– Everything Moves,* Richter was beat by two Nazi men, who he later called "those bastards" in

German newspapers. Intrigued by his open protest of the Nazis, Richter was invited by Prometheus Film to create a film called *Metall* about a workers strike in a Berlin iron factory whose food supply convoy was blocked by Nazi attacks. The German government got wind of Richter's project, and as he wrote "They forbade me this, they forbade me that, and I was continually rewriting the script. I rewrote seven times, until it wasn't a documentary anymore but was fictional… So I gave it up" (Richter, p. 46). Soon after, Hitler formally came into power leading Richter to flee to France. Richter left Germany in 1931, after which the Nazis cleaned out [his] apartment" (Richter, p. 47). Nazi presence in Europe stunted Richter's artistic production, As he wrote, "film in Nazi Europe? Film needs expansion and distribution and this is based on teamwork. Painting wants introspection, deliberation, contemplation… To leave Europe became more and more urgent" (Richter, p. 48). On his fifty-third birthday, Richter did just that and relocated to New York.

However, long before he fled, Richter was busy travelling "from the war into freedom and immediately into Dada!" (Richter, p. 32). Richter's artistic experimentation entered a golden age, and he created many paintings and sketches, and frequently collaborated with his fellow Dadaists who braved the inflation era leading bohemian lifestyles together. However, after several years of painted and drawn Dada mediums, the Dadaists "arrived at a crossroad, the scroll just looked at us and seemed to ask for real motion. This was just as much of a shock to us as it was a sensation. Because in order to realize movement we needed film" (Richter, p. 41). Richter specifically was led to pursue film as he "began to seek for fundamental principles which could control the chaos of Dada…. He became dissatisfied with the inability of

the scroll form to represent real <u>movement</u> in these elementary relationships, and how, almost unwillingly, he had to turn to film-making" (Richter, p. 16). In 1920, Richter and his colleague Viking Eggeling entered the world of film, and produced some of the first abstract films ever made.

Richter's foray into film caused a splash. After a start making films with hand painted slides that were basically animated paintings, Richter moved to shooting live action and stop motion with physical objects. When Richter's abstract films were shown in Berlin, "The aroused a certain scandal; such that everybody wanted to have a small film by this crazy guy" (Richter, p. 44). Richter began to receive film commissions that in turn financed his larger projects. One of these projects was commissioned by composer and musician Paul Hindemith in 1927 when "Hindemith called me [Richter] and asked me to make a film for him for the International Film Festival in Baden-Baden" (Richter, p. 45). Richer accepted, and the two began work on *Ghosts Before Breakfast.*

Richter's creative relationship with composer Paul Hindemith was a logical one, as Richter was fascinated by music. In his autobiography he writes, "Music really was my first experience with art, with the spiritual, with something above our daily, banal experience…. My passion for music as a child was very great, and I haven't lost it" (Richter, p. 20). While making Dadaist paintings, Richer wrote that he was attempting to "achieve a balance and counterbalance of the white paper with the black spots of ink I made my drawings with… I thought of it as a kind of musical problem" (Richter, p. 37). This led Richter to intensely study the musical counterpoint of Bach's preludes and fugues written for Anna Magdelena, and eventually he "used the paper like

a musical instrument…. This further development took place in the years from 1918-1921 when I made my first film" (Richter, p. 37). Richter wrote that studying Bach helped him recognize "the possibility of repeating the same theme on different parts of the canvas, with minor and major variations and enjoyed, in that way, controlling rhythm as well as form" (Richter, p. 68). Richter's fascination with music was largely focused on rhythm, which he found "not only in music but also in the steadily repeated movements of workmen in the streets" (Richter, p. 20). Richter began to incorporate rhythmic elements into his art, particularly in film, and made a series of films titled *Rhythm 21, 23,* and *25.* Richter recognized that "the orchestration of time was the esthetic basis of this new art form… in film I articulate time visually, and in music I articulate time aurally" (Richter, pp. 130-131). Richter incorporated strong rhythmic elements in his films, as can be seen in *Ghosts Before Breakfast.*

Paul Hindemith:

Paul Hindemith was born in 1895 near Frankfurt, Germany. Hindemith was an accomplished violist, violinist, conductor and composer. Despite the popularity of twelve-tone and atonal music in his era, Hindemith was known for revitalizing and expanding tonality. Hindemith began his studies on violin, and became the concertmaster of the Frankfurt Opera at the age of twenty. Hindemith's music was not limited to formal classical performance though, and "he played in more informal arenas, including coffeehouses, dance halls, and cinemas" (Monchik, p. 512). When he was called into military service during WWI, Hindemith even played the bass drum in a regimental band. Later in his career, Hindemith turned more towards composition,

music theory and teaching, and would eventually teach at Yale and the University of Zurich.

