

Ben Hecht and George Grosz

A Dada Happenstance During the 1920s

Jerry D. Meyer

During his highly productive, if controversial career, first as newspaper reporter and novelist during the Chicago Renaissance, and then as playwright, Hollywood screenwriter, and provocateur for Jewish homeland aspirations, Ben Hecht (1894-1964) had occasion to touch the lives of many notable personalities, including a number of artists. In an earlier *Caxtonian* article, I explored the importance of Hecht's relationship with fellow Chicago reporter Wallace Smith, and Smith's brief fame as an illustrator of several books including some by Hecht, published by Chicago-based Covici-McGee in the 1920s.¹ This article explores Hecht's early contact with German-born artist George Grosz (1893-1959) in Berlin and the mutually advantageous relationship of this friendship on their careers.*

Ben Hecht first made contact with Grosz in the very late teens. Although he did not initially visit the United States until the early 1930s, George Grosz was to have an impact on the lives of several interesting personalities in Chicago around 1920, among them Romanian-born Herman Sachs, founder of a short-lived industrial arts school in the Windy City, and aspiring writer Hi Simons, whose little-known life will be introduced below.

The young artist, nearly the same age as Hecht, was just beginning to make his reputation as an upstart leftist satirist in the dif-

ficult early years of Germany's recovery from humiliating defeat at the end of the Great War. Hecht was among those responsible for first introducing Grosz's work in America at this point in the artist's career. Contact with

the Berlin Dada group as well as with Grosz was to be reflected in some of Hecht's own writings in the early 1920s after his return to Chicago from Germany.

While Hecht was born of Russian-Jewish immigrants in New York City, his parents soon moved to Racine, Wisconsin where he was raised. At the tender age of 16 he left Racine, skipped an intended undergraduate degree in Madison at the University of Wisconsin after only three days on campus, and, in July 1910, without contacting his parents, boarded a train for Chicago to seek his fortune. He wanted to be a writer, having developed a predilection for the written word through his voracious reading.

The day after his arrival in the Windy City, a distant relative (Uncle Manny Moyses) set Hecht up with his first job at the *Chicago Daily Journal* under the supervision of managing editor Martin Hutchens. As Hecht recalled, his earliest newspaper experiences involved a variety of often sordid experiences, most particularly surreptitiously obtaining photographs of the recently deceased (usually those who had died violently). In the next few years, his fledgling career blossomed into that of a seasoned Chicago reporter, first at the *Daily Journal* and then, by the late teens, at the *Chicago Daily News*. His colorful stories wove anecdotes of urban characters he encountered as he "...haunted police courts, the jails, the river docks, the slums... [and] listened to the gabble of sailors, burglars, pimps, whores, hop-

heads, anarchists, lunatics and policemen."²

Like Grosz, whose early satirical drawings exhibited a biting contempt for all aspects of bourgeois life in Germany, Hecht said of his

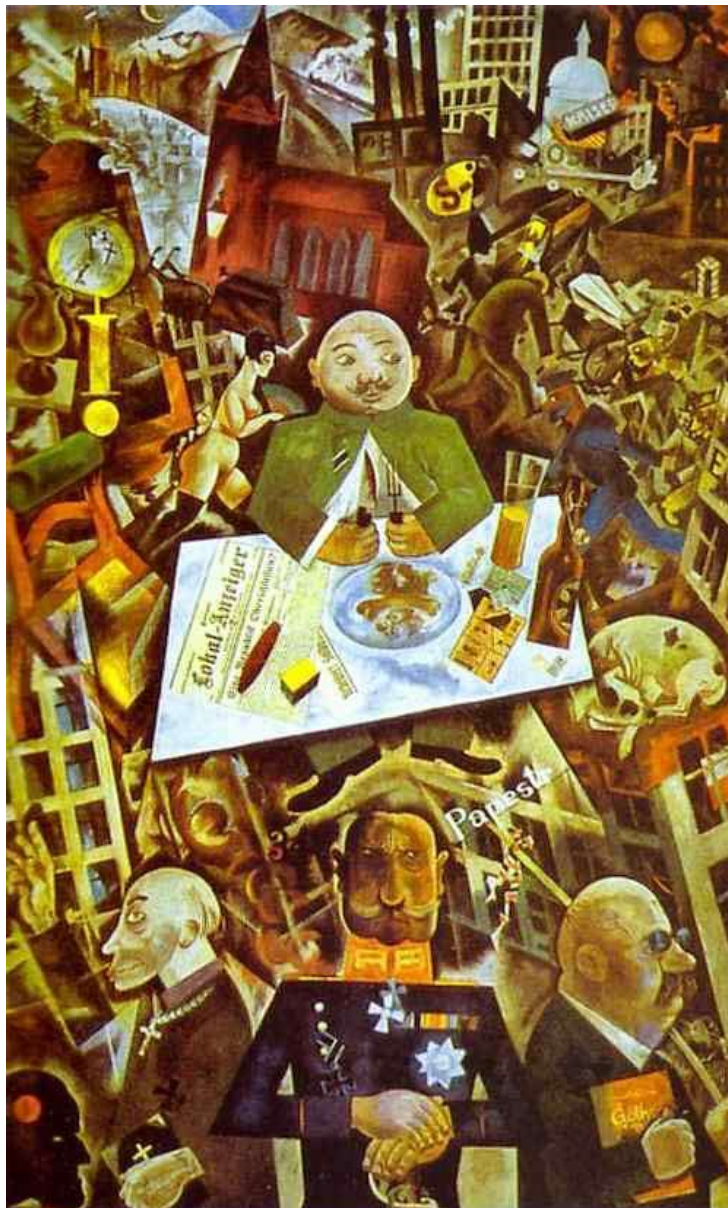


Fig. 7 Grosz, Germany, a Winter's Tale, oil painting, 1917-1919 (present whereabouts unknown; discussed on page 5).



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reportage and novels, published during his nearly 14 years in Chicago, "my earliest writings were full of an excited contempt for all moralists. I dedicated myself to attacking prudens, piety-mongers, and all apostles of virtue."³ He eventually found that he had the ability "to write gaily of that which was gruesome, macabre and exotic."⁴

Hecht's experiences with the seamier side of Chicago's urban life prepared him for his stint in post-war Germany as foreign correspondent for the *Daily News* from December 1918 to early 1920. As he later noted, he saw the surreal events in Germany, as various political factions, left and right, fought each other for political control "with a youthful delight for the preposterous."⁵ This was the same emotive lens through which George Grosz graphically interpreted his reaction to life around him in those years while participating in the short-lived Dada art movement in Berlin.

Except for two years spent in Berlin (1900-1902) after his father's death when the artist-to-be was only six, George Grosz spent most of his childhood in the small Prussian city of Stolp. By the time he was a teenager, he was wary of authoritarian figures – at a time when a German authoritarian and military lifestyle was in vogue. In 1902, young Grosz's widowed mother took her family back to Stolp where she had accepted a job managing an officers' casino. The family lived on the premises of the officers' quarters. Grosz early on liked to draw and was stimulated by the "blood curdling" plots of pulp "penny-dreadful" paperbacks with their exciting cover illustrations that he acquired from a "crotchety old woman," Klara Menning. She sold school supplies out of her street-level store to the teenagers in Stolp, sitting in her shop, as Grosz recalled, "with spectacles and cane, reigning like a witch out of Grimm's fairy tales."⁶

Grosz's adolescent life took a fateful turn when, at the age of 15, he was dismissed from high school for striking one of his disciplinarian teachers. Most professional careers for young men required a minimum of a high school education and Grosz was suddenly faced with declining possibilities. What was he to do? Fortunately, Grosz had shown an aptitude for

art, and his art teacher, Albert Pabst, came to his aid and persuaded his mother that her son should prepare a portfolio for entrance to the Dresden Academy of Art.

Under Pabst's tutelage Grosz did so, and in 1909, at the age of 16, began a successful, two-year course of study for his art diploma. The instruction at the Academy was traditionally academic and conservative, and Grosz indicated later that much of what he learned of personal interest came from his companionship with fellow art students and from a variety of books and periodicals.⁷ For instance, he was especially influenced by the illustrations in the popular journal *Simplizissimus* by artists Bruno Paul, Max Klinger, and Emil Pretorius. He was also

introduced to the graphic work of Aubrey Beardsley, Toulouse-Lautrec, and Daumier.

From these various sources he began to perfect his own distinctive early style of sharp, brittle, linear strokes. He dreamed of becoming a successful illustrator, and by the age of 17, was published in the magazine *Ulk*, the comic supplement of the *Berliner Tageblatt* newspaper.⁸ While in Dresden, Grosz became entranced with the paraphernalia of dandyism (inspired by reading Baudelaire and by his fascination with American culture) and began sporting striped suits and sometimes a monocle, carrying a walking stick, and even wearing face paint.⁹ Karl Hubbuch, a fellow student at the Dresden Academy, recalls Grosz at that time as wearing "...modern clothes in the American style – padded shoulders, extremely tapered trousers, gold-rimmed glasses, and a watch on a leather thong in his outside breast pocket."¹⁰ This exhibitionism, which continued after he was accepted into the Berlin Academy in 1911, was ultimately part of his rebellion against the bourgeois values of early 20th-century German culture. This role-playing was still evident in the artist's sketchy self-portrait done much later for the cover of the short-lived *Der Dada* publication in Berlin in 1919 (Fig. 1) during which time Ben Hecht first made his acquaintance with Grosz.

While taking classes in Berlin and now an art student with a stipend, Grosz lived with fellow art student Herbert Fiedler in an attic studio in Südende, a seedy suburb south of Berlin. As



Fig. 1 Detail, cover of *Der Dada*, No. 2, Dec. 1919 with Grosz self-portrait.

