

John Heartfield's Photomontages as a Political Tool

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Abstract

It is the fact that art often involves with politics. It can work both of sides, either with a political ideology or against of it. The strong relationship between art and politic was occurred during the World War I and World War II. As a member of Berlin Dadaist Art Movement, John Heartfield made sharp opposition with his photomontage works against the Hitler regime in Germany. Since photomontage became anti-art technique against traditional painting in Dada Movement, Heartfield used this technique to criticize his opponents, Adolph Hitler and Mussolini. This research will focus on how Heartfield attacked and disrupted with his photomontages to his opponents. Later on, I will analyze photomontages of Peter Kennard and Klaus Staeck, contemporary artists and designers, who were inspired by Heartfield's photomontage methodology and his artistic activism. The qualitative research and comparative methodology were used in this research. The findings of the research showed that Heartfield became the pioneer of using photomontage technique in his time. He realized that he could use photography to express his politic thoughts and ideas in collage making. He used photomontage as a political weapon against his political oppositions. Kennard and Staeck, like Heartfield, used photomontage to support and defend their political issues in their time, too. Finannly, this research shows that Dada artist, John Heartfield as well as contemporaray designer and artist Peter Kennard and Klaus Staeck used the photomontage to make a social criticism through their conceptual and powerful works. Their initial approaches were not making design for a client or gallery to sell their works, but they wanted to be, as "artists-activists", part of social changes in their time.

Keywords: Heartfield, Photomontage, Hitler, Kennard, and Staeck

Introduction

Although John Heartfield and his photomontages made big impact in his time, during World War I and II, his influences and inspirations affected many designers and artists. In this research, I will analyze the works of Heartfield and his position in Berlin Dada Movement. I will also research the direct and indirect relationship between the photomontage of John Heartfield and his inspired designers and artists, Peter Kennard and Klaus Staeck. This comparison will help us to understand the way of using photomontage in politic and social issues.

The term photomontage was invented after World War I (Ades, 1976, p. 42), and just a couple of years prior to the official establishment of the Zurich Dada movement in 1917. Edwin Smitt explains the methodology of photomontage as "cutting out parts of one or more prints and pasting them over parts of another print, a photo background, or on a plain neutral sheet to form a design." (Smitt, 1973, p. 120). On the other hand, Maun Levin stresses the importance of this technique as "an intelligent assembling of parts to allow for a rational efficient consumption" and "allowing for the quick grasp of several images at once." (Levin, 1992, p. 40). Therefore, the photomontage technique was accepted among the Berlin Dadaists, particularly Heartfield, as a "social criticism" medium (Heartfield, 1977, p.2).

John Heartfield

In his research, Sherwin Simmon researches the relationship between the artists of the Berlin Dada movement and the world of advertising and states that Heartfield studied in the *Royal Bavarian School of Applied Arts* and later studied graphic art in Munich (Simmon, 1999, p.126). However, Evans writes that Heartfield had worked as a commercial artist after graduating from school." (Evans, 1992, p. 10). Evans also mentions that Heartfield later settled in Berlin and was producing creative works at the studio of Ernst Neumann, the prominent advertiser of the period. In 1916 and 1917, Heartfield, his brother Herzfelde and their close friend George Grosz together published a satirical magazine called *Neue Jugend* (New

Youth) in which they made political criticisms. Evans also added that the magazine served as a vehicle for their antiwar and pacifist views (p.10).