Compositionally, Hindemith's early music leaned on Wagner, Strauss and French impressionism, but "his sense for grotesque effects and characteristic rhythms soon imparted to it a personal note" (Reich, p. 487). Hindemith explored polyrhythms and unique harmonies, and in the 1920s, "suffered the influence of jazz" (Reich, p. 488). Hindemith's compositional innovation "presents us with new harmonic experiences, new problems of hearing and of execution, tiding us over into more unaccustomed idioms and breaking down our prejudices against what is new by showing us that it may be interesting and agreeable and quite within our grasp" (Reich, p. 491). One such piece full of new harmonic experiences was Hindemith's *Sonata for Solo Viola*, Op 25 No 1 in 1922. This piece was a fine example of Hindemith's tendencies to be "less concerned with beauty and eloquence than the efficient and vigorous presentation of pure musical ideas: the so-called 'New Objectivity' (Neue Sachlichkeit)" (MacDonald). As Hindemith progressed as an artist, his interests expanded to collaboration with other mediums, like film.

As filmmaking rose in prominence in the 1920s, it had a "profound effect on the arts, particularly music, which film needed as its voice…. Paul Hindemith used the medium of film as a way to recapture a diminishing opera audience" (Monchik, p. 511). Hindemith loved film, frequently attended the cinema, and wrote several short plays, "some of which contain[ed] cinematic elements" (Monchik, p. 512). In 1920, Hindemith befriended filmmaker Arnold Fanck, and developed a deep interest in Fanck's mountain films. Fanck recalled Hindemith's reactions to the films saying,

"'What I do in pictures, [Hindemith] said, was indeed pure music– and [he asked] if he could be allowed some time to convert this film into music" (Monchik, p. 515). At the time, music was usually played alongside film screenings in movie houses, but original film scores were rare. Fanck believed that Hindemith's score to his mountain film *Im Kampf mit dem Berge* was "the first original film score ever to be composed" (Monchik, p. 515). Hindemith took on film scoring with great gusto, and wrote that, "the silent film did not require a close interpretation of all its separate scenes; what it required was the opposite, the *musical simplification of the mosaic of images into one long line…* The even flow of music must therefore, apart from certain exceptions based on dramatic considerations, not be interrupted" (Monchik, pp. 516-517).

Hindemith's penchant for films led him to become the "leading organizer of the festivals in Baden-Baden, [where he] repeatedly set the younger generation of composers the task of illustrating films with music" (Reich, p. 489). These festivals were celebrations of contemporary music, and "particularly emphasized new technology, such as film and radio, and its relationship to and impact on music" (Monchik, p. 525). It was for this festival that Hindemith asked Richter to create *Ghosts Before Breakfast*. The 1927 festival saw the debut of *Vormittagsspuk* (Ghosts Before Breakfast), for which "Hindemith wrote a mechanical accompaniment for the Steinway-Welte player piano" (Monchik, p. 527). Hindemith was very excited about his film collaborations, and even acted in *Ghosts Before Breakfast.* He can be seen in several shots alongside Richter.

Hindemith was fond of mechanically assisted musical performances as they allowed for greater synchronicity to the film being played. Instruments like the player

piano allowed Hindemith to record a performance of his score that could then be played as a "live" accompaniment over and over and never waver from its original performance. Undeterred by critique from other composers that mechanically driven music was emotionless, "Hindemith always preferred to write film music for mechanical accompaniment in order to achieve maximum control over the synchronization of the pictures and the screen with the music… [as it] 'always preserves the same quality of playback and is not dependent on the chance of a good but poorly-chosen conductor'" (Monchik, p. 528). This was the method Hindemith chose to use with *Ghosts Before Breakfast* not only for the sake of synchronicity, but also because "Hindemith believed that there was an intrinsic relationship between film and mechanical music…. 'I [Hindemith] have preferred to write music for a mechanical instrument, not only because an exact convergence can be achieved, but also because I firmly believe that a mechanically rolling sequence of frames belongs with mechanically reproduced music'" (Monchik, p. 528).