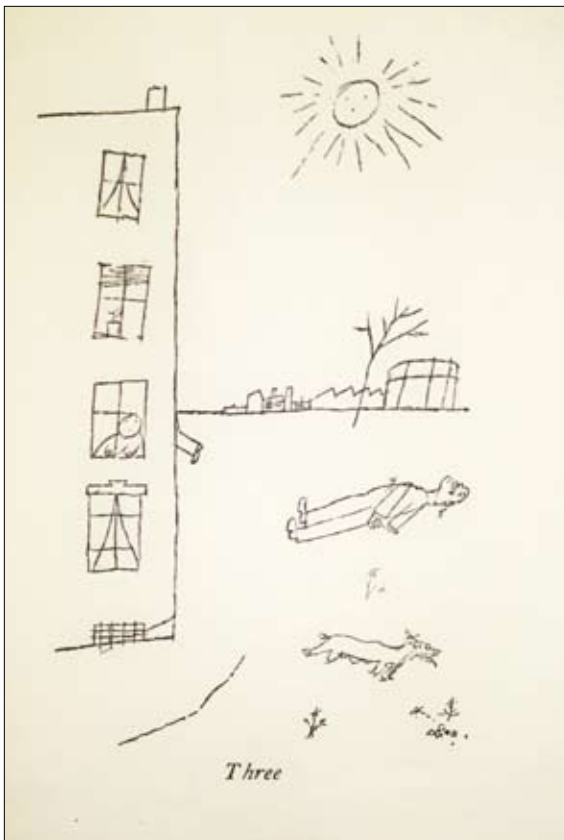


Fig. 2 Grosz, "Murder," plate 3 from Hi Simons' book on Grosz, 1921 (collection of the author).

reflected in the subjects he drew and painted throughout the teens and into the 1920s, he was especially attracted to the decadent aspects of life in cosmopolitan Berlin, not unlike some of the subject's of Hecht's early Chicago reportage. Grosz's attitude towards the urban scene was, as Kay Flavell suggests, that of a "romantic outsider."¹¹

Like Hecht in Chicago, Grosz was most stimulated by those on the margins of urban existence, where animal instincts frequently surfaced. Murders, sexual encounters, and rapes are subjects that populate his drawings, drawn in a deliberately childlike manner, such as his "Murder," probably executed around 1915 and reproduced later in Hi Simons' Chicago-based Musterbook publication, *George Grosz*, in 1921 (Fig. 2). This was possibly the first major visual introduction of Grosz's art in the United States.

Grosz went to Paris for most of 1913, experiencing firsthand the artistic revolution unleashed by the School of Paris. At the same time, he rejected, for the most part, the more extreme aspects of abstraction as well as the *Art pour l'Art* aesthetic of French modernism. As Grosz was to reiterate throughout most of his career, to be relevant, art must express the conditions of humanity rather than reach for some esoteric, transcendental goal. As he

noted in 1921 in a published statement reflecting his youthful Communist leanings: "You [as artist] can't be indifferent about your position in this activity, about your attitude towards the problem of the masses.... Are you on the side of the exploiters or on the side of the masses....?"¹²

The outbreak of World War I in late July 1914 abruptly interrupted Grosz's blossoming aspirations to be an artist and illustrator. As he wrote much later of the period just before this horrific conflagration, "Now I know that I have lived through the end of the world, and that the last years of that lost world were the least conscious and thus happiest years of my life."¹³ He enlisted in the infantry in November of 1914, but a sinus condition and his precarious mental state led to his release on medical grounds in May of the next year. He

returned to Berlin and continued his artistic activities, only to be called up again in January of 1917. Within 24 hours he was admitted to the infirmary and then to a mental hospital until, partially through the efforts of a powerful political friend, art collector and admirer, Count Harry Kessler, he was permanently released. As Grosz noted, "...my fate had made an artist of me, not a soldier. The effect the war had on me was totally negative."¹⁴

During his initial release from the military, Grosz, back in Berlin, continued to draw. He had begun to make a name for himself with his artwork and with poetry he published in Franz Pfemfert's leftist journal, *Die Aktion*. But

it was due to an enthusiastic critical essay on Grosz and his work by Theodor Däubler (1876-1934) appearing in the international journal *Die Weissen Blätter* in late 1916 that the artist's drawings, in particular, received wide attention:

His drawings are full, but he does not fill them, he spaces them with lines, with wires.... His view of the city is apocalyptic: houses appear (the houses are geometric) naked as after the bombardment. Men are the expressions of their lust: bewildered. At the café, one of them will end a suicide.... George Grosz is at the moment the Futurist temperament of Berlin.¹⁵

Däubler's reference to the word "Futurist" in the quote alludes to the influence of Italian Futurism on Grosz [via the work of Carlo Carrà (1881-1966)] with its sequential overlapping of linear shapes suggesting movement and energy. Grosz, in drawings such as "Old Jimmy," (Fig. 3) reproduced in the July See HECHT/GROSZ, page 4

Fig. 3 Grosz, "Old Jimmy," from *Die Neue Jugend*, July 1916.



1916 issue of *Die Neue Jugend*, indicates the evolution of the artist's style towards a more compact series of energetic, diagonal lines, focused on the vibrancy of urban life but often populated with sordid-looking characters. In this case, the drawing's title and details, such as the pistol, also reflect the artist's continued obsession with Americana. In an issue of *Neue Jugend* the next year, Grosz published a poem entitled "The Song of the Goldiggers" which included the lines (translated here):

Express trains cross the country
faster!
From San Francisco to New York –
Everything!!¹⁶

As a further indication of the artist's infatuation at this time with things American, by the September 1916 issue of *Die Neue Jugend*, Grosz had anglicized the spelling of his name in print from Georg Groß to George Grosz.¹⁷

When World War I ended November 11, 1918, Germany was cast into political disarray with the Communist-oriented Spartacus Party, led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, fomenting workers revolutions in various parts of the country, including Berlin, against the Social Democratic Party. Hecht arrived in Berlin in late December of 1918 as a foreign correspondent for the *Daily News* and registered at the Adlon Hotel, a center for Western reporters. For the next year, he was witness to the chaos of Germany's political unrest, including the occupation of the Kaiser's empty Palace (the Kaiser had already fled) by Spartacus sympathizers, the assassinations of both Luxemburg and Liebknecht by members of the Free Corps, and the horrific circumstances of the White Terror with mass execution of hundreds of Spartacus captives in Berlin's Alexanderplatz by government troops.

Among the famous and not so famous personalities and politicians that Hecht met while in Berlin was George Grosz. Grosz and Hecht, both in their mid-20s at the time and full of spunk, cynicism and energy, were to establish a life-long friendship beginning in early 1919. This included, eventually, Grosz emigrating from Nazi Germany in the early 1930s and settling in the United States where Hecht assisted in helping Grosz continue his career as an artist and teacher.

But importantly at this crucial time for both the young men, Grosz introduced Hecht to his friends (many avowed Communist sympathizers) and members of the Berlin Dada movement. A photograph, taken by Hecht's wife, Marie Armstrong, and now in the



Fig. 4 Photograph of Hecht, Dr. Karl Dohmann, and Grosz (holding a copy of the DADA publication *Die Pleite*) in a Berlin restaurant, c. 1920 (Ben Hecht archives, Newberry Library).



Fig. 5 Grosz, cover of *Die Pleite*, No. 6, January 1920.

Newberry Library's extensive Hecht archive, shows Hecht with a Dr. Karl Dohmann and Grosz in a Berlin restaurant, perhaps in the Adlon Hotel, in 1919 (Fig. 4). They may have been celebrating the publication of the Dada-related journal, *Die Pleite*, since a copy of the journal is being held by Grosz. *Die Pleite* was actually conceived in Grosz's studio, and he provided artwork for the various issues, including the cover of the January 1920 number (Fig. 5). The cover's inscription reads: "A capitalist and a military figure wish themselves a blessed New Year." The cynical

humor was at the core of anti-establishment Berlin Dada.

The Dada Movement was a nihilistic literary and artistic reaction to the events of World War I, officially inaugurated in the Cabaret Voltaire in neutral Zürich, Switzerland, in 1916, by several disaffected personalities. These included exiled German actor Hugo Ball, Romanian-born writer/poet Tristan Tzara, and German writer-in-exile Richard Hülsenbeck, among others. They organized a number of activities including exhibitions and nonsense dramatic events and poetry readings. The name they chose for their movement, *Dada*, seemed, in its varied meanings ("baby talk," "hobbyhorse," "yes, yes," or "no, no" depending on the language) to perfectly represent their contemptuous outlook on a bourgeois Western culture that was in the process of self-destruction. The best-known Dada participant to Americans was the French artist Marcel Duchamp. He spent the war years in exile in New

York City, charming the literati and mystifying the masses with his "ready-made" *objets d'art*, such as urinals and bicycle wheels attached to kitchen stools.

At the end of the war, Dada organizations briefly appeared in European centers, including Berlin, where several individuals, including Hülsenbeck (now back in Germany), Grosz, Wieland Herzfelde and his brother and artist John Heartfield, and Franz Jung, formed "Club Dada." Herzfelde's Malik publishing firm, established in early 1917, printed several Dada-related materials including the manifesto



Fig. 6 Documentary Photograph of the Opening of the First International Dada Fair, Berlin, 1920, featuring the artists.

Dada Almanach, the chapbook-like magazine *Die Pleite*, and a political journal with the Dadaist title, *Jedermann sein eigener Fussball* (*Everyone his own Football*).

All of these publications were short-lived but indicative of the chaos of German cultural life at the time. These were also some of the more provocative publications Hecht saw and admired. Grosz illustrated and wrote for the issues of these publications. The first and only number of *Jedermann* was published in some 7600 copies on February 5, 1919, before authorities banned its further appearance.¹⁸ With the horrific experiences of war still haunting him, Grosz became immersed in the politics of post-war Germany. "These were wild years," Grosz recalled. "I threw myself madly into life, and teamed up with people who were searching for a way out from this absolute nothingness."¹⁹

Ben Hecht was undoubtedly amused to be Grosz's guest at several "Club Dada" events where audiences were insulted and pistols discharged. At one such performance, Grosz staged a race between a woman operating a sewing machine and another at a typewriter. The race was preceded by a poetry contest in which the audience (who had each paid 20 gold marks for the privilege) listened to 12 compositions shouted out in unison. Hecht was made an honorary member of Club Dada and presented with a beer mug painted black and half-filled with sand as a symbol of that

honor.²⁰ In one of his columns written for the *Daily News* not long after his return to Chicago, Hecht recalled his impressions of the young artist: "Herr Grosz is a Fastidious maniac I grew to admire in Berlin. He is an artist with a soul as naïve as the inside of the moon and a talent as profound as the anatomy of a scarab."²¹

The Club Dada *pièce de résistance* was the staging of the "First International DADA-Fair" (*Erste Internationale DADA-Messe*) at Dr. Otto Burchard's Art Dealership in Berlin from June 30 to August 25, 1920. This was also the *only* so-called "International Dada Fair." It was an event Hecht would have relished had he not already returned to Chicago. For the occasion Grosz was designated "Propaganda Marshall."