When Heartfield introduced photomontage, he used it, as Peter Selz says, "rationally and purposefully" (Selz, 1977, p.11). Hitler and the Nazi regime were perfect targets for Heartfield's photomontage. Smitt describes Heartfield's Nazi period photomontage works as "political weapons". (Smitt, 1973, p. 31). Heartfield relayed the political significance of this technique in his visit to Moscow, where he stated that photomontage should be used as a "weapon" in the schools, factories and state institutes (Evans, 1992, p.35). This indicates that photomontage became "a weapon in the hand of Heartfield" against Nazis, Fascists and even Social Democrats." (Pachnicke and Hannef, 1992, p. 11). Heiner Muller defines Heartfield's position as an "Openierende Kunstler" (activist-artist) for reflecting his political views to the large masses by means of his photomontage works (Muller, 1992, p.8). In this regard, Heartfield could be considered an "activist" for his expression and dynamic attitude toward political decisions he deemed wrong. Heartfield's status as "activist-artist" is verified due to his intellectual activity and expression of his political views via the language of art.

Up to now, Heartfield was I have referred to as a Dada artist who used the photomontage technique most effectively as compared to the other artists in the Berlin Group. I defined the presentation of his works in a political context and described his "activist-artist" character. Now, how did Dada artist Heartfield use photomontage as a language on political issues? Evans connects results obtained by Heartfield's photomontages with the following fundamental characteristics: "Metamorphosis; hybridization; contrasts of large and small, high and low; and unmasking." (Evans, 1992, p.16). I would like to give and discuss some examples of Heartfield's works regarding using photomontage as way of language.

Heartfield's *The Face of Fascism* (1928), Figure 1, is an example of the "hybridization" method in photomontage. Selz states that this photo-collage was for a book cover, *Italien Ketten* (Italy in Chains) published by the KPD (German Communist Party) (Selz, 1977, p.9). In this work, Heartfield has a facial portrait of the Italian dictator Mussolini in the center of the collage. Heartfield associates the visual elements belonging to the skull of a dead person with the face of Mussolini. Although the eyes, hair, ears and forehead belong to Mussolini, the teeth and rotten nose reminding us that death is also present. Heartfield merged Mussolini's facial portrait with the figure of a skull to make the point that Mussolini represents death. Heartfield succeed in this connection by using hybridization, which is described as "mixing of binary opposites, particularly of high and low, such that there is a heterodox merging of elements usually perceived." (Evans, 1992, p.16). Heartfield collaged a portrait of Mussolini with a face of that represents horror and death.

In Figure 1, Heartfield placed a portrait of a wealthy man on the left and two men on the upper-right whom I consider to represent religion. On the lower right of this repulsive yet attractive portrait, a group of armed people moves forward in a vehicle of that period, and, finally, some dead people lie on the ground on the lower right and are attached using the collage technique. The verbal slogan, "Das Gesicht" (The Face) is written in German on the left and "Des Faschismus" (of Fascism) is on the right.



Figure 4. *The Crises Party Congress of the SPD* (1931), by John Heartfield

In this collage Heartfield skillfully hybridizes the face of death with the face of Mussolini and uses the slogan *The Face of Fascism*. The artist has turned the portrait of Mussolini into a strange and frightening form that contributes negativity to the portrayal. The purpose of Heartfield's work is to give us an idea that Mussolini's politics is horrific and based on violence. I think that Heartfield's work reflects historic and horrible experiences of German and Italian Fascism in Europe during first half of the 20th century when Dada art appeared. While talking about the characteristics of Dada art, Levin says they are "violent and enthusiastic, shocking and ironic, whimsical and witty." (p.5). Violence and shock are the most striking aspects of Figure 1. I can say that such a violent and destructive Dada photomontage was the result of World War I. I think that Heartfield's destructive photomontage of Mussolini's face is related with the artist's own stress and worries about the dictator's political action. Disfiguration of Mussolini's facial portrait can be "actually sign of psychological stress." (Levin, 1993, p. 144). Rothschild perceives Heartfield's aim as being "to irritate the comfortable classes through shock tactic so that they would take a hard look at themselves." (Rothschild, p.14, 1998). This approach is considered to be a Dadaist tactic.