Hindemith's relationship with the Nazis was a complicated one. Because Hindemith's music was technically rooted in tonality, he quoted German folk music, and his popularity, the Nazis were conflicted about how to treat him. While promoting his opera *Mathis der Maler*, Hindemith faced attacks from Nazi extremists and attempted to avert a crisis when he "used his Nazi connections, invited Hitler to attend one of his composition classes, and even defended his work by contrasting it with the 'sonic orgies' of émigrés Weill, Krenek, and Schoenberg" (Potter, p. 433). Despite this suspect effort by Hindemith, popular opinion concurred that his work was in fact "'culturally Bolshevist' in Germany. On December 6 1934, during a speech at the Berlin Sports

Palace, Germany's Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels publicly denounced Hindemith as an 'atonal noisemaker'" (Reisman, p. 88). Goebbels' blacklisting of Hindemith led prominent German conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler to challenge the state on Hindemith's behalf 1934. This resulted in Furtwängler's "resignation from all official positions and his temporary withdrawal from public appearances" (Meyer, p. 176). Nazi disdain for Hindemith was made official when he was featured in the "Entartete Musik" (Degenerate Music) exhibition, and some of his works were destroyed, including his score to *Ghosts Before Breakfast.*

Vormittagsspuk:

Vormittagsspuk, or *Ghosts Before Breakfast* (literally translated to "morning spook"), was a 1927 film made by Hans Richter and scored by Paul Hindemith. The film was "One of the first Surrealist films" (Richter, Dada, p. 222). *Ghosts Before Breakfast* neatly showcases Richter's philosophies about how objects, actors and rhythm should be used in films. When he asked Richter to make the film, "Hindemith suggested something pleasant, something set in the countryside. Richter ran out of time and shot something in an improvisational style" (Mills). In the film, "The 'characters' are everyday objects incited to 'revolt against routine'" (Richter, Dada, p. 222). The score to the film, and the original film reel, were destroyed as part of Goebbels' censorship campaign. A second film reel survives, but the score was irretrievably lost.

It is difficult to fir *Ghosts Before Breakfast* into a specific genre, but it is generally considered to be both a Dada film and a surrealist film. The film consists of a mix of fast paced and rhythmic stop motion and live action shots, with no apparent

coherent narrative. Richter described *Ghosts Before Breakfast* as being filled with

"mostly natural elements articulated by strong rhythmical movement (like the hands of

a clock), filled with totally irrational happenings, still make a kind of a story. It is here

where misunderstanding arrives– or is it misunderstanding?" (Richter, p. 143). Richter

theorized that viewers are habituated to view films as stories no matter their content,

and that the "flow of images always makes a story whether there is one or not… it

works even when abstract forms follow abstract forms… So whatever you do in films

you tell stories, whether with or without natural objects" (Richter, p. 143).

Despite Richter's awareness that his films told a story, he liked to improvise

when shooting his films and let viewers decide what the narrative of his films were after

they were completed. Richter denounced the planned execution of commercial films

which he felt did not allow for "sensitive improvisation [or] listening to oneself as well

as to the material you accumulate" (Richter, p. 144). In *Ghosts Before Breakfast,*

Richter denounced planning in favor of sensitive improvisation, much to the disbelief of

Eisenstein and others who "could hardly believe that the content, the story– the

rebellion of objects against daily routine– developed, so to say, as the by-product of

rhythmical conception and by improvisation" (Richter, p. 145). Indeed, *Ghosts Before

Breakfast* does seem to present a narrative of everyday objects revolting against

regimentation as Bowler hats resist capture, teacups move independently, and windows

open without assistance.

Even if Richter did not actually plan a narrative for the film, it is difficult to

believe that he did not have any intended implications for the film. After the score and

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original film reel were destroyed by the Nazis, Richter added a title card to the surviving film reel that reads:

> The Nazis destroyed the sound version of this film as "degenerate art."
> It shows that even objects revolt against regimentation.

Figure 1: Still from Ghosts Before Breakfast

With this title card, the entire film could be seen as a revolt against the regimentation of the Nazi party– yet Richter never claimed that the film had overtly political implications. However, based on his anarchist tendencies, his previous work and writings, and the political climate in which he was creating this film, it seems impossible that his work could not have been influenced by the Nazi party and the political climate of the day.