The general theme was provocatively anti-military, anti-capitalist, anti-bourgeoisie and anti-authoritarian. The multi-room exposition included over 150 pictures, objects, posters, collages, dolls, photographs, magazines and montages by such artists as Grosz, John Heartfield, Raoul Hausmann, Hannah Höch, Otto Dix, and Max Ernst, among others. Grosz himself contributed 27 works, including several major political paintings and a large-format, photographic self-portrait in militant profile, with the inscription "DADA is the deliberate corruption of the bourgeois vocabulary of concepts and DADA stands on the side of the revolutionary proletariats."²² Also

on exhibition was Grosz's recently published satirical portfolio of nine photo-lithographed drawings, *Gott mit Uns* (God is on our Side), published by Malik Verlag in 1920.

On the ceiling of the Fair's entrance room, visible in a documentary photograph of the organizers at the exposition's opening (Fig. 6), hung a floating "Prussian Archangel" in an officer's uniform with a paper-mâché pig's head. A banner around the figure's waist carried the words, "From heaven on high I descend" (*Vom Himmel hoch, da komm' ich her*). Also hung prominently in this room was one of Grosz's most important political paintings of this period, *Deutschland, ein Wintermärchen* (*Germany, a Winter Fairy Tale*), begun by the artist as World War I was drawing to its somber conclusion (Fig. 7; see page 1). In the documentary photograph of the Fair's opening, Grosz, standing in the center background wearing a hat, is looking at the painting. Below the painting is the sign "Dada is political."

Like much of Grosz's work around this time, the painting was intended as an indictment of bourgeois German cultural and political bulwarks – Army, Church, and School – that the artist blamed for the just concluded and (particularly for Germans) disastrous war. In many respects, the picture, a main attraction at the Fair, set the tone for the whole exposition. Grosz borrowed the painting's title from the Shakespearean title of a satirical poem written by German lyricist/writer Heinrich Heine (1797–1856), originally published in 1844 as part of *Neue Gedichte* ("New Poems").²³ The freshly completed painting had also been seen and admired earlier when Count Harry Kessler visited Grosz in his Wilmersdorf studio in January of 1919. Kessler remarked in his diary: "[Grosz] showed me a huge political painting, *Germany, A Winter's Tale*, in which he derides the former ruling classes as the pillars of the gormandizing, slothful middle class."²⁴

Grosz's stern, silhouetted head is visible in the composition's lower right corner. He angrily directs the viewer's attention to a trinity of principal male figures at the base of the painting who, standing like gods, symbolize the pillars of conservative German culture and politics: a priest representing the Church, a military officer wearing the German Cross, and an academic representing German education. Above, in the center of the composition, sits a well-fed bourgeois Nationalist eating his dog bone (faithful like a dog) with his beer and nationalist newspapers comfortably at

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Fig. 8 Albrecht Dürer, "Crucifixion," woodcut from the Great Passion series, 1498.



Fig. 9 Grosz, "The Faith Healers," 1916-17, plate 5 in Gott Mit Uns portfolio, 1920.

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his side. A city, seemingly, in chaos, circulates around this primal figure like a kaleidoscope.

Grosz sees these four human paradigms, repeated throughout his art of the late teens and twenties, as complicit in the destruction suffered by the German people as a result of the war. Hans Hess noted that the inclusion of the artist himself, in a position normally reserved for the patron of a medieval or renaissance religious painting, suggests that Grosz consciously referenced the format of an altarpiece.²⁵ And indeed, he had. Grosz was among a group of German contemporaries, including Max Beckmann and Otto Dix, who, in response to the horrors etched on their psyches by the Great War, created paintings that utilized various religious formats to emphasize the seriousness of their secular and spiritual messages in the late teens, the 1920s, and the early thirties.

As a further marker of the apocalyptic political statement Grosz intended, he included, in the upper left and right edges of his composition, a moon sliver and a red-orange sun, devices borrowed from earlier German art. Incorporating both a sun and a moon in pictures associated with Christ's crucifixion or other apocalyptic subjects is often found in northern European religious art, as can

be seen in Albrecht Dürer's late 15th century woodcut of the *Crucifixion* from the suite of prints known as *The Great Passion* (Fig. 8). Together, the two astral bodies become symbols for the historic passage of time, or the timeless significance of the historic event.

Not surprisingly, the authorities were not amused by the manner in which the government, especially the military, had been lampooned in the Dada exposition. Grosz, Herzfelde (Grosz's publisher), and Rudolf Schlichter (designer of the floating figure) were all charged with defaming the German army. At trial in April 1921, Grosz and Herzfelde were found guilty and fined, based on the defamatory nature of the *Gott mit Uns* images. The plates for the portfolio were confiscated and destroyed and further distribution prohibited.

This was Grosz's first major run-in with authorities based on objections to his art, but it was not to be the last. He would be charged twice more prior to his departure for the United States in the early thirties. During the Third Reich, hundreds of his paintings and drawings were confiscated and many destroyed. Perhaps the most familiar plate from the controversial *Gott mit Uns* portfolio, often reproduced, is number 5, *Die Gesund-*

beter ("The Faith Healers," originally drawn in 1916-17), in which an examining doctor proclaims an emaciated skeletal figure acceptable for military duty (Fig. 9).²⁶

In early 1920, Hecht returned to Chicago a more seasoned reporter enhanced with international experience. His most famous newspaper column, "Around the Town: A Thousand and One Afternoons in Chicago," was inaugurated in June 1921 for the *Daily News*. It concluded a little over a year later in October 1922 when his position with the *Daily News* ended during the controversy prompted by Hecht's publication of his erotic novel *Fantazius Mallare*.²⁷ During the early twenties, however, Hecht did what he could to introduce the work of George Grosz to his Midwestern audience, and he was indirectly responsible for encouraging the publication of the first monograph on Grosz's work in the United States, by Hi Simons in 1921 (discussed below).

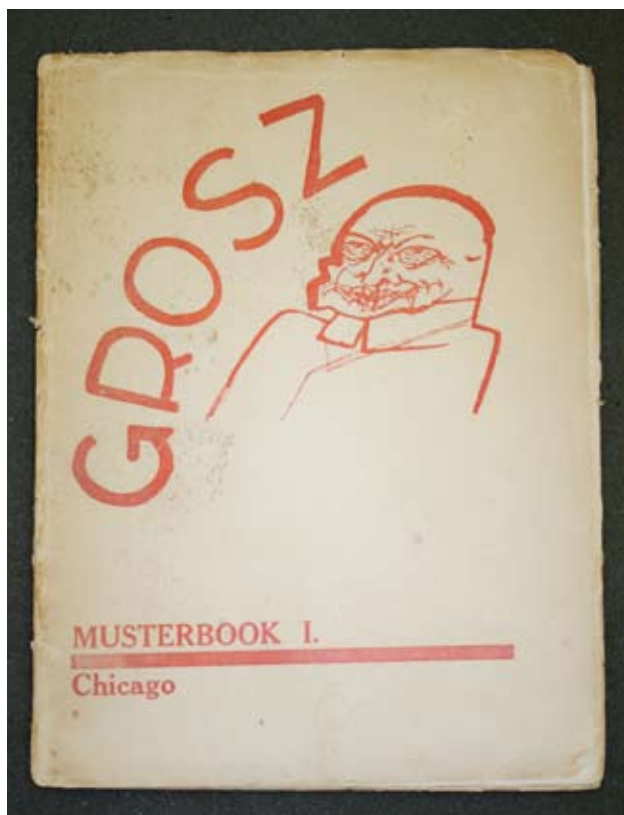
The lingering effects of Hecht's contacts with Grosz and the Dada Movement in Germany were several following his return to the United States. While Hecht's predilection for biting satire was present in his writing prior to his overseas trip in 1918, it was undoubtedly augmented by his German experience. As Doug Fetherling suggested, Hecht brought back to Chicago some of the artistic

attitudes that had shaped Dada in Germany, where "...it manifested itself in a sort of raunchy impertinence in the face of total, irreversible disaster... It presupposed that the world was an urban one close to collapse."²⁸

A kind of Dada-like attitude is embedded in some of Hecht's columns written in the twenties for the *Daily News* series, "A Thousand and One Afternoons." One column of particularly Dadaist flavor, appropriately titled "Da Da," concerned one Professor Dodo von Baader, "high Inca of the Imperial Inner Gnomes, division N. 72 of the Order of Da Da," who visits America from Berlin in search of followers.²⁹ The column, written tongue-in-cheek and imitating the absurdity Hecht saw in Berlin Dadaist performances, was ultimately intended, as the column's last paragraph finally reveals, to be a critical poke at the Ku Klux Klan: "If [Professor Dodo] goes away...the best I shall be able to offer as a substitute [in this newspaper] will be an interview with the High Imperial Wizard of the Ku-Klux Klan."³⁰

Hecht displayed reproductions of Grosz's drawings in the window of the Covici-McGee Bookstore in Chicago after his return from Berlin in 1920, and it is probably not coincidental that Hi Simons published his small Chicago-based *Musterbook* volume of 12

Fig. 10 Cover of *Hi Simons' book on Grosz*, 1921 (collection of the author).



Grosz drawings in 1921 (Fig. 10).³¹ There was an important confluence of personalities in the early 1920s with ties to Hecht and/or Grosz in Chicago who, early on, were responsible for bringing the German artist to the attention of the American public: Hecht, Hi Simons, and Herman Sachs. In a letter to Hecht from Grosz, cited in one of Hecht's "A Thousand and One Afternoons in Chicago" columns, entitled "Enchanted Exiles," the artist fantasized visiting Hecht in the Windy City:

I can hardly wait to come to Chicago. But I suppose I am already too late. Modernism seems to have advanced in America beyond us here in Germany. I feel like I was clinging to a backwater. Today I received a shipment of postal cards of Chicago. There was one of the Wrigley Building lighted up at night. Colossal! Such beauty, such joy of line! It seems to me if I could stand under such a building I would be happy the rest of my life. My heart is eaten with envy of Herr Sachs...³²

Grosz's reference to Romanian-born Herman Sachs (1883-1940) identifies a mutual friend of both Hecht and Grosz. And Sachs was also a significant link between Grosz and

Fig. 11 Grosz, "Main Street," plate 8 from *Hi Simons' 1921 book*.