The frightening face of Mussolini also relates to four different photographs integrated into the collage. Heartfield wants us to draw a correlation between the face of Mussolini and the skull and the other photographs. For example, a wealthy man was shown as a collaborator of Mussolini in the left part of the collage. The two men on the upper-right represent religion and the group of armed people on the lower-left represents the position caused by Mussolini himself and by the people who supported him. While depicting such a large point of view, using photographic elements representing reality, Heartfield contributes to the visual plausibility of this collage. I think that using a photographic source in such a montage can be more convincing and powerful than painting the same scenery. Although this collage is the result of juxtaposed photographic images, and not one photo without manipulation, it can still convince people through its use of photography as proof of the reality of it.

Heartfield's criticism of Mussolini in his collage is dependent on his skill in photojournalism as well as on his artistic talent. Heartfield aligns the photographic elements with the concept. I think Levin's view on the general character of Heartfield is also valid for the photo collage, Figure 1: "Heartfield invoked the verism connected by photojournalistic fragments in creating this illusion, and thus photomontages imply a mere "truly" seen event; they seem to reveal the absurdities inherent in the real." (p.94). Heartfield's collage can be considered "illusion" for the people who have supported Mussolini and his policies; however, it is equally realistic and true for the ones who were against Mussolini. This realism and truth are not acquired in the form of photomontage but in the meaning of the collage.

Heartfield's presentation of Mussolini's face together with the skull of a dead man is a manipulation of reality. Dead civilians suggest to us that Mussolini is a brutal political leader. The deathly Mussolini face in the collage gives us a clue that he caused or ordered the death of the civilians. On the one hand, Levin evaluates Heartfield's works in the scope of "manipulation of reality" (p.93); on the other, Walker states that Heartfield has "deconstructed and subverted" the reality through photomontage. "He did not attempt, as some avant-garde artists do, to invent a completely new symbolic language, but to deconstruct and subvert those, which already existed." (p. 102). Although some other Dadaists, such as Hoch and Hausmann, worked with photomontage, the nonsense and humorous political-criticism obtained by means of photography differentiates Heartfield in his period. Evans supports this claim: "Heartfield's use of photomontage for political satire distinguished him from all other avant-garde artists who worked with the technique in 1920s and 1930s." (Evans, 1992, p. 9). The elements of violence and humor in Heartfield's photo-collages are presented in an aesthetic and intellectual manner. Levin appreciates Heartfield's intellectual photo-collages as a "poster-like" style, and claims that these works should be evaluated in an "art context" (Levin, 1985, p.73).

Peter Kennard

Dada and Heartfield impacted the art world in the 1920s through the 1950s, and continue to do so even today. John Walker supports this assertion: "A significant number of contemporary artists in Europe and North America are indebted to Heartfield and contribute to the evolving tradition of political photomontage." (Walker, 1990, p.102). Although time, location and people change, certain visual symbolic languages remain intact and thread through different cultures and social life. I claim that Heartfield's manipulation and juxtaposition in photomontages influence today's designer and artist's works. I believe that the works of the British photomontage artist Peter Kennard can be traced to Heartfield's clever, political, humorous and conceptual photomontages. Kennard's photomontages are a continuation of Heartfield's political and artistic struggle.

It is possible to evaluate Heartfield's influence on today's artist and designer's works: In this regard, it is possible to include the political photomontages of Peter Kennard in this research. Richard Slocombe considered Kennard to be the "predecessor" of Heartfield. (Slocombe, Internet 1, 12/18/2018).

Kennard was born in London in 1949. His visual book, *Images for the End of the Century*, comprises photo-collages. Most of these works have certain representations not requiring verbal slogans. Such representations include the visual images produced by Kennard against nuclear armament. The intensive criticism in the collages of Kennard represents an opposition to nuclear weapons and the arms race.