This title card could also be explained by Richter's fascination with treating objects and actors equally while filming. As Richter put it, "I did not look upon natural elements as literal elements; I did not even consider their conventional significance… But I learned to understand that every object has an abstract, that is, purely visual, connotation as well as an emotional one…. I came to use objects as I used abstract forms, and people as I used objects" (Richter, p. 143). The title card could simply reflect Richter's feelings about how objects and humans could be used interchangeably

to achieve the end aesthetic goal of a film. As Richter wrote, "Even objects are God's children. My love for objects (in my films, in preference to people, or anyhow, people only as objects!) does not mean disregard for man, not a neglect. Rather it is a confirmation that humans are also objects, objects of historical, political, celestial happenings or simply objects of their own stupidity" (Richter, p. 145). In *Ghosts Before Breakfast,* the most notably featured objects are bowler hats that fly around freely, evading the grasp of their human counterparts. Of these bowler hats, Richter wrote "The interpretation of these objects becomes significant. They are living things whose language and gestures have to be discovered…. Everything is part of creation, one never knows WHERE God hides or is hidden" (Richter, p. 145).

Richter's focus on rhythm is very apparent in this film. Richter chose the subjects of this film, natural or abstract, on the basis of "their fit into my primary aim of articulating Time– Rhythm" (Richter, p. 143). Rhythm is most obviously presented in the film through shots of a clock that start, end, and occur throughout the film. This clock "relentlessly counts down the minutes to noon, a play on the German phrase 'Es ist fünf vor zwölf,' literally 'five minutes to 12' or 'time in running out'" (Mills). Time is played with throughout the film, as Richter uses slow motion, stop motion and reverse to blur the reality of time. The film also shows humans moving rhythmically and robotically, contrasting the freewheeling motions of the bowler hats and other objects in the film. For the film's score, Hindemith composed a piece which was "performed according to a roll of paper that unrolled in front of the conductor's music-stand at the same speed of the film" (Richter, Dada, p. 198). This allowed the music and film to sync accurately, emphasizing the rhythmic nature of the work.

Making the Movie: Truancy and Rabbits

This film was my first. I approached this project in the spirit of Dadaism and worked to let go of my inexperience and expectations and tried to create something simply for the sake of creating it– it was great fun! I purchased a Super 8 camera, recruited some friends, and had some fun creating props and filming in my parent's backyard. The process of recording the score was a bit more formal, and took nearly a year of practice to master Hindemith's work at a level worthy of recording. In the end, I was quite happy with how my recordings turned out and felt extremely rewarded by the long process of learning, deciphering, and executing Hindemith's work. Here is a bit more about my creative process.

Filming

When I first decided I wanted to focus on Dadaism for my thesis and make a creative project, my first thought was that I should compose a score in the style of Hindemith to accompany *Ghosts Before Breakfast.* I soon realized my compositional skills could not match Hindemith's, and shifted focus– I decided to make a film in the style of Richter and set it to an existing piece of Hindemith's music.

I wanted to make *Trumancy* with as much historical accuracy as possible. To ensure this, I began the research that has culminated in this essay to better understand Dadaism and *Ghosts Before Breakfast.* I also started to research the technical aspects of filmmaking in the 1920s, and what types of cameras and film were used by Richter and other filmmakers of the era. The most commonly used cameras from Richter's era shot

8 and 16 millimeter film. Unfortunately, these types of film are no longer manufactured, and thus both 8mm and 16mm cameras and film are very expensive and of unreliable quality. Coincidentally, I own an 8mm camera that had belonged to my grandmother, but because 8 millimeter film is difficult and expensive to obtain, I opted not to use her camera. Moving on to the next best thing, I chose to shoot on Super 8 film. Super 8 film is still produced today and is easy to purchase. Cameras are no longer manufactured, but they are a popular vintage item on Ebay. I purchased a Minolta "Super-8 Autopak," (manufactured from 1970-76) on Ebay and ordered Super 8 film from Kodak.