Simons' *Musterbook* publication of Grosz's drawings, since Sachs is named in the book as Grosz's "personal representative in America."³³ Sachs had arrived in Hecht's Chicago newspaper office sometime around 1920 with a letter of introduction from Grosz, and this is referred to by Hecht in his "Enchanted Exiles" column noted above in which both Sachs and Grosz are featured.

By the early twenties Sachs had become a known, however briefly, artistic personality in Chicago's cultural circles. He had arrived in the United States from his native Romania around age 17 (either in 1900 or 1902) and become a naturalized citizen of Chicago in 1909. From 1913 to 1918, however, Sachs was in Germany studying art, and it was evidently during this time that he became friends with George Grosz.³⁴

Back in Chicago, probably no later than 1919, Sachs founded the short-lived Chicago Industrial Art School (c. 1920). Around this time, his artwork was shown at the Art Institute. His intention, as Hecht relates in his column, "...was to raise one million dollars

and start modernistic art schools all over the country. 'What America needs,' said Herr Sachs, 'is somebody like myself.'³⁵ Unfortunately, Sachs' aspirations exceeded his self-esteem and resources, and his plan was short-lived. He would contribute significantly to art and arts administration in Ohio and California in the following years.³⁶

Even less information on Hi Simons is available. Although I assume he had contact with Hecht while the two were in Chicago, specific information is lacking. Surely Simons' interest in and contact with both Sachs and Grosz would have necessitated some communication between Simons and Hecht around 1920

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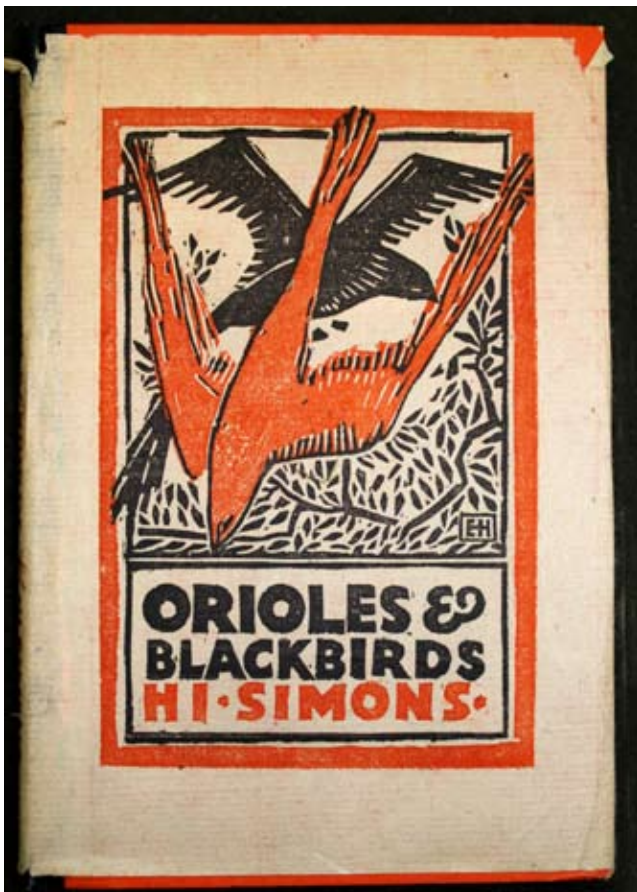


Fig. 12 Cover of Hi Simons, *Orioles and Blackbirds*, Chicago, 1922 (Special Collections, Northern Illinois University Libraries).

HECHT / GROSZ, from page 7

to 1921 at the time that Simons' book on the German artist was in preparation. Most bibliographic records do not record Simons' birth and death years. But according to the April 5, 1945 issue of the *Chicago Daily Tribune* (p. 16), H. A. (Hi) Simons (3240 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago) died April 4, 1945, at age 50. If so, Simons would have been born in 1895.

By his mid-twenties, Simons, living in Chicago, was an aspiring intellectual interested in poetry, criticism and publication. The small 1921 *Musterbook* volume on Grosz (printed by Chicago Hinrichsen Print Shop) was Simons' first significant published effort at criticism. While I have been unsuccessful in locating additional volumes in the *Musterbook* series, the advertising gloss printed on the end cover of the Grosz book, embodied Simons' expectations. He wrote that this "Musterbook I" will be followed by others, from time to time, on "fresh and significant work of contemporary artists."³⁷

In his five-page introduction to Grosz's drawings, Simons mentions a number of important hallmarks in the artist's life, including several of the Dada periodicals featuring his satirical drawings; the importance of

Grosz's painting *Deutschland, ein Wintermärchen*; and political problems arising from *Gott Mit Uns*. Simons probably had help in putting his information together, including translations of material already published on Grosz in Germany as well as the artist's own writings. However, his essay is flawed by faulty chronology, where dates given for publications related to the artist are sometimes off by two or three years.

As Simons notes, the drawings he chose for the *Musterbook* publication were selected from two of Grosz's portfolios published in Berlin: *Erste George Grosz Mappe* and *Kleine Grosz Mappe*.³⁸ And, in often florid language, Simons captures the satirical essence of the artist's work, applicable, as we might concur, to such compositions as plate 8 of Simons' book, which carries the innocuous title "Main

Street" (Fig. 11):

The compelling emotion [of Grosz's work] is hatred of the ugliness of contemporary metropolitan-industrial existence as it bore upon the artist's consciousness. Out of the demoniacal character of this hate rises the terrible vision, scintillant [sic] with colors of putrefaction, of the decomposition of humanity, of which that ugliness is at once a cause and manifestation. The vision embraces everything loathsome, depraved, lewd, enormous, godless, unnatural, that in the bowels of the great city gives rise to the processes of corruption.... He is a cynic, un-laughing, malevolent, merciless, diabolical, rather than a temperately reprimanding satirist such as Daumier....³⁹

Within two years of his small tome on Grosz, Hi Simons published two volumes of his own poetry in Chicago: a limited edition book entitled *Orioles & Blackbirds*, designed and printed by Chicagoan Will Ransom in 1922 (Fig. 12),⁴⁰ and a volume entitled *The Black Uniform* published by the Hyman-McGee Company in 1923. Hyman-McGee was successor to the Chicago-based Covici-McGee Company and Bookstore that had been so important for Hecht and his work

two years earlier. As a press release in the August 24, 1924 *New York Times* "Books and Authors" column states (p. BR17), Simons' *Black Uniform* series of poems was intended to be "a human document portraying prison life in the Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas." While Simons remained in Chicago for the rest of his life, pursued some research, and became distinguished in the local business world, he published no additional commentary on Grosz or books of criticism or poetry.⁴¹

Aside from occasionally mentioning George Grosz in his columns for the *Daily News*, including "Enchanted Exiles," Hecht wrote an article on the German artist for the short-lived *Milwaukee Arts Monthly* in late 1922. This occurred within a short time of Hecht's departure from the *Chicago Daily News*, when he was wrestling with the U.S. Postal Service over charges of circulating obscene matter in regard to his recently published novel *Fantazius Mallare*. Hecht had traveled to Milwaukee for several purposes, one of which was involvement in an east-side Milwaukee art gallery and the inauguration of the *Milwaukee Arts Monthly*.⁴² For the periodical, Hecht contributed a Dadaist article entitled "Hoch das Dadaismus," essentially a tribute to George Grosz.

In the article, in language emulating the German Dadaists, Hecht declares:

Herr Grosz is essentially the interpreter of interpretations. He is the Grand Cardinal of

Fig. 13 *Chicago Literary Times*, front page, March 16, 1924 (Special Collections, Northern Illinois University Libraries).



Caricature. He was elected Grand Cardinal of Caricature by the Dresdener branch of the Prussian Dadaisten on August 13, 1919, at 3 o'clock in the front of the Gambrinus Wein Stube. Herr Grosz is the Master of Linear Invective. He is also the embittered monomania of Premature Intelligence. His drawings are inspired by the conviction that the human Race is a failure. In this I agree with him. In 29 years of gregarious living, I have met only eight intelligent people. One of them is Grosz.

[Herr Grosz's drawings] are delightful paragraphs in which pride, love, ambition, charity, patriotism, Christianity and beauty are impaled upon nightmarish epigram. Herr Grosz is the first major symptom of the disintegration of the human race.⁴³

Hecht's experiences with Grosz-related publications while in Berlin also influenced some of his most satirical writing in Chicago. Of all Hecht's contributions to Chicago newspaper reportage, a Dadaist irony is most apparent in the off-the-wall format and writing style found in his semi-monthly periodical, *Chicago Literary Times* (subtitled *Modern Sardonic Journal*). It was published from March 1, 1923 to June 1, 1924, following his departure from the *Daily News*.

This early and important example of an underground newspaper, financially underwritten by the Covici-McGee Bookstore and publishing concern, operated on the Dada strategy of attacking all aspects of what was

Fig. 14 Chicago Literary Times, front page, April 1, 1924 (Special Collections, Northern Illinois University Libraries).