In her book, *Photomontage*, Dawn Ades evaluates the political photomontages of Kennard in the same context as the works of Heartfield. (Ades, 1976, p. 60-61). She offers Kennard's political photomontage works, *Haywain with Cruise Missiles* (1980), and *Defended to Death* (1982), as examples. In the work *Haywain with Cruise Missiles*, Kennard breaks the innocence of nature by using Constable's *The Haywain* painting and adding nuclear heads. He creates a contradiction in the image. There are two human figures moving in the river with a horse-cart. Kennard destroys this purely painted nature by creating visual shock and placing the photograph of nuclear heads in the horse-cart, next to these two humans.

As fascism was criticized in the above-mentioned work of Heartfield, here Kennard criticizes nuclear weapons and the ones who gain these weapons. Kennard wanted us to think critically about political and environmental issues. Kennard's photomontage works opposing nuclear weapons after 1980 were published in various media such as newspapers, postcards, T-shirts, posters and albums under the title, *CND* (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament). No matter how many of Kennard's works were published in poster form, e.g. *Broken Missile* (1979), *Defended to Death* (1980), and *Gone with the Wind* (1980), it would be wrong to limit his recognition only to posters. I think the description made for Heartfield's photomontage works, "poster-like", is also valid for the works of Kennard. Kennard's works not only aimed to illustrate newspapers and magazines but also to be displayed in galleries too. Although Kennard's work, *Defended to Death*, would be a good illustration for an article written on nuclear disarmament, this work could have been utilized as postcards, posters or other media. This is also true for Heartfield. He prepared most of his works for the cover of *AIZ Magazine*, yet some of his works were displayed in Dada exhibitions or were re-published in poster form in subsequent years. For instance, although Heartfield's photomontage, *The Moral of Geneva*, was published in the 1932 issue of *AIZ Magazine*, after a long time it was turned into a poster called *Never Again!* in 1960. (Herzfelde, 1977, p. 16). The story of this photomontage is as follows: In a demonstration carried out by the employees against fascism in Geneva, 15 people were killed and more than 60 people were injured by the attack of governmental forces. Heartfield's photomontage work concerning this event was published on the cover of *AIZ Magazine* in 1932. Later, in 1960, he revisited the same event with his poster "Never Again".

Here, I would like to compare Heartfield's *The Face of Fascism*, with Kennard's photomontage entitled *Iraq* (2003), (see following page, Figure 2), first published in his photomontage book, *Images for the End of the Century* (1990), later published for the *CND* and recently re-published in 2003 due to the war in Iraq. (Sanity Catalogue, 2003, p.16). In Figure 2, Kennard deforms the human portrait by using a gas mask and nuclear weapons. Kennard places a soldier's helmet on the head of this human figure and puts a world figure on the helmet. In this photomontage, designed in black and white, the disturbing elements are the gas mask, the soldier's helmet and the nuclear weapons together forming a human-like figure. Kennard externally interrupts this human portrait by means of mounting nuclear weapons and a gas mask. The new human type achieved by the so-called interruption is a modern creature of weapons, gas mask and helmet. Kennard's photomontage suggests the possible result of the use of nuclear bombs. The illustrated human is both equipped with war-gear as well as doomed by it. Although the figure is helmeted and gas-masked, his mouth is plugged with nuclear warheads. He is both in the position to ignite them, as well as to be exploded by them. Caroline Tisdall agrees that Kennard's photomontages are "suggesting rather than answering" events. She also explains the aim of Kennard's photomontage as setting "a mental process going that links visual perception to emotional impact." (Tisdall, 1973, p. 40). Walker accepts Kennard's collage as an "anti-war" image and says, "Missiles are stuffed inside the figure's mouth. Nuclear weapons, Kennard makes clear, pose a threat to the planet; they also dehumanize." (Walker, 1990, p. 104).