Once I received my camera, I was pleased to find that it worked perfectly, and began to start shooting. Luckily for inexperienced me, Super-8 cameras were designed to be user friendly, and the camera was quite easy to use, save for a few weather induced hiccups. The first hurdle I encountered was when I discovered that the camera did not enjoy the cold and would not turn on if the batteries were cold at all. The second hurdle was the camera's inability to shoot in anything but bright daylight without being extremely underexposed. I discovered this when I shot my first "test" roll of film mostly indoors and was dismayed to find that it was very dark and grainy once developed– this can be seen in some of the shots used in my film, like the digital clock. These factors combined meant that shooting indoors, on cloudy days, or in cold weather were not feasible options. These realities delayed shooting for nearly all of winter term due to weather and temperature. I was only able to start shooting in earnest in late March and early April when warm, sunny weather came round.

Once the weather brightened, I planned out shots and started filming in earnest. Shooting on film was interesting– because I am used to using digital cameras

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and shooting from the hip, I had to change my approach when using a film camera with a finite and expensive amount of film inside. Each 3.5 minute reel of Super 8 cost about $25 to buy, and another ~$65 to develop, making this project an expensive endeavor. Because of the high cost of film, I only shot three reels, or about 10 minutes, of total film. Thus, each time I pulled the trigger on the camera, precious film was being used, and I rarely took more than one take of anything in the film.

My intention with the film was to shoot a sort of modern homage to *Ghosts Before Breakfast*, so I decided to recreate some of Richter's shots, with a Eugene twist. Bowler hats became Birkenstocks, suits became jeans and t-shirts, and the tea set became a growler filled with IPA. I originally toyed with the idea of placing contemporary political imagery in my film, as I assumed many of the objects in Richter's film were intended to be subtly political. After researching his film further and discovering that he did not intend *Ghosts Before Breakfast* to be overtly political, I abandoned this idea– mostly. I thought Birkenstocks were a nice nod to the counterculture of Eugene and protest movements of the past, as well as a nod to Germany, Birkenstock's country of origin.

Here are some examples of shots that I modeled after *Ghosts Before Breakfast* (alternating stills from *Ghosts Before Breakfast* with stills from *Trumancy*):

Figure 2: Runaway bowtie (still from *Ghosts Before Breakfast*)

Figure 3: Runaway beanie, based on bowtie scene from *Ghosts Before Breakfast* (still from *Trumancy)*

Figure 4: Person chasing bowler hat (still from Ghosts Before Breakfast)

Figure 5: Person chasing Birkenstocks, based on Bowler Hat chase scenes from Ghosts Before Breakfast (still from Trumancy)

Figure 6: Stop motion guns displayed as negatives (still from Ghosts Before Breakfast)

Figure 7: Stop motion hatchets with negative filter, based on guns from Ghosts Before Breakfast (still from Trumancy)

To shoot the live action portions of the film, my roommates became my cast, and we spent a day shooting in my parent's backyard. The shots that were based on Richter's work were mostly pre-planned, like the "beer party" (tea party), Birkenstock

chasing (bowler hats), and funny walking. Some of the other shots were improvised, like the bench poses, and broken glass (a casualty of a ladder fall). For the shaving shot, my friend grew out his beard for weeks and then trimmed it in segments so I could shoot. For the beanie scene, which was meant to mimic the bowtie scene in *Ghosts Before Breakfast,* I sewed a piece of fishing wire through the beanie, tied it to a ski pole, and filmed the shot with one hand on the camera shutter, one hand working the ski pole, and an umbrella propped under my arm to keep the camera dry (it was a rainy day)– my finest multitasking work while filming!

Because rhythm was so important to Richter's filmmaking, and music is such a big part of this project, I included many rhythmic elements in my filmmaking. I had my friends walk in a synchronized three step, pedal the bike in a rhythmic fashion, and crawl in a stilted, rhythmic way. This also reflected Richter's treatment of objects and actors as film subjects on a level playing field, and his reversal in *Ghosts Before Breakfast* of humans moving like objects, and vice versa.

I filmed the stop motion portions whenever friends weren't available to help. I started with the digital clock, which was meant to replace the analog clock in *Ghosts Before Breakfast.* Unfortunately, this was one of my first shots and is quite underexposed due to low lighting. I moved on to shoot stop motion with the beanies and plants, and lastly the hatchets, which were a late addition to the film. I wanted to have something mimicking Richter's guns, and happened to find four hatchets in my parent's garage. All of the top motion work was fairly straightforward, and my camera had an option to shoot still frames which made it quite simple. Most of the other shots were improvised when inspiration struck. The swimming fish is on a drainage chain on the

outside of a house across the street from mine, the records were a new thrift store purchase, the viola looked nice in the lighting on my bed, etc. The two animals featured in the film, Truman the bunny and Keegan the lizard, are my neighbor's pets– and the real stars of the film!