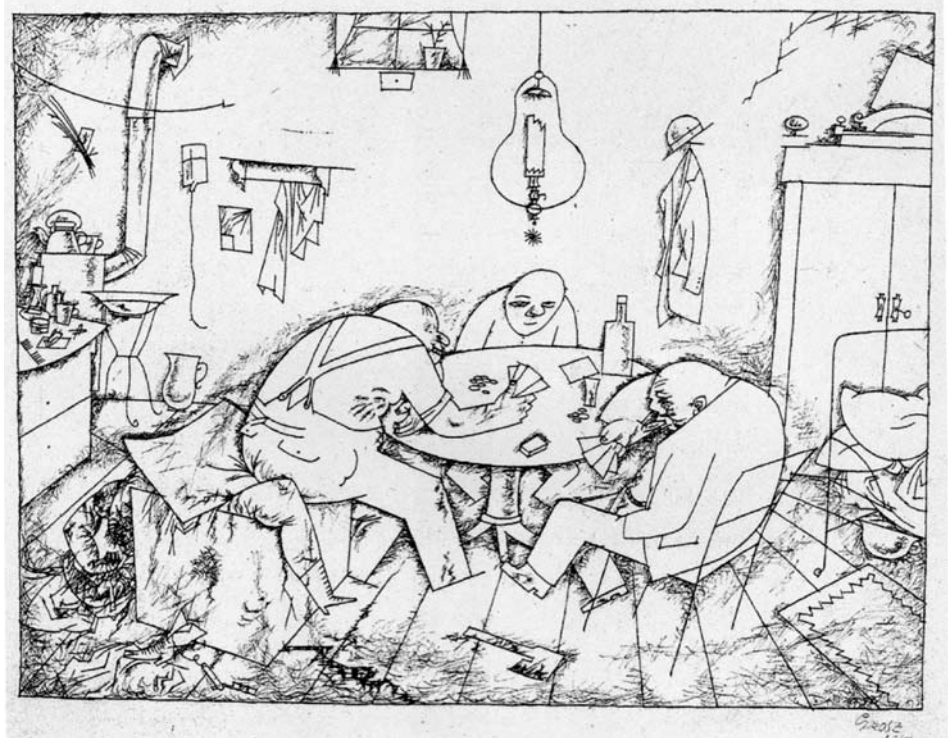


Fig. 15 Grosz, "Apache," plate 58, *Ecce Homo* portfolio, also used in the April 15, 1923 issue of the *Chicago Literary Times*.

considered civilized society.⁴⁴ Hecht's circle of literary friends and artists, including George Grosz, contributed to the publication, providing drawings and often outrageously humorous stories. Such can be seen, for instance, in the front pages of the paper's March 16 and April 1, 1924 issues (Figs. 13-14). The layout and absurd headlines of Hecht's revolutionary journal, seen in these two examples, emulate aspects of the Dada publications Hecht saw in Berlin (for example, Fig. 1).

Among specific contributions Grosz provided for Hecht's *Chicago Literary Times* was a gruesome drawing titled "Never Trump Your Partner's Ace" (Fig. 15). It appeared at the bottom of the front page of the newspaper's April 15, 1923 issue. Grosz used the same image for his portfolio of 84 images collectively entitled *Ecce Homo* (*Behold the Man*).

The portfolio (referencing a phrase laden with religious tradition) was published in Germany in late 1922, to great acclaim and controversy. The drawing was titled *Apachen- Als alles vorbei war, spielten sie Karten* ("Apache, When Everything was Over, They Played Cards"). The composition, originally executed in 1917, shows three men drinking and playing cards in a rustic, blood-splattered room, a hatchet visible on the floor, with one of the men sitting on a box containing parts of the body of a murdered and mutilated woman.

By the spring of 1924, with judgment rendered against him for *Fantazius Mallare* and

with the need for substantial cash, Hecht left Chicago for the East Coast. He and Charles MacArthur set up homes near each other during the summer of 1924, and with MacArthur's frequent collaboration, Hecht soon made a name for himself, as well as multiple fortunes, producing screenplays for theater and Hollywood movies. His fame and fortune were to make him a powerful name in American literature and popular culture during the late twenties and thirties, if somewhat less so in the forties and fifties.

Grosz continued to produce a variety of art in Germany during the twenties but made his greatest impact with his politically scathing drawings. He artwork was in constant demand, and he was continuously engaged in designing and illustrating books and contributing artwork to various journals. The satirical nature of his work, which continued to be leftist in orientation, made him widely known in his homeland, both admired and hated depending upon one's political proclivity.

In traditional overviews of the Dada Movement, its impact in the United States is usually limited to the contributions of Marcel Duchamp while the French-born artist lived in exile in New York City during the years of World War I. In contrast, the impact of Dada-related activities on the cultural scene in Chicago in the early 1920s has been largely

See HECHT/GROSZ, page 10

ignored. As we have seen, Ben Hecht's career as a writer was enriched by his Berlin experience and friendship with George Grosz. Additionally, the contact with Ben Hecht in Berlin in the late teens was to be crucial for Grosz's initial exposure as an artist in America, most specifically in Chicago with the publication of Hi Simons' little book. And lest we forget, it was in great part due to his continuing friendship with the influential Hecht that Grosz avoided a potentially fatal contact with encroaching Nazism in Germany when he made the decision to permanently immigrate to the United States in early 1933.

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Photographs by the author.

NOTES

*I am indebted to the staffs of both the Special Collections of Northern Illinois University Libraries and the Newberry Library for their assistance with a variety of materials, as well as to the exceptional International Dada Archive of the University of Iowa Libraries, much of it available online.

- ¹ Jerry D. Meyer, "Ben Hecht, Wallace Smith, and *Fantazius Mallare*: A Crisis of Censorship at the Crest of the Chicago Renaissance," *Caxtonian*, Vol. XVII, No. 4 (April 2010) pp. 1-9.
- ² Ben Hecht, *A Child of the Century*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954, p. 133.
- ³ Ben Hecht, *A Child of the Century*, p. 26.
- ⁴ Doug Fetherling, *The Five Lives of Ben Hecht*, Toronto: Lester & Orpen, Ltd., 1977, p. 15.
- ⁵ Ben Hecht, *A Child of the Century*, p. 269.
- ⁶ George Grosz: *an Autobiography (kleines Ja und ein grosses Nein)*, translated by Nora Hodges, New York: Imago Design Co., Macmillan Publishing Co., (1946) 1983, p. 16.
- ⁷ George Grosz: *an Autobiography*, p. 80.
- ⁸ George Grosz: *an Autobiography*, p. 82.
- ⁹ M. Kay Flavell, *George Grosz, a Biography*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988, p. 21.
- ¹⁰ Hubbuch letter, 19 February 1917, quoted in Matthias Eberle, *World War I and the Weimar Artists: Dix, Grosz, Beckmann, Schlemmer*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985, p. 56.
- ¹¹ Flavell, *George Grosz*, pp. 22-23.
- ¹² Portion of a statement from George Grosz, "My New Pictures [Zu meinen neuen Bildern]," *Das Kunstblatt* 5, no. 1 (1921), quoted in *German Expressionism: Documents from the End of the Wilhelmine Empire to the Rise of National Socialism*, edited and annotated by Rose-Carol Washon Long, New York: G. K. Hall & Co., 1993, p. 275.
- ¹³ George Grosz: *an Autobiography*, p. 84.
- ¹⁴ George Grosz: *an Autobiography*, p. 97.
- ¹⁵ *Die Weissen Blätter*, Vol. IV, No. 11 (Oct.-Dec. 1916) p. 167, quoted in Hans Hess, *George Grosz*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985, Studio Vista edition, 1974, pp. 64-65.
- ¹⁶ quoted in Hans Hess, *George Grosz*, p. 62.
- ¹⁷ Hans Hess, *George Grosz*, p. 64. Wieland Herzfelde, a poet and writer who befriended Grosz in 1915, acquired the rights to the dormant *Die Neue Jugend*, which in its earlier existence was a schoolboy's magazine, and revitalized it in 1916 as a literary journal, serving largely leftist and anti-war aims. Herzfelde

- also established the Malik Verlag (Malik Publishers) in early 1917, which in addition to printing *Die Neue Jugend*, was also to publish various of Grosz's portfolios of satirical drawings over the next several years.
- ¹⁸ Flavell, *George Grosz*, p. 38. The publication included some satirical work by Grosz.
 - ¹⁹ *George Grosz: an Autobiography*, p. 113.
 - ²⁰ *George Grosz: an Autobiography*, p. 140.
 - ²¹ The column entitled "Enchanted Exiles," from one of his "1001 Afternoons in Chicago," is quoted in Florice Whyte Kovan, *Art & Architecture on 1001 Afternoons in Chicago: Essays and tall tales of artists and the cityscape of the 1920s by Ben Hecht*, Washington, D. C., 2002, p. 37.
 - ²² Ralph Jentsch, *George Grosz Berlin-New York*, Milan: Skira, 2008, p. 101.
 - ²³ Heine's poem was based on a journey he took in Germany in late 1843 and, like Grosz's painting, was intended as a satirical attack on the political situation in the country. The present whereabouts of Grosz's painting, if not destroyed during the Third Reich along with hundreds of his other artworks in public and private collections, is unknown. It was last recorded in the hands of Wieland Herzfelde in Berlin in the 1930s.
 - ²⁴ *In the Twenties: The Diary of Harry Kessler* (originally published in Germany under the title *Harry Graf Kessler, Tagebucher 1918-1937*), with an introduction by Otto Friedrich, translated by Charles Kessler, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971, p. 64.
 - ²⁵ Hans Hess, *George Grosz*, pp. 72-73.
 - ²⁶ The letters K.V. coming out of the examining doctor's mouth are short for the lengthy German phrase *Kriegsverwendungsfähig* (fit for active service). Grosz frequently recycled his drawings and published them in multiple portfolios, sometimes with the titles changed. This drawing, for instances, was used again in the controversial 1930 portfolio entitled *The Marked Men*, where it carried the same title used in *Gott mit Uns*.
 - ²⁷ See my *Caxtonian* article, "Ben Hecht, Wallace Smith, and *Fantazius Mallare*: A Crisis of Censorship at the Crest of the Chicago Renaissance."
 - ²⁸ Fetherling, *The Five Lives of Ben Hecht*, p. 28. Fetherling suggests that the zany scripts Hecht wrote for the Marx Brothers reflected back to his experience with Dada performances in Berlin.
 - ²⁹ The column is reprinted in Kovan, *Art & Architecture on 1001 Afternoons in Chicago*, pp. 73-77. Professor Dodo von Baader is Hecht's playful invention based on a real Berlin Dadaist, friend and cohort of George Grosz, Johannes von Baader (1875-1955).
 - ³⁰ Kovan notes that Hecht organized campaigns and written copy against the Klan in the 1920s and was on the board of the National Unity League in Chicago along with Jane Addams. In late October 1922, Hecht was involved in setting up League offices in Milwaukee. See Kovan, *Art & Architecture on 1001 Afternoons in Chicago*, p. 103.
 - ³¹ Florice Whyte Kovan, *Art & Architecture on 1001 Afternoons in Chicago*, p. 101.
 - ³² Quoted in Kovan, *Art & Architecture on 1001 Afternoons in Chicago*, p. 40. The Wrigley building, completed in 1921 and gloriously illuminated at night, was Chicago's newest major contribution to modern architecture and received worldwide attention.
 - ³³ A statement on page 3 of Simons' book, across from the title page, declares: "The lithographs here reproduced are published with the permission of Mr. Herman Sachs, director of the Dayton Museum of The Arts, personal representative in America of

Mr. Grosz."