Figure 2. *Iraq (2003)*, by Peter Kennard

In his collage, Kennard depicts the human relationship to a nuclear bomb threat. Regardless of how the artist creates an imaginative human using photomontage, the main importance is the meaning it conveys. In this collage, Kennard used his imaginative idea to create such a machine-man figure. Sidra Stich, an art historian specializing in Surrealism, suggests that World War I was “the first wholly industrialized war” that involved “the suppression of the individual”. (Stich, 1990, p. 51). I think that Kennard reflects Stich’s observations in his photomontage. Kennard, as Heartfield did in his collage, Figure 1, manipulates the face of a human figure with a helmet, gas mask and nuclear warheads. Both artists focused on human figures to make an impact. This impact results in a grotesque human figure. Although Kennard’s collage is ominous for all human beings, it also skillfully combines cold metallic parts into a human face as a beautiful visual image. This beauty comes from the arrangement of disparate images. Susan Sontag says “The grotesque were not all horrible. Some were amusing, some almost beautiful.” (Sontag, 1978, p. 74). Kennard’s collage creates an idea that is worth a thousand words. While Walker defines Kennard’s works as “eye catching” and as “visual intelligence” (p. 102). Amanda Hopkinson analyzes the artist’s collage more broadly: “His work has moved from the dying streets of our inner cities to the killing fields of the former Yugoslavia.” (Hopkinson, 1996, p. 25). Kennard considers photomontage as an art form that “speaks about the politics of everyday life.” (Roberts, 1990, p. 101). Heartfield also reflected on his own time of dirty politics in his photomontages, and, as we mentioned earlier, his political identity as a Communist. John Roberts argues that Kennard’s photomontages “are inseparable from much of the British Left’s public identity in their period.” (Roberts, 1990, p. 101).

Kennard’s approach in this successful work is achieved by means of his skillful combination of photographic elements. The human figure in this work is a deformation and alienation with the use of symbolic objects such as the gas mask and helmet. Chris Townsend describes the deformed photographic works as “ugliness”. (Townsend, 1998, p. 10). Although the new human figure in Kennard’s work is ugly, it proves to be an aesthetic work through his creativity. Kennard not only created beautiful collages through photographic resources, but he dramatized and interpreted a disastrous threat to human kind. Rosalind Krauss’ remarks could be applied to Kennard’s photomontage: “... Dada photo collage disrupts in an attempt to infiltrate reality with interpretation.” (Krauss, and Livingston, 1986, p. 28). Kennard’s visual interpretation of the new image through manipulation of photographic resources constitutes the centre of the work. On the one hand, Heartfield criticizes fascism in his work (Figure 1); on the other, Kennard, in Figure 2, criticizes the countries and the people who further the nuclear arms race. I think both artists are politically critical in their works and try to reflect their own feelings and thoughts.

To return to Kennard’s photomontage, Figure 2, I can say that the artist visualized conflicts of human nature. The figure represents war. Val Williams agrees that Kennard’s “photo pieces deal explicitly with the complicated fantasies of conflict.” (Williams, 1991, p. 45). The conflict in the photomontage is that the depicted man, dressed for war and destruction in an attempt to save himself, will inadvertently destroy himself. Williams understands that the foundation of Kennard’s critique, his “starting point”, lies in the “absurdity” of the conflicting intention and result. Kennard explains, “The point of my work is

to use these easily recognizable iconic images, but to render them unacceptable.” (Williams, 1991, p. 45). Kennard's photomontage “pleads examination of the reality behind the appearance.” (Dormer, 1981, p. 29).

As the face of Mussolini in Heartfield's work is visually curious and surprising, Kennard's human figure in its new form with the weapons and gas mask creates curiosity and wonder in the audience at first glance. Despite such parallels in the photomontages, some different aspects are examined too. For instance, while Kennard used more than one symbol to manipulate the human figure in his work (a gas mask, nuclear warheads, a helmet and a globe), Heartfield placed only one symbolic skull on the face of Mussolini to signify death. Besides, Heartfield places other photographic resources on the portrait of Mussolini. I have mentioned above that the “hybridization” language was applied in Heartfield's work by means of unifying the face of Mussolini with the skull. I think this position is also valid for the human figure in the collage work of Kennard as well as the excellent harmony obtained among the other objects.