Unsurprisingly, I do not share some of Richter's cinematic talent and could not replicate all of his shots. The scene in his film where several men disappear behind a light pole seems to have been achieved through film splicing techniques, which I was unable to do (my film was sent to me as a digital file). I was also not sure how to mimic his film overlay techniques with the target, women's legs, floating head, etc. In the end, Richter's film is certainly more sophisticated than mine, but hey, it's Dadaism– anyone can make what they want, no rules, no talent necessary!

Music

When I was dreaming up ideas for a thesis, my first thought was up the idea for this thesis project, I was working on Hindemith's Op 25, No 1, and having a wonderful time doing so. I briefly toyed with the idea of attempting to compose an original score in the style of Hindemith to accompany my film, but soon realized that Hindemith's compositional talents are leaps and bounds beyond my capabilities, and gave it up. I instead decided to use Op 25, No 1 in my film, and recorded the first four movements to use in my film. I chose Op 25, No 1 primarily because rhythm is a hugely important aspect of the piece, particularly in the fourth movement, which reflects Richter's fascination with the rhythmic element of filmmaking. I also felt that playing a piece composed for a solo instrument mirrored the fact that many early film scores or

accompaniments were composed for solo piano. I originally wanted to perform Op 25, No 1 along with my film in real time, but after learning that Hindemith liked to compose for mechanical instruments like player piano in order to ensure synchronization between film and sound, I found it more appropriate to record myself playing and sync the recording to the film.

Learning Op 25, No 1 proved to be quite a substantial task. The piece consists of five movements, is composed for solo viola, and is home to some of the strangest harmonic structure that I have ever played. I spent nearly a year working up the piece to a performance level, and much of that time was spent parsing out the harmonic structures of the piece with my patient and benevolent viola teacher, Arnaud Ghillebaert, who broke down each movement note by note for me. This process revealed that Hindemith's seemingly random and chaotic composition actually made sense on a deep theoretical level.

Once I felt that I had mastered the piece at a high level, I set up two recording sessions in Beall Hall. My friend Will, a music production student, met me in the hall to set up the recording equipment. This was an interesting process for me as I had never recorded with professional equipment before, and I learned a lot about microphone placement and sound editing!

Editing

To edit the film, I used iMovie. I toyed with the idea of physically cutting my Super 8 film, but feared that I would permanently destroy my very expensive film

products– and I would have to track down a Super 8 projector. Editing in iMovie ended up being quite simple, and was a smooth process.

Despite using a digital editing interface, I wanted to use only effects that Richter had available to him. In *Ghosts Before Breakfast,* Richter reverses film, duplicates shots, uses slow and fast motion, and uses negatives as an effect, so I knew I could use all of these effects in my film editing. To fit the film to Hindemith's music, I ended up stretching the length of clips and changing their speed a decent amount. Hindemith and Richter both highly valued the rhythmic nature of film and the synchronicity of music and film, so this seemed like an appropriate editing choice. I duplicated a few shots to ensure the length of the film would match the length of the music, and usually either reversed or put a negative filter on the shots I duplicated. In the end, I felt that I was duplicating too many shots, and ended up editing out a minute and a half of the musical track rather than duplicating more film to fill that time.

I tried to follow Dadaist principles while editing and make the film truly random, but this proved to be a difficult task. As Richter said, humans will make a plot out of any string of images, and I certainly felt this while watching my film back. I had a sort of plotline in mind, but tried to abandon any sort of order while editing to create something Dadaist. This was a mostly successful endeavor, though you can see that, as in *Ghosts Before Breakfast,* the clock progresses throughout the film, and the Birkenstock searching and chasing is roughly in chronological order (searching, then chasing, then the return of the Birkenstocks to their owners feet).

Once the film was complete, it needed a name. I asked my friends for ideas, and one suggested Truancy, because they felt like this project couldn't possibly be school. I

agreed with the sentiment, and combined the word with Truman, the name of the rabbit

in the film, to make *Trumancy*. Once the film was titled, I made the title card, and

downloaded the exact fonts that Richter used (Hobo and Lydan) to do so.

Title card from Ghosts Before Breakfast

Title card from Trumancy

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