- ³⁴ The most accurate and readily available information on Herman Sachs in English can be found on the Pacific Coast Architecture Database (PCAD), available online at: //digital.lib.washington.edu/architect/architects/705. The number 705 in the database is Sachs' identification code. Precise information on Sachs' travels from 1913 to the conclusion of World War I is unclear. Although his intention was to return to the States following two years of art study, surviving passport information indicates that, except for a couple of weeks in Romania, Sachs remained in Germany during the war and returned to Chicago at its conclusion.
- ³⁵ Quoted in Kovan, *Art & Architecture on 1001 Afternoons in Chicago*, pp. 38-39.
- ³⁶ Sachs served as Director of the Dayton Art Museum in Ohio from 1921-1923. He was Director of the Creative Art Students League in Los Angeles beginning in 1923 for a number of years, during which time he also worked as an artist and color consultant, assisting in the design of some of the city's important landmarks. He remained in Los Angeles until his death in 1940.
- ³⁷ The publisher's statement suggests several topics that might follow "within the next few months," including Italian poetry, Palle Lunøe woodcuts, Emanuel Carnevali poems and prose, Dada poetry, and the art of Herman Sachs. No Musterbook imprint of these topics seems to exist, and I assume that the Musterbook publication venture must have been stillborn following the Grosz book.
- ³⁸ Hi Simons, *George Grosz*, Chicago: Musterbookhouse, 1921, p. 6. Simons mistakenly gives 1920 as the date of the two *Grosz-Mappen* publications, but they were both printed in 1917.
- ³⁹ Simons, *George Grosz*, pp. 6-7.
- ⁴⁰ *Orioles & Blackbirds* was issued in 280 copies, printed on KelmScott hand-made paper.
- ⁴¹ Simons became president of Chicago-based Yearbook Publishers, Inc. (medical books) in 1936 on the death of C. J. Head, his father-in-law. Simons was also a member of the Foreign Trade Committee of the Book Publishers Association in the 1940s; president of the Chicago Art Institute's Society for Contemporary American Art in the early 1940s; and, beginning around 1940, began research on what was to have been a complete bibliography of the work of American poet Wallace Stevens. Simons published two articles on Stevens' poetry, one in the December 1, 1940 special issue of the *Harvard Advocate*, and another journal article published posthumously. His larger project was cut short by his untimely death in 1945; see *The New York Times* (August 24, 1924; October 15, 1936; August 14, 1940; and October 20, 1940) as well as articles in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* (January 19, 1941; March 12, 1943; and April 5, 1945).
- ⁴² See Kovan, *Art & Architecture on 1001 Afternoons in Chicago*, pp. 101 & 103. The first issue of the *Milwaukee Arts Monthly*, Volume 1, appeared in September 1922, and there is no evidence that the publication lasted beyond the March/April (Vol. 1, No. 5) issue of 1923 (evidently some issues were bi-monthly).
- ⁴³ The entire article (probably from September 1922, first number) is reprinted in Kovan, *Art & Architecture on 1001 Afternoons in Chicago*, pp. 43-44. A cautionary note: Hecht's article is a bit flawed by erroneous information, including the statement that Grosz was born in San Francisco and taken to Germany at the age of two.
- ⁴⁴ Fetherling, *The Five Lives of Ben Hecht*, p. 60.

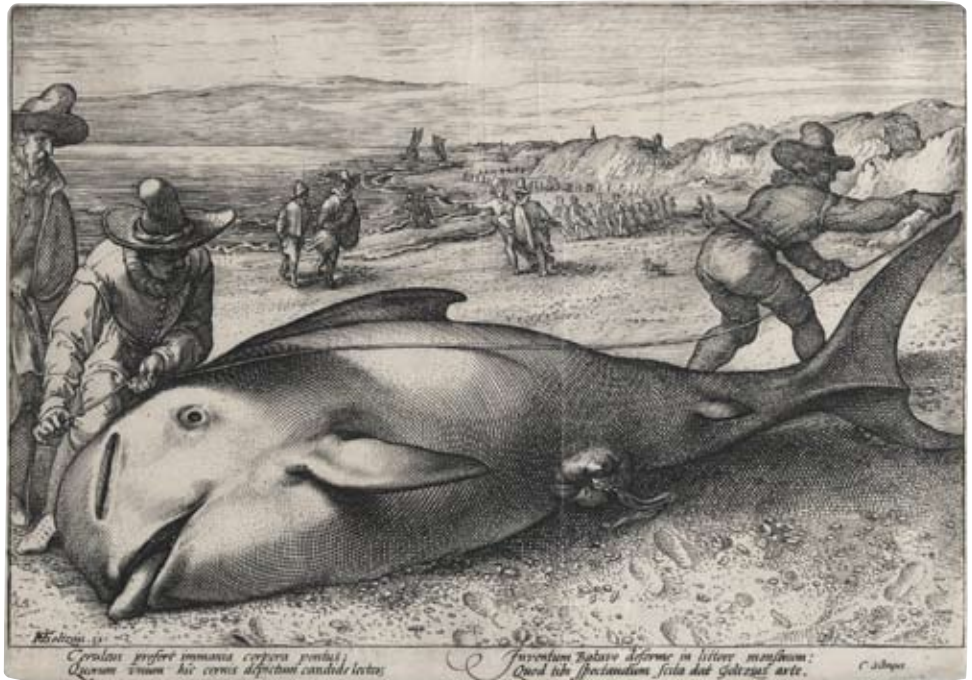
Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge

A blockbuster show fills the Block Gallery at Northwestern with works from early modern Europe

Ed Quattrocchi

The Block Museum on the campus of Northwestern University has mounted a rich display of prints, books, maps, and scientific instruments exploring the role of artists in the scientific inquiries of the 16th century. The exhibition started at Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum this past fall; it will be on display at the Block Museum until April 8.

Since I live near the museum in Evanston and have contributed occasional essays about book-related subjects in the Renaissance to the *Caxtonian*, I was asked to preview the exhibit. I agreed with some misgivings about my competence to interpret mainly visual prints and artifacts because my familiarity with the culture of the sixteenth century has derived mainly from literature, primarily in



Unknown artist, after Hendrick Goltzius, "Pilot Whale Beached at Zandvoort," 1594, etching and engraving. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Light-Outerbridge Collection, Richard Norton Memorial Fund, M24552. Photo: Department of Digital Imaging and Visual Resources, Harvard Art Museums, © 2011 President and Fellows of Harvard College.



English. In the end, I was overwhelmed but enjoyed myself immensely.

The items on display are described in a richly illustrated catalogue, comprising 442 folio-size pages, on sale in the bookstore for \$60. Associated with the exhibit are regularly scheduled programs, tours, and lectures focusing on various aspects of the collections. The entries in the catalogue are coordinated and edited with an introduction by Susan Dackerman, the

Heinrich Vogtherr the elder, "Anatomy, or, a Faithful Reproduction of the Body of a Female," Strasbourg: Jacob Fröhlich, 1544, woodcuts with hand-coloring and letterpress. Boston Medical Library in the Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine, ffQM33.A16. Photo: Boston Medical Library in the Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine.

Curator of Prints of Harvard Art Museums. She explains how artists, natural historians, cosmographers, medical practitioners, and instrument makers who gathered and interpreted knowledge of the natural world used printed images and instruments to describe and understand that world. This empirical approach to acquiring knowledge was in marked contrast to the method that preceded the Renaissance of the 16th century, which was based primarily on the authority of ancient philosophers such as Aristotle.

Essays by knowledgeable scholars orient the viewer to the significance of each of the divisions in the exhibit. For example, Lorraine Daston, Visiting Professor of Social Thought and History at the University of Chicago, explains how by the mid-sixteenth century "observation" had supplanted received classical authority as the primary source of knowledge and truth; "naturalists stopped looking at books and started looking at nature." One of several examples of this shift in perspective in the exhibit is a wood cut of a drawing by Hendrick Goltzius of a beached whale. The engraving provides a record of contemporary curiosity toward stranded whales, as people

See *PRINTS AND SCIENCE*, page 13

CAXTONIAN FOOTNOTES

Wynken De Worde

Where one or more Caxtonians gather in the name of books, sooner or later the question is posed, paraphrased, "Whither Bookstores?" The answer, my friends, was answered years ago by the bard, Bob Dylan. It is "blowin' in the wind." If anybody knows the full answer to that question, it is God Almighty, or Jeff Bezos, founder and CEO of Amazon.com, a veritable prophet himself, although some people think he is a god, too.

Like empty husks the hulks of abandoned Borders Bookstores dot the cities and towns of America. They are a victim of brick-and-mortar costs, internet ordering, and the digital firestorm which Bezos did not invent, but which his Kindle has flamed into a prairie fire. Barnes & Noble, the nemesis of Borders Books, is hollowing out its book display spaces in its reportedly 750 remaining stores, to expand the show space for its NOOK e-reader, with which it intends to out-innovate Amazon and its Kindle, and thus scrap for survival in a digital world.

But will Barnes & Noble survive? Suddenly real publishers are very concerned that it will. Without those hundreds of stores, how will their real books be sold? How will the back stock of older titles, which has traditionally supported profits for publishers and subsidized new authors, find buyers? What can publishers do to support brick-and-mortar stores?

It seems that there are more questions than there are new titles in paper.

In the face of these current events and current battles, actions are being taken by persons who have been or are Caxtonians. One of these is **Sandra Hindman** ('91), who is not currently a Caxtonian, but has operated a high-powered business in medieval, Renaissance, and illuminated manuscripts. Sandra was an art professor at Northwestern University, who spent half the year in Europe dealing with manuscript treasures. Her business, Les Enluminures, has had a Chicago office, and a Paris gallery, for years. Now, it has been announced, Sandra will expand to New York City in May. The opening show at Les Enluminures' new gallery in New York will be titled "12 Books of Hours for 2012" and will feature important Books of Hours from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries. These will appeal to very few of the Occupy Wall

Street crowd, but may appeal strongly to the 1%, or even one-tenth of one percent.