The similarities in the works of these two artists are also observed in some parts of their lives. Kennard has been a member of British *CND* and *The Workers Revolutionary Party*, which was a leftist party in Britain in the 1970s. In the beginning of my research, I mentioned that Heartfield was a member of the German Communist Party, in the 1920's the most influential, leftist party of the period, and then, he produced photomontage works criticizing capitalism and fascism in the *AIZ Magazine*. Another difference that I determined between these two artists is that, within his photomontage works, Heartfield especially criticized Hitler and the leading people around him in this period. For example, in his work *Mimicry* (1934), the artist mocks Hitler and his assistant Goebbels, and he satirizes the speeches of Hitler in his works, *Once Again First in the World* (1936), and *The Meaning of the Hitler Salute* (1932). On the other hand, Kennard does not usually depict individuals but criticizes the political structure of his own country in his works and also the negative points of global policy in general. For instance, as Kennard's *Broken Missile* poster represents the power of world peace against nuclear disarmament, his other works like *Defended to Death*, and *Haywain* also reflect the threat of nuclear weapons to world peace.

To summarize, Although Kennard and Heartfield worked in different historical periods and moved in different social, cultural and political spheres, their shared artistic medium served similar effects and results.

Klaus Staeck

I would like to compare the works of the German modern photomontage artist Klaus Staeck to Heartfield's works. The reason I picked Staeck's works for this comparison is that he embodied a role of “activist-artist” from the 1970s through the present time. His concern regards immigration, racism, and the rich versus the poor, justice, peace and corruption. He found himself in the middle of East and West Germany's political conflicts and he deeply desired to reflect his political, social paradigms. He created numerous posters regarding such issues. I think that Staeck's photomontages imbue a visual approach extremely similar to Heartfield's. This comparison will examine the similar, as well as varying, approaches between Heartfield and Staeck.



Figure 3. *Building Tycoon* (1975), by Klaus Staeck

Klaus Honnef urges that Staeck's *Building Tycoon* (1975) (see below, Figure 3) be viewed as a present-day continuation of Heartfield's political collages. (Honnef, 1992, p. 63). Staeck's is a continuation based on the similar collage technique of combining disparate images from different sources and thus catapulting political criticism as an "artist-activist". Bern Heimberger also considers Staeck to be a "continuation of John Heartfield in the second half of the 20th Century" and identifies Staeck as a "political artist" from the nature of his posters. (Heimberger, Internet 2, 12/18/2018). Satire is also an undeniably strong connector between Heartfield and Staeck's works. They share the skill for composing absurd, yet satirically meaningful, visual combinations. Staeck places a human portrait in the centre of his work, Figure 3, which was published both as a poster and as a postcard. This portrait is an impression of a wealthy businessman in a suit, bow tie and old-fashioned felt hat.

The most important and striking visual focal point of this poster is the scoop part of a digger truck replacing the face of the depicted man. Jutting clothing pins substitute sharp, hungry-looking teeth. Seeing a digger scoop instead of the businessman's face draws attention. My interpretation of this poster is that it is an allegorical representation and critique of a tycoon's insatiable desire for more and more at the expense of all, and everyone, else. Finding a truck part instead of a face we would have expected to see is an absurdity. The expediting factor between absurdity and humor is the scoop's resemblance to a mouth. This resemblance allows one to make sense of the substitution and to imagine the possible symbolism. Staeck points out the importance of humor in his works: "Satire was always for me the most effective method". (Jvergerson, Internet 3, 12/18/2018).

The verbal slogan, *Und der Haifisch der hat Zohne*, translated into English as "Building Tycoon", placed on the discrete upper part of the poster, helps us understand this bizarre human. This man of great wealth and power in the poster gives the impression that he continuously desires to devour with his aggressive mouth. The fact that he is a building tycoon means that he gains and exercises his power and wealth in the building and construction arena. This allows us to understand why a digger truck part, of all things, was used as a symbolic replacement. Another meaning can be that the wealthy businessman exerts his power over society so much so that he seems like an inhumane, senseless machine stripped of human characteristics and care. We can understand the poster artist's criticism of businessmen and their danger, harm and threat to society.