We shall watch her progress with interest. For a couple of years, Sandra Hindman and her erstwhile "sister," Leslie Hindman, operated an antique show at Navy Pier, at the same time as Art Chicago. The ladies went their separate ways when that event failed in the face of economic realities, but that sure has not slowed down the juggernaut that is **Leslie Hindman** ('84). The revival of Leslie Hindman Auctioneers was propelled forward after Leslie finally created a separate books & manuscripts department. Leslie rapidly outgrew her quarters on Aberdeen Street, across from Harpo Studios, and is now located in specially remodeled space on West Lake Street. Leslie has since announced or opened branch offices or auction rooms in Naples, Florida; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Denver, Palm Beach, and soon in New Orleans. Okay, yes, the jewelry and fine arts departments probably fueled the expansion more than the book department, but the expansion has required **Mary Williams** ('09), the head of the book department, to spend a lot more time on the road, and at airports.

The failure of Borders Bookstores may or may not result in a boost to smaller chains or independent new bookstores. How much it has helped or hurt Chicago's own surviving chain of new books, Barbara's Bookstore, remains to be seen. Barbara's still boasts seven locations, six in Chicagoland and one in Boston. But they vacated their store in University Village on South Halsted Street after a number of pioneering years next to the burgeoning powerhouse that is the University of Illinois at Chicago and its urban renewal neighborhood in the shadow of Hull House.

But one person's poison is another man's meat. Stepping into the void and the empty storefront is our own entrepreneur, **Bradley Jonas** ('89), the enterprising, overworked President of Powell's Books of Chicago. Jonas is opening Powell's third storefront in Chicago this month at 1218 S. Halsted St, with plans to expose the U of I resident and commuter students, and faculty, and neighbors to more books than they can see outside of their Richard J. Daley Library and its extensions. The powers that be at the university are anxious to have Powell's as the new anchor store for the many upscale businesses that

have clustered around the former site of the Maxwell Street Market. Brad's plan is, "We hope to have a pretty sizable inventory there – it'll be pretty strong."

Brad also hopes to appeal to the clientele who patronized his long-time location at 828 S. Wabash as his Loop or mid-city branch. That store closed in the recent past, in part, due to endless construction complications in that rapidly changing neighborhood around Columbia College.

Meanwhile, Brad's other enterprise, The Chicago International Remainder & Overstock Book Exposition, aka CIROBE, is scheduled to return to Chicago's Hilton Hotel in October again this year. Brad pioneered this trade show over twenty years ago. It attracts thousands of booksellers from around the globe for a weekend of shopping the clearance sales by publishers of books, audio, and software. They also patronize the local restaurants and watering holes, and, occasionally, some of the other used but not so rare booksellers in Chicago. Former Caxtonian **Ed Ripp**, who relocated his book business to Albuquerque several years ago, has returned to exhibit his wares at CIROBE, but swears that even the mild winter weather of 2011-12 will not influence him to move back to the shores of Lake Michigan. But he is willing to return for a weekend in October.

Another change in a South Loop bookstore involves Printers Row Fine Books, which is operated by **John LaPine** ('03). The business was purchased late last year by Col. James Pritzker. Col. Pritzker is a very, very busy man. No sooner had he moved **Theresa Embry** ('95), librarian, and his eponymous military library to Monroe and Michigan, than he has engaged to restore the Emil Bach house designed by **Frank Lloyd Wright** (1903) on Sheridan Road in Rogers Park.

North of Rogers Park, there are other changes that have occurred or are in process. **Florence Shay** ('85), occasional yenta and doyenne of Titles, Inc., is back in charge of her Highland Park bookshop after her prolonged illness. This is a great relief to her many friends and customers, as well as **Ann Kiel** ('06), who works in the store part-time. After months of treatment, Florence is much happier to be back in her beloved bookshop.

Two years ago, south of Highland Park, in Winnetka, the partners at Chicago Rare Book Center experimented with an expansion to a

second North Shore storefront, on Green Bay Road. The experiment was designed to last for four months (from October to January), with an option to renew. The shop was a chic transformation of a long, narrow space which had just been vacated by Rain Dog Fine Books. Former Caxtonian and children's books specialist **Ann Dumler** ('95), presided over the remodeling and subsequent operation of the 2nd Chicago Rare. Two of the highlights of its short tenure there were its Grand Opening Party, and a hugely successful appraisal day – both with standing room only.

As recently as last Fall, a third bookshop, Round Table Books, opened in Winnetka. That one specialty is Arthurian literature must be a reflection of its owner, Arthur Frank. He is also fond of the works of Omar Khayyam.

The mantle of Dean of Evanston rare book dealers fell to the shoulders of Roger Carlson after the death of legendary **Richard Barnes** ('63), who is survived by his wife, **Patricia** ('77). Roger is the avuncular founder of the celebrated bookshop Bookman's Alley. Through the past four decades, Roger has garnered more publicity than any other Chicagoland rare bookseller. He also appeared

as a character in the now-classic best-selling novel, *The Time Traveler's Wife*, by **Audrey Niffenegger** ('11). Like his long-time colleague in books, **Joe Girardi** ('81) – who recently lost his wife, Betty Lou – Roger has been suffering from various ailments. The Carlson family has persuaded Roger that he needs to shut down Bookman's Alley, and to retire before those jelly candies he keeps in glass dishes around the shop do him in. The closing markdown should continue until the expected closing of the shop at the end of March. The possibility of an outsider taking over the shop did not materialize (after all, there are only so many Pritzkers).

The demise of Bookman's Alley is sure to increase the pressures on the four partners of the Chicago Rare Book Center, relative newcomers to Evanston, who moved their business there about seven years ago (although partner Patricia Martinak operated her Alkhest Bookshop on Central Street for many years until about the year 2000). **Tom Joyce** ('82), another Chicago Rare partner, thought he had scored a coup on Roger Carlson. A Pioneer Press reporter did a full-page story in the December 22 issue of the *Evanston Review*,

with a photograph, to tell about the very rare 1855 broadside of Clement Moore's "The Night Before Christmas" which Tom had recently obtained from Oklahoma. The Chicago *Sun-Times* published a smaller version of the photograph, with a few paragraphs of text on December 18th; but it turned out that Roger Carlson got news coverage in the *Tribune* that day about his store closing.

The Chicago Rare Book Center has recently acquired for sale such special rarities as the first edition in English of Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica*, a Kelmscott Press book, and a special copy of the 1599 edition of Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations*, but they doubt that they will be able to score any special newspaper or internet coverage for them after the Clement Moore report. The partners of Chicago Rare are all senior citizens, with combined bookselling experience of more than 125 years, but none of them looks forward to trying to deal with the additional requests to buy books from people who will no longer be offering their books to Bookman's Alley first.

to be continued —

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PRINTS AND SCIENCE, from page 11

from all classes came out to see the animal while its flesh was examined and its parts measured.

In another essay, "Illustrated Natural History," Claudia Swan, Associate Professor of Art History at Northwestern, describes with illustrations how sixteenth- and seventeenth-century botanical images, anatomical treatises and maps demonstrate the centrality of visual information in the pursuit of knowledge about the natural world. A central figure in this period was the great artist Albrecht Dürer. He published two treatises – "Instruction on Measurement" and "Four Books on Human Proportion" – as textbooks for artists and other practitioners who lacked adequate training in geometry and technical skills.

Suzanne Karr Schmidt, The Curatorial Fellow in Prints and Drawings at the Art Institute of Chicago, gave a presentation at the Caxton Club dinner on February 15 in which she discussed new research possibilities in interactive printed matter, books and beyond. She worked extensively on the Harvard and Block Museum of Art exhibitions. She is also the author of "Altered and Adorned:

Using Renaissance Prints in Daily Life," an exhibit presented at the Art Institute last year. Her contribution to the Block Museum catalogue is an essay on "George Hartmann and the Development of Printed Instruments in Nuremberg." Scientific instruments such as sundials, globes, and astrolabes are commonly known in examples made of such durable materials as wood, brass and ivory. In the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries the city of Nuremberg was the center of the European trade in both printed images and in navigational and horary instruments such as astrolabes, quadrants, and sundials. In the sixteenth century they were also manufactured from printed paper. George Hartmann, the mathematician and vicar of the Church of St. Sebald in Germany, innovatively merged these genres, producing hundred of brass and ivory instruments as well as individual instrument components printed on paper.

The final section of the Block Museum catalogue, "Allegories of Knowledge," written by Katharine Park, Professor of the History of Science at Harvard University, is rich with beautiful examples of the pervasive use of art to teach moral and practical knowledge through allegory, the depiction of abstract

concepts through physical embodiments. The common assumption about learning was that the seven liberal arts were the foundation of medieval and Renaissance education. They were divided into the trivium (grammar, logic or dialectic, and rhetoric), which convey knowledge through language, and the quadrivium (arithmetic, astronomy, geometry, and music), which offered mathematical means of representing knowledge. The liberal arts were often personified allegorically as seven winged women, shown in profile wearing laurel wreaths and antique draperies.

My sketchy description of the variegated aspects of the stunning kaleidoscope on display at the Block Museum cannot begin to give you an appreciation of "Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe." If this brief summary whets your appetite for a more recondite perusal of the wondrous pictorial history of Early Modern Europe, I recommend that you be prepared to make more than one visit to the Block Museum and that you purchase a catalogue before trying to digest the descriptions of the prints and artifacts posted on the wall next to each item.

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Book and manuscript-related exhibitions: a selective list

Compiled by Robert McCamant

(Note: on occasion an exhibit may be delayed or extended; it is always wise to call in advance of a visit.)

Art Institute of Chicago, 111 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 312-443-3600: "Beauty and the Book: 19th- and Early 20th-Century Folios on the Decorative Arts" (books in a range of cultural and historical styles of ornamentation and design, lavishly illustrated), Ryerson and Burnham Libraries, weekdays only, through May 7. "Light Years: Conceptual Art and the Photograph, 1964-1977" (the Conceptual Art movement brought photography into the mainstream of contemporary art), Regenstein Hall, through March 11. "Schiff Fellowship for Architecture: Selections, 1989-2011" (exceptional projects by young architects selected annually), Gallery 24 through May 20.

Chicago Botanic Garden, Lenhardt Library, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe, 847-835-8202: "Renaissance Artists: Illustrations of Science and Art" (examines the artists and publishers of featured rare volumes), through May 13.

Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark Street, Chicago, 312-266-2077: "Charles James: Genius Deconstructed" (preserving the legacy of this Chicago fashion designer), through April 15.

Columbia College Center for the Book and Paper Arts, "Poems and Pictures: A Renaissance in the Art of the Book" (traveling exhibit from Center for Book Arts, NYC, covers book art from 1946 to 1981), through April 7.

Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State Street, Chicago, 312-747-4300: "One Book, Many Interpretations: Second Edition" (commemorates the program's 10-year anniversary with a juried exhibition by bookbinders and book artists interpreting the 10 most recent selections; judges were Caxtonians Paul Gehl, Audrey Niffenegger, and Norma Rubovitz), Special Collections Exhibit Hall, Ninth Floor, through April 15. "Actors, Plays & Stages: Early Theater in Chicago" (memorabilia of the early performances and theaters), Chicago Gallery, Third Floor, through May 15.

DuSable Museum of African American History, 740 East 56th Place, Chicago, 773-947-0600: "Spread the Word! The Evolution of Gospel" (great Gospel singers including Mahalia Jackson and Albertina Walker), through May 20.

Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 East Chicago Avenue, Chicago, 312-280-2660: "Laura Letinsky: Ill Form and Void Full" (book and other art from the museum's collection), through April 17.

Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton Street, Chicago, 312-943-9090: "Border Troubles in the War of 1812" (the conflict in the area then known as the West: firsthand accounts of warfare; territorial struggles between Indian nations and the United States; an East Coast print culture that romanticized wartime life in the Great Lakes region; and representations of the war in textbooks and other histories of the United States), through March 27.

Northwestern University, Block Museum of Art, 40 Arts Circle Drive, Evanston, 847-491-4000: "Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe" (how celebrated Northern Renaissance artists contributed to scientific inquiries of the 16th century), through April 8.

Northwestern University, Charles Deering Library, 1970 Campus Drive, Evanston, 847-491-7658: "Papering Over Tough Times: Soviet Propaganda Posters of the 1930s," Special Collections, through June 15.

Oriental Institute, 1155 East 58th Street, Chicago, 773-702-9514: "Picturing the Past: Imaging and Imagining the Ancient Middle East" (paintings, facsimiles, casts, models, photographs, and computer-aided reconstructions show how the ancient Middle East has been documented), through September 2.

Smart Museum of Art, 5550 S. Greenwood Avenue, Chicago, 773-702-0200: "Feast: Radical Hospitality in Contemporary Art" (artist-orchestrated meals that offer a radical form of hospitality), through June 10.

University of Chicago, Joseph Regenstein Library, 1100 East 57th Street, Chicago, 773-702-8705: "We Are Chicago: Student Life in the Collections" (highlights student experiences over a span of 120 years; drawn from the University Archives), Special Collections Research Center Exhibition Gallery, through March 23.

Until a replacement exhibit editor is found, please send your listings to bmccamant@quarterfold.com, or call 312-329-1414 x 11.



Harold Washington Library: *One Book, Many Interpretations*
BINDINGS BY (TOP TO BOTTOM) LESA DOWD, SCOTT KELLAR, BILL DRENDELL

Caxtonians Collect: Evelyn Lampe

Interviewed by Robert McCamant

Evelyn Lampe puts it simply. "I like to read," she says.

We talked mostly in the party room on the top floor of her apartment building, with a view stretching north along the lake. It was a slightly foggy day, so we couldn't see up to the North Shore, where she spent her childhood in the town of Zion.

"I grew up alone," she confesses. "Books kept me company." Her father had died two months before she was born, so Evelyn and her mother moved in with her grandparents. Everyone in the household worked, so Evelyn stayed during the day with her mother's sister. When she was older, she was home alone with her dog and her books.

A dominant factor in Zion during her childhood was the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church (now known as the Christ Community Church), an evangelical sect. John Alexander Dowie had founded both the town and the church in 1896. "We didn't belong to it," Lampe explains. "But in those days it defined the town. Nowadays you hear Spanish on the streets (just about everybody lives there), but when I was a child

it was a pretty isolated place if you weren't Christian Catholic Apostolic."

She escaped to the University of Dubuque for college. She majored in chemistry and met her future husband in a chemistry class. "He was the lab assistant for the class, and he would pester the girls by standing behind them and blowing on their hair. When he did it to me, I jammed him with my elbow. He remembered me."

By-then-husband Ken got a job at Montana State, so Lampe finished her undergraduate degree there, specializing in bacteriology. The following years were peripatetic, with stops at Yale, University of Iowa, and Montana State a second time. Ken would teach chemistry, and Evelyn would get a job in the lab of a local hospital or other medical facility. By Montana State the second time, a daughter had come along, so Evelyn decided to quit working in laboratories and study something new.

She chose history and got her masters' degree there. Her thesis was on the Christian

Catholic Apostolic Church!

A long stretch in Miami followed the peripatetic years. One of the notable events there was that Lampe found a part-time job with a used-book dealer. "The part I enjoyed most was going with her to look at people's libraries to decide if they were worth buying for stock," she explains. "I enjoyed trying to figure out if she was going to make an offer, and guess what



Photograph by Robert McCamant

it would be."

Ken's final job was in Chicago, working for the American Medical Association. As a result, Lampe has been in Chicago for more than 30 years. Most of her present library was assembled here, including sections on history, cooking, art, and even a bit of bibliography. "It's more books than I need," she says, looking around at her many bookshelves. "The problem is deciding what to keep," she concludes. It's a sentiment many of us would assent to.

Her collection of modern illustrated books may stem from a required art appreciation class as an undergraduate. She and her husband worked together to amass the collection of books illustrated by German Expressionists, particularly George Grosz. Her Maurice Sendak collection began with finding a brand new book called *A Hole is To Dig*, and seeing a spirit and power in the young man's work. Similarly, seeing underground publications on campus in Miami, she was attracted

by the individual vision and technique of R. Crumb. Edward Gorey was a later discovery.

Lampe joined the Club in 1992, nominated by Karen Skubish and seconded by Mary Ann McFarlane. She is also related to the Club's office manager, Dan Crawford, who is her nephew by marriage. "In the days when we first lived in Chicago, my mother lived with us. It was a good arrangement having him in town,

so that when Ken and I would travel, Dan could stay in our apartment and look after her."

In late 1984, answering an ad in a neighborhood newspaper, she volunteered to assist at the Newberry Library, which was holding its first ever Book Fair. Evelyn had run the book section of the Fairchild Garden Walk in Miami, and, applying the lessons she had learned there and in the used-book trade, she found herself in charge of the event, eventually being given the half-humorous title Book Fair Curator. She guided the Book Fair through an ever-increasing number of volunteers, books, and customers until 1995, when she swapped jobs with the Assistant Curator (Dan Crawford), becoming Curator Emerita.

From the days of beef bacon in Zion, Illinois to Union League Club buffet luncheons with the Caxton Club, books have been a constant theme in her adventures.

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Bookmarks...

Luncheon: Friday, March 9, 2012, Union League Club
Tony Batko
Bergen Evans: Part I, The Formative Years, 1903-1932

Bergen Evans, author, scholar, wit, TV personality, and legendary Professor of English at Northwestern, is one of the few relevant and utterly fascinating 20th century personages without a biography, yet. A bit of a paradox: Bergen, a Harvard graduate and Rhodes Scholar, wrote *The Dictionary of Contemporary American Usage* (1957) and *The Psychiatry of Richard Burton* (1944), a 16th century writer and favorite of Samuel Johnson. He also authored *The Natural History of Nonsense* (1946) and was host for TV shows including *The Last Word* and *Down You Go*. He was raised in a large (5 children), lively, permissive and somewhat impoverished family until, when Bergen was 11, his indomitable great-aunt Cornelia took over. A remarkable story. Tony Batko is a Northwestern graduate and a Chicago businessman (semi-retired), and was the co-chair of the Chicago Public Library Group which stopped the City from putting the central library in an abandoned department store and greatly influenced the building of its new facility.

March luncheon: Union League Club, 65 W. Jackson Boulevard.
Luncheon buffet (main dining room on six) opens at 11:30 am;
program (in a different room, to be announced) 12:30-1:30. Luncheon
is \$30. March dinner: Cliff Dwellers Club, 200 S. Michigan, 22nd

Beyond March...

APRIL LUNCHEON

On April 13, we will meet at the Union League Club. Caxtonian Tony Batko will continue his narrative about Bergen Evans, his Northwestern years and beyond, 1932-1978.

APRIL DINNER

We will meet Wednesday, April 18 at the Union League Club. Nina Baym, emerita, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, will speak on women writers in the 19th-century American west.

Dinner: Wednesday March 21, Cliff Dwellers
Isaac Gewirtz

Reading the Literary Archive: A Tale of Scholarship and Taste

Dr. Isaac Gewirtz will present an illustrated lecture on the literary archive as embodying the most recent stage in the evolution of the study of English and American Literature. He will show how "reading the archive" offers a new way for a writer's papers to be studied and enjoyed; that is, as the author's meta-work, which bears and transmits intentions distinct from, if dependent on, the author's oeuvre.

Gewirtz has served as Curator of the New York Public Library's Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature since September 2000. The talk will include a brief history of the Berg Collection. The author of "I am With You": *Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass, 1855-2005*, he curated the NYPL exhibition of the same title, as well as the exhibitions *Victorians, Moderns, and Beats, New in the Berg Collection 1994-2001*; *Passion's Discipline: A History of the Sonnet in the British Isles and America*; and *Beatific Soul: Jack Kerouac On the Road, 1957-2007*; as well as *Kerouac At Bat: Fantasy Sports and the King of the Beats*. Most recently, he co-curated the exhibition *Mark Twain: A Skeptic's Progress* at the Morgan Library.

floor. Timing: spirits at 5:00, dinner at 6:00, program at 7:30. Dinner is \$48, drinks are \$5 to \$9. For reservations call 312-255-3710 or email caxtonclub@newberry.org; **reservations are needed by noon Friday for the Wednesday dinner.**

MAY LUNCHEON

On May 8th at the Union League Club, Caxtonian Paul Ruxin will talk about The Club, founded in 1764 in London by Sir Joshua Reynolds for the sole purpose of conversation with Samuel Johnson. It still exists today, 248 years later!

MAY DINNER

Michael Winship of the University of Texas at Austin will speak on 19th-century American bookstores. Date and location to be determined, due to conflict with G8 summit events.