It would have been possible to more directly depict the message and meaning of this photomontage through straightforward language. For example, Staeck's message could be directly explained rather than depicted: Businessmen can be very destructive, greedy and insatiable. The same meaning is shared and can be derived from either the direct statement or the symbolic imagery. The reason for moving towards such a different and more complex method of expression through the use of symbolic connotations and away from the direct and simple expression is at the heart of this dissertation.

In Staeck's poster image, the artist used two different photographic sources to express his meaningful idea. For example, we can consider the scoop of the digger truck to be one element and the rich businessman image to be another element, and their coming together by means of the collage technique consequently creating a meaningful new image and message. This "new message" is essentially combined quotations from different photographic sources. (Evans, and Gohl, 1987, p. 42). The so-called "new message" is acquired through symbolic means. While commenting on the Dada effect obtained by the coming together of disparate elements by means of the photomontage technique, Teitelbaum states that, "Montage practice sought not merely to represent the real (as Cubism did through the integration of new material) but, also, to extend the idea of the real to something not yet seen." (Teitelbaum, 1992, p. 8)

Staeck reflects his feelings and beliefs about various subjects through his posters. For instance, Staeck draws attention to the relation between the church and money in his poster work, *At the Beginning was the Money* (1993). Moreover, he talks about the tragic situations of the workers in Germany in his *Immigrant Workers* poster made in 1995. In another poster, *Nothing Against Foreigners* (1994), he implies that some of the country's politicians still maintain historical Nazi ideology. The posters mentioned above are similar to Staeck's poster work in Figure 3 as they are photomontages. Staeck creates his poster collages in ways similar to those of Heartfield's, and in this sense, he reflects the elements of Dada art in his works.

I would like to study the correlation between Staeck's poster work *Building Tycoon* and Heartfield's collage *The Crises Party Congress of the SPD* (1931), (see Following page, Figure 4). There is a human portrait at the centre of Heartfield's photomontage. The face of this human portrait is replaced with the face of a roaring, wild tiger using the hybridization language. I can describe this portrait as half human and half animal-tiger. What does this wild human-like creature mean?

What does it symbolize? The title *The Crises Party Congress of the SPD* placed above the portrait aids us in answering these questions, as well as the following textual information placed below the portrait: "Social democracy does not want the collapse of capitalism. Like a doctor it wants to heal and improve it." (Fritz Tarnow, chairman, Woodworkers Federation). The veterinarian of Leipzig: "Of course we shall draw the teeth of the tiger, but first we must feed him and nurse him back to health." (Heartfield, 1977, p. 120).



Figure 4. *The Crises Party Congress of the SPD* (1931), by John Heartfield

In this collage, Heartfield, as a Communist, criticizes the German Social Democrat Party (SPD) because of their tolerance for Capitalism, and he illustrates Capitalism with the figure of a wild creature represented by the mixture of tiger and human. Ades points out that Heartfield's depiction of this frightening human figure is a warning for the SPD, and claims that this work is one of Heartfield's best photomontages (p. 50).

As Heartfield criticizes capitalism by means of the tiger-human mixture symbolized in his work, he tries to attribute negativity to it. The same situation is also observed in Steack's poster, Figure 3. Steack uses a ridiculous portrait of an object in order to satire and mock businessmen. Thus, the human portraits centered in the photomontages of both artists are interrupted externally via collage technique. Use of an animal head in Heartfield's work, and the scoop of a grater in Steack's work, support this interruption.

The Dada artist Heartfield and the poster artist Steack have changed the human image in their works and both have inclined to an allegorical presentation through symbolic figures and objects. I think photomontage is an important language of art in allegorical presentations. Grosz refers to the following effect of photomontage in the works of the Berlin Dada artists: "Photomontage allowed the Berlin Dadaists to say allegorically 'in pictures' what would have been banned by the censors". (Levin, 1985, p. 24). While pointing out the claim of art historian Benjamin Buchloh that "photomontage is inherently allegorical", Levin states that photomontage has "hidden meanings." (p.24). It is possible to produce alternative meanings from different points of view, in addition to my general definition of the symbolic photomontage works of Heartfield and Steack. For instance, the businessmen criticized in the collage of Steack can be interpreted as the people who are useful for the development of the country from another point of view. The scoop of grater used in place of the human head in the artist's work can also be interpreted as the useful contribution of the businessmen to the production activities in the country. In this regard, it is possible to talk about different interpretations in the allegorical works achieved by the photomontage technique. Levin supports this idea as: "... an allegorical representation opened up a range of interpretations and a play of significations for the viewer." (p.24).

The audiences are to obtain meanings along with symbolic images by means of their experiences in the allegorical works of these two artists; thus, the audiences have an active role in the said interpretations. Levin supports this idea by saying that "Allegorical is not prescriptive. The viewer is an active, creative proponent in constructing meaning rather than a passive recipient." (p.24).

I think the existence of alternative meanings in the works of both artists' results from the symbolic elements used in the collages and their different meanings to individuals. Although the tiger figure represents wildness and fear in Heartfield's

collage, it may represent nature and freedom according to another symbolic point of view. Another difference in the works of Heartfield and Staeck is the difference in the hybridization method used in their collages. Because these works are in black-white, no problem occurs in the harmony of the figures and objects in the photomontage. Although the face of the tiger is skillfully hybridized with the human face in Heartfield's work, the grater scoop is placed directly in place of the human head in Staeck's poster. Nevertheless, I believe that these two artists reflect the visual effect of their ideas in their works. Another common feature is that both artists retain verbal information in their photomontages, and they use such information in order to define the visual images in their works.

Conclusion

In this research, I concluded that Dada art movement was under the influence of the period's prevailing social, cultural and political processes. The psychological consequences of the First World War such as "destruction", negativity" and "fright" were reflected in the artistic works of this movement. Therefore, most of the works of Dada artists, including John Heartfield, had "pessimistic", "anarchistic" and "subversive" attributes that all turned out to be a kind of "social criticism". Besides, I have also identified that the association of the Dada movement with slogans of "Dada is political" and "anti-art" is in parallel relationship to the fact that this movement is against the bourgeoisie and traditional arts.

I observed that a "photomontage" method was intensively used in the Dada movement. In this sense I have stated that many photographic figures, animals and objects were produced into "absurd" and humorous representations through the "juxtaposed" method using this technique. In order to establish a comparative methodology in my research, I have analyzed the works of John Heartfield, the most significant photomontage artist in Berlin Dada group, as an exemplification. In these analyses, I have elucidated my observation of the visual methodology languages such as hybridization, metamorphosis, and in Heartfield's and other artists' works, with specific examples.

For instance, having stated that the photomontage work of Heartfield formed within an "idea" created a "social criticism" I compared some posters of the "artist-activist" Peter Kennard with the works of Heartfield. In this comparison I explained with several examples that both artists applied mainly "juxtaposed" method in their works based on photomontage technique and hence its results brought about similarities. Accordingly, I realized that there was correspondence in the employment of a visual language such as "hybridization", as both artists were using the same technique in their artworks, with the intent to create political propaganda.

Later on, I compared the works of Heartfield with the photomontage works of Klaus Staeck. I observed that the visual language and method Staeck used in especially "absurd", "satirical" and "allegorical" photomontage illustrations had very close similarities to Heartfield's works. For that reason I have stated that the "hybridization" visual language of the figures and objects in Staeck's art was parallel with Heartfield's works.

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